

CHINESE LITERATURE



4
1975

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Front Cover: A Village Girl at the Control Panel — *Yang Chih-kuang*

SONGS TO THE PEOPLE'S CONGRESS

The first session of the Fourth National People's Congress was held in Peking from January 13 to 17, 1975. To celebrate this joyful event, many among our multi-national people wrote verses and songs, among which are the five published below.

— The Editors

Opaochen

Song to Chairman Mao

With bright flowers from our Hulunbel prairies,
And the rippling waves of the Nengkiang River,
We celebrate the convocation of the Congress,
Presenting this song from a Tahur soldier.

Opaochen is a Tahur.

Not until the sun rose in Peking,
Did we Tahurs end our lives as "wild men".
Now, deputies of our nationality
Sit in the Great Hall of the People,
On Tien An Men we were received,
By our leader Chairman Mao himself.

Were we to use our grasslands as paper,
They'd be too small to record all our songs.
Were we to play on the rippling waves of the Nengkiang,
They'd not flow fast enough to express all our joy.
Chairman Mao's picture taken with us Tahur people
Will remain for ever close to our hearts.

Liu Hui-kao

Glad Tidings Flow on Wings of Gold

The open-hearth is roaring with joy,
The revolving roller sings happy songs,
Golden light glows in our red-hot furnace,
As molten steel flows in radiant ripples.

Red banners blend with the glow of the furnace,
Cymbals crash in rhythm with chugging motors,
Steel workers celebrate the convening of the Congress,
Clasping close the red paper bearing the good news.

Eyes are aglow as we read the proclamation,
Our happiness leaps up like the bubbling steel.
The Congress inspires us with a fighting spirit,
The Congress strengthens our verve and drive.

A thousand brave warriors advance to give battle,
And increase iron and steel for production,
New furnaces are completed ahead of schedule,
Contributing the flow of steel for our motherland.

Songs and laughter fill the workshops,
Glad tidings flow on wings of gold.
The trial heat from Furnace No. 5 is successful,
Self-reliance triumphs in our great steel complex.

Our old Party secretary pitches into work,
As vigorous as when he was still a youth,
Now, at the head of a brave contingent
He fights valiantly to control the flames.

Our young section leader, who worked through the night,
Gazes now with content on the new piles of steel.
Without rest, he goes off to express his joy
Writing poems that spring from his warm heart.

Let our poems, like sharp daggers, pierce
The enemy's dreams of restoration.
Let our verses shake the whole universe,
Bugle-calls for greater socialist construction.

The east wind of the Congress sweeps our steel city,
Around the furnace our feelings are united and victorious.
Marching ever under the banner of Taching,
We fly along Chairman Mao's revolutionary road.

Joy in an Yi Mountain Village

Why do lucky magpies in the flowering trees
Suddenly sing out with such joy?
Don't think the magpies are foolish,
They know we Yi's have some very good news.

What noise is this that shakes our mountain village,
Wrapped in rainbow-coloured clouds?
It's no spring thunder from out of the blue,
But Yi people cheering loudly in their happiness.

Ninety-nine buckets of honey water are not sweet enough,
Ninety-nine pine torches aren't really bright,
Ninety-nine feet times ten is not a great height,
And ninety-nine songs are too few for the Yi people's joy.

What excitement to learn the Congress is convened,
That liberated serfs as deputies have gone to Peking,
Now our multi-national people are masters of the country,
How elated we are to begin writing this fine new chapter.

A song of the Yi people.

Rejoicing on Snow Mountains and Grasslands

Stirring news have come
From the golden city of Peking.
The People's Congress is convened,
There's rejoicing on snow mountains and grasslands.

Blow loudly on our golden *suona*,
Leap in the joyful dance of the strings,
Holding on high a snow-white *bata* in Peking,
Display the exaltation of our liberated serfs.

Numerous are the stars in the night sky,
But not so many as the good tidings here,
Not even the fleetest steed on our grasslands
Can catch up with us on the production front.

Chairman Mao has brought us happiness,
Tibetan hearts fly to Peking.
Broad is the socialist road, paved with gold,
Chairman Mao's revolutionary road shines ahead for ever.

This is a Tibetan song.

Gifts from Hsisha

Our squad leader is a deputy to the Congress,
We're all so happy and excited,
What gifts shall we ask him to carry,
To convey our Hsisha soldiers' heartfelt love.

Take along this canteen of sweet spring water,
Clear and fragrant, better than any tea.
Please present it to our beloved Chairman Mao,
The red sun's radiance warms our whole happy country.

Take along this red coral flower,
Always brilliant, it fears neither storm nor stress.
Please place it in the Great Hall of the People.
May our motherland be for ever young and brave.

Take these pretty small striped shells along,
Their colours brilliant as clouds o'er the sea,
Let them tell the people's deputies
How rich, vast and beautiful our Hsisha islands are.

Take along too this golden phoenix conch-shell,
Its notes direct us as we patrol the frontier,
Let it announce the will of our youth,
Hsisha's sons will always answer the call to battle.

Our squad leader's a deputy to the Congress,
Ten crates of gifts are not enough for him to take,
For never can any number of gifts fully show
Our soldiers' deep love for their motherland.

Big-Character Posters Are Good
(oil painting) by *Fu Chih-kuei*



STORIES

Chin Chien-lan

Deputy Head Nurse

In the Party office of the Surgical Department, Old Wei sat at his desk. He was secretary of the Party branch and a member of the Workers' Propaganda Team. As the door was flung open Old Wei looked up in surprise. A furious Fang Shu-wen, head nurse of the surgical ward, stormed in. Having guessed the reason for her visit, Old Wei stood up and pulled a chair over for her. Without standing on ceremony, Fang opened fire as soon as she sat down. "I've come to unload my grievances, Old Wei. I don't see how I can carry on as head nurse." She let out a long heavy sigh.

Old Wei smiled good-naturedly as he tapped the ash from his cigarette into an ashtray. "Take it easy, Fang. No need to blow your top."

"You know how it is, Old Wei." Fang spoke with a heavy Ningpo accent. "Our ward was quite lively enough with all those young chattering nurses, but since Li Chun-mei came to be deputy head nurse the place has been turned topsyturvy.

"I told them that we were having a meeting tomorrow. But they said no. They had bought tickets for *Song of the Dragon River* and were taking the patients to the movie tomorrow. Busy as I am I managed to find time to sit down and prepare for my lecture to the Nurses' Training Class. But they wouldn't give me a single minute's peace. They had to teach the patients a song.

"I used my lunch hour to go the round of the ward. The corridor was quiet for once. But when I peeped into Room 3, the patient was talking to himself. I tiptoed in. He went on reciting something. And what did I find? Chun-mei was at the bottom of it again. She'd asked him to tell a revolutionary story at the next study session. What do they think nursing is? All fun and games?

"When my turn came for military training, I gave up the chance because I couldn't leave with an easy mind — not until Chun-mei knew the ropes. And, goodness knows, I've tried to train her. But is she grateful? Not she! All I tell her goes in at one ear and out of the other. I'm at my wit's end, Old Wei. So I've come to you. . . ."

Fang's outburst was cut short by a soprano voice singing:

Braving the snow, red plum-blossom announces the coming
of spring;
On high mountains, the pine and cypress stay ever green. . . .

The singing broke off as a bobbed-haired girl pushed open the door and stuck in her head. "May I come in, Old Wei?" She laughed. "Or are you talking secrets?"

"Always cracking jokes, Chun-mei!" Old Wei chuckled. "Come on in."

Quick to comply, she walked over to Fang and shoved her aside. "Come, let's share a chair," she said.

Fang knitted her brows. Frankly speaking, this assistant of hers was getting on her nerves. She had liked Chun-mei's capability when she first came. But as time went by she decided that the girl had too many newfangled ideas. And she was for ever talking or singing like a bird. Not wanting to entrust her with too much responsibility,

Fang had given her the job of almoner. Ostensibly, this involved smoothing the relations between staff and patients. But, in Fang's mind, it really meant doing ideological work among the patients. And since Chun-mei was a good talker, she thought this would be an excellent training for her.

To Fang's surprise, however, Chun-mei had taken this small job extremely seriously. Every morning when the night shift and day shift changed over she used to bring the head nurse all sorts of demands and suggestions: This patient wanted to try herbal medicine; that patient said that the meals had too little variety; others complained that life in the ward was too dull, and so on and so forth. Before long, the mere words "the patients say" were enough to give Fang a headache. And right now, she had a misgiving that Chun-mei was about to come up with another "the patients say".

"What shall we do, Old Wei and Sister Fang? The patients say that Old Chiang in Bed 32 has something on his mind. A comrade who came to see him told him that the national defence project he was working on was being speeded up. It's going to reach the final stage in two months. Old Chiang was a highly skilled and experienced worker before being promoted to be an engineer. The leadership hopes he'll be able to join in the last stage of the work — the final assembly. He can't sleep at night for fear that the pseudomonas infection on his scalded leg won't be cleared up in time. He asked me just now if we couldn't give him more intensive treatment, change his dressings more often. . . ."

Hearing this, Fang forgot her grudge and caught hold of Chun-mei's hands. "What did you tell him?"

"I agreed to it," Chun-mei answered with a smile.

Fang's face fell. "The patients say' again! Why must you always complicate our work? If this goes on we'll be rushed off our legs trying to attend to all the patients' demands." Making an effort to control her temper in front of Wei, she went on, "More frequent dressings might do him some good. But we have our regulations. The rule is: one dressing a day. If you change Bed 32's dressing more than once, other patients may want the same treatment. And

if sixty patients all demand special care, how on earth are we to cope? And what if an emergency case came in? You must consider our whole situation before making rash promises." Evidently pleased with this final admonition, Fang stopped, her expression less grim.

Chun-mei was disgusted. How many lectures of this kind had she heard! Once, a patient from Soochow was depressed and had no appetite. The nurses found out that she didn't like the hospital food. Chun-mei told Fang that she wanted to cook her a Soochow speciality.

"I know you mean well, Chun-mei. But we have our rules. What if other patients demand the same thing later? We must think of our ward's overall situation. Go and explain that to her."

Repeated incidents of this kind had given Chun-mei the impression that rules and regulations had bound Fang's hands and feet, and she in turn wanted to bind others with the same rules.

"We work for the interests of the patients, sister. We must have faith in the masses and rely on them instead of being restricted by regulations. We can mobilize the masses if we're too busy. The patients' rational demands should be complied with. If they ask too much we'll explain to them patiently."

"It's all very well to talk, but not so easy to practise what you preach." Fang was too angry to stay calm. "I don't agree to dressing Old Chiang's burn more frequently. You can't do as you like. You must think of every aspect of our work."

"It's our job to serve the workers, peasants and soldiers," Chun-mei countered firmly with a smile.

Ignoring her, Fang said, "What do *you* think, Old Wei?"

"From what I've heard so far, Comrade Fang, I agree with Chun-mei." Tapping the ash from his cigarette, Old Wei spoke decisively.

Fang was stunned. Standing up abruptly, she said, "Do it her way then. I've told you what I think." She walked away in a huff.

Giggling, Chun-mei saluted Wei. "Thanks for your support."

Wagging one finger at her, Wei said fondly, "You baggage!"

Chun-mei went on crisply, "I know Sister Fang and I like her straightforwardness, the way she comes out frankly with what she thinks. We blast off at each other like howitzers and rocket-guns

until we're both red in the face. But once we've argued it out she bears no grudge — she treats me as well as ever."

She laughed light-heartedly.

2

Light 7 flashed on in the nurses' office. Fang, who was sorting out medicine for the patients, hurried to Room 7, presuming that saline infusion for Bed 32 must be finishing. When she saw that the bottle perched upside-down on the rack was still half-full, her anxiety grew. The patient must have taken a turn for the worse. But Old Chiang, the patient in Bed 32, propped himself up a little in bed at the entrance of the head nurse. Turning off the signal light he greeted her and inquired, "Where is Chun-mei?"

"I don't know. What do you want?"

"It's like this," said Old Chiang apologetically. "Chun-mei changes my dressing four times a day. She was due to come at two but it's half past two now. She told me to pull the cord if I needed anything. That's why I signalled just now. Sorry to have disturbed you."

"This is really the limit!" Fang fumed inwardly. "A deputy head nurse who has no respect for rules! And she hasn't made it clear to the patients when to pull the cord. That light signals an emergency. It means that a nurse must drop whatever she's doing and come to the patient at once. And yet that scatter-brain went off to a meeting completely forgetting her promise to the patient." Fang's anger flared up again at the thought of their disagreement that morning.

"According to the rules, you're not supposed to pull the cord for a little thing like this, Old Chiang," she said gruffly. "You can ask other patients to come to the office for you. That signal can only be used in emergencies." She left. At the door she turned round. Her voice softened a little when she saw Old Chiang still propped up on one arm. "Go to sleep now. I'll tell Chun-mei when she returns."

Someone rushing in ran straight into Fang. It was Chi Lung-ying, a young nurse with a tray in her hand.

"What's up?" Fang demanded.

Embarrassed, Chi smiled. "I forgot to change Old Chiang's dressing. Chun-mei asked me to do it when she left for the meeting. But I went and forgot."

"Be more careful next time. Rushing in like that will scare the patients." Fang closed the door and left.

"Sister!" called Hsiao Ma from Bed 27 in Room 6. A young man in his twenties from Inner Mongolia, he had been in bed for a long time with psoriasis.

"How's your appetite, Hsiao Ma? Do you still sweat a lot?" Fang asked with concern.

"I feel a bit better. But my leg hurts. And the skin isn't growing well." Hsiao Ma was hort of breath. Taking cortisone had weakened him. His face flushed a sickly red.

Nodding sympathetically, Fang walked away.

"Sister!" Hsiao Ma called again, forcing her to stop.

"You're all so good to us patients, dressing Old Chiang's burn four times a day. Chun-mei comes every evening too. When I'm better and go back to 'grasp revolution and promote production' I'm going to learn from you," said Hsiao Ma slowly.

"Oh, we don't deserve such praise." Fang was not at all pleased with the comment.

Before she could find an excuse to leave, he continued, "My leg hurts, sister, and the skin isn't growing. Can you change my dressing more often too? Then I'll be able to leave hospital sooner."

Fang dismissed this request with a sweep of her hand. "No, you can't copy him. The rule of our ward is: only one dressing a day. Besides it's pain in the joint, which has nothing to do with the skin, that makes your leg ache. The cure for that is drugs."

"It's not the pain that worries me. I want to get better quicker," Hsiao Ma persisted.

"Can't be done. We have our rules." Annoyed by Hsiao Ma's stubbornness, she lacked the patience to explain that his chronic

psoriasis had caused deformity of the joint and affected all the skin on his leg, so that he could not expect a rapid cure.

"If you can do it for Bed 32, why can't you do the same thing for me?"

His retort made Fang's head throb with annoyance. Chun-mei and Old Wei seemed to be standing before her, and inwardly she raged at them, "Look what you've started! This is all your doing." Then, hardly knowing what she was saying, she again stressed the importance of regulations although she could see that Hsiao Ma was not convinced. On her way back to the office one thing was clear to her. At all costs she must make Chun-mei cut down on the dressings for Bed 32, and stop breaking the rules from now on.

Fang reached the office just one second before Chun-mei. "I've just been to a meeting, sister, about our next military training," she announced. "Our ward can send one nurse. Some other wards handed in names right away. But I decided to ask your opinion first." Chun-mei was in high spirits. She always livened up the atmosphere around her.

Fang ignored her and walked into the office, head lowered. Pulling over a chair she motioned Chun-mei to sit down.

"Hsiao Ma in Bed 27 wants to get the same treatment as Old Chiang, Chun-mei," she said as she closed the door. "But I refused."

"Oh?" Chun-mei pricked up her ears. "What did you tell him, sister?"

"The same thing I've often told you." Fang described fretfully what had just happened.

But Chun-mei took the matter seriously. "We can't blame him, sister. He knows nothing about medicine and treatment..." Chun-mei had wanted to say that a patient explanation should have been given to convince Hsiao Ma that additional dressings would not cure his leg, for he would have accepted this better than being told to stick to the rules. But Fang cut in:

"You're right. I didn't blame him. *We're* to blame in the first place for breaking our own rules. But it's never too late to correct our mistakes. Starting from now we'll dress Bed 32 once a day."

"No. That won't do," Chun-mei raised her head in agitation. "We can't call a retreat because of such a small set-back."

"Small, you call it? You've no idea of the big trouble it will lead to." Fang's anger seethed.

"Let me explain to Hsiao Ma, sister," Chun-mei begged, taking Fang's hand. "We mustn't stop giving Old Chiang extra dressings."

"I've already explained to Hsiao Ma. He just won't be reasonable. Ever since you took charge of liaison work between patients and staff, Chun-mei, you have never co-operated with me properly. At every meeting you come up with 'the patients say this' and 'the patients say that'. You should take the side of the nurses and stop the patients from making unreasonable demands."

Chun-mei laughed outright. "At last you've come out with what you really think, sister. You've often urged me to consider the work of our ward as a whole. But your way of looking at things is different from mine. Now I realize that our stand-points are different too. It's our job to serve the patients, sister. Why must we take the side of the nurses? If the nurses insist on sticking to regulations which aren't in the patients' interest, then surely there's something wrong with those regulations."

Fang turned pale and flushed up by turns. Pulling her hand abruptly away she retorted, "I admit you know how to talk. But it's running the ward well, not talking, that really matters."

"You mean to say we should work away without caring about what line we're following?"

"Are you accusing me of ignoring the political line? Let me tell you something, Chun-mei. I criticized the revisionist line in medical and health work before you ever set foot in this hospital."

In her exasperation, Fang thought: Three years ago, you were still working on a farm in Chungming. Two years ago, you became a trainee here and attended my lectures. Now, although you still call me sister you've started lecturing me.

"Since the Cultural Revolution I've come to work early and stayed late," she continued. "I often work night shifts for other nurses. I do all that because I want to run our ward well. That is serving the workers, peasants and soldiers in practice. The head nurse has

a lot more to do than just listening to what 'the patients say'." She pulled out her key-ring and threw it on the table.

Chun-mei was not daunted. She fired back, "We can't work by sticking to regulations and relying on keys. We'll be on a wrong path if we don't serve the patients whole-heartedly."

Chun-mei's obstinacy infuriated Fang. She stormed to the Party office and blurted out, "I'm going for the military training this time, Old Wei."

Old Wei guessed from her face that she and Chun-mei had fallen out again. He suggested, "Talk it over with Chun-mei first."

"No need. The head nurse should set an example and be the first to take part in the training. Besides, I should have gone last time."

Her sharp retort confirmed Old Wei's suspicion. "Let's go and find her," he said, taking Fang's arm and leading the way back to the nurses' office.

"Fang wants to join in the military training, Chun-mei. What's your opinion?" Old Wei cried as soon as they entered the office.

Sitting with her back to the door, Chun-mei went on sorting out the medicine where Fang had left off. She had known from the direction in which Fang rushed off that she had gone to the Party secretary to lodge another complaint. But this hasty decision of Fang's was unexpected. Steadying herself, she said in all sincerity, "It is only normal that we disagree sometimes in our work, sister. When I answer you back it doesn't mean I don't respect you. I only want to be responsible to the patients. We must argue out our differences if there are any. You aren't one either to keep things bottled up."

"You mean I'm going because I'm in a huff? Ridiculous! Angry at my age with a slip of a girl like you? I'm going because you can handle the work now. A head nurse mustn't stay behind just because she's too busy." She spoke sharply, annoyed that Chun-mei had seen through her.

Her lips compressed, Chun-mei eyed the keys on the desk. Fang was trying to put pressure on her by shifting all the work onto her shoulders. This irresponsible attitude upset her. Fingering the

keys she tried to keep a grip on her feelings. "I'm a new hand, sister," she said. "If you up and leave like this, making me take over the ward, our work will suffer. Do think it over carefully."

Pleased to think that Chun-mei was scared by the prospect of her leaving, Fang told herself: This will teach her a good lesson. She'll learn how much work is involved in running a ward. She said more amiably, "I know how busy we are. That was why I didn't go last time. As a head nurse, I'm not afraid of work. It's only that you have too many newfangled ideas. If you realize that and co-operate with me better, I'm sure we can run our ward well."

It was clear to Chun-mei that this was a ruse to make her drop her new measures. She said gravely, "We raised suggestions not because we were unaware how much work there was. But however busy we are, the patients' welfare should come first with us."

Chun-mei's stubbornness made Fang see red. She determined to go just to teach the girl a lesson. She picked up the keys to explain the use of each, "This big key opens the store-room. This little one opens the medicine cabinet. This brass key...."

Old Wei looked on. Secretly he was pleased by Chun-mei's principled stand. He was also aware that Fang's determination to join in military training was a way of running away from contradictions and putting pressure on Chun-mei. How to solve the contradiction between these two obstinate women? After careful thought he decided to support Chun-mei openly while helping Fang to see her own mistake.

After telling Chun-mei about each key, Fang thrust the whole lot at her.

But Chun-mei didn't accept them. Did she have cold feet? No. Not she. She knew that, however capable she might be, she couldn't run the ward well on her own — she would have to rely on the Party and the masses. Fang's persistence in her mistake made her feel very bad. She looked up into Old Wei's eyes which were full of encouragement and support.

"Take them, Chun-mei," said Old Wei.

Warmth coursed through her body. Solemnly she took over the keys with both hands.



"Anything we can do for you, Comrade Fang?" Old Wei asked. Fang shook her head silently and left for her office.

Chun-mei tagged along, asking with concern, "Sure it won't be too strenuous for you, sister?"

"Of course not," snapped Fang. "I'm rushed off my feet all day long in the ward, yet nobody has ever shown any concern. Why should military training be too much for me now?"

Snatching up her handbag, she stalked out of the office without even saying goodbye.

"Comrade Fang!"

Fang stopped, hearing Old Wei's call, and turned slowly around.

Wei had a long talk with her. When the shift was over the nurses took off their white coats. And warm-hearted Chi Lung-ying poked her head in to remind them that it was time to go home. When she saw Old Wei talking earnestly and tracing with the pen in his hand on the desk as if to underline the points he was making, she quickly shut the door again.

3

After Fang left, all her work naturally devolved on Chun-mei.

One day she was giving a patient an intravenous injection. She had just fastened the rubber bandage and was about to wipe his arm with a swab dipped in alcohol, when she heard Old Tsao of the linen room call from the corridor: "Is sister here? Time to count the linen."

"Coming!" she cried. Having quickly finished giving the injection, she hurried out to count the linen without even stopping to put away her tray.

She had barely counted out half the linen when an urgent voice called from the office, "Chun-mei! Your telephone!"

"Coming, put it down," she called back, then went on counting, "Sixteen . . . seventeen . . . eighteen. . ."

Only after quite a few minutes did she go to pick up the receiver.

"Hello. Is that the nursing school? . . . All right, the trainees can start classes earlier. . . . No, there's no problem."

Since the instructor from the nursing school wanted the student-nurses to start their classes earlier than originally planned, Chun-mei would have less time to prepare them. Having rung off, she picked up a pen to make a note of this.

She had just put down the pen when a nurse came in with a sickness certificate. Chun-mei saw her to the door, urging her to have a good rest, then went back to her desk to revise the schedule of shifts since this nurse would be absent.

After this she went to help the other nurses. She had just given an intramuscular injection when one of the patients' representatives came to discuss some problems. In this way another couple of hours flew past.

Chun-mei did her very best to run the ward well, giving her whole heart to the work, her mind functioning with clockwork precision. While doing one job she was planning the next. She worked non-stop during the day and sat up late each night preparing lessons. When she felt tired she would gulp down some strong tea, but even so she found it hard to cope. Everybody came to her, expecting her to deal with all their problems. She sweated away, burned the candle at both ends, yet could not get through all the work.

Could she go on in this way? No, it wouldn't do! She thought: Of course, I still don't know the ropes which makes me extra busy, and this should improve in time. Still, there's a limit to any one person's energy. I shall never be able to run the whole ward well alone. She had a mental picture of Fang saying, "So now you know what it means to be a head nurse? There's no end to serving the patients, but there's a limit to what the nurses can do." Chun-mei stubbornly shook her head. "No! Serving the workers, peasants and soldiers must come first. And there must be a way to solve this difficulty." She thought it over during meals and when going to bed, in fact whenever she had a moment to spare, determined to find an answer to her problem.

One morning, she was half-way through a lesson for some trainees in the conference room when a telephone call from the administration office summoned her to a meeting of head nurses. What could she do? She was in a quandary.

"Go on to your meeting, Chun-mei. I'll take over for you," said middle-aged Shen Hsiao-chen half-jokingly. "We older nurses aren't much use at most things, but I can give this lesson for you at a pinch."

Chun-mei was delighted. "Splendid! I'm ever so grateful. You needn't be modest. You'll be a very good teacher."

"Off with you, then, to your meeting." Smiling, Shen took over her notes and pushed Chun-mei out.

On her way back from the meeting, Chun-mei recalled all the help she had received from her comrades in the ward. Their familiar faces appeared in turn before her. "Yes, the masses!" she murmured. Hadn't Old Wei told her, "Chun-mei, when you have problems, you must rely on the masses." She could now appreciate this advice. Yes, hadn't they reaped those fine harvests year after year at the farm by relying on the masses' strength? Her eyes brightened. She walked with quickened steps towards the ward.

A familiar voice made her halt. Turning, she saw her good friend Hsu Hui-chen. They had worked in the same squad at the farm and were now both nurses in the surgical ward.

"Chun-mei, to really reform our system of nursing, I don't think it's enough just to give the patients more dressings."

"Not enough?" Chun-mei was puzzled, but she realized from Hsu's smile that she must have some plan in mind. Though Hsu never talked much, she used her head. Chun-mei took her arm and shook her. "Out with it! What brain-wave have you had?"

Hsu cast her a glance and said, "Remember how work at our farm went like a house on fire when leadership and masses pulled together? But in our ward, everything's left to the head nurse; so she's simply rushed off her feet, while the rest of us aren't able to go all out. So I think that the key to improving our nursing is to scrap the old system of management. The masses must be mobilized, just as they were on our farm, to run the ward."

"You and I have hit on the same idea," Chun-mei cried. "Quick, let's go and find Old Wei." Grabbing Young Hsu by the arm, she ran to the Party office.

That afternoon, some dozen nurses gathered in the nurses' office. With the exception of Shen and another chuckling middle-aged nurse, all were girls who had come from the farm. Young Chi, sitting next to Chun-mei, tried to read the notes the latter was writing and asked, "What's this meeting about?"

"Don't be in such a hurry," Chun-mei told her.

When all the nurses had arrived she announced, "We're going to put our heads together and discuss how to give full play to the masses' initiative, so as to do our jobs better." She then proposed a division of labour and responsibility according to the aptitudes of each. That should speed up and improve the work in the ward.

A young nurse with big eyes called Li glanced from Hsu to a tall girl called Chien, then nodded and said, "Young Hsu likes to study and she's very patient. She also writes reports well. She'd make a good teacher for the trainees. Young Chien loves dancing; let her do the liaison work between patients and staff. . . ."

Chi chipped in, "Li can sing, Chien can dance, Hsu can write and speak well. I'm the only one without any special skill."

Chun-mei pointed her pen at her. "Who says you've no special skill? You're our Number One Madcap."

"Right you are. I agree!" Chi exclaimed. "So let me look after the linen. Those chores should help me overcome my impatience. The rest of you can give your initiative full play; I'll curb my special bent."

They all laughed at this. Then they agreed to a preliminary division of responsibilities. Young Li was to check on the quality of their nursing, while the rest were all assigned different duties according to their own requests or the recommendations of others. The two older nurses were chosen to be technical advisers.

4

The day came when Fang returned from her military training. She could have gone straight home, but instead some force seemed to propel her towards the ward. Although she had only left it a month ago, she felt as if she had been away a whole year. She kept wonder-

ing how things had gone during her absence. Before her departure Old Wei had talked with her, pointing out that running the ward involved the question of which line to take. Fang had admitted that she might be too impatient, but insisted that her motives were good: she just wanted to do a good job. She could not accept the criticism that she was not following the right line. As to which was right, she or Chun-mei, the facts would show. This was not a dispute to be settled by empty talk.

Soon after she reached the training camp she received a letter from Chun-mei, written just the way Chun-mei talked. The girl asked how many miles she had walked. Had she blistered her feet? She assured her that all the nurses were working hard. But how could Fang feel assured? Of course, it was possible that Chun-mei had been forced to bow to the facts and change her old way of thinking, possible that the work in the ward was going well. If so, very good. She had left in a huff, actually, just to make Chun-mei face up to reality.

But as soon as Fang set foot in the hospital, she found more cause for worry. All the people who greeted her eyed her rather strangely. Some said with a smile, "Well, sister, you'll find big changes in your ward." This startled her. What sort of "big changes"? This sounded ominous. She hastened her steps. Then she met other people who told her what some of these changes were: The keys had been shared out between the nurses, all of whom now had their part in running the ward. Fang's ears buzzed. She had a picture of utter chaos: linen lost with nobody checking on distribution, nurses running all day to elicit the patients' suggestions, sulky trainees sleeping in class, patients' families complaining to the administration. . . . She sighed with anxiety and regret, anxiety over the state of anarchy she felt certain the ward was in, and regret that she had gone away leaving youngsters to run the show and mess things up. She seemed to see Chun-mei's mischievous, mocking smile. In exasperation, she shifted her bedding-roll from her right arm to her left and stamped to the lift.

Stepping out of the lift, Fang bumped into Chi. With a cry the girl dashed towards the office, shouting, "Li! Chien! Hsu! Chun-mei! Sister's back!"

All the nurses came pouring out from various rooms. Chun-mei rushed towards Fang crying out with joy, as if meeting a long-lost sister.

"Well, she's still just a child. She doesn't seem at all worried," thought Fang as she greeted them with a forced smile.

Li stared at Fang wide-eyed and commented solemnly, "H'm, you're quite sunburnt, much darker."

Since everyone else was chattering at once, Hsu could not get a word in. So she went and poured a cup of tea for Fang.

Holding Fang's arm, Chun-mei urged her happily, "Sit down and rest a bit, sister. I'll come and report on the work just as soon as I've finished with the patients."

When all had gone back to their different jobs, Fang sat in the office sipping the tea Hsu had poured and thinking over her best plan of action. She had better size up the situation first, not blast off until she had found the right target.

"Time for fetching fresh linen!" Old Tsao's booming voice rang out in the corridor. At this familiar sound, Fang automatically put down her cup and started out. Then she remembered she had not resumed charge yet, so this was still Chun-mei's job. She sat down again. It then occurred to her: If Chun-mei's handed over the keys to the nurses, somebody else may be in charge of the linen. She decided to take a look. When she reached the corridor, Old Tsao had left. A young nurse was sweeping the floor. When Fang stepped closer, she found it was Madcap Chi.

"Are you in charge now of the linen?"

"Yes." Raising her head Chi went on dejectedly: "I'm in a fix. What shall I do, sister? I'd just got out a bundle of mats from the small store-room and put them outside the door, meaning to wash them before putting them away. But while I was seeing to the linen they disappeared."

"Have another look in the store-room," urged Fang anxiously. "You may have forgotten to get them out."

"No, I distinctly remember bringing them out. This is most extraordinary." With that Chi left.

In no time at all the nurses on duty had heard of the disappearance of these mats and they, too, joined in the search.

Fang shook her head disapprovingly. "What a mess!" She marched straight to Room 6 calling, "Chun-mei! I want you."

Hearing her voice, Chun-mei hastily put down her forceps and came out. "What is it, sister?"

"Give me the keys."

"Oh." Chun-mei put her hand in her pocket.

Fang was surprised.

"Here you are." Chun-mei handed over a gleaming key, the key for the big store-room.

Only one key! Fang snapped, "I want *all* the keys."

"Let me explain, sister."

But Fang cut her short. "This is really the limit! Before I left, you'd already upset our routine. Now you've gone and distributed all the keys. If this goes on, how am I to carry on as head nurse? I've never heard of such a thing! Go and collect those keys for me. Go on!" Fang rapped this out like an order.

"I can't take the keys back. You say you've never heard of such a thing. All right. There are plenty of things we never heard of before, including socialism and communism. Of course, before the Cultural Revolution we had all sorts of rules drawn up when our hospital was run on revisionist lines. Surely you don't want to stick to those old rules?"

This silenced Fang for a moment. Then she perked up. "I may not be able to squelch your arguments, but I go by the facts. If we carry on in this way, we can't run our ward properly."

"Not properly?" Chun-mei smiled. "Why, sister, just come and see how keenly our nurses are working."

"I've seen quite enough, thanks. The one in charge of the linen has lost the mats..."

Before Fang could enumerate more misdoings, Chi came running up calling, "Chun-mei!"

"Well? What's the excitement?" asked Chun-mei.

"She can't find the mats," snorted Fang.

Chi panted up to them saying, "No, we've found them. The patients in Beds 7 and 8 washed them, then took them up to the eighth-floor terrace to dry. We feel bad, letting them do our work for us."

Fang did not know what to say to this. Chun-mei, however, suggested with a smile, "You must be tired, sister. Go and have a rest in the office."

Fang nodded and was about to comply when someone called, "Sister! Come here!"

It was Hsiao Ma in Room 6, who had been listening to their conversation.

As Fang entered the room, he raised himself on one elbow, but she promptly made him lie down. Hsiao Ma showed her his leg and looked at her earnestly. "See, it's practically healed."

Fang was amazed to see that Ma's leg which had been festering a month ago was now covered with new skin. It seemed miraculous, for he had been hospitalized for nearly a year during which time his sore leg kept suppurating, forming new scabs. When these scabs were broken, the place would fester and bleed. Fang could not imagine how it had healed so fast.

"You know, sister," he explained, "when Chun-mei and the others changed my dressing they carefully removed the scabs with forceps, so that I felt ever so much more comfortable. That made the ointment more effective too. It'll soon be completely healed. There's only a small patch left between the toes."

Fang felt her cheeks burning. She was an old hand at nursing. Whenever they changed dressings, she could handle more patients than any of the others. She had dressed Hsiao Ma's leg for months. Each time she had simply loosened the bandage, smeared on the ointment, then bandaged his leg up again — and that was that. During the dressing Hsiao Ma had invariably asked, "Sister, couldn't that crust over the sore be peeled off? Wouldn't that make the ointment more effective and speed up the growth of new skin?" Each time, however, before he had finished talking she would have finished changing his dressing. Now...

"Did you think out this new treatment for Hsiao Ma?" Fang asked Chun-mei softly.

"No, it was Shen's idea. She's our technical adviser."

Fang nodded and gently pulled up Hsiao Ma's quilt.

"And another thing I forgot to tell you, sister," Hsiao Ma went on. "Ever since you left, Chun-mei and Young Chien have been

straightening out my thinking. . . . Sometimes I'm too pig-headed. Remember how I argued with you over my treatment? Chun-mei finally made me see things in the right light. I do apologize for the trouble I made."

Embarrassed and touched by this, Fang did not know how to reply.

After they left Room 6 they returned to the office, where they found Instructor Chang from the nursing school.

"So you're back, sister!" Chang greeted her cordially. "You're looking very well."

They chatted about things which had happened since Fang left, until Young Hsu came in, whereupon Chang said to Fang, "It's true that a good teacher trains fine pupils. Young Hsu here doesn't talk much, but the trainees all say she explains things very clearly."

Young Hsu blushed. "The credit should go to Chun-mei," she said. "She's the one who coaches me at night and checks all my lecture notes."

Chun-mei, washing her hands at the basin, whirled round to threaten Young Hsu with her wet hands. "If you talk like this again, I'll seal your lips with sticking-plaster!"

Chi who was standing by laughed and shook her head. "You mustn't do that. Hsu's already tongue-tied enough. To have her lips sealed would suit her fine."

All those in the office burst out laughing.

The telephone rang. Chun-mei, her hands still wet, picked up the receiver.

"Yes. . . . What? You want me to go to the meeting? But we're just going to start a show, how can I go? . . . All right, I'll look in for a few minutes." Chun-mei rang off, then told Chi, "I have to go to a meeting. I won't be long. Sister's just back, so she's our guest today. Mind you look after her well."

"I will," Chi answered cheerfully.

Chang remarked to Fang, "It's nice having all these young people here. Makes your place lively."

Fang smiled. "They're for ever up to mischief. Imagine taking me as a guest!"

Chi seemed to have guessed what was in Fang's mind. In her capacity as "hostess" she told her what difficulties Chun-mei had been confronted with, how she had saved the situation by bringing the initiative of all into play, and how this had improved their standard of nursing.

Fang nodded from time to time as she listened. She remembered her arguments with Chun-mei on the day she left and today. She also remembered what Old Wei had said. Could she really have been in the wrong?

Seeing the expression on Fang's face, Chi tried to cheer her up. She took Fang's arm and suggested, "Let me take you to see our wall-newspaper, sister. We've got three issues out."

Young Chien's cheerful voice broke in then, "Time for the show. Come on, everybody." Fang remembered then that it was two days before National Day, so they were putting on a show to celebrate.

Apart from those patients who could not leave their beds, everyone flocked to Room 1, the largest in the ward.

Fang was escorted there by the young nurses. At the door she met Old Chiang from Bed 32, who had been isolated because of his pseudomonas infection.

"What? Your infection cured?" she asked him in surprise.

"Yes. They've done a wonderful job, spared no effort either. I'll tell you about it later," he said. Fang nodded.

The room was filled with a festive atmosphere. The items were rich and varied. The young nurses performed a dance, with even Chi who never danced taking part. Then the patient from Bed 28 told a story he had just made up. This was followed by a male-voice chorus, and a Shantung clapper-ballad. The show was in full swing when Chun-mei returned from her meeting. At once cries went up:

"Give us a song, Chun-mei!"

"Let the deputy head nurse sing for us!"

"We want a solo by Chun-mei."

Chun-mei stepped forward and said calmly, "Stop that noise! Of course I'll sing now that I've come." She took a deep breath and, smiling, signalled to Hsu to accompany her on the accordion. As the music started she sang in a clear voice:

Braving the snow, red plum-blossom announces the coming of
spring;

On high mountains, the pine and cypress stay ever green. . . .

She sang with tremendous feeling, her eyes bright with pride.

As Fang watched her, recalling incidents from the past, her mind
was in a turmoil.

After the song ended, all clapped and begged for another. Fang
joined enthusiastically in the applause. Suddenly a shrill voice was
heard above the noise. It was Chi.

"I have a proposal," she said. "Our deputy head nurse has sung.
Now how about a song from our head nurse?"

They all approved and turned their eyes to Fang. Caught unpre-
pared, she stood up and hastily said, "I can't sing, I have no voice.
Better ask Chun-mei to sing another one."

"No, you must join in." Chun-mei pulled Fang out from the
crowd and called to the others, "Shen, you come too. And you,
Chi. . . . We'll sing together. Let the elder generation, the middle-
aged and the young join forces. How about it?"

The audience clapped with might and main as the four of them came
forward. After a quick discussion they decided to sing *Sailing the
Seas Depends on the Helmsman*.

Young Hsu struck up on her accordion. The other nurses and
patients clapped in time to the stirring beat. And with this song
the show reached a new climax.

Illustrated by Chen Yu-hsien

Preparing Together (traditional Chinese
painting) *by Wu Chi-chung*

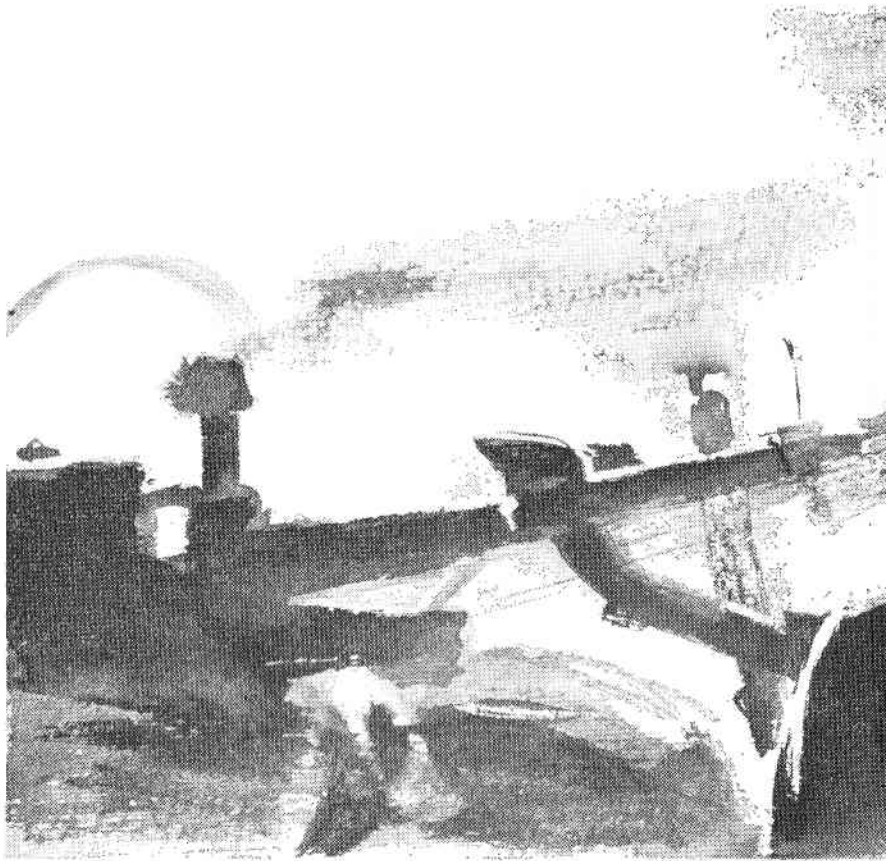


Teacher and Student

It was spring time. Dawn was just breaking. The first timid rays of the sun pierced the dark blue sky. The morning mist blurred the fields in the distance. But on either side of the path, I could see the dew-drops dotting the blades of the young wheat plants. I strode along in high spirits, for I was on my way to the commune tractor station to invite a veteran worker to give a talk on mini-tractors. Besides, Old Li, the head of our school, had told me some good news. The commune had decided to assign a worker-lecturer to our school. I was going to be able to depend on him in our efforts to implement the revolutionary line in education.

The tractor station seemed strangely quiet. Only one mini-tractor stood in the lot. I found the man on duty in the office and he told me that the master worker I was looking for had received a call from the commune office and gone out on emergency work. All the other drivers were out doing the spring ploughing.

What was I to do? I wandered about the parking lot thinking. It seemed the master worker wouldn't be back for quite a while. As I didn't want my mission to end in complete failure, I decided



to ask the worker on duty if I couldn't take the tractor to our school anyway.

"Can you drive?" He hesitated.

"I learned a bit when I worked with the peasants." I climbed onto the tractor, turned the flying wheel, and drove around in the parking lot.

"Well, all right, but be careful!" the man warned me.

Then I was rolling along the road. Though I had pretended to be sure of myself, I was now frankly on tenterhooks for I'd never driven a tractor alone before. For safety's sake, I put it into low gear and crawled along. Suddenly the motor began making a



strange sound. After a few seconds the tractor stopped short. I immediately jumped off and checked the parts, then I leaped back onto the tractor and tried to start the motor, but it didn't even turn over once. The sun was already high in the sky. Greatly worried, I wondered what to do.

Suddenly someone clapped me on the shoulder. "Have you got engine trouble, Teacher Pei?" Looking up, I saw a sturdy young man, with a boyish face, pleasantly smiling at me. He was wearing only a thin jacket, the collar wide open despite the chilly March breeze. Sweat beaded his forehead as if he'd been hurrying. Without a word, he took out a spanner and cutting pliers from the green

bag slung over his shoulder and started repairing the engine. And in less than the time it takes to smoke a cigarette, he had finished. "It's all right now! Please climb on. I'll take the wheel, Teacher Pei."

"You're...?" I scrutinized his face.

"I was a student of yours."

The bold forehead and steely eyes seemed somewhat familiar. All of a sudden it all came back to me: he was Ho Chih-chiang, the "trouble-maker", grown taller and stronger. The thought of an unpleasant incident that had occurred a few years ago made the blood rush to my face.

This son of a poor-peasant family had a hot temper and had sometimes been as stubborn as a mule in my class. He had dared to speak out and had backed up his words with action. He learned his lessons perfectly, but he often used to ask me odd questions. One day, some teachers were to come from other schools and observe my class as part of an exchange of teaching experience. I was so worried Ho might create trouble for me again that, just before the class started, I had a talk with him asking him to be especially cooperative that day. But in the middle of my lesson on "pumps, the different types and their characteristics", he suddenly jumped to his feet and asked, "What sort of pump does our brigade have, Teacher Pei?" I couldn't answer the question. Thinking he was deliberately trying to embarrass me, I shot back defensively, "Your question has nothing to do with today's lesson."

"Our lessons are divorced from the reality of production!" he retorted.

Divorced from practice? I was so annoyed by the incident that I didn't speak to him for a week. Afterwards our relationship went from bad to worse.

I hadn't dreamed that this young man who had so cheerfully and rapidly repaired the motor was Young Ho, the "trouble-maker". Seeing how mature and skilful he had become after several years' work, I felt confused and tried to sort out my thoughts.

"Young Master Wan, wait a minute!" someone called out, interrupting my thoughts. Who was Young Master Wan? Turning

round, I saw an old fellow from the brigade mill hurrying up to greet Young Ho. Braking immediately, Young Ho chuckled: "Uncle!"

Several young men came running out of the mill, shouting joyously: "Young Master Wan, you've come just at the right moment. We're installing a new grinding mill. Could you help us?" Even while speaking, they were already pulling Young Ho off the tractor and rushing him into the mill.

I was greatly puzzled by all this. Young Master Wan! How surprising they should call him that!

"Uncle, isn't his name Ho?"

"Oh, Young Master Wan's his nickname. I'll tell you how he got it," he replied beaming.

"Originally Young Ho was only a tractor driver. But he was never without his green bag, crammed full with his spanner, pliers, pincers, hammer and other tools. In his spare time, he would repair the machines, motors and electric lighting of the brigades he worked for. He helped whenever and wherever needed. After a while the villagers gave him that nickname, Young Master Fix-it (Wan-neng), meaning he could fix anything. And now people have almost forgotten his real name."

Just then, Young Ho emerged from the mill. The machine was already installed. The young men called out in chorus after him: "Don't forget to come tonight!"

"Of course I won't forget!" he promised smiling happily. Then he turned to me: "The brigade is giving a course on agricultural machines. I'm to teach this evening. You see, we want to train a group of technicians. That way we'll be able to do all the maintenance and repair work on the brigade machines ourselves. Even the most difficult repair jobs can be done within the commune."

Taking a notebook from his green bag, he handed it to me. "This is the teaching material we compiled for the course on electricity and mechanics. Please have a look at it and give us your comments and suggestions."

The tractor started off again. I opened the thick notebook and read the text, entirely absorbed in it. My admiration for this tireless young man was growing by leaps and bounds. Then I gazed at

the resolute expression on his face. Practical life and struggle had tempered the young generation. I felt so excited by my new understanding that I could hardly maintain a semblance of composure.

"Well, we've arrived." Young Ho shifted into low gear. At the cross-roads we caught sight of the red flags fluttering over our school building.

"Thanks a lot, Young Ho. I'll drive now. I don't want to take you out of your way."

He smiled. "But we're going the same way, Teacher Pei."

"You're going to our school too!" I was completely taken aback.

"Didn't you ask the tractor station to send a worker to your school?" he demanded, his eyes twinkling.

"What! You're the very master worker I went to invite?" What a coincidence! The man I had failed to find at the tractor station was sitting beside me. Overjoyed at this unexpected turn of events, I leaned towards him happily. "Drive on to our school compound, Young Ho. This time we've got a real tractor for our class."

But instead, Young Ho put on the brakes and, suddenly serious, said to me: "Doesn't our school have its own fields, Teacher Pei? Why continue to teach in the old way and use the tractor only as a model? We suffered enough from the revisionist line in the past. Students were locked up in the school compound and taught through mere talk and paper work. We had tests almost every day and many exams, but when we graduated we didn't know how to install an electric light. We must go outside the school compound and thoroughly break with the old line."

Of course Young Ho's idea was correct, but why hadn't I thought of that myself? I was still lagging behind because the old educational system was deeply rooted in my mind.

So I said heartily, "You're right, Young Ho. Drive directly to the field. This time we'll have our class there. I'll go and tell the students." I jumped down and taking a short cut ran towards the school.

In one breath, I dashed up the stairs to the classroom on the second floor. I pushed the door open. Not a soul in sight! Where

were they? I looked around in bewilderment. Then, I caught sight of a big-character poster hung up on the blackboard.

Teacher Pei,

We suggest that we hold our lesson on mini-tractors in the field, not in the classroom. We want to study through practical struggle, adhere to the principle of combining theory with practice, and wipe out the influence of the revisionist line in education. We mean to write a new page in the proletarian revolution on the educational front. Teacher Li agrees and has gone to the field with us.

You are welcome to join in and fight alongside with us, shoulder to shoulder.

Signed,

All the Red Guards from
Group One of the Second Year

What spirit! Our young vanguards were advancing rapidly. I hurried out to the field.

Shouts and laughter rang out from our paddy fields. Gleaming in the sunlight, the limpid water mirrored the smiling faces of the teachers and students, and the blue sky and white clouds above. Several students had rolled up their trouser legs and were standing bare-footed ready to wade into the field. Young Ho was busy explaining something about the tractor to the students crowding round.

"Come over here, Teacher Pei. Let me introduce you to..." Old Li indicated Young Ho.

"No need for that. We're old acquaintances," I replied, cutting him short.

"Perhaps, but you don't really know who he is," Li laughed. "Young Ho is the worker-lecturer assigned to our school."

"I was only notified this morning; that's why I was a little late," Young Ho said apologetically.

So Young Ho was both the master worker and the worker-lecturer chosen by the commune. I went up to him and tightly grasped his powerful hands. Words failed me.

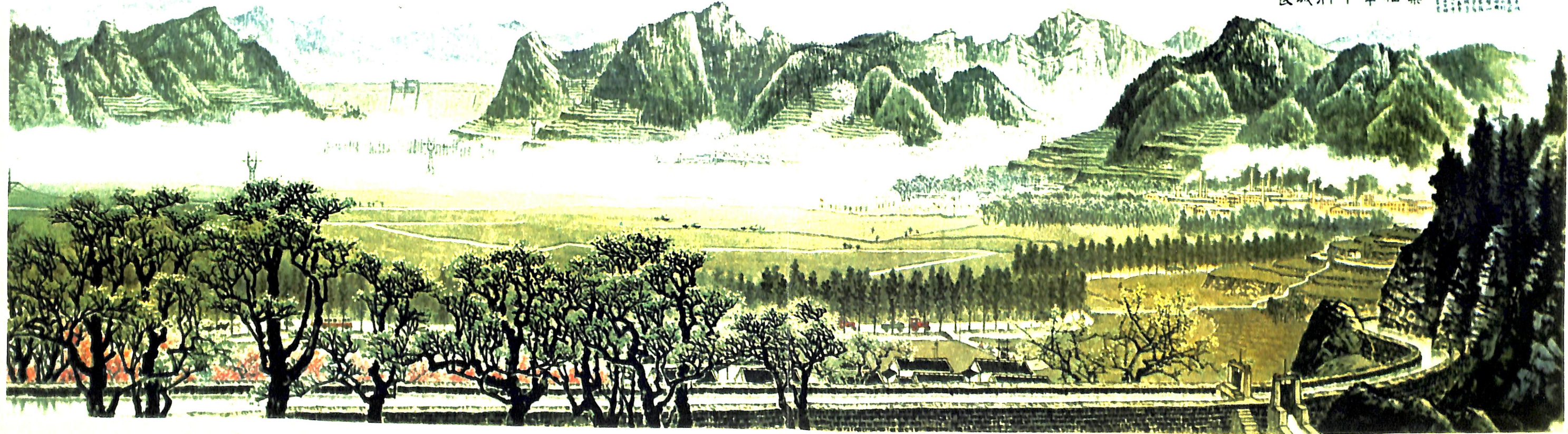
"You teach and I'll put in a word if necessary," Young Ho declared warmly.

"No," I protested. "You give this lesson. I need to learn from you. I'm your student now."

Illustrated by Chen Yi-fei

Channel of Happiness (traditional
Chinese painting)
by Pai Hsueh-shih and Hou Teh-chang

長城脚下幸福渠



Blazing New Trails

It was noon on a hot July day and the cicadas were making a nuisance of themselves, chirping shrilly in the poplar trees.

Near by, at the gate of the electroplating factory, stood a cart fully laden with pipes. Lu Hsia, head of the tubing section of the local synthetic fibre plant, and one of the young workers, Little Li, had pulled this cartload of pipes there to have them electroplated. But things hadn't turned out as well as expected; the factory was on a very tight schedule. Even though the man in charge made every effort to fit the job in, it was still going to take two and a half months. With one foot resting on the cart, Lu Hsia leaned forward and stared at the pipes. Sweat trickled down her forehead. Following the line of her graceful eyebrows, it streamed down her ruddy cheeks and dripped onto her overalls.

Little Li had come to understand her section leader's character quite well. She thought to herself: "Lu Hsia's always full of vigour both in grasping revolution and in promoting production. Every day our plant takes another step forward. Anyone seeing

this excellent situation would just itch to join in the struggle. But, we don't have enough stainless steel pipes to meet the needs of production, and to get our ordinary pipes electroplated will take two and a half months. That won't do at all." Little Li was greatly concerned for her section leader. What could she say to the plant leadership!

But this time Little Li didn't understand what was going on in Lu Hsia's mind. Reporting to the leadership was easy. She could just tell them about the problem and let them solve it. But Lu Hsia wasn't that kind of person. She couldn't rest until she'd found the solution. As she gazed at the pipes, she was racking her brains to find a way out. She wondered: Would it be all right to use glass tubes? No, that wouldn't work. The pipe system supplying the chlorine solution requires tubing of many different diameters and glass tubes are hard to connect. Someone had suggested using their plain carbon-steel pipes as they were, but wouldn't they rust? To produce fine quality fibre, the solution that passed through the pipes had to be absolutely free of rust particles. Racking her brains for a way to handle this problem, she was completely unaware of her sweat-drenched jacket. But even so, she failed to find a solution.

"Little Li!" she cried suddenly and put her hands on the cart shafts.

"Where to?" Little Li sprang to her feet.

"Back to the plant."

"What are we going to do?"

"Call a meeting and ask everyone for suggestion."

The moment they entered the plant with the load of pipes, Lu Hsia and Little Li were surrounded by a throng of workers. When they found out what had happened, there was a general shaking of heads and clucking of tongues in dismay. Some workers even hit their thighs with their clenched fists. They all knew what this set-back would mean.

Lu Hsia felt flushed and uncomfortable. The long face her elder brother Lu Chih-liang had pulled made the situation especially awkward for her. A vice-chairman of the plant's revolutionary committee, he was in charge of production.

"Why on earth did you bring them back?" he demanded reprovingly.

"It'll take two and a half months to complete the job," responded Lu Hsia. "Can we wait that long?"

Chih-liang frowned. "You can't have asked them properly."

What a thing to say! He was making it sound as if Lu Hsia had quarrelled with the comrades at the electroplating factory! And, as a matter of fact, that was what he was thinking. "With such a hot temper, she could make a mess of even the simplest task. Why didn't I send someone more diplomatic? What a pity! Now that they've refused once, it's going to be difficult to get them to change their decision."

Lu Hsia had immediately noticed her brother's displeasure. She would have retorted sharply if it hadn't been for the presence of so many people. And Old Kao, the secretary of the plant Party committee, had arrived too. She was also conscious of the fact that she hadn't yet accomplished her task. So she calmly explained: "Many plants want their products electroplated. The factory really does have difficulties and can't keep up with the demand."

"When they said two and a half months they were already doing us a great favour," Little Li chimed in.

No matter how earnestly they tried to explain the situation, the dissatisfied look did not leave Chih-liang's face. He looked hard at his sister. "This is a very important matter. . . . Well, what are you going to do now?"

"Ask everyone to think hard to find a solution. We'll blaze a new path by ourselves."

"A new path!" Surprised, Chih-liang drew a deep breath.

"Yes, blaze a new path like the Taching workers did in building the oilfield from scratch. Follow the example of Wang Chin-hsi, the Iron Man!" she responded resolutely. "Don't you remember what you said earlier this year at our meeting to launch the movement to learn from Taching? You told us we must learn from the Iron Man's spirit and speed up production. If we have the necessary conditions, so much the better. If we don't, then we must create them! Were these words of yours intended only for others?"

Chih-liang stood dumbfounded. But the workers' hearts swelled with admiration for her. What a courageous girl! Little Li proudly

nudged her comrades. Their section leader had once again lived up to her reputation — a brave Red Guard of the Cultural Revolution and now a fine new member of the Communist Party.

But Chih-liang was not overwhelmed by this volley of words. He himself had been a revolutionary rebel during the Cultural Revolution and now, as a young vice-chairman, he had a heavy load to shoulder. He had always put daring first, but kept calm at critical moments. Now he was eager to learn whether Lu Hsia had a solution to the problem in mind.

“Acting tough, aren’t you!” Then he changed his tone, looking curiously at his sister. “You know, to cross a river you need a boat, and to climb onto a roof you need a ladder. Well, what’s your idea?”

Lu Hsia was greatly dissatisfied with her brother, for his was not the correct attitude a leading comrade should have. So she retorted scornfully, “There’s no such thing as an ‘idea supply shop’. Ideas must come from you, from me, from each and every one of us. Hasn’t Chairman Mao taught us to unfold vigorous mass movements?”

All Chih-liang felt was disappointment. “So she hasn’t anything to suggest after all! She just thinks things are easy because she’s still young and inexperienced. Well, we must send someone to the electroplating factory to persuade them to do the job within a month and a half. That way we’ll still have a chance of doubling our output by the end of the year.”

The Party secretary Old Kao was still standing at the edge of the crowd. Lu Hsia’s words had warmed his heart. As long as there are workers like her, he thought, we will surmount all obstacles.

“Comrade Chih-liang.” Old Kao stepped forward. “Lu Hsia’s right to point out that we have Chairman Mao’s revolutionary line to guide us and the Taching workers as an example to follow. By boldly mobilizing the masses, we can definitely overcome every difficulty.”

Seeing the dubious look on Chih-liang’s face, Old Kao suggested that they immediately hold a Party committee meeting to discuss the matter. The two were heading for the Party committee office, when they suddenly heard a clear voice ring out from behind: “Let’s have a meeting of the whole tubing section!” Turning round, they saw Lu Hsia leading her work team to their shop.

For the next few days, Lu Hsia stayed late at the plant every night and only went home after midnight. Then one morning she got up before daybreak and rushed off to the plant, just taking the time to grab some steamed buns on her way out.

At that first meeting in their workshop, they had considered all the possible ways to solve the pipe problem. Someone had suggested that they simply use plain carbon steel as tubing; and an old worker had added that, from his experience, the chlorine solution didn’t seem to corrode their type of steel tubes. But of course he didn’t know for sure. Since no one could say whether it would corrode the pipes or not, they had decided to conduct an experiment.

After that meeting Lu Hsia and her comrades prepared several chlorine solutions of varying strength. Then they immersed a piece of plain carbon steel in each. For three days, they kept the solutions at a high temperature by heating them continuously, day and night. It was on the fourth day that Lu Hsia hurried to the plant at daybreak. She drew out the burning hot pieces of steel from the containers on the heaters. Not a single speck of rust on the glistening surfaces! She immediately left to consult Master Yang, a retired worker, who had been the former head of the tubing section.

When she arrived at Master Yang’s house, she found Old Kao there. No doubt Master Yang knew all about the problem already. Without a word, Lu Hsia showed them the pieces of steel. The old man put his glasses on and examined them for a long time. Gripping a piece of steel in his hand, he told Old Kao and the girl about an incident concerning just this kind of steel pipe.

It had occurred when the plant was being built. They were installing the system of pipes for feeding the final solution into the spinnerettes. A comrade from the warehouse made the mistake of issuing some plain carbon-steel pipes as stainless steel ones and the workers used them. It was only after a week of trial production that the mistake was discovered. When Master Yang disconnected those pipes, he examined their inner surfaces: they all shone brightly. There was not even a trace of rust. When he inquired at the laboratory, the workers assured him that the fibre produced in the first week was up to standard. Overjoyed, he went to see the foreign



“expert” then working at the plant. He proposed using the homemade carbon-steel pipes instead of the imported stainless steel ones. He waited for a long time, but the only answer he got in the end was a scornful snort and a shrug of the shoulders. The veteran worker stamped angrily out of the room.

Lu Hsia gripped the old man’s big hands. Her voice trembled with emotion. “So you proposed this innovation long ago, Master Yang!”

“Yes, but it was no use then,” Master Yang sighed. “Liu Shao-chi and his kind advocated the philosophy of servility to things foreign and kept the masses from making revolution. If it hadn’t been for the Cultural Revolution and the movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius, our plant couldn’t have achieved the excellent situation of today.”

His eyes on the girl, the retired worker went on in high spirits, “We now have Chairman Mao’s revolutionary line to guide us. Press forward boldly, Young Lu.”

“Do you mean it’s feasible?” Lu Hsia fixed her bright eyes expectantly on Master Yang.

“Go on with your experiments,” Old Kao told her. “At the same time, we’ll invite some veteran workers and technicians to discuss this matter thoroughly with us.”

“You’re quite right,” said Yang, getting to his feet. “I’ll join you, too.”

On their way back to the plant, Master Yang told Lu Hsia to consult her brother. Lu Hsia knew that Master Yang had a high opinion of Chih-liang because he had always worked hard and was familiar with the work in different sections of the plant. Old Kao also advised her to have a good long talk with her brother so that he would pitch into the experiment with her. In fact, Lu Hsia herself had been hoping to have a heart-to-heart talk with her brother for a long time. She sincerely wanted to help him by pointing out that he had become more and more subjective recently. In every workshop of the plant there were criticisms of his working style. Even their father and Chih-liang’s wife, both workers in other factories, felt the same way.

As soon as she returned, Lu Hsia searched the whole plant twice, but failed to find her brother. He had always used to be in one work-

shop or another, but recently he had been going out personally on "diplomatic missions". It was evening when she spotted him at last, sitting alone in the library thumbing through some technical journals.

"Brother Chih-liang!" she cried out as she entered the room. He looked thinner and from his expression she guessed that his "diplomatic mission" had failed.

"Your proposal won't work," he declared bluntly, pointing at the technical journals. "No experiment of using carbon steel for stainless steel is recorded. Neither in China nor abroad."

His sister stared at him. "Can't we blaze a trail then?"

"Easier said than done," he retorted. Then he looked at her intently. "Let me ask you: will the heated chlorine solution which will remain for quite some time in the carbon-steel pipes corrode them or not?"

"We can have a try, can't we?"

"Can we afford to wait three months till you try out the result? That's longer than it'll take to do the electroplating! How can we fill our production quota under those conditions?"

Smiling, the girl handed him the pieces of steel they had tested.

"Aren't you smart!" His eyes brightened and his face lit up in a smile. "Not a speck on it, that's true!"

Seizing the opportunity, she immediately related what Master Yang had told her. Chih-liang chewed on a pencil, absorbed in thought.

"How wonderful it would be if that were the case. But . . . are you sure?" He raised his eyes to meet his sister's. He seemed to be asking himself the question. After a few moments' silence, he turned to his sister and said seriously: "I'm glad you're full of go, sister. But we must assume a serious scientific attitude towards such an important experiment. A *serious scientific* approach, you know!" His voice rang with the irrefutable authority of a leader and elder brother.

He was not at all prepared for her reaction. Taking a step backward, she retorted: "Scientific attitude? You're always talking about it, but you don't dare put it into practice. And what's worse, you don't have the guts to allow others to carry on experiments.

Is this science of yours going to fall from the sky? You don't mobilize the masses. You don't go to the workshop to hear their opinions. Is that a serious attitude?"

Exasperated, Chih-liang lifted his arms. "What can I do? You've got to understand that. . . . Well, we've got different jobs in the factory. This is an important matter and I'm the one who'll be held responsible by both the plant's revolutionary committee and the Party committee."

"You seem to think you're the only one who has a sense of responsibility and that all the others want to shirk theirs. Chih-liang! There are almost one thousand workers in our plant; each and every one of them is working hard at his revolutionary post, responsible to the Party, the people and Chairman Mao!"

Chih-liang was astonished. Never before had he seen this impassioned look on his sister's face. So he changed his tactics. "You've only recently been made the head of the tubing section. You must learn to use safe and tested methods to deal with problems."

"Oh yes, it's quite safe to spend your time just sitting around and belching after meals! I'll leave that kind of 'action' to you." Lu Hsia stamped her foot in anger and rushed out of the room.

The two failed to reach an understanding. Chih-liang was thinking: Sister has had it easy. She became a Party member when she was only twenty. Then, she quickly became the head of the tubing section. She's high in the sky before her wings are quite strong enough. Recently, she's been acting as if she could do anything and everything. That makes her more rash and unsteady. I'll have to have a long talk with her some day to help her see things clearly.

After storming out of the room, Lu Hsia started thinking too. It was more than a question of subjective thinking in her brother's case. How best could she explain his problem to him?

"The very day I became a Party member, you told me at our family meeting: 'Joining the Party is a new starting point in continuing the revolution. Learn from father and temper yourself in the storm of the three revolutionary movements of class struggle, the struggle for production and scientific experiment. You must march for ever forward!' But how are you acting now, brother? The workers

have placed you in a leading post, and you only take care of the routine work under your nose and think about safety above all. You're trying to find a port to shelter yourself from storm and stress, for instead of charging ahead you've cast anchor in your thinking!" Clenching her fist, she vowed: "Just wait and see! I'll talk this over with Old Kao and father. We'll bring you back to your senses!"

The discussion meeting was soon going to begin in the Party committee office. Master Yang was the first to arrive. Recently he had been coming to the plant every day to join Lu Hsia and Little Li in carrying out the experiments. One after the other, the veteran workers and technicians from each shop had arrived. All were present except the two important figures — Lu Hsia and Chih-liang. After waiting in vain for a quarter of an hour, Old Kao asked Master Yang to tell his story. Next, Little Li reported on the result of their experiments. They were all busy examining the steel pieces that had been tested for seven successive days and nights when Lu Hsia came running in. Highly excited, she whispered something in Old Kao's ear.

Old Kao laughed and announced, "Comrades, let's change our meeting place to the workshop."

Once inside the shop, Lu Hsia led them to a big crucible under repair, a container used for dissolving the substances to make the final solution. She crept into it and pointed to a small patch on the inner surface where the stainless steel coating had dropped off. To everyone's surprise, that patch of plain carbon steel was not in the least corroded. The workers all began excitedly discussing this new development.

"Well, it certainly does seem that our plain carbon-steel pipes can be used without risk."

"That 'expert' didn't know what he was talking about!"

"Lu Hsia sure does know a thing or two."

Master Liu of the pump room suddenly clapped his hand to his head as if he'd just had a "brain-storm". He drew Master Yang aside and then they both left. The others were sure that these two veteran workers had something up their sleeves. Just then, Chih-liang came running in, drenched in sweat.

"I've got good news! There's still hope!" Gleeful and excited, he told them in one breath, "Today I returned to the electroplating factory and begged them to try to speed up the work. They showed revolutionary co-operation by promising to do our processing in six weeks. I've done some calculation. If we put on a spurt, I think we'll be able to practically double our output by the end of the year."

"You've come just at the right time!" Giving him a towel, Old Kao told him about Lu Hsia's latest discovery.

After he'd examined the patch carefully and pondered for a while, Chih-liang demanded, "When did the stainless steel coating flake off? What if it only happened recently?"

"Good question!" Some of the workers admired the vice-chairman's caution. "There's no way of knowing for sure."

"I know for sure," a repair worker spoke up. "It happened at least a year ago. I noticed it when the crucible was under repair last year."

That satisfied everyone except Chih-liang. "We must take all precautions. This small patch can't be relied upon as solid evidence. Better have the pipes electroplated, I say. It'll be safer."

The workers all began giving their opinions: some supported electroplating and others, the innovation. After much discussion they were still in a deadlock. Then Old Kao asked for silence, "Lu Hsia has explained her idea to me. Let her tell us all about it now, all right?"

Lu Hsia threw her head back and stood erect. "All right, *I will*. Comrades, we mustn't limit ourselves to what's under our noses and hobble along like women with bound feet. We mustn't only think of our own plant, but of the interests of our motherland as a whole. A lot of small synthetic fibre plants are being constructed all over the country. If we can discover a way of using carbon-steel pipes instead of the stainless steel ones, it would not only spur on our plant's production, but we would thereby be making a useful contribution to the socialist construction of our country and in support of world revolution! That's the important thing!"

"That's the spirit, Young Lu!" Master Yang exclaimed approvingly. He and Master Liu had just returned from the pump room.

"Well spoken!" Old Kao was well pleased with her thinking. "What Lu Hsia has just said can be summed up in one sentence: We must keep both the interests of the country and those of the world at heart. So long as we look at things this way, we'll stand higher and see further. Every step we take will link China's revolution with world revolution. Don't you think so, Comrade Chih-liang?"

Chih-liang hastily nodded, very embarrassed.

Master Yang then announced, "Master Liu has something to say," and pushed him forward.

"I'd like to show you this." Master Liu held a cog-wheel high in the air for all to see. "As everyone knows, the solution in the crucible is pumped into the system of pipes before it goes into the spinnerettes. This cog-wheel comes from one of the pumps. It's made of carbon steel and has been in use for several years. Just look! Can you see a speck of rust on it?"

Chih-liang took the brightly shining cog-wheel. Not a trace of rust. Everyone nodded in agreement: What further argument could now be brought forth against the innovation? This gleaming cog-wheel proved beyond the shadow of a doubt that plain carbon-steel pipes could be used.

Chih-liang sat nodding his head for a while, thinking it all over. Suddenly he shook his head. "But the carbon-steel pipes must be polished beforehand. We haven't the necessary equipment."

"You've only thought of that now!" Lu Hsia laughed gaily. "Official report to Comrade Vice-chairman: our section has produced a home-made grinding machine! We'll see to it that all the pipes are polished within two days."

There was nothing left for him to say. Old Kao and all the others were looking at Chih-liang attentively. Smiling sheepishly, he began to mop the sweat from his brow with his towel.

Thus it was that a new movement for grasping revolution and promoting production had started in the synthetic fibre plant.

Then came the big day. Flags of all colours fluttered over the plant. Drums and gongs sounded everywhere. The workers and staff were glowing all over with revolutionary pride and joy, for they had fulfilled that year's task three months ahead of schedule. Visitors

had come from various fraternal plants including the electroplating factory, and newspaper reporters were there too.

The vice-chairman Lu Chih-liang gave the introductory talk, since Old Kao had gone to a meeting of the municipal Party committee. Beaming with delight, Chih-liang explained how they had learned from the spirit of Taching and used plain carbon-steel pipes instead of stainless steel ones. After that, he led the visitors on a tour of inspection, showing them the system of pipes and the high quality snow-white synthetic fibre produced. He told them that the innovation had enabled the plant to put two more spinning machines into operation.

A reporter asked to meet the pathfinders of the tubing section, but Lu Hsia and Little Li had completely disappeared. No one knew where they were except Master Yang. The two had hidden in a small shed near by where they were conducting an experiment to determine whether or not the solutions used to make other types of synthetic fibres would corrode carbon steel.

After his shift was over, Chih-liang was on his way out, gaily pushing his bicycle along. He met his sister at the gate and they rode side by side.

"Where were you and Little Li today? We looked everywhere for you."

She glanced at her brother. He was still in a state of elation, buoyed up by the joy and success of the day. She replied, "I went to the clinic; I felt a little dizzy."

"Dizzy? But you felt all right this morning, didn't you?"

"My head whirls when I hear the beating of drums and gongs and the sound of congratulations and applause."

"Oh. . . ." Chih-liang, taken aback, began scratching his head in embarrassment. His sister's words had brought him back to reality. It's too late to repent now, he thought. I talked a lot about our experience, but it's true I completely forgot to mention our shortcomings and ask for comments and criticisms from brother plants. Old Kao had told me again and again that I should rely on the masses and modestly learn from them. But today. . . . Those pipes aren't rusty, but my mind is!

"You've given me a very important reminder and, in the future, I'll keep it in mind." Then he went on, "You've rendered meritorious services to the plant by enabling us to increase our output of fine quality products."

Lu Hsia flashed a severe glance at him. "Everyone says you're intelligent and capable, but you're wrong again! If it hadn't been for Master Yang, Master Liu, Old Kao and the combined efforts of our section and the support from the masses throughout the plant, could the experiment have succeeded? The people worked out the method and all the credit should go to the masses, the Party and Chairman Mao's mass line!"

Chih-liang nodded admiringly. What great progress she'd made in her thinking!

"Oh, I almost forgot to tell you. Father will be coming home this evening to preside over our family meeting. He wants you to prepare yourself well, so you'll benefit from it as much as possible. Old Kao will be there too."

Chih-liang's heart sank immediately and his delight and complacency vanished. He was beginning to become aware of the serious turn things were taking: his sister had formed a united front to settle the problem once and for all. It was going to be hard going for him in this coming test.

"You might give me some help first, sister," he pleaded sincerely. "One of my troubles is subjectiveness. . . ."

"You mustn't try to get out of it without probing deep down!" the girl cut in. "You must make a searching self-criticism and get to the root of your problem."

"To tell you the truth, now that I'm a cadre and my relationship with the workers has changed, I . . . I no longer know how to deal with things correctly."

"You've forgotten about continuing the revolution," Lu Hsia threw a glance sideways at him. "Brother, there're some 'whys' you must think over carefully. Why were you fearless when you were rebelling against a handful of capitalist roaders, but are now afraid to take even the smallest step? Why is it that the workers used to call you Chih-liang, but now you like them to call you Vice-chairman

Lu? And why were you so keen in studying Marxism-Leninism and Chairman Mao's works before, whereas recently you've been slacking off in your study?"

Chih-liang knitted his brows and hung his head, at a loss for words. These questions, like mirrors, had helped him to discover the dust deep in his mind. He felt his blood racing through his veins as he glanced in admiration at Lu Hsia. What a good worker! She's speeding along the revolutionary road; but as for myself, I've lagged far behind!

He turned those questions over and over in his mind. When he finally raised his head, he saw that his sister was riding some distance ahead.

"Why are you lagging behind like that, brother? You must catch up!" The tinkling bell accompanied the girl's ringing laughter.

Seeing his sister speeding forward, Chih-liang pulled himself together and rode vigorously forward towards the red-tinged clouds of the sunset.

Illustrated by Wang Wei-hsin

The Study Group Leader

The sun was setting when Double Lock, the production team leader, returned from a meeting held in the commune office. On arriving home, he immediately called the villagers together to announce the commune Party committee's decision. He told his team members, "Although our busy season has set in, we mustn't neglect our movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius. The leadership suggests we organize every ten households into a study group. We'll have two or three evening meetings per week. I think the idea is quite good, and should be carried out. That's all."

Grandad Ming-shan, an old man in his seventies, tapped his pipe against the bench and spoke up, "Your meeting lasted half a day. Why have you told us so little about it? You ought to have explained the movement's significance to us."

"Yes," seconded Little Tiger, a young middle-school graduate. "That's too casual a way to announce such an important decision."

Before Liberation Ming-shan had herded Scorpion Ho's sheep for many years. Now he was a commune member, who, having no family of his own, was well provided for by the brigade collective.

On arriving in Hochia Village, Little Tiger had asked to live in Grandad Ming-shan's house. The two of them saw eye to eye on everything.

"What needs to be explained further?" retorted Double Lock impatiently. "All we have to do is divide into groups and let each choose its own leader."

As Double Lock was in the third group, Man-tsang suggested, "Let's ask our team leader to head our group. How about it, Double Lock?"

"No, I haven't the time." Double Lock brushed this aside. "My job is production. On top of that I've sidelines and other things to see to. Besides, all that Confucian twaddle is over my head."

"I wouldn't agree to you being study leader even if you wanted to," Double Lock's wife put in. "All you think of is production. In my opinion, we should appoint Aunt Ho. She's a member of both the brigade Party branch and our team committee."

Her speech touched off an animated discussion.

"Yes, Aunt Ho is always busy reading newspapers and listening to the radio," said one. "She studies Marxism-Leninism and Chairman Mao's works very hard and takes an active part in criticizing Lin Piao and Confucius. She's the best person to head our study group."

"I agree. Her sharp eyes pick out what's wrong and she isn't afraid to speak her mind. She'll make a good group leader."

A vigorous woman in her fifties stood up. Forehead wrinkled, lips compressed gravely, she looked as if she had a good head on her shoulders. This was the woman they all wanted to elect.

Glancing round, she said firmly, "I haven't studied too well or had much schooling, so I can't recite much of that gibberish Confucius ranted. But if it comes to debunking his crazy notions, which one of us poor and lower-middle peasants isn't an expert?" Her audience nodded in agreement. "Lin Piao and Confucius are like two rotten melons from the same vine. Scorpion and centipede, they're both pure poison. If we don't lump them together, we can't criticize them thoroughly. And if we don't criticize them thoroughly, we can't get our village's work going with a swing. This is so

important that I can't be too modest. I'd offer to do the job even if you didn't ask me!"

The rest of the group applauded.

"We've a lot to do tomorrow. Let's break up the meeting now," said Double Lock, supposing they'd finished.

"Just a minute, please," Aunt Ho cut in. "I've something else to say."

"Oh, so you're giving commands even before our study begins!"

Smiling, Aunt Ho said, "As you know, we can't do without rules. Suppose people cut meetings later on, one to mill his flour, one to clean up his pigsty — what then?"

"We can solve that problem easily," Double Lock answered. "We'll make it a rule that no one can be absent without your permission."

"Do you all agree?" she asked the rest. As the answer was affirmative, she went on, "We must keep the rules made by our group. If anyone breaks them, no matter who, look out! Well, our first meeting will be tomorrow evening. Come to my house after supper."

With this she turned once again to Double Lock and Man-tsang. "Let me remind you, there'll be no exceptions, not even in your case." With those words the meeting ended.

Why had Aunt Ho singled out those two for a special warning? It was because someone had told her of Man-tsang's doings at the fair in town that morning.

Man-tsang, first thing that morning, had trundled his wheel-barrow along to town, weaving in and out among the traffic in the busy street. Feeling the warmth of the March sunshine, he stopped to undo his padded jacket and mop the sweat from his brow with a towel. Before Liberation he had been a well-to-do middle peasant. He toiled in his fields until his back was bent and, by tightening his belt and contriving means to make money on the side, he at last managed to build himself a house in Hochia Village. When the land-reform movement began, only the porch remained uncompleted.

Now, at fifty, he had not only provided his two elder sons with three rooms each, but had also stored up a thousand tiles for his youngest son. He liked to say, "Many a little makes a mickle." He

was on his way today to buy thirty rafters. Suddenly Man-tsang heard someone calling him. Turning, he saw Ho Chin-chuan, the landlord, a vicious character who went by the name of Scorpion Ho. Dressed in a tattered padded jacket, he had a dung-crate on his back, a package in his hand and, under his arm, a dung-fork with sharp, bright prongs.

"Well, well, well. The bigger the crowd the harder you pretend to be poor, eh?" Man-tsang taunted him.

Under his bushy grey eyebrows, Scorpion Ho's beady eyes flashed maliciously. But instead of answering he asked, "Are you going to the fair?"

"I want to buy some rafters."

"To build another house?"

"I can't afford to at present. I'm hard up, see?"

"You would have finished it long ago if things were still the way they were before."

These words went straight to Man-tsang's heart.

Before the Cultural Revolution, Man-tsang had hired himself out as a mason very often and earned good money. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, however, prevented selfish people like him from feathering their own nests, so he brought home less. On the other hand, the collective property had increased and the commune members' income had soared. But Man-tsang was not satisfied.

"And yet it's still quite easy to make money." As Man-tsang didn't reply, Scorpion Ho went on, "I heard that the county brick plant is going to hire masons to build houses. A skilled worker gets 3.2 yuan per day; an unskilled one, 2.8 yuan. Why don't you talk it over with our team leader?"

Man-tsang's eyes widened, but quickly narrowed again. "Why not talk to him yourself?"

"Ah! Even when my intentions are the best, they're suspicious. I'm putting you on to a good thing that's all. How can you make any money if you stay in the village day in and day out criticizing Lin Piao and Confucius?" He glanced around and started. Quickly slinging his crate onto his back, he said, "We'll talk about it later."

A broad-shouldered, vigorous middle-aged man was making his way towards them through the crowd. It was Double Lock. He stopped the landlord and asked, "Why are you sneaking away? Didn't you ask for leave to come and buy medicine?"

"Yes, here it is." Scorpion Ho hastily showed Double Lock his package. "I happened to meet Man-tsang here and exchanged a few words with him. I'm going back now."

"If I catch you slacking, you'll pay for it," Double Lock warned him.

Scorpion Ho nodded repeatedly like a hen pecking grain, then left.

"What were you talking about just now? You seemed to be chatting like old friends," the team leader asked Man-tsang.

"Oh, nothing in particular. He asked me what I wanted to buy. I just told him I'm going to buy some rafters."

"Mind you don't let him sting you with that poisonous tail of his."

Noticing how spruce Double Lock looked, Man-tsang asked, "On your way to the fair?"

"I'm busy with production from morning till night. What time have I to go to the fair?" replied Double Lock. "The commune's going to have a meeting about the movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius. Since our political team leader is away, the brigade has sent me instead."

As Double Lock was fishing a cigarette out of his pocket, Man-tsang quickly struck a match. He seized this chance to say, "We've dug wells all winter long, but made little money. If we go on like this, there'll be very little cash for our members at the end of the year and they won't be pleased with you."

"Digging wells is also in their interest, isn't it?"

"Yes. But wouldn't it be even better to dig wells and earn money at the same time?"

Double Lock, outspoken himself, was losing patience. "Don't beat about the bush, come straight to the point."

Man-tsang smiled. "The county brick plant needs masons to build houses. Why not let some of our people go there? It's a sort of sideline, too."

Double Lock thought for a moment and then said, "If only a few people go, it shouldn't matter. All right, I'll see about it after the meeting. Tomorrow evening after supper a few of us can meet to discuss it." With this, he went on.

So now there would be two meetings: one to discuss sending some team members out to earn ready money, another to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius. Not only did the time of the meetings clash, their agendas were in contradiction too. No wonder Aunt Ho had thought it necessary to issue these two men a special warning.

2

After supper the next evening Aunt Ho took her papier-mâché megaphone down from the wall and said to her daughter, "Orchid, we're going to hold a meeting, so wash up, quick. Then sweep the floor and boil some water. I'm going out to call people."

Stepping out of the courtyard, she climbed a bank by the roadside and turned towards the ten households in the eastern part of the village. Holding the megaphone to her lips, she shouted: "Hey! Attention, Third Group! We're having a meeting this evening. After supper, do your washing up quickly and come to my house. Women and men too."

Suddenly Double Lock appeared, his coat draped over his shoulders. He approached the bank, calling out: "Old sister, Man-tsang and I won't be coming this evening."

Aunt Ho gave him a withering look. "What makes you think you're an exception to the rule?"

"I've called a meeting too. Just for a few people. Man-tsang's one of them."

"What kind of meeting? An emergency one, eh?"

"We've made a contract with the county brick plant to send eight of our men to build houses. They'll set out tomorrow taking along a cart, so I'm calling them together tonight."

That sounded fishy, thought Aunt Ho. It was the busy season, yet instead of working in the fields they were taking on jobs outside. Besides, the plant should have hired building workers. Why take

labour from the brigade? This kind of thing had been severely criticized during the Cultural Revolution.

"Why didn't you call a meeting so that we could all discuss it beforehand? Why didn't you even tell the team committee?"

"Pooh! Dispatching a few people is a small thing. It's something I, as team leader, can decide."

"It isn't a small thing," Aunt Ho retorted. "You must take it up first with the team committee." Double Lock opened his mouth to argue back, but she raised her hand to stop him. "Our study group has a rule — I won't give you my permission to cut tonight's meeting."

Double Lock stood gaping at her for a moment. Scratching his head, he realized he had no choice but to go and tell Man-tsang to attend the study meeting.

Aunt Ho gazed after him, thinking: With a team leader who doesn't take political movements to heart, how can we boost production?

Meanwhile Man-tsang was squatting in his courtyard. Before him were spread out a trowel, a putty-knife, a shovel and other masonry tools unused for several years.

"Gracious me! How did they get so rusty?" While polishing them he murmured with a grin, "You've had a good rest all this time!"

The previous day Double Lock had told him he was to go to the brick plant. Although ninety per cent of his pay would go to the team, he would receive not only the remaining ten per cent, but also a forty-*fen* food subsidy and ten work-points per day. He calculated that though this was less than he'd earned as a mason before, he could still make more than if he worked for the team. If only such a chance would come more often! So he had gladly accepted the assignment.

Gleefully addressing his shining tools, he exulted, "You stand a good chance of being busy again."

Suddenly the gate slammed. Double Lock hurried in and announced curtly, "We have to put off our meeting. Go to political study."

"But you said we were to go to the county town tomorrow. Instead of getting us organized now, what's this about attending the study meeting?"

"Our study group leader says the matter must first be discussed by the team committee." He turned and stalked out of the yard.

Man-tsang rushed to the gate, calling, "I don't understand. Who has the final say, the production team leader or the study group leader?"

"Don't ask any more questions," Double Lock snapped. "You're told to attend the meeting. That's all!"

Not liking the turn things had taken, Man-tsang decided to cut the study meeting anyway. Meaning to stay clear of trouble, he picked up his shoulder-pole and buckets and started out. But on his way, he ran into Aunt Ho.

"Where're you going?" she demanded.

"To water my own plot, in my free time..."

"Didn't you hear me calling?" she asked, stopping him.

"No, I didn't," replied Man-tsang. "All right, I'm coming now!" He hurriedly trotted home, his empty buckets clanging as they swung back and forth.

3

On her return, Aunt Ho found her room full of people, the women on the *kang*, the men squatting near it or sitting on benches. Her daughter was handing round bowls of boiled water, and the whole place was ringing with talk and laughter.

She stepped to the centre of the room and cried, "What a racket you make the minute you get together. I now formally declare our study group meeting open. Today we'll concentrate on criticizing 'self-restraint and a return to the rites'."

Double Lock sat near the wall on a seat made from a tree stump. He had begun to feel at ease since Aunt Ho hadn't mentioned the contract with the brick plant.

His wife, sitting on the *kang* nursing her baby, suggested: "Let's first ask Aunt Ho to explain what 'self-restraint and a return to the rites' means."

"In fact, you all know what I'm going to say. Two thousand years ago, slaves united to raise the banner of revolt. When Con-

fucius saw that the slave system was collapsing, the black-hearted windbag preached 'benevolence and righteousness', and hoisted this reactionary flag of 'self-restraint and a return to the rites'. He peddled his doctrine everywhere, trying to revive states that had disappeared, restore hereditary families who had lost power, and recall to office those who had been dismissed. . . ."

"He wanted to restore the old order and turn back the wheel of history," Little Tiger chimed in.

"Yes," Aunt Ho said. "Every reactionary who wants to put the clock back hoists this same flag. Lin Piao who talked so much about 'self-restraint and a return to the rites' wanted to restore capitalism, didn't he?"

At this point in the discussion, Double Lock's wife put in, "Remember that year Scorpion Ho pasted a couplet on his inner door-frames? It said, 'Desiring nothing but a return to the rites; dauntless devotion promises success.' How was it that, without talking it over together, they all sang the same tune?"

"They're all stalks grown from the same root: the exploiting class," replied Aunt Ho. "All diehards want to return to the past because of their class nature. A white wolf eats people just the same as a grey one. Do they talk it over together in advance?"

All of a sudden, Aunt Ho saw that Double Lock was scribbling something on a small piece of paper, using his knee as a support.

Aunt Ho walked over to him. "What're you doing?"

"Old sister, how much money do you think we'll get this spring, if we send eight people and a cart to the county brick plant?"

"You've a nerve coming out with such talk! Put that away!" Aunt Ho was more than a little irritated. "Can you tell us why Lin Piao and Scorpion Ho sing the same tune?"

At a loss, Double Lock smiled awkwardly. "Why ask me? It doesn't matter if I don't join in one of these meetings. But if we haven't enough grain and cash to give the team members after the autumn harvest that'll really hurt. That's more important."

"More important!" she retorted. "Debunking Lin Piao and Confucius is what's most important. No matter how busy we are all day in the fields, we can't ignore the political line. If you, our team

leader, don't understand that, and pay no attention to the political line, how can you boost production?"

"That's right," Grandad Ming-shan said. "When we're building socialism, do you think the class enemy lies low? It won't do to think only of ploughs, rakes and hoes."

"Our team leader didn't say that we shouldn't grasp the class struggle," muttered Man-tsang trying to help out Double Lock. "But Confucius has been dead for two thousand years now, his bones have rotted away. . . ."

"What a blockhead you are!" Aunt Ho scolded. "Although the old devil is dead, all his followers, Liu Shao-chi, Lin Piao and the landlords, rich peasants, reactionaries, bad elements, Rightists and others held up Confucius' flag to attempt to bring about a counter-revolution. Isn't that obvious?"

Worried by Double Lock and Man-tsang's apathy, Grandad Ming-shan burst out, "Don't you know how Orchid's father died?"

At those words, Aunt Ho felt a sudden pang. "It happened the year Double Lock went off to pave the highway," she said. "Still, he must have heard about it afterwards. Perhaps he's lived in times of peace too long to remember the struggles of the past."

"If he can't remember the past, we'll jog his memory," replied Grandad Ming-shan. Filling his pipe, he began speaking slowly but forcefully. "In 1954, Orchid's father got some twenty households of poor peasants and farmhands to set up the first agricultural co-op in our district. They had no tools, no animals, nothing. They planned to raise the money to buy an ox by making tiles. But they had no kiln. Then one day a brickmaker from South Village came, offering to rent them a kiln cheap."

"He was a fellow called Chang," Aunt Ho broke in. "I still clearly remember how he came to our house and told Orchid's father, 'I'm on my way to work in another village. I heard you're hard up for money and need a kiln. I'll rent you mine if you like.' We didn't know what a swindler he was."

Then Grandad Ming-shan took up the story again. "So we started baking tiles in his kiln. Half-way through the firing, crash! — three metres of the kiln's front wall caved in, exposing the red-hot bricks

along the sides. What a disaster! Our customers had paid in advance for those tiles. If they turned out all right, we would make a few hundred yuan. If we botched them, we would have to pay back over two thousand yuan. How could a small co-op make good such a loss? It was Orchid's father who saved the situation. He led us in lashing stalks together and mixing mud. Then he and some others climbed to the top of the kiln. He stood there only two feet away from the glowing bricks. With the stalks and mud, he began filling the gaping hole in the wall. Fragments of burning tiles flew into the air and he was soon covered with blisters. But he kept at it, working without stop from evening to daybreak. I can still see Aunt Ho standing before the kiln, nursing Orchid, then just a year old. All that night, she watched with clenched teeth."

"That night my heart burned as if Orchid's dad had hung it up on the kiln," said Aunt Ho.

"The sun was rising. At last the repair work was finished. Just then Orchid's father, dizzy from exhaustion, lost his balance and fell — a fall of seven metres. . . . If only he could have lived to see how that co-op of ours forged ahead!" Grandad Ming-shan choked with emotion. Only the sound of men puffing at pipes broke the silence.

Then Grandad Ming-shan went on indignantly, "The next day some poor peasants from South Village came to tell us they'd seen Scorpion Ho slip into that brickmaker's house, a bottle in his hand. We were pretty sure then that he'd put the brickmaker up to swindling us."

"Scorpion Ho is a vicious wolf," exclaimed one villager.

"Since we shared out his land and houses during the land reform, do you think he doesn't want to take his revenge?" asked another.

"You're right," declared Aunt Ho. "Scorpion Ho hasn't just got his knife into us in this village, he wants to pull down our red flag, the flag we won as the first co-op in our district, and to restore capitalism. Just before he died Orchid's dad told me, 'Most people are all for socialism, but some are dead against it. Struggle is inevitable. We must battle against anyone who tries to stop us from building socialism. The poor have only one way out — follow

Chairman Mao and take the socialist road.' I'll never forget those words to my dying day."

"Yes, indeed," put in Double Lock's wife. "If Lin Piao had got the upper hand and let loose devils like Scorpion Ho again, how many honest folk would have been butchered!"

Nodding, Aunt Ho asked Double Lock, "Is that clear to you?"

"Of course," he hastily responded. "If you're talking about taking the socialist road, I've never swerved from it."

"Just thinking you're on the right road doesn't prove you are. If you don't pay attention to our movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius, you can't tell the difference between progress and retrogression. You may even take retrogression for progress."

"What!" Double Lock stared at her.

"I'm not the only one who thinks so," she retorted. "Everyone's here tonight. Tell them about your contract with the brick plant and see what they think about it."

Double Lock thought, "I'm not afraid of making it public. I've acted in the interest of the team members." So he stood up and explained the matter in detail.

As they listened, the villagers exchanged whispered comments. Only Grandad Ming-shan said nothing but puffed away at his pipe, narrowing his eyes in thought and glancing at Double Lock from time to time.

When Double Lock had finished speaking, Man-tsang said, "In any case, the houses are being built for the people and the team will receive the money. I think we should have a go at it."

"Have a go at it! Didn't we have a go at it long ago?" Grandad Ming-shan whacked the ashes from his half-smoked pipe, staring hard at Man-tsang. "When Liu Shao-chi and Lin Piao were trying to spread revisionist practices, some people left their work in the fields and scurried to the county town to get easy money. There they worked at odd jobs, fishing and shrimping one day, peddling another. Our team's carts rushed back and forth along the road all day long. And our fields? The cucumbers grew tough because no one picked them in time. When heavy rains knocked over the corn, it was left lying on the ground. No one worried about the

weeds that were choking the crops. That year's wheat crop was only about a hundred catties per *mu*. You've forgotten that, haven't you?"

"You can't compare the two," argued Double Lock. "This is something totally different."

"Of course it's a bit different. If it weren't, that would mean an even bigger backsliding," retorted Grandad Ming-shan.

"We mustn't go backwards!" exclaimed Little Tiger.

"Even I don't agree with you," put in Double Lock's wife, "if instead of putting farming first you use crooked ways to make money."

Springing up, a scowling Double Lock vented his wrath on his wife, "Who are you calling crooked! Think I intended to pocket the team's money? Putting farming first doesn't mean that we can't have sidelines." Fuming, he plumped down onto his seat again.

"We have sidelines to help our farm work, not to hinder it," responded Aunt Ho calmly. "In the spring we're so busy ploughing, we're short of hands. But you want to send men away to town to make money. Is that learning from Tachai?"

"If you don't let the cart and the men go out, how are we to increase our income?" muttered Man-tsang. "Our team leader's acting in our interest."

Aunt Ho rounded on Man-tsang. "But what's really in our interest? If we don't put our backs into farming, we'll have to accept relief grain in time of drought or flood. And of course we won't be able to make any contribution to our country. Is that in our interest? The truth of the matter is that it's in the interest of a handful of people who are poisoned by bourgeois ideas."

Man-tsang hung his head, not daring to meet Aunt Ho's eyes.

Double Lock, unable to restrain himself, bellowed, "If you all think I run myself haggard from morning to night just for the sake of a few selfish people, then I can't carry on as team leader any longer."

Everyone was ready to give his opinion, but the atmosphere was too heated for a discussion. As they had reached a deadlock, Aunt Ho proposed: "It's late now. Let's all go home. We'll discuss this next time."

She tried to retain Double Lock, suggesting that he stay to talk things over.

"See you tomorrow!" was his curt reply as he pulled aside the door curtain and stalked out.

Crestfallen, Man-tsang shambled off too. Nearing his house, he saw Scorpion Ho waiting for him.

"What time will you be leaving tomorrow? I'd like you to bring back some medicine for me."

Man-tsang wondered why he was so anxious to know. But he only replied, "We're not going. Our study leader won't agree to it."

"Of course, if none of you attend her meetings she won't have anything to report to her superiors. But the commune members will be the losers. They'll have to sell their eggs to get spending money."

"That's a lot of nonsense. Clear off! I must get some sleep. We're going out at midnight to water the wheat fields."

"With your study group leader?" asked Scorpion Ho.

"Yes!" snapped Man-tsang. "You'd better keep away from me from now on. That'll save me a lot of trouble." He slammed the door in Scorpion Ho's face.

4

Day was breaking. In the east where earth and sky met, a rosy flush appeared. This extended further and further, until it seemed to encircle the whole earth. Within this circle the winter wheat, just turning green, shimmered in the early morning light. The water in the ditches sparkled. In the distance, a pump chugged and water poured from the pipe like a shower of white petals.

In these fields to the east of the village lay the second team's wheat field, separated from their private plots by an irrigation ditch. Just then the day shift of the second team appeared; Double Lock in the lead, they were heading towards their wheat field. Coming to the top of a mound, Double Lock spotted Little Tiger and Man-tsang fighting over a spade, both pulling at it, while Aunt Ho stood looking on. He broke into a run.

"Why on earth are you fighting instead of watering the wheat field?"

At the sound of the team leader's voice, Man-tsang let go of the spade. Little Tiger immediately strode over to the irrigation ditch and, with the spade, filled in the opening through which the water was flowing into Man-tsang's private plot. When he saw that part of the plot had been watered, Double Lock shouted indignantly at Man-tsang, "Didn't I tell you that water's scarce with this drought? We'll water the team's wheat field first and then the private plots. Don't you remember my explaining that?"

"Since one of the cadres can water her own plot, why can't we do the same?" Man-tsang wouldn't be put down. "She's the head of our study group, isn't she? Did we elect her for her looks? When she does something, we follow suit."

Double Lock turned towards Aunt Ho's plot. It was filled with water.

Little Tiger, having blocked the opening, ran up and said angrily, "All last night, Aunt Ho was in the pump station looking after the pump while Man-tsang and I were watering the wheat field down here. Just before dawn, I noticed that the water in the ditch had become sluggish. So we walked along the embankment to investigate and found a leak beside Aunt Ho's plot. Uncle Man-tsang insisted that Aunt Ho had made it on purpose and said his own plot must get water too."

"A leak? Bah!" Man-tsang retorted. "Does that look like a leak?"

Double Lock walked over to examine the side of the ditch. It was so solid that the opening could not have been made by the water itself. He threw a glance at Aunt Ho but said nothing. Meanwhile the peasants, talking among themselves, had all agreed that Aunt Ho was not that sort of person. But Double Lock, with a wave of his hand, shooed them away saying, "Don't waste your time talking. Go and hoe the field." At that they all set to work.

Aunt Ho remained silent. She was in no hurry to clear herself. Squatting beside her plot, she looked carefully at the spot where the opening had been discovered. "Who's played this dirty trick?" she wondered. Then she caught sight of a small iron spike, bright

and unruined, just by the opening. Picking it up, she dried it and put it in her pocket.

His eyes riveted on Aunt Ho, Man-tsang was thinking, "She'd not take this so quietly if she hadn't done something sneaky." The more he thought, the more indignant he felt. Not daring to speak out loud, he muttered under his breath, "You were throwing your weight about yesterday evening, accusing people right and left of having bourgeois ideas. Well, what about you? Who's so foolish as to prefer corn bread to steamed rolls? It's only normal to look out for one's own interests." Turning to Double Lock, he asked, "Are we going to the brick plant or aren't we?"

"Since we've promised, how can we get out of it? We'll start this afternoon."

Drawing herself up to her full height, Aunt Ho declared, "No, you mustn't!"

"Look here," Double Lock said icily. "In future, don't poke your nose into the team's production matters."

"I'll give my opinion whenever it's necessary."

"Bah, don't talk big." With this parting shot, Double Lock went off without even glancing back.

All the team members had left except Little Tiger. Throwing the spade on the ground, he exclaimed indignantly, tears in his eyes, "Damned ditch! Why the devil should it spring a leak right here of all places?"

"It didn't spring a leak," said Aunt Ho, stroking the boy's hair.

"What!" Little Tiger was wide-eyed.

"Life isn't so simple, so don't let's be simple ourselves. We must use our heads. Right?"

Little Tiger nodded, still a bit bewildered, and then urged, "You'd better go and rest. You've been up half the night."

Smiling, Aunt Ho said, "You go ahead. I want to stay here for a little while."

Little Tiger set off, leaving Aunt Ho alone. She squatted down, facing her flooded field, her thoughts surging like the tide. She reviewed the events of the past twenty years from the land reform all the way up to the Cultural Revolution. How many battles she

had fought during those years! But they all boiled down to a struggle between progress and retrogression, between revolution and restoration. After the Cultural Revolution, they had blocked the crooked ways leading to capitalism and they were just beginning to learn from the model Tachai brigade. She thought to herself, "We have not yet carried out sweeping changes in our Hochia Village, but already some people want to take a step backwards and earn money by working in town. This can't be allowed. I mustn't let them do it." She looked again at her private plot. "Someone's obviously trying to silence me in order to undermine the movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius. . . ."

Her train of thought was interrupted by the sound of approaching footsteps. It was Little Tiger and Grandad Ming-shan. Straightening her shoulders, she looked up at Little Tiger. "Why didn't you go and sleep?"

"I couldn't sleep for thinking about this business," responded Little Tiger, pressing a bun and two eggs on Aunt Ho.

Looking at the youngster's swarthy face and pointed chin, she recalled how slight and weak he had been when he'd first come to the village. Now the boy had grown up, she thought with pleasure. She took the bun, but put the eggs in Little Tiger's pocket. Then she addressed the old man, "I've thought it over. Who would have played this dirty trick? It must be sabotage."

"That's exactly what we think," exclaimed Grandad Ming-shan. "Debunking Lin Piao and Confucius hits the enemy where it hurts, makes them hopping mad."

Little Tiger broke in excitedly, "You know, Aunt Ho, when Grandad Ming-shan heard about this, he went straight to ask the villagers who'd been out all night watering the wheat fields if they'd noticed anything strange."

"Yes," said Grandad Ming-shan, "and a man from the fourth team told me that he saw Scorpion Ho out before dawn. He was hurrying along the road carrying a dung-crate. So you see, the scorpion must have lashed out with his sting again."

"We'll chop it off before he can pull it in!" Aunt Ho declared resolutely. "You two go on investigating while I go and report

this to the Party branch committee. Afterwards I'll visit the brick plant. We mustn't give an inch in fighting against capitalist tendencies."

"Go home and get some sleep before you set off," Little Tiger advised.

"Go to sleep and let them drive the cart out of the village? That's what our enemy wants. They thought they could muzzle me. But they're going to discover that I'm even more active than before. Well, I've got to be off now."

Little Tiger watched Aunt Ho stride away. Suddenly she turned back. Producing the iron spike, she explained, "I found this in the ditch near the opening. Take it. It may give you a clue."

"Rest assured, aunt." Little Tiger threw out his chest. "We'll get to the bottom of this."

5

It was the afternoon of the same day. Aunt Ho came back from the county town by bus. As she walked home, she saw a cart carrying a few men speed out of the village. A whip stuck in the crook of his folded arms, Man-tsang sat up front humming a tune from an old opera.

Aunt Ho strode straight towards the cart. Pulling vigorously at the reins with one hand, she shouted, "Whoa!" The horse slackened its pace and finally came to a halt.

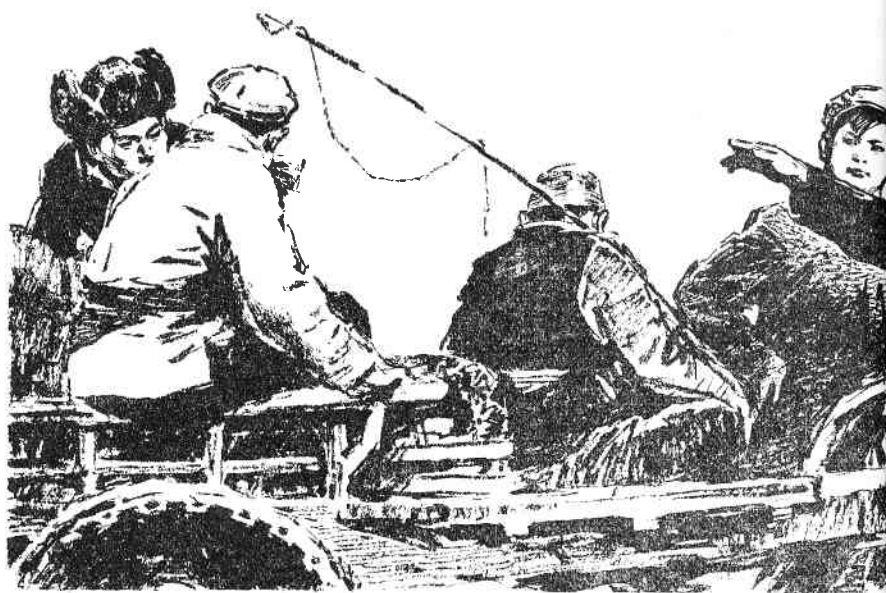
"Turn the cart back!" Aunt Ho ordered sternly.

"The team leader's given his consent. As study group leader, it's none of your business," Man-tsang retorted, sneering.

"Everyone has the right to correct what's wrong," Aunt Ho said.

Man-tsang sniggered. "If it's in the interest of the commune members, you call it wrong. But watering your private plot is right, eh? Well, well. . . . Talk yourself hoarse if you like, but your words are falling on deaf ears. Giddap!"

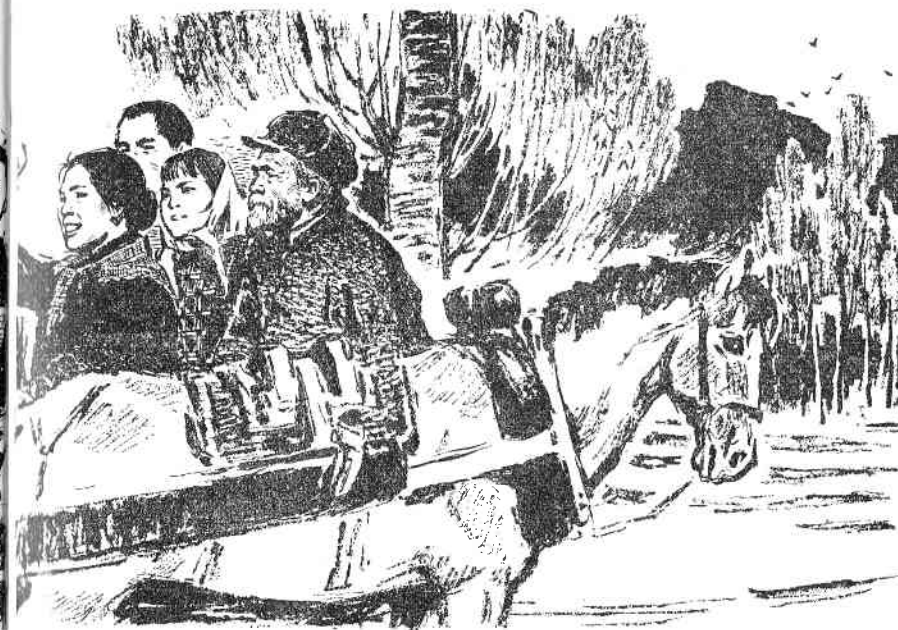
The powerful horse harnessed between the shafts was about to start off when Aunt Ho pushed down the brake bar and again shouted, "Whoa!" The cart was now rooted to the ground.



Suddenly, shouts rang out from behind, "Don't let them go!" Little Tiger, Grandad Ming-shan, Double Lock's wife and many other peasants thronged round the cart. Rather relieved, Aunt Ho turned to address the men sitting on the cart, her voice ringing with emotion.

"In the old days, many of you left the village to earn money. You carried heavy loads in the mines until some of you became stoop-shouldered. And some of you broke your legs while pulling rickshaws. Did any of you ever have a square meal in those days? On New Year's Eve, your wives and children waited anxiously for you to bring them rice to eat and money to buy salt, but your pockets were empty. Don't you remember that some men didn't dare go home empty-handed to their dear ones, but instead walked around outside the village the whole night?"

"Only when Chairman Mao led us on to the socialist road did our life begin to change, every day bringing new victories. But Liu



Shao-chi and Lin Piao began peddling revisionism and capitalist ways. They fouled up our village. Bourgeois ideas found their way into the minds of some of our peasants. What's more, a handful of class enemies usurped the village leadership. That landed us in big trouble.

"It's the Cultural Revolution that rooted out these capitalist ways and made socialism strike roots in our hearts so that we started learning from Tachai. Ever since then, our collective economy has been flourishing. We have a good life. But some people will not accept defeat and are trying to launch a comeback."

Aunt Ho paused for an instant and then continued, "Ask yourselves what we owe our good life to. To the money we earn? No! We owe it to Chairman Mao's revolutionary line!"

"Well said! We can't go the old way," one of the villagers exclaimed.

"Yes," another agreed, "we must stick to the right line, not go running after money."

Several men began climbing down from the cart.

"Well..." Man-tsang hesitated, still holding the whip in the crook of his folded arms. But then he spotted Double Lock running towards them. Like a drowning man clutching at a straw, he said, "Let's see what our team leader thinks."

By then, Double Lock had elbowed his way through the throng, yelling at the team members, "What's wrong with you today? Why make such fuss about a few people going to work outside? Why have you all left the fields? Go back, quick!"

However, no one moved. An argument started.

"It's not a simple matter," said one.

"That's right! It's a vital question concerning progress or retrogression," put in another.

"But we can't break our promise," Double Lock retorted.

Aunt Ho then fished out a letter and gave it to the team leader, saying, "Read this carefully."

After finishing the letter, Double Lock flew into a rage.

He glared at Man-tsang, shouting, "You... you..." Too furious to continue, he squatted down, holding his head in his hands.

The Party branch committee of the brick plant had written this letter to the second team of Hochia Village. At Aunt Ho's request, Little Tiger read it out for all to hear:

... In the great movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius, the workers of our plant are refuting the fallacy of "self restraint and returning to the rites" and linking theory with practice. We've realized that, in some respects, our plant was still following the revisionist line, and recently we ferreted out a hidden class enemy. His name is Chang Teh-fa, and he's the man who made the contract with your team. After a preliminary investigation, we found that he had abused his power to serve his personal interests. By arranging these contracts in underhand ways and embezzling public funds he's undermined the socialist economy. He deceived both the masses and the leadership. This is a very serious case. On the basis of the information Aunt Ho of your team supplied, we are making a further investigation

of this man's past. Herewith we are returning the work contract. Thank you again for your help. Wishing you continued success in the movement....

The villagers were moved by the letter and felt they had a lot to learn from the workers.

"How did you help them?" Grandad Ming-shan asked Aunt Ho.

"When they told me about Chang Teh-fa's crimes, I was so angry and indignant that I asked the leading comrade: 'May I question the man personally?' I immediately recognized the fellow. It was that same brickmaker from South Village who had worked hand in glove with Scorpion Ho in trying to sabotage our poor peasants' co-op in 1954. The head of the plant told me that the man had come to the plant from a coal-mine only a few years before. So now you see what happened; this fellow Chang got in touch with Scorpion Ho to try to pull us down once again."

"Quick, Little Tiger! Go and get Scorpion Ho," ordered Grandad Ming-shan. "And don't forget his dung-fork." Little Tiger rushed off.

"It was Scorpion Ho who first suggested working for the brick plant," put in Man-tsang hurriedly. "He urged me to persuade our team leader to make the arrangements."

"What?" Double Lock pulled himself to his feet. "How could you listen to Scorpion Ho!?"

"You've listened to him too," broke in Aunt Ho. "Just think! You run around all day long, thinking only about sidelines and production, not caring a straw about which line we're following. You're so muddle-headed that now you've been taken in. And all the time you thought you were doing this for the sake of the masses. To go on in that way is dangerous!"

Her reproaches went to Double Lock's heart like a draught of cooling medicine. Hanging his head, he fell into deep thought.

Just then, Scorpion Ho was led up by Little Tiger who handed the dung-fork to Aunt Ho.

Pointing at it, he cried, "Look!" One prong was missing. Furious she grabbed Scorpion Ho's arm, and ordered, "Tell us what you went out to do last night!"

"I didn't leave my house," protested Scorpion Ho in a low voice.

"You were seen sneaking back from the field in the south," Little Tiger retorted.

"Uh. . . I went out to gather some dung."

"What could you get before cock-crow?" demanded Little Tiger.

"Come clean!" Grandad Ming-shan exploded. "Did you make that opening in the ditch beside Aunt Ho's private plot?"

"I don't know anything about that."

"No?! That's a good one!" Aunt Ho thrust the dung-fork under his nose. "Did you lend your dung-fork to anyone yesterday?"

"No, I . . . I didn't." Scorpion Ho was getting nervous.

Aunt Ho calmly took the small iron spike from Little Tiger and placed it on the fork where one prong was missing. It fit exactly! Then she spoke, stressing each word, "This was found in the ditch near the opening in the embankment. You used this dung-fork to do it, that's clear. Speak up!"

The villagers were shouting now in anger.

Chills shot up his spine. Scorpion Ho rolled his beady eyes. Seeing he was trapped, he blurted out: "The opening . . . I dug it. . . I . . . I saw that Aunt Ho was so busy with the movement and with her work in the fields, she had no time to water her own plot. I couldn't help feeling . . . sorry for her. So . . . so I watered it. I see now it was wrong. But I didn't mean any harm." He snivelled, squeezing out false tears.

"Didn't mean any harm?" Man-tsang snorted, stepping forward.

"Didn't you say to me, 'Getting some cash outside makes more sense than criticizing Lin Piao and Confucius?'"

"You heartless brute!" bellowed Grandad Ming-shan, thumping his stick on the ground. "You're just as vicious as Lin Piao and Confucius. 'A smile on your face, but poison in your heart.' You'd like to kill people quietly without shedding blood!"

"That's right!" Aunt Ho spoke up. "You want to undermine us, to stop us debunking Lin Piao and Confucius and learning from

Tachai. You egg people on to return to capitalist ways in the hope of restoring your man-eating 'rites'! We will counter-attack, comrades! We must defend and develop the achievements of the Cultural Revolution and carry the struggle through to the end!"

Double Lock mustered all his courage and severely criticized himself before Aunt Ho and the others. Then after exchanging a few words with Aunt Ho, he jumped onto the cart and exclaimed, "We won't go to the brick plant. This evening we'll have a meeting to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius. Aunt Ho will be the chairman and I'm going to fire the first shot!" Then he turned to Little Tiger, "Drive the cart back and tell the militiamen to watch over Scorpion Ho. He's a good target for us if we're going to link theory with practice in this movement."

"Right." Snatching the whip from Man-tsang, Little Tiger released the brake and turned the cart round. After making sure everyone in the cart was seated, he cracked the whip in the air and shouted, "Giddap!" Kicking up its hooves, the horse galloped back to the village.

Illustrated by Chen Yu-hsien

POEMS FROM HSIAOCHINCHUANG

Wang Tso-shan

Song to Chairman Mao

The Tachai spirit shakes mountains and streams,
In our brigade there are many heroes.
Fighting through bitter winter, they don't complain,
Red banners and songs float on the frosty air.

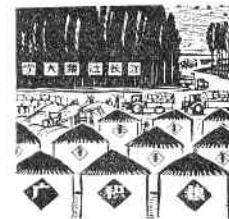
A spring wind covers the vast green plain,
Golden waves ripple across broad acres,
Our wheat crop alone exceeds the Programme* target,
Autumn's harvest will surpass that of the Yangtse Valley.

In *Chinese Literature* No. 10, 1974 twelve poems by the peasants of Hsiao-chin-chuang in Paoti County near Tientsin were published as well as an article introducing the peasant poets of that district. Those published here are selected from a new volume of Hsiao-chin-chuang poems published by the Tientsin People's Publishing House.

Wang Tso-shan is the Party branch secretary of the Hsiao-chin-chuang Brigade.

*The Programme for Agricultural Development 1956-1967. The programme stipulates targets to be reached in different parts of China within the period of twelve years starting from 1956. The targets are: 400 catties of grain per *mu* for areas north of the Yellow River, 500 catties for areas north of the Huai River and 800 catties for areas south of the Huai River including the Yangtse River Valley.

Success does not breed complacency,
Our revolutionary drive becomes the stronger,
Hearts full of love, we gaze towards Peking
And sing our bumper harvest song to Chairman Mao.



Wang Tu

My First Visit to Peking

During the movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius I went to Peking for the first time, as a representative of poor and lower-middle peasants. There I took part in a forum to study the ancient struggles between Legalists and Confucians.

Fond hopes for so many years,
Happy dreams of a thousand nights,
How many times have I gazed at the far North Star,
And envisaged red lanterns on the Tien An Men Gate.

My first visit to Peking,
Impossible to calm my throbbing heart.
Thousands of warm hands shake mine,
Thousands of faces smile their welcome.

Wang Tu is leader of the militia company.

With so much joy and great pride,
I come to see the grandeur of Peking,
To take orders from Chairman Mao at his side,
Then study this most important criticism.

An arduous task and yet so glorious,
Chairman Mao has regard for workers, peasants and soldiers
As we take our positions on the ideological front
And pass judgement on millennia of history.

An intrepid spirit fills my heart,
I square my shoulders for a heavier load,
Long the journey, but we press onward,
Prepared for battles all along the way.

Now we workers, peasants, soldiers assume leadership,
We'll clear away rank winds and evil influences,
Criticize all reactionaries, struggle against restoration,
Guarding proletarian dictatorship through the years to come.



Wang Tu

There Is No Winter

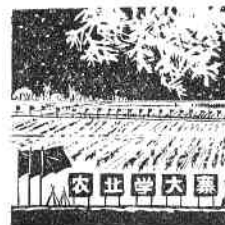
On the southern slope there's a line of sheds,
Red banners flap atop the windy peak.
Our peasant workers are on the march,
Firm footsteps tramp on the solid earth.

Before the battle starts the old Party secretary speaks,
"This winter, we'll conquer this alkaline land."
One after another padded jackets are shed,
As like springing tigers they launch the attack.

Heavy stones they heave on high,
To fall and crack the stubborn, frozen earth.
Laden carts are shuttled to and fro,
Beside those scurrying on with basket loads.

The old secretary sprints uphill like a gust of wind,
Rumbling carts roll on like thunder, and like cavalry
Our people race on to victory, each vying with
And eager to outdo the others.

As snowflakes dance, the wind dries sweat,
Laughter and chatter interweaves a string of songs,
"Learn from Tachai" are the words that warm our hearts,
There is no winter amid such happiness.



Wei Wen-chung

After the Repudiation Meeting

Enthusiastic, energetic, we set off for night school,
To criticize Confucius and traitorous Lin Piao,
Afterwards, hurrying home straightway,
Finding my hoe, I leave again.

But why is no one else around?
Why is our village street deserted?
Far off, I hear voices in the fields,
Labour chants resound everywhere.

Nearer, in the moonlight I see picks flashing,
Silver hoes thrusting in the soil,
One and all, we're back at battle again,
Enthusiastic, energetic, just as at the night school.

Wei Wen-chung is an old poor peasant.

Wang Yu

The Theorists

Deep in the night,
As the setting moon drifts westward,
Our militia returns from an exercise,
In passing Grandad Wang's door,
I notice there's a light still shining
Through the paper-cuts that decorate his window.

Peeping through the glass, I see
Grandad sitting close beside the lamp.
In one hand he holds a book,
In the other a pen is poised,
As carefully reading, he takes notes,
Unaware of sweat dripping from his brows.

Wang Yu is a spare-time teacher in the political night school.

Amazed to see such concentration,
I walk the whole length of our village,
Patrolling it from one end to the other.
Many households are still busy,
Golden light gleams through the windows,
So industriously are our theorists studying.



Wang Chi

Our Wheelbarrow Team

Elm-wood handles and rubber tires,
Sturdy shafts to bear a heavy load;
With rolled up sleeves, unbuttoned shirts,
We can carry up to half a ton.

We stride along, tramping forcefully,
Winds and thunder roll around our wheels.
Steam from heated bodies swirls around our heads,
As we go mud-spattered and all in a sweat.

Wang Chi is a commune member.

Dashing over the snow, we crush the icy crust,
Our wheelbarrows roll along a golden road,
For we'll never stop to rest, but onward go,
After the Yangtse, still full steam ahead.
Full steam ahead, straight along the road
For communism is our future goal.



Wang Ting-ho

Why Don't You Listen to What the Team Leader Says?

When the sun has sunk in the west, stars stud the sky,
Still work chants reverberate beyond the clouds,
Though the north wind roars in mid-winter cold,
Sweat pours down our hot, perspiring backs.
We're determined to terrace our land this winter,
Next year we'll increase our crops of grain and cotton.

"Look, it's getting late, it's dusk already,"
The team leader begins to shout aloud to all.
"Put on your coats now, go home for a meal."
But nobody seems to hear a word he says!
Girding themselves, they work with increasing vim,
Hey! Why don't you listen to what the team leader says?

Wang Ting-ho is the leader of Team One.

Wang Hsin-min

Thanks to the Great Cultural Revolution

The rising sun crimsons the dawn clouds,
Green willows and red banners dance in the wind.
An emerald sea stretches to the far horizon,
Rippling wheat fields flow on and on.

A red tractor weaves through a tapestry of green,
A blue water pump unleashes the tamed dragon,
Criss-crossing ditches cast a silvery net,
Like golden stars deep wells dot the fields.

Wang Hsin-min is deputy leader of Team One.

Our girls work busily with their hoes,
Each a red flower on the green carpet.
Pretty as a picture is life in our commune,
Thanks to the Great Cultural Revolution.



SKETCHES

Shen Jen-kang

The Torch

Outside, the north wind was howling and the sky was a mass of dark clouds. It looked like rain. But inside the meeting room the air pulsed with enthusiasm.

The meeting had been called by the commune to exchange experience in learning from Tachai in agriculture. This was the second day of discussion. Spurred on by the movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius, all the production brigades were going to launch a new drive that winter and the following spring to build irrigation channels and terrace fields on a larger scale. This would boost the whole commune's output.

Evening descended; abruptly the lights went on; wreaths of smoke filled the lively meeting room. One after the other, the Party secretaries from various production brigades enthusiastically reported their plans for developing agriculture, each expressing the resolve to work yet harder during the coming year. Then it was the turn of Old Chen, Party secretary of Golden Rice Brigade. Nearly sixty and the oldest of those present, he had been honoured as a model

worker at various conferences in the county town, the prefecture and the provincial capital since the land reform. Under his leadership, Golden Rice Brigade was the most advanced in the commune. So his prestige was high. He now addressed the meeting, speaking slowly but steadily, his voice resonant.

"In our brigade," he said, "we're going to reinforce the Golden Rice River Dam, making it a metre higher. At the same time we'll dig more irrigation ditches so that we can bring 280 more *mu* of land under irrigation. We'll also continue to level the land in order to double the area of tractor-ploughed fields. In a word we'll do our utmost to grow more grain for our socialist motherland."

Like a hammer, each of his statements struck a chord in the hearts of his listeners. "It's an ambitious plan," one commented. "But Old Chen is always as good as his word."

"Golden Rice Brigade has always been in the vanguard," said another. "This year they're way ahead of us again."

"They had better conditions to start with," remarked a third cadre, rather enviously. "Their soil is so fertile and black you'd think they watered it with oil."

"You're making 'conditions' all-important, comrade," protested the Party secretary beside him. "You haven't taken into account their cadres' fine working style and their commune members' hard work. Their output is high because they work hard; their soil is fertile because they've spread plenty of compost. I know what compost has done for our brigade's fields."

Yet it was true that Golden Rice Brigade had relatively favourable conditions. Situated on a small fertile plain, it had the best land in the commune. Golden Rice River ran through the middle of its fields and though the river was not large it provided water for irrigation all year round. During the Cultural Revolution, a dam had been built on the river, raising the water level, and more land was irrigated, so that the yield of grain soared each year.

While the others were deep in discussion, Li Hsin, young Party secretary of Silver Jar Brigade, turned his attention to something else. Sitting beside him was the Party secretary of Pioneer Brigade. This brigade, high up in the hills, had been very successful with its

afforestation. In the past they had grown pine-trees by planting seedlings, but recently they had succeeded in planting cuttings. The report made the previous day by the Party secretary about their successes had particularly interested Li Hsin. He was now asking for more details and carefully jotting down notes. For he was determined to begin afforesting his brigade's barren rocky hills using this method.

Although the name Silver Jar sounded pleasant enough, this was the commune's poorest, most barren brigade. Not only did it have little water and a very thin layer of soil, but rocks and stones covered the land. In some places, the earth in the fields was no more than five inches deep, hardly covering the seeds sown in it. The members of the brigade worked hard, but reaped very meagre harvests.

The meeting gradually quieted down. Party Secretary Hsueh of the commune suddenly announced: "Let's ask Comrade Li Hsin of Silver Jar Brigade to speak now."

All were startled. "Silver Jar Brigade?" someone asked in surprise.

"Yes, Silver Jar Brigade," Party Secretary Hsueh reiterated, his voice firm and strong to rebut any disparagement of this brigade.

Li Hsin stood up. Scratching his head, he said in a low voice, rather diffidently, "There's nothing much I can say. We've learned a lot from the experience of our brother brigades."

By now all eyes were fixed on him intently. He was a vigorous young man in his mid-twenties, his hair closely cropped. His smiling face was round with big eyes and thick eyebrows. In his faded blue student's jacket, with his broad shoulders squared and his chest thrust out, he gave everyone an impression of honesty. Yet hitherto this stalwart young man had not attracted anyone's attention.

After finishing middle school Li Hsin, the son of a railway worker, had left the city to settle down in the commune. It was the year the Cultural Revolution began. The commune assigned him to Golden Rice Brigade. But he asked bluntly, "In which brigade are things toughest?" "In Silver Jar Brigade," was the answer. "Then let me go there."



Seven years had gone by since Li Hsin had arrived in Silver Jar Brigade. During this period he had been tempered by his work, joined the Party and been elected Party branch secretary of the brigade. But few people outside the brigade knew much about him.

Old Chen, looking at him, recognized the young man who had come to see him the previous evening, just after he had turned in. A pen in one hand, a notebook in the other, the young man came up to his bed and said, "Comrade Old Chen, may I trouble you?"

"Certainly," Old Chen replied. "What can I do for you?" Always warm-hearted and generous in helping others, he promptly sat up.

"No need to sit up. Just lie there." Li Hsin gently pushed him back.

Restrained by that powerful hand, Old Chen had no choice but to remain lying down.

"On my way here, I had a look at your brigade's fields," Li Hsin said. "All those plants you use for compost are growing well."

They fairly made my mouth water! We'd like to know just how you grow them. And have you any extra seeds? Is it too late to sow some now in our brigade's fields?"

He wrote down all the information Old Chen gave him and did not leave until late at night. His eagerness to learn as well as his working style deeply impressed Old Chen, who had at once taken a great liking to him. Although he had spoken little at the previous day's meeting, he fixed his dark shining eyes on the speakers and listened attentively to every word they uttered.

At this point Party Secretary Hsueh said, "Silver Jar Brigade has changed. Work there is going like a house on fire. They'll soon have transformed their brigade into a real silver jar! This year Comrade Li Hsin and several other youngsters found an underground stream in a cave. They've carved out a canal through the rocks and constructed a pumping station. This means they've solved the problem of irrigation."

Shouts of approval rang out. Suddenly, everybody remembered an incident during the building of this canal.

By dint of hard work, the Silver Jar Brigade members had been making steady progress in the construction of the canal. They had reached the foot of Knife-cut Cliff, a towering precipice that looked as if it had been slashed out of the rock. Just then their supply of fuses and dynamite ran out. It seemed they were at a standstill. Well, the masses are the real heroes; solutions come from practical experience. The cadres consulted everyone to discover a solution to this new problem. One of them went to discuss the matter with the cooks. While helping with the cooking, he chatted with them. After the meal had been prepared, a cook quenched the fire by throwing water on it. At once the hot stones supporting the cooking pot cracked. He had found the solution! He was so overjoyed that he embraced the cook and danced round him, crying out: "I've got it!" Without stopping to eat, he led the brigade members to Knife-cut Cliff where they piled branches against the rock and set fire to them. When the rock became red-hot, they poured cold water on it. The hard rock cracked. In this way they were

able to pierce the cliff. The cadre who had taken the lead in this was Li Hsin.

Now, under the lights of the meeting room, Li Hsin seemed to them to be gradually growing in stature.

"Speak up, Young Li. Go ahead!" Old Chen urged.

"Really, I don't have anything much to say." Li Hsin smiled, less diffident now. "If you insist, I'll tell you something about the high class consciousness and hard work of our commune members in transforming our new socialist mountainous regions." His voice was ringing and forceful. Beaming, Old Chen nodded approval at each word.

Li Hsin went on: "In our brigade we criticized Lin Piao and Confucius and educated the masses in the Party's basic line. Confucius wanted retrogression, Lin Piao attempted to restore capitalism. But we stand staunchly for socialism. A few people lost confidence in cultivating the mountain areas. They wanted to give up farming and earn money through sidelines. They said, 'There's nothing in our hills but stones. When will we ever build a new socialist mountain area? We should go in for more sidelines.' We retorted, 'You're wrong. The Tachai people have terraced their mountains and tamed their rivers; by carrying earth from several miles away, the Shashiuyu commune members have built up fields on what were once rocky slopes. Why can't we transform our mountains? The way you want to go is the capitalist road. We must take the Tachai road.'"

"Well said!" exclaimed Old Chen. He knew that there were also people in his brigade who wanted to take men away from farming and go in for sidelines, but he had not yet got round to refuting them. Evidently his class consciousness was not as high as that of Li Hsin. So he admired this young revolutionary successor from the bottom of his heart.

"Once they really grasp the correct political line, the commune members will go all out," Li Hsin continued. "In this drive we'll terrace thirty *mu* of paddy fields. And each *mu* will yield a thousand catties of rice next year."

"What?" someone cried out, not believing his ears.

“A thousand catties of rice per *mu*?” others shouted incredulously.

Everyone knew that, for the people of Silver Jar Brigade, maize had been the staple food for generations. Growing crops in their rocky fields was so hard they could never be sure of a good harvest. To build up thirty *mu* of paddy fields might not be too difficult in other places, but in Silver Jar Brigade where the ground was covered by rocks and stones it seemed well-nigh impossible. The new paddy fields would be a tribute to their resolve to continue the revolution, a song to celebrate learning from Tachai!

“This year we experimented by terracing four *mu*,” Li Hsin went on. “We reaped 1,100 catties per *mu*, the first rice ever grown in Silver Jar Brigade. Our folk say: We’ll build Tachai-type fields even if we have to grub them out with our fingers. We dig up soil from every cleft in the rocks, ten or twenty metres deep, it doesn’t matter.” He gestured as he spoke. “When we’ve got enough, we level the rocks by blasting, build retaining walls and dump the soil, half a metre deep, between them. We’re already constructing twenty *mu* in this way.” He spoke as confidently as if this involved no difficulty at all. But in fact each step taken meant a hard struggle.

The meeting room was quiet; not a sound was heard. Old Chen listening felt his blood fired. He unbuttoned his jacket. As soon as Li Hsin had finished his talk, Old Chen stood up and made his way through the crowd to the young man. Grasping his hand, he said, “You’ve taught me a good lesson on continuing the revolution. When I go back after the meeting I’ll get all the members of my brigade to learn from your brigade’s spirit. We’ll do our best to make a bigger contribution to our socialist motherland.”

Li Hsin warmly clasped the old man’s hands too. Hot tears welled up in Old Chen’s eyes.

By the time the meeting came to an end, the wind had subsided and a light rain had begun to fall. Commune Party Secretary Hsueh urged the cadres to stay another night and go back the following morning. But Li Hsin, pulling out several picks from under

The Fight Goes On (oil painting)
by Shang Ting



a chair, slung them over his shoulder and said, "I must go now, Secretary Hsueh."

"Your road is the longest and uphill all the way; besides, it's raining now. Why be in such a hurry?" someone asked.

Smiling, Li Hsin told him, "I want to get back as soon as possible to help terrace the fields. I can't wait to see how the work is getting on."

Just then lights appeared on the eastern mountain opposite. Dancing in the darkness, they grew larger and larger. They were torches for lighting the way. Looking at the approaching lights, Li Hsin said, "They must have come to meet me. I must be off." He lit a torch and strode out of the meeting room. By the gleaming light of the torch, he walked quickly through the drizzling night toward the eastern mountain. Like camellia flowers in spring, the torches dotted the mountain.

All the Party secretaries went back to their brigades in the rain that same night, their hearts burning like the torches in their hands, all eager to take a bigger step forward in learning from Tachai.

Illustrated by Wang Teh-chuan

Chin Ming

The Creation of the "Red Silk Dance"

On October 1, 1949, when the People's Republic of China was born, our great leader Chairman Mao solemnly declared to the whole world from Tien An Men: **"The Chinese people have now stood up!"** Chairman Mao's voice stirred our whole motherland and hundreds of millions of our people went wild with joy. Everywhere there were sounds of gongs and drums and coloured ribbons fluttered in the air, welcoming the new birth of our motherland. The conception of the *Red Silk Dance* dates from this historic movement. The dance reflects on the stage the joy of the masses at the festival, the buoyant revolutionary spirit and pride of the Chinese people who have won liberation.

The *Red Silk Dance* comprises many different episodes to express the jubilation which marked that occasion. In the more than twenty years since it was first created, it has been revised and improved on many times. Now, the curtain rises on a magnificent scene of the golden Tien An Men Gate, a clear blue sky behind it. Young men

and women, torches in hand, are performing the vigorous *yangko* folk dance to the accompaniment of gongs and drums in vast Tien An Men Square. The changing formations of the dancers give the audience the sense that the crowd is coming closer and closer, growing more and more numerous. Suddenly the young people throw aside their torches and red streamers fly up like flames in mid air. Dancing and singing in praise of our motherland interweave with fiery passion. Then individual dances are presented.

First, a single dancer performs with two silk streamers; then two dance with slow, graceful movements. These two contrasting episodes suggest a whole range of emotions. Next follows a scene with five dancers leaping for joy, then a dance with hoops by men and women dancers, building up gradually towards the climax. This comes when with vigorous and rhythmical movements the dancers swing their hoops to form balls of fire, and then as finale we have a dazzling display of acrobatics.

This dance was first created in 1950, when *yangko* dancing was widely popular. Since this cheerful, vigorous folk dance was well suited to express triumphant rejoicing, we adopted it as the basis of the *Red Silk Dance*. Following Chairman Mao's instructions to make the past serve the present and to evolve new things from old, we also introduced useful features from other traditional dances.

For example, in such traditional Peking operas as *The Heavenly Maids Scatter Blossoms* and *The Goddess Chang-ngo Flies to the Moon*, the fairy figures wave variegated silk streamers to suggest that they are sailing through the clouds. Of course, the original operas served as entertainment for the feudal ruling classes and should be repudiated, but certain specific movements and techniques were so expressive that we could make use of them. We therefore adopted some and combined them with *yangko* dancing.

Various forms of dancing with streamers can be found in Peking opera. Sometimes a dancer waves a streamer in one hand. Sometimes a long streamer passed behind the neck is held in both hands and waved to form designs such as cloud-patterns or big circles, or is made to criss-cross or swing over the dancer's waist. The silk traditionally used was light blue or light green; occasionally it had

printed designs. Though the movements of the silk were quite varied, the footwork was simple. The dancer simply circled the stage with small, quick steps without leaping or whirling around; and this was insufficient to express the feelings of the workers, peasants and soldiers of our age.

In our revision of this dance we have kept the traditional arm movements of dancing with silk, but have rejected the small, quick dancing steps which conveyed a sense of restriction. To add new life and forcefulness, we adopted the swinging steps and spirited leaps of the *yangko* which are more suited to expressing the new theme. We have also changed the original solo dancing into dances with two, half a dozen or more performers. Instead of holding the streamer in both hands, they now wave it with one hand. We have also changed the colour of the silk to red, using brilliant red streamers to form different patterns — flames, torches, fireworks and so forth — suggesting a festival. This conjures up an atmosphere of red-hot enthusiasm as happy crowds celebrate among lanterns and flowers.

During the Cultural Revolution we made further innovations in this dance. For the principle of artistic creation derived from the revolutionary model stage productions — that our main task is to create heroic images of workers, peasants and soldiers — is applicable to all forms of revolutionary art. In our earlier *Red Silk Dance* we were only aware of a contradiction between the performer and the silk. We gave all our attention to the dancing technique, forgetting that the silk dance must bring out more vividly the images of our heroes and heroines. So now, after learning from the model stage productions, we put more emphasis on the individual and group dancing, especially the collective scenes, using contrasting rhythms, movements and gestures to project the spirit of the heroic characters.

This dance requires technical virtuosity, for in order to increase its expressive power we added such difficult acrobatic feats as whirling and somersaulting by male dancers. These call for high speed and perfect co-ordination by all the performers; they must also



Before the Lecture (oil painting)
by Li Ping-kang

fit the rhythm and the whole scene must have symmetry and precision.

The music of the earlier *Red Silk Dance* was taken mainly from folk tunes. Though distinctively Chinese, it lacked the depth and variety needed to express the spirit of our age. Now we have integrated the music of *Singing of Our Motherland* which was widely sung at the time of the founding of our People's Republic. In the rhythm, too, we have introduced more variety, breaking up the former regular beat to express a more militant, revolutionary spirit.

So now the *Red Silk Dance*, first staged more than twenty years ago, after much revision and improvement has reappeared as a new item on our stage.

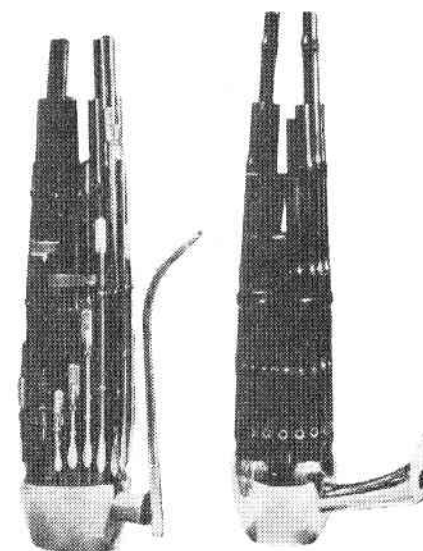
Some Popular Chinese Wind-Instruments

Of all the traditional Chinese wind-instruments the most popular are the *sheng* or reed-organ, the *ti* or bamboo flute and the *suona* or wooden trumpet.

In old China the folk musicians playing these instruments had a very low social status. As a result, throughout long centuries few improvements were made in these instruments and their performing techniques. After Liberation in 1949, Chinese instrumental music was revived and gained a new lease of life. Since the Cultural Revolution especially, under the guidance of Chairman Mao's directives that the past should serve the present, foreign things should be made to serve China, a hundred flowers should bloom together and new things should emerge from the old, there has been a tremendous development in Chinese instrumental music. Learning from the experience of the revolutionary model stage productions, our revolutionary musicians have composed many new works for Chinese instruments which reflect our life today under socialism and the heroic spirit of the working class. They have also edited and revised many of the best traditional compositions. Moreover such wind-instru-

ments as the reed-organ, the bamboo flute and the wooden trumpet are no longer used solely for accompaniment but in solo performances too.

The *sheng* is one of the oldest wind-instruments in China. It consists of bamboo pipes of varying length, each with a vibrating tongue, which yield notes of different pitches. These pipes are mounted on a copper base, and the sound is produced by blowing through the hole at the



base. This is the prototype of the later pipe-organ and accordion. During the Shang and Chou Dynasties between the sixteenth and third century B.C. the *sheng* was already widely played in China. Traditional *sheng* normally had only thirteen or fourteen tongues, thus the sound range was narrow with incomplete semi-tones, and it was difficult to modulate. Now that improvements have been introduced, some of these instruments have twenty-one, twenty-four, twenty-six or even as many as thirty-two tongues, yielding high, middle-range and bass tones. In addition, some are fitted with keys and a sound-box, making them much more expressive. Compositions for *sheng* solos such as *Reconnaissance on the Grassland* and *Red Blossoms of Tachai Bloom Everywhere* have been warmly received by audiences all over China.

Reconnaissance on the Grassland conjures up a stirring picture of our people's forces day and night patrolling the vast grassland at the northern frontier, forming an impregnable bulwark against possible attack by the revisionists. It successfully projects the heroic images of the cavalry forces of our People's Liberation Army. The com-

position is divided into five movements. The Mongolian melody running through the prelude evokes the beautiful, far-stretching northern grassland. The first movement opens with an allegro passage suggesting the galloping of horses and embodying the melody of the revolutionary marching song *Three Main Rules of Discipline and Eight Points for Attention* to bring out vividly the image of the reconnaissance troops. The second movement is militant and expansive. The third, lilting and melodious, depicts the cavalrymen's lofty ideals and love for their socialist motherland. The fourth has a quick tempo and varying rhythm to represent the frontier patrol advancing, singing lustily, through wind and snow. The fifth uses strong overtones to produce stirring sound effects stressing the revolutionary aspirations of the soldiers and the magnificence of our socialist motherland.

Red Blossoms of Tachai Bloom Everywhere was inspired by the struggle of the poor and lower-middle peasants of Tachai Brigade in Hsiyang County, Shansi to transform their barren land. It successfully projects the glorious heroes of Tachai. The prelude depicts Tachai as seen from the top of Tiger-Head Hill at dawn. The first movement with its impressive cadences proclaims the miracles achieved by the people of Tachai under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party. The second, with its quickened tempo, forcefully brings out the main theme — the selfless working style and revolutionary spirit of the Tachai people; this is followed by a graceful passage conveying their jubilation after winning victory after victory by following Chairman Mao's revolutionary line. The third movement, in subdominant tones, blends the melody introduced in the first movement with the rhythm of the revolutionary song *Learn from Tachai and Overtake Tachai*. Then in a splendid crescendo the music suggests that the red blossoms of Tachai are blooming everywhere throughout the country.

The *ti* is a bamboo flute with a blow hole and a second hole covered with a membrane, followed by six holes for stopping, and two more at the end for expelling air. It was already widely used by the beginning of the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D. 220) when a Legalist line prevailed and encouragement was given to new folk music.

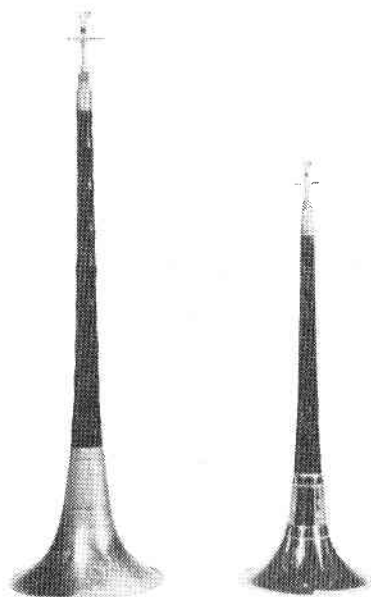
There are various types of Chinese flute but the two most representative are the *chu ti*, the flute used in operatic music, and the *pang-ti* used to play northern *pang-tzu* tunes. The former is thicker and longer with a soft, mellow tone. It was played in the Yangtse Valley as accompaniment in *kunchu* and other types of opera or in instrumental music with fiddles and flutes. The *pang-ti*, smaller and shorter with a higher pitch, produces sharp, clear tones and was used to accompany *pang-tzu* or clapper tunes or other types of northern folk music.

Since the Cultural Revolution improved flutes have appeared, some with keys and twelve chromatic tones in equal temperament. A smaller flute has also been made. Many new compositions have been performed such as *A Song for the People's Liberation Army*, *Harvesting* and *Morning on the Miao Hills* which express our minority nationalities' love for their new life under socialism. These performances are widely acclaimed, as are renderings of the traditional *Three Variations on the Melody "Plum Blossom"*.

In *A Song for the People's Liberation Army*, the clear vigorous prelude conjures up the beautiful scenery of Tibet. The first movement is a song by the emancipated serfs of Tibet to the People's Liberation Army which saved them. Vibrato and other techniques to express the joyful feelings of the Tibetan people are skilfully used. This movement is strongly reminiscent of folk-singing, while the second has the cadence of Tibetan dancing, its stirring rhythms revealing the Tibetan people's admiration and affection for the People's Liberation Army. Interweaving solo flute passages with orchestral music, the composition reaches a jubilant climax.

Morning on the Miao Hills is played with the small flute and adapted from the clear, high-pitched melodies of certain Miao folk tunes. Listening to it, we fancy we can see the Miao people merrily climbing their dewy hills to





till their fields in the early morning sunlight. The hills are verdant with trees and bamboos, and the people's commune is lovely as a picture. The flute also imitates the chorus of bird-song which seems to be sending off the commune members. It carries the audience into a realm of enchantment.

Three Variations on the Melody "Plum Blossom" is said to have been composed for the flute by General Huan Yi during the Eastern Tsin Dynasty (A.D. 317-420) while sauntering by a stream in the woods. It was later made into lute music.

Musicians have now adapted it again for the flute with the *cheng* or Chinese harp as accompaniment, retaining the best features of the original but cutting repetitious passages. This work evokes the fortitude of the winter plum blossoming so proudly in the snow and frost.

A wood-wind prototype of the *suona* was introduced into China from Persia and the Arab countries during the twelfth or the thirteenth century. It was already widely used by the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). Different types of this instrument later evolved, the chief being the *lapa*, *tatsui*, *haiti* and *hsiaoching*. The *suona's* conical pipe is made of redwood. It has eight finger holes in all, seven in the upper side and one on the lower. It is fitted with a brass mouthpiece in which is a reed-whistle; the opening end consists of a brass funnel. The *suona* has a resonant, piercing note and its expressive power has won it an important place in folk orchestras. Since Liberation this instrument's tonal quality and modulation have been much improved. A new type fitted with keys has a whole range of semi-tones and is easy to modulate.

A Hundred Birds Contend in Singing is a traditional folk tune very popular among the labouring masses of China, being gay, lively and full of local colour. The imitations of cuckoo-calls, the cooing of doves, the twittering of swallows and the songs of thrushes and nightingales with which the music is interspersed create a fresh and festive atmosphere. The whole composition evokes a scene of natural beauty and charm and reflects the optimism of the working people. By improving on the mouthpiece, *suona* performers have been able to enrich the traditional performing techniques and convey the chirping and whirring flight of the cicada, as well as the singing of many different birds. The *suona* solo is accompanied by an orchestra and this, too, has helped to make something new of this traditional folk tune.

Another *suona* item *All Members of Our Commune Turn Towards the Sun* pays tribute to our peasants' love for the Chinese Communist Party. This short melody in the traditional *suona* style is based on a song of the same title. After a brief prelude the *suona* trumpets forth a cheerful tune expressing our commune members' joy and pride over the great socialist age in which we live and their appreciation of the people's commune. In the second movement, by a double-tonguing technique, a quick, leaping rhythm is produced suggesting the peasants' splendid determination to farm for the revolution and the speed and energy with which they work. Finally, the music soars up a whole octave like a surging tide and reaches a grand climax.

Two Oil Paintings

The Fight Goes On and *Before the Lecture*, two of the oil paintings reproduced in this issue, are a reflection of our current deep-going movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius. Both depict a PLA fighter writing an essay of repudiation: both present a typical image with strong individual characteristics.

The soldier in *The Fight Goes On* has a fiery temperament. Sitting on a pack of explosives beside a tank with a rifle slung behind him, he is writing an essay to repudiate Lin Piao's revisionist line during a break in a drill. His determination to persist in fighting — whether with a rifle or a pen — is brought out vividly through the sweat on his face, his compressed lips, the indignation in his eyes, his foot braced against a tree trunk and his intense concentration.

Before the Lecture shows a soldier, deep in thought, re-reading his notes for a lecture on repudiating Lin Piao and Confucius. The alarm clock, the two candle stubs, the profile of a bugler in the distance outside the window, and the unruffled bed — all indicating that he has sat up all night — bring out his tenacity and fighting spirit.

The smile around the corners of his mouth manifests his confidence in victory.

From these two paintings we see the common feature of both soldiers, that is, their strong class consciousness and awareness of the two-line struggle and their magnificent revolutionary fervour. Yet their personal characters are well brought out too. The soldier in *The Fight Goes On* is daring and hard-working while the other impresses us above all by his tenacity.

The distinctive colours and atmosphere of the two paintings highlight the image of the fighters. The background of *The Fight Goes On* is laid in the shade of a tank with the sun shining on the soldier and his manuscript. *Before the Lecture* shows a dark corner of a room with the morning sun slanting in through the window on to the head and chest of the soldier and his notes. The sunlight in the first painting is bright and strong while the soldier in the second is bathed in soft morning rays, and this conforms with the fiery temperament of the first soldier and the firmness and steadiness of the other.

The painters of these two oils are rank-and-file members of the PLA who live amid turbulent struggles. By taking part in the army's movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius, making careful investigations of the setting up of theoretical groups in different companies and witnessing many moving incidents, they have seen how ordinary soldiers with little schooling have become mainstays of the theoretical groups by painstakingly studying the works of Marxism-Leninism and Chairman Mao and analysing the history of the struggle between the Confucian and Legalist schools and the history of class struggle. On the basis of a deep understanding of life they have concentrated, refined and generalized the materials they collected from real life and created these well-received paintings.

CHRONICLE

Festival of New Stage Productions in Peking

Last year two festivals of new stage productions from certain provinces and autonomous regions were held in Peking. Recently another such festival, sponsored by the Ministry of Culture, opened in the capital.

These new stage productions came from the Sinkiang Uighur Autonomous Region and the provinces of Shensi, Heilungkiang and Szechuan. Other provinces and autonomous regions which have not yet presented their new theatrical works in Peking will take part in similar festivals in the near future.

Festivals of this kind spur the implementation of Chairman Mao's proletarian revolutionary line in literature and art, as well as the militant task of deepening and carrying forward the socialist revolution in all spheres of the superstructure as called for by the Fourth National People's Congress. They encourage the production of more socialist works of literature and art, and thereby give fresh impetus to the proletarian revolution in this field.

This dramatic festival follows Chairman Mao's directives to make the past serve the present, to make foreign things serve China, to let a hundred flowers bloom and to evolve the new from the old. The different provinces and the Sinkiang Uighur Autonomous Region have all presented their local adaptations of revolutionary model operas or scenes from these in the form of Uighur, Shensi, Szechuan

and *pingchu* operas. The items include works which reflect the Cultural Revolution and our present socialist revolution and socialist construction, as well as others with themes based on revolutionary history. The majority are dramas, but songs and dances, orchestral music and other items have also been presented.

This festival enriched the cultural life of Peking during the Spring Festival.

Mass Singing in Peking and Shanghai

To celebrate the successful convening of the Fourth National People's Congress, mass singing rallies were held in Peking, Shanghai and other parts of China. Fifteen thousand workers took part in the rally held in Peking. That held in Shanghai was attended by several thousand workers from different fronts, poor and lower-middle peasants and PLA armymen as well as young Red Guards and Little Red Soldiers. They sang in praise of our great Party and our great motherland, expressed their determination to carry the movement to denounce Lin Piao and Confucius through to the end, and voiced their joy at the convening of the Fourth National People's Congress. The items presented were enthusiastically applauded.

Annotated Selections from Writings by Ancient Legalists

To meet the needs of the movement to repudiate Lin Piao and Confucius and to spread its influence deeper among the masses, the Peking People's Publishing House and the Shanghai People's Publishing House have both published annotated selections from the writings of ancient Legalists.

Since the movement to denounce Lin Piao and Confucius began in 1974, workers, peasants and soldiers of Peking and Shanghai, as well as revolutionary cadres and revolutionary intellectuals in these two cities, have been striving to use a Marxist standpoint and method to criticize Confucian books, study and annotate writings

by Legalists, and sum up the historical experience of past struggles between the Confucians and Legalists and of other class struggles, to serve the needs of present-day class struggle and the struggle between the socialist and the bourgeois lines. These two selections of Legalist writings are the fruits of their study.

The first volume published in Peking includes twenty-one works by eight Legalists dating from the sixth to the first century B.C. Their authors are Sun Wu, Shang Yang, Hsun Kuang, Han Fei, Li Ssu, Chia Yi, Chao Tsuo and Sang Hung-yang. The first volume of the Shanghai selection consists of nineteen works by Shang Yang, Hsun Kuang, Han Fei and Li Ssu who lived between the fourth and the third century B.C.

These two selections with annotations and comments introduce these famous Legalists and analyse their works, affirming the progressive significance of these writings while pointing out their historical and class limitations. The clear expositions and concise notes of both volumes make them popular texts for the masses.

New-Year Pictures, Musical Scores and Plays Published

To meet the demand for popular art during the traditional Spring Festival, some publishing houses in Peking have published a large number of New-Year pictures, musical scores and short plays.

The New-Year pictures outnumber those published in past years and surpass them in variety and quality too. The People's Art Publishing House alone has published more than forty different New-Year pictures, most of them the work of amateur artists from the ranks of workers, peasants and soldiers. These vividly reflect the splendid scenes on various fronts throughout the country resulting from the Cultural Revolution and the movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius. They are highly realistic and true to life.

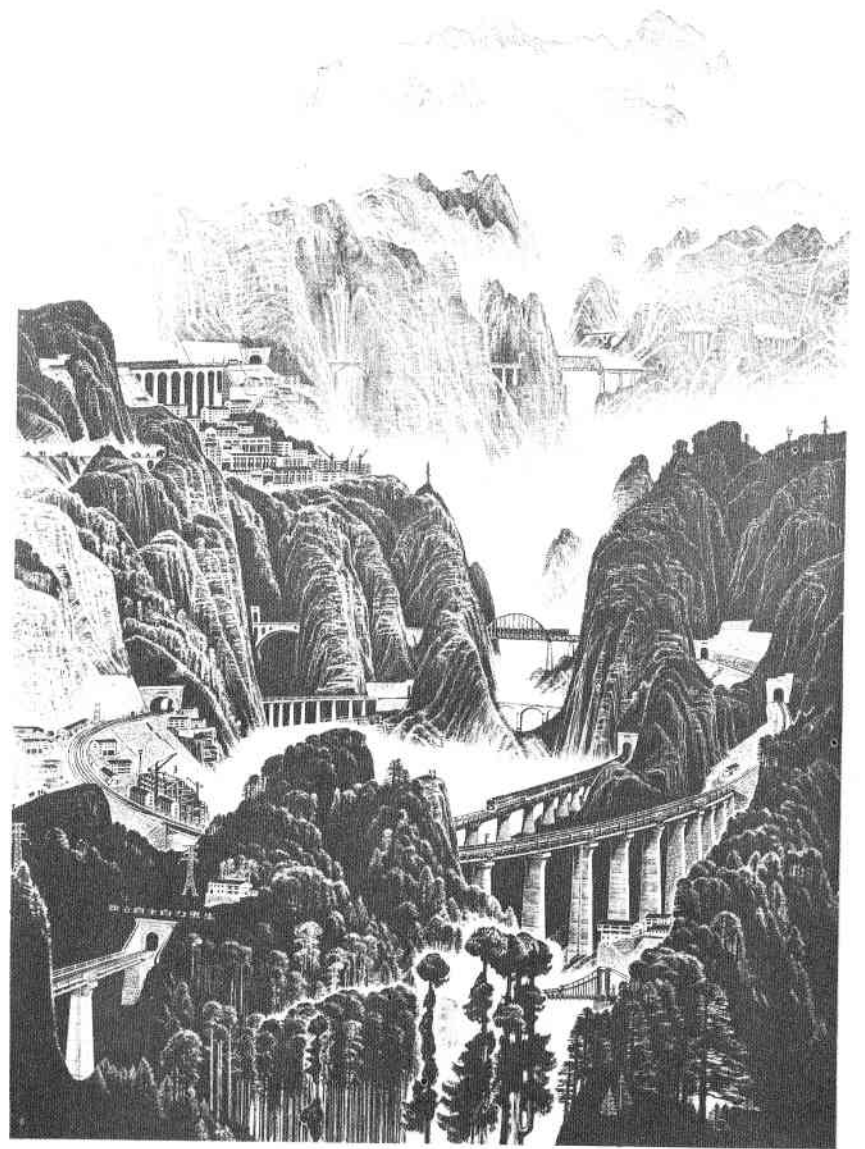
Other publications include the short dramas *Half a Basket of Peanuts* and *Before the Thunderstorm* and *Selected Arias from Revolutionary Modern Peking Operas*, *Revolutionary Songs* and some scores of instrumental music.

New Peasant Paintings from Hsiyang County

Hsiyang County in Shansi Province is famous as the home of the Tachai Production Brigade. In recent years amateur art activities have developed rapidly among the peasants there, who have painted many pictures reflecting their struggles and their life.

There are now more than four hundred peasant artists in this county. During the past year they have produced more than sixty sets of lantern slides, more than three hundred wall paintings, and more than a thousand paintings of other kinds. These breathe a revolutionary militant spirit and are full of realism and local colour. From different angles they depict the heroism of the people of Tachai Brigade and Hsiyang County who are battling with Nature and transforming their land under the guidance of Chairman Mao's revolutionary line. They reveal too how splendidly the peasants of this whole county are learning from the example of the Tachai Brigade.

Published by Foreign Languages Press
Yu Chou Hung, Peking (37), China
Printed in the People's Republic of China



The New Railway (woodcut)

by **Feng Chung-tieh**



中国文学

英文月刊1975年第4期

本刊代号2-916