

CHINESE LITERATURE



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Front Cover: Forest Dawn — *Chao Mei*

STORIES

Sunny-Side Pine

Everyone calls him the old director. He is Chen Hung, Party secretary and chairman of the Revolutionary Committee of the Great Wall Ridge Iron Mine.

I first met him in 1958 when I was a reporter on the staff of the *Iron and Steel Battlefront*.

One morning in autumn I was sent to cover the iron and steel production frontline on Hulung Mountain. A leading comrade at the headquarters for developing the iron and steel industries in northern Hopei told me, "Do you know that their command post is being moved?"

"Where to?" I asked, interested.

"To Sunny-side Slope."

This story and the following one were selected from a collection of short stories entitled *Sunny-Side Pine* published in 1975 by the Peking People's Publishing House. The stories, set in the Yenshan Iron Mine north of Peking, were written collectively by a group of miners. They describe the life and struggles of the miners before and after the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

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"You don't mean Sunny-side Slope!" I smiled sceptically. "Except for a ramshackle old temple, there's not a single house in sight there. Why..."

"You can't believe it either!" he laughed, cutting me short. "They called a Party committee meeting to study this problem specifically. And the suggestion originated from Chen Hung, the new director of the mine."

"The new director, eh?" My mind reverted to the familiar face of Comrade Huang Fei, vice-director of the mine. He was a very careful and timid man who seemed to lack the calibre for bold decisions. He liked to corner a friendly soul and complain with a rueful smile, "Look what a lot we've got to do here. How can we cope unless they give us a director?"

Now, my narrator went on to say, "This Chen Hung started revolutionary work in the early days of the War of Resistance against Japan and he still carries in him some unremoved enemy shrapnel. An old regimental commander only recently demobbed, he got to the heart of the problem as soon as he arrived. He's put his fingers on the fundamentals too." Then he told me what had happened.

Three days ago, in spite of a pouring rain, Chen Hung arrived at Hulong Mountain at the head of three hundred newly demobilized men. They found that the command post was in the town of Hulong, about eight kilometres from the construction sites.

"For a project as big as this one, why is the command post in the rear?" the old commander wanted to know.

"You see, local conditions are such, there's no place to set up offices for a command post nearer the mine itself," said one of the miners. "So Director Huang said he would move the staff to the mountains when new offices are built."

"But how are we to command the work from there?" asked the commander again, a question which none of the miners present could answer. They looked blankly at one another. After a pause, a chubby young fellow piped up, "Use a car, of course. Doesn't Vice-director Huang whizz by in a car every day? He seems to spend most of his time in that car of his."

Just then the tooting of a car was heard from the foothills.

"See, here's Vice-director Huang come to welcome you," said one of the miners and on that note they left.

Huang was very pleased to see his colleague. Gripping Chen Hung's hand, he said in great joy: "I've been looking forward to your coming, Director Chen. Why, I simply couldn't manage by myself, leading a command post for so big a mining enterprise. If not for that car, I couldn't even find time to come to the construction sites. My hands are so full with meetings and telephone calls."

Chen laughed. "That's a fact. It is a wretched business being cooped up in an office! Telephone calls, charts, meetings... they're enough to bog anyone down."

"That's just it." Vice-director Huang couldn't suppress a sigh.

"I'm a complete layman as regards running a mine," Director Chen continued. "But let's try to learn together from the masses."

Huang Fei nodded. In a tone of perplexity he said, "I must say the miners have plenty of drive; can't beat them at work. The only thing is they like to criticize: You're either a bureaucrat or you're becoming a 'flying commander'... such talk can give you a real headache."

"But criticism's good," said Director Chen smiling. "The masses' criticism will clear our heads." He gave Huang Fei a friendly look before continuing, "I've only just arrived, Old Huang, and may very well be talking through my hat. But I want to discuss an idea of mine with you."

"What's that?" Huang Fei was not expecting this.

"We should bring our command post to the construction front. This will enable us to lead the work on the spot and put us where we have our feet firmly planted among the masses."

"That..." Huang Fei was seized with uneasiness. He realized that critical remarks must have reached the new director's ears. Shaking his head with a helpless gesture, he said, "Very hard to deal with this problem really. Ours is such a big set-up. If we move up closer to construction, where are we to put the offices? There's not a proper house on the whole work-site."

"Come, let's go and take a turn first." Without waiting for a reply Chen took Huang's arm and started in high spirits on a long walk round Sunny-side Slope.

There were countless little sheds and newly dug caves all around the slope which made up the housing area for the more than two thousand workers on the mining site. Because construction had begun so suddenly there had been no time for preliminary building. And yet there were few villages of a fair size round about Hulung Mountain. To solve the problem of housing, the workers made do by digging into the mountain sides, making temporary cave dwellings, sheds or dugouts which they covered with mats and thatch and lined with straw and hay. Into these they cheerfully moved.

After the two directors had circled round the workers' quarters, they went up Sunny-side Slope, stopping outside a broken-down old temple.

"It's just an old temple. Want to see it too?" asked Huang Fei.

"Let's go in for a look." Director Chen went in with Huang at his heels. After a while Chen came out and turned to Huang Fei with a smile. "What do you think about setting up headquarters here?"

"Put our command post here?" Huang thought the question amusing. He shook his head firmly. "It's too broken down."

"We'll repair it."

"Repair it? Can't be done. Whoever heard of setting up a headquarters for more than two thousand workers in a ramshackle temple?"

"It's been done. In the war years, very often the command post was in the trenches and we even did our office work on horseback."

"That was during the war. We are now on socialist construction, Director Chen." Huang Fei shook his head gently, smiling.

"That is precisely why we should carry on the old revolutionary traditions."

"The place is too small, too shabby." Huang was still adamant.

"Of course it's shabby if you compare it with a modern building: it's only a temple the size of three rooms. But we can hardly sit and wait until a proper building is finished before setting up our head-

quarters. Besides, all the miners live in caves and cellars, is there any reason why we should enjoy privileges?"

"Well..."

"The miners have been talking." Director Chen eyed Huang, then smiled. "We Communists must always keep the masses in mind. What's more, in developing industry and construction work we must stick to the principle of building our enterprise by hard work and frugality, using whatever is available and economical. We must never care too much about appearances."

The vice-director now had nothing to say. "All right," he mumbled after a pause. "Let's call a Party committee meeting then and study the question."

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When the story was told, my narrator stood up. He handed me a bulletin sheet from the mine. "See there? The Party committee quickly unified its thinking and the decision to move was made."

I looked down at the bulletin in my hand. Indeed, the headline was very refreshing: "Go to the frontlines — to be with the miners!"

1

It was autumn. The rain-washed sky was so clear it seemed exceptionally high. After cutting through a stretch of pathways, I reached the highway leading towards the mine. Here, cars swept by and horse-drawn carts rumbled past. Groups of happy people marched down the road. I was captivated by the lively scene of a big leap forward in production and pedalled on with redoubled energy towards the hillside. Jumping off my bike at the foot of Sunny-side Slope, I looked up and noticed figures moving outside the ramshackle temple. In a few minutes they all entered. So the command post had already moved in! That was fast! I headed straight for the temple myself.

An old pine reaching to the sky stood outside the temple gate. Being the only pine-tree on the slope, people called it sunny-side pine. Green and sturdy, its knotted branches spread out on high so that it was visible from quite a distance away. So well situated

was it that from there you had all the dugouts and caves under your eyes. The pine was the highlight of the slope and also its centre. Hulung Peak rose magnificently to its north while Hulung River rippled gently along its south flank. At its foot was the small village of Chingsih and further away in the distance the town of Hulung. It was indeed a fine place except that the only building there, the temple, was too old and ramshackle. Being high up it was also very windy. That was why nobody lived up there. Ordinarily, except for an occasional passerby going to or from work, few people ever went up there. Now that headquarters was being moved, it would surely bring a change to this lonely spot.

It took me quite a little while to make my way to the top. Looking towards the temple I saw dust swirling out its gate as several men in army uniform were busy cleaning and dusting inside. Under the old pine was a mound of fine brown earth. For repairs? Perhaps headquarters hadn't arrived yet. Before I could enter the temple and ask, I heard the soft creaking of a carrying-pole. From the winding pathway to my left came a big man bearing water buckets which swayed with his lithe movements. As he drew nearer I noticed the faded colour of his army uniform. His tunic was open at his chest and his sleeves and trouser-legs were rolled up high. Although hatless and bare-footed, he was perspiring heavily. His eyebrows were bushy above smiling eyes and there was a kindly look round the curve of his thick lips. The way he carried his load and his firm steady gait as he came up the slope gave me the impression of an experienced veteran cook. When he came nearer I went up to him. "Carrying water?" I asked.

"Um!" He gave me only a casual glance before busying himself with setting down his buckets. Quietly, he took up a fork to make a small hollow in the pile of new earth. Then dropping the fork he emptied the buckets into the hollow. This done he picked up a spade and began deftly mixing mud. His movements were quick and agile. I went closer to strike up a conversation. "Mixing mud to do some repairs?"

I was favoured with another grunt as he went on busily with what he was doing. I decided I'd better go somewhere else. At that



juncture he asked, "Say, young fellow, are you looking for someone?"

"The new director of the mine."

"Is there something you want?"

"I just want to see him. Do you happen to know him?"

"I do know him." He went on working busily.

"I heard he proposed to have headquarters moved here as soon as he arrived at the mine," said I.

"No. That suggestion came from the masses." He corrected me as if he knew what he was saying. Then he laughed and said, "Here, young man, lend us a hand, will you?" A shovel was thrust into my hands.

Unable to refuse, I took up the tool and pitched in. Before I had shovelled twice he cried out, "Hey, that's no way to mix mud. You're just shoving around at random."

I was a little surprised at this dressing-down from a stranger. But when I saw how vigorously he was working, standing barefoot in the muddy water with mud splattered all over his face and clothes, I felt ashamed. He looked at least twenty years my senior and yet he was working so hard. I decided to follow his example. Taking off my shoes and socks, I rolled up my trouser-legs, spat on my hands and jumped into the mud heap, determined to work with real gusto. Unfortunately I shovelled too hard this time so that mud splattered all over my face. My companion burst into laughter. Then he nodded approvingly. "That's the way to work. You can't try to stay clean when you're mixing mud."

"Uncle, here I am!" There came a peal of girlish laughter like the tinkling of brass bells. A little girl in a flowery blouse came up Sunny-side Slope, a basket on her back. I recognized her as Chi Hsiao-ying who lived in Chingshih Village at the foothills. Before I could say anything, my companion hastened over to take the loaded basket from her back. "Thanks ever so much, Hsiao-ying," he said. I saw the basket was full of golden straw, chopped fine.

"Don't thank me. This is to help our iron and steel industries." Hsiao-ying smiled at the old comrade as she wiped her damp brows.

"How much is there?" he pursued.

She tossed her pigtailed. "I didn't bother to weigh it. My grandpa said we're giving this in support of the iron and steel industries."

"But . . . but we can't take anything from the masses just like that."

Warmed by the friendly exchange between these two, I walked up to greet Hsiao-ying.

"Are you here too, uncle?" With a skip and a hop, Hsiao-ying came over to me.

"Do you two know each other?" the old comrade asked, putting down the basket of straw.

"He often comes to have a drink of water or tea at our place. He's the reporter from the *Battlefront*." Hsiao-ying smiled at me with a twinkle.

"Ha, ha. . . . So I've conscripted a reporter to mix mud for me, eh? You must forgive me, Comrade Reporter."

"Please don't talk like that," I protested and we all laughed. Then I purposely held up the basket to gauge its weight. "Hsiao-ying's getting to be really smart. She's carried more than twenty catties without trouble it seems."

Hsiao-ying giggled. "This wheat straw takes up space but isn't heavy. If it had been dried grass I could easily carry thirty catties in this basket."

"Good," chuckled the old comrade. "Comrade Reporter, will you please write out a receipt for twenty-five catties of straw for me to give to Hsiao-ying?"

"All right." I quickly produced a notebook and began writing.

But clever little Hsiao-ying seized an opportunity when my companion bent down for a tool to empty her basket on the mud pile. Slinging the basket on her back, she raced away. "Don't bother to write any receipt," she shouted. "I won't take it."

"Hey, Hsiao-ying, stop!" we called after her, but Hsiao-ying went off without turning her head.

"What a girl!" laughed my companion as he pitched in again with his fork. While we were working with a will, someone else came up the hillside.

"Hello there, Vice-director Huang!" I called out cheerfully.

"Hello, Comrade Liu, haven't seen you for some time." Huang came up to shake hands and exclaimed in surprise, "How come you're doing a mason's work here?"

"That. . . ." When I looked down at my bare legs and mud-bespattered self, I couldn't help laughing. "I've been conscripted," I told him.

He looked at my companion and exclaimed with even greater surprise, "Director Chen, why are you doing this work yourself?"

"It's done much faster if I do it myself." Chen straightened up to smile at me. "And I've conscripted a reporter to work for me."

Amidst our laughter, Huang put down his pack and picked up a tool also. As he worked with us, he grumbled: "You know, Director Chen, you have only to say the word to get the place repaired. We've more than two thousand workers here. Couldn't we have found the kind of mason you want? Is it necessary for you to start on this yourself?"

Director Chen gave him a look. "If I recruited workers to do our repairs, that'd really be bureaucratic." He entered the temple with a spadeful of newly mixed mud.

We followed, each with a spadeful.

The mud idols had long since been removed from the temple which was empty except for the litter of broken bricks and tiles. There were many holes in the wall and the roof, both large and small. If not for the strong wooden frame, the building would long since have collapsed. Director Chen, trowel and mortar-board in hand, started work cheerfully. Soon large holes and then small ones disappeared from sight. To some young men in army uniforms, he cried, "Find some mats and thatch, young fellows, and cover the roof." Before long, under his direction, the roof was also repaired. Turning to me with a broad smile, he asked, "What do you think of the building now?"

"Not bad. Seems to be weather-proof."

"That's just it. Men must create the right conditions for themselves. Now that we've stuffed the holes and repaired the leaks, this temple will do all right." Director Chen was in high spirits.

"Director Chen, do we move in all the office staff?" asked Huang.

"All."

"It seems to me we might wait a bit before we move them all."

"Why?" asked Chen.

Huang laughed. "It's nothing for the two of us to move up. But to move all the office staff, that'll involve more than just one or two people." He shook his head and glanced at Chen again. "This is such a big set-up. Wherever are we to put everyone?"

"That's something you needn't worry about. As long as we, the leaders, are determined to set up house here in this temple, I'm sure our office staff will gladly rough it with us here on the slope. You see, the leadership is the key." Director Chen waved his big hand. Still smiling he said, "Come, Old Huang, stop dithering. Weren't you anxious to get rid of the odious label of bureaucracy? I think this'll be the best way to do it. Make up your mind and move the whole office organization into the midst of the masses. I'm sure everything will turn out all right."

Huang laughed at this. "If only it'll turn out as you say."

One of the men came over. "Everything's ready, director. Shall we move in right away?"

"Yes, we'll move in now," came Chen's firm reply. Still laughing and talking, we went into the temple hall to look it over. Pointing to the old wooden tablet hanging over the lintel, Huang Fei said, "We ought to remove that old tablet."

"No need," said Chen. "All we need do is write over it the new name for this place."

"And what will you call it?" I asked.

Chen stopped to think. "Let's call it Windy Tower."

The men were moving in an oblong table and some stools.

"A table and two stools," said Chen happily. "Add a telephone and everything'll be fine."

Huang Fei found paper and ink. With a flourish of the writing brush he wrote "Windy Tower" and pasted the paper over the old lettering on the tablet.

That night, I moved into Windy Tower with the two directors. Chen looked mighty pleased and we talked together for a good while. We discussed the mine today and what it would be like in the years to come. I could sense the depth of his vision and noticed also the openness and humour of his character.

When I woke up in the middle of the night, I saw that Director Chen was still not asleep. A pair of spectacles perched on his nose he was mending a jacket. When I turned over softly I saw that the soldier sleeping by him was covered by the director's coat. Now I understood. He was mending the soldier's jacket for him.

After this I went again several times to the mine, always looking up the old director at Windy Tower. Usually he was busy with the workers, blasting out a cliff or carrying rock or ore. Sometimes he would be sitting with them exchanging the time of day. Whenever he had a minute to spare, he would work on the land outside Windy Tower, carrying earth or levelling terraces to make small plots for vegetables and tree saplings. With the director taking the lead, the office workers cleared out a space large enough for a sports ground under sunny-side pine. Here a pair of basket-ball nets were put in and green pines planted all around the place. Sunflowers grew up around the old temple. Before long, the three-room building, small though it was, turned into a centre of activity for the whole mining enterprise. Here, small gatherings were held and here too, big meetings were convened. Even when there were no meetings, the workers came after work to play a game of basket-ball or to talk things over with the leaders. Some came merely to listen to the old director's revolutionary stories. From morning till night, Windy Tower was a hive of activity.

The pace of construction at the mine was so rapid, it was like growing sorghum near harvest time: you can see a difference in its growth over only half a day. Before long, across the thirty-six peaks of Hulung Mountain an opencut mining site appeared, tier upon tier. Winding tunnels were dug in the hillside, high-tension wires stretched across the horizon and numerous pathways led to the shafts and veins. Then, all round Sunny-side Slope, row upon row of storied buildings sprang up as well as low brick houses. Soon, with the help given by fraternal units, all kinds of equipment arrived at the mine. Overjoyed at these tremendous changes, Vice-director Huang was all smiles and full of pep. "Things depend on how much effort we make," he told me every time I came. "Just you wait and see. There'll be many more changes to come." He also put forward many new ideas and suggestions during this period.

By 1962, however, Liu Shao-chi and his lot went against Chairman Mao's instructions to build up the iron and steel industries in a big

way. Orders were issued for the mine to close down. At the end of the year I was assigned a task at the mine. I was told to go and see how the orders for closing down were being implemented and submit a report on the basis of my investigations. I felt as if I'd swallowed a frozen persimmon in the midst of bitter winter — an icy chill ran down my spine. How could they close down such a big, flourishing mine? The old director had put so much thought and time into the mine; he'd poured in his very life's blood and all for naught. Why was I of all people asked to play the role of the "inspector-general" in this? I was filled with dismay. It was with a heavy heart that once again I went to the mine.

In the past when I went there I always looked up at the mountain as soon as I crossed the river. An indescribable joy would fill my heart at sight of the opencut mining veins in the distance and sunny-side pine reaching into the sky. I would listen happily to the roars of blasting reverberating in the hills. But this time I was too downcast. Hulung Mountain stood as always in majestic splendour, but I no longer heard that stirring sound of blasting. The old pine appeared, as lush and green as ever. The young pine saplings surrounding it even seemed to have grown bigger. This soothed my uneasy heart a little. I perked up enough to walk swiftly up the road leading to the mine. By the time I had climbed halfway up Sunny-side Slope I paused to look round. Storied buildings and low brick houses stretched silently row upon row. All was quiet. There was not a soul in sight. Gone? Were they all gone then?

To my surprise I discovered there were quite a number of people sitting quietly on the basket-ball court under the big pine. Were they having a meeting? I was a little stunned. When I looked again, I saw a tall sturdy figure by the window of Windy Tower. It was Director Chen. Close beside him, with his back against the wall sat Vice-director Huang who seemed quite depressed. Not daring to butt in I sat down quietly behind some of the miners.

"Why look so glum, comrades?" asked the old director. "Come now, you must perk up. We've got to stick it out."

"Stick it out? All the men have been transferred. How ever are we to carry on?" came a voice from the crowd.

The director gave the speaker a look. "Who said all the men have been transferred away? There're sixty of us left to watch over the homestead. Sixty men make two whole platoons, you know. In the war years, two platoons were a pretty powerful force. As long as we pull together and unite our forces, our sixty pairs of hands will be able to cut a huge chunk out of Hulung Mountain if we stick it out for two or three years."

Animation rippled through the men. After a pause came an indignant question, "Aren't they saying that Hulung Mountain has no more potentials and there aren't any more ore left?"

"Who says so? It's pure nonsense. Look! What do you call that?" roared someone springing to his feet and pointing to a pile of ore lying on the slope.

"Then, why do they close down our mine?"

"Why? Why?" roared the workers in unison.

The director, also roused, looked around him. With a wave of his big hand, he cried, "This is the same kind of wind as that gusting round the villages calling on the peasants to farm on their own. Comrades, we need to use our heads and think things out."

"That's true. Chairman Mao says that the people's communes are fine, but someone insists on calling for individual farming. Chairman Mao calls on us to build up the iron and steel industries in a big way, but again someone closes down iron mines and steelworks. Whatever is the matter?"

The director glanced at the old worker and said calmly, "You've got a good point there, master worker. Chairman Mao says, **'Opposition and struggle between ideas of different kinds constantly occur within the Party; this is a reflection within the Party of contradictions between classes and between the new and the old in society.'** Comrades, we have to use our heads and give the matter serious thought."

"Tell us what to do, old director. We'll all do as you say." The miners stood up one by one, eager to hear the director's answer. Again he waved his hand, signing to them to sit down. "As long as we are here we'll see that ore is mined from this ridge," he cried, his voice powerful with determination. "We must have confidence

and believe that the mine will reopen someday." He turned to look at Huang Fei. "Vice-director Huang will talk to you now about the task ahead of us."

Huang got to his feet and cleared his throat. "Our provisional Party branch have been talking things over. We feel that at the moment the most important thing is to gather together our machines and equipment scattered all over the mine, clean them thoroughly and store them properly."

"Right. These are weapons in the hands of us miners. We must keep them intact to be used when the mine opens again. We must make a proper inventory of state property to ensure that nothing is lost." The director then signalled to Huang Fei to continue with what he was saying.

Huang soon finished talking about the assignment for those still left at the mine and the miners dispersed in groups. They had a clear orientation now and knew what they must do. Suddenly the director approached me.

"Comrade Liu," he said jovially. "Sorry to have kept you waiting. But you've seen how things are here. Now you can report the truth to the leadership."

So he had even guessed why I was there. I felt a little flustered. Without thinking twice, I blurted out, "You sure are bold. Don't you know what the trend's like now that you still talk about sticking it out?"

He roared with laughter. "So you too are worried on my behalf. Never mind. At worst, I shall only lose a director's title. Why not wear a peasant's straw hat instead of an official's cap? As long as I'm here I'll see to it that ore is mined on Great Wall Ridge." With that he took my hand in his warm one and we walked towards Windy Tower. He was not silent on the way but continued, "I'd heard you were coming. I've been warned, you see. They want me to be careful. There's no need really. To go in for iron and steel in a big way is something open and above board. It's not as if we were doing something underhand which we must make haste to hide." He shot me a glance. I smiled and nodded approvingly, so he went on, "I was advised to leave the mine and go to live in a city.

Do you think I could do that? Am I to be a deserter? Chairman Mao has told us, **'Only socialism can save China.'** Tell me, can we build socialism without iron and steel?" Growing more roused he spoke in a louder tone. There were flashes of fire in his glance. By the time we reached Windy Tower he was so worked up he was practically shouting. I didn't want to talk about my assignment and the question of closing down the mine when he was in such a state. But as if bent on supplying me with full evidence, he kept harping on the question. The cadres and the miners would work to extract ore in spite of the orders to close down, I was told. They had a plan drawn up to stick it out. . . . Finally he gave me a peculiar smile. "The sixty of us left here will all move out of the office building below, leaving only those on duty there."

"Move out?" I was taken aback.

He smiled. "We'll move into the temporary huts and sheds beside Windy Tower, like in the old days. We'll be closer together and we'll use rough-and-ready methods to extract ore."

I could see the director was ready to start afresh with his remaining men. They would carry on the tradition of arduous struggle and frugality with which he had begun work here. This showed that he and his comrades-in-arms had confidence in the eventual development of the mine.

Huang came in at this point. After exchanging the time of the day with me he turned to the director. "Things are going from bad to worse. The depot's had orders to stop supplying us with explosives and detonators."

"What? Have they clamped down on that too?" The director sprang to his feet, the veins on his wrinkled forehead throbbing.

"How can we extract ore without explosives?" Huang Fei spread out his hands in despair.

The old director grunted and sat down again in silence. Fishing out his pipe, he filled it and puffed on it without a word. At first his brows were tightly knit, his face stormy, but gradually his brows smoothed out. "Old Huang, let's call an emergency meeting of the Party branch. We'll put our heads together and see what's to be done."

Huang Fei agreed and left the room.

The director told me broodingly, "Now that the mine's closed down and the Party committee disbanded, we, a score or so of Party members left here, have become the mine's mainstay."

I nodded, convinced by his words.

"Why don't you sit in at our Party branch meeting? You'll hear our people's opinions."

When the meeting began, the director told them about the clamping down on the supply of explosives. Pandemonium broke out.

"We don't have enough workers left to begin with and now they've clamped down on our explosives. How are we to go on with the mining?"

"The greater the pressure, the more we should try to stick it out."

"We'll carry on even if we have to rely on hammer, pick and wedges."

"That's the spirit! We simply can't back down. It's obvious someone's bent on making things difficult. Since we want to carry on, they throttle us by cutting supplies. This is sabotaging the production of iron and steel."

"It's an attempt to cut down the mainstay of socialism. No, we can't let them."

Then the hubbub died down. Everyone turned expectant eyes on the two directors.

Vice-director Huang seemed to be in a quandary. He looked first at the miners and then at the old director. With a heavy heart he said, "Director, you're the Party secretary. Are we to stop work or not? You say the word."

The director knocked out his pipe. "We are the Party members of this mine. We mustn't forget that our iron and steel industries urgently need ores. We can't just sit back and watch over the mine, waiting for it to reopen." He swept the others with his eyes and, one big hand cutting the air with a wave, he announced decisively, "It seems to me we cannot stop. We have to keep going."

"Yes, keep going." Everyone got to his feet. Just then the telephone on the desk rang.

Huang Fei hurried over to pick it up. "Hello, who's that? Yes, I'm Huang Fei. What's that? You're stopping our supply of explosives? Yes, we've got the notice. What do we intend to do? Well, it's like this. We've had a Party meeting and our unanimous opinion is that we'll go on mining even if we have only hammer and pick to do it. What? . . . That's not allowed either? We're to stop work at once? We must await further orders? . . ." Huang Fei looked flustered. Beads of sweat gathered on his forehead. Still gripping the receiver, he turned with a helpless gesture to the director, "Director Chen!"

Chen strode over to take the receiver from Huang. Bushy brows tightly knit, he yelled into the receiver, "We object to such a decision. What's that? . . . Of course, I'll come to headquarters in person and tell you the miners' opinion." He slammed down the receiver.

"We object to such a decision!"

"We'll write to Chairman Mao and the Party Central Committee!" the Party members roared.

"I agree with you all," the director looked gravely from face to face, his own eyes clouded but determined. It was so quiet in Windy Tower that I could hear the sighing of the pines outside.

Suddenly we heard footsteps as a group of angry miners rushed in. A big fellow in front asked the director, "Is it true that orders have been given to stop our supply of explosives?"

The director nodded without a word.

The big fellow cried out, waving his hand, "All right then, we'll do our mining with hammers and picks. If they think they can throttle us this way, they've another think coming. They can't!"

"True! They can't!" shouted the miners.

This thundering roar brought a flicker of a smile to the director's face. He gripped the big fellow's hand and said with feeling, "My good comrade, that's the spirit."

His face flushed, the man stood proudly by the director, throwing out his broad chest. Sweeping the gathering again with his eyes, the director continued, "Comrades, we should have faith that with the brilliant leadership of Chairman Mao and the Party Central Committee, the mine will open again and construction work continue."

"Let's write to Chairman Mao and let the Central Committee know the situation. . . ."

A stir rippled through the crowd. The director looked at Huang Fei with emotion and Huang's eyes, fixed on the miners, slowly filled with tears. But in that instant his slightly hunched shoulders straightened up.

"When you write to Chairman Mao, count me in too!" This sudden outburst startled everybody. When I looked up, the miners had made way for the newcomer. It was an old man with hoary hair. Ah, it was Grandpa Chi Chun-shan and close behind him his granddaughter, Hsiao-ying, now in her teens. In the years since I saw her last, she had grown into a young woman. She was of medium height. Her bobbed hair framed a ruddy round face. Dark eyes glowed with the fire of youth though her lips were tightly pressed together to clamp down her agitation. The two went straight to the director.

Chen took Grandpa Chi's hand. "We welcome you, grandpa."

The old man pointed to his granddaughter. "Director, let me first have Hsiao-ying registered here. When she finishes middle-school, I want her to come and be a worker here at the mine."

"Hsiao-ying," The director took the girl's hand and scanned her face.

"So it's all settled then, Uncle Director?" asked Hsiao-ying with pride.

"Yes, it's settled," he said, touched by her eagerness. "Hsiao-ying, just you grow up quickly. With your spirit, I'm sure you'll become one of Chairman Mao's good miners."

The director then turned to Huang Fei. "Look, Old Huang, here are our miners and our poor and lower-middle peasants. We have Chairman Mao's leadership, we have the support of the workers and peasants. Our mine can't possibly stay closed indefinitely."

Huang nodded. He removed his glasses to wipe them.

"Comrades!" The director turned to the others. "The mine will not always be closed. Let's not lose heart but be ready to welcome the day when the mine opens again." Then he smiled at me.



"Comrade Liu, I must go to headquarters in person to report on the situation. What about you?"

"I'll come with you."

When we walked down Sunny-side Slope, I turned once more to look at the old pine. It stood dark and sturdy, surrounded by young green pines all over the slope. The sighing of the pines rose like a surging tide.

3

The rolling waves of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution which began in 1966 demolished the bourgeois headquarters headed by Liu Shao-chi. The mines and plants which they had forced to close down were reopened one by one under the warm care of the Party Central Committee and Chairman Mao. Many veteran miners and workers who had been transferred against their wish returned



in triumph with countless young people to fight again at their former post. During the triumphant progress of the Cultural Revolution, new revolutionary committees were born one after another. When I learned that the Revolutionary Committee for the Great Wall Ridge Iron Mine had been set up, I felt too excited to sleep a wink that night. Chen Hung, the old director who'd been in my thoughts so often, was elected chairman of the committee while his old comrade-in-arms Huang Fei was his deputy, a vice-chairman. The most exciting news, however, was that another vice-chairman elected was Chi Hsiao-ying. She had been a young Red Guard and was one of the first to sign on for the battle to reopen the mine. This village girl who had grown up by the mine went through the steeling and test of the Cultural Revolution right there at the mine. Together with other miners she rebelled against Liu Shao-chi and his handful of capitalist-roaders, growing into a young path-breaker whose name became known throughout the mining area. How I

longed to see my old comrades again and this younger generation of new miners. I also wanted to see the mine at work again.

In 1973 the Tenth Party Congress was victoriously convened. While the millions of our people and armymen were swept into a high tide of studying and implementing the spirit of the Party congress documents, I was given a welcome assignment. I was sent to the mine to write a story, so once again I went to Great Wall Ridge.

As soon as I crossed Hulung River I saw these words, "Develop the Mining Industry" inlaid into the mountain with rocks. Above them was the opencut mine which rose in tiers with narrow steps between them. From a distance they looked like terraced fields. On closer inspection I could make out figures flitting here and there as well as the tops of drilling machines and power-shovels. On the highway leading to the mines, trucks shuttled past. The mining area was alive again.

Hastening my steps I found on reaching the highway that it was a new paved asphalt road with a sign at the edge of the village. One of the arrows on the sign indicated that the ore-dressing plant was to its north and the other pointed to Sunny-side Slope to the east. Standing by the sign I looked northward to the rows of new factory buildings. I could hear indistinctly the rumbling of machines. Needless to say that was the new ore-dressing plant whose site was familiar to me, as preparations for its construction had begun before the mine was forced to close down though actual construction work did not start until the mine reopened. It was completed a year later and started production. I then looked towards Sunny-side Slope. It too had changed. The young pines planted by the old director himself had grown into a fine green pine grove while sunny-side pine stood at the top, greener and sturdier than ever. More new houses and buildings had been erected on the two flanks of the slope. I walked towards a new red building at the top and came face to face with a young woman. Looking at me with a smile, she asked, "Looking for someone, comrade?"

"I'm looking for the revolutionary committee. I want to see the old director."

"You'll find him at Windy Tower in the back."

"Is the director still living in Windy Tower?"

"Yes. That's where the office of the revolutionary committee is."

I looked where she pointed and made out a wooden placard attached to the trunk of sunny-side pine. The words "Revolutionary Committee of the Great Wall Ridge Iron Mine" were clearly inscribed. I remembered that in the old days when the old director first moved into Windy Tower there had been a similar placard here with the words Command Post instead of Revolutionary Committee. I walked to sunny-side pine and noticed people working in the low office buildings flanking it. The place looked exactly the same as in the days of the command post. But there was not a soul in sight when I entered Windy Tower. I put down my bag and scanned the former hall of the old temple. It was now partitioned into two. There were a desk and stools in the outer room leaving a smaller space for the inner room. I pushed open the door. There were two beds inside. I recognized the old director's green quilt with its patches on one of them and Huang Fei's old bedding on the other. So both the former leaders of Great Wall Ridge Iron Mine were still living here. Someone came in. It was a young woman of medium height. Before I could say anything she smiled broadly and seized my hand. "Don't you remember me, Comrade Liu?"

"Ah, so it's Chi Hsiao-ying. I hardly recognize you."

She pulled over a chair for me and then poured me a glass of water. "We haven't seen you for years," she said, laughing.

"That's right and what great changes have come over the mine!" I said. After a pause, I asked, "Where's the old director!"

"Both the director and Vice-chairman Huang are in the city attending a class to study the Tenth Party Congress documents. Anything I can do for you?"

"I never imagined that the old director would still be living in Windy Tower."

"Well, if you want to know, it's a long story." She proceeded to tell it to me.

Just before the revolutionary committee was set up, warm discussions on how to lead the masses to firmly implement Chairman Mao's

revolutionary line were launched at a preparatory meeting. People talked about ways to improve the leading body's style of work and how they must keep in close contact with the masses. The final item on the agenda was to decide the location of the revolutionary committee. The general view was: now that the new leading body was being formed they should move out of Windy Tower. His short pipe dangling from his lips, the old director listened to the discussion without a word, a smile on his face. Then he turned to Huang Fei, sitting beside him. "Tell us what you think, Huang." Huang Fei gave Hsiao-ying a look and whispered in her ear, "See, the old director is testing me again."

He stood up and cleared his throat. "I think we should just change our command post into the office of the revolutionary committee; we needn't move at all."

"But the revolutionary committee is a new-born red power," said someone. "It's something totally new, therefore we should move to a new place."

The old director stood up. Smiling he said, "I support Old Huang's idea. By setting up the revolutionary committee here, we're not only carrying on our Party's glorious tradition of hard work and arduous struggle but what is more important we are displaying the excellent style of work of our Party, that is, keeping in close contact with the masses. The revolutionary committee should be totally new as regards high efficiency, a stream-lined staff and thoroughgoing methods of work. It should have its office in the hearts of the masses and do its work right there in the mine pits. It seems to me we already have these three rooms and there are a number of makeshift work sheds in front of this building. If we repair them and do some remodelling, they'll be good enough. I propose that all of us on the revolutionary committee should pitch in right now and get the offices ready this very night. Let that be our first lesson." The director's words were greeted with tumultuous applause and, amidst happy laughter, the first battle of the revolutionary committee was launched under the old director. . . .

At this point the young woman I had met earlier entered. "Your telephone, Comrade Hsiao-ying," she said.

"Coming." Hsiao-ying got to her feet. "Will you wait a bit for me, Comrade Liu?" she asked. "I'd like to have a good chat with you later on." Taking a willow helmet from the wall, she left Windy Tower with the other young woman.

Looking out of the window I saw the two of them disappear into the pine grove. My thoughts were turbulent as I watched the old pine standing so erect and green and the grove of fine young pines all over sunny-side slope. A younger generation is maturing, radiant with the youthful ardour of an older generation of revolutionaries. That is how the cause of our Party flourishes and develops.

Illustrated by Shen Jao-yi

Honest Chung and His Family

In the thirty years I've worked for the revolution, I've met a great many people in countless different situations. Some of them I don't remember very well, some I've forgotten completely. But some of them still stand out clearly.

1

In the spring of 1943 the Party assigned me to an iron mine near the Great Wall Ridge run by the Japanese invaders and their puppets. My task was to build up underground Party membership and organize the miners to chop off the aggressors' plundering claws.

Thus I found myself among the miners of Hulong Mountain.

All of them were poor people from the north China plain press-ganged by the Japanese. Driven by whips and bayonets, they hacked out the ore and carried it down the mountain on their backs. There was no road, only a narrow footpath nearly six kilometres long winding down the mountain like a snake. Even empty-handed men trembled with every step at the thought of slipping off, let alone when

they were carrying up to fifty kilos of ore. Many miners had plunged to their death in the gorge below.

It was at the mine I got to know Honest Chung and his family. . . .

A storm was brewing one noon as I was cautiously plodding down the slope under a heavy load. At the entrance to Pear Gorge a sad and timid voice called out, "Brother, have you seen my father?"

Bent under my load, I looked up to see a young woman, gaunt, dishevelled and in rags standing at the side of the path. She was clutching a broken basket to her breast, a child wailed on her back. Shy and panicky, she kept darting glances up and down the twisting trail as she spoke. For when rainstorms came the miners' families became half-crazed for fear of what might happen to their men along that treacherous path.

I shook my head apologetically. "Who's your father?"

"Honest Chung."

Honest Chung? I knew that name! I was about to ask another question when she cried out happily, "Oh, there they are!" and dashed toward two men trudging downhill under their loads of ore. I slowed down. Honest Chung?

In my home village there had been a tall, stocky, middle-aged blacksmith who used to trundle a wheelbarrow laden with a small forge along the roads and lanes from village to village. He had no personal name, only the family name Chung. Because he was upright and honest, the villagers called him Honest Chung. A sturdy boy, who often accompanied him, they took to be his son and nicknamed him "Little Blacksmith". One year there was a drought along the Hulong River and from that time on I had not seen Honest Chung again. I heard later that his wife had starved to death, leaving him with their fourteen-year-old son and his son's childbride of twelve or thirteen. Wheeling his barrow with his tools and few possessions, he had fled the village with the children to try to earn a living somewhere else. Some eight years had gone by since then.

Were the Chungs really here? I would so like to see the blacksmith in this mine crawling with the invaders. People like the Chungs make up the masses our Party relies on. Leaning my load against a rock, I pretended to be resting in order to have a closer look.



The two miners drew nearer. A tall swarthy fellow with a stubble trudged in front, panting. Sweat trickled down his face. The young woman rushed up to him crying, "Dad!" The man raised his head.

Was this man Honest Chung? I wasn't sure. The woman wiped away her tears then took two bran buns filled with wild roots and leaves from her basket and gave them to him. He glanced at the baby on her back. "Has the child eaten?"

"Y . . . yes. He has," she stammered.

The man sighed and took the buns. He broke one of them in two and gave half to the child on her back. Then he handed the other bun to the young man behind him. As the boy reached out to take it, I recognized him. Little Blacksmith!

I waited until they were about to pass me. The young man cast me a glance, then another, as if he recognized me. I smiled at him.

"Are you new here?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Where're you from?"

"Chingfeng Village."

"You're Hu-tzu, aren't you?" he cried.

"And you're Little Blacksmith!"

The older man halted. "You know each other?"

"He's from Chingfeng Village, dad," Little Blacksmith said excitedly.

"Well, well, so we're fellow-villagers."

"You're Uncle Chung, aren't you?"

"Yes, lad. What's your name?"

When I told him, he sighed. "So you couldn't make a living at home either?"

"No. How can we poor people make a living with endless taxes and vicious officials and landlords riding on our backs?"

Honest Chung smiled. "Be patient! It will soon be dawn." He glanced up and down the path and lowered his voice. "*They* arrived two days ago and blew up a truck!" He mysteriously flashed an "eight" with his fingers. That stood for the Communist Party's Eighth Route Army. "Like locusts when winter's coming, the Japanese invaders' days are numbered."

Another group of miners was coming down the trail. Chung quickened his pace and I followed at his heels.

The young woman turned out to be his daughter-in-law, Shan-ku. As I trudged along that trail in the days that followed, I would see her with the child on her back scouring the mountainside for leaves and wild plants. In the spring her basket would be filled with poplar, elm and apricot leaves or wild plants. In autumn and winter, she gathered withered scraps of plants and chestnut leaves. However hard pressed, she managed to make a few bran buns and take them to the trail where she waited for her dear ones.

Guided and educated by the underground Party organization, Honest Chung and his son became Communists. During the day they worked at the mine and at night, hidden in a cave behind their thatched hut, they made landmines and grenades for the revolution. When these exploded in an enemy fort or blew up an ore-transport truck, the miners smiled among themselves. And the Japanese imperialists and their lackeys could do nothing about it. As for Shan-ku, she took on a heavier task: keeping house in the daytime and standing sentinel for her family at night.

I was in their hut one day when she suddenly said, "We've all been hoping the Japanese imperialists will be chased out soon. Then our miners can have square meals every day and there won't be any more searching for wild plants and going up the trail to bring them bitter herb buns."

"That day's getting closer, Shan-ku," I said.

She smiled and a new gleam lit up her eyes.

In 1945 the anti-Japanese war ended in victory and in 1949 Chiang Kai-shek was defeated. With the Communist Party and Chairman Mao to lead us, Hulong Mountain belonged to the people. After generations of misery the miners and their families knew happiness for the first time in their lives.

Now the people were going to develop the mine themselves. Honest Chung and his son were issued a pair of overalls each. These men, whom the old society had used like beasts of burden, felt the honour of being miners of New China.

Shan-ku whom everyone now affectionately called "Sister Chung" was highly respected too. She had gone to live with the Chung's at the age of seven and at nine had begun learning to cook. Now thirty, she had been doing their cooking for twenty years. Or to be more accurate, she had been worrying herself sick about their meals for twenty years. For the first time, she wore a smile as she prepared their food. She once told me, "Chairman Mao has rescued us from the bitter sea. Now the miners have clothes and food. I can make them delicious food and let them eat to their hearts' content. And they'll be able to transport more ore to help build up our country faster."

One day I again met her at the bottom of the trail leading up to the mine. She was still carrying a basket and had another child on her back, but her clothes were neat and her basket brand-new. She was all smiles.

"Waiting for your dear ones again, Sister Chung?" I teased.

"I've brought their lunch." Her face glowed.

"Their lunch?" I was puzzled. "Why are you still bringing lunches to them?"

"I'm going to do it all the time, even in the future." She chuckled.

It turned out that she and Honest Chung had fought over it. . . .

The mine was in the hands of the people now, but it was a ruined and pillaged mine, requiring an enormous amount of work. The miners used the same crude extraction methods and carried the ore on their backs along the same dangerous path. There was still no canteen at the work-site, so Honest Chung and his son went home

for lunch. Their trip down the mountain and back up again, however, took a lot of time. One day Old Chung said to his daughter-in-law, "Iron Ox's mother, I'd like to talk something over with you."

"What?"

"What would you say to bringing us our lunches again?"

"To the trail?" She was bewildered. His words called up memories of their old suffering, which still twisted her heart with bitterness and anger. Before Liberation three generations of Chungs had never known what it was to eat together at home, never tasted pure wheat flour or rice. Now their life was better. How happy the family was, eating together at mealtimes! In fact, this was one of her greatest joys.

"Why do you want me to bring you lunch now?" she asked.

"So we can carry more ore."

"It's a new rule?"

"No, it's my own idea."

"Well, I don't like it. After all, everyone has lunch at home. Why do we have to be any different?"

Disappointed, the old man simply replied, "Well, we'll talk about it some other time."

Two days later, Honest Chung brought it up again. "Iron Ox's mother, I've thought it over. I'd still like you to bring us our lunches."

"What's the matter with you, dad?" She smiled. "Just think how much more comfortable it is to eat at home — and you want to eat your food cold, with the northwest wind for spice!"

Chung heaved a sigh. "She's changed," he thought. "We're only beginning to lead a better life and already she's getting too attached to comfort." He put two wheat rolls in his pocket and left without continuing the argument.

At noon the young couple waited for Old Chung. When he didn't come home, Shan-ku began to worry with the old fear and rushed toward the trail. There she spotted him trudging downhill with a load of ore. She ran up to him and said angrily, "Don't you know it's lunch time?"

"I brought mine." Honest Chung wiped the sweat from his forehead.

Words failed her. She felt a pang of remorse and slowly walked back home.

That evening, while they were eating supper, the old man turned to his son and said, "Chung Min, do you know why we had to have our lunch brought to us before?"

Chung Min replied, "Well, we never had anything to eat in the morning and we were starving, but we couldn't go home at noon because the extra load we carried then earned us a little more food."

The old man nodded, then turned to his daughter-in-law. "Things are different today. Under the Japanese and their lackeys we risked our lives to keep our family alive and put something in our stomachs, but today we're liberated. The family of a poor blacksmith has become proud members of the working class — masters of the state. We must supply more ore for our country. We're rebuilding our motherland. We're still fighting a war. Everywhere the country needs iron and steel. Hulung Mountain is practically solid iron, but we can't get it out fast enough. Doesn't that worry you too?"

The old man looked at his son, who nodded in agreement, then eyed his daughter-in-law, but Shan-ku smiled. "It seems to me that everyone's doing his best."

Honest Chung shook his head. "For the revolution, we can never say we've done enough! We must double and redouble our efforts — and that's why we don't want to waste time coming home for lunch."

"Well, it's all the same to me, but you're going to have cold meals again."

"That doesn't matter." The old man's face was wreathed in smiles. "If it means I can carry more ore for our country, even frozen food will warm my heart."

"Well. . ."

"I agree with dad," Chung Min put in.

Honest Chung nodded. "I understand what you're thinking, Shan-ku — you're worried about Chung Min and me. Things are better now and you want to do more for us. But what about in the old days? Then you really worried — and there wasn't anything you could do about it. Today you must be just as concerned about our mine as you are about us. By carrying more ore, we make a greater contribution to our motherland. We show our working-class consciousness as masters of the state by loving our country and our mine."

"Dad!" Shan-ku exclaimed.

"So from tomorrow on, you bring us our lunch. The Chungs should set the pace."

"Right," the young couple answered together.

Honest Chung looked at his grandson, Iron Ox, sleeping on the *kang*, and smiled. "When he grows up, we'll teach him to do the same."

From that day the Chungs had made it a rule to eat at work. Every day father and son made one trip more than the others. Their new style of work soon spread through the whole mine.

2

In 1958 I was transferred from the lively mine to the company office. Meanwhile Chairman Mao's call to produce iron and steel on a large scale brought hundreds of new people to Hulung Mountain. Explosions split the air over the mine's thirty-six peaks. But only three years later, an order came to close down the mine. "It's worked out," the men were told. It was not until the Cultural Revolution that I realized this was a plot hatched by Liu Shao-chi and his lot to sabotage Chairman Mao's directive. How I reproach myself for having blindly carried out this order! For I had returned to Hulung Mountain in the autumn of 1962 with the task of convincing the miners to stop working the mine and carry out the order to the letter.

I discovered that the miners had already gone, leaving less than sixty of the original two thousand to guard the mine. With so



few men they obviously had no choice but shut down, I thought, so there's no need for me to dissuade them.

I sadly made my way to Pear Gorge to say goodbye to my old friends. Under a green pine-tree at the mouth to the gorge, a tall figure stood silhouetted, staring up at Hulong Mountain. As I came closer, I saw that it was the man I was looking for.

"Old Chung!" I ran up to him.

He turned, then laughed. "So it's you, Young Chen."

"Still calling me Young Chen. I'm already forty." I gripped his powerful hand.

Finally he said, "I suppose you've come here to persuade us to stop working the mine too?"

"So you know about it?"

"Humph! A number of cadres have come here lately, all for the same reason." He glanced at the mountain. Bitterness touched his face. "Now that they've shut us down, the lordly officials ought to be satisfied."

That was aimed at me, but I didn't say anything.

He turned around, suddenly furious, and burst out, "Why the devil make us stop working when the mine is going great?"

"It's worked out."

"Worked out?" He stared hard at me. "Maybe you can fool others, but not Honest Chung!" Pointing up the road, he snorted,

"That's a mountain of iron! How can you say there's nothing left?"

I evaded the question. "Our leadership gave the order."

"Humph! Fine order — an order to retreat!" He stared fiercely at me as though I were personally responsible.

In fact I couldn't understand the decision either. Having helped build the mine, how could I have the heart to watch it shut down? I understood the old man very well but to keep the conversation from getting out of hand, I changed the subject. "Well, we'll discuss that next time. But tell me," I said awkwardly, "what're you doing up here by yourself?"

"I've brought them lunch. Now that I'm retired I can do that."

"Lunch?" Puzzled, I looked where he had pointed. A bamboo basket sat on a rock underneath the pine-tree. I was about to ask who the food was for when he exclaimed, "Here they come!" Some people were running down the path with a cart — a strong young man, Chung Min and Shan-ku, and beside them a romping boy. The cart was heaped with ore. In spite of their sweat-covered faces, they looked happy. Pleasantly surprised, I ran to meet them. "Chung Min, Sister Chung."

"Old Chen!"

They dragged the cart to a stop and greeted me warmly. The young man called me "uncle". Like a tiger cub, the boy stood apart stealing mischievous glances at me.

So in a period when they were closing down mines, I met this fine family of miners once again. The young man was Iron Ox, Shan-ku's eldest son and the eight or nine-year-old boy her younger son Little Calf.

I had so much to tell them I didn't know where to begin. I said, "Why are you transporting the ore in a cart?"

"What else can we use?" Chung Min scowled at me, then pointed to Iron Ox, "He's a driver. But all the trucks have been locked up. I've heard they're going to be transferred somewhere else. We can't just stand around watching the mine."

"There was a meeting yesterday of the miners they left here," said Shan-ku with a smile. "We all agreed we couldn't just sit around

wasting our time, so we decided to go back to work today. We don't have any machines, but we'll do it with sledge-hammers and picks. No trucks, so we'll use carts. And if they take the carts away, we'll carry the ore down on our backs. Just look, every one of our family has turned out to work!" She laughed proudly.

"Why are they making us stop work, Uncle Chen?" Iron Ox asked me.

Before I could reply, Shan-ku cut him short with a wave of her hand, "Oh, let's not talk about that any more, let's go home and have lunch."

Honest Chung had kept silent. Now he said, "Better have it here. I've brought it."

"What!" Shan-ku was surprised. "Why bring lunch now?"

"Why not? If you go home, you'll waste the time it takes to make another trip. Anyway I don't like hanging around home doing nothing." The old man chuckled. "It's better all around this way."

"Oh, it doesn't make any difference. At least we're working and not just guarding the mine. That's enough, isn't it?"

"How can you talk that way?" Chung scolded. "We should always work hard. Nothing should make us miners slack off."

Shan-ku flushed, then smiled at me. "You know, dad hasn't rested a day since he retired. And ever since I started working the year before last, he's helped by bringing our lunches. Now that the mine's been shut down, he's still doing it."

"What's that?" the old man said. "They only *think* they've closed it. We're holding our ground. Don't forget what we all said at the meeting yesterday: Chairman Mao calls on us to go all out for the iron and steel industries. Iron and steel are needed to develop our country. We'll keep on working the mine, even if only one of us is left!" Glancing at me, he said to Shan-ku, "With all of you working so resolutely, how can I sit back and rest? We're not going to give up the fight! You'll see — the mine will be reopened and expanded one day!"

Shan-ku burst out laughing. "Whenever somebody mentions closing the mine, you get angry. No wonder people call you Old Opposition!"

"We shouldn't think in terms of opposition," he retorted. "Let's say I'm for developing our mine."

"I'll go along with you on that, dad." The whole family laughed.

"Please have lunch with us here, Old Chen," Shan-ku urged.

"No," the old man put in, "he's our guest, so he and I will go home to eat. That way we can have a good talk."

As his family finished eating and left, he told me proudly, "We've kept up our tradition of eating at work for over a decade now. We still deliver extra cartloads that way and do much more work."

From his expression and tone I knew Honest Chung had not in the least accepted the decision to close the mine. Before these stubborn miners and their families, I was confused. Because they loved their mine and socialism, they were courageously going against the tide, consciously carrying out Chairman Mao's directive. What spirit! But my task? I was uncomfortable about it and decided to leave the next day.

He seemed to have seen through me, for he bantered, "Do you really think we're going to stop working?"

I shook my head and grinned. "As long as you're here, I guess the mine'll never shut down."

"You've hit the nail right on the head." He laughed proudly, then strode away. I followed close behind with my confidence and energy rising.

3

In 1974 when the whole country was denouncing Lin Piao and Confucius, I was transferred back to the mine at Hulung Mountain.



I found a bustling mine, triumphantly reopened and developed rapidly during the Cultural Revolution. Everything was new and thriving.

One evening Honest Chung's grandson Iron Ox, now section leader of the transport shop, came to my dormitory.

"Uncle Chen, we're having a family meeting this evening. Would you like to come?"

"Fine," I praised them. "You certainly do your political study regularly."

I greatly admired the Chungs. Five of them were miners now, working or retired. Iron Ox's new wife made six in the family. His young brother Little Calf had just graduated from the drivers' training class. From the first day of the movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius, they had set up a family study group and held a meeting every week.

Quite unexpectedly, my praise seemed to embarrass Iron Ox. "But we're going to discuss something special tonight," he said, shaking his head. "My mother asked me to invite you."

"What's the matter?" I asked mystified.

"There's been a clash. Grandfather's furious and mother would like you to calm him down."

On the way to Pear Gorge, Iron Ox told the story. Little Calf had started working as a truck driver that morning. Too excited to sleep, his grandfather had got up very early that morning, found his old brown lunch box, and washed and scrubbed it in hot water.

When he had cooked the lunches, he filled the old box with steamed white rice and fried fish, then prepared the lunch boxes for the rest of the family. Putting all the boxes in his basket, he weighed it in his hand. It was heavier and he was pleased.

Spring had set in. The pear-trees were in blossom and the perfume of the white flowers filled Pear Gorge. Grey-templed Old Chung walked along the asphalt road in high spirits. He had trudged two or three times a day up and down this road when it was only a tortuous path; now it linked the mine above and the ore-dressing plant below. This road on which he had gone through such world-

shaking changes had become wide and strong, just as the young ones of his family had been tempered and steeled. The family's history had been written on every inch of it and now its broad path pointed to their future.

Having reached the mine road, he put his basket on the rock under the pine-tree and waited for his dear ones with his eyes fixed on Hulung Mountain. After a while Iron Ox's truck pulled up before him. The old man handed Iron Ox the lunch boxes for everyone except his young grandson. Then he waited for Little Calf.

One truck passed, then another. Other drivers back from lunch had gone up to the mine again, but Little Calf still didn't show up. "What's wrong with the boy? Has he forgotten it's lunch time?" Honest Chung muttered to himself.

At last a truck roared down the slope and screeched to a stop next to him. Little Calf stuck his head out of the window. "Hello, grandfather."

The old man went up to the truck and held the lunch box high. "Here it is, lad."

"Oh, I ate at the canteen on top of the hill."

"What! You . . . you've had lunch?"

"Oh, grandfather, it really isn't necessary for you to bring us our lunches any more."

"Why not, I'd like to know!"

"Everybody eats



at the canteen," the boy said, laughing. "Why should we be different?"

"What do you mean, 'different'?" The old man was trying to control his temper. "Our house is near the road. Bringing lunch for you saves time — and gas too because you drive an empty truck to the canteen. In the time you save, you could transport an extra truckload of ore."

"Oh, what's one more load?" Little Calf replied nonchalantly. "I can make it up easily."

"No, son, lost time is lost time," the old man said patiently. "You know it's a family tradition."

"Well, it's about time we stopped it," the youngster retorted stubbornly. "After all, we need a rest after working hard, don't we?"

"What?" Honest Chung burst out. He angrily shook his finger at his grandson. "You've grown too big for your britches! A fine truck and only eight hours a day and still not satisfied, eh?" But Little Calf suddenly stepped on the accelerator and drove off.

His lips quivering with rage, the old man snatched up the basket and stomped off toward home. "Think you're smart — and not even weaned yet!" he muttered. "Haven't even put in a full day's work and already you've broken our tradition! And clamouring for a rest to boot. Won't do, that's all!"

When his son came home after his shift, Honest Chung exploded, "You never think about anything but your work! Your child needs bringing up too, you know!"

"What's the matter?" Chung Min asked, startled.

"Ask Little Calf!" the old man snorted. He took a deep breath. "Educating our young workers isn't only the mine's job, it's their parents' job too." Then he told Chung Min what had happened.

Chung Min was almost fifty. When he was in his teens, his father had taught him to be a blacksmith and then a miner. Of course he understood his father. Who of the older generation didn't want his descendants to be better than himself? The future of the socialist construction depended on them. Chung Min was worried. Little Calf's behaviour had broken his grandfather's heart. This wasn't

just a little thing — the old man was defending their fine family tradition, a tradition that helps push the revolution forward. Let Little Calf give it up? No, he had to make sure it was handed down to the next generation. He had never played the harsh parent, but could he go on in his quiet way now? Hating the fact that his son had let him down, and himself for failing in his duty as a parent, he said to his father, "Don't be angry. I'll give him a good talking-to."

"You think just a simple talking-to will solve this problem? You'll need a lot of patience to bring him around. Tell him how we suffered in the past." Sick at heart, Honest Chung blinked his eyes and went on, "I thought that because Little Calf had been brought up at the mine, he'd understand the way we think. But, I'm sorry to say that as his grandfather I didn't do my job either." At last his feelings found expression in a tear.

At this moment Shan-ku and Iron Ox came in. Taken aback, Shan-ku asked, "What's wrong?"

"You came just in time." The old man looked up. "Little Calf wants to stop our tradition." Then he told her about it.

Shan-ku laughed. "I thought it was something serious. Why do you get all upset about a little thing like that? It seems to me Little Calf's only doing it for your good. After all, you're old now. I agree with him. You shouldn't go on bringing us lunches any longer. You can't keep at it for ever anyway."

"So you agree with him!" The old man got up abruptly, the veins on his forehead standing out. "I like bringing you your lunches. And since it means hauling an extra load of ore, I'll go on doing it as long as I can move my feet!" He started pacing round in the room.

"What about the day you can't?"

"Then you'll carry on the tradition. I won't let it be stopped." He turned round and glared at Shan-ku and Iron Ox. Neither said a word. After a pause, he said, "Why do we of the older generation work so hard at our tasks? To build socialism. And this is something we have to hand down to the next generation. The way he's carrying on, can we?"

Shan-ku sat down on the *kang* and said nothing.

After a moment the old man said in a quieter voice, "I'm glad you love your children, but you mustn't spoil them. Little Calf is still young. Does he know the bitterness of the past and how we came by this sweet life? Tell him about it. What he did today on his first day as a driver breaks my heart. We've maintained our tradition for many years with just one thought: to further the socialist revolution and construction. Rest is necessary after hard work all right, but he thinks of rest after he's only worked a half day!"

Shan-ku cleared her throat to speak, but changed her mind, stealing a glance around instead. Her husband was puffing away at his pipe, Iron Ox was rubbing his hands together and reflecting. Her cheeks tingled with embarrassment.

"As parents, you must talk to him not only about today, but about tomorrow," the old man solemnly reminded her. "That's what we mean by carrying on the revolution."

Shan-ku nodded, thinking of the past. This ordinary woman mine-worker loved her father-in-law, her husband and her children. She could endure all kinds of hardship for their sake, but love alone was not enough now. She must take the burden from the older generation, sharing it with her husband. It would be handed down from generation to generation, each teaching the next to carry on the revolution along the socialist road pointed out by Chairman Mao. At last she broke the silence, "I understand now, dad."

Her husband heaved a long sigh of relief. So did Iron Ox. A smile played on Honest Chung's lips. "Good," he said, "you've understood at long last. But it's Little Calf we have to make understand."

Shan-ku nodded.

"How about having a meeting this evening?" Chung Min suggested.

"Good."

Iron Ox's account brought many memories of the past back to me. I quickened my pace.

During the meeting Honest Chung talked about the bitter days when he had trundled his wheelbarrow all the way to Hulung Moun-

tain. He talked about the inspiring life after Liberation. Then he told about the fierce struggle in 1962 against the order to close the mine, and how it fairly seethed with activity when it was expanded during the Cultural Revolution. He grew excited, his face glowed. Little Calf lowered his head, his eyes swimming with tears. His grandfather put his powerful weathered hand on his shoulder. "Lad, do you still think that my bringing your lunch is a trifle and that hauling an extra load a day doesn't matter? I hope you say no, for this is a matter of great importance. If you answer no, it means we've forgotten neither the bitterness of the past nor the source of today's happiness. It shows our family is loyal to the Party and to socialism."

Stroking the old lunch box, Little Calf stood up. Tears filled his eyes. "I understand now, grandfather. I was wrong."

Honest Chung smiled. The heavy atmosphere in the room suddenly gave way to rejoicing. Shan-ku pushed open the window. A bright moon rode in the sky, over the undulating mountains. Headlights of trucks sweeping along the winding road gleamed in the distance.

The next day at noon, Little Calf drove me down the mountain. I spotted Honest Chung below under the pine-tree next to the road as usual. The truck slowly stopped before the old man.

"Hi, granddad!" Little Calf said in high spirits. Honest Chung handed him his lunch and greeted me.

"I'll never forget, grandfather," declared Little Calf.

Honest Chung waved, then the truck started off again.

As I watched the young man beside me, gazing ahead and concentrating on his driving, memories crowded into my mind, throwing it into a tumult. The Chungs were ordinary workers and eating from a lunch box on the job was nothing extraordinary. But of such revolutionary spirit is the world changed.

Illustrated by Chen Ya-tan

SONGS OF TACHAI

Iron Shoulders

Tachai brigade members are called "iron shoulders":
This well-deserved name is known far and wide.
There's good quality metal in Tiger-head Hill;*
Our commune forges it into the finest steel.

On these iron shoulders of ours we carry
A shoulder-pole with a crate at either end.
At dawn we carry a load of stars with us,
And return with moonlight at the end of day.

We race over the ridges in spring with fertilizer;
Much sweat we scatter on the green hills too.
In summer, to build up the dykes, we carry clay
To strengthen flood walls and protect our fine crops.

Golden grain in autumn we tote along mountain paths;
Songs of our bumper harvest re-echo in the valleys.

*A hill in Tachai.

Hsi Liu

In winter we bring rocks and stone to build new dams,
Our fortresses of steel stretch mile after mile.

When shoulder poles are worn and old, we replace them;
When small crates break, we make new larger ones.
If you'd like to know the total weight we've carried,
Just take a look at those stone dams and bridges.

Our Tachai brigade is fast becoming mechanized,
Now high in the sky, we have an elevated rail line
To transport fertilizer, rocks and golden grain;
We keep it busy through all four seasons.

Yet our "iron shoulders" still work with the same vim,
We still use our carrying-poles and crates.
We say we must preserve this tradition of "iron shoulders",
So that future generations will remember and learn from us.



Liang La-cheng

Spring Comes Early to These Hills

Trees in the valley are white with hoarfrost,
And icicles hang from the cliffs above:
For while it is still mid-winter on Tiger-head Hill,
Our brigade members have already come.

They've not come to pay a friendly visit,
Instead they've issued a declaration of war!
They've brought their picks and hammers with them,
And presented Ephedra Gully* with an ultimatum.

"Cliff, it's time you lowered your proud head!
Valley, come now, heave yourself up!
For here we intend to level the land, make a plain
That will stretch as smooth as the Yangtse Valley."

*One of Tachai's seven gullies.

At the word of command the hill lowers its head,
As its cliffs are brought low, it says,
"I'll obey you," while the gully trembles,
Saying meekly, "I admit defeat."

Hammers, like battle drums, sound the charge;
Like fire-crackers welcoming spring is the dynamite's blast,
Bulldozers roll along with a rumble and roar;
Spring has come early to these hills.



Tung Yao-chang

New Man-Made Plains

With a deafening roar the dynamite explodes;
The whole hilltop crumbles, then disappears.
For Tachai brigade members are levelling the land,
Changing its contours from year to year.

The highest hills are demolished, river courses changed;
As the new plains expand, the horizon widens.
Of the former Wolf Lair,* not much is left
Except relics kept for remembrance in our new museum.

In the past Wolf Lair shut out nearly all the sun,
Overhanging cliffs and boulders kept even birds away;
Wolf Lair manacled our hands,
It shackled and fettered our feet.

*Wolf Lair Gully is one of Tachai's seven gullies.

All we could do then was sigh and shake our heads;
But now a new generation of heroes has grown up:
With iron arms they embrace and crush the hills,
Fill in gullies and make new level plains.

Amid wind and snow their fighting spirit soars;
Wolf Lair has changed now beyond all recognition;
A wide field stretches afar in the bright sunlight;
Tractors gurgle with glee as they race over the land.

Paving the way for full mechanization,
Sweeping the road clear for a new leap forward,
As symbols of our re-constructed mountain region,
New man-made plains are really splendid!



NEW TALES OF HSIYANG

The two stories printed below were chosen from *New Tales of Hsiyang*, published in 1975 by the People's Literature Publishing House. Hsiyang County is situated in the mountainous area in the east of Shansi Province. Tachai Brigade, widely known and emulated as a model agricultural unit, is in its jurisdiction. During the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, by learning from Tachai the people of Hsiyang have transformed their county into a Tachai-type county. The stories in the collection show the spirit of the Hsiyang people in learning from Tachai, criticizing capitalism and building socialism.

-- The Editors

Li Yen-hsiang

The "Chief Supervisor"

It was past supper time. Teh-kuan's wife reheated the lentil porridge and the corn buns again and again as she waited impatiently for the return of her husband Teh-kuan and their son, a middle-school graduate who had come back to the village to farm.

As Paipo Brigade's movement to learn from Tachai gathered headway, father and son, both activists who had pledged themselves whole-heartedly to the cause of socialism, were constantly late for supper. She had never once complained. But what made her so anxious that evening? She wanted a chicken coop made for her brood of

new chicks. Her son, a militia platoon leader, was too busy to catch hold of but her husband, after postponing the task day after day, had at last agreed to do it that night. Yet he had not come home.

As her impatience grew, her husband and son returned, one on the heels of the other. Immediately, her son Ken-chu picked up his bowl and wolfed down his food while her old man plumped silently down on the *kang*, drawing vigorously on his pipe. Fury written all over his sun-tanned face, he didn't touch the bowl placed in front of him. He had doubtless met with some unpleasantness in the course of his "supervision".

His wife shoved his bowl forward. "What's the matter?" she inquired. "Angry with someone?"

"Yes. With Liu Ta-hu," the old man snapped.

Liu Ta-hu was responsible for their brigade's side-occupations. He had also been put in charge of a temporary construction team which was to build some new classrooms after the spring sowing. Teh-kuan, when told that he was to be the store-room keeper of this team, had gone straight to seek out Ta-hu. He found him in the carpenter's shop throwing away bits of wood on to a scrap-heap. Shocked by this waste, Teh-kuan urged Ta-hu to keep them for future use. Having headed the side-occupations for years with thousands of yuan's worth of material passing through his hands, Ta-hu considered these bits and pieces of wood too space-consuming and paid no attention to the old man whom he thought too stingy. Teh-kuan went home indignantly.

His wife, consoling him, urged him to eat and brought up the subject of the chicken coop again. Hard to put it off any longer, the old man said, "All right. Stop nagging me every day. I'll do it after supper." He turned to his son, "Get me our old wooden box."

"What for?" his son asked.

"To make a chicken coop."

"No need," his wife protested. "I've some pieces of wood." She pointed to a corner.

"You have wood?" Teh-kuan looked at the pile of wood of irregular lengths under a bookcase. "Where do they come from?"

"The carpenter's shop."

Teh-kuan put his bowl down. Pointing a finger at his wife he demanded, "Why did you take what belongs to the brigade?"

Bewildered, his wife retorted, "Don't shout. I've not stolen anything or robbed anyone. What's wrong with taking something the brigade throws away?"

"It's against the collective interest. That's where you're wrong."

"I asked Ta-hu's permission."

That reminded Teh-kuan of his brush with Ta-hu. "What did he say?" he inquired.

"He said that the brigade had no use for these scraps. Whoever wanted them could help themselves."

That rekindled Teh-kuan's fury. "Ta-hu's head needs examining."

"If there's anything wrong I'm the one to blame. I'll send them back."

"That's no way to handle it. You take things from the brigade out of selfishness. Ta-hu's not a good cadre if he panders to your selfishness. You should overcome your selfishness of course, but he has his responsibility too. Naturally the wood must be sent back. At the same time we must draw a demarcation line between public and private interests."

"Dad is right, ma," Ken-chu put in. "Otherwise we can't distinguish between socialism and capitalism."

"It's my fault." Teh-kuan's wife sighed. "I don't know what came over me that I was so muddle-headed."

This raised a question in Teh-kuan's mind. Since the start of the movement to learn from Tachai his wife had made a lot of progress in her political consciousness, and she had never been one to covet little advantages. What had muddled her this time?

"What made you go to get the wood?" he asked.

"Li Erh-yen suggested it."

Alerted, Teh-kuan asked, "Li Erh-yen? What did he say?"

His wife told him that when she was feeding the chicks at the door that afternoon, their neighbour Li Erh-yen came over to chat. He mentioned that there was a lot of useless wood in the carpenter's shop. Why didn't she go and get some to make a chicken coop? She

protested that one mustn't take things from the collective. Li argued that the brigade was throwing them away anyway, so she was quite justified in putting them to some use. She thought it over and went to ask Ta-hu's permission. She was told to take as much wood as she needed.

His mind working quickly while he listened, Teh-kuan sensed something fishy. "Why didn't you use your brains?" he scolded. "How could you listen to Li Erh-yen, a grasping well-to-do middle peasant who was criticized before the Cultural Revolution for going in for speculation? Like grass squeezing out from the cracks between stones, his selfishness is always cropping up. You've been tricked by him."

"What?" She was baffled.

Ken-chu was quick to catch on. "He must have his eye on that wood himself and wanted you to take some first — so that he can follow suit."

"Quite right." Teh-kuan nodded. "You must look out. He's probably making use of your self-interest as a cover for his capitalist dealings."

His wife digested this in a dismayed silence. Meanwhile Teh-kuan was thinking: Chairman Mao teaches us that **"the serious problem is the education of the peasantry"**. Li had prompted his wife to act selfishly. But Ta-hu, being a cadre, should have helped her to overcome her selfishness instead of condoning it. Cadres are an important factor in educating the peasantry. The more Teh-kuan thought of it the more he felt Ta-hu was in the wrong. Slapping his thigh he stood up. "I'm going over to see Ta-hu," he announced.

"Leave it till tomorrow," his wife urged.

"No." Picking up the wood, he told his son, "Make a coop out of our old box." With that he left.

2

Liu Ta-hu, having finished his supper, was sitting by the table studying the "Blueprint of Paipo Brigade's New Village" and checking their construction plan for the new school with the site shown on the

blueprint. He was humming to himself as his fingers tapped the table.

He had done good work in the years since he was put in charge of the side-occupation team and, in the movement to learn from Tachai, had accumulated sizable funds to help develop the brigade's agriculture. In his view, capitalist tendencies had been criticized during the Cultural Revolution and they were now taking the right course in developing side-occupations, so recently he had been concentrating his efforts on side-lines. His working style had grown slipshod while he paid lip service only to the importance of orientation, political line and ideology. He was revelling in a happy dream of the brigade's new village when Teh-kuan came in.

"Ta-hu, what are your responsibilities as a team leader?" Teh-kuan demanded abruptly.

"What?" Ta-hu was taken aback. He quickly offered Teh-kuan a seat. "Side-occupations of course."

"Is that all?"

"I'm in charge of construction work at the moment too. Have you...?"

"You mean bricks, tiles, stones and timber. Is that all?" Teh-kuan cut him short.

"Well, being a member of the Party branch committee, I look into people's ideology too," he added quickly.

"You still remember that?"

Sensing that the old man was leading up to something, Ta-hu urged, "Fire away, uncle, if you have any criticisms for me."

"Sure. That's why I've come," was the blunt answer. "Did you give my wife permission to take those pieces of wood this afternoon?"

Ta-hu realized now why Teh-kuan, who had always put the public interest first, was looking so displeased. "Yes, I did," he said. "That's all right. Don't blame aunty."

"All right, you call it? Generous, aren't you! You're encouraging selfishness among our commune members!"

"You're too strict, uncle. The brigade has no use for these bits of wood. I don't call it selfishness if the commune members turn them into something useful."

Teh-kuan was furious. "You don't even feel bad about throwing all that wood away! Why should this wood be useless to the brigade yet so useful to individuals? Tell me, what kind of thinking makes all this difference?"

Ta-hu was tongue-tied. After some time he hedged, "A bit of selfishness doesn't really matter. We can't expect the peasants to change their centuries-old habits overnight. We must educate them gradually."

"Gradually? How have you been doing it? By allowing this wood to be taken away you were tolerating the selfish tendency. If it goes unchecked it may turn into capitalism."

"It's not that serious, uncle."

"No? Tell me, who else has come to take wood?"

"Li Erh-yen took some afterwards too."

"See! I knew he had a hand in this." His suspicions confirmed, he told Ta-hu how Li had put his wife up to coming to take the wood. In the end he warned him. "Li must be up to something. Don't let him have his way."

Ta-hu was not convinced though. "Li's made a lot of progress since he was criticized that year. Don't worry too much, uncle. I know him." Tapping the blueprint he added, "I've got to work on this, uncle. It's getting late. Why don't you go home to bed?"

Teh-kuan shook his head. "You're managing property for socialism. That means you must pay attention not just to money and materials but to politics and the way people think. Don't they say in Tachai that the most important thing is to stick to the Party's basic line? The first and foremost thing is to educate the people with Mao Tsetung Thought. Have you forgotten all this?"

At the door, the old man turned around and added, "I'll be off. Can't persuade you right now. But I'm not going to let this drop here. I'll be back."

Looking after him, Ta-hu smiled wryly. "What a stubborn man!"

Teh-kuan went straight to look for the Party secretary. As he had not yet returned from a meeting in the commune, the old man had to go home unhappily. The lights were out. Both his wife and son were asleep. He crept quietly into bed, but sleep would not come.

Teh-kuan was known in his village for the wide range of things he "supervised". Big or small, everything came under his scrutiny before the Cultural Revolution. But since then, by criticizing the revisionist line of Liu Shao-chi and Lin Piao and in the movement to learn from Tachai, his political consciousness had been greatly raised. Taking the Party's basic line and the Tachai spirit as his criterion, he realized that he should look into the roots of things instead of every small trifle. So he set himself the important task of helping the brigade leadership to follow the correct line and offering sound advice as a good supervisor. Thus he became a helpful assistant to the Party branch of Paipo Brigade and won the support of the cadres and brigade members. In 1969, when he was fifty-seven, he had been admitted into the Party. Since then he had been overseeing things even more actively.

Lying in bed, he was reviewing that day's happenings when he heard noises next door. Pricking up his ears he made them out to be the sound of sawing and hammering. His neighbour Li Erh-yen sometimes made chairs and benches for other people. He liked to make himself new things too. But why was he working so late at night? A big question-mark in his mind, Teh-kuan linked this sudden activity with what had happened that day. Vigilantly he got up and made for Li's house. Instead of going to the door he peeped in at the brightly-lit window of Li's store-room which had been converted into a carpenter's shop. Sawdust covered the floor. A pile of wood lay on one side of the room. On the other were some carpenter's tools. Li was astride a carpenter's bench nailing up a winnowing fan. There were several more on a brand-new cupboard behind him. More striking still were two new trunks.

Teh-kuan's suspicion increased. Had he taken all that wood in one afternoon? Did his family need all those winnowing fans? The two trunks could hardly have been made out of small pieces of wood. Had he taken the brigade's good wood too? And why was he working at dead of night? Was he up to his old tricks again?

Teh-kuan was on the point of going in to question him when he thought better of it and went home quietly. Musing over all the events of that day, he couldn't lie still. He switched on the light,

took out the *Selected Works of Lenin* Vol. IV, put on his reading glasses and turned to the paragraph in "*Left-Wing*" *Communism, an Infantile Disorder* which was underlined in red.

It was a paragraph on remoulding and re-educating the small commodity producers. The sentence "**The force of habit of millions and tens of millions is a most terrible force**" touched a chord in his heart. Though Li lived in a socialist society his heart was still on capitalism. Not only did he make selfish calculations but he wanted to infect other people with his selfishness. And the selfishness of Teh-kuan's wife showed that she too had remnants of the ideology of small commodity producers. If these were left to develop unchecked, they would undermine socialism. Lenin pointed out the need to struggle against the forces and traditions of the old society by means of both education and administrative measures. Yet Liu Ta-hu, instead of clamping down on ideas of private ownership in either way, treated them as something quite natural. How could he consolidate proletarian dictatorship in this way?

Inspired by Lenin's teachings, Teh-kuan decided to make good use of this incident. Slapping his thigh he exclaimed:

"Right. I'll bombard him."

"Who're you going to bombard?" asked his wife who had woken up.

"Liu Ta-hu!"

"You're the limit! Why don't you sleep instead of bombarding people at night?"

Teh-kuan told her what was in his mind.

"How are you going to do it?" she asked.

"I'll write a big-character poster." He took out paper and a writing brush.

"Can you write?" his wife asked.

Teh-kuan stood there at a loss. It was true, there were many characters he couldn't write. His wife burst out laughing and reminded him of their son.

Scratching his head, the old man laughed too. "Yes. I'd quite forgotten our scholar." He went over to shake Ken-chu who was sleeping like a log. Pulling off his quilt Teh-kuan called, "Emergency

assembly!" Ken-chu jumped up and bounded over to the wall to get his gun. Laughing, the old man stuck the writing brush in his hand. "You're certainly a good militiaman. Use this weapon to-night."

"It's not an emergency assembly?"

"Yes. It's a family assembly to bombard the old force of habit."

3

Early the next morning, the big-character poster signed by Teh-kuan, his wife and son was put up.

Entitled *To Whom Is He Giving the Green Light?* the poster pointed out that Liu Ta-hu was neglecting his duty as a cadre and conniving at the ideology of private ownership, which would encourage the growth of spontaneous capitalist tendencies. It went on to solicit the masses' opinion as to whether or not Teh-kuan was making a mountain out of a molehill as Liu Ta-hu claimed.

Gathering before the poster many people voiced their opinions.

"Old Teh-kuan has sharp eyes."

"Liu Ta-hu does need a bashing. In meetings he tells us to grasp the main issue. I don't think he knows what the main issue is."

"Taking a few pieces of wood has nothing to do with political lines."

That was immediately refuted. "That's not the way to talk. This business shows what line our cadres are taking."

"Quite right. A cadre, no matter what his job, must educate the peasants with socialist ideas. This is Tachai's most important experience."

Liu Ta-hu behind them bellowed, "It's outrageous!"

The villagers immediately started to debate with him. Unable to win the argument, Ta-hu cried hoarsely, "I'll not argue with you. I'll go to see the Party secretary." He turned around only to run into Party Secretary Cheng Sung who had hurried back from the fields to read the big-character poster. Before he could make head or tail of it Ta-hu shouted at him, "Cheng Sung! Find yourself another team leader."

"Why!" Cheng Sung laughed. "You're knocked over by only one shell?"

"They've blown this small question up into a question of political lines. How can I do my work?"

"Keep your shirt on. Let me read it first." Cheng Sung nodded with apparent agreement as he read on. "Hum. He has a point there." Turning to Ta-hu he said, "The Party branch committee should study this poster carefully. In my opinion a cadre can work better if he's criticized like this by the commune members."

Ta-hu's fury mounted. "I don't look at it that way. You can go ahead and criticize me." He went away in a huff.

Dissatisfied with Ta-hu's attitude, the villagers spoke their minds freely when Cheng Sung asked what had happened. He read the big-character poster carefully again and decided to have a talk with Teh-kuan, but could see no sign of him.

After putting out the poster with his son and telling his wife to keep an eye on Li Erh-yen, Teh-kuan had gone to the construction site. He sorted out the pieces of wood Ta-hu had discarded, arranged them into a neat pile and was sticking a piece of old newspaper on to it when along came Cheng Sung.

"Ha, Uncle Teh-kuan, so many people are reading and discussing the poster you wrote while you're taking it easy here."

Although much younger than Teh-kuan, Cheng Sung was on such familiar terms with him that they often pulled each other's legs.

"Ha! Cheng Sung," Teh-kuan straightened up happily. "You're most welcome. Write a few words for me."

"What shall I write?" Cheng took over the brush.

"Love public property! Bear socialism in mind!"

"Well said."

As he was writing this, Teh-kuan asked, "Have you read my poster?"

"Yes. I've come to hear all the details of the story."

When Cheng Sung had finished writing, Teh-kuan told him what had happened the day before. "This is how I look at it. Tell me whether I'm right."

"You're quite right. You have my whole-hearted support."

"But Ta-hu doesn't see eye to eye with me."

"He will. We must help him to see it in the correct light. I think I'll call a meeting of the Party branch committee. We'll study this business together."

"Good. We'll make him see light."

"Not only him. All of us cadres need to use our brains more. In the last few years of learning from Tachai we've made some progress by criticizing the capitalist tendency of attaching undue importance to side-occupations while neglecting field work. Recently, though, our cadres have eased up on class struggle. If we don't remind them to be more vigilant, we'll deviate from the most basic experience of Tachai."

"Quite right," said Teh-kuan. "The most important of all the things we should learn from Tachai is the need to grasp the basic line and train peasants of a new type. We must keep that in mind."

"At the commune meeting yesterday," said Cheng Sung, "the directive of the county Party committee was relayed to us. The bad tendencies of graft, bribery and profiting oneself at public expense all have to be corrected. This is to be a new battle launched against capitalism, a movement in which the masses will educate themselves by breaking with old traditional ideas."

"We must get cracking on it!" exclaimed Teh-kuan.

"Hasn't your big-character poster started a fire already?" Cheng Sung laughed.

Teh-kuan suggested that the Party branch committee should keep an eye on Li Erh-yen. Cheng Sung agreed readily.

Liu Ta-hu, flushed with fury, arrived soon after Cheng Sung left.

"Give me my assignment, Ta-hu." Teh-kuan avoided mentioning the poster.

"Me give you an assignment?" growled Ta-hu. "You can take over my job as team leader now."

"Quitting's not the right solution."

Ta-hu lowered his head, knowing that it was the wrong attitude.

Teh-kuan squatted beside him. "When we criticize you, it's only because we want you to work better. You mustn't get us wrong. We're all Party members, why can't we thrash out our differences?"

"I've no objection to being criticized for the slightest neglect in my work. But you can't make a mountain out of a molehill, dragging in political lines!" Ta-hu pouted.

"A cadre should learn to look at little things with a magnifying glass. A small mistake can turn into a serious one — and then it may be too late to correct it."

Ta-hu was not convinced. "Selfishness is just selfishness. You can't call it capitalism."

"I don't say it is. Capitalist trends can sprout from it. Let's avoid theories and look at facts. Take Li Erh-yen, isn't he merely selfish? A few years back, when we didn't learn conscientiously from Tachai, we put up with his ways and didn't try hard to educate him with socialist ideas. What was the result? When he went to town to do carpentry work he embezzled wood and used it for speculation. He was caught out and criticized, since when he's been more careful. But he's never overcome his selfishness which comes to the surface as soon as there is a chance. You allowed him to take some wood yesterday because, to you, it was a small matter. That made it lawful and gave him a chance to do unlawful things. You don't believe it? He's been making winnowing fans and trunks at night. Where did the wood come from? I suspect that he took good wood besides those small pieces."

Ta-hu was flabbergasted but wanted proof. "He may be selfish," he countered, "but I don't think he'd dare do that. He hasn't the nerve. Couldn't someone have asked him to make these things?"

Teh-kuan shook his head. "You're too lacking in vigilance. We'll get to the bottom of this. You must use your brains, man."

4

That night the Paipo Brigade Party committee met to discuss the implementation of the county committee's directive and decided to make use of Teh-kuan's revolutionary big-character poster to mobilize the brigade members and start a people's war on capitalist trends.

The brigade members took action quickly and in two days many big-character posters were put out. Some exposed new capitalist

tendencies in the village; some criticized certain cadres for neglecting the main issue while concentrating on production; and others censured Li Erh-yen for not having overcome his selfishness and not being an honest carpenter. Many posters supported Teh-kuan and criticized Liu Ta-hu.

Teh-kuan's heart was ablaze with revolutionary fervour. Under the Party committee's guidance he investigated Li Erh-yen's activities. That afternoon he went to see Ta-hu who was ill to report on what he had found.

Ta-hu had been ill for two days with an ideological rather than a physical illness. Now Teh-kuan wanted to use Li Erh-yen as his remedy, having found out that Li had been in suspicious contact with a stranger recently and had been seen sneaking home pieces of wood on the pretext of using them as firewood. As the other carpenter was on sick leave Li, being alone in the shop, could easily filch material on the sly. Linking these facts with what he had seen the other night he suspected serious speculations and he wanted to talk the matter over with Ta-hu.

Sitting side by side on the *kang*, Party Secretary Cheng Sung and Ta-hu were in deep conversation. Teh-kuan told them his findings. "It's not a good idea leaving Li in the carpenter's shop all by himself," Cheng said to Ta-hu.

"Big timber is too heavy for him to carry home alone. He can only take small planks of wood at the most," Ta-hu argued.

Teh-kuan suddenly remembered that they had talked about the high wastage caused by using an electric saw when he had gone to see Ta-hu in the carpenter's shop that day.

"He may saw the good wood into planks to take away and report them as wastage," he said.

"Hum. That's quite possible," Cheng Sung agreed.

"Let's go and check up," Teh-kuan suggested.

"How?" Ta-hu shook his head dubiously.

"That's easy. Add the planks sawed and the scrap together and check the total against the original figure. That'll give us a general idea anyway."

"Fine. Let's go," said Cheng Sung.

In the carpenter's shop Li Erh-yen was sorting out wood from the scrap-heap. He quickly put it back at their arrival.

Teh-kuan got a tape-measure from Li and measured the boards with Cheng Sung and Ta-hu. After a while Teh-kuan asked, "Li Erh-yen! Why are two cubic metres missing?"

Tensely, Li stretched out his two hands. "Don't you know that the electric saw causes big wastage?" he retorted.

Cheng Sung countered gruffly, "The wastage may be big, but the wood here's two cubic metres short minus the wastage. How is that?"

Li's face dropped. "I... I don't know. I didn't take it."

Teh-kuan noticed that Li was throwing furtive glances at the scrap-heap. More suspicious than ever, he walked over and rummaged through it. From the bottom he soon pulled out more than twenty planks big enough to make trunks with.

"What are these?" pointing at them Teh-kuan demanded sternly.

Li turned pale and trembled.

Stamping his foot in a rage, Ta-hu shouted, "You... you... How can you do such a thing! Why can't you ever get rid of your selfishness?"

"You must confess how much wood you've stolen and what you've used it for," said Cheng Sung sternly. "You must make a clean breast of this to the masses tonight."

Li consented readily. As he was leaving, Teh-kuan stopped him. "Why must you stick to capitalism when everyone is learning from Tachai and embarking on the bright road of socialism? You're taking a dangerous path, Li Erh-yen. You must make a definite break with the bad ideas of capitalism, instead of trying to find ways to get out of this fix."

"Sure. I'll make a clean break." He went away crestfallen.

5

The brigade political night school was more crowded than usual for all were very interested in the subject to be discussed.

The pile of wood on the rostrum attracted the attention of everyone. Cheng Sung looked around and asked, "Hasn't Li Erh-yen come?" People looked and couldn't see him. As it was decided to send for him, Li sneaked in with head lowered to sit in a corner.

Cheng Sung announced that the meeting was to discuss the wood incident and asked Teh-kuan to take the floor.

Standing up, Teh-kuan said, "You all know what happened. No more explanation is needed. Tonight I just want to criticize myself."

Everyone was astonished. He was the one who had found out about the misappropriation. Why should he make a self-criticism?

"You've given me the name 'supervisor,'" he went on. "And I thought I'd looked into all the things I should. In the last two days, however, after studying and thinking hard I feel I haven't lived up to that name — I've not done a good job of supervision for our socialist cause. Take this incident as an example. Li Erh-yen has been undermining socialism for some time, but although I'm his next-door neighbour I found it out only recently. And the same goes for Ta-hu. I didn't warn him in time. I'm a commune member as well as a Party member. I should have a responsibility for socialism. Failing to give socialist education to Li and help our cadres to do revolutionary work well, I'm responsible for their mistakes."

Teh-kuan sat down amid silence. Party Secretary Cheng Sung said, "Comrades, Uncle Teh-kuan's self-criticism teaches us a lot. His determination to carry the revolution forward is fine. I must learn from him. All the members of our Party committee should learn from him. Just think, why isn't capitalism able to have its way in Tachai? Because the Party committee and the poor and lower-middle peasants of Tachai adhere to the principle of putting proletarian politics in command and placing Mao Tsetung Thought in the lead. Thus they can grasp problems early and well, grasp them when they are small. All the time we've been learning from Tachai we haven't learned their basic experience. Uncle Teh-kuan has learned better, his consciousness is higher and he sees things clearer. He grasped that this incident wasn't a small but a big matter. Yet some of our cadres hold that he has been making a mountain out of a molehill. We would like to discuss freely how we should look at the matter."

The meeting was thrown open for discussion. Many opinions were voiced.

"When left alone, selfishness is insatiable. You may take a little wood one day, the next some boards and the day after that still more. The cadres' responsibilities are very grave."

"Liu Ta-hu has been conniving at Li Erh-yen's malpractices. If Uncle Teh-kuan hadn't seen through him in time, what he'd do with the brigade's wood is anybody's guess."

"Make him speak up."

"Have you been making money out of the brigade's wood, Li Erh-yen?"

"No, no. I haven't," Li denied in his corner.

When Cheng Sung asked Li for his self-criticism it proved a slipshod affair. He acknowledged that he had taken some wood, but only to make himself something, he insisted.

"Your walls are already lined with trunks and cupboards. Why make two more trunks? And do your family need so many winnowing fans?" demanded Teh-kuan.

Li still denied that he had made things to sell others.

Ken-chu stomped into the room with a big sack. "You can't get away, Li Erh-yen," he said as he emptied the sack. Five winnowing fans crashed on to the rostrum. Picking up one he told the meeting, "Look! This is the proof of his misdoings."

Teh-kuan had told his wife and son to keep an eye on Li Erh-yen. That evening after supper, Teh-kuan's wife saw a suspicious stranger call on Li Erh-yen. She warned Ken-chu who took his rice bowl and sat outside the door. After a while Li came out alone to go to the political night school. Ken-chu immediately notified the militia to be on the look-out for a dubious character. When darkness fell the stranger sneaked out with a sack. Ken-chu questioned him. In the sack were five of Li's winnowing fans, and the man confessed that he had been Li's partner in speculation before. Recently they had resumed contact and were selling furniture on the sly. He had come to pick up the trunks and fans Li had made; but as Li had already been caught out he dared not give him the former, so he took only

the fans. The stranger was taken to the brigade office by the militiamen.

Teh-kuan's wife came in now and supplemented what her son had said. The room boiled over, everyone firing questions at Li who had to confess how he had resumed contact with that man. The fellow had come once the previous year when the mass criticism in the brigade was on the upsurge and Li dared not make a misstep then. Recently, finding that the side-occupation team was not so strict, Li had grown bolder and agreed to make furniture and tools which that man would sell from wood stolen from the brigade, each of them getting fifty per cent of the proceeds.

Everybody was shocked. Liu Ta-hu was the most startled. Full of regret he said, "Comrades, I'm the one to blame. I didn't see the class struggle right under my nose, and I thought Uncle Teh-kuan was making a mountain out of a molehill over a few pieces of wood. I was too muddle-headed. Please criticize me."

Silence reigned in the meeting room. Everyone felt bad for Ta-hu. Teh-kuan's wife stood up to say, "Aunty wants to criticize you, Ta-hu. You were so free-handed when I went to get some wood, I was grateful to you then. Now I know that with your 'generosity' you were encouraging my selfishness. Why didn't you check it in time? What kind of a cadre do you call yourself?"

"She's right," Teh-kuan said. "You're a communist cadre, Ta-hu. You must always work to uproot private ownership, help to enhance socialist ideas in the commune members' minds and lead everyone on to the road pointed out by Chairman Mao."

"Yes, I've neglected my duty," said Ta-hu. "I feel very bad."

"You must find the reason for your making such a mistake," said Cheng Sung.

"I think the old traditional ideas are too deep-rooted in Ta-hu," Teh-kuan went on. "He thinks that it's a natural thing to throw away bits of wood and it's only natural for anybody who wants them to take them. These are old habits which don't square with the habits of the proletariat. If you don't do away with old habits yourself, how can you help the commune members to break away from them?"

The room turned lively again. "Well said, Teh-kuan."

"He's spoken the truth."

Much clearer in his mind now, Ta-hu said, "Yes, yes. I must make a thorough break with old traditional ideas."

The meeting ended very late in the night. As they came out of the political night school a mischievous youngster said to Teh-kuan, "You're a good 'supervisor', Grandpa Teh-kuan. You supervise the team leader too. Let's call you the 'chief supervisor'."

People laughed. Fingering his beard, Teh-kuan joined in their laughter.

That was how Paipo Brigade came to have a "chief supervisor".

Men Can Conquer Heaven

In early spring 1969, the work to cut through the mountains and change the river channel was in full swing in Sun-flower Production Brigade.

One evening, immediately after a light rain, a man left the village and headed for Sand River. It was Li Keng-mao, member of the Party branch committee and brigade leader. Now in his fifties, this man of medium height was a strong, highly capable hand at farming.

A spring breeze at dusk had brought this shower, which made Keng-mao happy beyond words. Previously the earth had been parched, for there had been no snow all winter. After gulping down his dinner, he'd set off for the fields to see how moist the soil was. As he walked along he began thinking: With this rain perhaps we'll be able to reap another bumper harvest — for the moment our worries are over. In a field along the riverbank he squatted to examine a handful of soil; its black richness stretching away off filled his heart with honey-sweet content.

Chia Jen suddenly appeared. This son of Chia Wu-wan, the former despot and landlord of Sun-flower Village, now worked as a

doctor in the brigade clinic. All smiles, he hurried over to Keng-mao, carrying a bundle of medicinal herbs he had collected.

"How hard you work, brigade leader. Still at it at this time of day, racking your brains for the good of the masses. Be careful you don't catch cold. It's easy enough at the beginning of spring."

"Why are you out here so late?"

"I went to dig up the roots of these medicinal herbs. I'll replant them tomorrow while the soil's still wet. It'll save money for the brigade, you know."

"Glad to see you're showing concern for the collective."

"Don't put it that way, brigade leader. I've gone all out in my work and I always keep the collective in mind, but some people still speak ill of me behind my back."

"Just ignore them. So long as you work honestly, people will come to understand you."

"You're right, brigade leader. I'll do as you say," Chia Jen nodded and bowed as he spoke. Then he hit on an idea and continued, "On my way to gather the herbs I had a look around the fields. The earth looked terribly parched, brigade leader. Now it's rained, we should concentrate on spring sowing, shouldn't we? The commune members had better not go to the mountains again. Nanchai Mountain has been there for as long as men can remember. If it could have been transformed, wouldn't our ancestors have done it long ago?"

As he had been thinking along the same lines himself, Keng-mao more or less agreed with Chia Jen, but only replied: "Our Party branch committee will take care of that. Just go home and get on with your work." Shouldering his shovel, Keng-mao headed for the village.

When he reached the brigade office he saw Tang-ni, Party Secretary Lu Ming's younger sister. As company commander of the brigade's militia, she was discussing something with squad leader Meng-hsiao.

"Do you know where Grandpa Sheng-tien is, Tang-ni?" Keng-mao asked.



"He came in a minute ago, but left right away," Tang-ni replied, continuing to add up some figures. "He asked Meng-hsiao and me to work out how many cubic metres of earth we'll have to move to transform Nanchai Mountain. Since the other parts of the project will soon be completed, he and my brother went there today to measure the area. They want to tackle the

problem of cleaving Nanchai right away so the project can be completed on time. There'll be an enlarged Party branch committee meeting tomorrow to discuss it."

Annoyed by the news, Keng-mao went out to look for the old man but, not finding him in any of the usual places, he went home.

He threw himself on his *kang*, but could not sleep. When he thought back to the Party branch committee meeting held the previous winter his heart began pounding like the waves of Sand River in autumn.

At that meeting Party Secretary Lu Ming had told them all about the county conference on learning from Tachai. Then they had discussed how to bring the Tachai spirit to life in their village. Some members proposed building embankments along the river to create one hundred *mu* of new fields on part of the river-bed. As he listened, Keng-mao thought this proposal too ambitious, but Li Sheng-tien butted in at this juncture with a much bolder idea.

Sixty-three-year-old Li had been elected group leader of the poor and lower-middle peasants' association not long after the Cultural

Revolution and only recently had been admitted into the Party. Though not a member of the Party branch committee he rushed to the meeting and spoke up as soon as he arrived. He termed the proposal too conservative — perfect for bird-sized appetites, as he put it, showing neither a long point of view nor the Tachai spirit. His words were like a bombshell in the hall.

"Well said!" Lu Ming exclaimed happily. Then he asked Grandpa Sheng-tien to explain his ideas.

Old Sheng-tien's plan was a daring one. He suggested actually changing the course of Sand River by damming it at Yellow Dragon Mouth and splitting up Nanchai Mountain to make a new channel for it. In this way 1,300 *mu* of fields could then be built up on the old river-bed, a hundred *mu* more than the total amount of cultivated land in the whole brigade.

This proposal met with Keng-mao's immediate opposition. He objected, quoting the old saying: "Mountains and rivers can't be moved!" Then he asked how the one hundred members of their brigade could possibly split the Nanchai Mountain in two to make a channel for the river?

"We who live in these Taihang Mountains must dare to carve up our hills," Old Sheng-tien riposted, swinging an arm for emphasis. "Though high, the mountain is still under our feet. As ships plough through huge waves on the sea, we'll trample underfoot all difficulties, no matter how great. We must think of the future and advance." His words warmed the hearts of the committee members.

"Grandpa Sheng-tien has given this a great deal of thought," Tang-ni told the others. "He's been working on this plan for a long time and even has a red notebook in which he's jotted down a lot of data and made many sketches of our mountains and rivers. He's worked out his own 'pictograph' but only he can read it."

At that, they all remembered how for years whenever he had time the old man had explored the mountains. When they asked what he did up there, he never answered. Realizing now that he had been planning the transformation of their mountains and rivers all the while, they unanimously approved his proposal. Lu Ming concluded: "It's a good thing Grandpa Sheng-tien burst into our

meeting today. All our old conservative ideas of doing it bit by bit or relying on Heaven have been blown sky-high. We peasants working collectively in socialist China can certainly move mountains and tame rivers."

Keng-mao alone opposed the old man's plan. His arguments having been rebutted by the others, he had to say that in principle he agreed.

Following the meeting, all the villagers, both men and women, old and young, were mobilized. The tense battle to transform nature began with Lu Ming in command and Grandpa Sheng-tien as his deputy. The work progressed swiftly. In the space of one winter, a four-hundred-metre long dam stood at Yellow Dragon Mouth. Only the channel through the mountain, the key to the whole project, was left.

Lying on his *kang*, Keng-mao mulled over all this. Cutting the channel is the most difficult job. Can we do it? And when will it be finished? It'll soon be time for spring ploughing, but everyone is still away on the mountain. I must ask for them to be sent back so we can prepare for spring ploughing. Besides, we must send some people out to work on sidelines. A month's work will bring in plenty of ready cash. Then we'll all have some money as well as grain in the autumn. Isn't that better and easier than carving up mountains? These thoughts flashed through his mind like scenes in a film. The clock on the wall struck three. Soon after, he finally drowsed off.

2

Red flags fluttered on Nanchai peak; the commune members had started to carve up the high mountain.

Thunderous blasts rang out. Stones and huge clods of earth flew through the air. Smoke rose in a tenuous veil around the mountain.

Wiping the sweat from his beaming face with the back of his hand, Grandpa Sheng-tien looked at the scene and exclaimed in delight: "The harder we work for socialism, the brighter our future!"

Just then a man hurrying up the mountain shouted: "Brother Sheng-tien, I'd like to have a word with you."

Looking down, Grandpa Sheng-tien recognized Keng-mao. The two went into the work shed. As soon as they'd sat down, Keng-mao told him what he'd been thinking the previous evening. When he'd finished, Old Sheng-tien kept silent, frowning.

"My plan won't work?" Keng-mao asked puzzled.

"No!" Old Sheng-tien replied adamantly. "I agree to sending some brigade members back to do the spring ploughing, but I'm against stopping work here for sidelines to make money. That's no way to do things."

"Don't take it so seriously, brother. It only means stopping work on the project for the time being. In autumn there isn't much work in the fields so we can take up the project again and carve out the canal step by step."

"We're working for socialism; communism is our final goal. We must take a long-term view." Old Sheng-tien stressed each word. "According to the weather forecast, spring will be particularly short this year. That means the rainy season will come earlier. If we don't cut the canal before then, flood waters will destroy our newly-constructed dam and wash away the fields we've built up on the old river-bed. Every day counts now if we want to keep the initiative in this struggle against Heaven. We must work at the spring ploughing and the canal at the same time."

"You're really crazy about taming rivers and mountains, brother!"

"Right you are! I'm sixty-three years old now and I've been crazy about it for several decades. It was only a dream before Liberation because we were so bitterly oppressed, and after Liberation, though we set up a co-operative, we still couldn't carry it out because our collective strength still wasn't sufficient. After we set up our people's commune, we should have begun transforming our rivers and mountains right away, but Liu Shao-chi's revisionist line blocked our way. So it remained a dream. It was only when the Cultural Revolution put an end to the wrong line that this dream could become reality. Why shouldn't I be crazy about it?"

"Well, I'll go and talk it over with Lu Ming." Throwing up his arms in annoyance, Keng-mao left.

That evening Party Secretary Lu Ming called an enlarged meeting of the brigade's Party branch committee. After discussion it was decided that some of the brigade members would be assigned to the spring ploughing, for which Keng-mao would be responsible; the others would form a shock team to continue work on the mountain under Grandpa Sheng-tien's command. So Keng-mao's plan was only partially approved.

On his way back to Nanchai Mountain after the meeting, Grandpa Sheng-tien's heart was heavy, as he thought about Keng-mao. Why doesn't Keng-mao, a Party member who started life as a hired hand, see eye to eye with other commune members on the question of learning from Tachai? There must be some reason why he keeps going against the masses' ideas about transforming nature. People have been saying that Chia Jen always has his ear these days and has been visiting him frequently. I must keep tab on them. Chia Jen's probably behind this.

When he reached the work-site on Nanchai Mountain the old man saw his lively team of youngsters sitting in groups of twos and threes, absorbed in a heated discussion.

"Aren't you tired after a hard day's work?" he asked as he walked up. "Why haven't you turned in yet?"

"So you're back at last, Grandpa Sheng-tien," a youngster responded. "We've been waiting for you. We need your help."

"My help?" Old Sheng-tien asked, unable to make head or tail of it.

"We've been arguing about whether the project needs to be finished as quickly as possible or can be done more slowly."

"What do you youngsters think?"

"Most of us are for completing the project rapidly without stopping to rest. But a few think we should slow up a little so everyone can have a breather. They say that carving up Nanchai Mountain isn't like slicing bean-curd. It's no joke."

"Who said that?"

"We heard it in the village."

"What else did you hear?"

The old man's question puzzled the youngsters, who didn't know what else to tell him. After a moment of silence, one of them mentioned a few rumours he had picked up in the village.

"Some people are saying that the sky and earth were made by gods and that unless the sun sets in the east you won't be able to cut up Nanchai Mountain."

"They're saying, 'You can't do wonders with that old Sheng-tien in command.'"

Sheng-tien frowned, then turned to question the youngsters again: "Tell me, why should we learn from Tachai and transform the rivers and mountains?"

"That's easy." Meng-hsiao laughed. "We're doing it to change the face of our country as quickly as possible."

"That's not all." The old man shook his head.

The youngsters looked puzzled.

"Tachai is a standard-bearer in agriculture named by Chairman Mao himself," the old man explained. "The Tachai people have firmly followed the socialist road. To learn from Tachai means making a thoroughgoing revolution. We're learning from Tachai and transforming our rivers and mountains to consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat, to build socialism."

His words opened the youngsters' eyes. Aware of the truth, Meng-hsiao exclaimed, "Now I know why some people have tried to sabotage the project."

"It's important to understand this," Old Sheng-tien went on. "We mustn't let the red flags fluttering over Nanchai Mountain blind us to the activities of our class enemies who're sharpening their knives behind our backs. Well, what shall we do now that the enemy is trying to sabotage our project and a few conservatives want us to slow down?"

"Go ahead with it anyway. We'll grasp the Tachai people's revolutionary spirit, carry the fight against the class enemy to the end, and continue the project by relying on our own strength."

"Well said!" put in Lu Ming, walking up with a shovel on his shoulder.

"What brings you here at this late hour, Party secretary?" asked Meng-hsiao.

"Like you, I couldn't sleep," Lu Ming said. "What were you discussing so enthusiastically?"

Sheng-tien explained in detail.

"I also heard those rumours in the village," Lu Ming said. "At this critical moment, the class enemies are working desperately, hatching their plots. What's more, the ill wind has found its way into the Party. The struggle is complex. We must be prepared for the enemy's next move. As the masters of nature, we'll make Nanchai Mountain give way. We shall not fall into the class enemies' trap."

"Yes! We'll make the mountains give way!" echoed the youngsters, their powerful voices shattering the tranquil night.

3

Once those assigned to the spring ploughing had left, the other brigade members concentrated on their job high on the steep mountain.

Cutting a one *li* channel for Sand River would entail removing half a million cubic metres of earth and stone. The method used most often, dynamiting the mountain and shovelling out the earth would take at least two years. But the new river-bed had to be finished before the summer floods, only six months away. Would they be able to do it? Old Sheng-tien had spent days turning this problem over and over in his mind, so engrossed was he that he even forgot to eat. Finally he went to see Lu Ming and suggested they mobilize the masses.

"Right," Lu Ming approved. "We'll hold meetings tonight."

After supper that evening, Lu Ming, Tang-ni and Grandpa Sheng-tien organized separate meetings of the young, the middle-aged and the older brigade members. The old people met at Sheng-tien's house, where, smoking their pipes, they aired their opinions one after the other.

"Don't you remember, folks, how one year a big flood washed away the small ridge at Yellow Dragon Mouth, destroying many of

our good fields?" an old man reminisced. "What monsters those destructive torrents were."

"I remember another incident," someone else chimed in. "Last year water pouring out of Lichiayu pumping station washed away tons of earth. It made a huge hole in the ground in half a day! Why can't we use water to wash away the earth at Nanchai Mountain?"

"Good for you, old chap!" Old Sheng-tien slapped his thigh. "That's an excellent method! In the past, the Water Dragon King often came to destroy our houses and fields. Now we'll lead him by the nose and put him to work for us."

"What a brain wave!" everyone exclaimed in delight.

"In the past we people feared Heaven, but now we'll make Heaven fear us people," Old Sheng-tien declared. "Well, it's settled then."

Having seen off the others, Sheng-tien hurried over to look for Lu Ming who'd gone home after his meeting.

"We've got it, Lu Ming!" the old man shouted before even entering the house.

"How pleased you look!" Lu Ming cried. "Tell me about it, quick!"

Old Sheng-tien lit his pipe, then told him their plan. Excited, Lu Ming cried, "The masses are true heroes!"

Then they decided on a few details. The following day they discussed the method with the masses; all approved.

But the drought continued after that brief shower and water was scarce. The one well that hadn't dried up would hardly provide enough water for the sowing, let alone wash away tons of earth. Although the commune members racked their brains over the water problem it was Old Sheng-tien who hit on a new idea.

"Don't worry, comrades," he said. "I know where we can get water."

"Tell us, grandpa, quick," Meng-hsiao urged, for this impetuous young man had little patience and hated waiting.

Old Sheng-tien glanced at him, then said: "In Peichai Gully there's an abandoned coal pit, which that old despot and landlord Chia Wu-wan forced us poor people to dig for him before Liberation. Later it was flooded and nobody bothered about it for many years.

There's a lot of water there still, and though it can't be used for irrigation, it'll serve our purpose."

Before Old Sheng-tien had finished, Meng-hsiao was itching to go and investigate. Just then Keng-mao hurried up with a weather report; the county had notified them that the drought would still continue. He suggested that an enlarged meeting of the Party branch committee should be held immediately to discuss measures to fight the drought. Lu Ming and Old Sheng-tien were to attend the meeting. Before leaving, they asked Meng-hsiao and Tang-ni time and again not to risk going down the sides of the pit because the air down there was probably foul from the stagnant water.

At the Party branch committee meeting Keng-mao proposed they stop work on Nanchai Mountain and send everyone back to carry water for sowing. He argued that they lacked water and manpower in the fields. However, his proposal met with strong opposition from Old Sheng-tien.

The meeting was in full swing when Tang-ni rushed in panting. "Meng-hsiao's fainted in the pit!"

Meng-hsiao and several young men had gone to the pit to investigate. In vain, Tang-ni had tried to stop him. Having tied a rope round his waist, Meng-hsiao asked the others to lower him into the pit where, overcome by noxious gas, he lost consciousness.

While telephoning the commune hospital for an ambulance, Lu Ming told Tang-ni to send the doctor, Chia Jen, ahead to give first aid. Then Lu Ming rushed to the pit with Old Sheng-tien and Keng-mao. Surrounded by a crowd of people, Meng-hsiao lay unconscious, his face as white as paper, his lips purple.

After a long while, Chia Jen arrived, pushed along by Tang-ni.

"I asked him to come," Tang-ni said, pointing an angry finger at Chia Jen. "But when he heard Meng-hsiao had been asphyxiated, he didn't want to. He says he's never given first aid in such a case."

"Are you a doctor or aren't you?" Sheng-tien raged. "Any doctor can give first aid in a simple case like this. I think you're delaying deliberately. I tell you, if the boy dies because of it, you'll be held responsible."

Since Sheng-tien had hit the nail on the head, Chia Jen was forced to treat Meng-hsiao. After some casual artificial respiration, Chia Jen declared that the case was quite serious. An injection of cardiogenic tonic would be necessary. He opened his box and slyly fumbled around in it. Believing that no one noticed, he swiftly fished out an ampoule and was about to fill the syringe when Old Sheng-tien stopped him. "Wait a minute. What's that?"

Chia Jen started. "Cardiogenic," he answered and quickly began filling the syringe, so that he could throw the empty ampoule away.

"Let me have a look!" Tang-ni reached out for it.

Chia Jen squinted at Lu Ming and Old Sheng-tien who were staring sternly at him. He had no choice but hand it over.

Tang-ni examined it. Furious, she announced, "This isn't any cardiogenic, it's just penicillin! What are you up to, Chia Jen?"

Everyone was angry. One after the other the brigade members cursed the infamous doctor. Outwardly unruffled, Chia Jen tried to convince them that he hadn't done it deliberately, that it was a mistake due to carelessness and haste. Everyone wanted to argue with him, but Lu Ming interrupted. "Every minute counts now. We must give Meng-hsiao first aid. Tang-ni, didn't you learn how to give injections during your militia training? Come on, you give him one."

The ambulance soon arrived. Having asked Tang-ni to accompany Meng-hsiao to the hospital, Lu Ming turned to question Chia Jen again.

Old Sheng-tien indignantly shook his finger at the doctor. "This was no case of carelessness," he declared. "It was an attempt at sabotage."

Vying with each other, the angry villagers fiercely criticized Chia Jen, insisting that he make a clean breast of his intention.

Feigning innocence and bewilderment, Chia Jen spoke with tears in his eyes.

"Keep calm, comrades." Keng-mao stepped out of the crowd. "Though Chia Jen comes from a landlord family, his work's all right. The small mistake he made today can't be called sabotage, though it's a serious lesson for him. I think we should let him go back and write a self-criticism."

"Don't be a fool, Keng-mao!" Old Sheng-tien shouted angrily, striding up to the brigade leader. "Chia Jen has shown himself for what he is today. Don't be deceived by his honeyed words."

The brigade members held a meeting on the spot and censured Chia Jen. Then Lu Ming ordered Chia Jen to go back and write a confession and warned him not to try undermining their activities in the future.

When Chia Jen was gone, Lu Ming, Old Sheng-tien and Keng-mao continued to discuss and analyse the recently reported activities of class enemies and help Keng-mao increase his understanding of class struggle. They'd decided to go to the commune immediately to borrow a blower and dispel the gas from the pit. Then, after exploring it, they'd set up pumps around its edge. Before leaving, Old Sheng-tien threw a stone into the pit. From the sound he could tell the water was deep.

"The water problem has been solved at last!" Lu Ming exclaimed.

4

Three days later they completed a one *li* canal along which the water from the pit would be pumped to the newly-built storage pond at the top of Nanchai Mountain. The pumps were set to work. Explosions rang out day and night. Mound after mound of earth was washed away.

After being criticized by Lu Ming and Old Sheng-tien that day, Keng-mao began to change his attitude. Besides leading the brigade members to fight the drought and complete the sowing, he often went up the mountain to look around, meaning to do his bit to help. But changing one's way of thinking is no easy matter. It can't be done in a day or two, and so it was in Keng-mao's case.

"Now that we've solved all the problems involved in changing the course of the river, I feel really happy," he told Old Sheng-tien one day.

"Have all the problems been solved?" Old Sheng-tien asked gravely. "I don't think so, Keng-mao. The nearer to victory, the more

alert we must be. Don't forget that though the old landlord Chia Wu-wan died long ago, his spirit still exists — and he has an heir."

"Oh, Chia Jen," Keng-mao said indifferently. "He's worked fairly well in recent years. Besides his everyday work in the fields, he looks after sick people in the brigade. He also tries to be close to Party members and cadres. You can't judge him by his past only."

"What!" Old Sheng-tien was a little agitated. "That son of the old landlord is a double-dealer who pretends to be progressive but schemes in the dark. You only see his good side but forget what he's done behind our backs. What about that matter of not giving Meng-hsiao the injection he needed the other day?"

Tang-ni and Meng-hsiao came up together. "Look at Meng-hsiao, grandpa," the girl complained to the old man. "He's barely back on his feet, but he insists on coming to work."

"How are you, Meng-hsiao?" Old Sheng-tien asked full of concern. "That was a close shave! You must draw a lesson from it. Do you know that Chia Jen tried to harm you?"

"Tang-ni has told me all about it, grandpa," the boy said. "I shouldn't have risked going down into the pit. But I won't forget about Chia Jen. That's why I came here to pitch in right away."

"Has Chia Jen behaved well in the last few days?" Sheng-tien asked.

"He's been spreading rumours again," Tang-ni replied. "He claims the pit belongs to the Dragon King and that anyone who touches it will be punished. He's been citing Meng-hsiao as an example. He says that if we go on pumping the water from the pit, something worse will happen. I think, now that the work's in full swing, he's spreading these rumours to sabotage our project."

"So long as we keep our eyes open, we've nothing to fear," Old Sheng-tien said. Then he turned to Keng-mao. "What do you think?"

"I agree. Let's go back and have a look round the village, Tang-ni." The two headed back at once.

For several days the shock team worked hard. They were busy at the work-site by day and kept a close watch on the canal by night. Grandpa Sheng-tien worked the hardest. Though old, he never

tired and willingly took on any job assigned him. Besides directing the work, he patrolled the canal, shovel in hand, plugging leaks and strengthening any part of the embankment that looked weak. For him, every drop of water counted.

He was patrolling a distant section one night when he noticed the water suddenly stopped flowing. He scanned the mountain ahead. A dark figure was stealing towards the village. At the same time he heard water splashing. He immediately gave chase, shouting, "Someone's damaged our canal! After him!"

"After him! Catch him!" voices echoed in the village.

"Don't let him escape!" shouted the youngsters on Nanchai Mountain. People began converging on the saboteur.

Since the scoundrel seemed as good as caught, Old Sheng-tien dashed instead towards the sound of splashing. Shining his flashlight on the canal bank, he spotted a big breach from which the water was rushing down the slope. Beside himself with rage, he frantically shovelled dirt into the breach, but the water washed it out and crumbled the embankment, widening the hole rapidly. What was he to do? After a moment's thought, he threw down his shovel and sat down, filling the breach. The water flowed on towards the pond once again.

It was almost dawn, but on that chilly spring night the water was particularly cold. Grandpa Sheng-tien remained in the breach, though soaked through. As time went by, the cold increased till his teeth began to chatter and his hands and feet were completely numb.

At daybreak, having caught the saboteur Chia Jen, Lu Ming, Keng-mao, Tang-ni and the shock team made for the spot where the foul work had been done. They found Old Sheng-tien like Mount Tai sitting immobile in the breach. Lu Ming quickly helped him out, while directing others to repair the embankment. All were moved to tears by the old man's heroic act.

"Chia Jen did it. We've caught him," Lu Ming told Old Sheng-tien. "He's being questioned in the brigade office."

"This is a serious lesson for me, Brother Sheng-tien," Keng-mao confessed. "I couldn't believe Chia Jen was a wolf in sheep's clothing. I'm not alert enough politically. He deceived me so well, I



even defended him. I'll correct my mistakes and work better at continuing the revolution."

This struggle against the class enemy greatly stimulated the cadres and masses of Sun-flower Village, making them work for socialism with heightened enthusiasm. Not only did they finish the sowing ahead of time, but they speeded up the work on Nanchai Mountain. The task of transforming the mountains and rivers, which some people had said would take two years, was completed late that spring. All the villagers, men and women, old and young, were thrilled by their success.

The day after the channel was completed, there was a rainstorm and torrents raced down from the upper reaches of the river to pound on the newly-built dam at Yellow Dragon Mouth. Blocked by the high

embankment, the river roared along its new bed cleaved through the mountain. Raincoats draped over their shoulders, Grandpa Sheng-tien and Lu Ming stood on the dam to open a sluice-gate which let in a stream of muddy water. The silt would enrich the soil of the people's new fields on the old river-bed.

All the commune members came in the rain to watch. They were happy beyond words at the sight of those torrents tamed for the first time.

"The dream of our forefathers for generation upon generation has come true at last!" Old Sheng-tien exclaimed to Lu Ming.

"That's it," Lu Ming responded. "Because we have Chairman Mao's revolutionary line, we commune members can go all out to build socialism, removing mountains and changing the course of rivers. That's what we mean when we say: 'Men can conquer Heaven.'"

Illustrated by Li Yen-sheng

WRITINGS BY LEGALISTS

Li Ho

Tiger Rampant

Neither long spear nor strong cross-bow
Can overthrow it;
It suckles and rears its young
To wreak havoc in turn:
Each raised head a rampart,
Each swinging tail a banner.

Even Master Huang* of Tunghai
Would dread a night encounter with this monster;
For meeting Tsou Yu** — a kind heart in a tiger's form —
Rouses this Kungniu Ai*** to anger.

*A wizard said to be able to control beasts. When he grew old and infirm his magic failed him and he was killed by a tiger.

**A legendary creature with the form of a tiger which would not eat other beasts.

***According to a legend, Kungniu Ai was ill for seven days, then turned into a tiger and killed his own brother.

What avail a fine sword
If left on the wall to thunder?*

From the foot of Mount Tai
Comes the sound of a woman wailing,**
Though its capture is ordered by the government
The officers dare not comply.

*Referring to a magic sword which clanged to announce the approach of an enemy.

**Legend has it that once Confucius passed by Mount Tai and saw a woman crying by the roadside. He sent his disciple Tzu-lu to ask the reason and learned that the woman's father, husband and son had all been eaten by a tiger. But because the taxes and levies there were not exorbitant, her family did not move away. So Confucius said: "Tyranny is more rapacious than a tiger." This story was often used by Confucians to attack the rule of the newly emerging landlord class. Here the poet uses it to expose the atrocities of the local warlords.

The Governor of Yenmen

Black clouds press down on the town to topple it,
Mail glints like golden fish-scales in the sunlight,
Bugling invests the sky with autumn splendour
As crimson forts freeze to purple in the night;
Red flags half-furled advance to the River Yi,
Our drums are muted, muffled in heavy frost;
To repay the honour conferred from the Golden Tower*
I draw my jade-dragon sword to die for my lord.

*The tower where the general received his appointment from the emperor.

Verses Written in My South Garden

Less than thirty am I, more than twenty,
Hungry all day long when green herbs are yet in shoot;
May some elder at the bridge take pity on me
And leave me a book on military tactics!*

.....

A man should wear a scimitar
And go to recover all fifty prefectures.
Pray mount Lingyen Pavilion** and look at the portraits there;
What scholar ever won a fief of ten thousand families?

*Refers to the story that Chang Liang was given a military treatise by an old man whom he met on a bridge in his youth. Later he assisted Liu Pang to conquer the whole empire and found the Han Dynasty.

**Emperor Tai-tsung of the Tang Dynasty had portraits painted and kept in Lingyen Pavilion to honour the twenty-four men who helped him to conquer the empire.

A Satire

No pearls left in Hoppo,
No oranges left in Lungchow:
It seems the creator himself is powerless
To meet all the demands of the governor!
The women of the south have not set about weaving,
Silkworms are just starting to stir,
When up gallops the magistrate,
Grim-faced, with curled purple beard,
Holding a square placard before him,
On the placard a written order.
"If you had not angered the governor,
Would I have come to your house?"
The woman curtseys to the magistrate.
"The mulberry leaves are still small;
Not until the end of spring
Can I set my loom whirring."
While she pleads with him
Her sister-in-law cooks millet;
Barely has the magistrate bolted the food and left
When the bailiff is in the hall.

A Bronze Immortal Leaves the Han Palace

In the eighth month of the first year of the Chinglung Era (A.D.233) Emperor Ming of Wei dispatched a palace officer west with carts to bring back a bronze immortal holding a disc to catch dew made for Emperor Wu of Han, in order to set this up in his front court. When the palace officer removed the disc and the statue was about to be loaded, it shed tears. So I, Li Chang-chi, a scion of the House of Tang, have written this song.

Gone with the autumn wind
Is Master Liu of Maoling,* a passing guest,
One still hears his horse neighing at night
But by dawn he has passed without trace.
The scent of autumn yet hangs
On the fragrant osmanthus by painted galleries;

*Emperor Wu (140-87 B.C.) of Han, whose family name was Liu, was buried at Maoling.

In his thirty-six palaces
Green moss is growing.

As Wei's envoy brings out the carriage
To drive a thousand *li*,
Keen wind at the East Pass makes the eyes smart;
From the ruined palace he brings nothing forth
But the moon of a previous dynasty;
And longing for his former master
The statue sheds leaden tears.

Withered orchids by the Hsienyang road
See the traveller on his way.
If Heaven had a feeling heart
Heaven too must grow old!
He bears the disc off alone
By the light of a desolate moon,
Far behind now, the town on the Wei*
Faint the lapping of waves.

*Hsienyang on the bank of the River Wei.

Legalist Ideas in Li Ho's Poetry

After the middle of the Tang Dynasty (618-907) class struggles between the peasantry and the landlord class intensified, as did the contest within the landlord class itself between the conservative Confucian political line representing the interests of the big landlords and the more progressive Legalist line representing the interests of the smaller landlords. During this period a number of writers and poets with Legalist ideas appeared. Our magazine has introduced such writers of this period as Liu Yu-hsi and Liu Tsung-yuan. Li Ho is another prominent poet of this period with Legalist ideas.

Li Ho (790-816), or Li Chang-chi, came from Changku County (present-day Yiyang County) in the province of Honan. He died when only twenty-seven. His father served as a minor official in some border region and he himself was a minor officer in charge of ceremony for three years; thus he had an unsuccessful official career and his life was one of frustration.

Although Li Ho died young, his life spanned the three reigns of the emperors Teh-tsung, Shun-tsung and Hsien-tsung. After the An Lu-shan and Shih Ssu-ming Revolt which lasted for eight years,

the formerly prosperous Tang empire entered upon a period of decline. The growing independence of local garrison commanders and the usurpation of power by eunuchs in the imperial palace resulted in many critical situations. Reformists who represented the interests of the smaller landlords endeavoured to consolidate the central government. In A.D. 805 some Legalists with Wang Shu-wen and Liu Tsung-yuan as their representatives assisted Emperor Shun-tsung to carry out certain political reforms which attacked the Confucian line and tried to wrest power from the eunuchs and local commanders. In spite of these measures, however, the reformists were soon defeated by a counter-attack of the die-hard Confucian forces; and after Hsien-tsung ascended the throne Wang Shu-wen was killed, Liu Tsung-yuan and others were banished, and the government once more fell into the hands of the Confucians.

Li Ho in his youth witnessed this fierce tussle between the Confucian and the Legalist lines in politics, as well as the iniquities caused by Confucianism. He wrote poetry to reflect the contemporary political struggle from a Legalist standpoint and to express his own political ideals and thoughts.

A significant part of his poems shows his opposition to the local warlords and his desire to see the country united.

After A.D. 741 the former army system was abolished. A new method of conscription was adopted and garrison commanders were appointed in various regions. There was then a manor economy created by the annexation of land by big landlords, who connived with the local garrison commanders, enabling them to exercise full power in their regions and become practically independent. The government appointed new local commanders in an attempt to control the existing ones, with the result that by the time of Emperor Hsien-tsung there were as many as forty-eight independent military regions controlling 295 prefectures which comprised more than 1,400 counties. When a local commander died, his son usually succeeded him. These warlords often fought each other and sometimes several of them banded together to oppose the central government, undermining the unity of the empire and bringing endless suffering to the people.

The prevailing confusion and anarchy aroused Li Ho's anxiety and indignation, thus his poems make scathing attacks on the crimes of the warlords. *Do Not Venture Out, My Lord* is a trenchant criticism of unruly local commanders, whose rapacity and savagery are compared with poisonous snakes and man-eating monsters. In *Tiger Rampant*, published in this issue, the various allusions used identify these cruel local despots with savage tigers, vividly exposing their true features.

The poet's distress over the calamities caused by the local warlords made him give eager support to government attempts to re-conquer the regions under their control and unify the empire. *The Governor of Yenmen* in this issue is a well-known poem describing such an attempt. In a vigorous, tragic style Li Ho describes a government force fearlessly confronting an enemy as threatening as black clouds pressing down on the city. The looming black clouds stand for the local warlord forces and show the poet's hatred of them, whereas the magnificent line "Mail glints like golden fish-scales in the sunlight" conjures up the spirit of the government's expeditionary forces whose advance and engagement are concisely conveyed by graphic images. In the last two lines, the warrior's declaration shows his dauntless courage and readiness to die for the unification of the country. This expressed Li Ho's own determination to fight for unification and the strengthening of the central authority, a determination which in those circumstances had a progressive significance.

Li Ho not only hoped the government forces would achieve unification, he was eager to serve in them himself to suppress the local commanders. He compared himself to a fine battle horse:

Would that, a golden harness on its head,
It might gallop off through the cool autumn!
.....
When the time comes to charge the enemy
It will be led over, a mount for the general.

Elsewhere he compared himself to a magic sword able to fly off with a clang and kill the enemy:

When will Heaven open its eyes
That at last the ancient blade may roar?

An ardent supporter of the Legalist line in politics, Li Ho used myths and parables in his poetry to affirm this line and the Legalists' reform measures and to denounce the separatist activities of the Confucians. He condemned the rule of Hsien-tsung who had returned to the Confucian line and persecuted Legalists such as Wang Shu-wen and Liu Tsung-yuan. In one of his poems on horses he wrote:

Too soon Lord Liu departed,
Now there is none to keep dragons;
At night in the frosty stable
The west wind breaks the fine steeds' bones.

This refers to an ancient legend about a prince of the state of Liu who was so good at keeping dragons that all dragons flocked to him. Li Ho used this story as a parable to criticize Hsien-tsung; for in A.D. 805 when Emperor Teh-tsung died and Shun-tsung succeeded to the throne he had relied on such fine men as Wang Shu-wen and Liu Tsung-yuan to carry out reforms; but after a few months only he had to yield the throne to Hsien-tsung, who persecuted the Legalists as soon as he came to power. He was the one who did not keep dragons. In this poem Li Ho condemned the emperor and showed sympathy for the "fine steeds" exposed to the frost at night.

Li Ho despised the conservative Confucian pedants who felt no responsibility to the country. In one of the *Verses Written in My South Garden* he described his life of poverty and expressed the wish to be like Chang Liang who had assisted the first emperor of Han to conquer the empire by adopting a Legalist line. Another of these verses has the lines:

A man should wear a scimitar
And go to recover all fifty prefectures.

This poem voiced his longing to serve the country as well as his contempt for those useless pedants who could never achieve deeds of valour like the men who helped to create the Tang empire and had their portraits hung in a memorial hall.

Ever since the Chin (221-207 B.C.) and the Han Dynasties in ancient China, the palace eunuchs had been a force of reaction who often connived with Confucians to carry out a retrogressive line.

After the middle of the Tang Dynasty the eunuchs had a great say in the government. As die-hards representing the interests of the big landlord class, they were so powerful that they could even depose or murder the emperor. Hsien-tsung himself was brought to the throne by the powerful eunuch Chu Wen-chen. Men of this kind were anathema to Li Ho, who often exposed their true features and satirized their corruption and greed.

In A.D. 809, on the death of Wang Shih-chen, military governor of the Chengteh Army Region, his son tried to force the government to appoint him in his father's place. When his attempt failed he declared himself independent. Hsien-tsung sent an expeditionary force to reconquer the district, but put this force under the command of the eunuch Tutuh Cheng-tsui; finally after depleting the treasury the army was defeated, but this eunuch on his return reported a victory in order to win credit. Li Ho in his poem *General Lu* made a scathing attack on this fiasco:

A tortoise-nosed square silver seal, a jogging white horse,
And below the fiery flag a powdered damsel!
The north's iron horsemen challenging him to a fight
Far off smell the scent from his quiver of painted arrows.

This eunuch taking the field was as gaudily dressed as a woman, with nothing about him to command awe but a silver seal which he carried on a white horse; thus when challenged by enemy lances he could only fly for his life, leaving behind the fragrance of cosmetics.

Li Ho also painted vivid pictures of the corrupt politics of his day and the wretchedness of the people owing to the Confucian line carried out by Hsien-tsung. His poem *An Old Jade-quarrier* describes how the old man toils in wind and rain, going hungry and cold and forced to risk his life because the court demands so much jade as tribute. A rope round his waist he lowers himself into a deep stream to find the precious stone.

The old man, hungry and cold, gives the dragon no rest,
The stream's water has lost its clear limpidity.

.....

He worries for his beloved child in the cold thatched cottage,
And the sight of grass clinging to old stone steps only adds to his grief.

In *A Satire* published in this issue Li Ho describes how local magistrates and bailiffs levy taxes from the village women in spring when the silkworms are still small. This penetrating exposure of the cruel exploitation and greed of the feudal government also reveals the poet's sympathy for the downtrodden labouring masses.

The disunity of the empire and its general decline as a result of adopting Confucian policies made Li Ho think back longingly to the famous men with Legalist ideas in the past who had unified the country, and he described such heroes in glowing terms. Chin Shih Huang, founder of China's first united feudal empire, had always been vilified by Confucians as a "despot". Li Ho, however, gave whole-hearted praise to the First Emperor's achievements and the victory of his Legalist line, depicting him in stirring, magnificent language. In *A Long Song After a Short Song*, he described Chin Shih Huang as a bright moon in the dark night and expressed a longing to see him and follow in his steps, as well as regret at not living in the same age. The theme of his *A Bronze Immortal Leaves the Han Palace* is the story of a bronze statue made in the time of Emperor Wu of Han which was dismantled from Hsienyang (near Changan in Shensi) and removed to Loyang in Honan, in the time of Emperor Ming of Wei during the Three Kingdoms Period. Legend had it that the bronze statue shed tears when leaving Hsienyang where his former master was buried and in this way Li Ho showed his admiration for the Han emperor who had defeated the Huns. So this poem also reflected his disapproval of Hsien-tsung's Confucian line and his eagerness for reforms.

All earlier Confucians had advocated the metaphysical views that "Heaven changes not, neither does the Way," and that "life and death, wealth and nobility are predestined by Heaven". This was the theoretical basis for their retrogressive conservative line. Li Ho in his poems boldly refuted such views. He believed neither in gods nor in the immutability of the universe. In *Alas, the Day Is Short* he asked: "Where is the supreme god, where the Primordial One?" *Through the Centuries* has the lines:

When is the end of all time?
A thousand years go with the wind;
Sand from the ocean changes into rock;
Fish blow bubbles over Chin Bridge.

In his view, everything in the universe was in a process of continuous change and development. This early materialist dialectical thinking was the ideological basis of his demand for political reform.

Li Ho in his short life wrote more than two hundred poems, many of them splendid with the brilliance of Legalist thought. These are gems of ancient Chinese literature. However, Li Ho was no more than a reformer of the landlord class. Owing to his historical and class limitations, he could not see the power of the masses but placed his hope for reform on the ruling class and exaggerated the importance of great men. His criticism of the Confucian political line was also aimed at preserving the feudal order, and this being the case it could not be very thorough. Moreover, as his career was unsuccessful, some of his poems express grief at the lack of recognition of his talent. These are the negative aspects of his poetry.



The rising serf breaks off his chains (a detail of the last scene)

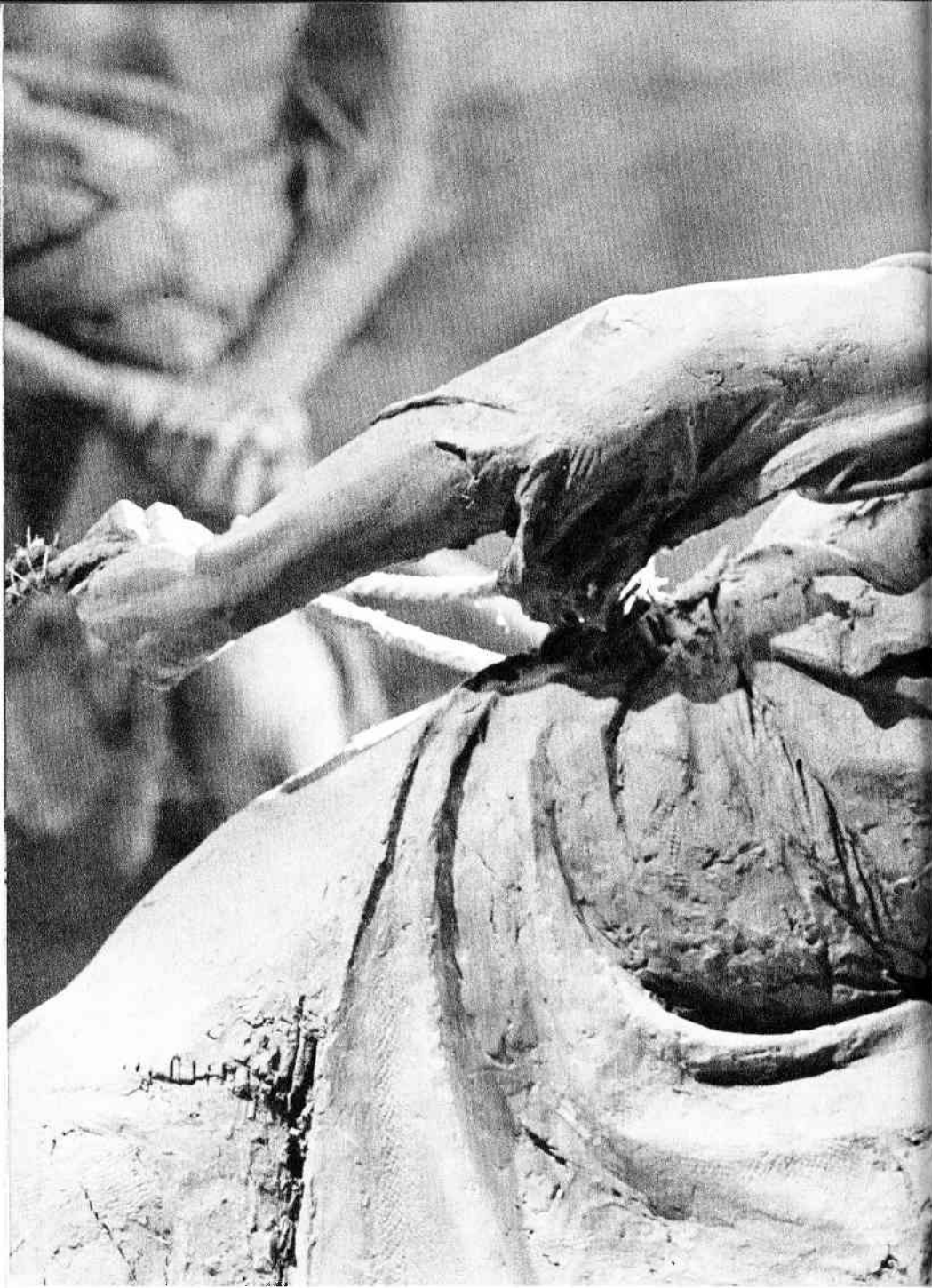
The Clay Sculptures "Wrath of the Serfs"



A woman serf doing conscript labour

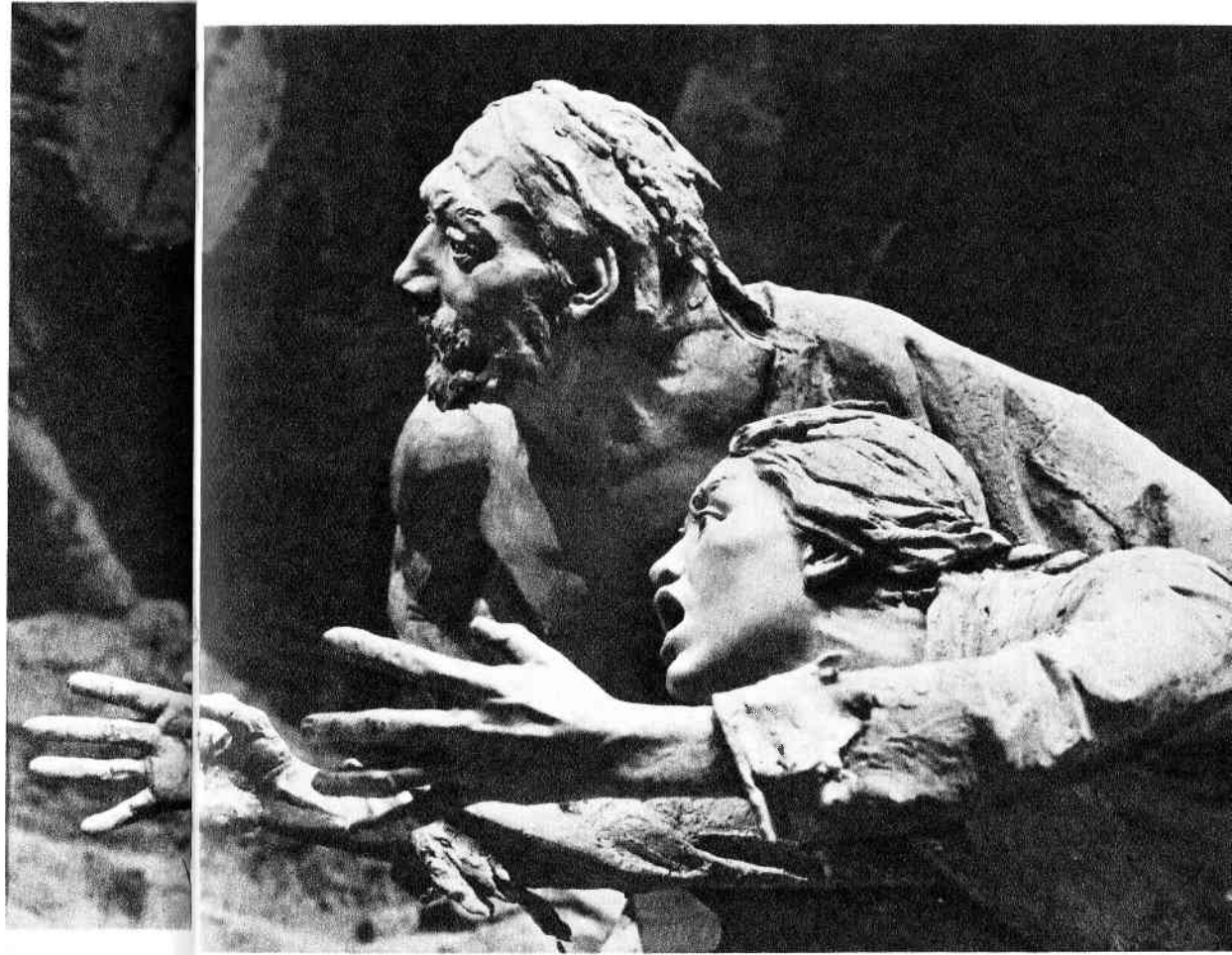


A serf protects his mate from the overseer's whip



A mother toiling in the serf-owner's field cannot go to feed her hungry baby

A boy slave bartered for a donkey cries for his granddad



The lamas are burying her baby alive



A woman serf rising heroically in revolt

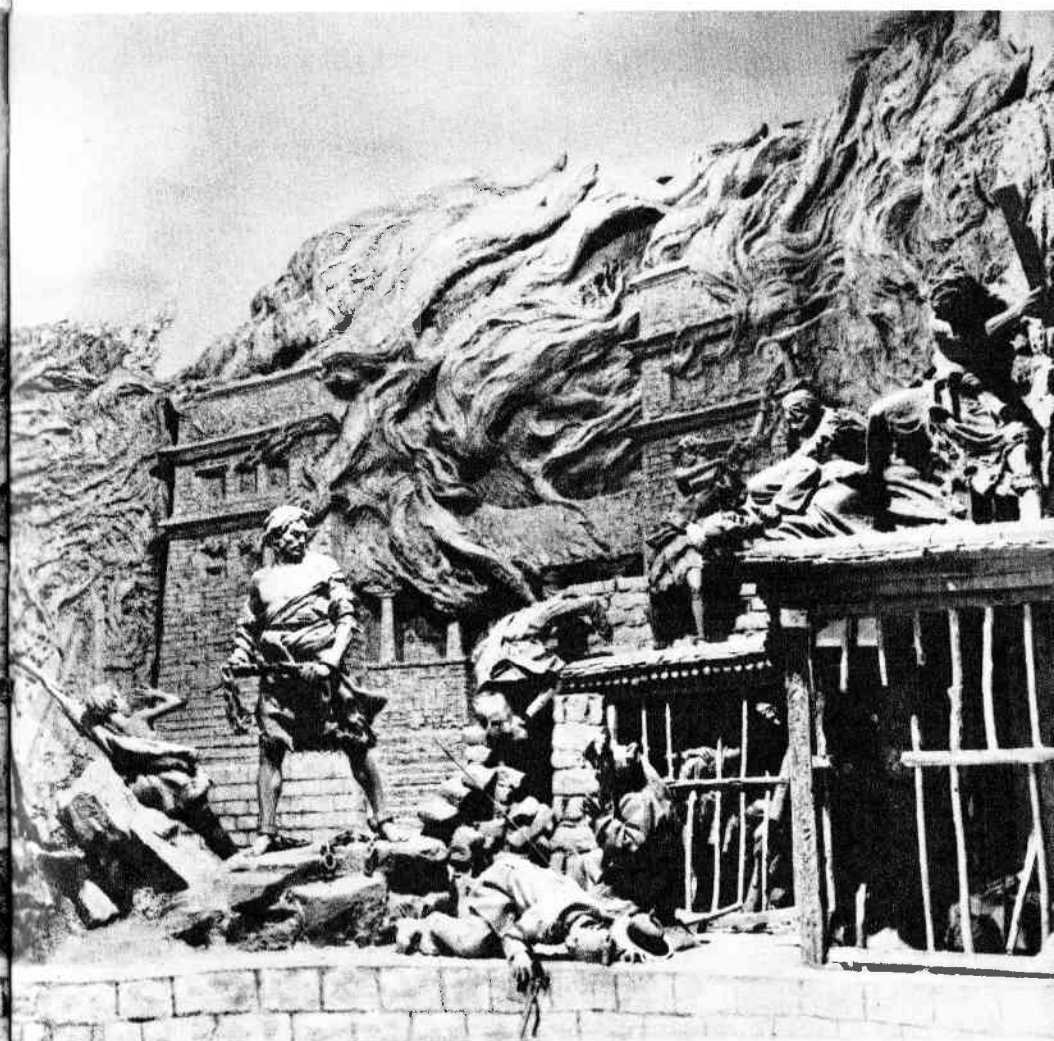
A valiant serf, about to have his hand chopped off, remains undaunted



A serf being sent into exile with a cangue round his neck



The motherless girl is following her father into exile



The serfs' struggle for liberation (the last scene)

Struggle (a detail of the last scene)



A Monba woman serf (a detail of the last scene)



Calling his class brothers to rise and fight (a detail of the last scene)

CRITICISM OF "WATER MARGIN"

In accordance with Chairman Mao's instructions, in September last year Chinese periodicals started printing articles evaluating the fourteenth-century Chinese novel *Water Margin* which describes a peasant revolt. What is the story of this novel and why are we discussing and criticizing it today? In our No. 12 issue last year we published two articles dealing with these questions. In this number we are introducing Lu Hsun's comments on this novel. Other articles on *Water Margin* will appear in future issues.

— The Editors

Kuo Yu-heng

Lu Hsun's Comments on the Novel "Water Margin"

The popular novel *Water Margin* has been the subject of all manner of comments and interpretations, notably in the twenties and thirties of this century when certain reactionary scholars put forward a host of fantastic views on this book to serve their political needs. Dr. Hu Shih, the most prominent of these, praised this novel to the skies, claiming that it was an "immortal masterpiece". At the same time Hu Shih lauded the book's chief character Sung Chiang as a "hero", a champion of "humanity and justice".

Lu Hsun (1881-1936) forcefully debunked these fantastic claims. In his essay *The Evolution of Roughts* he said, "*Water Margin* makes it quite clear that because they were not against the emperor, they accepted the offer of amnesty and enlistment when the government troops arrived and set out to fight other brigands for the state — brigands who did not 'carry out the true way on behalf of Heaven'. They were lackeys after all."

This criticism of Lu Hsun's penetratingly revealed the reactionary essence of this novel which praises a capitulationist line and advocates a slavish philosophy.

Using the Marxist method of class analysis, Lu Hsun unerringly seized on the crux of the matter — the fact that they did not oppose the emperor — and made a brilliant analysis of the whole novel. As the theme of *Water Margin* is a peasant uprising, the author's attitude towards the emperor, the supreme head of the feudal landlord class, is a question of paramount importance. In feudal society the emperor with his absolute power was the chief representative of the landlord class. It was the cruel economic exploitation and political oppression of the peasantry by the landlord class that forced the peasants to rise in revolt; therefore all the numerous peasant uprisings in Chinese history attacked the supreme head of the landlord class, the emperor and the imperial house. *Water Margin*, however, not only does not depict revolt against the emperor but actually lauds the corrupt rule of Emperor Hui-tsung at the end of the Northern Sung Dynasty when the action in the novel took place.

We know that the Northern Sung Dynasty was a relatively decadent one and that Hui-tsung was the most decadent of the Sung emperors. Even past feudal historians had recorded that he spent huge sums on the construction of pleasure palaces and lived in wanton luxury while the people groaned under oppression and natural calamities. The class contradictions in that society had sharpened to breaking point, and a whole series of peasant uprisings gave the emperor no rest; yet this novel distorts history by alleging that ever since Emperor Hui-tsung ascended the throne he had "governed with humanity and justice" and "devoted himself to the people". So this corrupt despot was glorified as a wise ruler.

The novel also harps on the theme that all the upheavals in the empire were caused by a few corrupt and evil officials such as Kao Chiu, who undermined the state, deceived the emperor, did all manner of evil and persecuted good and loyal men. In short, the peasant uprising at Liangshan was presented as a fight between so-called good and loyal subjects and evil officials. The novel denigrates the revolutionary line aiming at the overthrow of the emperor advocated by Chao Kai, founder of the insurgent forces. It gives fulsome praise to Sung Chiang's capitulationist line which opposed the evil minister Kao Chiu only but not the emperor. The novel praises the emperor as "most sagacious and intelligent", and Sung Chiang's slogan "Carry out the true way on behalf of Heaven" shows his loyalty to the sovereign for it means that he is enforcing Confucian doctrines on behalf of the emperor.

Lu Hsun pointed out, "They opposed evil ministers, not the emperor; the people they pillaged were common citizens, not generals and ministers." In feudal society all officials were simply instruments of the sovereign to control the people; the emperor was the true ruler. As Lu Hsun said of Sung Chiang's opposition to evil ministers but not to the monarch, "This was not revolt, it was simply a little rum-pus." So Sung Chiang's struggle against Kao Chiu was just a dog-fight within the landlord class, each party fighting for more power and profit for himself. It had nothing in common with peasant revolts which opposed the emperor as well as evil officials and were aimed at overthrowing the feudal dynasty. In this sense, Lu Hsun's comment pointed out the reactionary essence of this novel.

Since Sung Chiang opposed only evil ministers, it followed logically from this that he would surrender in the end to the emperor. As Lu Hsun pointed out, "They accepted the offer of amnesty and enlistment when the government troops arrived." In feudal times the landlord class often resorted to the reactionary trick of accepting peasant insurgents into the imperial army. The dual tactics of armed suppression and invitation to surrender were both employed to stamp out peasant revolts. In certain situations the latter could be more effective than suppression by force, but only when there were capitulationists in the insurgents' camp.

Sung Chiang in this novel is just such a capitulationist. Before going to Liangshan he is a member of the landlord class eager for fame and official position, a faithful supporter of the feudal order who has always opposed peasant revolts, considering them as high treason. But because he is defeated in his struggle for power and profit in the landlord class and his own life is in danger, having no other way out he sneaks into the ranks of the peasant insurgents. His aim in so doing, as he himself admits, is "to take the marshes as a refuge for the time being and wait to be enlisted in the government forces, in order to serve the state". This character of landlord class origin hiding in the ranks of the insurgents naturally waits for an opportunity to use this insurgent force to bargain for an official position himself. This is why immediately after the death of Chao Kai, leader of the insurgents, he usurps the authority and takes a different line to carry out his own sinister scheme, finally betraying the revolution. A fortified position can be most easily taken from within; this is a profound historical lesson. Lu Hsun once stated with deep feeling, "The enemy is not so much to be feared; what is most to be feared are the termites within one's own camp, so many enterprises have been spoilt by such creatures."

After betraying the revolution, those capitulationists within the ranks of the revolutionary people always become the most faithful and vicious henchmen of the reactionaries, to crush the revolution. This is the case with Sung Chiang. In *Water Margin*, soon after surrendering, he asks to go and suppress a peasant revolt led by Fang La. In Lu Hsun's words, he "set out to fight other brigands for the state — brigands who did not 'carry out the true way on behalf of Heaven' ". Lu Hsun here made a clear distinction between brigands who would "carry out the true way on behalf of Heaven" and those who would not, considering the former as bona-fide capitulationists, flunkeys of the reactionary ruling class, and the latter as genuine revolutionaries, heroes who revolted against servitude. This distinction shows Lu Hsun's clear class stand, his strong feelings of love and hate.

Lu Hsun said that brigands of Sung Chiang's type were "lackeys after all". He compared Sung Chiang with the so-called gallant men in Chinese history and popular romances, worked out the origin of

"roughs" and came to the conclusion that these evolved later under new historical conditions. For the "gallant men" in most popular romances started their careers as brigands, then served under certain officials and captured their former comrades for the government, thus becoming the official's body-guards and henchmen. According to Lu Hsun, after becoming the proteges of some good official or high commissioner, "they had a greater sense of security and hence showed a greater degree of servility". This is why when Sung Chiang suppresses the peasant revolt led by Fang La he shows greater savagery than the government troops. As Lu Hsun said, "Lap-dogs are usually fiercer than their masters."

Water Margin describes the whole process of Sung Chiang's capitulationism. However, some of the Liangshan insurgent leaders are against capitulation. Among these are Li Kuei who wants to "fight all the way to the eastern capital and take over the throne", as well as Wu Yung and the Yuan brothers who follow Chao Kai from the start. These men do not share Sung Chiang's views and several times oppose his capitulationist activities. However, this novel does not give these men prominent roles but makes them secondary characters, mere foils for Sung Chiang.

Capitulationism and refusal to surrender are two diametrically opposite lines. Although *Water Margin* does its utmost to distort and vilify those who oppose surrender, objectively the novel none the less reflects the struggle between these two lines among the Liangshan insurgents. The capitulationist Sung Chiang resorts to intrigue and Machiavellian tricks, but his main tactic to poison the minds of the peasant insurgents is preaching Confucian ideas, and the gist of this preaching is "loyalty and justice", a phrase constantly on his lips. "Loyalty" implies being loyal to the emperor, and "justice" being just to one's own friends; but the latter is subordinated to the former. Sung Chiang urges his men to have loyalty and justice in their hearts and to strive to achieve great deeds for the government. In this way he persuades the insurgents to follow his leadership and his capitulationist line.

By the use of such fine phrases as "strive to be loyal to serve the state", *Water Margin* endeavours to negate the contradiction between

the peasantry and the landlord class and the difference between capitulation and revolt. The novel claims that all people belong to one family, that all men whether high or low, close or distant, are brothers; thus it tries to present Liangshan which is racked by contradictions and struggles between two lines as a realm of true equality and justice. This aroused the admiration of Hu Shih, owing to his counter-revolutionary nature. He declared, "Of all Ming-dynasty works of literature *Water Margin* is the one with the most radical ideas." He was in fact trying to use the novel's landlord class theory of human nature to oppose the spread of Marxism-Leninism in China. Another reactionary writer Lin Yu-tang also expressed similar ideas. Lu Hsun sharply refuted this argument by saying, "Those men in the Liangshan marshes did not treat all men as brothers." And that was quite true. Sung Chiang showed great deference to high officials and big landlords like Lu Tsun-yi, offering him the seat of honour, and urging him to take over the leadership. But he threatened more than once to kill men like Li Kuei who resolutely opposed capitulation, and did eventually kill him with poisonous wine. Sung Chiang's talk of "justice" was actually just a trick to sabotage the revolution.

Water Margin uses a peasant revolt as a cover for preaching capitulationism. In this sense it can teach us a valuable lesson by negative example. From his own long experience of class struggle Lu Hsun realized the importance of such teaching material by negative example. Speaking about literary criticism, he said that for a fighter to understand more about the revolution and the enemy, "he ought to spend more time to dissect the enemy confronting him". Then he said that in writing he "should not only know the real situation of the revolution, but the situation of the enemy too".

Because of this Lu Hsun expressed strong disapproval of the feudal writers who abridged this novel. Various editions of *Water Margin* exist, the best known being the 120-chapter, the 100-chapter and the 70-chapter editions. The latter was abridged in the seventeenth century at the start of the Ching Dynasty by the reactionary scholar Chin Sheng-tan, who cut all the later chapters describing how Sung Chiang surrendered then suppressed another peasant revolt for the emperor. Lu Hsun argued that in making this abridgement Chin

Sheng-tan was "influenced by the social conditions of that period". We know that Chin Sheng-tan made this edition in the fourteenth year of the Ming emperor Tsung-chen (1641), three years before the peasant insurgent force led by Li Tzu-cheng took Peking by storm and overthrew the Ming Dynasty. At that time peasant revolts were sweeping the whole country, and since soft tactics had proved useless, the Ming government decided to suppress them by force. It was under these circumstances that Chin Sheng-tan with his reactionary landlord class stand expressed his inveterate hatred by making this abridgement of the novel. He did not approve of trying to win insurgents over by allowing "brigands" the "honour of redeeming themselves and the joy of escaping punishment". He wanted to have them wiped out. This is why he cut the end of the novel and went to the trouble of creating the god Chi Shu-yeh to massacre the Liangshan insurgents to the last man to vent his loathing for peasant uprisings.

This abridgement of *Water Margin* was thoroughly approved by later reactionaries. Thus Hu Shih said that Chin Sheng-tan was "a most remarkable man with a depth of understanding rarely found among the ancients", and that this abridgement of his had "resuscitated the novel and recreated Liangshan". He carried out "researches" and wrote tens of thousands of words in an attempt to prove that the Chin Sheng-tan edition was actually one of the original texts. Lu Hsun refuted this claim and pointed out that Chin Sheng-tan's abridgement showed his hatred of the outlaws and the fact that he took the same stand as the government and landed gentry, scoffing, "He was even stupid enough to dream up a Chi Shu-yeh to kill off Sung Chiang and the others." Cutting off the end of the novel, Lu Hsun said, had made it like "a dragonfly with its tail lopped off". Lu Hsun's criticism of Chin Sheng-tan's stupidity and reactionary stand also hit back at Hu Shih who had praised this abridged edition.

Lu Hsun's environment and the struggles he waged account in some measure for the acuteness of his comments, comments which grasp the main essence of the novel. After the May 4th Movement of 1919, especially after the counter-revolutionary coup of April 12, 1927 when Chiang Kai-shek massacred revolutionaries and Communists, capitulationists and renegades had appeared within the

revolutionary ranks. Lu Hsun in his lonely wanderings and search for truth described this situation as follows, "Some have left the ranks, some have fled, some have grown disillusioned and some have turned renegades." During the reactionary coup of 1927, Lu Hsun witnessed for himself how people informed on their comrades and helped the government to arrest revolutionaries, and this brought it home to him that the main danger for the revolution was those capitulationists. He pointed out indignantly, "The defeat of a revolution is usually owing to opportunists who have sneaked into the ranks, to corrupt from within." While attacking renegades who chose to be slaves, Lu Hsun showed himself to be, in Chairman Mao's words, "a man of unyielding integrity, free from all sycophancy or obsequiousness". So he was ruthless in his criticism of opportunists.

Chairman Mao in one of his recent instructions concerning *Water Margin* mentioned Lu Hsun's comments on this novel in the essay *The Evolution of Roughs*. Lu Hsun's trenchant and penetrating comments were a forceful attack on the opportunists of his day, and today still serve as a powerful weapon for us.

NOTES ON ART

Kao Yuan

The Clay Sculptures "Wrath of the Serfs"

Old-time Tibet was a hell on earth for all the serfs living there. The feudal lords, the lamaseries and the reactionary local government together exercised the most cruel and barbarous control over the Tibetan masses. Modern times have seldom witnessed such savage means of oppression. The group of clay sculptures *Wrath of the Serfs* modelled recently by Chinese art workers for the Tibetan Revolutionary Museum in Lhasa is a forceful exposure and denunciation of the heinous crimes committed under the feudal serf system in Tibet, and with impassioned revolutionary feeling it praises the serfs' revolt.

These clay sculptures are divided into four parts: the feudal manor, the lamasery, the *kasha* or former local government, and the serfs' struggle for liberation. They comprise one hundred and six life-size figures of men and women, six animal figures and four reliefs providing the backgrounds.

In the first section we see the cruel oppression of the serfs by Tibet's feudal nobles. Serfs toiled in wind and snow, staggering up mountain paths, bowed down by heavy loads; they suffered hunger, cold

and fearful beatings, being treated by their masters as cattle. Indeed, they were not only forced to work like cattle but could be exchanged for cattle too.

The second section depicts the lamaseries which enfeathered the serfs with religion. The lamas could force serfs to do heavy labour to build temples, even burying children alive under the foundation to serve the need of superstition. The children of serfs became slaves of the lamastery as soon as they left their mothers' wombs. Hard as they toiled they received no mercy from any of the "living Buddhas". To crush the revolt of the serfs, the lamas connived with foreign imperialists and stored cases of ammunition and weapons in their lamaseries. Rebellious serfs would have their arms chopped off, their eyes gouged out, be dragged to death by horses or thrown into seething cauldrons. Such scenes are shown in this section.

The reactionary local government of Tibet known as the *kasba* represented the class interests of the feudal nobility and the lamaseries. It was the organ by means of which these reactionary forces exercised absolute control over the serfs and savagely trampled over them. Even so, serf revolts followed one after another. The fourth section of sculptures shows how the serfs finally broke through their prison and set the whole plateau ablaze to destroy this hell on earth. The feudal serf system was finally smashed, and a new day dawned in Tibet. The Communist Party and Chairman Mao had come to save them.

The whole series of sculptures centring on the "wrath" of the serfs has strong political content and artistic impact. All four sections together sum up the history of class struggle in this feudal serf society throughout the centuries, showing the sharp conflict between the reactionary ruling class and the oppressed masses, as well as the revolt and victory of these slaves. The whole profoundly brings out the truth that history is made by the slaves.

As regards artistic composition, the sculptors have succeeded in contrasting the sorrows and revolt of the serfs with the savagery and cowardice of the enemy to make up one well-integrated whole. In the first section, for instance, we see a slave carrying his master and can feel from the angry glitter in his eyes that a revolt is imminent.

Then there is the old man whose grandchild has been snatched away: the anguish on this face with its eyes gouged out and the clutching fingers expressing his indignation show forceful though silent protest. This section also shows a man being dragged to death by a horse, and while the horse is already hanging its head in exhaustion the slave, despite his death agonies, still stubbornly props himself up on his arms to show his defiance and unyielding spirit. Again, in the lamastery there is a slave who refuses to carry in cases of ammunition, resisting fearlessly even when threatened by the enemy's sword and seething cauldron. As for the woman who has led a revolt of the serfs, she raises her arm and glares at her oppressors when led to the execution ground, and this projects her heroism even more strongly.

These first three sections which depict the cruelty of the reactionary rulers also make clear their hypocrisy and cowardice. The scenes of persecution in the lamastery highlight the hypocrisy of the two serf-masters standing before the hall. In the section depicting the local government too, the ugly, sinister officials and lamas hide their faces in fear as the serfs denounce them. Through these specific incidents and typical images the artists bring home to us the truth that the greater the oppression, the greater the revolt.

On the basis of the sharp conflict between the oppressors and the revolting serfs, the last section depicting the serfs' struggle for liberation brings the action to a climax. The blazing flames of the serfs' wrath destroy their prison; the slaves are shown fighting with instruments of torture as well as bows and arrows and spears until their reactionary masters are finally overthrown. This stirring scene contrasts strongly with the earlier depictions of the viciousness of the die-hards and the sufferings of the serfs. The figures here are either realistic or symbolic. Standing proudly in the forefront is a slave who has broken his fetters and is glaring in anger — he is an impressive symbolic figure. This combination of realism and symbolism in group sculptures is a successful new departure in *Wrath of the Serfs*.

Each group of figures in these sculptures is based on real life, but they are typical images in typical circumstances and the whole is imbued with revolutionary heroism which comes out most fully in the

final section. It is because the sculptors have linked revolutionary realism with revolutionary romanticism quite effectively that they have succeeded in producing a work of a fairly high artistic level.

Wrath of the Serfs is another significant achievement in Chinese sculpture since the appearance of the group sculptures *Rent Collection Courtyard*. These artists are convinced from their own experience that the line for literature and art pointed out by Chairman Mao is the only correct one. Nine of these sculptors are professionals in the College of Fine Arts in the Central May Seventh Academy of Arts, another is an art teacher of the Lu Hsun Art College of Shenyang, three others are Tibetan art workers in the Revolutionary Museum of Tibet. For about a year and a half they visited communes and pastures in Tibet, travelling over five thousand kilometres. By working with the masses and joining in their class struggles, they gained a deep impression of the Tibetan serfs' past sufferings and their enthusiasm for socialism today. Understanding that militant art comes only from plunging into fiery struggles these artists have relied closely on the masses, listened to their opinions and suggestions and in accordance with these kept improving their work from the initial conception to the drafting and the final sculpting. This is why they were able to create a work of art which the masses approve of and are deeply stirred by.

When the finished work was shown to liberated serfs it rekindled the wrath in their hearts, and it is teaching the younger generation not to forget past class hatred and past sorrow. It utterly exposes the lies of the reactionary brigand chief, the Dalai Lama, who claims that the old Tibet was a holy and beautiful paradise on earth.

The appearance of *Wrath of the Serfs* after the Cultural Revolution and the movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius shows how the revolutionary spirit of our age is finding expression in art. Through their revolutionary practice these sculptors have made a new contribution to our socialist literature and art.

Our Experience in Sculpting “Wrath of the Serfs”

For many years we sculptors have wanted to create works depicting the Tibetan serfs to expose their savage oppression and exploitation by the former reactionary rulers of Tibet and to sing the praise of the serfs' revolt and struggle. In the spring of 1974, when the movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius began, our wish was realized. Nine sculptors from the College of Fine Arts of the Central May Seventh Academy of Arts in Peking and a teacher from the Lu Hsun Art College of Shenyang went then to the Tibetan Autonomous Region to help make the group sculptures *Wrath of the Serfs* for the Revolutionary Museum in Lhasa.

To prepare ourselves for this work we went to live among the local people, visiting their homes and carrying out investigations. We travelled for more than five thousand kilometres and attended more than forty mass meetings at which liberated serfs spoke of their past misery; we also talked with more than seventy former serfs who had undergone fearful suffering. In this way we collected a great deal of raw material for our work.

This article was written by the sculptors of the *Wrath of the Serfs*.



The sculptors on their way to carry out investigation

At a mass meeting in Quxur County an old woman told us: "What you're doing is very important. Young people nowadays don't know what we endured in the old society. You must make them see that the Dalai, chief representative of the old serf-master class, must never be allowed back to lord it over us!" Her earnest advice made us understand more clearly the importance of our task, giving us more courage and determination to overcome all difficulties.

The average age of our group was forty-two, and some of us were not too strong, but we were determined to go and live in communes and among herdsmen to learn from the liberated serfs, following Chairman Mao's instruction that artists must go whole-heartedly to live among the masses. The Tibetan Autonomous Region is very mountainous, so we had to learn to ride horses; at first some of us and our mounts would stumble and fall; however, we carried on undeterred. Once we went to a certain commune to help dig a canal. Being not yet fully acclimatized to the high altitude, we were panting for breath all the time; but all of us stuck it out till the job was finished.

A woman called Krzang in Nyabmad Commune told us: "My mother was a slave. When I was born, her master forced her to go out and do hard labour, so that she had to leave me with the dogs. . . ." Party Secretary Geleg of Chunba Commune had been compelled for twelve years to wear a wooden cangue which made it impossible for him to lie down; yet with superhuman courage he managed to survive.

When we heard tales of bitterness like these, we shared their indignation and sorrow and our hearts became linked together. We felt we must express the feelings of these liberated serfs, our own class brothers and sisters, for them. This gave us the enthusiasm and strength to persevere.

When we had amassed abundant raw material from real life we started to make clay figures, six whole sets in all. In order to achieve the best possible result, we scrapped some of these figures several times and started all over again.

To give our sculptures a strong emotional impact, we had to feel the serfs' own sorrow and wrath and correctly appraise their suffering and their resistance, the savagery of the serf-masters and the revolt of the serfs themselves. In old Tibet there were many atrocious tor-

They talk with a liberated serf





Sketching by the Yalutsangpo River

tures and one problem was how to depict these correctly. For instance, in one scene we wanted to show how the heads of a lamasery tried to crush the serfs' revolt by chopping off their hands. We made various models but none of them depicted the ferocity of the enemy and the revolt of the serfs to our satisfaction.

Then we went to see Comrade Drolma, both of whose hands had been chopped off. Shedding tears she told us her story and said in conclusion: "Facing the cruel enemy's sword, I never shed a single tear. . . ." We heard the story too of Comrade Pudag who was hacked with a knife by those thugs and dragged behind a horse until he was half dead, then drenched in icy water and scorched by fire; finally both his eyes were gouged out, and hot melted butter was poured into his eye-sockets. However, he never yielded and each time he recovered consciousness he cursed the enemy. Such stirring heroic stories helped us to create the scene: a seething cauldron by the high wall of the prison, a heroic figure, both arms fastened, glaring angrily and proudly at the bestial lamas and the blood-stained sword, showing his indomitable spirit.

There were a hundred and six figures in all, and each had its own individual character. We made a great many sketches from real life so that, when we started to sculpt, all those images of liberated serfs would appear in our mind's eye and enable us to create typical characters. For example, the chief hero of the last scene was a composite of several real characters. To understand these characters better, we made records of the lives of many people to study their distinctive features and their characters more deeply. We made a painstaking study too of their physique, eyes, hair, mouths and gestures before starting work on our figures.

We were deeply moved by the cruel lot of those serfs in the old society which taught us a profound lesson. Our strong urge to depict the gratitude and love of the liberated serfs for Chairman Mao and the Communist Party, as well as their joy in their new life, made all of us work harder.

Wrath of the Serfs is divided into four parts and ten different scenes. The whole composition had to be harmonious and the style consistent; at the same time each separate episode was independent. This complex task would have been too much for any single artist and we had to rely on our collective efforts and make full use of our collective wisdom in order to accomplish it.

CHRONICLE

Albanian Art Exhibition in Peking

To celebrate the 31st anniversary of Albania's liberation, an exhibition of Albanian art was held in Peking late last November. On show were more than ninety oil paintings, woodcuts, posters and cartoons rich in both revolutionary content and artistry. They were vivid reflections of the heroic war of liberation waged by the Albanian people led by their great leader Enver Hoxha and the Albanian Party of Labour, as well as of their great achievements in socialist revolution and socialist construction. To Chinese audiences, they brought noble images of heroic characters from all walks of life, and some sang the praises of the unbreakable friendship and solidarity between the Chinese and the Albanian peoples.

Festival of Puppet and Shadow-plays Continues

After the first group of participants in the national puppet and shadow-play festival sponsored by the Ministry of Culture, a second group gave performances in Peking. It included troupes from Fukien, Kwangsi, Kiangsu, Liaoning, Hopei, Shansi and Szechuan Provinces as well as from Peking itself. More than sixty puppet and shadow-plays were staged. Among them were scenes from revolutionary modern Peking operas and ballets, new compositions reflecting contemporary socialist revolution and socialist construction in the countryside, and others lauding new socialist phenomena, or portraying the life of children.

Shanghai Artists Go to the Countryside

Many Shanghai art workers went to the people's communes in the city's suburbs during autumn harvest, to learn from the poor and lower-middle peasants and help them in their work.

They came from the Peking Opera Troupe of Shanghai, the Shanghai Acrobatic Art Troupe, the Shanghai Opera Theatre, the Shanghai School of Dancing, the Shanghai Art Studio, etc. Using fields, threshing floors, village tea-houses and school classrooms for a stage, they performed passages from revolutionary model theatrical works and sang songs praising the achievements of the Cultural Revolution, the movement to criticize Lin Biao and Confucius, and the great victory of Chairman Mao's revolutionary line in art. They also used various art forms to create programmes about new socialist phenomena, new socialist ideas and new customs in their localities.

New Art Graduates from the Central Institute for Nationalities

Over a hundred students were recently graduated from the art department of the Central Institute for Nationalities. Trained for work in the national minority regions, they are mostly children of liberated serfs, poor and lower-middle peasants and herdsmen of different nationalities who entered college in 1972 to study music, dancing and art. In three years of diligent study and training, these students made rapid progress; for example, Chang Yiu-yu, a girl of only fifteen, is the first violinist of the Chingpo nationality. She and a Tajik student of the same age gave a violin duet in the all-China music festival in Peking and won praise from audiences in the capital.

Exhibition of Newly Discovered Cultural Relics in Shensi

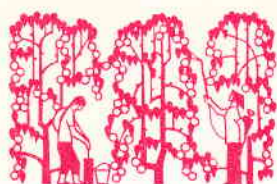
The Shensi Provincial Museum recently held an exhibition of cultural relics, mainly discovered in recent years in that province. The exhibits number over a thousand, some of them rare specimens. Some of the pottery vessels dating from primitive society unearthed

at Lintung have clear ideographic marks, showing that as early as six thousand years ago, long before the ideographs found on Shang Dynasty oracle bones, there was already embryonic writing in China. The bronze vessels unearthed at Chishan are decorated with exquisite designs. The jade carvings of deer, tigers and locusts, and colourful agate rings dating from the Western Chou period (11th to 8th century B.C.) unearthed at Paochi are gems of art. The bronze pieces with elaborate designs dating from the Spring-and-Autumn Period (770-476 B.C.) unearthed at Fenghsiang are also very rare finds.

Also displayed were several of the life-size terracotta figures of warriors and horses, and the accompanying actual weapons found in a pit on the east side of the First Chin Emperor's sepulchre at Lintung.

Another group of significant finds consists of the painted terracotta figures of men and horses of the Western Han Dynasty from Yang-chiawan, Hsienyang. Also on display were a sword made of an alloy of thirteen chemical elements made in the Chin Dynasty (221-207 B.C.) and the jade seal of an empress of the Western Han period.





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