

Dutch Filmmaker Joris Ivens Focuses on China

Summer 1978

\$1.25

New China

Chinese Meet Cosmos in Giants' Stadium

Rare Pre-Liberation Stamps

Vice Premier Chen Yong-gui Interview



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yǒu yì

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I'm delighted to have this chance to meet you.
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我很喜欢有机会认识您。
What is your name, sir?
xiān shēng nín guì xìng?
先生, 您贵姓?
I like your country.
wǒ hěn xǐ huān nín de guó jiā.
我很喜欢您的国家。
Do you speak English?
nín shuō yīng yǔ ma?
您说英语吗?
This is my first time here.
zhè shì wǒ dì yī cì dào zhè er lái?
这是我第一次到这儿来。
To your health.
zhù nín jiàn kāng.
祝您健康。
Thank you, I had a wonderful time.
xiè xiè, wǒ wán dé hěn yú kuài.
谢谢, 我玩得很愉快。

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Please call me at seven in the morning.
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请你早上七点钟叫我。
I want a room for a week.
wǒ yào yī gè fáng jiān zhù yī xīng qī.
我要一个房间住一星期。
Here is my passport.
zhè shì wǒ de hù zhào.
这是我的护照。

Any mail for me?
wǒ yǒu méi yǒu xìn?
我有没有信?
Come in, please.
qǐng jìn lái.
请进来。

Dining

qǐng zài lái yī diǎn er.



A little more please.
qǐng zài lái yī diǎn er.
请再来一点儿。
A table for two please.
wǒ yào liǎng gè zuò wèi.
我要两个座位。
The menu please.
qǐng gěi wǒ yī fèn cài dān.
请给我一份菜单。
Rice, beef, pork, vegetable.
fàn, niú ròu, zhū ròu, qīng cài.
饭, 牛肉, 猪肉, 青菜。
The check please.
qǐng nǐ bǎ zhàng dān gěi wǒ.
请你把帐单给我。
It was very good.
hěn hǎo.
很好。

Shopping

wǒ de měi guó dà xiǎo shì...



My size in America is...
wǒ de měi guó dà xiǎo shì...
我的美国大小是...

I would like to buy this.
wǒ yào mǎi zhè gè.
我要买这个。
I am just looking around.
wǒ zhǐ shì kàn kàn.
我只是看看。
I will take it with me.
wǒ yào dài zhè gè.
我要带这个。
Show me porcelain, please.
qǐng nǐ gěi wǒ kàn kàn cí qì.
请你给我看看瓷器。

Transportation

qù nán jīng de huǒ chē zài nǎ er?



Where is the train to Nanking?
qù nán jīng de huǒ chē zài nǎ er?
去南京的火车在那儿?
I want to see the Great Wall.
wǒ yào cān guān cháng chéng.
我要参观长城。
Taxi.
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Take me to the airport, please.
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Key to pronunciation of the Chinese phonetic alphabet. The Pinyin system, a phonetic alphabet utilizing Western characters, is in use throughout China. Q is pronounced as the ch in cheer/X as the sh in sheer/Zh as the j in judge/A as the a in father/O as the aw in saw/E as the er in her/I as the ee in see/G as the g in get/U as the u in rug/C as the ts in hats.

New China

Summer 1978

Published quarterly by the US-China Peoples Friendship Association

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Meng Lung Sha

Battlesong of Taching

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These films have appeared as a series at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and the Chicago Art Institute, and *Island Militia Women* was exhibited at the Los Angeles International Film Exhibition.

Look to October Films for future releases from the PRC.

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NewChina

Summer 1978 Volume 4, Number 2
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Cover: Photo by Mitsu Sundvall. Transplanting rice on the Machiao People's Commune outside Shanghai, 1976.

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NEW CHINA welcomes manuscripts and ideas for articles. Authors should first submit a brief description of their subject and indicate what material will be used to develop it. Please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Corrections, Spring 1978 issue: The cover photo is by Mort Weinberg. The photos on pp. 34-36 are by Emile Chi.

Typographers Support Normalization

The following resolution was unanimously passed at the October 1977 meeting of the Bay Area Typographical Union No. 21 of Northern California. One of its seven co-sponsors was Max Beagarie, author of "Read All About It" (NEW CHINA, September 1976). The resolution is a step forward in the campaign to mobilize all sectors of the American people around the issue of normalizing U.S.-China relations. It

should be noted that "all necessary steps to accomplish the full normalization of relations" would include the three conditions outlined in the Shanghai Communique: (1) withdraw recognition of the Chiang government on Taiwan; (2) withdraw all U.S. military forces and installations on Taiwan; and (3) end the mutual defense treaty with the Chiang regime. It

A Resolution Urging Normalization of Relations with the People's Republic of China

WHEREAS, two members of the Bay Area Typographical Union have on separate occasions visited the People's Republic of China, carrying both official and unofficial greetings from this union to the printers of China and receiving in exchange messages of friendship and respect to our members,

and also warm personal hospitality in factories, shops, farms, schools, and everywhere they visited; and

WHEREAS, full diplomatic recognition of China offers not only the advantages of increased cultural, scientific, and educational exchange, including increased

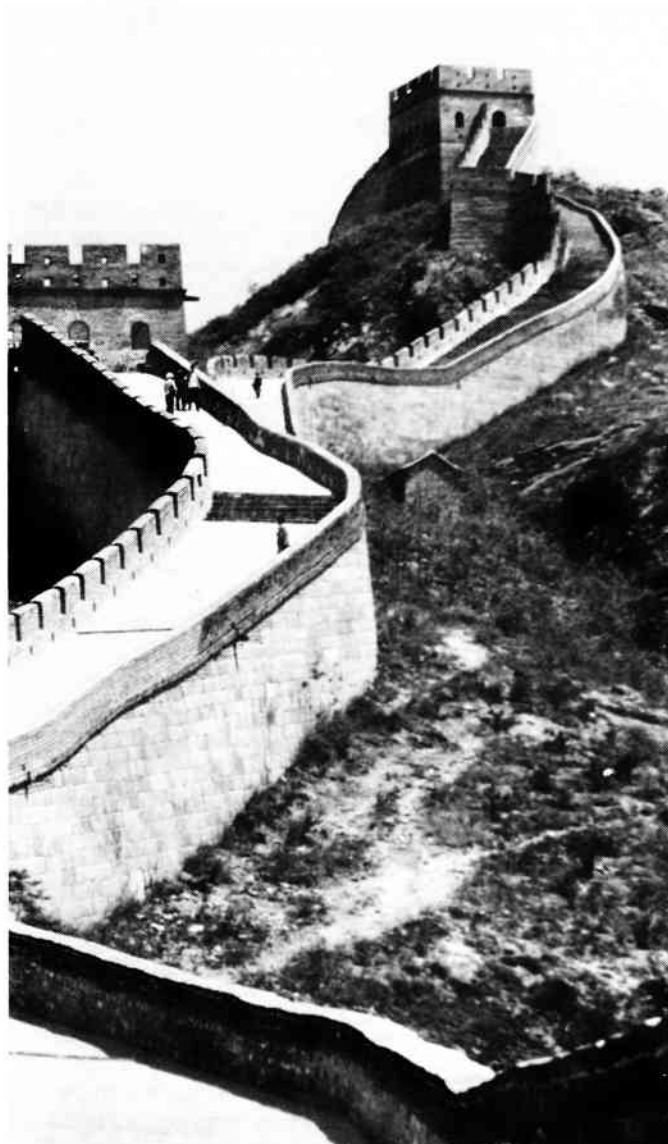


FROM THE CHINESE PRESS China's Chairman Hua Guo-feng visited coal miners in Tangshan in January of this year. This is the city that was struck by severe earthquakes in 1976. In the No. 6 mining area, over 600 meters underground, Hua spent the morning with miners, listening to their plans for increasing coal output, inquiring about conditions, and reading workers' poems and essays.

"The workers of Tangshan are really marvelous. They deserve our respect," Hua is reported as saying. He congratulated them for their accomplishments in exposing and criticizing the "gang of four," combating the effects of the earthquake, and restoring production. Hua urged Party leaders at city and other levels to go among the people, consult with them, regularly take part in physical labor, and "not act as high and mighty officials."

Six weeks later *Peking Review* reported that, following Hua's example, "more than 30,000 leading cadres of the coal mines in various parts of the country" went into the mines to participate in manual labor and give on-the-spot guidance.

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opportunities for the American and Chinese people to visit one another's countries, but also the prospect of greatly expanded trade, with benefits not only to American workers manufacturing the many products China needs, but to the economy as a whole; and

WHEREAS, establishment of full and friendly relations between the United States and the People's Republic of China will make an important contribution to the preservation of world peace, and thus be of incalculable benefit to the people of all countries; and

WHEREAS, the United States, the only major nation which does not officially recognize the largest country in the world, in 1972 joined with China in issuing the Shanghai Communique, in which we stated there is only one China, thus setting the stage for normalization of relations which has since been the official policy of this country; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interests of the people of China and the United States that the spirit of the Shanghai Communique be fully implemented; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that Bay Area Typographical Union No. 21 urges the government of the United States to implement fully the spirit of the Shanghai Communique, accord full diplomatic recognition to the People's Republic of China, and take all necessary steps to accomplish the full normalization of relations between China and the United States; and be it further

RESOLVED, that suitable copies of this resolution be forwarded to President Carter and all state and national legislators and officials who have any constituency in the jurisdiction of this union, to AFL-CIO President George Meany, and to any other persons able to further the aims hereby expressed.

Introducing China to Second-Graders

"Well," said Diana, "it's kind of like your friend landing in the Blueberry Patch in Candyland." I asked Diana, a second-grader, to explain. She continued, "Well, if your friend lands in the Blueberry Patch, he needs a blue card to get out. So instead of wanting to get the blue card yourself, you hope that your friend gets it so he can get out and play with you again."

This discussion took place last year in my second-grade classroom during our study of communes in China. Diana was sharing with her classmates the meaning of the Chinese philosophy "friendship first, competition second."

I had decided to teach my second-graders about the Chinese commune as an alternative unit of study on communities. I had become interested in China through a teacher at my school who had been to China and who had urged me to attend a workshop given by the US-China Peoples Friendship Association. Impressed by the the workshop, I joined the chapter's Schools Committee and, with the resources I discovered, decided to "try China." Although the study of China is not an alternative unit for the second grade in the Cincinnati public schools, I felt that if approached as a study of a community setup, China and its communal philosophies provided an excellent model of the objectives that I wished to stress in my teaching of social studies.

My biggest problem in setting up the unit was collecting materials. The printed

material owned by the school system was sparse and grossly out-of-date, reflecting U.S. foreign policy toward China prior to 1972. The few things that were usable were written at a reading level high above second grade. Once again I turned to the Association and got an assortment of pictures, films, maps, books, plays, puppets, and resource people to use in writing a unit of study.

We began our study of China from a geographical standpoint, since it was a continuation of our previous work on map skills. In discussing the size of China, I asked the children to come up with ways we could determine whether China or the United States was bigger. Todd could conceivably have spent the whole day coming up with suggestions, but after string measurements, cutting out out-of-scale outlines of both countries and placing one on top of the other, and even a suggestion to walk across both countries and count our footsteps, the children decided that it might be quicker and more reliable to look up the information in a resource book and compare numbers. At the same time we compared populations. Next the children made paper strip graphs to represent the ten percent of arable land in China. Through a content reading activity I wrote up, they learned about the staple crop of the north, wheat, and of the south, rice. With this basis the children were able to identify a problem which had faced China, that of feeding its 800 million people.

It was at this point that we went into

some of the social history of China. I used the book *Rent Collection Courtyard* as a basis for this. The children sat around me and I explained the pictures, which tell the story of the harsh feudal system that existed in China prior to 1949. We discussed feelings and reasons and fairness and solutions. But the most striking feature for me was the fact that the children equated the Chinese peasant's lot with that of the American slave. *Roots* had just been shown on television and the kids were quite familiar with American slavery and found many similarities between the two systems.

To illustrate the principles of responsibility and the importance of work for all members of society, five students were chosen to perform the puppet show *Little Sisters of the Grassland*. After-school rehearsals, plot and character discussions, building a puppet theater, and prop-collecting created a thoroughly enjoyable and educational show. In fact, the play was so good that I took it "on the road" as part of my presentation on "Teaching China in the Elementary School" at the USCPFA Teachers' Workshop held in February 1977.

The children learned about the purpose of communes in China. I tried to allow them to discover that more people benefit when working together than when each works for his own personal gain. The children compared their own homes to a typical commune home. They studied typical jobs on the commune and saw that everyone has some responsibility, and they compared these jobs and responsibilities to the jobs and responsibilities of their own family members.

The teacher who had gotten me interested in China came one day and showed slides from her China trip, and the class had a discussion on day-care centers and schools.

To develop an appreciation for Chinese culture, the children did activities involving Chinese calligraphy, folksongs, and children's stories. Some of the best fun we had was participating in a demonstration of Chairman Mao's Four-Minute Exercises led by a teacher skilled in various dance and movement exercises.

Unfortunately, the year ended before we were able to sprout our own mung beans and prepare a savory Chinese dish. However, my students made me promise to take up in September where we had left off in June. Our one "Chinese dish" had only whetted their appetite for learning more about China.

Carol Clark
Cincinnati, Ohio

The script for the Little Sisters of the Grassland puppet show is available from NEW CHINA. Please send \$1.00 to cover cost of xeroxing and postage.

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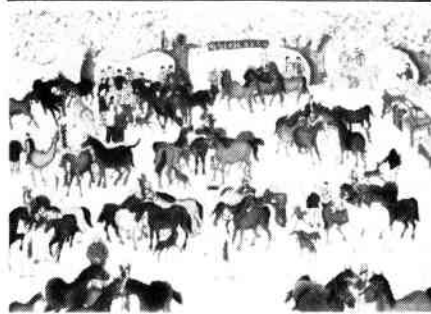
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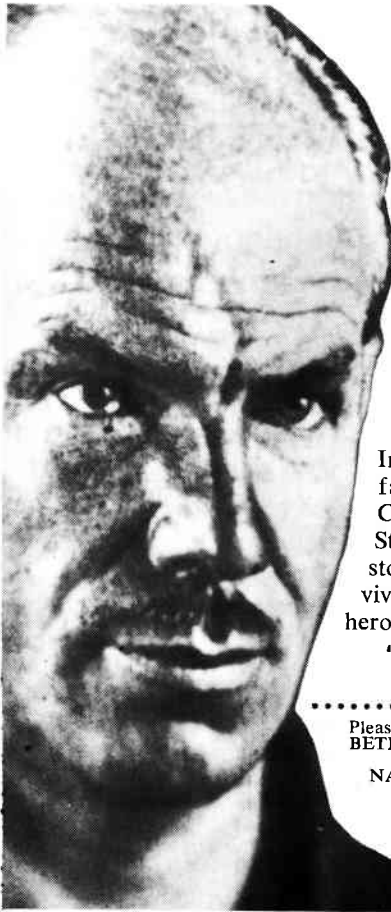
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Books

China Revisited after Forty-two Years. By Chiang Yee. W. W. Norton, New York, 1977. 180 pp. Cloth, \$9.95. *China Revisited* is Chiang Yee's first journey "back home" to the country he had been forced to leave in 1933. But it is much more than a quick visit to China's Dazhai (Tachai), new factories, schools, and hospitals. Chiang Yee is a remarkably sensitive author who looks at China's past and present through the eyes of an artist, historian, and world traveler.

As a young man from a wealthy and educated Chinese family, he became a district governor under KMT rule. However, his unconventional attempts to build factories to give a livelihood to the poor, dredge rivers to avert floods, and initiate investigations of the tax system led to his being branded a "mad young man" and to inevitable flight to England. In one short chapter of reminiscences he gives the reader a simple but accurate portrayal of the oppressed lives of his poorer countrymen under the KMT and the warlords.

Chiang returned to China in 1975, a renowned painter, calligrapher, poet, and author with an overwhelming desire to see for himself if his people are truly leading a better life. He was reunited with his wife, two grown daughters, their husbands and children. He traveled with his daughters, who were given two months off with pay, meeting old friends, visiting familiar places, and seeing the accomplishments of the last 27 years. Woven into his memories and impressions are fascinating anecdotes and historical facts. Art lovers will especially appreciate his descriptions of art history, poetry, architecture, and painting as he visits such sites as Jing-de-zhen (Ching-te-chen), the Yungang Caves, and the Summer Palace in Peking. Especially gratifying to him are the efforts to preserve the cultural heritage of the past. The restoration work being done at the Temple of Heaven in Peking particularly delighted him: "I admire the present government in Peking for having repaired and restored it to its original grandeur as one of the most strange but beautiful pieces of architecture that was ever designed by man."

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city and country scenes, done with the practiced eye of a classical Chinese painter. Verbally he expresses his unrestrained emotion, his profound joy at seeing his country unified as one nation, everything being manufactured at home, people joking as they work, women not suffering the indignities suffered by his beloved sister in the past.

This is a book with great scope and new insights – the personal history of an interesting man, a firsthand account of the old society, and a warm, intimate portrait of the new. – RUTH NESI

The Case of the Gang of Four. By Chi Hsin. Cosmos and Books New China, Hongkong, 1977. 295 pp. Photos. Paper, \$3.95. One of the questions asked in a book containing five articles about the "gang of four" is "Can Chinese politics be understood"? The articles are translated from *The Seventies*, a progressive Hongkong magazine whose sources include newspapers and pamphlets from the People's Republic and interviews with mainland residents. According to the publisher, *The Seventies* has proven to be a trustworthy analyst of events in the PRC. Readers will of course have to decide for themselves whether the interpretations of the book are correct.

The articles deal not only with the events immediately after Mao's death which led to the arrest of the "gang of four," but also with such topics as excesses during the Cultural Revolution instigated by the "four," their stifling of free discussion of politics and free expression in the arts, the incident in Tian An Men Square after the death of Chou En-lai, and the careers of Hua Guo-feng (now Chairman of the Central Committee) and Deng Xiao-ping (Teng Hsiao-ping), a veteran revolutionary who was twice demoted and criticized and is now again in a leadership position.

One article contains a simple explanation of dialectical materialism, the theoretical basis of China's revolution, which will be especially helpful to readers who are just becoming interested in China. Three of the longest articles, in lively question-and-answer form, focus on the very points that

Note on Spelling of Chinese Words: Chinese proper names in NEW CHINA are generally spelled in *Hanyu pinyin*, the romanization system now used in the People's Republic to render pronunciations in the official common dialect. Since pinyin is relatively new to Americans, in most cases the more familiar spellings are given in parentheses at a word's first appearance in each article. In book titles or direct quotations using other forms of romanization, the pinyin follows in square brackets. A few familiar proper nouns are spelled as they usually appear in U.S. publications.

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seem to be on the minds of Americans who are concerned about China. An appendix includes several documents written by Deng Xiao-ping and the criticisms launched against him by the "gang of four," which gives the reader a chance to evaluate the author's conclusions.

The Chinese government is now releasing a stream of documents relating to the controversial questions, and according to the author, there is lively discussion of the issues going on at all levels of Chinese society. This book gives the American reader a chance to grasp what is being discussed. It is particularly important reading because it shows that such questions as "Should every student go to the countryside?" and "Should political discussions be allowed to interrupt economic production?" cannot be answered in absolutes but must take into account the very real conditions of life in China. — RONNI SANDROFF

Up to the Mountains and Down to the Villages: The Transfer of Urban Youth to Rural China. By Thomas P. Bernstein. Yale University Press, New Haven, 1977. 371 pp. \$17.50. China's answer to rapid, unchecked urbanization brought about by the growth of industrialization has been to develop revolutionary programs. One of those, the "up to the mountains and down to the villages" program, is designed to settle urban youth between the ages of 16 and 18 (after completion of secondary education) in rural areas permanently. From 1968 to 1976, 12 million youth resettled.

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Volume One: Chinese-English

by TIANN Honng Wenn

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OP 喔	IP 坡	IQ 期	R 日	IN 思	IT 特
U 乌	V 世	W 我	X 希	Y 了	Z 子

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ma (mā) mma (má) mmaa (mǎ) maa (mà)

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China on Film – Unrehearsed

*Filmmakers Joris Ivens and Marceline Loridan
work from the script of everyday life*

Americans and people of many other Western countries are finally getting the chance to see an important new film series – *How Yukong Moved the Mountains*. Adapting its title from that of an ancient fable retold by Mao Tsetung in 1945 (“The Foolish Old Man Who Removed the Mountains”), the series is about how to carry out a seemingly impossible task. In the ancient tale, the task was the removal of two huge mountains. In Mao’s retelling, the story points out that the Chinese people, through perseverance and the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, could certainly throw off the two mountainous weights of feudalism and imperialism. Today, the challenge is the building of a socialist society. *How Yukong Moved the Mountains* shows how the people are accomplishing this in the factories, villages, schools, and homes of new China.

The 12 color films in the series, a dozen hours of footage, were shot in 1973–74 by Joris Ivens and Marceline Loridan. Ivens, a Dutch filmmaker of international fame, has been producing documentaries since the 1920s, among them *The Spanish Earth*, about the Spanish Civil War, with a narration by Ernest Hemingway. Loridan, who is French, has worked with Ivens for over ten years and with him made several films about the struggle in Indochina.

It is largely because of the approach of these two filmmakers that *How Yukong*

Moved the Mountains is like no other film depiction of China. Ivens and Loridan work in a cinematographic style the French call *cinéma direct*, which brings the viewer as close as possible to the subject of the film. One of the reasons the style is so successful is the way Ivens and Loridan themselves work. Each film in the series was shot at a location where the filmmakers and their Chinese crew lived and worked for an extended period of time – anywhere from several weeks to a few months. Ivens and Loridan attempted to get to know the people and to experience the pace and detail of their lives. Everywhere they stayed, they asked questions – about daily life, work, the effects of the Cultural Revolution. And while they questioned, they filmed.

The result is that the *Yukong* series is intimate, as well as beautiful to look at. But perhaps even more significant, in these films the Chinese people speak for themselves about their revolution. There is only the barest minimum of narration, and never a statistic: for that sort of information you will have to go elsewhere. What *Yukong* provides is a glimpse of the process of daily life in China, a kind of tapestry of the ordinary – extraordinary – experience of the Chinese people as they “move mountains” to make a new society.

Watch for the films to be shown on your local Public Broadcasting System station.

The following interview, edited by Jean-

Marie Doublet and Jean-Pierre Sergent, was translated from the French by Nancy Jervis.

No one before you has been able to film in China under such favorable conditions. How do you account for the exceptional facilities made available to you?

Ivens: I’ve been in contact with the Chinese revolutionaries for quite a long time, and I think this explains, at least in part, our privileged situation. In 1937, while I was filming the struggle of the Spanish Republicans against the fascists, the same anti-fascist battle was going on at the other end of the globe, where the Chinese people were trying to defend themselves against the Japanese invasion. It was in order to document this invasion that I went to China in 1938 and made *400 Million*. At this time, the Communists were allied with the Guomindang (Kuomintang, KMT). When I’d finished shooting the film, I met Chou En-lai, who explained the difficulties the revolutionaries were facing in Yan’an (Yenan). “We do have a few cameramen,” he said, “but no camera.” Since I was about to return to the United States, my job finished, I decided to make them a present of my portable camera.

Chou En-lai himself arranged the secret meeting – it had to be secret because we were watched very closely by Chiang Kai-shek’s KMT agents – during which I gave

my camera and 2,000 feet of film to an emissary from Yan'an. It was because of this camera that the revolutionaries were able to found the Chinese cinema. All of the pictures of Mao Tsetung in particular, as well as the ones of Norman Bethune, were taken with it.

The Chinese do not forget such things, and that's why I was invited by Chinese filmmakers to return to China in 1958. There, in the Museum of the Revolution, I happened to see the same camera I had given them years before. I met Chou En-lai again, who had become the Premier. It was the period of the Great Leap Forward, and Chinese filmmakers had just discovered the existence of color film. We worked together and made some experimental films, in order to study the use of color film under a variety of conditions. The one I made in Inner Mongolia at 86° below zero (F.) was probably the most successful. This work also created strong ties with Chinese leaders and filmmakers. Then British troops landed in Lebanon, which was followed immediately by huge demonstrations all over China. At that time, I made a short film in Peking about the demonstrations and called it *600 Million With You*.

I went to China again in 1965, and this time Marceline Loridan was with me. Later on, in 1971, we returned for four months, to gather information at the end of the Cultural Revolution. We wanted to know what had happened – what actually *was* this Cultural Revolution, and what was its significance? Little by little, the idea of making a film emerged. It became even more concrete during a meeting with Chou En-lai, who scolded me for having come without my camera.

Loridan: We thought that since we'd delved into things rather deeply, it would be important to be able to make this film. Once we made up our minds, all of our work and research took place in this context. But in order to make our goal feasible, we had to come back to France.

Did you have problems in financing the film?

Loridan: Yes – we didn't have any money! Fortunately, the Centre National du Cinéma gave us an advance against the profits which enabled us to begin, so we left for China with our movie equipment and enough footage for about four months. We planned to make a movie that would run for three or four hours, and would give a sort of composite picture of China in 1973. However, confronted with the reality of the situation, we found the problems were so big, the richness and variety of the topics were so great, and the possibilities before us were so wonderful, that we ended up working and filming continuously for a year and a half.

I had to come back to France several times to take care of financial problems. We received additional advances, which allowed us to continue our project. But we had to borrow money, too.

In China, we had a sort of exchange agreement. Joris, who had taught in the film school in Peking years ago, organized a film crew to do *cinéma vérité*, which was unknown in China. As for myself, I showed

them how to record the sound, and so altogether the cost of filming was lowered. However, the Chinese never envisaged a co-production and wanted us to assume complete responsibility for our work, both financially and politically

So you were more or less a roving film school?

Ivens: Yes, exactly – a roving film school which operated for a year and a half.

The Twelve Films

The Oilfields (87 minutes), beautifully photographed in China's northern "steppe" region, records the life of the young workers who have volunteered to drill for oil in this remote and frontier-like area, as well as the experiences of some of the older pioneers.

The Drugstore (81 minutes), about an innovative pharmacy in Shanghai, is considered by many to be the best film in the series. Full of concrete details of the pharmacy's experiment in worker-community management, the film captures the lively, sometimes humorous, sometimes stubborn personalities of both customers and workers.

A Woman, A Family (108 minutes) shows the working and family life of Gao Shu-lan, a welder and union official at a locomotive factory in the Peking suburbs. Much of the filming was done in the busy courtyard shared by Gao's extended family and their neighbors.

The Generator Factory (129 minutes), fascinating for both its content and its camerawork, was filmed in Shanghai. Ivens and Loridan had the good fortune to be there when a political movement critical of the management erupted.

The Fishing Village (102 minutes) is set in a small coastal village in Shandong (Shantung) Province. As in all of the longer films, daily life unfolds slowly and intimately: a group of young women organize and become deep-sea fishermen; a captain admits he hasn't completely understood the Cultural Revolution; students harvest algae to make their school self-supporting.

An Army Camp (57 minutes) gives a glimpse of a very unusual army, one in which officers eat with soldiers and the troops grow their own food and work alongside civilians in construction, militia training, and farming.

The Football Incident – High School No. 31 (20 minutes) documents what happens when a student kicks the ball after the bell has rung.

Professor Tchien (13 minutes) recounts the story of a university physics professor who was vehemently criticized by the Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution.

Rehearsal at the Peking Opera (32 minutes) intertwines theoretical discussions (the theory of the performing arts in China, the model hero/heroine, the relationship between art and reality) with scenes from a rehearsal of a revolutionary model opera.

Behind the Scenes at the Peking Circus (16 minutes) is a beautifully edited "silent" film (set to music) of acrobats rehearsing and then performing.

Impressions of a City: Shanghai (60 minutes) vividly portrays the sights and sounds of everyday life in China's largest and most modern city.

Traditional Handicrafts (15 minutes) is a short, lyrical film about Chinese myths and Chinese crafts, and how one generation teaches them to another.

How long did it take you to edit the film?

Loridan: Also a year and a half. All together it took three years, from 1973 through 1975, to make the film.

Anyone familiar with Chinese movies can see that the way they film and their photographic techniques are nothing at all like the film you made. Did you have serious difficulties working with the Chinese technicians?

Ivens: In 1963 and 1965, when I was in China making movies, I had already had need of a cameraman. In order to find one, I had quite a few films projected, until I found a shot that exhibited the qualities I was looking for. The cameraman I found in that way proved to be entirely satisfactory. But another one, on the other hand, picked in the same manner, couldn't adjust to my way of working. This, of course, does not mean that he lacked talent. It's just that Chinese movies are different from ours, they're more contemplative, more static. The camera is not part of the action, but records it, observes it. According to the old Chinese philosophy: "Man stands between heaven and earth and looks at the ten thousand things of the universe." The result is that the camera does not move. For a Chinese cameraman, to understand that he can move along with his camera is staggering. Most often, when he finally gets to do it, he goes to the extreme and moves too much. So you have to explain the role and function of each movement of the camera.

Another important point to bring out about Chinese movies is that in general there are not so many close-ups as in our movies. This is connected to their cultural tradition. Generally in their visual art you don't see close-ups of people, except perhaps in the Buddhist tradition. So I had to explain why I used them, why close framings were necessary. All of that took a long time, because in China, you must be patient if you want to convince people. To impose your arguments, as is often the case in other countries, is out of the question there. This is also part of the Cultural Revolution.

How did you go about giving them an idea of the cinéma vérité that you wanted to do?

Loridan: In the beginning, we underestimated the problem. But after a month, during which we shot about 15 hours of footage, we realized that something was going wrong, particularly concerning the relationship of the picture to the sound. I went back to Paris where I had all the rushes synchronized. When I returned with the results, the technicians were able to see the mistakes they'd been making. The cameraman in particular had to understand that sound is not a minor detail but plays a role parallel to that of the image.



Joris Ivens and Marceline Loridan at New York's Museum of Modern Art for the first American showing of their film series *How Yukong Moved the Mountains*. (Photo: R. Del Tredici © 1978)

Ivens: We also had to explain to them what a film sequence was. We showed them as an example a film which Marceline brought back from France. When the cameraman saw it for the first time, he couldn't get over it. He kept saying: "It can't be. It must be edited, there must be cuts." We projected it again, and I explained to him, "Look here, it runs four minutes, or nine minutes - without any cuts." Only then did he understand what a film sequence was and its possibilities.

You don't speak Chinese, so how did you manage?

Loridan: We had two interpreters with us, the same ones for a year and a half. After a few months, they were like real

movie assistants. Sometimes they were helped out by local interpreters, recruited on the spot, because of the different dialects. They not only had to translate words, but feelings and thoughts as well. Our first big job was to explain what we wanted, not in our language, but in that of the Chinese. This was a big problem. That's why some of the questions we ask are formulated in a way that might seem a little strange. They had to be understood by Chinese and Westerners alike.

Gradually, I began to understand Chinese. This was obviously a big help. Once I was sensitive to a situation, I could throw back a question, deepen the level of discussion.

So, after a while, you had expert techni-



The family of a Peking welder, Gao Shu-lan, from *A Woman, A Family*. (Photo: Marceline Loridan)



In this scene from *The Drugstore*, an elderly customer at the No. 3 Drugstore in Shanghai asks for advice in treating his failing eyesight. (Photo: Courtesy of Capi Films)

"It's not an encyclopedia, a dogmatic or didactic film; nor is it travelog. We just take you where we were and show you the people as we saw them. We don't tell you everything about education in China, or medicine; and we don't pretend to know everything about China. We have preferred to capture reality at its most intense, in daily life. You can read political analyses everywhere. We thought that what the West lacked was to see the Chinese live, work, eat, laugh, and think. But daily life is perhaps the hardest thing to film."

JORIS IVENS

cians and a film crew, you had outside contacts which enabled you to meet people the way you wanted to, and from the start you had general authorization to film from the Premier himself. Once you had all this, how then did you choose the subject matter, what and where you would film?

Ivens: We really could go anywhere we wanted, except of course nuclear installations. We could have even gone to Tibet, only the state of my health prevented us. We were really in quite a privileged position, but even so we had to continually earn their trust and justify our projects. As I said before, authoritarian-style arguments do

not work well in China. This was true for us as well. In each new location we had to struggle for our freedom. People's natural tendency is to show the positive side of things, to embellish reality. I've come across this problem everywhere in the world. What I mean is, when you receive a guest, you clear the table and generally clean up, especially if the guest brings his camera with him. But I am a very patient person, and I take as much time to convince people as necessary. We knew this was important, because we wanted to deal with complex and difficult problems, since our main subject was the Cultural Revolution and the

changes it brought to different layers of Chinese society. Contrary to what people generally believe, there *is* a diversity of social classes in China. It is not a uniform world: there are intellectuals, employees, workers, peasants, soldiers. All of them have been affected and the relationships between people are not the same anymore. Our idea was to make an "epic" film encompassing all these changes, but I guess this was rather utopian.

Loridan: We had wanted to make a film that synthesized everything, but we realized that we didn't have all the necessary political elements to do it. We don't pretend to know everything about China, far from it. If we had pursued this idea, we would only have succeeded in making an exhaustive but ultimately false film, one that was irrelevant. That is why we preferred to grasp reality where it is most intense – in everyday life. As for political analyses – there are already lots of books and articles about that. What film can bring is what's always been missing from these texts: the Chinese people. To see them live, work, eat, laugh, and think, that's what's never really been shown in the West. To be able to capture day-to-day life is probably the hardest thing to do in our field. By all means, it takes the longest time. Sometimes you have to spend months in one place, and nothing happens.

Did that happen to you?

Ivens: Yes, in the fishing village, for example. You couldn't really say that anything special happened, it was just everyday life. In the drugstore, it was the same. On the other hand, in the generator factory, something did happen. There was a "criticism movement," a kind of revolt of workers against the management, which stemmed from a report on an experiment published in the Chinese press. There, we were able to film an event taking place right before us.

So the preparation and shooting of each film would take you several months?

Loridan: Yes, because we never worked with a scenario. The main thing was to talk to people, understand them, try to get to know them well enough to see what their lives were all about. We never had anything done especially for us; when the drugstore's employees went to the countryside, it was just routine for them, as it was for the 1,200 workers of the generator factory when they went to work with the peasants.

How did you select this particular factory?

Ivens: We wanted to film an ordinary factory, one with a lot of workers, but also a place where somewhat spectacular things were made. Our plan was to portray the living and working conditions of the workers.

Loridan: We visited about 15 factories



Scene from *The Fishing Village*, set in a small coastal village in Shandong Province. (Photo: Courtesy of Capi Films)



Gao Shu-lan and her family describe their lives in *A Woman, A Family*. (Photo: Courtesy of Capi Films)

Two Previews

Excerpted from an article in *Jumpcut Magazine*, Nos. 12-13, by Thomas Waugh.

The Football Incident

The Football Incident – High School No. 31 covers a single incident which Ivens and Loridan happened upon quite by accident during the course of a routine visit to a high school. The film has an entirely different sort of dramatic interest than those films with a larger scope. As the filmmakers arrived in the schoolyard, they noticed a sense of excitement in the air. Students and teachers hastened to give the filmmakers their own versions of a student-teacher dispute which had just taken place. A woman teacher had rung a bell signifying the start of class and a teenaged boy, engrossed in his play, had kicked a ball in her direction which had struck her in the face. She then confiscated the ball. When the crew arrived, a meeting of the class had just been called to discuss the affair and the filmmakers were invited to record the session. After an initial recap of the incident by playground bystanders, the camera proceeds inside and the rest of the film follows the analysis by teachers and students of what happened. At first, both sides are evasive, self-righteous, and accusatory, the boy providing alibis for his behavior and freely charging the teacher with not respecting his ideas, and the teacher remaining adamant. This remarkably spontaneous discussion moves through various stages, each freely commented upon by those present, the girl students sometimes siding with the teacher and sometimes with the boy and his allies. The meeting finally arrives at a moment of reconciliation which is curiously ritualistic but affecting and authentic all the same. An awkward handshake and exchange of grins concludes the episode. This 20-minute film provides a thoroughly absorbing vignette of a revolution-in-progress.

The Generator Factory

The filmmakers deliberately decided to focus another of the feature films on a generator factory. The pharmacy which the team focused on in Shanghai [*The Drugstore*] was admittedly a model one; it was a sort of pilot project experimenting with the idea of extended community service. If the team had dwelt exclusively on such experiments, and they were certainly dazzled by the diversity and the scale of experimentation of this kind, the resulting films would have had a certain utopian relevance without reflecting the exact reality of contemporary China. Accordingly, they decided to find a factory suitable for filming; they made a firm commitment to focus on an ordinary, typical work situation to balance the utopian aspect of films such as that on the pharmacy.

It was their good fortune and ours that something did indeed happen in the generator factory which the team filmed. A *dazibao* [big-character poster] movement took place during their four-month stay. In this film, we witness a spontaneous movement of criticism by workers against the management, expressed first in the huge, strikingly cinematic banners which have long dominated the Western media's visual impressions of Chinese politics. The workers direct criticism against administrators who always stay in their office, against favoritism seen in such matters as the distribution of cinema tickets, and against general ineptitude in the running of the factory. Eventually we sit in on workers' meetings, study sessions on Engels' *Anti-Dühring* and the general problem of revisionism, meetings with the bosses, and joint efforts to arrive at a new anti-hierarchical and non-bureaucratic organization of the factory in revolutionary committees. We hear the voices of the workers as they design their *dazibaos*:

"... You should draw it like this... the truck is stuck in the sand in the desert and its wheels are turning round and round... You can hear the noise of the motor but the truck is not moving... That's how we should represent the management..."

The film gives an overwhelming sense of being present at a particularly important moment of history.

before we chose this one. Some of them were too small or made things that weren't interesting enough to film. Some others were a little too perfect. We saw one factory in Shanghai that was wonderful, too wonderful. We precisely didn't want a model factory, just an ordinary factory. We were still looking for one when we just happened to meet two workers at an exhibition dedicated to the Paris Commune uprising, and had a conversation with them. They were very interesting to talk to and that's how we got the idea to see the place where they worked – and this was the generator factory.

How did you pick the drugstore?

Ivens: We had thought about choosing a department store, but we were afraid it would be too diffuse. And besides, it seemed to us that it would be more interesting to choose a place where people would be more involved than in an ordinary store. Then we thought about a pharmacy as being just the place where people talk most about themselves and their problems. Because I wasn't feeling very well at the time, the employees of the pharmacy we had chosen came to see me. We talked about my health, about the film, about all sorts of things. We became very friendly and by the time we began shooting, real contact had been established between us. It was almost like we were in it together.

Do you think you were successful in getting people to be sincere in front of the camera?

Loridan: Yes, really. It wasn't always easy, because as Joris said, everybody has a tendency to make things look better and show only the good side. In Daqing (Taching), for instance, when we visited the oil-drilling crew, they all started by telling us how happy they were, how hard they worked, how everything was just great, etc. We said, "It's true you work hard, in a heroic place, out here in the plains, that really does take iron will. The whole nation looks up to you, and that's great. You tell us that you are proud, that you're doing it all for the Party, that you're revolutionaries. OK, we believe you, but perhaps things aren't quite so simple." And that's when they began to talk about their problems. People in the West say that the Chinese don't talk easily about themselves, that they're not open. Wrong, and this is the proof. But first they must trust you and perhaps even feel some affection for you. All too often Westerners who go there do the same thing: they aim their cameras and microphones four inches from a Chinese and pester him with aggressive questions, so they shouldn't be surprised if they can't get more than a polite smile and evasive answers. To make a film, you must have a dialogue first. This is what we tried to do. ●

Score One for Friendship

by John Griesemer

*The Cosmos meet China's national soccer team
— and both sides win*

China's national soccer team arrived by Greyhound bus at the New York Giants' new football stadium late on a Friday afternoon. A towering ring of cement and steel, the stadium is the centerpiece of New Jersey's Meadowlands Sports Complex which rises like a recreational Xanadu from the broad miles of marshland, commerce, and garbage that stretch west of New York City.

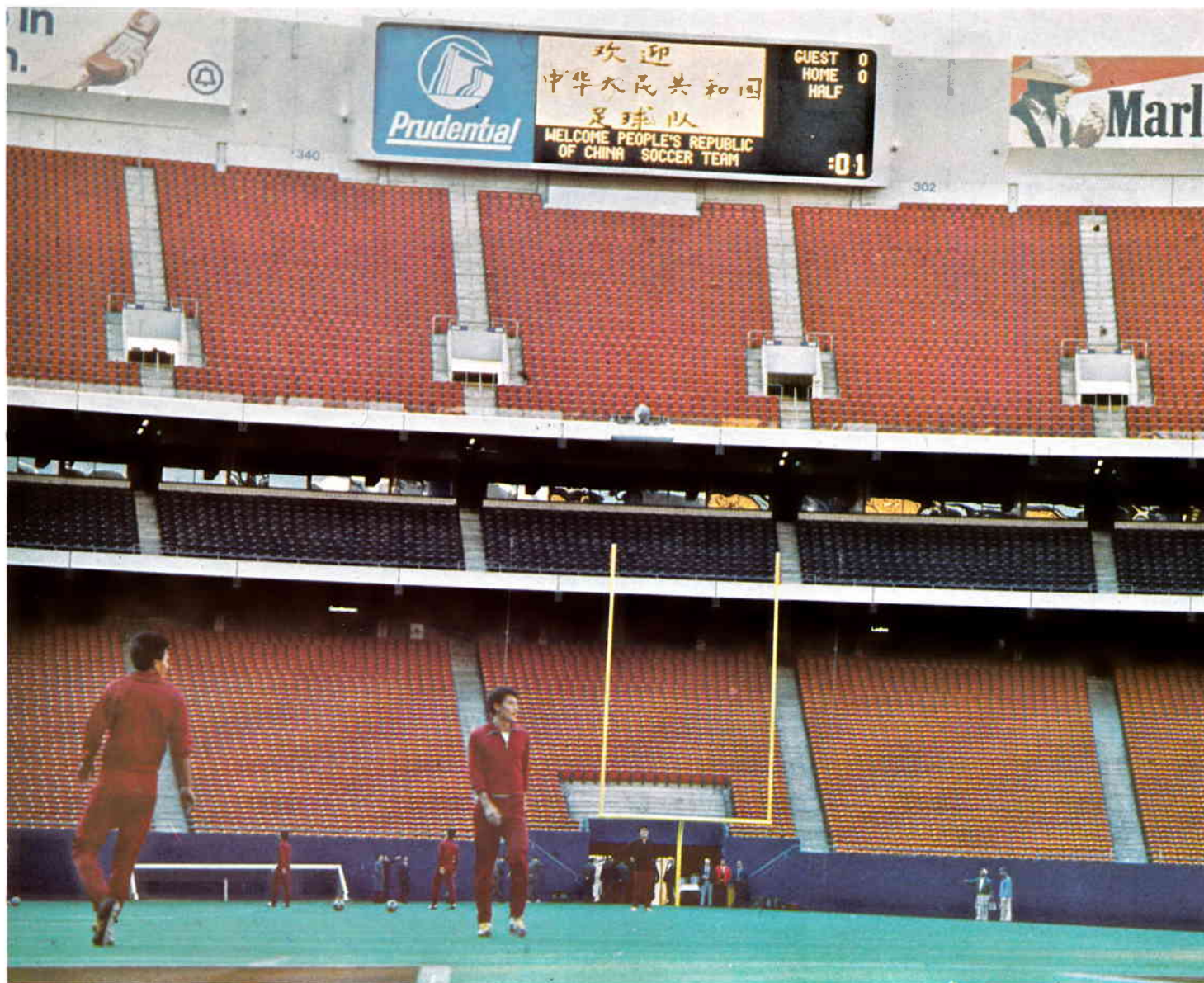
The team had less than two hours to use the empty stadium that October afternoon. So, under a yellow-gray sky and amid tumbling gusts of wind, the Chinese players hustled off the bus, courteously by-passed the onlookers, and hit the field.

The Chinese team literally "hit" the field, not only with soccer balls but with their bodies. The upcoming game against the New York Cosmos was to be their first contest on American soil — but the problem was that the field had no soil. Instead, the Chinese were testing the bounces of synthetic Astroturf. The tough plastic "grass" can leave nasty abrasions and bruises, and the Chinese, with virtually no experience on the strange turf, were concerned about injuries. Talk had even circulated about changing the location of the game, which was part of a five-game good will tour in



One of the Chinese players taking the field for the pre-game warmup.
(The Meadowlands photos: M. Jahr)

JOHN GRIESEMER is a former New Hampshire journalist now living in Brooklyn.



Cosmos' electronic scoreboard welcomes the Chinese team to Friday's practice game.

response to the Cosmos' visit to China last September. But Yang Xue-wu, deputy-general of the Chinese Football Association, announced the turf was no problem. The Chinese were ready to play.

As photographers clicked away and reporters wandered the field listening for people who could speak about the Chinese team in English, the Astroturf drill was suddenly interrupted. High above the 96,000 empty seats, the massive computerized stadium scoreboard flashed a test message. The Chinese players stopped their practice and broke into wide smiles. The scoreboard flashed in English and Chinese: "Welcome, People's Republic of China Soccer Team. Friendship First, Competition Second."

That message, summing up China's sports philosophy, was repeated the next day as the Chinese and the Cosmos ran onto the field, hands clasped, before a cheering crowd of 33,712. While New York's soccer games

have always attracted the city's ethnic minorities, today's contest drew not only some of the city's Latin population but a strong representation of local Chinese residents. Today was their day. Many fans waved small red pennants proclaiming "Long Live Chinese-American Friendship."

"I hope no one wins," U.S. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance told his friends in the VIP box. Vance said he was looking for a tie score as a diplomatic solution to a "friendship first" game.

Ever since "ping-pong diplomacy" got its start in 1971, with subsequent visits by Chinese table tennis, martial arts, gymnastic, and volleyball teams, the Chinese have been asked to explain their slogan "friendship first, competition second." It's sometimes a difficult concept for Americans, who are schooled, from Little League on, in the Vince Lombardi "winning-is-everything" tradition.

Team captain Xiang Heng-qing and spokesman Yang said the Chinese concepts of friendship and competition are not contradictory. "We think 'friendship first' is most important in helping to build good international relations through sports competition," Yang said. At the same time, Xiang, the team's fullback, added that the Chinese are very concerned with playing their best, playing up to a "sportsman" level. "Promoting friendship and raising the level of competition are not in contradiction," Xiang said. But the Chinese are always wary of "championitis" and "prize-ism," he added. Competitors should not get carried away in their desire for victory. "We should strengthen friendship and also raise the level of athletic performance," Yang said.

Supporters of the Chinese sports philosophy were out in force at the Meadowlands. A gigantic "Friendship First" banner



A Chinese player uses his head early in the game.

billowed open at one end of the stadium, while a huge "Admit China to the Olympics" appeared at the other. Stadium police and management, however, did not share the enthusiasm. They fought a dogged – but losing – battle to enforce Meadowlands regulations which prohibit such expression of opinion (no banners, no leaflets allowed). While guards kept scrambling about to stop it, banners nonetheless kept blossoming. In addition, leaflets welcoming the Chinese and demanding China's admission to the Olympics kept circulating from seat to seat as freely as hot dogs or cold beers.

The opposing coaches, China's Yang, and the Cosmos' Eddie Firmani, were appropriately diplomatic in assessing each other's teams. Yang cited the Cosmos' overall strong play and complimented the play of midfielder Franz Beckenbauer and center

forward Giorgio Chiniglia. Firmani, in turn, marveled at the great condition of the young Chinese squad. "They have a very fit team," Firmani said. "They can run strong for the whole 90-minute game. Skill-wise and technique-wise they have it. They just need more competition to toughen up."

In addition to complimenting their opponents, the Americans and Chinese agreed on another point – that China should be admitted to Olympic competition. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) continues after almost 25 years to defy world opinion and keep China out of the Games. Although the IOC voted in 1954 to admit China, the American president of the IOC, Avery Brundage, unilaterally declared IOC recognition of Taiwan. Despite China's protests and its withdrawal from the Olympics, the IOC has allowed Taiwan to

compete as the "Republic of China," keeping the People's Republic out of world competition. The normally reserved Yang responded somewhat sharply when asked about the Olympics: "In my view, the Chinese soccer players are very eager to participate in these international events, but right now the present International Olympic Committee is still occupied by the Chiang Kai-shek clique [the rulers of Taiwan Province]; therefore the All-China Sports Federation cannot participate in these events," he said. "We believe that with the support of all our friendly people in the world, we will be able to regain our rightful place in the IOC, but only after the Chiang Kai-shek clique is expelled."

Cosmos coach Firmani said simply, "I think it would be a good thing for the Chinese to be in the Olympics. A good



The Chinese team at a "strategy session" the day before the game.



Yang Xue-wu, deputy general of the Chinese Football Association, who accompanied the team on their tour.



Fancy footwork during the game.

thing.” The team’s star goalie Shep Messing elaborated: “The IOC is archaic in all matters, including this one. It’s a sad situation and it’s not an equitable solution. China is pushing for a change and I’m all for getting them in.”

Meanwhile, the soccer team was getting a taste of tough international competition and faring pretty well. Against the Cosmos in China last September, the Chinese team played the New Yorkers to a 1-1 tie before 85,000 fans in Peking and then beat them in Shanghai, 2-1, before a crowd of 50,000. Only two nights prior to the Meadowlands game they had played the American national team to a 1-1 tie.

While ping-pong and basketball are more popular in China, interest in soccer, with its high energy and speed, is growing and the game plays a significant part in China’s



Shep Messing in Peking



Shep Messing with Pele (l.) and Franz Beckenbauer (c.) at the Forbidden City. (Photo: K. Davison)

Shep Messing, the New York Cosmos’ 28-year-old superstar goalie, wanted a little time to himself while the team was getting ready for its match against the Chinese national team in Peking last September. Messing took a walk to a local park where he came upon a group of Chinese youngsters playing basketball. He joined in.

“I was a little wary at first,” he said. “But I tried to work my way into the game. I started doing a little ‘hot dog’ stuff and that got them.”

“Soon word went out, ‘Get the best players over here,’” Messing said. Before he knew it, the Harvard-educated athlete found himself “running a basketball clinic, teaching the kids how to set up a pick, drive for a lay-up, pass behind the back.”

The language barrier was no problem, he said. “They knew I was showing

them basketball and I knew how they were playing. We didn’t need any language.”

The Chinese believe athletes should not indulge in “prize-ism” and should not strive for individual awards. Nonetheless, Messing indulged a bit and gave a medal he had won at Harvard to the youth he thought was the best player that day in the park.

A fierce competitor, Messing made no secret he wanted to beat the Chinese at the Meadowlands game. While Secretary of State Vance may have wanted the game to end in a tie, Messing said a tie game was “a little like kissing your sister – no big thrill.”

But when the game ended in a 1-1 tie, the goalie was not disappointed. “I’m quite satisfied with the outcome,” he said. “After all, it’s for friendship with the Chinese.”



Members of 12 US-China Peoples Friendship Associations turned out to welcome the Chinese team and distribute information about the campaign to admit China to the 1980 Olympics.



Hugs and handshakes mark the end of the game.

national sports program. From the very inception of the People's Republic in 1949, Mao Tsetung stressed the importance of vigorous sport. The principle that physical education must serve the needs of the people has even been incorporated into the Chinese Constitution. Soccer, in particular, has roots in China as far back as the 16th century B.C. when, archeologists have found, the Chinese had a ceremonial "soccer dance." Goalposts and an inflated ball (the originals were stuffed with animal hair) were improvements introduced during the Tang Dynasty between 618 and 907 A.D. Today, in larger cities particularly, soccer has caught on. In just one county of Guangdong (Kwangtung) Province in the south, the so-called "home of soccer," there are more than 240 fields to accommodate 2,600 teams. The 22-man team traveling in the U.S. came from the ranks of China's students and workers. Among its members were two machinists, a shipyard worker, and a railway employee. China has no paid professional athletes, but most national team members are students who attend physical culture institutes and devote almost all their time to sport. The 30-year-old captain, Xiang, teaches at Shandong (Shantung) Institute of Physical Culture and has devoted 20 years to the sport. He works out with the team three times weekly after classes.

When the Meadowlands game was over, Secretary of State Vance had had his wish. It ended in a diplomatic 1-1 tie. The only winner was international friendship. Perhaps the outcome might have been different if the Cosmos' Brazilian superstar Pélé, now retired, had been on the field. Instead, he was just one of the crowd enjoying the friendly but hard-fought competition. The Chinese team followed this performance by losing twice to the U.S. national team in Atlanta and San Francisco and beating the Tampa Bay Rowdies in Florida. Between games, the Chinese athletes visited Disney World, toured Coca-Cola world headquarters in Atlanta, attended a California-Oregon State football extravaganza, went bowling, and attended clinics on sports medicine and American training techniques. The Chinese then headed south for games in Mexico and Jamaica. The players, Xiang said, eagerly awaited the chance to test themselves in the world soccer arena.

Back in the Meadowlands, with the game over, a few diehard leafletters were in the parking lot spreading the word to departing fans. One man, hurrying to his car, snatched a flyer and read the "Welcome Chinese Friends" headline.

"Why are you giving me this now?" he asked. "It's all over."

"Not at all," said the leafletter, "not at all."

From Los Alamos to a Chinese Dairy Farm

by Joan Hinton

An American nuclear physicist tells why she left the “establishment” and headed for the Chinese countryside

I was born a white Anglo-Saxon American in a professional family. So things were always pretty easy for me in this society. From the time I was little, I had wanted to be a scientist. Having climbed the academic ladder with comparative ease, my first shock came when I tried to get into graduate school in physics and found only one (Wisconsin) that would take a girl.

Then came the war. Soon the graduate schools were practically cleaned out of anyone involved in nuclear physics. Along with the others, I joined the Manhattan Project in Los Alamos, New Mexico. We knew we were working on a bomb which we called “The Gadget,” but we never really expected it to be used. In late July 1945, the first bomb was tested on the Alamogordo desert. A few of us, not directly involved in the test, had sneaked past army patrols and sat waiting all night on a little knoll.

Just before dawn the bomb went off. Though we were some 25 miles away, we felt the heat as though we were standing in front of an oven. For an instant the whole atmosphere was so bright that you couldn't tell where the light was coming from. Then

JOAN HINTON has lived in China since 1948. In 1977 she revisited the U.S., speaking on China and gathering information on current American dairying techniques. Her job at the dairy of the Red Star Commune outside Peking involves designing and developing farm machinery. In the June 1976 NEW CHINA, she described the advances women had made at Red Star during the “anti-Confucius, anti-Lin Biao” campaign.

The present article is based on a talk given at the Fourth National USCPFA Convention.

gradually the light withdrew back into its source – the bright white turning to a billowing mass of deadly purple. The top rose higher and higher until a huge mushroom burst into full daylight high above us, like sunrise on a mountain peak. Two minutes later the sound hit us, a deafening crack followed by rumbling on and on as the shock wave echoed back and forth among the hills. Before the sound came, we had talked in whispers. Not only had everyone on the project worked in extreme secrecy for over two years, but we ourselves were secretly watching within the secret. When that sound hit us, we felt we were caught naked. With the rumbling of those mountains, our secret was suddenly exposed to the whole world.

A few days later the newspapers reported that the U.S. had dropped an atom bomb on Hiroshima, then Nagasaki. One hundred and fifty thousand people – people like you and me – 150,000 all gone up in smoke.

How had this happened? How was it that we scientists who were interested only in “pure” science, who were interested only in knowing how the world was put together, how had we produced a monster like this?

We formed the Association of Los Alamos Scientists. Many of us left the project. We went to Washington to lobby for civilian control of atomic energy. Since the Manhattan Project was under the military, we thought the problem lay with the military. Soon we won government or civilian control, and many of us went back to school thinking that at last the nightmare was over and now we could bury ourselves again in

“pure” science. I went to the Institute for Nuclear Studies in Chicago. But it soon became apparent the world was not so simple. Bit by bit I came to realize there was no way out for an experimental nuclear physicist. You were caught in a vise. You had either to sell your soul to the establishment or quit.

At the time my brother (William Hinton) and a friend of ours (Sid Engst) had both gone to China. From them I learned more and more about the Chinese Revolution. After intense mental struggle, I finally made up my mind. In February 1948, I quit the Institute and headed for the liberated areas of China. I wanted to see what the U.S. looked like from the outside. I now knew pretty well what I was against, but I wasn't at all sure of what I was for. It took a year in Guomindang (Kuomintang, KMT) China before I arrived in Yan'an (Yenan) where my friend Sid was already working. At that time, March 1949, we didn't know how long we would stay. We always intended to come back to the U.S. someday, but somehow there has always been so much going on in China that I never got around to coming back until last week [August 1977].

What were some of my first impressions when I got to Yan'an? I think perhaps the first was the contrast between the simplicity of the life and the spirit of the people. Those people were the happiest I'd ever seen, yet they lived so extremely simply.

The people I was living with were personnel, or cadres, in the Border Region Government compound, i.e., the government of this liberated area. They were preparing to take over the city of Xi'an

(Sian) which was soon to be liberated, yet they lived so simply. Everything they owned they could carry on their backs. We got issued one set of clothes for summer and one set of padded clothes for winter. We all ate in one mess, though there was a slightly better mess for sick people and older people in poor health. You never had to worry about what you were going to wear or what you were going to eat. All our energies were free to think about how to get the work done better.

My first job was at an iron factory some two days by foot from Yan'an, in a village called Wayaobu. Nestled into the loess hills of North Shanxi (Shansi), this iron factory had a yard about 50 by 200 feet with three sides enclosed by a stone wall, the fourth by caves cut into the hill. There were perhaps 40 workers with no machine tools whatsoever – no tools but what they made with their hands. Everything was done from scratch. If you wanted a board, you got it by sawing it by hand out of a log. Some days you'd see the blacksmith outside the blacksmith shop making nails all day. Just the head of each nail alone took three strokes with the hammer. And if you went into the fitters' cave, there you'd see the fitters making beautiful pliers by hand out of an old piece of railroad rail. These people who had so little had so much!

At the factory, everyone studied. They studied every day. Most of them were learning to read and write. Some were studying mathematics and mechanics, some even studied English, and they all studied politics and world affairs. The ones who could read, read the paper aloud to those who couldn't, and together everyone discussed the daily news. There were lots of meetings. Everything in the factory was discussed. People were frank. Both criticism and self-criticism were sharp but friendly. In one meeting a fitter would be criticizing the vice-director of the factory, in another a group would be criticizing an apprentice for sloppy work. They criticized anything that was not done well and continually discussed how to improve the work. We workers took an active part in management of the factory while the cadres worked together with the workers at the bench. For a long time, I couldn't make out which was which.

In 1947 the KMT had invaded this area and destroyed vast numbers of villages, wrecking houses for firewood and killing work animals for meat. There was a shortage of cooking pots and farm tools. The first job of the factory was to replace the damage as fast as possible and help the peasants get production going. "Chiang Kai-shek's our minister of supplies," the workers jokingly explained as they melted up old bombs, sent by the U.S. through Chiang Kai-shek to destroy them, and

cast them into cooking pots and plowshares for the people.

The spirit of the place was contagious. Working there you were suddenly part of something much bigger than yourself. You were working in coordination with millions of others for the good of the people, for the good of mankind. You could not help but feel as though, at last, you had come home.

In September 1949 three of us from the factory were transferred to a livestock farm on the northern border of Shaanxi (Shensi) Province, a week's walk north of Yan'an.

Soon after we started working on this farm, a small incident gave me one of the most profound lessons of my life. At the time I was pretty much of a pacifist. A young boy with us on the way from Yan'an to the farm had a gun. As we were walking through the hills, he would take potshots at rabbits and birds, adding meat to our diet as we went. At one point we came upon a rabbit, sitting there as plain as life. He gave his gun to me, saying, "Would you like to try a shot?" I refused to shoot.

When we got to the farm, we found that the military situation in that region was not yet stable. There was a semi-bandit, a local army chief called Zhang Ding-zhi, whose headquarters was in a place called Dong Wu Chi, a bit northeast of us. In 1949 he had come over to the Liberation Army and decided to cooperate with the new government. Soon afterward the regular Liberation Army went south to free the whole country, leaving only these local armies. In early 1950 Zhang Ding-zhi got displeased with something, locked up the local cadres in Dong Wu Chi, and suddenly starting banditing. His troops began to live by looting. They'd come into a place on horseback, kill whoever tried to stop them, grab whatever they wanted, and leave. News came that they were coming our way. We held a meeting and decided not to evacuate but to defend our farm, which was in an old walled fort. There were about 20 of us in all. We didn't have enough guns to go around, so we collected bricks and other things for those without guns. When it came time to hand out the guns, I lined up to get one too, but the others said, "What good will it do to give you a gun when you wouldn't even shoot a rabbit?" All they would give me was a baseball bat.

Well, all I can say is that a person's mind sure can change in a hurry under the proper conditions. All my ideas about being a CO, about not killing, about how killing is the worst evil – all those ideas went up in a puff of smoke while I was standing on that wall in the middle of the night waiting for bandits to plunder, loot, and kill those innocent, hard-working people – and all I had was a baseball bat. How I envied those with guns!

Those nights standing up on that wall, I thought a lot. We had come here with Holstein cows and merino sheep for the sole purpose of helping the local people improve their livestock and better their living. But now suddenly those bandits were were on the loose. Any minute they might sweep in to grab a few cows for a feast. As I stood there on that wall peering into the dark, I suddenly had no qualms at all about shooting to kill. And I understood it isn't that people want war – but when bandits anywhere start slaughtering the people, there isn't anything for them to do but defend themselves.

The people here – just ordinary peasants – had been through eight years of fighting the Japanese invaders. And then, just when everyone was looking forward to peace at last, the KMT invaded this area and the people again went into the hills and fought three more years before driving them out. They hated war as much as you or I. They surely had seen enough of it.

But they understood there were two types of wars – just wars and unjust wars. When Anna Louise Strong asked Mao, "If the American people ask why the Communist Party is fighting, what should I say?" Mao answered, "Because Chiang Kai-shek is out to slaughter the Chinese people, and if the people want to survive, they have to defend themselves. This the American people can understand."

And I began to understand something even more profound. I saw that through all these years of resistance these people had gradually come to realize a truth: no matter how big or vicious the enemy may be, it is the people who determine the outcome of war. Even as vicious a weapon as the atom bomb, they looked at in this same way. They were not cowed by the atom bomb. They said it was a paper tiger made to scare people. Tactically it could do a lot of damage and kill a lot of people, but strategically it was still the people – not one or two new types of weapons – who determine the outcome of war.

The Chinese people fought against the Japanese invaders and KMT reactionaries. The Korean people fought against the U.S. imperialists. And the Vietnamese people fought for 30 years, first against the Japanese, then the French, and then the U.S. imperialists. These wars were just wars waged and won by the people. But the wars waged and lost by the Japanese, French, and U.S. imperialists against the people were unjust. People who have been through wars like these know that, in the end, imperialism and all reactionaries will be defeated because they represent reaction, and the people will win because they represent progress.

In those weeks I began to understand still

another thing. I began to see why the people all around me had such confidence in and love for the Communist Party and Chairman Mao – because it was the Party which helped them organize and which pointed out a correct way to fight each step of the way. Without the discipline and organization of the Party, they could never have won. And I began to understand the Communist Party of China had not been born easily. Its birth and growth are the accumulation of 100

years of experience and sacrifice in struggle of the Chinese people. It is the organized struggle of the vast majority which in the end is bound to defeat the handful of imperialists and reactionaries.

* * *

I don't know how many of you have read the fifth volume of Mao's *Selected Works*. Reading it, you get quite a feeling for the tremendous struggles that went on in the early 1950s, when the mass movement of

some 500 million peasants to collectivize agriculture swept the country.

In 1953 we were transferred to the Xi'an Dairy Farm, which in 1955 was amalgamated with Zao Tan State Farm, a farm set up to reclaim wasteland along the Wei riverbed just north of Xi'an. Since we were on a state farm, the collectivization movement did not affect us directly, though we saw it going on around us all the time. In those days, we thought, politically the struggle for socialism was the struggle to get rid of private ownership of the means of production. In the countryside this meant private ownership of land must give way to collective or public ownership. Since ours was a state farm – that is, the land and property of our farm already belonged to all the people of China – we already had the most advanced type of ownership possible. So we thought that as far as we were concerned, the Revolution had already been won. The class struggle was over, and all we had to do was work hard to get production going. We thought that after production got to a really high level, then some fine day in the future there would be enough of everything to go around for everyone and we would at last end up in communism.

Of course, during those years there were all sorts of problems in the process of the struggle to get production going. The interesting thing is that, though a lot of the problems were technical ones, they were not all technical. At that time none of us had ever seen socialism. Our only example was that of the Soviet Union, so we went all out in the study of the Soviet experience.

In 1956, among other things, we tried out an elaborate method of piece-work wages in our dairy barn. I was very active in getting this system going. In the first place, it seemed very logical to me. Isn't one of the basic principles of socialism "To each according to his work"? You do so much work and you get so much money. Isn't it only fair that people who do more get more? In the second place, it was lots of fun working out those different systems of wages. You had to figure out how much a person should get for every pound of milk milked, for every cow bred, for every healthy calf born, and how much bonus a worker would get above that for every cow whose yearly production went over so much milk, etc. I enjoyed figuring these things out because it used a lot of mathematics. I even used calculus to figure the bonus on the pigs.

Right from the beginning there were some people who were not so sure about it, especially among the workers. But on the whole, most people were enthusiastic. Well, we got the whole elaborate system going. Everything seemed to be going all right for



Joan, her husband Sid Engst, and their translator, Jiang Gen-ye, at the iron factory in Yan'an, 1949. (Photos: Courtesy of J. Hinton)



This Yan'an iron factory's furnace and water pump were ingeniously contrived from available materials such as a Buddha from an abandoned temple, 1949.

a time. As individuals, the workers took on more cows and milked more milk than they had before. But soon contradictions began to show up. If a person took extra time to clean up the yard or help someone else, it would influence his or her income. We tried revising the system over and over, but no matter how elaborate you made the system, still you could not get the material incentive of more pay to fit exactly with the reality of what was needed to get the job done well. Workers who really cared about the work as a whole, who helped others in difficulty, who were careful not to waste feed, etc, would end up with less pay than ones who were all out for themselves. Unity in the barn got worse and worse, and production as a whole went down.

After about a year the whole thing was criticised and stopped. I remember so clearly when a cadre from the central government in charge of state farms came to our farm. He had been on the Long March. In a meeting he got up and said, "What a thing! Imagine if we had done it this way on the Long March! Give you so much for every enemy you kill! How could we possibly have won the Revolution that way?"

I also remember a letter written by a worker to the Xi'an daily paper saying that this piece-work wage business was an insult to the workers. They were working for the Revolution, working so that everyone could go forward together, not just so that they themselves could get more pay.

Then came the Great Leap of 1958. It is hard to describe the enthusiasm of that year. Among other things, everyone on the dairy farm pledged that they would not spoil one pound of milk in the whole year. Our dairy was spread out in three different locations. We had no electricity, no truck, and no hard-surfaced road. Every night at midnight the milk was sent some 13 miles into the city on a two-wheeled mule cart. When it rained, the mud got so deep the mules literally dragged the cart along on the axle. In August that year there was a flood. A small drainage canal in front of the dairy suddenly swelled into a river. The bridge went out and we were left stranded. But the workers got the milk into the city just the same. Just before the bridge went out they



Joan Hinton checks out the silage combine she helped design



Joan Hinton on the Red Star Commune where she now lives and works.

drove the mule cart over to the other side. Then they made a ferry out of oil drums with their own bed boards tied on top. When it came time to send the milk, they ferried it across to the other side. In 1958 we were sending about three tons of milk into the city every day, and not a single pound went sour. Piece-work wages or material incentives could not possibly have produced the spirit of that year.

Then came the hard years. In August 1960 the Soviet experts were suddenly withdrawn and all Soviet aid stopped. All around the city of Xi'an half-finished buildings of all kinds stood like ghosts, their scaffolding turning gray with age. Commodities became extremely tight. There was very little meat. Weather conditions were bad in those years, but it was not until the Soviet Union came out with its open attacks on China that we knew what the main reason for the difficulties was. Only then did we realize that opportunists had betrayed the first socialist state.

In spite of the natural calamities at home those years, the whole Chinese people together tightened their belts, paid back their debt to the USSR, and freed themselves from the stranglehold imposed by the Soviet social-imperialists.

Among other things, the debt included immediate payment to the USSR for the 156 major enterprises given as aid to China when Stalin was alive. It also included paying for military aid sent by the Soviet Union to support the Korean war of resistance against invasion by U.S. imperialism.

During those years, in spite of all difficulties, production kept going up. The

farm expanded and gradually improved. In 1959 we got electricity, then trucks and more tractors. A new road was built and by 1965 we had regular bus service to the city from the farm.

Yet, strangely, in 1962 piece-work wages were suddenly started again. Again I was an activist in getting them going and again they failed. I was greatly puzzled by this. Why were they started again? And why again had they failed?

It was not until 1974, during the discussion of the new Constitution of China, that this contradiction was finally resolved in my mind. The socialist principle of "To each according to his work" is not a static principle but a leftover from capitalist society, a bourgeois right, which should be gradually limited in the period of socialist revolution. Piece-work wages do just the opposite; they expand bourgeois right, pushing our relations of production nearer to capitalism. Thus, they tend to weaken the socialist economic base rather than strengthen it.

Looking back on all this now, one can see that this swinging back and forth between the method of the Great Leap and the method of piece-work wages to get production going was actually just a tiny reflection in our farm of an intense two-line struggle going on within the Chinese Communist Party, a struggle between the capitalist road and the socialist road. Do we rely on the tremendous enthusiasm of the people for building socialism or do we treat the workers as hired labor and rely on material incentives to get production going?

In 1962 Chairman Mao called on the people never to forget class struggle. He

pointed out that even though the economic base was now completely socialist – we no longer had any private ownership of the means of production – classes and class struggle still exist in our socialist society. In 1966 he sparked off the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, calling on the people of the whole country to rise up against those in the Party in authority going the capitalist road. That is, he called on the people to ferret out a handful of individuals in the leadership in China, who if allowed to get control of the socialist state would follow the road of Khrushchev and turn China into a country ruled by state monopoly capitalists. The Cultural Revolution was a tremendous education to all the people of China. They studied what had happened in the Soviet Union and related it to their own experience in China. By the method of great debate, the capitalist roaders were exposed and became isolated.

As a result of the Cultural Revolution, first Liu Shao-qi, then Lin Biao, and now the "gang of four" – three bourgeois headquarters within the top leadership of the Chinese Communist Party – were ferreted out. But beyond this, a most precious result of the Cultural Revolution was the tremendous increase in the consciousness of the masses of Chinese people and their ability to recognize political swindlers and doubledealers.

In ending, I would also like to say that I have recently noticed in China, everywhere, great confidence in Hua Guo-feng's leadership. Watching the way extremely complicated things have been handled in the last year, one senses the touch of the old Chairman. ●

From Court to Countryside

by Mark J. Scher

Stamping out elitism in the postal system

*A single horseman in the red dust
and the young Consort laughs,
but no one knows if it is
the lichees which come.*

These words by the Tang Dynasty poet Tu Mu recall the times when imperial couriers on horseback carried a continuous supply of fresh lichees 1,500 miles from the south for the indulgence of the emperor's favorite concubine.

China's earliest postal system, established in about the 8th century B.C., was known as the *I Chan*, or Imperial Courier Service. Although paid for by local taxes on the people, it was for the exclusive use of government officials. By the 14th century, when Marco Polo visited China, the system employed countless foot couriers and 200,000 horses to service 10,000 postal stations. Teams of relay runners were expected to cover 100 miles a day, relay express couriers on horseback up to 250 miles in a single day and night.

In the 15th century merchants set up the *min xin chu*, or people's letter offices, to transmit business correspondence, parcels, and remittances. These private letter

Editor of China Report in the 1960s, MARK J. SCHER wrote on Anna Louise Strong in the Fall 1977 issue of NEW CHINA.

agencies, or "hongs" as they were called by foreigners, were managed by banks and other commercial establishments. Their services were also offered to the general public. The hongs, which at one point numbered several thousand, expanded their operations throughout China and to the overseas Chinese communities in Southeast Asia as well. Because they were a serious rival to the limited government postal bureaucracy, the Guomindang (Kuomintang) outlawed the hongs in 1935.

After its defeat in the First Opium War of 1842, China was forced, through a series of humiliating treaties with the imperialist powers, to open its ports to foreign trade and to accept the concept of extraterritoriality. Foreigners were not subject to Chinese law; treaty ports were governed by the foreign powers and patrolled by their gunboats. In these ports Great Britain, the U.S., France, Japan, Germany, Italy, and czarist Russia each established its own post offices, using its own stamps. It was as cheap to send a letter to New York from Shanghai as from San Francisco, since letters and parcels traveled at the domestic rate. This was a great boon to foreign businesses, which were able for a long period to use this system to circumvent Chinese customs.

More than 158 of these post offices were

maintained until 1922, as well as subsidiary branches in the various foreign consulates, in stations of the foreign-owned railways throughout China, and in areas where foreign military forces were stationed. This system lasted long after the establishment of a Chinese government postal service because of the particular rivalries among the foreign powers and the commercial advantages each gained from it.

Since there was still a need for local mail distribution beyond the treaty port system, the imperialist powers also required the Chinese government to create a national postal system to supplement their own networks. The Ching rulers turned over this task, as they did many of their foreign dealings, to the peculiar institution known as the Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs Service. Sir Robert Hart, an Englishman, was its Inspector-General, and all of its higher offices were staffed by foreigners. Its main function was to collect revenue to pay indemnities to foreign powers for their military adventures in China and to see that some financial blood was supplied to keep the dying Ching Dynasty alive. In 1896-98 the mails were reorganized and then separated from the English-dominated customs administration; under French pressure, a Frenchman, T. Piry, was later appointed Postmaster-General. As with customs, the



On this Ching Dynasty envelope of the Imperial Courier Service, the instructions to the carrier warn him to "fly quick as fire without regard to rain or night" and that he would face "heavy punishment if it were delayed, damaged, or destroyed."
(Photo: M. J. Scher)

top positions in the postal service were occupied by foreigners, and even as late as 1938 two-thirds of the postal commissioners were foreigners.

Following the Revolution of 1911 led by Sun Yat-sen to overthrow the feudal Ching Dynasty, China went into a period of increasing revolutionary struggle against feudal oppression, warlordism, and foreign intervention and invasion which lasted until Liberation in 1949. China was reduced to a state of administrative collapse as each warlord tried to expand his rule under the patronage of one or another of the foreign powers. In some provinces warlords established their own currencies, each one declining in worth at different rates from others. Consequently, stamps issued by the central government had to be overprinted with the province name for use in the Northeast, Sichuan (Szechuan), Yunnan, and Xinjiang (Sinkiang), the main areas of warlord rule. Following the Japanese invasion, each of the Japanese-controlled puppet regimes in the Northeast, Inner Mongolia, North and Central China began issuing its own stamps.

After Chiang Kai-shek's betrayal of the revolution in 1927, Mao Tsetung with Chu Teh founded the Red Army in south central China and established the Workers and Peasants Democratic Government in the



The 1858 Treaty of Tianjin (Tientsin) compelled the Chinese government to carry mail addressed to the foreign embassies and consulates in China. This stampless envelope from Ningbo was carried free of charge to the American consul in Chefoo (Yentai) by the Imperial Customs Service. (Photo: Courtesy of H. R. Harmer)



The first Chinese stamps issued by the Imperial Maritime Customs Service in 1878 were of the large dragon design. This letter addressed to Scotland, however, required an additional French stamp since Chinese stamps were not universally honored for use in international mails until 1914. (Photo: Courtesy of H. R. Harmer)

revolutionary base areas of Hunan and Jiangxi (Kiangsi) in 1928. The new government then founded the Red or "Soviet" Mail service which expanded with the struggle into the adjoining provinces of Fujian, Hubei, and Zhejiang (Fukien, Hupeh, Chekiang).

After the Red Army's epic 9,000-mile Long March to the northwest in 1934-35, Yan'an (Yenan) became its base of operations, with some forces remaining behind in the original base areas in central China. Despite the declared "united front" between the Communists and Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist (KMT) forces, the Red liberated areas in the northwest were blockaded not only by the Japanese but by the KMT as well, making it necessary to form Communications Bureaus to coordinate postal communications in the guerrilla bases and behind enemy lines in east central China. Working under the most trying and dangerous conditions with the railroads and highways under enemy control, the postal service was able to deliver military orders, official correspondence, newspapers, and letters to and from the fighters at the front, maintaining uninterrupted contact between the various liberated areas. Unified in 1943

as the Communications Battalion, the "communications couriers" kept in close touch with the peasants, supplying them with news and helping them with their work. The peasants helped the couriers to infiltrate areas blockaded by the enemy.

In contrast, the Chiang Kai-shek government, which had retreated to Chongqing (Chungking) in the southwest, not only kept open postal communications with the Japanese-occupied areas but supplied postage stamps for their use. The Japanese puppet government, then in Nanjing (Nanking), merely had to overprint these stamps with the values of the currencies and the names of the provinces under their control.

After the Japanese surrender in 1945, Chiang Kai-shek once again resumed open civil war and attempted to swallow up the liberated areas. The KMT-controlled areas underwent whirlwind inflation; in 1947-49, the currency system was replaced three times. During this period stamps were surcharged with new values, their denominations ranging from one cent to as high as five million Chinese dollars. Finally, since the postal rates had to be revised daily, stamps were printed without any denomi-

nations and letters posted without any realistic way of accounting. The KMT postal service was in chaos.

With the fight to liberate all of China, mail service rapidly expanded; as the military campaigns progressed, new postal districts were set up. But it was not until Liberation in October 1949, when Chiang's forces were finally defeated, that China could at last establish an effective national postal system. On January 1, 1950, the General Postal Bureau was set up and began to play an important role in rebuilding and unifying the country. In order to combat the wild inflation of the pre-1949 period, which had made it impossible for the people to carry out normal commerce or even to keep savings, a long-dormant postal savings plan was reactivated. The value of deposits was measured in terms of government-stabilized grain prices, and everything from the price of a stamp to the postal system's entire budget was calculated in terms of so many catties of millet.

Not only could savings be maintained and payments and goods be sent through the mails, information and news could now circulate between cities and the countryside. Before Liberation, newspapers



These stamps of the U.S., Great Britain, France, Italy, Germany, Japan (overprinted with the characters for "China"), and czarist Russia were for use in their post offices in China. The Indian stamp overprinted "CEF," China Expeditionary Forces, was used by British colonial troops stationed in China. The new values surcharged on some of the stamps indicate that they could be sold in the local currency - which more often than not was the Mexican silver dollar. (Photo: M. J. Scher)

and periodicals had not reached beyond the big city areas, since inflation made it impossible to set realistic subscription rates. With the "millet measure" in effect, the postal service undertook the management of subscription orders and distribution. The results were dramatic. From January 1950 to July 1951, the circulation of newspapers increased by 278 percent and magazines by 1,166 percent. Today, the People's Post still carries out this service, simplifying the ordering of any of several hundred publications anywhere in the country.

Helping to spread information and news was only part of the overall function of opening up communications with the vast rural areas of China. In old China the postal system served the interests of the imperialists and capitalists whose stronghold was in the big cities and coastal areas. The rural areas were cut off from communication with the rest of the country. Peasants had to walk for miles in order to post a letter. To write someone in the countryside, a person had to find the nearest town with a post office, address the letter to a shop there with a note on the envelope asking a passerby to be kind enough to deliver it. Even when old China's postal system was at its "best," only in the cities and larger county towns were there any postal facilities, most likely a corner of a store. Some counties had no postal facilities whatsoever, and in all of China there were only 800 postmen assigned to rural delivery.

Over the past 29 years the number of rural post offices and delivery routes has grown steadily. Today all communes and 97 percent of production brigades have regular mail delivery. Priority treatment is given to newspapers, which are delivered the same day in cities and the following day in areas within a radius of seven and a half miles from the city limits.

Mail delivery to remote areas is of prime concern. Letter carriers travel by foot over the mountains to pick up and deliver mail and sell stamps and stationery. Deliveries are made to work team offices, which maintain postal boxes. In Xinjiang Autonomous Region in mountainous northwest China, for example, mail used to be carried by caravans and it took at least a month to get a letter from Urumqi (Urumchi), the regional capital, to Hetien in south Xinjiang. Since 1949 the number of post offices in the region has increased more than twentyfold, and it now takes only four days to get a letter from Urumqi to Hetien. Costs have been standardized and kept low to encourage widespread use; a regular letter sent within county limits costs 4 fen (about 2 cents), and to any other point in China 8 fen. Domestic air mail costs an extra 10 fen. There is no "special delivery," as the postal



These historic stamps were used in the Red base areas during the early period of the Chinese people's revolutionary struggle and in the liberated areas behind enemy lines during the War Against Japanese Aggression. *Top row, left to right*: Red Mail of the Hunan-Jiangxi early liberated area, 1928-30; Hunan-Western Hubei, 1929-31; West Fujian issue, 1929-31. *Middle row*: Chinese Soviet Posts, 1931-34; Worker and Farmer design, 1931-34; South Hebei Anti-Japanese War Post, 1940. *Bottom row*: Shandong Wartime Post, 1942; Huainan, northern Jiangsu, 1941; Central China Communication Bureau Resistance Currency issue, 1946. (Photo: M. J. Scher)



The face value of the KMT stamps on this envelope mailed in November 1948 was \$4,050,000. Less than a month before it would have cost the sender only \$1,100,000. Inflation ravaged postwar China. In 1937 \$100 could purchase two oxen; by 1948 it could not buy even a single grain of rice. (Photo: M. J. Scher)

Moving the Mails

Postal worker HARRY STERNS visited China in July 1977 as a member of the USCPFA's National Workers' Tour.

New China: As a worker at a bulk mail center in the U.S., what were some of your first impressions when you visited the center at the Peking Railway Station?

Harry Sterns: Well, one of the first things I noticed was the lack of foremen walking up and down the aisles telling people to get to work and, generally, a pretty relaxed atmosphere in the building. There were about 150 people working there, and when we walked in they all stopped and started to talk enthusiastically because it was the first time they had ever seen an American worker. Especially a fellow postal worker. They told me this was one of the more automated plants in China and so it was interesting to compare their bulk center with ours. I think theirs came out a little bit ahead because the working conditions seemed better, the pace was slower, and it wasn't as noisy.

NC: You said you didn't notice any foremen right away. You mean there's no supervision?

HS: There's supervision but it's more like the workers supervising themselves. They are organized into little groups, and they choose their group leader. But he works right alongside them, he's just a leader — he's not standing over them.

I asked what they do when somebody doesn't come to work, or always comes late, or is lazy and doesn't want to work. They said that when somebody is messing up, or the other workers think they're not pulling their weight, they just criticize them and try to impress upon them that they should be doing the best they can. Not that they have to drive themselves up the wall, but they have to make an effort.

They don't have a time clock, but most of the people seem to be pretty regular, and if they're not, the other workers find out what the problem is and help them to correct it. In the U.S. you get docked if you're five or ten minutes late — we have this elaborate

time-checking procedure penalizing you if you miss a little time. They used to have the same kind of thing in China before the Cultural Revolution in the late 1960s — you'd be docked if you were a little late. But during the Cultural Revolution the workers decided that they should rely not on such material incentives but on political education to get the work done.

NC: So what you're saying is that a lot of the decisions on the way things are run are made by the workers themselves.

HS: Yeah, the decisions that they can make right there on the work floor. There are probably other decisions that are not made just by the workers on the work floor, but it's much different from the way it is here.

NC: There's been a lot of controversy around some of these highly automated bulk mail centers in the U.S. When they were set up, a lot of workers were laid off and there was a lot of speed-up of the workers still employed. How does the automation process work in China — does it affect workers the same way it does here?

HS: Well, as far as I know, automation in the post office in China doesn't put anybody out of work. Even if there was a situation where some workers weren't needed there anymore, they could just move to another station or another department or job. There's no danger of being out of work in China.

You can tell that the workers have a lot to do with how things are automated there because the machines are just more human. They have a machine similar to one we have here where the worker keys a code into a machine, a parcel goes on a carousel tray and drops into a particular chute. In China the keyers choose the speed of the carousel. In the U.S. the bosses want to turn it up so it's zooming around at this incredible speed, but over there it goes at a leisurely pace and the worker controls how fast or slow the parcels go. And the slower speed means fewer errors are made.

NC: A lot of people in the U.S. complain about their packages coming all chewed up in the mail. From what you could see, was this a problem there?

HS: In my post office they have large areas devoted to rewrap sections. You have about 100 people over three shifts devoted to wrapping up parcels that have been ripped up by machinery. In the post office I saw in China, I walked all over the building but didn't see any rewrap areas. I didn't ask that question about damage to parcels, but from what I could see it wasn't a serious problem. Also a big thing is the speed at which you're working. At a more reasonable pace there's going to be less damage. If the belts of machinery are jamming the mail, parcels and stuff get crushed up, and speed has a lot to do with it.

NC: How would you compare the level of mechanization to where you work or any other major mail center here?

HS: A lot of the machines used in this country have their equivalents in China — automatic shake-up, keying, carousels, conveyor belts, fork lifts, jeeps, skids with mail on them. The machines didn't look American, but they were doing the same kinds of things.

All of this machinery was made in China. And the workers in the plant had a lot to do with the designing of it. One of the chief technicians was a postal worker who had gotten training and was responsible for designing a lot of the machinery. Not that they don't use the help of technicians from outside the post office, but even these people discuss with the postal workers what should be automated or how they can improve the machines. In the bulk mail centers in this country a huge amount of money was spent to put in machinery that a lot of postal workers feel doesn't make a lot of sense; it's inefficient.

NC: What were the workers' reactions when you told them about the postal system here? Were they surprised at any of the things you said?

HS: They were surprised about the number of injuries on the job. I told them about back injuries in the U.S., and that this was a big problem in the post office. I asked them how they dealt with back injuries. They said first of all that they have a sack weight limit of 50 pounds. In this country it's 70 pounds. They also said that whenever there's a job which requires using your back, doing that kind of manual labor, the whole thing is just to take it easy, you know, not push yourself. There's no pressure to load a certain amount.

NC: What about other conditions — how do they compare with those here?

HS: Well, in the post office here the two occupational hazards used to be hernias – caused by lifting heavy mail sacks – and TB. The TB was caused mainly by dust; there was an incredible amount of dust in the post office. Now the so-called modern installations are somewhat better, but they're still extremely dusty. One of the things I noticed in China was that it is very clean. The simple fact that the canvas mail bags are cleaned often makes a big difference. They supposedly clean them in this country, too, but they're usually



The railway post office in Peking where people can sit and write letters. (Photo: H. Sterns)

pretty foul most of the time. For years and years and years these things are just collecting dirt.

Also, the latest design in post office buildings here seems to be without any windows at all, but I think most workers would like to have some windows. In China you walk in and they have 15-foot-high windows.

NC: How do wages compare?

HS: Your average postal worker, say, like me, with about five or six years experience, might make 70 yuan a month. That's about \$35. That sounds like very little money. But basic living costs are very low. For instance, they can get free child care. In the U.S. you might pay \$100 a month for one child alone. They have public transportation there, so no one has to own a car to get into work. And a person's rent can't be more than 5 percent of their income. Prices either have been very stable or have gone down since the 1950s – like the price of medicine, for instance.

There are workers who make more than many administrators and there are administrators making less than even the lowest-paid workers.

I asked them if they had forced overtime. The Christmas season here is an incredible rush with the mails. People in the post office are forced to work overtime. Many like it because they need the extra money, but a lot don't like being forced to put in the extra time. The Chinese workers said, well, we don't have a Christmas rush but we have a Spring Festival – that's our big rush time. The big expansion in the mail flow is handled by having all the people who usually do administrative and management work come down and work on the floor. Nobody is supposed to just sit up in an office year after year – they have to spend a certain number of days on the work floor. This is the way they try to lessen the division between workers and management, make sure they're working together and not against each other, and help ensure that the plant is really run by the workers.

NC: Isn't it true that in this country most unions would really make a stink if the administration or management tried to come down and work on the floor? How can this happen in China and be a good thing?

HS: Well, in this country the unions do this mainly to protect the workers, to ensure they have some kind of job security. In the post office here there are large numbers of people, thousands of them, who are not guaranteed a full week's work. When the mail gets a little slow, management can cut the work force down to the bone; when the mail gets faster they can expand it. So there are all these workers in a relatively unstable position.

In China the foreman can't say to you, "Well, if you don't like it here there are ten more who can take your place," because they don't have unemployment. In China, everybody's a full-time worker – everybody has a full-time job, slow times, fast times, whatever. They're not on call – you know, they can't get called to work and then get sent home after four hours like these postal workers here. People work six days a week there; it's a 48-hour work week.

NC: Why is the week so long?

HS: China is still a relatively underdeveloped country. There's lots of work to be done. It's a long work week, but I don't think the workers mind it that much. They feel everybody is working hard to build up China. They feel that they're important, not just some cog in a machine who's taking orders, they know they're making a real contribution.

service moves all the mail as rapidly as possible.

A major benefit of the new postal system resulted from the work of postal workers in reuniting families torn apart and scattered after years of war. For example, in 1944, during the Japanese invasion, 16-year-old Wang Xiu-lan lost touch with her parents. A quarter of a century later, in 1969, she wrote the postal worker in her native Ling County, Shandong (Shantung) Province, asking for help in locating her family. The postal worker had little to go on. Xiu-lan's letter said her family used to live opposite a store run by a family named Liu and gave her father's and mother's full name. But the Liu store had long disappeared, and no one in the immediate area remembered the family. The postal worker widened his search, asking questions in handicraft factories, stores, restaurants, inns. He finally met an old man in a fruit co-op who remembered the girl's uncle, and after more searching, the family was finally reunited.

When stories like this appeared in Chinese newspapers, people who had given up on locating their relatives began to write to local post offices. One woman, who had been abducted by slave traders in 1929 when she was nine years old, remembered the name of her native village and wrote the post office for help. She visited the area and with the help of a veteran postman went around the countryside in search of her parents. But she got no clues about her family's whereabouts and returned home in disappointment. Weeks later a rural postman talked about the case while his bicycle was being repaired in a commune shop. As soon as he finished his story, another customer began to cry and said the girl was most likely his sister. When a visit to the mother confirmed this, the post office wired the news to the daughter.

Communications between China and other nations have also been improved by the new air routes which link China's major cities to all regions of the globe. A few years ago it took weeks or even months for a letter to get from Peking to New York, but now it is sometimes a matter of four or five days. In Guangdong (Kwangtung) Province, where many overseas Chinese come from, special service is given to make it easier for families to keep in touch with their relatives abroad.

The modern history of China's postal system reflects the vast changes which Chinese society has undergone during the past century when it lay under the weight of imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucratic capitalism. Since Liberation the Postal Service has been playing an important role in building new China's economy and social life and in reunifying the country. ●

Standing Up for the Truth

by William Hinton

Part IV of an interview with Dazhai's Chen Yong-gui

To keep Dazhai's (Tachai's) ship on course through the storms fanned up by the "communist wind," the "exaggeration

WILLIAM HINTON has published several important books on China, including *Fanshen* and a series of interviews with the late Premier Chou En-lai. He recently (1977) revisited China for several months. These conversations with Dazhai's leader Chen Yong-gui took place during a visit in 1971.

Parts I and II of Hinton's interviews (NEW CHINA, Spring and Fall 1977) dealt with Chen's life as the son of a landless laborer and the situation in Dazhai during and after the Japanese occupation. With land reform, Chen organized a mutual aid team of old men and children to till the soil, only to be ridiculed for his unprofitable foolishness by the Stalwart's Team of able-bodied men. Though he thought that there wouldn't be any more class struggle after the landlords were overthrown, it turned out otherwise: ex-landlords spread rumors, rich peasants went in for black-marketeering, both tried bribing cadres, and the transition from elementary to advanced co-ops — where income was based on labor — aroused sharp antagonisms. Through it all, simple things like evaluating the price of a donkey or a sow became teaching material for building the new society.

In part III (NEW CHINA, Winter 1977) Chen recounted Dazhai's continued struggle in the early 1960s against profiteering, black-marketeering of grain, graft, and corruption. Chen Yong-gui and his followers persisted in putting "public first, self second," resisted pressures to falsify reports of harvest yields during the "exaggeration wind," and in the end won the support of the whole county and the whole country.

wind," and the "leveling and transferring wind" that blew after the Great Leap Forward, to stand firm against profiteering and a return to private production during the hard years that followed — all this was difficult for Chen Yong-gui and his small brigade on the flank of Tiger Head Mountain.* But these difficulties began to seem minor indeed compared to those that arose later. After Mao Tsetung called on the whole country to study Dazhai, this brigade became the focus of intense attention from every side: the media, workers in all fields of culture, the scientific establishment, and of course Communist Party members and cadres at all levels as well as rank-and-file peasants, workers, soldiers, and students. In response to the call "In agriculture, study Dazhai," visitors began to flock into Xiyang (Hsiyang) County at the rate of thousands, even tens of thousands per day. Chen told us that there were days when 30,000 people passed through the village and toured the observation trail that wound over the ridges and through the gullies that Dazhai people had transformed.

All of this attention was not necessarily

* The Great Leap Forward (1958–59) was a vast effort to develop the full potential of the Chinese people in production and construction unleashed by the establishment of public ownership in industry and collective ownership in agriculture. Subsequently, three years of bad weather, withdrawal of Soviet aid, and some serious mistakes in leadership led to crop shortages and cutbacks in industrial production.

friendly. During the intense political struggle that developed in the 1960s, any banner raised by Mao Tsetung inevitably became the target of those who opposed Mao's policies. Some people came, looking into every aspect of Dazhai, in order to find fault, in order to tear Dazhai's banner down. Others, not necessarily out to destroy Dazhai, tried to use its prestige to achieve their own ends. If they were identified with or in favor of one particular aspect of technology, such as burning corn stubble to control disease, or some particular social development, they tried to push Dazhai into adopting it, thus making it a model for the whole country. In this installment Chen Yong-gui, after concluding his discussion of the "communist wind" that blew up in the 1950s, tells of some of the conflicts that arose in the sixties and set the stage for the Cultural Revolution.

Chen: In 1958 we had a sharp conflict with the cadres at the commune level. Our commune leaders set aside 14 mu of land (2.3 acres) to build a 10,000-pig sty. It took a lot of labor to do the job but the commune didn't have any pigs. The only way to get pigs was to transfer them from the brigades. All the brigades that had pigs gave pigs. Dazhai had 300 pigs. They wanted us to give 30 or 40. We didn't agree. After this they had to have grain — since they had pigs they needed grain to feed them. They had no grain production at the commune level, so they wanted grain from the brigades. Once, after I had been

away, I came back into the room in time to hear Jia Cheng-nang say over the telephone, "Tomorrow we will certainly send it." He turned to me and said, "We are the only ones left who have not given grain for the pigs. . . ." But I took the telephone and said, "We're not going to give one catty of grain. Once we have sold grain to the state, the commune level cannot ask for more grain on their own."

"Comrade Chen shouldn't resist so firmly," one of our members said to the Party branch. "He shouldn't oppose them like this. It will only bring trouble to the brigade."

But in this struggle, if we had failed to be firm we would have gone under. Other brigades did what they were told. They sent all the pigs and all the grain they were asked to send. But we sent not one single pig, not one catty of grain, and this was based on principle. A commune is a big collective that includes several brigades or small collectives. If the large one takes from the smaller ones in a way that does not increase production but merely transfers property from small to large, we have to oppose it.

Since we refused pigs and grain, the commune leaders said, "Dazhai cadres are *jiao ao de bu de liao* (arrogant beyond belief). No one can lead them. They are so proud they won't listen to anybody. They hold their tails straight up in the air and nobody dares touch them."

But what we did was not linked to pride in any way at all. It was a matter of line. When they wanted this and wanted that [unwarranted transfers of collective property], we refused to give it.

They reported back to all levels about us - how we had refused to listen to the leadership. But later on, when the wrong line was corrected, some of these same cadres at the commune level came down and criticized all the other brigades. "Why couldn't they have been like Dazhai?" they asked, "why couldn't they have resisted the wrong line when it was coming down? People like this are never wrong. They always rush along with whatever wind is blowing, no matter what!"

A Stomach Full of "Chi"

Such people knew nothing about production, yet they went around directing it, giving orders of all kinds, and throwing everything into a mess. They said you can get high yields by putting dry chopped corn stalks in with the seeds as they are planted. They spread this experience all over the county. During that week I was at a cadre meeting in Yangquan. Our brigade sent a comrade to call me home. He said, "We can't hold out against this if you don't return. The order says we must plant 200 mu

by this method in so many days. If we don't do it there will be a big beating of drums as the red flag now held by us is sent away.* The county leaders say we have already fallen behind at this task, so they have ordered 300 people from Dazhai to take the flag to another brigade."

"I can take the flag myself," I said. "Don't send 300 people for that."

* In socialist emulation campaigns a flag was temporarily awarded with great fanfare to whichever unit took the lead at the moment. If this unit faltered the flag was transferred to a new leading unit.

In very low spirits, I excused myself from the meeting and got ready to go home. They didn't want to let me go. It was right in the middle of the hard years. At the cadre meeting the food was of poor quality. I was so angry I couldn't eat. They thought it was the food. "What's wrong with your health?" they asked. "Can't you eat this food?" And they asked the cook to make something special for me. But I said, "I don't need good food. My stomach is full of *chi* (anger)." All along the road on the way back I saw people putting chopped stalks in with the seed as they planted.



This papercut of Chen Yong-gui exemplifies an old Chinese folk-art adapted to new themes.

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"Why are you doing it that way?" I asked. "We were ordered to," they said. "We're not like you Dazhai people. We don't dare resist."

When I got back to Dazhai our people were also planting in the same way. I told them to stop immediately. We had to do the planting all over again. We covered all the holes and planted again, according to our original plan. I pointed out that some leaders were giving wild directives, blind directives, and that we had to use our own heads.

I found out later that as soon as I left the meeting a Yangquan cadre had called our commune leaders and told them to get the red flag from Dazhai quickly themselves. They were afraid I was going to take the flag into my own hands and turn it over to the next brigade in person. So when I got there there was no red flag in sight.

But when the repudiation of this wrong directive came along, these same cadres turned on the other brigades and criticized them for not being able to resist as Dazhai had!

Such bureaucrats!

Hinton: During the Great Leap, when things got off the track, did the wrong ideas come from above or from below?

Chen: The exaggeration wind could not have started from down below among the peasants. In August 1958 the Provincial and the Regional Committees criticized us, saying, "You don't read the papers. All over the country there are 'sputniks' reaching the sky but you are not even moving." People down below said, "Don't believe it." But some people above said, "We watched the harvest and took part in it. How can the reports be false?"

Wrecking the Great Leap

The slogan was *yi ma dang xian, wan ma ben teng* (one horse in the lead, 10,000 horses gallop along). Grain was the leading horse, and everything else was to follow. Our county was criticized at the provincial meeting. Cadres said, "You neither have one horse in the lead nor 10,000 horses following." In order to follow this slogan, some people made false reports full of empty talk. I think the purpose was to wreck the Great Leap Forward of 1958. If we had not had this exaggeration wind, 1958 would have been an even more important year.

Dazhai started to develop fast in 1958. The increase in grain output was more than in any previous year. From the fall of 1957 we worked hard right through the winter and into the spring of 1958. There really was a big leap. We worked in the fields until 12 or 1 o'clock at night. And we worked all day too. We rebuilt more land in 1958 than in any other year. Throughout

the county people did the same. Also, the weather was good that year. So it was the bad exaggeration wind and the blind directives that damaged the Great Leap Forward. If it hadn't been for this wrecking, 1958 would have set a solid basis for further improvement. Wrecking undermined the Great Leap and added difficulties to the series of natural disasters that followed in 1959, 1960, and 1961.

This wrecking came from above, not from below. People from above came down to more advanced brigades fanning up the wind, pushing for more and more exaggeration. Those people in the brigades who were slavish followed their lead and did whatever they were told to do.

Take the brigade that was given the title of "Oat King." My sister lives there. I asked her whether they really harvested 3,800 catties per mu. [One catty = 1.1 pounds.] She said, "No, not even 380." She said that a piece of land that had belonged to her before the cooperative was formed, the best land near the river, had yielded only 200 catties. If you could get 240 catties of oats per mu, that would be good. But some people from above blew the exaggeration wind all summer. They reported how much land had produced how much, adding more each time, each trying to outdo the other, all exaggerating shamelessly. First, they demanded that the land produce 5,000 catties per mu. When the commune members said they couldn't do this, they finally compromised on 3,800!

Another method was for certain provincial cadres to find an advanced place, then publish false production figures in the paper. Then people would say, "If others can do it, why can't we?" They built *yue jin ma* (Great Leap Horses) - replicas of flying horses made out of bundles of millet or wheat - bigger and bigger, until they were so large they couldn't even be pulled in a cart. And these were supposed to represent the horse in the lead.

If this didn't come from above, where did it come from? It damaged the enthusiasm of the people and brought great harm to the national economy. All the grain they reported did not exist - empty figures. The whole state plan got messed up. Factories and other units depended on real grain for their production, not just figures on paper. Why in the end did the higher cadres conduct a check-up in 1959? Because they came down to look at grain that wasn't there. Then they had to look into the matter. Where had all the grain gone?

People who had pushed exaggeration figures damaged the planning of the whole national economy. They advocated close planting of rice and reported close planting that was so thick that a person could walk

on top of the rice growing in the field and not sink in. They said there were wheat fields so thick that an egg placed on the heads of the wheat would not drop through to the ground. Propaganda of this kind cannot come from down below. The people below are peasants. They know reality. How could they have said things like this? Only bureaucrats behind closed doors can say things like this. The practical people down below would never think up such things, or dare to say them. What happened to us in Dazhai also shows that this came from above. We harvested 520 catties per mu but they tried to make us change the figure to 2,000. They put pressure on us to adopt the change. All these examples show that the exaggeration wind came from above. The masses down below were opposed to it. But those above were so bureaucratic that they didn't care and only came down to find out the truth when grain deliveries fell short. What did they accomplish by all this? Only harm, no advantage at all.

Blind Directives

Hinton: Was there struggle over this up above?

Chen: I couldn't take part. I don't know.

But I guess there must have been. The cadres talked about it among themselves but said, "Don't tell the leadership." Some people were afraid of losing their positions. They didn't dare stick up for what was right, didn't dare struggle against these wrong things. In the meantime these blind directives kept flooding down. "Spread advanced experience! Sow 500 catties per mu!" People below opposed this. Then they were criticized from above. They were told not to be so conservative. "To plant 500 catties of seed per mu is a good thing. If you plant 500 catties of seeds and harvest in return only three catties for each one planted, you'll still reap 1,500 catties per mu."

When this wind blew so hard, it swayed us a little too. We didn't completely resist it. We were criticized too much. We had to do something. So we tried this kind of planting on a fifth of a mu. With our old seed drill, we couldn't even get 200 catties per mu onto the land, not to mention 500. So we just plowed the land and poured seeds all over it as if we were using an open field as a storage bin. We planted another tenth of a mu by scattering wheat on the soft ploughed ground in a thick layer. This amounted to 200 catties per mu. The harvest we got from this was 90 catties per mu. We

thought this was a lot of crap to begin with, but now, after trying it out with less than half of their 500 catties we were more convinced than ever that these people knew nothing about agriculture, to say the least.

But to see it in this simple way was to give them the benefit of the doubt. Looking at it from a different angle, one had to ask if they were all really so stupid. Weren't there some who deliberately set out to wreck?

From all these ridiculous examples I have mentioned here, you can see that blind directives were coming down in our county at that time.

In 1966 the same sort of thing happened again. Once when I came back from a long high-level meeting, a new experience in making dams in gullies was being spread in our county. We used to build the dams by piling up the rocks as they came, fitting them together according to their natural shapes. We built the dams themselves in the shape of an arch because after our dams were torn out three times by torrential rains we finally summarized our experiences and found that by building them arched toward the mountain, they held. They have never been torn out since. But now the county leaders were spreading a new experience. They said our dams looked too

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sloppy. They were getting everyone to make straight dams. They put up a string as though they were building the foundation of a house. Then they got stonemasons to cut the stones square. They were spreading this throughout the whole county. I talked to the Party vice-secretary. I pounded the table and said it was nonsense.

The Dajin Brigade of Jiedu Commune made all their dams according to this "experience." They wanted me to come and give them some advice. They could produce only two or three rocks per person per day when they cut them square like that. The Jing Gou Brigade next door to Dazhai tore down seven arched dams they had made and replaced them all with straight dams made with square rocks. One day when I was out fixing terraces below the animal farm, the brigade leader from Jing Gou came to find me. He is an old *zhanyou* (comrade in struggle) of mine and we are also relatives in that one's daughter is married to the other's son. Among all the brigade leaders he had always been the best at studying the experience of Dazhai. That day he told me that on orders from the county his people had already torn down the seven arched dams and replaced them with straight dams of cut stone.

I was so angry that I said, "From now on don't come here anymore! We are no longer relatives!"

I couldn't interfere with county or commune directives, but I could oppose what the Jing Gou Brigade did because he and I were relatives. An article in the paper had mentioned us as two brothers on Tiger Head Mountain who worked and advanced together. But he had gone and listened to them and had taken the wrong track. Since then he hasn't dared come and see me any more.

When the people are still living in mud houses and caves, how can you build in the fields with rocks as though you were building houses? Isn't this exactly the opposite of *duo, kuai, hao, sheng* (more, better, faster, and more economical - the call put forward by Chairman Mao in 1955 as a guideline for socialist construction)?

Better and Faster, or Worse and Slower?

So you can see how serious it is when county leaders issue blind directives and make blind decisions. They go out and find some backward brigade that has done some wrong thing, and then they try to spread that experience around and get everyone to copy it, including the advanced brigades.

So I pounded the table. I quarreled. I said, "You people are too bureaucratic." But why did I dare pound the table in 1966 when I didn't dare do it before? In 1956

and 1959 I only voiced opinions and criticized those crazy things and caught all sorts of hell in return, had all sorts of hats [labels] put on my head just because I dared to criticize. But now I dared pound the table.

I dared pound the table because the Cultural Revolution had started. The people in Peking had already started to rebel. It was just at that time that some cadres came to Dazhai and ordered all our dams torn down and rebuilt according to the new "experience." Song Li-ying [vice-secretary of the Party branch] was there. But I was not at home. She said they must wait for me to come back before doing such a thing. Our way is much better. Uneven rocks stick together. We can fix a whole gully in one winter. Doing it their way would take ten years!

The film on Dazhai [a documentary on growing corn and building up "sponge" land] was made in 1965. It shows that we changed to arched dams because we failed three times with straight dams. Then why, even after that, after there is a successful experience, why do these people go outside our county and look for another experience and then start spreading this experience of building with cut stone? They say straight dams are easier to build. At the very least these people are giving blind directives. More than that, they are attacking Dazhai. Chairman Mao said to study Dazhai, so they oppose it. The situation developed to such an extent that if we hadn't rebelled and seized power, there is no telling what might have happened.

I quarreled with the county vice-secretary. "You are college graduates. Yet you know nothing. How can you lead agriculture?" Of course, now college graduates go down to practice. They learn a lot and they know a lot. Before the Cultural Revolution people were resisting down below, but without power how could they succeed? Why was it that though Dazhai existed, the experience of Dazhai could not be spread in the county? It was because we had no political power. Things were really in a mess. Some lower cadres just listened to the upper cadres and carried out whatever they said, right or wrong. But the Dazhai Brigade struggled all the time against wrong directives. If an order is not in accord with reality, then we oppose it.

So in every political movement we always became the target of attack. Wherever there were bureaucrats, they supported each other in struggle against us. They called us anti-Party elements. When a new movement came along, they said, "Where are you going to escape to this time?" So we fought back. We fought back in ordinary times and we fought back when movements came. We weren't soft. We dared fight back even when

a movement came and these people concentrated on us!

But there must be a principle in this struggle. You must struggle on the basis of reason. Stick to the truth. This is very important. The principle on which you base your struggle is very important. For instance, during the Great Leap, what did striving for more, better, faster, and more economical results mean? We had a general idea of what it meant and we judged whether a cadre's way of doing things was correct or not on the basis of this understanding. If there is a more productive, better, faster, and more economical way of doing things, then of course there is a less productive, worse, slower, wasteful way, a way in opposition to Mao's call. Practice proves which one you have chosen. It has to be one way or the other.

Practice proved that what some were doing was less, worse, slower, and more wasteful! What basis did I stand on when I opposed those county directives? The basis of practice, of experience. We study problems all the time according to this. But some of the people who were up above were not like this. What did they do? They sent orders down from level to level. Once sent, the orders must be followed. Whoever didn't listen was a counter-revolutionary. Our experience tells us that if power is held by bureaucrats and revisionists we will certainly catch hell.

Before the Cultural Revolution some newspaper reporters and some agricultural experts worked against us - people from those two groups especially. If I were to tell you all the tales about them it would take half a year. Here are just a few examples.

In 1965 some reporters wrote articles about us. Then they came back and said, "We made you famous by writing about you. You should thank us." But we didn't agree. "All the achievements come from the labor of the people," we said. "Once they work hard and accomplish something, it doesn't matter if you write about it or not." But these reporters were not happy. If you criticized them, they complained to higher levels, saying, "Dazhai people get more arrogant all the time!"

In 1965, 120 newspaper reporters came. They lived right here. Premier Chou En-lai came to visit us. The reporters who were there at the time all lined up to shake hands with the Premier. They lined up together with the people of Dazhai whose hands are hard like files. When the Premier shook hands he found all those soft pale hands with watches at the wrist. Then he looked around and counted at least 60 reporters. He ordered them all to go. But after the Premier left they came back.

They all wanted me to talk personally with them. If I wouldn't talk, they'd tell on

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me. They'd complain that I was arrogant. They'd say, "The people of the district level can't even speak with him." There were people shooting movie film, artists painting - everyone was out to get stories. If it hadn't been for the Cultural Revolution, the reporters alone would have been enough to wreck Dazhai!

Next we had to cope with all those experts who find fault. They said we were not polite. They said we didn't believe in scientific methods. One agricultural expert, a corn specialist, came to find out about close planting - how many stalks did we plant per mu? I took him to the fields to show him. He asked, "How many are there in this field?" I said, "1,800." He took out a ruler, measured the distance between the plants in the row and the distance between the rows, and said, "No, you have 1,600." He said it as if I had deliberately told a lie. So I said, "Whatever you say. Sixteen hundred, if that's what you say." I was angry and walked off. Then he felt that maybe he was wrong. So he started measuring again. From far away he called out, "Old Chen - it's still 1,600."

Actually he measured distances in the center of the field only. He didn't measure anything at the edges. But we plant corn a little thinner at the center than at the edges in order to leave more space for air to circulate. At the edges the plants are closer. If you don't investigate the whole situation, if you just measure in the middle, how can you get the right figure? But I was also wrong because I should have had the patience to explain all this. He on his part showed no feeling for working people. He just thought he was smarter than anyone. That's what made me angry.

When we decided to dig up hills and change the course of rivers we went to the experts and asked for drawings. But the drawings scared us all. We couldn't use them.

"You are a stumbling block to this plan of ours," I said to the experts. "We'll do without you. All you have is a notebook in your hands and a tape in your pocket."

If you have a chance you should talk to the Communist Party secretary of Hongshui Commune. He was so intimidated by the experts that he didn't move to reclaim any land for two years. Then he saw that people on all sides had already started construction, so he finally began to move too. He has some very lively things to say on this subject.

Poor Peasants Put Their Heads Together

The whole work of rearranging the mountains and rivers really depends on the poor peasants putting their heads together. Experts divorced from practice who hadn't

made proper investigations didn't contribute much. The labor days we actually expended were 90 percent fewer than the experts estimated. All the facts are there.

We created many new things.

In reclaiming land in the river bed, the usual method is to build dikes on both sides and let the river run through the middle. This was the kind of great engineering work that one designer proposed. All he could think of was this. But the people created one dike that pushed the river to one side. The mountain range on that side served as the other dike. When we are dealing with a small stream we just cover it over. We let the water run through a large culvert and convert the area on top into good land. This is really economical. We create new land and it is secure. But the engineers never dreamed of anything like this. They never heard of any such thing before, so it never entered their heads.

In one place the people have cut a tunnel through a cliff to let the river run through and have reclaimed the whole loop of the old river bed as productive land.

"Did you think of this?" I asked some experts.

"No."

"See, I told you your theory alone is not good enough."

At Xigubi they pumped water into a holding basin on top of the ridge and used it to wash the earth out of the cut in the mountain they were digging. The experts hadn't thought of this and said it would take the people of the brigade seven years to cut through. At first the people worked day and night at the worksite and wore themselves out. All this hard work made them think: "How come the mountains are all cut open? If water can cut canyons like that, why can't we use water to do the job?"

So they thought of pumping water to the top of the ridge and letting it flush the earth away. Through hard work they created a method, an experience that fit their conditions. Now the cut is almost finished.

Big Zhai into Small Zhai

Another example. You've seen the film on Dazhai. The old method was to dig up the corn stubble and burn it in the spring before the land was plowed. But we left the stubble in the land to become fertilizer. We did it for several years. Some experts were against this. They said that the roots of the corn have all sorts of bugs on them. "You don't believe in science," they said. "All sorts of harmful pests are stored in the roots, in the corn stubble. Your land is a storehouse for pests." But we had used this method for such a long time. If it really was that bad, how could our production be that good?

They criticized us severely, but later it was proved that there are pests in the stalks but not in the roots. Why not in the roots? Because the land freezes two or three feet deep and the roots as well. Where the stalks are piled up, on the other hand, the pests survive because there is warmth in the piles.

These people didn't go deeply enough into real conditions here. We argued with

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them for years, then finally proved that leaving the stubble caused no trouble at all, in fact it increased the fertility of the land. When we showed this experience in the film, they were still opposed. They didn't want this made public. They still said the roots harbored pests. We said, "We've done it for over ten years. It helps make the sponge-like soil of Dazhai fields."

Now this experience has spread to other

places. It would be too bad to burn all the stalks – a waste of good fertilizer. But some experts think they have an education, they are university graduates, they have theory. They think they know everything and we who have no formal education know nothing. So if we disobey them, they don't like us. But actually there are many things they don't understand as deeply as we who have so much practice, practice

in the fields. Our practice gives us a certain amount of truth. They tend to have a metaphysical approach. This is a struggle between two different world outlooks.

If things had gone on like this, with so many blind directives coming down, with the people unmobilized, and without a Cultural Revolution, Dazhai (Big Zhai) would have become Xiaozhai (Little Zhai).

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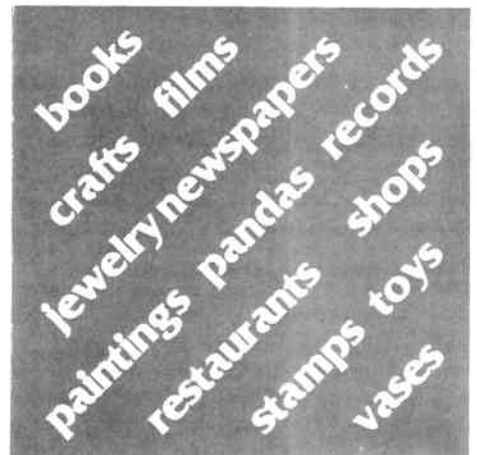
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Recipes from China's Kitchens

by **Barrie Chi**

Sunday at Grandma's

Through my husband, I am privileged to be part of a Peking family, able to spend many happy Sundays at Grandma's, all day from after breakfast until after dinner. It is a day of relaxation, talk, fun, and of course, food.

As soon as we arrive the first of many cups of tea is poured. The children get down to the serious activity of chasing each other around the courtyard. Neither English nor Chinese is spoken, just joyful yelps are heard. If I am lucky I am allowed to help make the *jiao zi* (fried pork dumplings). All my culinary skills vanish as I try to shape and stuff the dumplings while attempting to pick up threads of the conversation at the same time. All are jolly and joke about whose dumplings will break open first.

When I first visited the family in 1971 all the cooking was done on a coal stove. Now gas has been installed and life is easier.

About noon the Sunday dinner begins. The cousins, aunts, and uncles pull up stools to the round wooden table in one of the rooms that rings the courtyard. In addition to the *jiao zi* there are usually three or four stir-fry dishes utilizing fresh vegetables, a stewed meat, and soup. For dessert there is fresh fruit. Sometimes uncle bikes to the store for a box full of *bing gurr* (ice pops) which are quickly devoured by the children and adults alike. There is very little home refrigeration in China, so frequent trips to the store are necessary. However, one does not have to comparison-shop because the prices are uniform. What a joy not to have to check if supermarket A is selling chickens for 10 cents a pound less than supermarket B!

Midway through the afternoon we all take a *xiuxi*, a little rest. That enables

everyone to have a light dinner and then toddle on home. A favorite dish at Grandma's is fried mutton. There are national-minority restaurants in Peking which serve only mutton. However, lean lamb may be substituted.

Grandma Chi's Fried Mutton (or Lamb)

Serves 4 to 6

- ½ lb. mutton filet or lean lamb, cut into tiny thin slices
- 1 Tbs. Hoisin sauce
- 3 Tbs. soy sauce
- 1 Tbs. sherry



The art of making *jiao zi*.
(Photos: E. Chi)

- 1 tsp. dark soy sauce
- 1 Tbs. vinegar
- 4 Tbs. sugar
- ½ tsp. minced ginger
- 6 tsp. cornstarch
- 3 tsp. peanut oil
- peanut oil for deep frying

Cut meat into tiny thin slices.

Mix 2 tsp. cornstarch in ½ tsp. water, add meat and Hoisin sauce, and mix well.

Put 4 tsp. cornstarch in 4 Tbs. water, add ginger, vinegar, and wine. Mix thoroughly.

In a wok, bring oil for deep frying to a high temperature and deep-fry the meat for 15-20 seconds. Remove the meat and discard the oil.

Return wok to fire with meat and the sauce. Stir-fry approximately two minutes.

Meatballs with Vermicelli Soup

Serves 4 to 6

- ½ lb. ground pork
- 1 oz. vermicelli
- 1 tsp. soy sauce
- 1 qt. chicken broth (make your own or use College Inn)
- 1 medium-size onion, sliced
- ½ tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. cornstarch mixed with 2 Tbs. water

Mix meat with cornstarch-and-water mixture, and form into small meatballs. Wash vermicelli and drain.

Put broth into a large pot with vermicelli. Bring to a boil and keep on low boil for 4 minutes.

Put meatballs in the soup and slow boil for another 3 minutes.

Add soy sauce and sliced onions to soup and boil slowly for a few minutes until piping hot.

BARRIE CHI is a lecturer-demonstrator on Chinese cooking who studied here and in new China.



In the courtyard after lunch.



Grandma with a new addition to the family.



Chinese and American cousins communicate with gestures and giggles over lunch.

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Kathleen Chamberlain, Publisher

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Goal: To build active and lasting friendship based on mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of China

Toward that end we urge the establishment of full diplomatic, trade, and cultural relations between the two governments according to the principles agreed upon in the joint U.S.-China communique of February 28, 1972, and that U.S. foreign policy with respect to China be guided by these same principles: respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity; non-aggression; non-interference in the internal affairs of other states; equality and mutual benefit; and peaceful coexistence.

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Our educational activities include production and distribution of literature, films, and photo exhibits; sponsoring speakers and study classes; speaking out against distortions and misconceptions about the People's Republic of China; publishing newsletters and pamphlets; promoting the exchange of visitors as well as technical, cultural, and social experiences.

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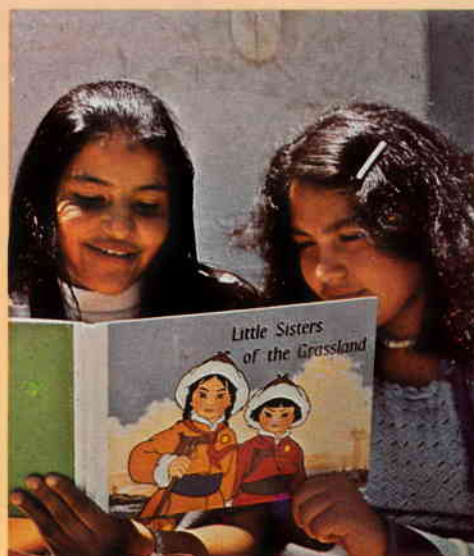
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