

CHINESE LITERATURE



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STORIES

Li Yung-sheng

Old Martinet

I am a lorry driver. After last Spring Festival the leadership of our transport company decided to send me to Hsinfengling Iron Mine to join in the campaign for more ore. As soon as the order came I went to the office to see about my transfer. But the office head said that there was no hurry, that I could wait till my kiddy who was down with flu recovered. To set my mind at rest, he rang up the mine saying that I might be a couple of days late. I was grateful for his concern, but when I thought of the whole nation's support for the campaign how could I stay idly at home? So after settling my family affairs I took up my bedding-roll and set off.

It is much colder in the mountains than in the city. I could feel this even with my top-boots on. As the train rolled along I told myself that I should have worn more clothes.

When I got off the train and inquired the way to Hsinfengling, I was told that I still had twenty *li* to go. How could I carry my luggage all that way?

Yu Chou Hung, Peking (37), China
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Just at that moment along came a "Liberation" tipper, the model used at the mines. I waved my hand and the lorry came to a stop. Running over, I asked for a lift.

The driver opened the window and cried in a ringing voice, "This your first trip to the mine? Get on."

Gladly I threw my luggage on to the back then went round to the other side of the cabin. Not that I was ignorant of the regulation that the cabin can seat only two, the driver and his assistant; but since the weather was so cold and the front seat was so roomy, it seemed to me they could easily fit me in. The man sitting next to the driver was moving over when the latter rapped out: "No more than two are allowed in the cabin, comrade."

I looked up and our eyes met. He seemed a man of nearly fifty. His black overcoat was stamped with the name Hsinfengling Iron Mine. Strong and massive, he had a square face and a grave expression. His most prominent feature, however, was a long scar at the tip of his right eyebrow.

Paying little attention to his grave look, I asked, "It's so cold, mate, won't you fit me in?"

"Comrade, this is a regulation," he cut me short.

I had nothing more to say. This rebuff had ended the exhilaration I had felt on getting off the train. I climbed up the tipper, saying to myself: "I know the regulation all right, but you ought to take the weather into account. Why be so inflexible?"

Old Man Heaven seemed to have it in for me too. A strong northwest wind from the mountains set me shivering. I pulled my padded jacket closely round me. Then, abruptly, something black was flung at me from the cabin, and a voice boomed: "Put on that coat!" Before I could say anything, the door banged shut and the lorry started moving.

As I slipped on the coat I thought: "This fellow certainly does nothing by halves!"

On my arrival at the mine, the head of our drivers' team took me to the dormitory and told a fellow called Shao to take care of me.

Young Shao was about my age — in the late twenties. He was making a bed when we went in. At the sight of us he came forward

to take my luggage. "We weren't expecting you till the day after tomorrow," he said apologetically. "So your bed isn't ready yet."

"Leave it to me," I said.

As we made the bed together we chatted. "My name's Shao Teh-ming," he told me crisply. "Just call me Young Shao."

I smiled, then looked round the room.

"This is my bed," Young Shao went on. "That one over there is Old Martinet's. . . . And this is the banner our squad has won two years running. We're a Red Banner unit, you know. The other banner belongs to Old Martinet. See what's written on it: Yen Yung-cheng — Red Standard-bearer."

"Old Martinet? Who's he?" I asked.

"My mistake! I thought you knew him. Old Martinet is our squad leader's nickname. Not many people in our mine know his real name, but everybody knows Old Martinet."

Young Shao's lively talk and sense of humour soon made me feel at home. Soon we were chatting away like old friends who had not seen each other for years.

I was wondering what our squad leader was like and why he had such a nickname when Young Shao, as if reading my thoughts, added: "He's really very decent, full of drive. It warms your heart just to be with him. He's not much of a talker, but still waters run deep. If any of us has some difficulty or ideological problem, you can be sure that he knows all about it. As a driver and mechanic, he's first-rate. He can spot whatever's wrong with a truck just from hearing it pass by. And he's always right! If he weren't so capable, people wouldn't respect him so much, especially when he's so strict with us all."

This description of our squad leader delighted me, giving me a mental picture of a kind-hearted veteran worker beaming with smiles.

"When he heard of your coming," went on Young Shao, pointing at the mat on my bed, "he was afraid that the bedding you'd bring along might not be thick enough, that you might find it difficult to adjust to life in the mountains. So these last few days right after work he went to the nearby fields to pick up some rice stalks, then braided them, after washing, into a mat for you."

Unwittingly my hand reached for the mat and I felt as if I were touching an old worker's warm heart. What a good squad leader! I could hardly wait to see him. But he did not appear, not even after my bed had been made.

Young Shao and I then tidied up the whole room. Still there was no sign of our squad leader.

"Most probably he's overhauling his lorry. That's his habit," said Young Shao. "Let's go and have our meal first."

I opened the door and almost bumped into a man who was entering in a hurry. He had a look at me and I at him. What I saw was a man in a black overcoat, panting for breath. His overalls and face were grimed with grease, and he had a long scar above his right eyebrow. I was stunned. It was the driver who had given me a lift.

As we scrutinized each other, Young Shao said, "Old Martinet, this is our new driver Lu."

"Oh, it's you! We've been expecting you," he said, opening the door a little wider for me.

"This is our squad leader — Old Martinet," Young Shao told me.

I nodded and held out my hand, but the man waved his gloved hand, oily and dirty, saying, "You two go and eat first. We'll have a talk later." Then he stepped quickly into the room. I had nothing more to say, so I followed Young Shao to the mess hall.

On the way my mate asked me: "It seems you've met him before, eh?"

I told him about the lift that afternoon, concluding with the comment: "He's too strict."

"You're new here, so you don't understand him yet," said Young Shao. "Our squad leader's most particular over work." Then he told me how Yen had come by his nickname.

Two years before, Young Shao was apprenticed to Master Yen as his assistant driver. One day when the two of them were on their way to fetch steel from a distant rolling mill it started snowing hard. The strong wind kept swirling snow flakes at the lorry. . . . On their

way home, Master Yen stopped at the railway station to meet somebody, leaving his assistant in the lorry. In no time he came back with a woman of about forty. Because of the howling wind Young Shao could not hear what they were saying to each other. But he thought: on such a snowy day if that woman sits at the back she will get frozen. So he poked his head out and called, "Let her sit inside."

"She'll be all right behind," said Yen, helping the woman up.

When they returned to the depot, the other drivers crowded round the lorry to ask, "Where is your wife, Old Yen?"

Yen opened the door and leaned out. "She's at the back."

Only then did Young Shao realize who the visitor was. He looked up and saw that she was white all over.

Dismounting, Mrs. Yen greeted everyone with a smile.

"Old Yen's really smart. He's brought home a whitehaired fairy!" someone quipped.

This set everyone laughing except Young Shao who blamed his master for not having told him the truth.

"I didn't want to leave her out in the cold, but the cabin can't take more than two," Yen explained.

"But this was a special case. She could have sat with us," Young Shao protested. "Why take that regulation so seriously?"

"Which is more important? A wife or safety regulations?" Yen replied.

Hearing this, Mrs. Yen spun round and chuckled, saying, "That's my old man for you! An old martinet, that's what he is."

The crowd again burst into laughter. Since then the nickname had spread throughout the mine.

Young Shao acted out this story as he told it. And when he finished I could not help laughing, too. "So it was his wife who gave him that name!" I mused.

The following day Old Martinet told me to go out with him so as to get to know the roads around. I waited for him in the driver's cabin while he went from one lorry to another to watch each start.

Apparently it was his practice to see the whole squad off before setting out himself.

Abruptly he brandished his big gloved hand at one of the men and bellowed, "Do you want to get killed? Look, where are you sitting? Is it child's play driving through the mountains?"

The man who was sitting on the side of the lorry stuck his tongue out and slid down to sit on the floor. I felt sorry for him, getting such a dressing-down.

Since this was my first drive with our squad leader, it seemed a good chance to learn more about the mine. "Master Yen, how many lorries does our mine have?" I began, not yet daring to address him as Old Martinet.

He ignored my question, his eyes fixed on the road. I doubted whether he had heard me.

As our lorry rolled along the mountain highway, rows of houses, trees, factories and hilltops swept past. I was so elated that I asked again: "Squad leader, what does the mining area look like?"

"If you've anything to say, wait till we've stopped!" His ringing voice was as sharp as when he had refused me a seat in the cabin. He was concentrating on driving, and from that minute on he ignored me altogether. I said to myself, "He's really a stickler for rules. I'd better keep my mouth shut." In a constrained silence we drove on till we reached the mining area.

The mining area was a grand sight. Roads wound through mountains which loomed, range on range, to the sky. Excavations on the summits of the mountains made them appear from a distance like terraced fields. The roar of explosives and machines and the hooting of lorries interwove into a melody which echoed and resounded over the valleys. The battle for ores was in full swing. Entranced by this scene, I did not even notice when our lorry came to a stop. I was aroused by the voice of our squad leader: "Young Lu, with cliffs and chasms to guard against all day we can't talk while driving, not until we get off."

He spoke emphatically, but I saw no need for absolute silence while driving. Why sit at the wheel like dummies? Still, since he had invoked the regulations, all I could do was nod unwillingly.

Then he told me to take a look round for myself. While I was dismounting he further advised me: "Look out, don't bump into anything."

I roamed around, watching the lorries shuttle swiftly back and forth, carrying off the ore, carting off rocks. . . . My hands itched to be holding a steering-wheel. I longed to do my bit in this tremendous campaign.

While I was looking around Young Shao drove up in a brand-new Shanghai-made truck. He tooted to attract my attention and stopped. I hurried forward and mounted the footboard. Peering through the window I had a good look at the dashboard. "Tiptop!" I exclaimed.

Young Shao winked at me knowingly and moved aside. "Come on! Try it out."

Itching to drive, I opened the door and got into the driver's seat. But before I could put in the gear, a bellow from behind made me start. "Get out of there, Young Lu!"

I turned and saw our squad leader alongside me in his lorry. His face was grave, his dilated eyes were stern and that scar of his was throbbing. He stretched out his big oily gloved hand as if to yank me out. My heart thumped, my cheeks burned in indescribable embarrassment.

Inwardly I fumed: "What bad luck to be working under this Old Martinet. . . ."

At lunch time I saw our squad leader again. As if nothing had happened, he asked, "Young Lu, have you got meal tickets?"

"Yes," I answered curtly without meeting his eyes and went straight into the mess hall.

Although our squad leader was so inflexible, everyone seemed glad to see him. He was greeted on all sides the minute he entered the hall.

"Old Martinet! Come and join us when you've bought your meal," someone shouted.

"Old Martinet! Our electric-shovel squad is going to compete with your Red Banner squad. Come and give us some advice," cried a plump youngster from one corner.

"Your teeth aren't too good, Old Martinet. How about six ounces of noodles in soup?" asked the cook who was taking the lunch box from our squad leader. I couldn't but be impressed by the fact that even the cooks knew him so well and showed such concern for him.

After buying my meal I looked round for Young Shao. I spotted him in a corner getting a talking-to from our squad leader, his lunch box in his hand. Although Old Martinet was trying to keep his voice down, I could hear every word he said. "A lorry is worth tens of thousands of yuan, you know that very well. And, quite apart from the money, how can you risk an accident that would hold up our drive to mine more ore?"

Young Shao lowered his head and said nothing.

"We should have at heart the safety of our class brothers as well as state property," continued our squad leader. "No one may drive before he knows the surroundings. You know that regulation, don't you?"

I didn't stop to hear more but walked away, feeling very bad because Young Shao was receiving this dressing down on my account.

When the day's shift was over I went back to my dormitory. Upon entering I stepped on something soft. It was a pair of grease-stained gloves with holes worn in the patches already on them. I knew without having to ask that they belonged to our squad leader. "He should get himself a new pair," I thought as I kicked them outside the door. Then I lay on my bed with my hands beneath my head to think over all the happenings of the day.

"Who's done this?" came the voice of Young Shao through the window. "Who dare throw away Old Martinet's gloves!"

Aware that I had blundered again, I sat up just as Young Shao came in with a package under one arm and the shabby gloves in his hand.

"According to regulations, he should replace those with new ones," I said quickly.

"Our squad leader doesn't pay too much attention to regulations like that. He says we should save the state all unnecessary expense,

so he won't ask for replacements unless absolutely essential. If you don't believe me, wait and see for yourself."

Young Shao put the parcel on my bed and said, "Here are overalls our squad leader got for you. Try them on. I bet they'll fit you nicely. There's a pair of shoes too."

I stood up and apologized to him first for what had happened at lunch.

"That's no way to talk," said Young Shao. "Old Martinet was right to tell me off. I don't pay enough attention to regulations and, although you're new here, I didn't tell you about them. All this shows that since our squad was cited as a Red Banner unit I've grown swell-headed."

Young Shao insisted on my trying on the overalls and shoes. I did so, and found them both a perfect fit. "How extraordinary!" I exclaimed. "How did our squad leader know my size?"

"He has a little notebook in which he puts down everything that concerns our squad and our squad members. He knows not only the size shoe you take but exactly how old your child is—a little over one year, eh?"

I had to revise my ideas about our squad leader.

It was really a headache to me — I had just settled down and worked steadily for a few days, when I had bad news from home.

One day while I was loading ore in the mountains, Young Shao handed me a letter from my wife. The letter said that our little boy's flu had developed into pneumonia and he was now in hospital. She wanted me to go home. If I were too busy, I should send some money.

That put me in a dilemma. Production was on the upswing in the mine, with everybody going all out to get more ore; how could I leave at such a crucial moment? I asked Young Shao whether he had any money at hand. His reply was negative — he had banked it all. He asked me what I needed money for, but I did not tell him, not wanting people to know about my personal problems. It was only three days to pay day. I decided to pretend as if nothing had happened.

Before the shift the following day, our squad held its regular meeting and Old Martinet talked to us about safety first. We presumed that he had noticed some signs of potential danger, otherwise why this insistence on safety precautions? He warned us that the more rushed we were for time, the more strictly the regulations should be observed, and the better should be the care taken of our transport. No truck should be taken out if something was wrong with it. His talk suddenly reminded me that I had forgotten to overhaul my engine which had been back-firing the day before. This made me nervous. I tapped myself on the head, expecting a reprimand for my negligence.

But strange to say, when next I started the motor no sound came from the exhaust. I put this down to the fact that the engine was cool and decided to make a check after reaching the mountain-top.

The whole day passed without any back-firing. Had somebody fixed it for me? Impossible. I had told nobody about the trouble.

After supper, Old Martinet sent for me. My heart began thumping. I guessed I was in for it now. But the first question he asked me was: "Young Lu, has anything happened at home to worry you?"

I was stunned — how did he know? Still, preferring to keep my troubles to myself, I stammered out, "No, . . . nothing."

"I wanted to ask you yesterday. But you were already asleep by the time I finished overhauling the truck."

"How could he have found out yesterday?" I wondered. "Impossible!"

"If you've any trouble, say so. I haven't had much schooling and am not much good at solving ideological problems. But if a driver has a weight on his mind, he's more liable to have accidents."

This was all Old Martinet said, but his obvious sincerity warmed my heart. I was wondering how to reply when Young Shao dashed in. "Young Lu, quick. A long-distance call for you."

I braced myself — was the little chap's illness worse?

As I ran out I was thinking: "I can't hide it now, but I've lied to our squad leader. . . . Well, it's no use worrying. Hope nothing serious has happened at home."



At headquarters I picked up the telephone and shouted, "Hullo, hullo... yes, speaking..."

"Little Tung's taken a turn for the better," came my wife's voice. "No fever now. You were certainly prompt in sending me that twenty yuan. Your mate says you're terribly busy at the mine. Well, you don't have to worry about things at home..."

Twenty yuan? Strange! I'd sent no money home, and in fact this had been preying on my mind. The questions I put to my wife only confused her. Who had sent the money anyway? Putting down the receiver I resolved to find out.

When I returned to my dormitory Young Shao was alone there reading. From him I learned that our squad leader was at a Party meeting. As soon as I told Young Shao about the money mystery, he put down the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* he was reading and declared that Old Martinet must be behind this, adding that he must have sent the twenty yuan by one of our long-distance trucks because he had done things like this several times before.

I objected that I had told no one about my problem.

"Take it from me," said Young Shao mysteriously, "that's how it must have happened. Yesterday as soon as you got back and stopped your engine, Old Martinet said to me, 'Something's wrong with Young Lu's lorry.' When he finished cleaning his own lorry, he looked through his little notebook and said to me, 'Young Lu must have had bad news from home otherwise he wouldn't be in such a flap as to forget to overhaul his engine.' I told him you'd received a letter that day and asked me to lend you some money. He slapped his hip at that and said, 'I see. I'm afraid his child may have got worse.' When I asked him what he meant, he said he knew your little boy was ill."

In addition, Young Shao told me that Old Martinet had spent the whole evening working on my lorry, refusing his offer of help.

I remembered then that late the previous night Old Martinet had tiptoed into our room and stood by my bed for quite a while before tucking my quilt closer round me and turning in himself. My blood started racing. What a fine squad leader! He had given all of himself to the building of the mining district. Not only was he

a good driver and mechanic, he was able to detect our mental problems from the engine trouble we had — and all this so accurately and so quickly! Besides, he helped solve our difficult family problems behind our backs.

No longer able to hold back my feelings, I poured them out to Young Shao, telling him the way I had felt about our squad leader at the start.

My confession nearly made Young Shao split his sides with laughter. "You couldn't be more wrong!" he chortled. "Old Martinet isn't that sort of person at all." He was about to elucidate when we heard a knock at the door.

"Is Old Martinet in?" someone asked.

"Come in, Fatty!" Young Shao called.

The visitor was the plump youngster who had greeted our squad leader at lunch.

Once inside the room he asked, "Young Shao, can Old Martinet come to our squad tomorrow to speak about his bitter past?"

"Tomorrow? Why at such short notice? You should give him time to prepare."

"I spoke to him about it at lunch," Fatty retorted. "Besides, he doesn't need any preparation — he can just tell us the story of his scar."

The story of his scar? I was intrigued by this. After Fatty left I asked Young Shao to tell me about it. His face clouding, he complied.

... Old Martinet's parents died quite early. He found a job driving a truck for a capitalist. Those capitalists treated their employees like dirt. One rainy day the boss ordered Yen to deliver an urgent consignment. To this Yen replied, "The windscreen wiper on the truck's out of order. I'll have to replace it first." The boss glared at him and forced him to start right away.

The rain poured down more and more heavily as Yen drove on through the mountains. He had to operate the wiper with one hand while he used the other to steer. At a cork-screw bend the truck skidded towards the cliff edge. By slewing the wheel round and slowing down he managed to avoid crashing over the cliff. In so doing he scraped the mudguard against a big tree, however.

When he returned with a damaged mudguard the boss bawled at him, "Dolt! Even if you sold yourself, you wouldn't be able to pay for the repair." He struck at him savagely with his walking-stick. Too late Yen dodged — the blow caught him above his right eyebrow. With blood streaming down his cheek, he fainted in the street beside the truck.

His eldest child, who was begging, came by just then. When he saw his father lying in a pool of blood, he threw himself on him and shook him frantically. The street was a scene of desolation, with the sound of sobbing mingling with the pelting rain. After a while Yen came to and, struggling to his feet, saw his son weeping beside him. He waved his big hand, stained with mud and blood, to stop the child from crying. "Stop bawling!" he said. "Think you can soften the bosses' hearts with tears? We'll get our own back later. Come on. I'm quitting."

.....

As I listened I clenched my fist, crying shame on myself: "What a fool I am, what a fool! My way of looking at things is completely wrong."

"Every time Old Martinet speaks of the past, his heart nearly bursts with fury," Young Shao added. "He says that in the old society the bosses thought of nothing but profit; the death of a few workers meant nothing to them. But today we have stood up and become our own masters. We should have the safety of our class brothers at heart. We must also have socialist construction at heart. Another thing he often says is that revolutionary rules and regulations reflect Chairman Mao's revolutionary line, so we can never neglect them."

Young Shao's words threw my mind into such a tumult that I was unable to speak. I was raising my eyes to have a look at the red banners on the wall when our squad leader entered, all smiles.

"Still up?" he boomed.

I turned and gazed at him with deep emotion. In his weather-beaten face I read his hatred for the old society and his love for the new. His ardent eyes were shining. I felt as if I were seeing him

for the first time. Striding forward I gripped his powerful, calloused hands.

Old Martinet was ready to talk today. He said to me: "The Party has asked me to talk about my family history tomorrow. To be frank, recently I've fallen down on my job. I've been too stiff-necked again. I admit my fault to you and I mean to correct it."

"Squad leader. . . ." I began, but my heart was too full for words, and there was a lump in my throat. . . .

Illustrated by Liu Jen-ching



The Golden Road

It was already summer but the drizzle continued.

The expected arrival of a new Party secretary that day was causing a great commotion in the rice-transplanter experimental workshop of the agricultural machinery plant in the Spring Wind People's Commune. Even sixty-year-old Master Chuan-keng, not to mention the youngsters, wanted to meet him at the bus terminal.

"Clang! Clang! . . ." A girl, squatting in the middle of the floor, was hammering away at a sheet of metal.

"Why are you talking yourselves hoarse?" she shouted. "None of us should go!" This girl, named Wang Feng, was about twenty years old. Sent by her fellow villagers to work in the plant only two years before, she already wanted to have her say about everything. For instance, the idea of making a rice-transplanter was first put forward by her. Everybody had taken a fancy to this daring girl and called her "a group leader without an official title".

"What do you mean, Little Wang?" asked Master Chuan-keng, taking off his spectacles. "We've all been longing for the new Party secretary and now he's coming. What's wrong with going to meet him?"

Wang was about to answer when Liu Chao, a young man, called out, "Vice Party Secretary Keng Cheng went off on his bike early this morning to meet him at the bus terminal. Why shouldn't we go too?"

"He went there on behalf of us all, didn't he?" Wang argued. "Do you mean that the whole plant should turn out to welcome the new secretary?"

"But," said Liu, slapping his thigh, "we should see him ahead of Keng Cheng to tell him about our experiment. . . ."

"So you want to put in a good word for yourself," the girl said, cutting him short. Throwing her hammer down beside the sheet of metal, she stood up and came straight to the point. "You're afraid that our new Party secretary will be persuaded to side with Keng Cheng, eh?" Wang Feng's sharp remark caused a hush. She continued calmly, "Is it correct to try our hand at making a rice-transplanter? Is it a good thing? If not, let's stop our experiment right now. But if it *is* correct, why be in such a hurry to see the new Party secretary? How do you know, anyway, that he won't support us?"

"I've heard that they're from the same village and are relatives of some sort," Liu remarked with some hesitation.

This set Wang Feng into peals of laughter which confounded the young man. "I'll tell you what I've heard," she said seriously after glancing at the rest of them standing around. "Our new Party secretary's name is Keng Yung-hsing. He's a good cadre with a firm class stand. The brigade he led has become an advanced unit in our county's movement to learn from Tachai."*

Scratching his head, Liu smiled sheepishly. In fact, he only hoped like everybody else that the new Party secretary would support

*The Tachai Production Brigade in Hsiyang County, Shansi Province. In 1964, Chairman Mao issued the call, "In agriculture, learn from Tachai."



them, as had the commune Party leaders, so that they could speed up the production of a simple rice-transplanter.

"A good cadre will certainly have correct ideas. He'll back us even if we don't go to meet him," Wang Feng said. "If he opposes us, he won't be very welcome. So, we'll listen to him when he's correct and criticize him when he's wrong." Tossing back her thick glossy plaits the girl went on, "Wasn't our experimental group set up through struggle?"

That was true. It was Keng Cheng the vice Party secretary of the plant who was holding back the making of a trial rice-transplanter, although he was nominally leader of the experimental group. That was why the workers had often fallen out with him lately. Besides, he had taken on the extra task of processing some valves sent from Shanghai and tried to take man-power from the experimental group for this job. He had met with opposition.

While the others continued the discussion Wang resumed her work. Having prepared her drill, she turned to take a heavy steel box from a corner. A man who had slipped unnoticed into the workshop helped her lift the steel box on to the drilling-machine bench. He was so deft and nimble that Wang Feng in her surprise forgot even to thank him. The man was in his fifties. His face was wrinkled but bronzed; his eyes sparkled under bushy brows. His homespun clothes were soaking, his trouser-legs rolled up and his bare calves were spattered with mud. Obviously he was a weather-beaten peasant who had experienced plenty of bitterness before Liberation. It seemed to Wang Feng that she had met this man somewhere. Vaguely she wondered whether she had not seen him while going to the brigades to repair their farm machinery.

"Have you come to get something repaired?" she asked. "Just look at you, wet to the skin! Let me find you some dry things."

"Don't bother. Go ahead with your work," the man said, stopping her. Having looked round, he asked, "Is this part of a rice-transplanter?"

"Yes. It's the gear box," Wang explained eagerly. "We're to bore eight holes in it. We haven't got a boring machine, so

we're making do with a driller. It's difficult though. We've tried twenty-seven times but haven't succeeded yet."

"Making a new thing from scratch always means difficulties," said the man, toying with the gear box.

Touched by his understanding and sympathy, the girl continued, "Difficulties are nothing. It's someone's attitude that puts our backs up!"

"Puts your backs up?"

"Somebody is standing in our way."

"But that's good," the man answered, smiling. "With your backs up you can fight it out. When there's no beaten path, you must blaze a new trail. We must get a move on, so that our commune members will soon be able to use rice-transplanting machines in the fields."

Wang Feng was cheered by his encouragement. Gripping his big strong hands, she said, "Uncle, when you go back to your brigade, tell them, no matter what the difficulties, we'll send rice-transplanting machines to them in plenty of time."

"That's the spirit!" The man's eyes gleamed with approbation.

"Uncle Yung-hsing!" someone called from outside the workshop. The door banged open to admit a gust of chill wind and rain. Keng Cheng rushed in. "How come you're already here! I've been waiting and waiting for you," he continued, warmly shaking the newcomer's hand.

Everyone was astonished to hear Keng Cheng address the man as "Uncle Yung-hsing". Was this middle-aged peasant their new Party secretary whom they'd been longing to meet?! They all stopped work and gathered round. Wang Feng was both surprised and happy. Her face flushed pink, she stepped up to him and, after gazing intently at him for a moment, she exclaimed, "Uncle!"

There was much excited laughter and talk in the workshop. Everyone had something to say and Keng Cheng, the vice Party secretary, could not get a word in edgewise.

Suddenly as if coming to her senses, Wang Feng shouted, "Now, now, let Uncle Yung-hsing at least go and change his wet clothes."

"That's right," cried the workers, leading him to the door.

"What a girl," joked Yung-hsing to Keng Cheng with a hearty laugh. "I've hardly set foot in the workshop when she's driving me away." So saying, off he went.

"I've missed you, uncle. How are you keeping?" Keng Cheng inquired as he walked along beside the Party secretary, arm in arm. "How's the family? Your little grandson must be quite big now."

"D'you mean Little Ming?" asked Keng Yung-hsing with a smile. "He tried to talk me into letting him come with me to see the farm machinery."

"What a boy! Ah..." Keng Cheng felt a trifle awkward, so with a laugh he led the conversation into another channel. "I've got everything ready for you. We must have a heart-to-heart talk."

Keng Cheng really had a great deal he wanted to tell Yung-hsing. The former Party secretary had been transferred the year before last and since then he had had to take charge of the whole plant and had been snowed under with problems. The contradictions became even more acute when he decided to process those extra valves from Shanghai. In order to finish them in time, he wanted to take some workers from the experimental group. But Wang Feng and the others had turned a deaf ear to his request. Neither side would yield. This almost drove the vice Party secretary frantic. When he was told that the commune Party committee was sending Keng Yung-hsing to the plant as the new Party secretary he felt slightly relieved. Yung-hsing was a distant relative of his who had recommended him for the Party. It was he who had accompanied Keng Cheng and carried his bedding for him to this plant fifteen years before. Keng Cheng still remembered how well they had hit it off and what an excellent job they had done together in the early co-op movement in the 1950s. Now that Yung-hsing was assigned here he would surely be able to solve the contradictions so that the processing of those valves would no longer be a problem.

"How long have you been working on the trial rice-transplanting machine?" the Party secretary asked casually. "There seem to be only a few of you in the group."

"They've been messing around for four months!"

"Oh?"

"That girl's really annoying," sighed Keng Cheng. But since it was their first meeting after so many years, he changed the subject once more. "Our plant has changed quite a bit since you saw it last. Look at that new workshop for processing valves."

Looking in the direction to which Keng Cheng pointed, Keng Yung-hsing saw a big red brick building with a tiled roof. Its door was wide open, showing the neat rows of lathes and planers inside.

"Our profit the year before last was twenty per cent above that of the previous year," Keng Cheng said, his eyes aglow. "Last year it increased again by fifteen per cent." After a pause he continued, "It's quite possible to get another increase of fifteen per cent this year, if we can solve the problem of processing the valves. Since this plant of ours was set up, we have tripled our profit. I've got it all figured out, Uncle Yung-hsing. After several more years of hard work, we'll have saved enough money to put up even better buildings. Then we'll build a brick wall around them, put in an asphalt road edged with flower-beds and trees, along which motorcars can come and go. . . . By then our plant will really look grand!"

"It's a big plan!" remarked Keng Yung-hsing coldly.

Keng Cheng did not catch the underlying meaning in those words and rattled on, "Certainly we need to have an ideal. To increase our profits and expand the plant, I've also another project in mind. But we'll talk about that later. . . ."

Yung-hsing had no interest in all this talk. His eyebrows were drawn together in a deep frown. The words of the commune Party secretary and the brigade cadres as well as many other people's complaints had come rushing to his mind.

"All Keng Cheng thinks the agricultural machinery plant needs to do is to make more profit. They've already gone far beyond their plan," they had told him. "The plant is getting bigger, but we're losing touch with it."

Yung-hsing wanted to have a good talk with Keng Cheng, but the younger man was voluble and conceited. Yung-hsing sighed. He knew well enough that his relative was pig-headed and would not give up his ideas easily.

It was still raining; the clouds hung low. The new Party secretary remained deep in thought.

2

A shaft of silvery light from the window of the plant office pierced the pitch-black night. The fine rain was getting on people's nerves and the atmosphere in the room was oppressive too.

Keng Cheng sat huddled in a chair under a lamp, drawing heavily on his cigarette. His eyes were fixed on a chart headed, "Graph of the Annual Accumulation of Funds", which he had made himself and pinned on the wall. Whenever he felt disgruntled he would sit and stare at it, drawing consolation from the rising index figures.

Leaning against the wall near the window, Keng Yung-hsing stood looking thoughtfully at Keng Cheng. The Party secretary had had a busy day. After finishing with the philosophical study group, he'd gone to take a hand in the experimental workshop. Unfortunately the drilling was a failure again. Having discussed the cause with Wang Feng and old Master Chuan-keng, he encouraged them to have another try. Then he toured the workshops asking the workers for their opinions about running the plant. After supper, he had had another talk with Keng Cheng, but made little progress.

The door suddenly banged open and, like a fresh wind, in rushed Wang Feng and Liu Chao. Before she could steady herself, Wang Feng thrust a requisition slip under Keng Cheng's nose. "Signature, please."

"What?" Keng Cheng took the slip and glanced at it then said, "We've none of this material left."

"None left?" cried Liu.

"The valve workshop needed it and took all that was left this morning. So there'll be no more available till the next quarter. You may look in the storehouse if you don't believe me." Keng Cheng sounded as if he had scored a point.

"Why didn't you keep us some? Didn't you know we need it for our drilling?" Wang Feng asked angrily.

"How could I know that you'd fail again today?"

"You..." Liu was too furious to speak.

"This won't do," Wang retorted firmly. "You must think of a way to get us some or you'll be holding up our experiment."

Turning round, Keng Cheng shook his head and told the Party secretary, "Look at this, Uncle Yung-hsing. What can I do?" He passed the requisition slip over to him.

Yung-hsing considered the matter for a moment. "We'll be able to get some material," he said without hesitation, "but you must have a good rest tonight after all that hard work. Get a good sleep and be ready for battle tomorrow!"

Yung-hsing's quiet but determined words changed the charged atmosphere at once. Liu Chao, red in the face, still wanted to say something, but could not put it into words quickly enough. Having said good-bye to Yung-hsing, Wang Feng took Liu by the arm and went off.

Gazing at their receding figures, Yung-hsing picked up his jacket and was about to leave when Keng Cheng stopped him. "What are you going to do, Uncle Yung-hsing?" he asked.

"Why, see if we can use some of our waste material," Yung-hsing answered with a grin. "The masses show great initiative in the building of socialism. I'm going to consult them." So saying, Yung-hsing opened the office door to leave. It was still drizzling outside. Lantern lights flickered in the fields and water pumps chugged. Turning around on the step, Yung-hsing urged with some emotion, looking straight at Keng Cheng, "Don't just sit staring at that chart of yours, comrade. Look out there!" He pointed to the fields in the distance. "What do the villagers think? What are they doing? What do they need? Use your head! What should we do?" With these words, he left. Keng Cheng sat deep in thought, his cigarette burning away in his hand.

It rained all night and ceased only at daybreak. Everything was wrapped in mist.

Keng Cheng had slept fitfully. He dreamed of valves, profits, experiments and the peasants. Early in the morning, he received a notice from the county agricultural bureau which gave him a new

idea. Like a drowning man grasping a spar, he saw fresh hope. Not bad, he thought. This will kill two birds with one stone, even Uncle Yung-hsing won't be able to oppose my plan. He decided to find the Party secretary right away. Having searched the office, the big workshop, the storehouse, dining-room and experimental workshop, he finally went to the junk pile.

There a throng of people, laughing and talking, stood around a cart loaded with materials.

Keng Cheng arrived amid laughter. As soon as he reached the cart, he knew what had happened.

"Come on, let's load some more on," Liu Chao cried. "We'll soon be able to make another test." Everyone began helping to collect more scrap.

"Wait!" Keng Cheng blocked their way. "Don't move that stuff!"

"What's wrong now, Keng Cheng?" exploded Master Chuan-keng. "We've found scrap we can use, why stop us?"

Wang Feng tossed her head, flinging back her plaits as she called out, "Get on with the job!"

"If you carry that off now you'll only have to return it later," Keng Cheng said quietly. "The situation has changed."

"Changed? How?" Liu asked anxiously.

Keng Cheng giving him a sidelong glance said, "First I'll find Uncle Yung-hsing."

"Speak up. I'm right here." Keng Cheng was surprised to find the Party secretary standing behind him. He produced the notice from his pocket and handed it over, saying, "This is from the county agricultural bureau. The Shanghai agricultural machinery plant has exceeded its plan and will be sending us more rice-transplanters. Our county government has decided to allocate twenty instead of ten to each commune."

"What good news!" Keng Yung-hsing read the notice with pleasure. His delight made Keng Cheng even happier.

Having thought for a moment, the Party secretary gave the notice back to Keng Cheng, saying, "I know what you're thinking. Since we'll have enough rice-transplanters now, we should concentrate all

our efforts on processing those valves. We'll increase our profits and make our plant look grand. Neither the production of the valves nor the number of rice-transplanters available to the commune will be affected, so both ways we stand to gain. What could be better?"

That was exactly what Keng Cheng was thinking. "All our problems are solved," he said with a sigh of relief.

"Now I'll give you a mathematical problem," Yung-hsing said with a broad grin.

"A mathematical problem?" Keng Cheng was puzzled.

"Suppose the Shanghai agricultural machinery plant has exceeded its production quota by one hundred rice-transplanters out of which it gives us ten, how many are left?"

"Ninety," Keng Cheng answered glibly.

"But suppose we add ten which we have made ourselves?"

Keng Cheng hesitated. "That makes one hundred and ten."

"Is that more or less?"

"Why, more of course. . . ." he faltered.

"Sure it's more," Liu Chao agreed.

Wang Feng glared at him and the young man grinned sheepishly.

"Now," continued the Party secretary, "if every commune in our county can produce ten rice-transplanters how many will there be? How many counties are there in our country? If every commune makes some rice-transplanters itself, that will certainly speed up the mechanization of agriculture. What's more, the rice-transplanters we make ourselves will suit the needs of our area better, won't they?"

Keng Cheng was flummoxed by this.

"Such a simple question, why don't you answer?" Yung-hsing asked earnestly.

Keng Cheng hung his head. There was a short silence.

"You didn't sleep well last night, did you?" Yung-hsing asked sympathetically as he noticed the dark shadows under the younger man's eyes. "You need to think over all these problems seriously. If you can't solve them, why not go to the poor and lower-middle

peasants for help? I happen to know they're dissatisfied with our plant."

"Later, when I've time, I'll go and visit the villagers to hear their criticism," Keng Cheng replied.

"Not only you. We should all go. And not later but right away. Even the experimental group can stop work for a while," he said, turning to Wang.

"Stop our experiment?" Liu couldn't believe his ears.

Keng Cheng lifted his head also, astonished.

"It'll pay us to call a halt, just for the time being," Yung-hsing continued calmly. "Let's go and help with the work in the fields for a while, repair some farm tools and listen to everyone's opinions. It'll clear our minds, broaden our ideas about our work."

Wang Feng listened attentively, though not fully grasping the meaning of this. But after the confrontations between the two Party secretaries since the older man's arrival, his words carried weight with her. So she exclaimed impulsively, "I agree."

Yung-hsing nodded to her, a faint smile flitting across his face.

Keng Cheng, of course, did not object to the experimental group stopping for a while. But after a moment's thought he inquired gloomily, "What about the valves?"

"That should stop too. We'll all go." Yung-hsing's reply was firm.

"What?" Keng Cheng almost shouted. "Nothing doing! The processing of those valves is crucial right now. It can't be delayed, or we'll fail to fulfil our task. Then. . ."

"Then what?" asked Yung-hsing riveting his eyes on Keng Cheng.

"How can I explain our failure?"

"Is it that serious?"

"It is!" Sweat glistened on Keng Cheng's forehead. "Our profits this year, the future of our plant depend on those valves. The money to buy the rice-transplanters from Shanghai and what we've spent on our experiment all has to come from the valves. Uncle Yung-hsing, you must consider this more carefully."

"Yes, we need to consider the whole question more carefully," said Yung-hsing sternly. "And the first thing to consider is which

road we're following. When our agricultural machinery plant is unable to produce rice-transplanters, our workers will have no heart to go on with the processing of the valves. Haven't you thought of that? It'll soon be the busy season. The peasants will need rice-transplanters badly. Have you ever given a thought to their needs and feelings?"

"But . . . but I still can't see why we should stop work on the valves."

"You have a right to voice your opinion. Let's have an enlarged Party branch committee meeting before we make a decision," Yung-hsing said resolutely.

The sun came out after a long rain and the air was fresh and sweet with the fragrance of the fields.

Yung-hsing and Keng Cheng walked along the ridge of a paddy field both shouldering loads of rice shoots for transplanting. Yung-hsing holding himself erect swung firmly and energetically ahead, his shoulder-pole curved by the weight of his heavy load. But Keng Cheng's back was bent and he staggered along as if walking on a heap of cotton. The ridge was slippery after rain.

Looking back, Yung-hsing asked quietly: "Is this little load too much for you? You can't have been out in the fields for a long time." He took the towel from his neck and threw it to Keng Cheng, urging, "Straighten up, man, otherwise you'll never make it."

Keng Cheng caught the towel and mopped his sweating face, ignoring the full implication of Yung-hsing's words. He was still deep in thought. After a short time, he caught up with Yung-hsing. With a glance at the younger man's clouded face, Yung-hsing asked, "Still thinking about the valves?"

He had hit the nail on the head. Keng Cheng grumbled: "Doesn't industry need those valves? Am I right or not to process valves for the state?"

Yung-hsing slackened his pace to answer seriously: "Who says we can't process valves? Of course it's right for a commune factory to process what's needed for industry. Remember, though, that the main job of our agricultural machinery plant is to manufacture

agricultural machines. We can't neglect our main task just so as to make more profit." After a pause he added: "However, what's more important is your thinking. How do you think our commune plant should serve agriculture? What do you think about the mechanization of agriculture?"

As he listened Keng Cheng remembered the sharp criticism and the keen discussion in the enlarged Party branch committee meeting the previous day. He was so agitated that the pole on his shoulder swung up and down and he had to steady it.

Gazing at the boundless fields, Yung-hsing said significantly: "If we lose touch with the peasants we won't know what they are doing and thinking. By degrees we'll become so short-sighted that we see nothing but the small patch under our nose. We'll fail to find the bright road pointed out for us by Chairman Mao!"

While Yung-hsing was speaking there was a roar of laughter from the near-by fields. Several voices were yelling: "Step on the gas!" He saw some of his comrades from the plant transplanting rice with the peasants. All were working with a will. It was a hot contest. Wang Feng had left Liu Chao some distance behind and the lad was racing to catch up with her. His red vest was soaked. Stirred by this sight Yung-hsing quickened his pace, calling over his shoulder to Keng Cheng: "Quick! Let's catch up with them!"

When they reached the edge of the field all the others had already climbed the ridge of the next plot and set to work there. Keng Cheng had just put down his load and not yet caught his breath when Yung-hsing pulled him forward to the water. In a flurry, Keng Cheng kicked off his muddy canvas shoes and waded barefoot into the plot where he began to work with the others. On his left side stood an old woman and near her were Yung-hsing and Wang Feng.

The old woman noticed that Wang Feng held the rice shoots in one hand and bent low to transplant them quickly and easily. The rice shoots set in place by her deft fingers stood straight up in a row above the water. Then she stepped back and another row emerged. The old woman was well pleased to see how this girl had been steeled in the countryside.

She also noticed how swiftly Yung-hsing took the rice shoots held in his left hand between his right thumb and forefinger and transplanted them into the limpid water. His rice shoots seemed firmly rooted in the mud. His progress was so steady and smooth that it appeared effortless. In no time a vivid green carpet stretched out in front of him. Fine!

Then the old woman observed Keng Cheng on her other side. He was very slow. And every few minutes he straightened up to take a breath. She said to him bluntly: "Out of practice, aren't you, comrade?"

He nodded with a wry smile.

"I've heard that our machinery plant is going to make rice-transplanting machines. Is that true?" she asked him.

Keng Cheng didn't know how to answer. He lowered his head.

When he remained silent she went on: "Chairman Mao calls on us to farm for the revolution. We're all willing to work hard. But we want to mechanize agriculture too because machines will help us reap more grain. We must mechanize for socialism as Yung-hsing puts it. Your plant was started in the Big Leap Forward in 1958. At that time it was Yung-hsing who gave us the lead in levelling the land, digging irrigation channels and building roads so as to bring in machines. We did all this to prepare for mechanization, which is something all commune members long for. Yet in 1962 some people started saying that it didn't matter whether mechanization started early or late. They wanted the agricultural machinery plant to switch to making kerosene stoves and pans. You can guess how angry we were when we heard that!"

Hearing this, Keng Cheng recalled how Yung-hsing and the poor and lower-middle peasants had struggled against a few cadres who had taken this wrong road in the former county Party committee and in the factory. They had stood their ground in the face of this adverse current. At that time, Keng Cheng himself had admired Yung-hsing very much.

"It's really fine that now you're getting down to making those rice transplanters for us," said the old woman. "Can you let us have them in time for the summer planting?"

Her words reverberated in the ears of Wang Feng and the other workers. As for Keng Cheng, he bowed his head so low that it was barely an inch above the water.

Yung-hsing who had been working without a break now straightened up to say firmly: "We'll certainly let you have them!" Everyone in the paddy field turned to look at him.

Very pleased, the old woman wheeled around to say to Keng Cheng: "You have a heavy load on your shoulders. You must learn to take big strides. How many communes and brigades are there in our country? How many poor and lower-middle peasants are longing for those machines? Just figure it out. Then while working in your plant you'll not forget us villagers. You'll not forget how important it is to mechanize agriculture." She turned to Yung-hsing. "Am I right?"

Yung-hsing looked up with a broad smile but made no answer. To Keng Cheng he said, "Hear that? You've been given the answer to the problem I set you."

Keng Cheng still kept his head lowered for his face was crimson. He didn't know what to say. Fortunately just then Liu Chao shouted: "Quick, let's speed up!" At once the paddy fields seethed with activity. Hands filled with rice shoots flew like shuttles above the water. Very soon, the nearby paddy fields were carpeted with green shoots. Then, one by one, Yung-hsing, Wang Feng and the rest climbed up onto the last ridge.

Keng Cheng, still deep in thought, suddenly found himself alone in the middle of the field. Turning, he saw that the others had finished transplanting the rest of his row for him. He was surrounded by rice shoots as if he had been dropped into a green sea. His bewilderment made the commune members laugh.

"Keng Cheng, forward march! Come over here," called Yung-hsing from the ridge.

Keng Cheng floundered through the paddy field till he reached them.

At that moment, a child's voice rang out from the edge of the fields: "Grandpa, grandpa!" Yung-hsing turned and saw his

grandson Little Ming running towards him, a sheet of paper in his hand.

"Grandpa, look at my drawing. Our teacher says it's good enough to put in our school exhibition," the boy cried happily.

Wang Feng and some others surrounded the boy, eager for a look at the drawing. It was a picture of the new countryside: In the sunlight stood large factory buildings, white smoke billowing from the chimneys. The fields stretching to the horizon were a sea of paddy and cotton. A strange agricultural machine with a red flag fluttering on it was driving across a field.

"What sort of machine is that?" Wang Feng asked.

"I don't know what it's called," the boy answered nestling close to his grandpa. "It can do everything: ploughing, hoeing, spreading manure, rice transplanting, harvesting and pressing oil. Grandpa says we'll have machines like that in the future."

This aroused a roar of laughter. Wang Feng clasped the boy tightly in her arms. The old woman also examined the drawing attentively before handing it to Keng Cheng who had just sat down for a rest. "That's the kind of machine your factory must make in future," she said. "Our children are waiting for it. You'll have to speed up."

Embarrassed, Keng Cheng took the drawing and silently looked it over. Glancing at him, Yung-hsing said sincerely: "Aunty is quite right. We must speed up. Chairman Mao long ago pointed out: **'The fundamental way out for agriculture lies in mechanization.'** Only by advancing along this road can we speed up the development of our national economy and strengthen the alliance between our workers and peasants. Only so can we do away with the difference between town and countryside and between workers and peasants, and bring about the early realization of the ideal of communism. We mustn't forget the load on our shoulders. Every step we take should be along the right road."

Yung-hsing's speech like a spring breeze reached everyone's heart. Keng Cheng suddenly lifted his head. Wang Feng noticed that his eyes were glistening. She felt that right then Keng Cheng's ideas were changing.

The busy summer season arrived. New rice-transplanting machines one after another rolled out from the machinery plant to the fields like a long-tailed dragon going off to battle.

Yung-hsing and Wang Feng drove the first transplanter. Keng Cheng coming along the road shouted: "Wait! Wait for me."

Wang Feng turned around: "We can't wait. You must hurry up!"

Keng Cheng ran a few steps to catch up and a powerful warm hand reached out to help him climb on. When he had settled down he pulled out an envelope from his pocket and handed it over to the older man, saying, "Uncle Yung-hsing, this is the plan we've worked out in our experimental group. Will you read it and tell us what shortcomings there are, so that we can revise it together."

Yung-hsing gladly took the plan and passed it over to Wang Feng along with some other papers that he took from his own pocket.

"Just three days since the mobilization meeting and already so many proposals!" Keng Cheng exclaimed.

"Many? I think there are too few," Wang Feng retorted with a chuckle.

"Quick work, I mean," Keng Cheng added.

"I think it's too slow."

"What a girl!"

"Annoying isn't she?" Yung-hsing teased. All three of them burst out laughing.

The sun was slowly rising. Its bright light gilded the green fields with gold. And the whole earth seemed to resound to the powerful roar of the vast convoy of transplanting machines.

Illustrated by Lai Li-yang

Riding the East Wind

Chiang Feng hurried back to the plant as soon as the Marxist-Leninist study course at the Textile Bureau finished. He was of medium height and going on fifty with flashing eyes and an honest ruddy face. This Party secretary of the Hsinhua Textile Machinery Plant had started there as an apprentice before the Liberation; it was not until after the Cultural Revolution that he was made secretary of the Party committee.

Early that morning a call had come for him from the plant. His deputy, Vice-Secretary Liu, wanted to know when he was going to return. Liu had sounded as if something important needed his attention though he said no more than "come back as soon as you can. We'll talk when you get back".

Chiang Feng was a careful and sensitive person. Aware that the developing movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius was a test to temper everyone, he was very eager to plunge into the fray. Unconsciously, he hastened his steps.

Very soon tall factory buildings appeared before him. He made straight for the bulletin board in front of the mess hall, for with all

the posters and wall newspapers there it was really the plant's public opinion centre, reflecting the complex and interrelated conflicts here as well as the reactions to them. To Chiang's mind, the existence of these public media testified to the vigorous political atmosphere prevailing in the plant since the Cultural Revolution.

On a slope just ahead a girl was straining to push a loaded cart uphill. Chiang Feng bounded over to give her a hand. With a mighty heave, he got the cart to the top.

"Ah, it's you Old Chiang. So you're back!" cried the girl, bright eyes smiling at him. Chiang discovered only then that it was Young Pan of the machinery workshop.

"What's come over me that I didn't recognize the famous Pan Hsiao-ying earlier!" exclaimed Chiang, laughing boisterously. Nineteen-year-old Pan was a general favourite of the workers and staff for, besides having good brains which had helped her to launch several innovations, she was also lively and frank.

"Well, Young Pan, have you been exposing contradictions like the rest?" Chiang asked, keeping one hand on the cart.

Pan made a face at him. "Of course. Can't leave the contradictions unexposed, can I? Why don't you go and look at the big-character posters?" Arching her neck, she pushed the cart off, humming as she went: "We are the masters of the factories, on our shoulders rest the tasks of the times..."

Eyeing her retreating back Chiang said to himself: "Young people, new masters... masters of socialist plants!"

When Chiang reached the mess hall he stopped by a new poster signed by Pan Hsiao-ying and others under the title: "On Comrade Liu Chiang's Attitude." It was straightforward and very much to the point:

Wake up Old Liu and listen please:
To the wrong line you've kept.
Stop-watch in hand you're treading the old road.
The masses' criticism you won't accept....

"Ho... ho, so they're on the stop-watch question again." Chiang laughed jovially. But as he read on, his face became serious for the

poster pointed out that the plant administration had neglected the innovation proposals made by the machinery workshop and the workers thought this involved a matter of political line, not to be lightly overlooked.

Chiang Feng remembered that the machinery shop's proposals had been made before he left for the study course. Why were they still being ignored? It certainly was difficult to launch a new idea.

Chiang was deep in thought when someone clapped him on the back. It was white-haired Old Yang, looking at him fondly.

"Ah, Master Yang!" Chiang gripped the veteran worker's hand.

"So you've come to take criticism before even stopping to put down your knapsack." Yang always spoke with humour. The Party secretary had been his apprentice many years ago and now he put one arm round Chiang Feng's shoulder.

"The fire's reached my eyebrows," Chiang answered. To him the retired old worker was still his respected master. Already in his mid-sixties, this old Communist had insisted on coming back to work as a welder when he learned that the plant was going to build a new spinning machine of a kind comparable to the world's most up-to-date model.

As they had not seen each other for some time, Old Yang was particularly pleased by this encounter. Pulling the Party secretary closer, he glanced around to make sure no one could overhear him. Then, using Chiang's boyhood name, he said, "Iron Pillar, I want to tell you something. Our new spinning machine's been held up and we workers feel pretty bad."

"I suppose the administration is to blame, eh?"

"Right," Yang pointed to the poster. "The plant leadership has given us no real help. Instead, Old Liu keeps getting in the way of us workers. He had the innovation proposed by the machinery shop shelved for so long that we finally raised hell. Not until the day before yesterday did he approve it. I'm on my way now to get the material we need."

"Aren't you attempting too much? Don't tell me you're acting as storekeeper for them."

"You don't know half of it. Your old master's become the general chief-of-staff for this experiment." Yang chuckled as he spoke and flung out his arms. "The first step in this innovation begins in our cold-working section. How can I stay away? If we succeed in this experiment the production time can be cut by twenty-five per cent to say the least. We'll be able to produce the spinner ahead of time. That'll be dealing a blow at the imperialists, revisionists and reactionaries."

Chiang was very stirred. Grasping the old man's hand, he said firmly, "Right you are, master. The Party committee will give you its full support."

"It's not that simple." Yang shook his head. "Now you're back you can't help clashing with Liu. Still, confrontation will be good for him. It's time he took a good look to see what road he's following. He's going backwards again."

"Find an opportunity to give him a good talking-to, will you?" said Chiang.

Yang waved this suggestion aside. "At present we two are at loggerheads. But you talk to him. Tell him not to forget the masses' criticism during the Cultural Revolution."

After Old Yang left, Chiang made straight for the Party committee office. He walked fast and urgently. Young Pan's words, the posters and his talk with Old Yang all made his blood course faster. A strong east wind was bucking him.

Liu was speaking on the phone when Chiang entered. He was about Chiang's age but his smooth well-cut hair was streaked with grey. Before the Cultural Revolution, he had been the director in charge of the plant's production. No one could gainsay him once his mind was made up.

It seemed some problem was troubling him for his eyes were half-closed and he was thinking hard. As soon as Chiang entered, Liu clapped a hand over the receiver and cried, "Hi, old mate! You've come just at the right time. Look, it's like this." Then speaking into the telephone, he went on, "Wait a bit, Old Chang. The Party secretary's back. Let me talk it over with him and I'll let you know."

Chiang asked with a smile, "What's up? You look like an ant on a hot griddle."

"Do ants ever come across such thorny problems?" Liu produced a telegram from his drawer which he stuffed into Chiang's hand. It was from the ministry.

The telegram said that in line with the policy of self-reliance and independence, an important synthetic fibre plant must be completed ahead of time and trial production begun. This meant that the spinning machine for short nylon fibre undertaken by Hsinhua must be completed and delivered within that month.

They had exactly twenty-seven days left to complete the task. All this would entail a re-arrangement of production plans and workday schedules. . . . In other words, it was necessary to deploy their forces again for a new battle. Time was pressing.

Chiang meditated with the telegram in his hand. Liu poured him a cup of water and lit a cigarette for himself. Leaning his head against the chair, he sighed. "Hard. Very hard. The work load gets bigger and bigger. Just think, we must get a new machine finished in twenty-seven days. Easier said than done."

Chiang flashed him a glance. "Come on, out with it. I know you've got everything all worked out."

Liu picked out from the shelves a carbon copy of a report. Handing it to Chiang, he said, "It's all listed here. Naturally the spinning machine's got to be finished on time. This is a political task, so important that no quibbling is allowed. But how to do it? The only way is to ask the bureau to re-adjust our plan for this quarter. We can shift some work to the next quarter. Otherwise we can't balance our schedule. I'm sure the bureau will agree."

"What's that? Say it again!" Chiang was astonished.

"Shift some of our work to the next quarter so as to get the spinning machine out on time. After all, our equipment, material, workers are fixed factors. We can only cook according to the amount of rice we have. How can you cook a new meal when there isn't any more rice?"

Chiang's brows knit together though he made no reply. He leafed through the report and calculated each item, one by one.

As he read on, he remembered the poster on the bulletin board. The workers have unlimited potentialities, he thought, our job is to tap the source. Equipment is manned by workers, difficulties can be overcome, miracles are created by man.

"Do the workers know about this?" he asked Liu.

"No."

"Has the Party committee discussed it?"

"No. This is a production question, I have the right to decide."

"A matter as important as this should first be discussed by the Party committee and decisions made on the basis of the mass line," said Chiang.

"But time and tide wait for no man. Old Chang of operations goes to town for a meeting tomorrow. I intend to let him take the report down. We've got to take the initiative." Liu seemed displeased with Chiang's questions.

Chiang Feng smiled patiently. "Old Liu, our shoulders are meant to bear work loads and we ought to take up heavy ones. I know you are anxious to win victory in this battle. So am I. The workers are even more eager. Let us go first to the shops and ask their opinion. We should first find out how the land lies and then study the question this evening."

Liu was stunned. Though he wanted to insist on having his way, he eventually bit the words back. Chiang had already changed into overalls. He took down Liu's overalls too from the wall and flapped them gently to remove the dust that had collected. Liu felt his face burning.

Chiang Feng had meant to take his deputy to see Young Pan's experiment but Liu said with a frown, "I must see Chen in the tools workshop. They're getting into quite a mess out there." Chiang did not insist on his coming with him. As he headed for the machinery shop, he saw Old Yang striding down the pathway, his face livid, white hair and beard quivering with rage.

"Master Yang," cried Chiang, wondering why the old man was so angry.

Old Yang stopped. When he saw that it was the Party secretary, he pulled him into the cold-working section. "You've come! So

much the better. I was just on my way to talk to the management. Come in, come and have a look. It's enough to make anyone angry."

Sputtering with fury, Yang pulled Chiang Feng to a half-welded workpiece. Several workers were busily filing the welding ridge. Yang grabbed a file and knocked on the welding. "Have a good look. The designs stipulated clearly that we should use No.2 stainless steel. But what number steel is this?"

Chiang squatted down for a better look. "I see, they gave you the wrong stuff, did they?"

"That's just it. Using this kind of steel is hopeless. I knew something was wrong as soon as we started welding. Now, tell me, do you call this giving your support to the new experiment?"

"What happened?" asked Chiang Feng. He really wanted to know. Since the experiment had been launched, the proper material should have been issued.

"What happened? It's Old Liu's idea." Yang's anger flared again.

Chiang Feng began to understand. He noticed the old man's sputtering and took over the file with a smile. Stroke by stroke, he steadily filed the welding ridge.

"I tell you what," he said placatingly, with a glance at his former master. "I'll consult Old Liu about this. We'll issue you the right material to try again."

"Ha . . . him . . ." muttered Old Yang.

Chiang smiled again. "I remember when I was learning to use the file twenty years ago," he said. "I grabbed a file and went at it hammer and tongs. But you stopped me. Patting my head, you said, 'You've got to do it patiently, silly boy, stroke by stroke. Impatience will get you nowhere.'"

Yang glared at him, not understanding why he should be reminiscing at this juncture. Chiang pointed at the half removed ridge on the welding line. "It's the same with ideas. If we want to straighten out someone's thinking we can't just be angry and impatient. Isn't that right, master?"

Yang cocked his eyebrows as he realized the Party secretary was helping him to see light. He burst out laughing and punched Chiang on the shoulder. "Really, you. . . ." Chiang also laughed.

When Chiang Feng told the old worker that the spinning machine had to be finished by the end of the month, Yang slapped his thigh. "Then Young Pan's innovation will come in most useful. You must help her to see it through."

"Of course," said Chiang. "But tell me more about this proposal." They began discussing it in detail.

While Chiang Feng was in the cold-working section, Liu Chiang had left the tools shop where he had been told by Chen that some workers were critical of certain rules and regulations recently re-introduced. But Liu remained adamant. He said, "The more complicated things are, the more reason there is for us to adhere strictly to rules. Don't lose your head at the first bit of criticism."

As he headed for the machinery shop, Liu recalled his argument with Chiang Feng in their office. Then he made up his mind. He must stick to his plan if he wanted to get the new spinning machine under way and completed that month. As for the masses' criticism, the big-character posters and all the rest of it, he needn't mind about that. The spinner was much more important. Since Old Chiang was so eager to hear the workers' opinions, better let him deal with divergent views, mass criticism and inter-shop conflicts. This would leave Liu time to concentrate on the spinning machine himself. That was what he would call a good division of labour, the right way to co-operate. Yes, he would talk to Chiang about this.

As soon as Liu entered the machinery shop something happened to jar on his nerves. He noticed that the cutter of a large milling machine was whirring away but the machine was untended. The cutter would soon reach the end of the cylinder which meant it might blunt itself and even break down.

"Who's on duty?" barked Liu.

"Pan Hsiao-ying," answered a worker close by. The mere name made Liu angry. Since he saw the cutting was coming to an end, he reached out to switch off the machine. A hand caught his sleeve before he could reach the switch. He turned to encounter Young Pan. He was just going to tell her off when — click! — the cutter turned itself off, the workpiece was replaced by another and the machine started whirring again. Liu breathed a sigh of relief. So

they've automated it, eh? He glared at Young Pan who looked smugly back at him.

"Making innovations is all very well, but how can you leave your post like that?" he scolded. "Where's your sense of responsibility?"

"We were studying our new experiment," explained Pan.

"How can you experiment when we're rushed off our feet as it is? Has Chiang Feng been here?"

"Who knows," muttered Pan crossly.

Liu Chiang asked another worker who told him Chiang Feng was in the cold-working section. He hurried off to look for him.

But as he left by one door, Chiang came in by the other. They just missed each other.

Chiang Feng was struck by the atmosphere of strenuous activity the moment he stepped into the shop. The lathes rasped cheerfully, the millers made staccato music. The grinder seemed to be roaring in applause as it threw off golden sparks, while the great boring machine thundered down on a large part. His eyes on this bustling scene, Chiang thought of the many fine rationalization proposals made by the workers in the cold-working section to get the new spinner built in record time. As long as we fully mobilize the masses and rely on the working class, there is nothing they can't do, no peak that can't be scaled, he thought.

Chiang Feng came to Young Pan's machine. The girl was on tiptoes on her rotary work-table. With one hand on the workpiece she was turning the handle vigorously with the other.

"I say, comrade, that's no way to work. Do you want to get your head cut off?"

Pan turned round and saw Chiang. With a smile she retorted, "What do we have heads for if not to work hard?"

Chiang laughed in spite of himself. Nevertheless he made her get down from the table. "Since you've a head, you should know how to work wisely. See?"

"Wisely? But someone won't let us work wisely." She bit her lips and pouted.

One of the workers near by told Chiang that Old Liu had just come in and criticized her.

"Oh," said Chiang. He added after a pause, "The ministry wants us to finish the new spinner within this month. That's why Old Liu is so worked up."

"Why be worked up? This is a splendid challenge." Pan was excited by the news. "Tell me, Comrade Chiang, why don't you consult us workers about production? Liu's always complaining that our innovations hold up current production tasks."

"How can innovations hold up production?" said Chiang looking at Pan encouragingly. "Small innovations make for a big leap forward you know."

"That's right, Old Chiang. But you know how our Old Liu . . . ah . . ."

Her deep sigh made Chiang's brows knit. Deep wrinkles appeared on his face. He had a moment's misgiving. Were the young people losing heart? Far more difficult struggles lay ahead of them.

Chiang's frown made Young Pan think too. Why had she heaved that sigh in front of the Party secretary? Was she really discouraged? Why behave like a cissy? She wanted to say something but for a moment words eluded her.

"Let's have a look at your experiment," suggested Chiang suddenly.

Young Pan flew into action. At a touch of the switch, her miller started whirling, the staccato sound of the cutter like the quick tattoo of drumsticks. Leaning against another machine, Chiang Feng watched the improved machine tool with a tingle of excitement. Since the Cultural Revolution, their plant had been like a huge machine which innovations had made more efficient, more vibrant with life. And every revolutionary worker had a part in the renovation of this huge machine. Weren't their posters, criticisms and comments still helping to introduce new innovations? Now why was it that Old Liu simply couldn't see this? Why was he set only on cutting down production tasks? Chiang left Young Pan to go and find Liu. He meant to exchange views with him.

After Liu left the cold-working shop he had to deal with some routine business before he finally headed again for the machinery shop. He was feeling annoyed for no known reason. Everything combined to irritate him that day, nothing seemed to go right.

Suddenly a voice called out behind him, "Old Liu, come quick, I simply don't know what to do." It was Chen from the tools shop who wanted him in the sharpening room. "You see, the plant's regulations stipulate that cutters brought here to be sharpened must carry specifications from the technicians. Young Pan has no specifications from the technicians yet she insists on sharpening the cutter she's made. What are we to do?"

"What cutter has she made?"

"I don't really know. She says they're using a different type of steel and therefore need a new type of cutter."

"If you're not clear, don't let her sharpen it," Liu said crisply. "If people can burst in here to do as they like, what do we keep this special room for? Can't you keep a strict watch over the place?"

"We told her the plant's got regulations. She said it's necessary to rebel against wrong ones."

"Bah, rebel?" Liu Chiang was angrier now. "Who is she rebelling against? Why don't you think this question out? Send her to me. Don't let her get out of hand. If we go on like this, what's to become of the plant?"

They hurried their steps as they talked but already a number of people had gathered outside the room.

"Go ahead, go and get Liu Chiang, get the Party secretary too. I'll say what I want!" Young Pan cried vehemently.

"Say it then. What do you want?" Liu confronted her.

Cutter in hand, Young Pan fixed her eyes on Liu.

"You want to sharpen it, is that it?" Liu's eyes were very stern. "How can that be done without the specifications?"

Although Liu looked ready to snatch the cutter from her, Young Pan calmed down all of a sudden. "How can you speak of specifications when we've only just begun the experiment?" she said reasonably. "Getting specifications would take two weeks, meanwhile what about the experiment? Isn't the experiment itself the best specification?"

"Every plant's got its own regulations. Experiments shouldn't violate regulations."

"Regulations should serve production and help to bring out the initiative of the workers."

Her sharp retort made Liu's anger flare. "No! You're not to sharpen it."

"This is for the revolution. So I *will* sharpen it, I will!" Young Pan was furious too. She rushed towards the door. But Liu was quicker. Bounding forward he slammed the door shut and padlocked it.

This was so unexpected that Young Pan gasped with dismay and indignation. Her eyes blazing, she spun round to pick up an angle iron. She was going to smash that lock! A big calloused hand gripped the iron. Chiang Feng had arrived. When Pan turned to face the Party secretary, Liu's eyes were also on him. Behind him stood the veteran worker, Old Yang. The Party secretary looked grave but firm. Young Pan loosened her hold on the iron.

"Why can't I sharpen my cutter? Why, Old Chiang?" she asked, looking up at him beseechingly.

Chiang weighed the iron in his hand before he turned to Liu with a look that spoke more than words. Liu's face was livid. "The masses are hard to handle; it's hard to be in charge, hard to get the work done!" Hard, hard, hard . . . the words whirled in his mind like a windmill.

"You decide, Old Chiang," he blurted out at last.

"Let's discuss the question," said the Party secretary calmly.

At this Liu was again annoyed. He took the key of the padlock from Old Chen and thrust it into Chiang's hands. "You can discuss it with them." After which he left in a huff.

Angry eyes followed Liu's retreating back and then turned to the Party secretary. Chiang Feng weighed the key in his hand and felt the gravity of the situation. He reflected: The Party and the people placed the factory in our hands and the workers gave us the key. How can we run the plant well and use the key properly? This is a matter we must weigh with care.

"How many cutters do you want to sharpen?" he asked Young Pan.

"Only one now, but a lot more if our experiment works."

Chiang turned to Old Yang. "Will you take on this job, master? We can't unlock the room and use the machine at the moment and you are the only one who can do it well by hand. Will you sharpen this cutter for us? I'll see about future ones." So saying he lifted the key and said to the others present, "As for that door, it should be unlocked by the man who locked it. However, we must first unlock the knot in Old Liu's thinking and the key to that is in the hands of all of us."

"Yes, in our hands." His beard quivering, Old Yang raised a mighty fist. Everyone began to speak and the discussion was heated.

A strong wind sprang up at dusk. The poplars rustled loudly. As the blower roared away the lathes and machine tools whirled merrily. Flashes of red rose from the foundry shop, crimsoning the sky and lighting up the earth. Sparks shot up from the tall chimney from time to time, twinkling briefly then disappearing into the darkness.

In the office a meeting of the standing committee of the Party was half-way through. There was a short break. Some comrades were glancing through their papers while a few talked together in low voices.

Liu Chiang stood by the table puffing unremittingly at a cigarette, one hand thrust into his hair. Arms folded, the Party secretary was pacing back and forth. He stopped by Liu to take the cigarette from his fingers. "Stop smoking like that, it's not good for you."

Liu smiled without a word. He grabbed a glass of water and not bothering to see whether it was hot or cold gulped down half its contents.

"You know, mate," said Chiang, "I was delighted with what we saw of the workers' boisterous revolutionary enthusiasm this afternoon. What vitality! The irrepressible vitality of spring!"

"You must be feeling light-hearted to wax poetic like that," said Liu with a snort.

"But life is like a poem," said Chiang Feng significantly. His penetrating eyes pierced Liu as if searching for his reaction.

"The fact is, if we go on like this, we'll hardly be running a factory." Liu vented the anger he had bottled up ever since the afternoon.

Chiang smiled. He understood Liu's mood. In the earlier part of their meeting they had discussed the masses' opinions aired in the posters and criticized the conservatism and wrong approach to new things of certain comrades in the Party committee. Everyone expressed the determination to go to the front line and boldly lead the masses forward. Only Liu seemed preoccupied. His mind was on the new spinner and he was silently debating whether or not to send in that report to the bureau. This matter was to be studied after the break. Chiang put his hand into his pocket to grope for something, but did not take anything out.

With a gentle sigh he poured Liu a glass of water before resuming his seat at the table.

"Let's go on with our meeting. I don't agree with Liu Chiang. I think this is just how a socialist plant should be run. The present lively political situation is a special trait of genuine socialist factories. The trouble with our Party committee at present is that we don't support the workers' socialist enthusiasm enough. As a matter of fact, sometimes their enthusiasm is being curbed and that is impermissible for that means retrogression."

Liu was not convinced. "If you call one thing curbing them, and another suppressing their initiative, how are we ever to lead their work? Look at the way Young Pan was carrying on. Shouldn't we do something about her? Was I wrong to take action?"

"We have to do something. But that something is to trust the masses and rely on the masses. Work actively to support the masses' revolutionary actions. Rules and regulations are necessary too, but when the masses' socialist enthusiasm surges so high that it rejects irrational rules then it would be very wrong to insist on enforcing these rules. To do so would be the wrong way of leading a socialist enterprise."

"Just listen to you. You're carrying principles too far," Liu retorted.

Chiang Feng rose to his feet. "Old Liu," he said with resolution on his face. "We've got to consider the masses' opinions from a principled stand. We should examine our own thinking to see if it conforms with the revolutionary line. The way you are heading,

it's very dangerous." He placed something wrapped in a piece of cloth before Liu. Puzzled, the vice-secretary removed the wrapper. He was startled to see a stop-watch still ticking away. All the committee members stared in surprise.

"Who gave you this?" asked Liu.

"The veteran workers wanted me to bring it to you," said Chiang gravely. "Old Yang dug it out of the junk house. He told me that it pained him to see you going backwards along the old road."

Liu felt a sharp twinge. He picked up the stop-watch. There was a little slip on the back with a quotation from Chairman Mao: **"There will be no future for them in going backwards."**

"Think hard, Old Liu!" urged Chiang Feng. "What road are you following? Surely you haven't forgotten the painful lesson of the past!"

Indeed, past lessons are much harder to forget than achievements. And that is as it should be. It was time Liu Chiang reviewed the old lesson of the stop-watch.

It had happened before the Cultural Revolution. To rush the production of an assignment for foreign aid, Liu tried to use material incentives. He wanted to top their profit figures. Chiang Feng at that time was already a member of the plant Party committee and concurrently the head of one of the workshops. Since he refused to have anything to do with material incentives, bonuses and the like were not given in his workshop. Liu Chiang came to the workshop in person, armed with his stop-watch. He found the workers all eager to support the anti-imperialist struggle of the Asian, African and Latin American peoples and working with a will. The lathes whirled and carts trundled to and fro. But Liu was blind to all this bustling activity which bespoke the workers' revolutionary enthusiasm. With the stop-watch tucked deep into one pocket he roamed the shop floor, halting behind a worker from time to time to check the time he took to finish one process. He thought he was being thorough in his work.

However, his secret was discovered by Chiang Feng. Gripping Liu's hand which was on the stop-watch, Chiang growled, "Let me see what's that in your hand."

"What are you doing?" cried Liu angrily.

"I'd like to know what *you* are doing," Chiang rejoined indignantly.

"I'm timing just how long it takes them to finish a product."

"Anything above board doesn't have to be done on the sly. Are you afraid of the workers?" Chiang spoke seriously. "This is not private enterprise, I'd have you know. We belong to the working class. Can't you see? You are standing before members of the working class."

Liu choked, unable to say anything for quite some time. Chiang dragged him to the pile of finished products at the door. "Take a good look. Haven't we fulfilled the quota on every assignment? We are overfulfilling our quotas all the time, but are we doing it for a bonus? No. We do it for the revolution, for socialism. Class-consciousness is exceeding your quotas. Do you understand, my dear director?"

"What do you take us workers for?" protested several machine-operators who had gathered round.

However, it was impossible for Liu to understand, he was too deeply poisoned by the revisionist line. During the Cultural Revolution, when Chiang Feng and the other workers revolted against the revisionist line, they used the incident of the stop-watch to debunk it, thus helping to educate the former director. Only then did the lesson touch Liu to the heart.

But how was today's incident linked with that past lesson? Was he using a stop-watch and going backwards again? Liu Chiang sighed.

"You must realize, comrade," Chiang Feng said in all sincerity, "you can't rely on a stop-watch to time the enthusiasm of our workers, nor can you use a padlock to lock it up. These are measures which the revisionists used to curb the workers. Since the Cultural Revolution, apparently, you've discarded the stop-watch, but you've not got rid of all the poison left in your mind by the revisionist way of factory management. When the workers' enthusiasm rises, you feel it's hard to manage them, hard to be a leader, hard to do your work. You try to use a padlock but the workers' enthusiasm is

like surging waves, like the rising tide. How can you padlock it? A genuine socialist enterprise does not rely on locks and watches. How can we stand in opposition to the workers?"

Like a heavy sledge-hammer, Chiang's every word hammered on Liu's mind. His head felt close to bursting.

"Nearly ten years, why is it I still can't discard that stop-watch!"

"It is hard because the watch is linked to the revisionist line. If your thinking is still tied to that line then, in your heart, you won't relinquish the stop-watch. When the time is ripe you'll pull it out again. But discard it you must. We are both old cadres brought up and tempered by the Party for many years. We must follow Chairman Mao's revolutionary line."

This started a general discussion. Chiang Feng opened the window to let in the evening breeze which refreshed Liu's whirling head. In the distance a train rumbled past. The blower continued to roar close by. His comrades' well-meant criticism made a powerful impression on Liu's heart.

Suddenly from the loudspeaker system a voice announced, "Here is good news, everybody. The first step of the experiment in the machinery shop has succeeded. This will pave the way for the making of the new spinner..."

Liu bounded to the window to listen carefully. Abruptly, he closed the window with a bang. "Let's go," he cried to Chiang Feng.

"Where to? We haven't started on the report yet."

"Bah — what I need is to be educated among the masses. We'll find the answer among the workers," said Liu sheepishly.

Chiang Feng smiled. He brought out the key to the sharpening room, saying, "The lock..."

Liu snatched it out of his hand. "... will have to be unlocked by me."

Everyone smiled. The meeting adjourned. As the two Party secretaries hurried to the work-

Now We Can Control Gas (traditional Chinese painting)

by Yang Li-su and Chang Teng-kuei



shops, the news of the successful first experiment was still coming over the loudspeaker system.

"It seems we needn't change our work schedule after all," Liu observed softly to Chiang.

"But there are still difficulties ahead. Something may go wrong with the experiment again," said Chiang Feng.

Liu punched Chiang Feng playfully. "So what? We'll overcome the difficulties with the help of the masses."

They both burst out laughing. Then Chiang stopped short and signed to Liu to listen. They were broadcasting the workers' song: "The workers are the masters of the plant. . . ."

Before them in a blaze of light was the machinery shop. Bustling activity greeted them like a rush of fresh spring wind. The two secretaries strode forward as if riding on the east wind.

NEW HSIYANG FOLK-SONGS

The Tachai Brigade, widely known and emulated as a model agricultural unit, is situated in Hsiyang County, Shansi Province. Learning from Tachai's example, the people of this county have made the whole district a model. Through their years of struggle the heroic members of the Tachai Brigade and the labouring people of Hsiyang County have produced many stirring songs. The following are chosen from the booklet *New Hsiyang Folk-Songs* published recently by the People's Literature Publishing House, Peking.

— The Editors

Kuo Feng-lien

Chairman Mao Is Like a Red Sun

Chairman Mao is like a red sun
Shedding light on me day and night.
Socialism is the road to happiness.
I'll advance and follow Chairman Mao closely.

Kuo Feng-lien is the secretary of the Tachai Party branch.

Chia Chin-tsai

There Is Only Class Love

There is only class love.
There is no such thing as clan love.
Landlords only love landlords;
Only the poor love the poor.
So there are two branches under one family name.

Chia Chin-tsai is chairman of the poor and lower-middle peasants' association at Tachai.

There Are Always Higher Peaks to Climb Ahead

Going downhill is easy, going uphill is difficult,
But the higher you climb the more you can see.
Never say this peak cannot be scaled;
Ahead there are always higher peaks to climb.

By Tiger-Head Hill

Snow, whirling goose-feather flakes,
Wind, a piercing arrow,
But even if knives cleave the air,
It won't deter the Tachai Brigade.

Villagers flow in a mighty tide
Into Wolf Lair Gully,
Iron arms work with a will,
Roaring bulldozers shake the earth,
Dynamite blasts the peaks asunder.

Hills are levelled, gullies filled,
At Tachai there are man-made miracles,
Icy the hard rock but fiery their hearts,
They pounce with the speed of dragons and tigers,
Singing as they plunge into the fray.

Who says spring has not yet come?
Spring flowers laugh amid the snow.
Here at Tiger-Head Hill it's always spring,
For another bumper harvest is predicted.

This song was written collectively by members of the county cultural centre
in Hsiyang.

Cartloads of Grain and Song

A train of carts along the road,
Each piled high with sacks of grain,
Endless laughter follows them,
There's endless singing along the road.

We sing of our leader Chairman Mao,
The helmsman who guides us,
Who charted the course of the Cultural Revolution.
New songs of victory are now sung everywhere.

We sing of Tachai's fiery spirit,
Their enthusiastic taming of nature.
Our country, production and ourselves all transformed,
Everywhere people sing of the big leap forward.

We sing while denouncing Confucius and Lin Piao,
Our bumper wheat harvest, fruit of our mass movement,
We're sending now in carts to the state;
Cartloads of wheat and cartloads of song.

Li Chu-peng

A Myriad Red Flowers Welcome the Spring

Bright are plum, cassia and peony blossoms,
But none so gay as Tachai's red flowers.
For they have been tended by Chairman Mao;
Buffeted by storms, they but grow more splendid.

The Cultural Revolution came like spring thunder,
Red flags unfurled on hills and by streams.
In agriculture, the whole country learns from Tachai;
A myriad red flowers welcome the spring.

Li Chu-peng is a member of Liuchuang Brigade.

Liang Shuang-cheng

Spring Comes Swiftly Under Their Deft Fingers

Sounds of singing flow down the mountainside,
Climbing closer we see gay flowers in the trees;
These are our girls doing the pruning,
Spring comes swiftly under their deft fingers.

Liang Shuang-cheng is a member of Kungshih Brigade.

Chang Shuang-mei

Bringing Gurgling Streams to Our Fields

Our Iron Girls have plenty of guts,
They've climbed each cliff and gully,
Their singing has startled the barren peaks,
As they've searched the hills for water.

Savage winds only serve to cool their brows,
Their clothes are caked with mud;
In the lee of a cliff, beside their iron cauldron,
They sit and eat in any weather.

Chang Shuang-mei is a woman member of Huanglungti Brigade.

Learning from Tachai's brigade of Iron Girls,
Ours, with picks and hammers, search the hills
To defeat drought and win good crops,
Bringing early spring to this cold northland.

Sparks like stars fly up from their picks,
Under their spades the cliffs give way,
Now a new canal spans the mountains,
Bringing gurgling streams to all our fields.

Bringing Back the Tachai Spirit
(gouache)
by Yeh Hsin, Chang Szu-chun and Yang Piao



大寨新貌

阳泉

大寨一景

Pink Cloud Island

Pink Cloud Island, a novel in 32 chapters, was published in 1974 by the Literary Publishing House of the Chinese People's Liberation Army. The author Chou Hsiao, an army veteran, is well acquainted with the life on the islands in the South China Sea. Encouraged by the revolutionary modern Peking operas, he began to write this novel in 1972.

The book relates events that took place in 1962. Backed by imperialists, revisionists and reactionaries, the Chiang Kai-shek gang, holed up in the Chinese province of Taiwan, decide to launch an offensive against the mainland. Under the guidance of Chairman Mao's teachings on people's war, the armymen and civilians on the south sea islands battle as one man in their defence of the coastline. The fighters and fishermen on Pink Cloud Island are examples of these men. Led by Shih Yu-ting, leader of the garrison troops stationed there, they investigate a case of secrets leaked out to the enemy, discover an enemy line connected to the island's submarine cable and capture the spies who are tapping our military wires from a centre on Sky-bearing Rock. Then, they unearth collaborationists on the island and wipe out an armed force commanded by the traitor Mo Tien-tzu, son of a local despot who before Liberation oppressed the fishermen here. The attempt of the Chiang Kai-shek clique to "recapture the mainland" ends in total failure.

Below are some excerpts from the novel.

— The Editors

SECRETS LEAKED TO THE ENEMY

The spring fishing season was over. The fishing boats from other localities had put out, one after the other, for the western deep-sea fishing grounds. Tranquillity had returned to Pink Cloud Island bay. The sea was calm, its surface as smooth as a mirror; only six boats of the local fishermen's brigade were moored in the spacious bay.

In the wheel-house of Fishing Boat No. 2, just back from an unsuccessful search for fish, an animated discussion was taking place. Shih Yu-ting, leader of the garrison troops stationed on the island, Tseng Hsiu-nu, Party secretary of the fishermen's brigade, old fisherman Uncle Hung and his son Hung Ta-yung, a platoon leader of the brigade's militia, had met to decide on measures to improve their catches. The matter was urgent. They all felt heavy-hearted and anxious, for during the last few days they had not found a single big school of fish and had returned each time almost empty-handed.

In the midst of their discussion, a voice suddenly rang out from the shore: "Old Shih! Old Shih!"

Shih Yu-ting stood up. Leaning on the window frame, he looked out. Hsu Chia-lung, the deputy political instructor, was calling him. Shih waved his hand, beckoning Hsu aboard. But in turn, the deputy political instructor insistently beckoned him ashore. Shih reluctantly left the wheel-house and walked to the prow. "What for?" he shouted.

Hsu opened his mouth to reply, but changed his mind. After a moment's hesitation, he jumped into a sampan and rapidly rowed up to the boat. Shih helped him climb on board and inquired in a low voice, "What's up, Old Hsu?"

Hsu was about to explain when he saw that the people in the wheel-house had already caught sight of him. Again he held back the words on the tip of his tongue, saying simply, "I'll tell you when you come back." With that he turned to go.

Grasping his arm to retain him, Shih asked calmly, "What's happened, Old Hsu? Don't panic, comrade. Our island wouldn't sink into the sea even if the sky fell on it."

"They're investigating a case at headquarters," Hsu said in a low voice and then climbed down to the sampan.

After thinking the matter over quickly, Shih strode back to the wheel-house. Having told Party Secretary Tseng Hsiu-nu that he had urgent business in the office, he leapt on to the waiting sampan. Hsu and he swiftly rowed back in silence. Once ashore they headed straight for the path up the hill.

"What's this investigation about?" Shih asked Hsu.

"Secrets have been leaked to the enemy."

"What secrets?"

"Commissar Yin Cheng-yun just telephoned from headquarters to say they've picked up an enemy intelligence report on the wireless. It gave the figures for the amount of drinking water and grain stored in the tunnel on our island in readiness for war."

Shih was shocked. "How could that have leaked out?" He knit his brow and frowned. "We two worked out those figures together only a couple of days ago, and no one else knew about it."

"Exactly. That's what makes the problem so serious. How could the enemy have got that information so quickly? It's very strange!" Hsu punctuated his words with angry kicks at the pebbles on the path, sending them rolling off in all directions.

Shih slowed his step, trying to contain his emotion as he analysed the situation on the island. The cadres know the approximate amount of drinking water and grain stored in the tunnel, he thought, but none of them know the exact figures. Not only that, but we've never written them down or mentioned them at any discussion among the cadres or at any meeting of the Party branch committee. And yet the enemy has somehow got hold of the exact figures.

Hsu interrupted his thoughts to say anxiously, "Old Shih, you've just come back and don't know the fishermen here too well. Could you have let those figures slip out while discussing the work with someone?"

Shih made no reply but walked on, lost in thought.

Hsieh Li-chun, a Party branch committee member whom Hsu had also informed about the matter, was sitting under a banyan

tree anxiously awaiting their return. When he saw Shih walk meditatively up the stone steps and sit down without saying a word by the stone table where they had often enjoyed the cool of the evening, he decided not to disturb him. Instead, he went into the house to fetch two cups of water which he placed on the table in front of Shih and Hsu.

After a moment Shih looked up at Hsu. "I've thought it over carefully," he said firmly. "Except for reporting the figures to garrison headquarters that evening, I'm certain I didn't breathe a word about them to anyone — not even to Comrade Hsiu-nu."

"That makes it even more peculiar," Hsu shook his head. "I've racked my brains too to remember everything I've said in the past few days and I'm positive I haven't uttered a word about it either. How did it leak out then?"

"Could the leak have come from headquarters?" put in Hsieh Li-chun.

"Commissar Yin said they've investigated that possibility," Hsu replied. "He's sure that no one there is responsible. He insists that the leakage is here, on our island. With the help of the cadres of the fishermen's brigade we're to investigate the matter thoroughly and report our findings to headquarters right away."

There was a long silence. Shih was thinking hard. Suddenly his eyes widened. "Could someone have overheard it by tapping the telephone wires?" he suggested.

"It's possible." Hsieh nodded. "During the war both our men and the enemy often tapped each other's wires to get military intelligence."

Shih bent forward and said, "You know, I've remembered that the day after my return here the telephone operator reported that transmissions from outside had become weaker." Turning to Hsu he asked, "Did he tell you about it?"

Hsu reflected. "Yes, he did. I told him to check the equipment, but he didn't find anything wrong."

Having commanded a communications unit for four years, Shih knew something about wireless equipment and cables. He decided

to investigate the island's communication system more thoroughly. He began immediately by sending for the telephone operator to question him further.

The operator confirmed what Hsu had said: the whole system had been checked carefully; the transmitter was operating normally; the batteries were new and the wires correctly connected to the submarine cable. In his opinion, transmission had been impaired by the big waves and strong winds out at sea.

As soon as the operator had left, Shih set to thinking again. After a moment he raised his head and weighing his words said to Hsu and Hsieh: "The commissar has told us to learn from our past experience and be vigilant at all times, for there may be enemy agents within our ranks. This leak is a warning that on this island of ours there are hidden class enemies plotting in the dark. The situation is critical; we must call a Party committee meeting immediately. Old Hsu, please be ready to make a detailed report about this at the meeting. Mind you stress the need for absolute secrecy."

Hsu nodded his approval. "I'll go and notify all the committee members right away."

Shih added, "You know that Hsiu-nu and her fishing brigade have just held a meeting to discuss their problems. I think we should choose among our soldiers those most experienced in fishing and send them to help the brigade look for schools of fish. We must give them our whole-hearted support."

"Of course," Hsu agreed. "I'll tell the platoons about it and ask them to make the necessary arrangements."

After Hsu had left, Shih turned to Hsieh. "Old Hsieh, we must rely on the masses and get to the bottom of this as soon as possible. You know most of the people both here on the coast and in the mountains. While on your rounds to see patients or out in search of herbs in the mountains, keep your eyes open."

Overjoyed at being entrusted with this important new task, Hsieh replied without hesitation, "Rest assured, Old Shih, I'll do my very best."

THE BLACK WIRE

After this incident Medical Officer Hsieh Li-chun kept a close watch on everything that happened on the island, whether he was out visiting patients or collecting medicinal herbs. One day the medical department at headquarters asked him to look for the silkworm germander, a rare herb used for curing neurasthenia and pulmonary tuberculosis. Since this plant grows in the damp crevices of high cliffs, he had climbed the mountains several days in a row searching for it, without success. Undaunted, he set off again immediately after breakfast the following day and after half an hour reached precipitous Lookout Cliff.

Holding on to branches, he slid slowly down a bushy ravine, his eyes fixed all the while on the damp crevices on either side. All of a sudden his foot slipped; the branch under it snapped in two and he began plunging down the face of the cliff. Luckily, he managed to catch hold of a small tree two metres below. When he had steadied himself, he looked down and saw the angry foam-tipped waves tossing and pounding at the foot of the high cliff. What a narrow escape! he thought, breathing a sigh of relief.

He was busy wiping the perspiration from his forehead with his sleeve when he spotted two healthy germander plants in a damp crevice right in front of him. Twenty centimetres high, with strong stalks and stems, they looked like silkworms lying among the rocks. Their round, prickly leaves, though small and few, were striking, purple-tinged on the upper surface and scarlet on the lower. Hsieh eagerly clambered over to them. He was reaching out to dig them up with a small hoe when his eye fell on a black wire running along a crack in the cliff. "That's strange," he thought. "What's this wire doing here? As an old islander I thought I knew every wire on the whole island."

His many years in the army had taught him to be vigilant at all times. He quickly stood up to have a better look and found that one end of the wire ran along the crack toward the southwest; the other wound up the cliff northward and disappeared into the grass near the woods. At once his mind flashed back to the task Shih had entrusted

him with and the talk with the telephone operator. Leaving the herbs, he set out to follow the black wire northward. It snaked through the woods and over a small clearing, then vanished into the earth. Having examined this place, he continued his search. Judging from the direction the wire had taken before disappearing, he was certain it ran toward the coast where the island telephone wire joined the submarine cable.

The thought that the enemy took a special interest in their island made his hair stand on end. The enemy might even launch a military attack on it! Defying the danger of plummeting into the sea below, he half-slid down the steep slippery cliff to the coast and quickly dug up the earth covering the cable. Just as he had expected, he saw the black wire biting like a viper at the juncture of the cable where it connected with the island switch-board.

This discovery set the blood racing through his veins. He cautiously looked around but found nothing else that seemed suspicious. He decided to go back and report to the leadership right away. On the way back he carefully examined the location of the black wire once again so as to make an accurate and detailed report, and with branches and stones marked the places where it disappeared from sight.

"Medical Officer Hsieh!" called out Shih from a distance as he approached accompanied by soldier Wang Ying and the telephone operator from the southern beach.

"Why in such a hurry, Hsieh? What on earth's happened?" Shih asked as they strode up to him.

Panting, Hsieh told them what he had seen on the cliff.

"Wire-tapping!" the telephone operator let out a cry. "Someone has been tapping our line to headquarters?"

"There are enemy agents on this island, that's for sure," put in Wang Ying.

While listening to his comrades, Shih fixed his eyes on Lookout Cliff. "Did you check the southwest end of the black wire?" he asked Hsieh in a low voice.

"No, I didn't have time," replied Hsieh.

"Let's go and have a look." With a sweeping gesture, Shih led his comrades toward the perilous cliff. They climbed one precipice after another, hot on the tracks of the wire.

The black wire was so craftily laid that it was very difficult to spot, sometimes winding through cracks in the rocks, sometimes creeping along the face of the steep cliff high above the sea. However, Shih and his comrades trailed it until they discovered a place where the wire emerged from the rocks and went underground. Shih examined the loosened earth there but could not figure out where it had gone to. It seemed to have disappeared completely.

The telephone operator looked downcast, but suddenly Wang Ying cried out: "Team leader, it comes out here!"

Shih and the others hurried over and saw that the black wire reappeared among the decayed leaves in the woods. It then ran on twenty metres further and disappeared into the wall of a dilapidated blockhouse, left over from the Japanese occupation.

"Be on your guard!" Shih ordered in a low voice.

Hsieh nodded. He knew that the derelict blockhouse was covered with plants and grasses and that very few people ever came here, its only visitors being an occasional goat or some other wild animal. He quickly signalled to Wang Ying and the telephone operator to take cover.

Shih drew out his gun and took up a position to one side of a loop-hole. He listened intently. All was quiet inside. Glancing at the wire, he saw it reappear now and then among the grasses to streak into the back of the blockhouse through a crack in the cement foundation.

The rust-covered iron door of the blockhouse was wide open. There was no one inside, but the small iron door of the inner room was half shut. Shih gave it a forceful kick. With a piercing screech it flew open and flakes of rust showered down into the pool of water on the ground. The room was dark and empty.

Shih put away his gun. Squinting a little, he searched the room with his eyes and quickly spotted the black wire gleaming darkly in the light pouring in through the door. It ran along the wall to a corner where it was spliced on to a cable.



Hsieh, walking in, cried out in surprise, "That's the cable laid by the Japanese invaders!"

"That's right," said Shih as he stepped closer to the cable. He bent down and looked at it carefully. Its copper wires, grown green from disuse, had been polished brightly at the juncture of the wire and the cable.

By then the telephone operator and Wang Ying had also come in. "Damn it!" Wang Ying swore indignantly. "Where does that cable go to?"

"Dirty dogs!" swore the telephone operator, moving forward. "I'll disconnect their wire."

"Wait a minute," Shih grasped his hand.

"But they'll go on tapping our line, team leader!" The operator's eyes were bloodshot with rage.

"We can use the other circuit to make important reports to headquarters," Shih told him. He was referring to another cable that left the island at its northwest end and linked it to the other islands, from where their reports could be put through to headquarters.

From Shih's tightly knit brows Hsieh knew that his old comrade-in-arms was considering their best tactics. He patted the operator and Wang Ying on the shoulder and winked to them. They all left the blockhouse quickly.

After a moment the furrows on Shih's brow disappeared. He closed the iron door, leaving it as they had found it, then obliterated the footprints on the ground.

Outside the blockhouse, Hsieh was keeping watch while the other two fighters, their anger still raging, stood silently gazing at the vast billowing sea.

Shih walked over to them and explained to the operator: "We mustn't disconnect the black wire just yet. We'll leave it so as to keep the enemy hooked."

The man nodded with a glance at Hsieh, and made no further objection.

Shih strode to the top of the cliff and gazed into the distance. His glance swept slowly from the boundless sea in the southwest to the islands looming up in the northeast, then back again to the southwest. His eyes finally came to rest on a dark speck at the horizon — Sky-bearing Rock. He recalled how he and Yin Cheng-yun had come to this blockhouse the year Pink Cloud Island was liberated to find out where the Japanese cable went. They had decided that it ran under the sea to Sky-bearing Rock.

"It's clear that the enemy is using the Japanese cable to tap our line," said Hsieh walking over to Shih. "It's from this black wire they got the figures for our water and grain. There's no doubt about it. But where does the cable end?"

"What do you think?" Shih asked.

"I saw you gazing at Sky-bearing Rock," Hsieh said. "Do you think it goes there?"

"Yes. During the Pacific War the Japanese set up a secret communications centre there with a network of cables."

"But they were all destroyed, weren't they?"

"Perhaps not thoroughly enough."

"But we've maintained a constant sea patrol for years..."

"Our enemies aren't dead; they're active too. There may be some hidden enemies in the area who know our patrol's general movements."

The anger in Hsieh's heart flared up again. Since Liberation he had battled with many adverse winds and waves but had never met with such a worrying problem. He fumed, "Whoever laid the black wire seems to know our island very well. Perhaps he's an old hand at espionage."

"I think you're right. He must be a big fish." Shih's lip curled contemptuously.

"Have you any idea who could have done it, Old Shih?" Hsieh demanded eagerly.

"No one's born a know-all! We'll have to investigate." Shih laid one hand on Hsieh's shoulder and went on, his voice ringing with emotion, "We must search, must put up a fight! Sooner or later we'll get to the bottom of this and catch the fish. But you see, Old Hsieh, catching the enemy is just like curing an illness; you doctors can only prescribe when you know the disease. To do battle, we must burrow beneath the surface, proceed from appearances to the heart of the matter. But from the looks of things I can assure you that, by the end of this battle, we shall have unearthed a lot more than just one or two spies."

"You mean the enemy's planning to launch an armed offensive against our island?"

"In the past, the enemy did their utmost to tap our wires so as to collect military intelligence. Now they've laid this black wire again, not without incurring great risks and using precious hidden forces. They seem to be doing it at all costs. Why? Merely to get infor-

mation about our garrison troops here? Well, let's go and look at the other end of this wire."

"Oh, yes, I didn't refill the hole I dug there. Let's go quickly." Hsieh started moving off in high spirits.

"Old Hsieh," Shih said with a smile, "you went to a lot of trouble to find those two germanders, why not go back and pick them on the way? Behave as if nothing had happened."

Hsieh understood. Blinking his eyes in admiration, he said to himself: "Old Shih, you really do think of everything. You're calm and far-sighted whatever problems come up."

Shih turned to send Wang Ying back to the southern beach, warning him not to say anything about their discovery. Then he and the telephone operator set out to check the other end of the black wire.

After the meeting of the Party branch committee, Shih made a second report through the other circuit to headquarters. At the end of this report he proposed four emergency measures to the leadership for approval: 1, to give the Second Platoon the task of keeping a close watch over the black wire; 2, to use the indirect circuit for transmitting important messages, but at the same time to keep the direct line working as usual so as not to alert the enemy; 3, to arouse the masses, first soldiers, then civilians, starting with Party members, and rely on the masses in the search; 4, to organize a secret reconnaissance expedition to Sky-bearing Rock as soon as possible.

The Party committee fully approved these four measures and ordered Shih to put them into action immediately.

AN EXPEDITION TO SKY-BEARING ROCK

Riding the waves across the dark waste of the sea, a junk with an outboard motor sped like a torpedo towards Sky-bearing Rock.

This was the first night mission on the sea for the fighters Peng Kang and Wang Ying, and they wondered at the novelty of it all. As the boat cut through the waves, its prow, pointing skyward, ploughed up two lines of phosphorescent foam. In its wake these lines joined to form a single streamer which tossed up and down till

it faded from sight, dyed black by the night sea. As far as the eye could see, white foam leapt and swirled, taking on a thousand different shapes. . . . Suddenly, Wang Ying called out in happy astonishment, "Look, Peng Kang. Lights!"

To the south, at the point where the water met the sky, Peng Kang caught sight of what seemed to be a city, its myriad lights forming a sparkling band several miles long. It was in fact the commune fishing fleet. Fascinated, Peng Kang stood up exclaiming: "What a sight! Just like a festival in town." Turning to Uncle Hung at the helm, he asked, "How do you like those fishing lights, uncle?"

"They're grand. A fisherman loves the sea and lighted boats the same way a worker does machines or a peasant the land." Thinking back he added, "But before Liberation the sea was pitch-dark. There were only the ghostly flickering lights on the imperialist and Kuomintang warships."

By now Shih Yu-ting and Tseng Hsiu-nu had joined them. At this mention of the old days, Shih suggested, "Our new fighters don't know the history of Sky-bearing Rock, uncle. Why not tell them about the narrow escape you had here?"

Uncle Hung scanned the dark sea before letting Tseng Hsiu-nu take the helm. Sitting down, he looked round at Shih Yu-ting and the fighters and then slowly began his story.

During the Anti-Japanese War, Uncle Hung had worked as a shrimper for Mo Ho-tien, the despot of the fishing village. One day he and some other fishermen were intercepted at sea by a Japanese gunboat manned by a square-faced, beady-eyed traitor and several Japanese soldiers who carried them all off to Sky-bearing Rock. There, the Japanese invaders were building a secret communications system needed in the Pacific War. Uncle Hung and thirty other fishermen and peasants were forced to work all day long, unloading boats, carrying cement and sand, and quarrying. When the concrete fortifications were completed, they were made to climb up the face of a precipice to widen cracks and chisel out long grooves running from the sea all the way to the top of the cliff.

One day at noon, a big warship sailed up from the east and dropped anchor near by. Sky-bearing Rock was dwarfed by the towering

vessel. A loudspeaker shrilled. The Japanese troops on the tiny island snapped stiffly to attention. Then whistles blew. At this signal, the Japanese soldiers and the traitor, bellowing wildly, drove Uncle Hung and his mates to the edge of a precipice. Soon a Japanese officer came ashore from a launch and, escorted by a Japanese captain, inspected the fortifications. After this they conferred for some time in the shade of the lighthouse, casting baleful glances at the group of Chinese. Then the officer left.

That night Uncle Hung was restless and worried. He sat leaning against the cold, damp stone wall of the cellar, thinking over the events of the day. Could the blood-thirsty invaders be planning to kill them so as to keep the work they had done a secret? Suddenly, the stillness of the night was broken. Heart-rending shrieks drowned the roaring of the waves. They came from the quarters of the dozen peasants in the western part of the island. Awakened by the cries, the fishermen with Uncle Hung jumped up to see what had happened. But on a platform, just outside, eight Japanese soldiers, bellowing and cursing, were training a machine-gun on their door.

Before Uncle Hung and his companions could think of a way to deal with the situation, the soldiers dashed in like hungry wolves. Bellowing, they drove the twenty-odd fishermen all the way to the edge of the precipice at the western end of the island and, forming a semi-circle, trained their rifles and bayonets on them.

Then the beady-eyed traitor whispered something to the Japanese captain. Flourishing his sword, the captain in turn gave an order to two soldiers who fetched a coil of thick wire. One of them grabbed a fisherman and bound his wrists together with the wire. When he began trussing up another fisherman, Uncle Hung realized that the Japanese were preparing to throw them into the sea.

"The savage bandits!" he thought and quickly called out, "Brothers! Jump into the sea. Don't wait to be killed!"

Alerted, four fishermen broke away from the soldiers and plunged into the sea. The Japanese captain raised his sword and roared. The traitor, his beady eyes ablaze, dashed up to grab Uncle Hung who, cursing, kicked him in the chest and sent him sprawling on the ground. In the commotion that followed, Uncle Hung spun

round and with two bounds took a headlong leap from the cliff, down into the pounding sea. . . .

Shih Yu-ting broke in indignantly, "Sky-bearing Rock may be small, but it's steeped in the blood of our fishermen. Engraved with the hatred of the Chinese people!"

With clenched fists the fighters listened, taking each word to heart.

"Uncle, is it true," one of them asked, "that a few years ago Mo Tien-tzu, the son of the fishing despot, was boasting in Taiwan that he was going to cross the sea and fight his way back to Surf Peak?"

"Yes. And now the U.S. imperialists are backing the Chiang Kai-shek clique in their attempts to 'counter-attack the mainland'. Mo Tien-tzu says he's going to come back and kill me. He wants to hang my head over the gate of his house. Well, I'm ready for him," Uncle Hung said fearlessly.

Peng Kang ground his teeth. "If he dares to come back, it's *his* head we'll hang up."

"Good." Uncle Hung laughed. "We'll take care of him together."

As soon as they had skirted Shark Pass, Sky-bearing Rock loomed up ahead like a majestic black warship on the night sea. On all sides of the island, angry waves surged and thundered, throwing up torrential spray. It was a thrilling sight. The deserted lighthouse and concrete fortifications were the only traces of the past now left on the island. The dock built by the British imperialists and reconstructed by the Japanese had been demolished by the Kuomintang shortly before Liberation. And then in the first few months after Liberation, all the lighthouse equipment had been stolen by marauders.

All this time, Squad Leader Li Chih-chiang had been at the prow, ceaselessly observing the island. Shih went over and inquired, "Well?"

"Nothing to report."

"Tell the combat groups to prepare for landing." Shih added, "Keep an eye on Peng Kang and Wang Ying. See they know what to do."

The boat nosed into a triangular inlet.

As an incoming wave tilted up the prow Shih Yu-ting leapt nimbly on to Sky-bearing Rock. Running head down, rifle in hand, he and two veteran fighters dashed into the lighthouse. They searched the rooms but found no one. Having taken the building, they now commanded the island.

Tseng Hsiu-nu tied the boat to a boulder and spread some sacks on the slippery rocks. At a signal from Shih she waved her gun and called, "Let's go, comrades."

The fighters jumped rapidly on to the rocks and divided into three reconnaissance groups. Ten minutes later they reported to Shih and Tseng. Their search of the lighthouse, fortifications, cellar, caves and crevices in the rocks had revealed no trace at all of the enemy.

Tseng Hsiu-nu had not expected to find anyone, as she supposed that the enemy only came here from time to time. Yet she was surprised that they had left no traces.

After some thought she said, "The enemy may cover their tracks but they can't take the submarine cable with them to Taiwan. Our task is to examine the cables laid by the Japanese to find out whether the one in the blockhouse on our island ends here. If so, we must look for signs of recent use too."

"That's right, we can't afford to overlook anything," Uncle Hung agreed. "Enemy agents are tricky—any crack in our defence and they slip through like mercury. It was only after Liberation that I learned that those grooves we made had been used to lay cables. We did destroy some of them, remember, Yu-ting? But we may not have cleaned up the whole lot."

"This time we must do the job thoroughly," said Shih, immediately setting off with the fighters to investigate.

On the northern slope Shih Yu-ting, Uncle Hung and Tseng Hsiu-nu examined the four cables they had wrecked after Liberation. These strong rubber-covered cables, that emerged from the sea to run up the grooves in the precipice, had been covered with a layer of cement that concealed them almost perfectly. But now, since some of the cement had been smashed, torn or severed cables could be seen in places, while in others the rubber covering had been strip-

ped off, exposing the rust-covered wires. Inspection showed that none of these four lines had been put into use again.

The fighters returned after an hour without having discovered a fifth line.

Shih looked at his watch. It was two o'clock in the morning. Since it would be extremely difficult to find a craftily-laid cable at night, he had to make a decision quickly. "Let me see," he said. "Li Chih-chiang, Peng Kang, Wang Ying and I will stay here until tomorrow night. You others will return to the island before day-break. Hsiu-nu, ask Instructor Hsu to make a report to headquarters."

"But we've made no preparations to stay, we haven't brought along any food or water," Hsiu-nu protested.

"We can get water here. Remember that well on the southern slope?"

"What about food then? I'll go and see what I can find in the cabin." Uncle Hung went back to the boat and rummaged around for some time. He returned with less than half a kilogram of rice in a pot. Frowning, the old man said with concern, "This is all I could find. Not enough for a whole day. Why not come back another time when we're prepared?"

"If we don't get to the bottom of this, uncle, we won't be able to take the initiative. That could affect the outcome of the whole struggle." Continuing firmly, Shih said, "We can find food for ourselves wherever we are, whether in the mountains or on the sea. Besides, we have this rice. There's nothing to worry about."

Uncle Hung nodded but sighed, "There's hardly more than a mouthful of rice each."

Li, Peng and Wang retorted cheerfully, "We're much better off than the Red Army when they marched through the marshes and climbed the snowy mountains. Please go back, uncle and Party Secretary Tseng. Don't worry about us."

"You're right," said Uncle Hung, handing the rice with some salt and matches to Li Chih-chiang. With his eyes on the two new recruits he went on, "'A good steed is not trained in a courtyard nor does a pine grow sturdy in a greenhouse.' Well, carry out your task. We'll await good news from you on Pink Cloud Island."

After their departure the weather began to change. At daybreak, dark menacing clouds bore down from the southeast, casting huge shadows on the sea. Presently a long curtain of rain turned the sky and the sea the same leaden, opaque grey. A storm was brewing.

Peng Kang was to keep watch in the lighthouse. Shih and the others climbed to the top with him. From the window, Shih surveyed the tiny island through the rain. He pondered for a long time then said to himself: "Our Pink Cloud Island is to the northwest of this island and most submarine cables follow a straight line. So the cable we're looking for must be somewhere along the northwestern part of the coast."

Suddenly Peng spoke up behind him, "Team leader, I think we should search the northwestern part of the island since it faces Pink Cloud Island."

Shih spun around. Highly pleased, he patted Peng's broad shoulder. "That's just what I was thinking."

"Let's go back and search again," a beaming Peng suggested.

"Right. Come on." Shih left with Peng after telling Wang to keep watch and Li to cook.

The torrential rain seemed to have polished the slopes and cliffs making them even more slippery. Shih and Peng had to proceed very cautiously. A single slip and they would plummet into the sea. At the top of a precipice in the northwest, Shih told Peng to keep watch. Unfastening the coil of nylon rope attached to his belt, he tied one end of it to a rugged rock and the other end around his waist. He slowly let himself down.

Grooves and cracks criss-crossed the hazardous precipice now before his eyes. Something suddenly arrested his attention. Looking closer he saw a dark grey streak on the brownish red cliff. When he whipped out a dagger and tapped it the place gave off the hollow sound of a cement-covered cable groove. The streak ran down the precipice, disappearing into the water through a small hole in the rock.

Squatting at the top, Peng Kang could see from Shih's expression and movements that he must have discovered something. He

too began to explore the rock. The dark grey streak curved a little to one side and then stretched straight up along the northern face of the cliff. He called out jubilantly, "It's the cable line, team leader. It comes up the north side!"

With his sleeve, Shih wiped away the sweat running down his forehead. He then craned his head to look up along the cement streak. Li was just going to start cooking when he heard Peng's jubilant call. He hurried over and helped Shih up. Peng eagerly pointed out to them what he had discovered. The cement streak ran on a short distance and then vanished beneath the foundation of a small cottage built of rock.

"Does it burrow in there underground?" Li wondered.

"It must do. There's no other way. Let's have a look." Shih went through a passage into the stone cottage.

This cottage built beside the lighthouse by the Japanese did not look like the centre of a secret communications system. One corner of the roof had tumbled down and there were piles of rubble on the ground.

Walking around, Li suddenly commented, "That's queer. Look over there, team leader. Why are those broken bricks so well-arranged?"

"That's an important point. It means someone's been sleeping here." Shih had noticed it too, but his attention had already been drawn by something else. He examined the four corners of the room. Three of them were uncluttered but a flag-stone had been set squarely in the corner by the cable outside and seemed out of place among the rest of the debris. Shih stepped over to it with tense anticipation and, removing the stone, saw a hole as big as a cup. He probed this with his fingers and drew out the end of a rust-covered cable. Its tip gleamed brightly, indicating recent use.

"So this is where they tapped our conversations." Li let out a long sigh of relief.

Shih carefully replaced the cable and the stone. Wiping away his sweat with the back of his hand, he said indignantly, "The equipment the Japanese invaders installed twenty years ago has now been

put to use once again by the Chiang Kai-shek clique. We must be on the alert."

"Shall we set up an ambush here?" Li asked.

"We'll have to do a lot of careful planning before we can wipe out both our enemies and their agents at each end of the cable," Shih replied. "They've been tapping our telephone line to prepare for an armed attack. But we have no idea yet how they operate at this end of the cable or who the spies are on our island. A lot of hard work has to be done before we can get to the bottom of this." Preoccupied with this problem, Shih slowly walked out.

Peng Kang ran up the lighthouse steps as fast as he could, to take the good news to Wang Ying and to relieve him of his sentry duty.

His face flushed with excitement, Wang flew down the stairs, shouting, "How did you find the place, team leader?" Noticing that Li was carrying something wet and bulging wrapped in his shirt, he asked curiously, "What have you got there, squad leader?"

"Ingredients." Li laughed.

"Ingredients?"

"For chowder. Here, have a look." Laying his bundle on the ground, Li opened it to disclose a pile of abalones, oysters and clams.

"Wonderful!" Wang Ying squatted down to have a closer look.

"This chowder is going to be far more delicious than any chicken or meat broth," said Li with a twinkle, as he began to pry open the oysters and clams with his dagger.

"I'll chop some wood and put the pot on to cook," Wang Ying volunteered. "I know how to make a smokeless fire." Seeing that Shih was smiling at him, he leaned towards him and added, "We're going to have a real feast with this chowder."

Fondly patting him on the back, Shih laughed. "We must eat it all up. Finish the lot in one go."

RETURNING WITH A BIG CATCH

The moonless nights at the beginning and end of each lunar month are the best time for fishing with lights. It was on one of these

evenings called "Black Moon Water" by the fishermen that the fleet set out to sea.

Ever since the expedition to Sky-bearing Rock, Uncle Hung had always sailed past it when he set off for the eastern deep-sea fishing grounds, for Shih had asked him to keep the tiny island under observation.

It was dusk when Trawler No. 5 approached Sky-bearing Rock. While steering, Uncle Hung looked alertly from time to time at the shadowy silhouette of the empty lighthouse.

Suddenly, above the chugging of the engine, his sharp ears caught a shrill bird's cry. Scanning the lighthouse and its vicinity he caught sight of two sea-gulls darting up in fright from the roof. After hovering in the darkening sky for a while, they glided down again.

What had frightened the birds? He had a hunch which at once set his blood racing.

Trawler No. 5 continued cutting through the waves, leaving Sky-bearing Rock behind.

Darkness had set in. Uncle Hung glanced around. The lamps on the brigade's fishing boats and trawlers were shining. Up in front a white light shimmered on the surface of the dark sea. Moving northwards, the patch of light spread gradually, now dimming a little, now glimmering like a huge mirror. It was the light reflected by a shoal of fish swimming near the surface.

"Climb up the mast and observe the shoal, Ta-yung," Uncle Hung called.

Ta-yung ran to the rope ladder and climbed up. He soon called down from the lookout post, "Ahead, to larboard, a shoal of fish has surfaced. About a ton, judging by size and density."

"Get the seine ready!" shouted Uncle Hung as if giving a battle order.

Highly pleased to have come across a big shoal of fish before even entering the fishing grounds, all the fishermen went into action. Moving at full speed, the trawler described a big white circle on the inky sea as they spread the seine. The white light vanished immediately as the shoal sank. But in no time at all it rose to the surface again. The struggling fish threw up layer upon layer of silvery waves. The frightened pilot-fish could no longer lead. His

panic-stricken shoal darted in all directions, some diving down as far as they could, others struggling to leap out of the water as if they were trying to upturn the sea.

The seine was drawn and the fishermen set to work hauling it in. Laughter and singing rang out on the trawler as they brought out salt and began scooping up the fish and throwing them into the hold.

Sitting alone on the cabin roof, Uncle Hung kept his eyes glued on Sky-bearing Rock. He was thinking. . . .

"Aren't you feeling well, dad?" Ta-yung ran up to ask.

When told about the sea-gulls, Ta-yung was sorry he hadn't spotted them. Although the birds' sudden flight seemed suspicious, father and son both agreed that it was not sufficient proof that the enemy was there. They decided to fish near the island that night in order to keep it under observation and act if necessary.

"Have a spell of rest, dad. I'll stay here and keep watch."

"Spotting the enemy is far more important than finding a shoal of fish. It affects our whole struggle. You must be alert."

"Yes, I understand. Don't worry."

When all the fish had been stowed away, three small boats were sent out to patrol the sea. The trawler anchored southeast of Sky-bearing Rock and Uncle Hung and the crew turned in for the night.

Bracing himself eagerly for his task, Ta-yung swarmed up to the lookout post which swung through the air as the vessel bobbed and swayed. It would have made many a sailor's head spin, but toughened by wind and waves since childhood, Ta-yung enjoyed it as a child would a swing. Perched up there with one hand on the lookout railing, he kept his eyes riveted on the lighthouse looking for signs of the enemy. "If they've come, we'll catch them like turtles in a jar," he chuckled to himself.

Uncle Hung lay wide awake on his bunk thinking over the intricacies of class struggle. Months had gone by since the black wire was discovered and the location where the enemy tapped our wires had been found on Sky-bearing Rock. But the enemy had never shown up. Even when Mo Tien-tzu had cruised in the waters near by, exploring a new route on the sea, there had been no sign of ac-

tivity on the island. If they had come back now, then it must be to prepare for an armed attack, which was probably scheduled to take place fairly soon. He had to unravel the mystery of the birds. Encouraged by Chairman Mao's teaching, "**Never forget class struggle,**" Uncle Hung got up abruptly and left the cabin. The howling sea wind was biting cold. He went back to fetch Ta-yung's sweater and wrap himself in a blanket.

Ta-yung was still on the lookout post. His profile silhouetted against the night sky showed intense concentration. Uncle Hung was satisfied. "Come down and put on a sweater, Ta-yung. It's cold," he said, walking slowly over to the mast.

Ta-yung climbed down the rope ladder. He rubbed his eyes, smarting from the wind, and then stretched his arms and legs. "Black Moon Water nights are the best time for discovering fish and luring them with lights. But not for watching enemy activities. In three hours I didn't see a soul."

"It isn't that simple." Uncle Hung's fondness for his son had grown in the past months as Ta-yung made steady progress. Seeing the lad hugging his arms and huddling his shoulders to warm himself, he gave him the sweater and urged, "You can turn in now."

"I'm not sleepy. I'll put on my sweater and stay. . . ."

"Do as you're told," growled his father, as if angry. Ta-yung left obediently.

Uncle Hung walked over to the prow, to inspect the three small boats which lured fish with their lights. At the bow of two of them, two girls in padded coats were seated cross-legged, keeping a careful watch on the sea around. The young man on the third boat was also at his post, priming a pressure-lamp. Reassured, Uncle Hung went into the wheel-house. Sitting on a high stool he again took up his watch, observing Sky-bearing Rock closely. The night sky, though moonless, was studded with bright stars. But the buildings and rocks on the island were barely discernible. The old man tried to memorize the rugged lines of each rock and precipice and the contours of the buildings, his eyes moving from left to right and then back again. If anyone had been moving about there, the old man's sharp eyes would certainly have picked him out. As he watched

he reflected, "That's odd. If the enemy have really come, why haven't they posted a sentinel? Could he be hiding in the lighthouse? Perhaps he's keeping watch at the top. I must think of some way of making sure they're there."

The low-pitched call of a conch rent the air. A shoal of fish had been sighted by one of the boats.

Uncle Hung didn't move. Suddenly an obscure figure seemed to take form in the doorway of the lighthouse before vanishing abruptly. The sea wind made the old man's eyes water. He quickly wiped them and, with bated breath, went on watching.

Toot, toot, toot! The conch blared again, this time louder and more insistent.

Uncle Hung kept his eyes glued on the lighthouse doorway. Once again the obscure figure appeared. But, just at that moment, tears blurred the old fisherman's eyes. By the time he had wiped them away, the figure had disappeared.

Uncle Hung looked up. Dawn would soon be breaking. He turned anxiously to observe the island again. Had he really seen a man? Perhaps he should wake Ta-yung and have him look too. As he was pondering, Ta-yung came striding up.

Uncle Hung told him what he had seen and asked him to watch the lighthouse doorway too.

This gave Ta-yung renewed energy and he riveted his eyes on the doorway. But the figure never returned.

"Since you saw him, dad, let's set off at daybreak and report it."

"But I'm not sure. I may just have imagined it. There's no room for mistakes in reporting on enemy movements."

"What should we do then?"

Suddenly a loud conch signal sounded from their second boat.

"Quick, look carefully!" Thinking the signal might make the enemy stir from his hideout, they both stared at the doorway. But this time nothing happened. The old man promptly decided that it was time to cast the seine. He sent Ta-yung to wake up the fishermen while he himself went down to start the engine.

Suddenly the morning star leapt lightly over the horizon and beamed down on the dark earth. Night would soon give way to day. Time

and again, Uncle Hung observed the doorway, but the figure didn't reappear. By turns he gazed anxiously from the tiny island to the morning star.

Ta-yung entered in soaring spirits. "We can take action at daybreak. Team Leader Shih once told me some ways of coping with a situation like this. I think I can put one of his ideas to good use this time."

Uncle Hung looked at his son expectantly.

Scratching his head, Ta-yung continued, "But I've got to go to the island."

"Well, what's your plan? Speak up," the old man urged. He too had been considering the necessity of going to the island.

"We'll inspect the well." Ta-yung went on excitedly, "Team Leader Shih said that the enemy are sure to use the well on the southern slope. When water is taken from a well, a mark is left on the wall. We'll only have to look at the well, dad, to know whether the enemy have come or not."

"Hmm, that's a good idea," the old man approved, his brows smoothing out for an instant, before knitting again.

"Don't hesitate, dad. Make up your mind."

"Hmm. . . ." The old man went on thinking, his eyes on Sky-bearing Rock, clearly silhouetted against the lightening sky.

The sky in the east was turning a pearly white, like the underside of a fish. Ta-yung's eagerness knew no bounds. "What's wrong, dad? Why are you holding back?"

"Your dad is willing to go through all kinds of hardships to safeguard our motherland." His silver beard quivering, he paused as if to gauge his son's determination. "But we must consider all eventualities beforehand. If the enemy get suspicious and pounce on us, or if they use their guns in panic, how should we act?"

Ta-yung thought for a moment. "We'll pretend we've only gone there to fetch water. If they don't believe us or try to attack us, we'll keep calm. Our men are all out here on the sea, dad. The enemy are like drowning mice. They're scared to death and won't dare expose themselves."

"Good. We must always plan carefully ahead."

Encouraged by this, Ta-yung added, "We must play our parts well, dad. Team Leader Shih is waiting to wipe out the armed invaders so we mustn't scare them off."

"Good for you. You know how to use your head," said the old man softly. Smiling lovingly at his son, he went on, "Caution comes first in carrying out a good plan. When we're on the island, don't look around too much and don't talk too loudly. Prick up your ears. If something crops up, look to me for a cue."

"Yes, dad, don't worry," Ta-yung answered solemnly.

"Let's get ready." Uncle Hung walked over to the two fishermen at the bow and told them their duties. Ta-yung fetched a bucket and a coconut bowl. Father and son jumped down into a sampan.

The sampan darted like an arrow over the waves. The sight of the myriad fishing lights flickering on the sea gave them added strength and they pulled powerfully at the oar. They landed on the tiny island as the eastern sky was brightening.

The island was in a deathlike slumber. The morning wind whistled in their ears and the pounding waves echoed eerily in the caves. Frightened by the intruders, crabs of all sizes fled, crawling frantically over rugged rocks and reefs.

Uncle Hung walked ahead holding the coconut bowl. Ta-yung followed with the bucket. They made straight for the well on the southern slope.

As they walked along, they heard a dull thud as if something had been knocked over in the abandoned lighthouse. Then, when they were quite near the well, they distinctly heard a pistol being cocked in the lighthouse some dozen metres away.

Uncle Hung's heart leapt with joy. The lines around his eyes deepened slightly and then smoothed out again. As they came up to the well, he glanced at his son.

Ta-yung returned his glance calmly. Inwardly, he was cursing, "The son of a bitch. He considers two unarmed fishermen who've come to fetch water as dangerous enemies."

Silence fell upon the lighthouse once again. Nothing stirred inside.

Uncle Hung squatted beside the well. Just as they had expected there was a dark ring an inch wide above the water. Uncle Hung couldn't tear his eyes from it.

Ta-yung saw it too. Flushing with excitement, he could hardly contain his joy.

Father and son exchanged knowing glances. Unhurriedly, Ta-yung filled his bucket with the coconut bowl. Uncle Hung listened intently, while calculating how many people there were in the lighthouse from the amount of water used.

When the bucket was full they stood up and headed back, talking to each other and laughing. A loud noise came from the lighthouse as if somebody had stepped on a tile and broken it. It was so loud that ignoring it would cause suspicion. Exchanging a rapid glance, they halted resolutely, looking back at the lighthouse.

"What's that?" asked Uncle Hung loudly.

"The wind's blown a tile down, I suppose," replied resourceful Ta-yung raising his voice too.

Uncle Hung looked incredulously at his son. "Maybe some sea animals have come ashore?"

"That's most unlikely," Ta-yung retorted. "Forget it," he added impatiently. "Our men on the trawler are all dying of thirst."

"True. The water in our tank is brackish since brine seeped in," declared Uncle Hung loudly as he strode on.

Ta-yung scooped up half a bowl of water from the bucket and smacked his lips at its good taste.

They jumped into the sampan, unfastened the moorings and quickly rowed back to the trawler.

As Trawler No. 5 was sailing back with a full hold, they spotted another shoal of fish. The crew immediately wanted to stop and lower the seine. Since this would help allay the enemy's suspicions, Uncle Hung agreed to cast the seine for a third time.

STORMING SKY-BEARING ROCK

A mantle of darkness enveloped both slumbering Pink Cloud Island and the tranquil sea. A junk with an outboard motor openly left

the island's northern bay and flew at top speed towards the deep-sea fishing grounds.

Half-way there, Shih Yu-ting and his fighters climbed down into a sampan towed by the boat. Standing at the prow, Shih thought, "We need to keep our heads even when the situation is in our favour. We've set off to 'catch the turtles in a jar', but we'll be bitten ourselves if we're complacent and careless."

In the distance lightning flashed and thunder rumbled. Menacing dark clouds moved overhead and soon a light rain began to fall. Amid the thousands of fishing lights, a dim light moved rapidly. He figured it must be the navy gunboat coming along to back them up.

When they were still some distance from Sky-bearing Rock, Uncle Hung ordered his son to detach the tow rope. Immediately the sampan slowed down. The power-driven junk raced past the tiny island and continued at the same speed, acting as a blind, while Uncle Hung pulled vigorously at the oar and brought the sampan round. Riding the waves, they soon reached the northwestern edge of the island. Here jagged reefs scraped the bottom of their sampan, but Uncle Hung steered it skilfully through the rocks.

Shih leapt ashore with Li Chih-chiang, Chu Hsing-pao, Hung Ta-yung, Peng Kang and Wang Ying at his heels. Uncle Hung and another fighter stayed in the sampan, waiting for them to return.

Crouching behind a rock, gun in hand, Shih reconnoitred the terrain. He looked at his watch. It was half past one in the morning. Deciding it was time to capture the enemy sentinel, he signalled to his task force to come over for instructions. Suddenly, voices were heard from the stone cottage where they had discovered the cable end. So the enemy were not sleeping.

As Shih was observing the lighthouse, laughter broke out in the cottage. A sentinel sauntered out, a carbine slung over one shoulder. He looked at the sea for a moment and then walked over to the doorway of the lighthouse, leaning against the wall.

Why was the sentinel on guard there and not in front of the cottage where they tapped the wire? Were most of the enemy hiding

in the lighthouse? Shih ordered resolutely, "Overpower the sentinel. We'll question him."

Crouching, Chu Hsing-pao, Hung Ta-yung and Wang Ying skirted the southern wall of the lighthouse until they were only seven metres from its doorway.

Chu peeped round the corner. The sentinel was still leaning against the wall. His carbine now slung across his chest, he was eating something from a tin with great relish. Chu motioned to Wang Ying, crouching behind him, to move up closer. As Wang raised his foot he sent a small pebble rolling down the slope.

The enemy sentinel started. "Who goes there?"

Chu had a brain wave. Putting his fingers to his lips, he imitated the cries of birds jostling each other in a crowded nest. Simultaneously, Hung stole over and flattened himself against the wall. He slowly stretched his arms forward in readiness. Wang came up behind him with a piece of cloth in his hands. Both lay in wait for the enemy.

After cocking his head and listening for a while, the sentinel decided it was only sea-gulls chattering. He threw the empty tin away and lumbered over.

As soon as his head appeared round the corner, Ta-yung's fingers closed around his throat. Before he could make a sound, Wang Ying and Ta-yung sprang over and gagged him, while Chu disarmed him and bound his hands behind his back. Ta-yung then led him away.

The enemy sentinel was thrown down before Shih who briefed him on our policy to prisoners. Having ungagged him, Shih bombarded him with questions. "How many of you altogether? Where are you hiding out?"

Scared out of his wits, the sentinel looked around in a daze. He didn't answer.

Laughing coldly, Shih whisked out a shining dagger and waved it under the sentinel's nose. The man turned green, shaking with fear.

"Speak up and be quick about it," Shih ordered.

"Five, five of us. Three sleep there..." He indicated the cottage.

"And the other one?"

"He's the vice-commander..."

Doubting that there could be a deputy commander for only four soldiers, Shih demanded, "What kind of a commander is he?"

The sentinel blurted out, "He's the communications chief. He... He has a room facing south on the second floor."

"Well, if you're lying..." Shih glared at him piercingly, his dagger gleaming with a steely glint.

"I swear I'm telling the truth." The sentinel collapsed with fear.

Action had to be taken immediately. Shih ordered Chu and Wang to take the sentinel down to the sampan. Li Chih-chiang and several fighters were to charge the cottage while he, Ta-yung and Peng were to take the lighthouse. To prevent the enemy from escaping by sea the other fighters spread out along the shore.

Li's group crept stealthily along the wall and dashed into the cottage, pointing guns at the enemy. A man wearing ear-phones was smoking in the corner near the cable. On the other side two men were sprawling beside a small transistor radio. Dazed, they slowly put their hands up.

Shih, Ta-yung and Peng slipped into the lighthouse. Ta-yung ran in long strides, burning with excitement at the thought of capturing a high-ranking enemy officer. Suddenly Peng grabbed his leg. Looking down, Ta-yung saw an empty tin. A close call! If Peng hadn't stopped him in time, the man inside would have been alerted.

Footsteps were heard indistinctly. They seemed to come from the second floor. Their eyes wide with expectancy, Peng and Ta-yung looked to Shih for orders.

Eyebrows arched, Shih said briskly in a low voice, "Up!" He ran up the staircase two steps at a time, Peng and Ta-yung close behind him.

Two shots rang out as Shih approached the room. The bullets hit the rock wall opposite, sending sparks flying.

Enraged, Ta-yung pointed his tommy-gun at the door. Shih pushed him aside abruptly. Standing flattened against the wall

beside the door, Ta-yung peered in. The dim room was vacant except for an unoccupied grey hammock, still rocking slightly. Hearing heavy footsteps, Shih looked round and saw a black shadow running up the spiral staircase. At once he shot into the dark room opposite.

"Go downstairs and cut him off there!" shouted Peng.

Peng dashed into the room. Standing out of range against a wall, he yelled to the enemy, "Surrender your arms. The People's Liberation Army is lenient to prisoners."

Ta-yung ran furiously to the bottom of the spiral staircase. There he waited impatiently.

There was no answer to Peng's call. The fighters surrounding the island knew from the shots and Peng's voice that the enemy were besieged. Shouts rang out in all directions.

Shih climbed nimbly out of the window. Gripping the railing of the balcony above, he easily pulled himself up and stood outside the room on the top floor. Trained by long experience of naval manoeuvres at night, Shih could discern any object moving in the dark. Looking through the window he was sure the enemy wasn't there. Had he escaped? It didn't seem probable since the fighters were still shouting for the enemy to surrender. He then peered at the spiral staircase. There he saw a man looking down, his pistol pointed at the bottom of the staircase. A shot rang out. The pistol clattered down the stairs. Shih had aimed well.

Shih jumped through the window crying, "Hands up," his gun trained on the enemy. Howling like a beast, the man pulled out a shining dagger.

Shih looked at him with contempt. He motioned with his gun for him to surrender.

The man sprang forward, roaring. Shih's index finger tightened on the trigger but then relaxed again. Dodging, he tripped up his opponent who fell flat on his face, his dagger flying out of reach. Shih watched calmly while the man grovelled in fear at his feet. Suddenly, the fellow sprang up and made a dash for the window.

"Halt!" Shih shouted. Pouncing on him, he gave him a violent tug which sent him sprawling again.

Like a caged beast the enemy scrambled to his feet and with a savage howl sprang at Shih again.

Like an iron tower Shih stood his ground. With one powerful, well-aimed kick at the other's chest, he sent him flying headlong down the stairs.

Hearing the sound of fighting, Ta-yung and Peng were about to rush up and give their team leader a hand when a dark form came plunging down the stairs. It was a man in a Kuomintang uniform. They closed in on him. Peng Kang pinned his hands behind his back while Ta-yung tied him up with a nylon rope.

Shih came down. "Take him away," he said.

Shih looked at the officer. The place was too dark to make out his features clearly. As they left the lighthouse and joined Li's group, which was leading away the three other prisoners, Shih shone his pocket flashlight on the commander. A man of medium height,



he was wearing an American-style Kuomintang army uniform that gave him a foreign look. He was in his forties with long hair and a beard. In his pale square face, bruised and streaked with blood, two bloodshot eyes were blinking at the bright light.

Shih went over to the other three prisoners. "Is he your vice-commander?" He indicated the man with his flashlight.

"Yes, sir. The communications chief too." The three prisoners nodded their heads frantically.

Shih turned to Peng. "We'll take them back with us." He then detailed some of the fighters to search the island again and bring down to the boat any "trophy" they found.

Following their plan, Uncle Hung had rowed the sampan over to the inlet where they had landed the last time. The junk was waiting there too. When Uncle Hung learned that a deputy commander and all the enemy agents had been captured, he ran up the slope beside himself with joy.

Shih shone his flashlight on the commander's face for the old man to see.

Uncle Hung walked up to him. "You son of a bitch! I'd slap your face if it weren't for our policy."

After searching the island, the fighters brought over the "trophy", which they piled on the deck of the junk. When the Kuomintang officer had been led aboard, Ta-yung started the engine. Uncle Hung brought the boat around and they sped off in victory.

The officer looked familiar to Uncle Hung. He was sure he'd seen him before. Suddenly he cried out, "Ta-yung! Come and take the wheel!"

Ta-yung, who was vividly describing their manoeuvres to the fighters, quickly ran over.

Uncle Hung's voice had sounded strange. "What's wrong, Uncle Hung?" asked Shih.

"Give me your flashlight, quick."

Shih handed it to him.

Uncle Hung went out on the deck. Flashing the light on the five prisoners he stopped at the face of their vice-commander. Even if it were reduced to ashes, he thought, he would still recognize

that square face with its beady eyes. Twenty years ago, when the Japanese invaders were trussing the fishermen up, preparing to kill them in cold blood, those beady eyes had looked on, gleaming in the same baleful way. All of a sudden he seemed to hear once again the despairing cries in the deep of night. The fire of his hatred, with this fresh fuel added to it, blazed up in a fury so great that he could hardly control it. He raised his iron fist, its veins bulging.

"Uncle," Shih intervened in a soft voice.

Uncle Hung's arm dropped slowly. Tears of hate ran down his face.

"Ah, this. . . This is the traitor, Yu-ting. He was the one who helped the Japanese kill so many of us on Sky-bearing Rock."

All the fighters closed in with fury.

Trying hard to contain his own anger, Shih motioned to the fighters to calm down. The Kuomintang officer was shaking, his square face white with fear. "No wonder you know Sky-bearing Rock so well," said Shih between clenched teeth.

His hatred overflowing, Uncle Hung spoke, his feelings pouring out like tidal waves rushing toward the shore. "Listen, you devils. The days when the Chinese people were trodden underfoot are for ever past. Now that we have Chairman Mao, the Communist Party and the People's Liberation Army, we the Chinese people are standing on our feet, our heads high. We'll chop off the claws and smash the heads of any invaders who dare to attack us."

Illustrated by Liao Tsung-yi and Tseng Chao-hsin



Black Gold (woodcut)

*by Li Chi-hsin, Wang Yuan-ming,
Kuo Li-cheng and Liu Chi-teh*

WRITINGS BY LEGALISTS

Chinese Literature starting from this issue will publish poems and prose writings by famous Legalists in Chinese history to give our readers a better idea of the struggle between the Legalist and Confucian schools throughout the centuries and the viewpoints of these well-known Legalists. At the same time we shall publish articles introducing the Legalists.

The Legalist school is an important school of thought in Chinese history which emerged during the Spring-and-Autumn and Warring States Periods (770-221 B.C.). The Legalists first appeared as the political and ideological representatives of the rising landlord class. During the establishment and consolidation of the feudal system these ancient Legalists, propelled by the slave uprisings of their times, waged fierce and protracted struggles against the Confucians, who were the political and ideological representatives of the declining slave-owning class. They played a positive role in the historic transition from the old slave system to feudalism. After the Western Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D. 8), as the feudal landlord class became more decadent and reactionary, the Legalists gradually ceased to represent the emerging landlord class but became the progressive wing within that class. So from that time on the struggle between the Confucians and the Legalists was carried on mainly within the landlord class, between conservatives and progressives.

China's Legalists have left a great body of writing, for many of the later Legalists were celebrated poets or prose writers. Taking literature as their weapon, they used it to express their ideas, their political aspirations for change and reform. Many of their works have an important place in Chinese literature.

— The Editors

Tsao Tsao

Graveyard Song

East of the Pass gallant knights
Rise in arms to punish traitors;*
First joining forces at Mengchin,
Their goal is Hsienyang.**

*The traitors were the followers of Tung Cho. See the article on p. 102.

**Mengchin in present-day Honan was where King Wu of Chou joined with other local chieftains to attack the last ruler of Shang, traditionally considered a tyrant, in the eleventh century B.C. Hsienyang was the capital of the Chin Dynasty and had been stormed by rebels before the founding of the Han Dynasty. These analogies imply that the aim of their rising against Tung Cho was to reunify the country and restore peace.

But their allied armies are at odds;
Irresolute, they straggle like wild geese;
Bent on power and gain they fall out
And are soon at each other's throats.
South of the Huai a young lord takes a royal title,*
And a seal is carved for a monarch in the north;
Men long in arms grow lousy,
Countless those who have lost their lives;
White bones lie bleaching in the wilderness,
For a thousand *li* not a cock is heard to crow.
Of our people, only one in a hundred is left —
The thought of this breaks our hearts.

*In A.D. 197 Yuan Shao's cousin Yuan Shu proclaimed himself emperor south of the River Huai. In 191 Yuan Shao tried to set up Liu Yu the governor of Yuchow as emperor and had a golden seal made for him.

Gazing Out Across the Ocean

Come east of Chiehshih Cliff*
I gaze out across the ocean,
Its rolling waves
Studded with rocks and islets;
Dense the tree and bushes here,
Rank the undergrowth;
The autumn wind is sighing,
Huge billows are breaking.
Sun and moon take their course
As if risen from the sea;
The bright galaxy of stars
Seems sprung from the deep.
And so, with joy in my heart,
I hum this song.

This and the following verse are stanzas from the poem *Leaving Hsia Gate*.

*This cliff southwest of Loting County in the province of Hopei has now been submerged by the sea.

Though the Tortoise Lives Long

Though the tortoise blessed with magic powers lives long,
Its days have their allotted span;
Though winged serpents ride high on the mist,
They turn to dust and ashes at the last;
An old war-horse may be stabled,
Yet still it longs to gallop a thousand *li*;
And a noble-hearted man though advanced in years
Never abandons his proud aspirations.
Man's span of life, whether long or short,
Depends not on Heaven alone;
One who eats well and keeps cheerful
Can live to a great old age.
And so, with joy in my heart,
I hum this song.

Tsao Tsao and His Poetry

Tsao Tsao (A.D. 155-220) was a famous representative of the Legalist school of thought at the end of the Eastern Han Dynasty (A.D. 25-220). A progressive statesman and military strategist of the landlord class, he was also a brilliant poet.

Towards the end of the Han Dynasty, powerful clans annexed more and more land and many peasants, losing their land, were reduced to serfdom. At court the empress' relatives and the eunuchs contended for power. The economy became disrupted and class contradictions were intensified until in A.D. 184 the famous Yellow Turbans Uprising broke out. Under the powerful onslaught of this peasant uprising, the dynasty tottered. Then local governors and officers raised troops to carve out independent kingdoms, so that the empire was split up with many warlords fighting each other.

Tsao Tsao's life spanned this turbulent period. In 174 when he was twenty, recommended by the provincial authorities, he became the officer in charge of the Loyang Garrison in the capital, later serving as magistrate of Tungchiu County and an adviser at court. In 189 the powerful warlord Tung Cho, Governor of Pingchow,

led his troops into the capital and seized state power. Local warlords east of the Hanku Pass, headed by Yuan Shao, joined forces against Tung Cho, and Tsao Tsao joined this united army. In 192 he defeated the Yellow Turbans of Chingchow in present-day Lingtzu, Shantung, and incorporated all three hundred thousand insurgents into his army, greatly increasing his strength. In 196 he took the last Han emperor Hsien-ti who had lost all real power to Hsueh-ti in Honan, thus winning control of the central authority. In his efforts to reunify the empire he carried out a Legalist political line and policies.

After crushing the Yellow Turbans, Tsao Tsao's two main policies were: to suppress all rebels in the name of the Han emperor, and to encourage agriculture in order to ensure supplies for the army. His political aim was to achieve unification under a centralized authority and to oppose partition of the empire. His economic policy was to encourage agriculture and organize production, to ensure the material basis for a war of reunification.

After taking control of the central government in the name of the emperor, Tsao Tsao settled garrisons in different districts and made them support themselves by tilling the land, encouraging the opening up of wasteland. He introduced strictly unified taxation and prohibited additional tolls and levies. After inflicting a military defeat on the powerful clans who had gained control of whole districts, he took further steps to curtail their power by forbidding the private annexation of land.

In his selection of officers, Tsao Tsao insisted that they should be chosen on the basis of merit, not on the recommendation of patrons or kinsmen as had been done during the Eastern Han Dynasty in line with the Confucian concepts of "benevolence" and "filial piety". He appointed talented men of humble origin able to govern well and strengthen the army even when "they had a shameful reputation, had been ridiculed for their actions, or were lacking in benevolence and filial piety". This policy was in accord with the wishes of the smaller landlords and helped to implement a Legalist line. As a result of its adoption, many capable civil and military officials were brought to the fore.

At the same time Tsao Tsao resolutely insisted on rule by law instead of rule by rites or social usage, making no exception for his own kinsmen and friends. He applied this principle to himself as well. For instance, during a march through fields of wheat, he gave orders that anyone who damaged the crops should be severely punished; and when his own horse trampled down some wheat he asked his men to decide what his punishment should be.

When people took the Confucian line, Tsao Tsao did his best to make them change their stand; if they remained stubborn, he suppressed them ruthlessly.

In warfare Tsao Tsao also used strategies and tactics advocated by earlier Legalists. He was skilled in utilizing contradictions and seizing the right moment to attack, at using surprise tactics to wipe out enemy units one by one. This enabled him to defeat stronger and numerically superior forces and was another important factor in ensuring the success of his Legalist line.

Because his Legalist line conformed to the progressive trend of the times, Tsao Tsao played a positive role in history, bringing unity and peace to the Yellow River Valley which had been torn by factions and strife, and developing production. Tsao Tsao's whole life was spent in stormy political struggles and wars, and he made a significant contribution towards the reunification of China.

Tsao Tsao also contributed to the development of ancient Chinese literature. He opposed the Han court literature which featured empty embellishments and grandiloquence, and advocated bold reforms. His own style was fine and unadorned. Thus the great proletarian thinker and writer Lu Hsun called Tsao Tsao a forerunner in literary reform. Tsao Tsao himself said that "in writing memoranda there must be no more false modesty, nor should there be empty embellishments". He opposed all meretricious mannerisms and stilted epithets.

Little more than twenty of Tsao Tsao's poems and songs have come down to us. These were all written to be set to music in the form of the earlier *yueh-fu* songs. During the Han Dynasty the Yueh-fu Office was responsible for collecting and editing folk-songs which were set to music. And poets, Tsao Tsao among them, often

wrote in these set forms. It is recorded that Tsao Tsao "often composed songs when climbing a height, and wrote poems and set them to music to be sung". However, Tsao Tsao's poems were never devoid of content, they were never empty eulogies or laments. He wrote to express his political ideals and his views, to attack the evils of his time and voice his aspirations and resolve.

In the content of his writing, Tsao Tsao shook off the fetters of Confucianism. In artistic form he made innovations too. The Han *yueh-fu* had their specified subject-matter. Thus the songs called "Overgrown with Brambles" and "Dew on the Shallots" were funeral dirges. The form called "Leaving Hsia Gate" was used to express the transience of life and men's longing for immortality. Tsao Tsao, however, did not let himself be hampered by the old conventions but instilled new contents into traditional forms to reflect the contemporary political situation and his own feelings, linking his poetry with reality. He refrained from using set phrases, but expressed himself naturally and truthfully by means of fresh images. By so doing he showed himself a radical of the party of reform in the landlord class.

As we have seen, Tsao Tsao's lifelong political aim was to end local separatism and achieve the unification of the empire under a centralized authority. This was also the focal point of the struggle between the Confucian and the Legalist lines. Tsao Tsao's poems in the forms "Overgrown with Brambles", "Dew on the Shallots", "Bitter Frost" and "Leaving Hsia Gate" express this political ideal. For here he condemns the Confucian line followed by the reactionary warlords who split up the empire towards the end of the Han Dynasty, whose incessant wars disrupted the economy and caused countless deaths. He expresses his own progressive ideas, his resolution to bring about reunification. His song written in the form "Dew on the Shallots" describes how the powerful warlord Tung Cho set fire to the capital, driving the people out of the Pass, and deploras the misery and confusion caused by the retrogressive Confucian line. "Bitter Frost" records the arduousness of the march in 205 when Tsao Tsao led his troops over the Taihang Mountains to attack the remnants of Yuan Shao's warlord force.

Graveyard Song, written in the form of "Overgrown with Brambles", published in this issue, tells how the united forces opposing Tung Cho started fighting among themselves in their greed for power, bringing wretchedness to the people. In 189 Tung Cho had forced the young emperor to abdicate and set up Hsien-ti in his place, in order to usurp power himself. The following year, all the local governors east of the Pass organized an allied force to attack Tung Cho, who then compelled Hsien-ti to abandon Loyang and go west to Changan. Tsao Tsao had served as an officer under Tung Cho. Since he opposed this conspiracy, he secretly left the capital and joined the forces against him. However, the leaders of these forces put their selfish interests first and in the end started fighting amongst themselves. Yuan Shao tried to use this opportunity to seize state power by setting up Liu Yu, a distant kinsman of the imperial house, as emperor, making a new seal for him, while his cousin Yuan Shu assumed the imperial title south of the River Huai. The internecine fighting between these warlords devastated the country. This poem by Tsao Tsao reflects this situation and expresses his indignation, his longing to see the country united again under a centralized authority.

Gazing Out Across the Ocean, also published in this issue, is one stanza from Tsao Tsao's song in the form "Leaving Hsia Gate". It was written during Tsao Tsao's march north to quell the Wuhuan tribesmen. After Yuan Shao was defeated by Tsao Tsao in 205, his son Yuan Shang led his remnant forces north and, with the Wuhuan tribesmen, harried the northern frontier. In 207 Tsao Tsao, undaunted by the difficulty of the journey, set out to attack and destroy these rebel forces, restoring peace to the frontier regions.

Tsao Tsao set out on this march in summer. By autumn he was advancing along the coast and reached Chiehshih Cliff from which he had a magnificent view of the ocean. In his exhilaration he wrote this stirring poem. Though its language is simple and concise, the spirited, richly imaginative lines conjure up for us a splendid panorama and convey a profound meaning.

The first two couplets describing Tsao Tsao's view of the ocean dotted with rocky islands give readers a sense of strength and virility,

while the luxuriant vegetation suggests the vigour and freshness of the united north. The sighing autumn wind and the tumbling billows betoken the lack of unity in other parts of the empire, for the country was still torn by rebellion and strife. Finally, the lines about the sun, moon and stars express the breadth of Tsao Tsao's vision, his noble ambition to unify all China.

Tsao Tsao's poetry discloses his materialist view of history. It is recorded that he never believed in "the will of Heaven". Early in his career, while administering the principality of Tsinan, he had more than six hundred temples and shrines destroyed. After he became prime minister he did more to abolish superstitious practices. In his poem *Crossing Mountain Passes* he wrote: "Between Heaven and Earth, Man is noblest." Similar ideas are evident in *Though the Tortoise Lives Long* introduced in this issue.

This poem was also written during the march northward against the Wuhuan tribesmen. It breathes a vigorous, optimistic spirit. Tsao Tsao was then already fifty-two. He had been in the saddle all his life in his efforts to restore unity to the empire. Even now that he was growing old he did not fear the trials of this long expedition. The poem opens with mention of such legendary creatures as the divine tortoise and dragon, scoffing at the superstitious belief in immortality. Tsao Tsao did not share the traditional belief that the tortoise could live for three thousand years and the winged serpent could soar on clouds to the sky. He points out that all creatures must die in the end. The lines about an old war-horse and a noble-hearted man show his determination to unify the empire and his vigour and optimism in spite of his advanced years. He asserts that human life is not preordained by Heaven, that if a man keeps healthy and cheerful through his own efforts he can prolong his life. This poem shows his faith in his persistent struggle to realize his political ideals. It refutes the Confucian concept of fate and expresses the Legalist materialist view that men through their own efforts can conquer Heaven.

As a representative figure of the Legalist school of thought in the middle period of feudal China, Tsao Tsao carried out a political line true to the spirit of the early Legalists, for he followed the progres-

sive trends of his time and was for the unification of the country, against retrogression and disunion. He adopted a number of progressive measures and played a positive role in Chinese history. His poetry served his political line, reflecting his aspirations and positive spirit, at the same time introducing innovations in the form and content of writing. Hence his important position in the history of Chinese literature.

Tsao Tsao nevertheless was a representative of the exploiting class, a statesman of the landlord class. His Legalist line was basically in the interests of this class; thus his political career was marred by his suppression of the Yellow Turbans Uprising. Owing to the limitations of his class and his age, his views on reform could not be thoroughgoing. His poems also show the influence of certain reactionary Confucian ideas and these defects should be criticized and rejected.

On His Way to the Commune (traditional Chinese painting)

by Yang Hung-wei



NOTES ON ART

Pien Tsai

Amateur Worker-Artists of Yangchuan

Yangchuan in Shansi Province is a new industrial city which produces a great deal of coal. Not only are socialist construction and socialist revolution making great progress there, but mass literary and art activities flourish. Especially active are amateur artists from among the industrial workers. Before the Cultural Revolution, they numbered a bare dozen. But by May 1972, when the thirtieth anniversary of the publication of Chairman Mao's *Talks at the Yanan Forum on Literature and Art* was celebrated, the movement had assumed a mass scale. Between 1972 and 1974, with leadership and help from Party committees at different levels, several types of art study groups arose. Now the contingent of amateur artists exceeds 250, mostly coal-miners. Spurred on by the mass movement to denounce Lin Piao and Confucius, they study and paint in the course of the struggle and have produced more than ten thousand new works. Their serial-picture book *New Song from the Coal-mine* was shown in the 1973 National Exhibition of Serial Pictures. In 1974, thirty-three of their new works, including traditional Chinese paintings, woodcuts and serial pictures, were exhibited in Peking and other cities.

These workers link their art closely with the three great revolutionary movements of class struggle, the struggle for production and scientific experiment. So their pictures are heartily welcomed by the masses and leading cadres in factories and mines. Through a variety of media including blackboard bulletins, wall newspapers and exhibitions, these new creations are brought directly to mine-shafts, workshops, offices and canteens. Workers describe them as "a filling station, giving us added energy". During the movement to denounce Lin Piao and Confucius, Yangchuan's amateur artists have set down many images of struggles between revolution and retrogression in China's past, and of how the labouring masses have created history. Many old workers look for these works eagerly after they go off shift.

Here are two examples which reflect rather well the active participation of workers in the mass movement against Lin Piao and Confucius. The woodcut *Going into Battle* shows a veteran worker at a mass meeting springing up indignantly from his seat and going up with his notes to the platform. A young worker sitting near by turns to look at him, obviously deeply moved. The interestingly composed poster *A Worker Lectures on History* shows a worker explaining the struggle between the Confucians and the Legalists in ancient times and the creation of history by the masses. He himself, lecture notes in hand, speaks as one of these creators. In the background is the Great Wall, and in the foreground are placed peasant insurgents of the past. Both serve to enhance the central theme.

Not only do the amateur art activities of these workers promote the movement to denounce Lin Piao and Confucius, helping it to spread wider, go deeper and persist longer. They also spur production. The Party committee of the coal-mine once got these artists to draw 164 worker members of an advanced team. When the sketches appeared on the announcement board, the workers said elatedly: "In the old society, foremen used to chase us with clubs; now artists make our portraits. What a huge difference!" The woodcut *Rivals in a Revolutionary Contest*, made during a friendly competition to boost coal production, strikingly brings out the coal-miners' gallant spirit of working for socialism. Two rival team leaders, one old and one

young, are shaking hands. One is congratulating the other on doing better than himself and pledging to learn from him, the other modestly disclaiming credit and saying he will strive for yet higher output.

Many works present good images of our working-class heroes, especially through the medium of traditional Chinese paintings. An example is the series *Changes in the Coal-mine* done jointly by the amateur artist Wang Yung-hui and others. It not only shows the immense changes in mining conditions but also brings out the heroic spirit of the workers. In the first painting we see four emaciated miners toiling in a dark pit underground before Liberation. The roof propped up by ramshackle supports looks as though it might collapse any moment, weighing on and threatening the people like the three mountains of feudalism, imperialism and bureaucrat-capitalism. Prominent is the portrait of an old miner, his oil lamp clutched in his teeth, his furious eyes blazing with the workers' feeling of revolt against the old social system. The second, set after Liberation, shows miners working hard in the shaft under iron supports, courageous and selfless, undaunted by any difficulty. The third conveys the joy of an old miner operating a new machine that installs consecutive self-advancing hydraulic supports as the coal is extracted. Other woodcuts with the same theme, *Hydraulic Supports Have Come to the Mines* and *Black Gold*, depict the happiness of miners when they see new hydraulic supports made in China arriving at their shaft and when they are extracting coal.

In the old society, gas in the pits often killed miners and disrupted production. Miners longed to get rid of this menace so that they could work in safety. After Liberation, through technical innovations achieved by the concerted efforts of workers, technicians and the leadership, equipment was successfully produced for remote control of gas and turning it into a useful product. A traditional Chinese painting *Now We Can Control Gas* does not go into the technical details of the process, but brings out the workers' creative spirit and joy at their own invention. The traditional painting *She Goes Through All the Underground Passages* shows a different aspect of socialist innovations — a "barefoot doctor" working among the

miners. The artist, Chao Yung-chi, was formerly a pit miner and is now an electrician who does some medical work. He understands very well how much a "barefoot doctor" is welcomed down below. The girl doctor, modest and earnest, wears a miner's helmet and boots. A medical case and canteen hang from her shoulder. In her hands are a cup and a bulletin. She not only gives wholehearted medical service everywhere in the mine but passes around bulletins of new production achievements from section to section. She is hurrying forward, her face turned to the right, clearly looking for someone who may need her help. The background with carloads of coal on the move suggests that she is passing from one underground gallery to another, serving the miners.

Another traditional Chinese painting, *On His Way to the Commune*, is the creation of a truck driver who, through a typical situation, strikingly portrays the noble qualities of the working class. He himself often carries fertilizer and other needed commodities to communes in the suburbs. So he appreciates the importance of the peasants' contribution to socialism and his own duty, as a member of the working class, to help the peasants. In the painting a truck runs along a country road, flanked by fields of grain. Its driver, exemplifying the spirit in New China, takes care not to damage any crop and stops to prop up plants leaning on to the road. This painting is an ode to the workers' and peasants' alliance. The gouache painting *Bringing Back the Tachai Spirit*, made by an engine driver on the Yangchuan Railway and other workers, reflects the excellent situation in agriculture from another angle. It depicts people of various nationalities, who have just been visiting the nearby Tachai Brigade in Hsiyang County, enthusiastically exchanging notes with each other in the railway waiting-room. They are determined to bring back the Tachai spirit of industry and self-reliance to their respective home districts, and transform them into places like Tachai.

These Yangchuan miners who have become amateur artists exemplify one of the many new trends since the Cultural Revolution. Diligently and persistently, they struggle to occupy the art front with proletarian ideology. They actively attack the fallacy that some persons are born with innate genius, preached by Confucius, Lin

Piao and their kind. Supported and led by the Party organizations, they have emphasized the mass character of this movement and are practising hard to improve their artistic skill alongside their work in mines and factories. Among the many recent works in which they give play to the working-class spirit of perseverance, is the serial-picture book *Two Lamps*. It describes how before Liberation the miners worked underground only by the light of oil lamps carried in their teeth, but today all wear miner's helmets with electric lamps. The artists were young workers lacking personal experience of the old society; they asked an old man who had worked in the mines since childhood to tell them of the dark life there in the past, so that they could truthfully portray it. He demonstrated how he used to carry loads of coal up a steep slope, an oil lamp clenched in his teeth; and the young artists made sketches. With sharp truth, their creation expresses the old miner's feelings, his grim hatred of the old society and love for the new socialist society. Their creation has a strong impact on the young workers.

These amateur artists not only learn from their fellow workers and strive to improve their own skill for the revolution. They also help newcomers to the field of art. For example Yeh Hsin, a young bench-worker in a farm equipment factory, has long made sketches during his spare time. From some of these, the woodcut *From the Masses*, representing a cadre working among the rank-and-file, was made. Inspired, all other workers in his art group are practising sketching. Once, to help another worker draw a certain gesture, Yeh Hsin posed for him repeatedly until he succeeded. These amateurs also learn from professionals, who instruct them patiently in technique and composition.

A new success for Chairman Mao's revolutionary line is embodied in the artistic achievements of these Yangchuan workers. They themselves say: "We paint for the working class, for the revolution." So their primary urge is to make themselves into true revolutionaries. All are activists in the study of Marxism, in the denunciation of revisionism and in productive labour. Because they cherish the lofty ideal of working in art for the revolution, they are able to produce numerous creations militant in spirit and reflecting our new reality.

More Rare Finds from Han Tombs

Following the 1972 excavation of the No. 1 Han Tomb at Mawangtui in the suburbs of Changsha in Hunan, during the winter of 1973 and the spring of 1974 the two other Han tombs near by were excavated and yielded yet more precious historical relics. These finds include vivid silk paintings, finely wrought lacquerware with elaborate designs, rare documents written on silk, figurines and textiles.

The No. 3 Tomb contained more than twenty records totalling about one hundred and twenty thousand characters, most of which were lost over a millennium ago. These are therefore finds of great value, providing important material for the study of ancient Chinese history and philosophy. They shed light on the struggle between the Confucian school which represented the interests of the declining slave-owning class and the Legalist school which represented the emerging feudal landlord class more than two thousand years ago and provide a vivid testimony to the splendid ancient culture of our country.

The No. 3 Tomb yielded more than three hundred pieces of well-preserved lacquerware of various forms and designs. The rectangular double-decker lacquer box with a painted design, 49 cm long, 25.7 cm wide and 21.8 cm high, which was found in a case in the north corner of the tomb, held a lacquered gauze cap in excellent condition. The box ornamented with coloured cloud designs is vivid and resplendent. The designs have a white outline filled in with red, yellow and green, making them very striking. Another lacquer box is round with meticulous hair-stroke designs in fine vigorous brushwork, and the animals depicted are thoroughly lifelike. These painted designs and line drawings on lacquerware testify to the skill and creativity of the labouring people, the true creators of our ancient civilization.

Another splendid specimen of lacquerware found in the No. 3 Tomb is a black rectangular dressing-case, the lowest compartment

A lacquer plate



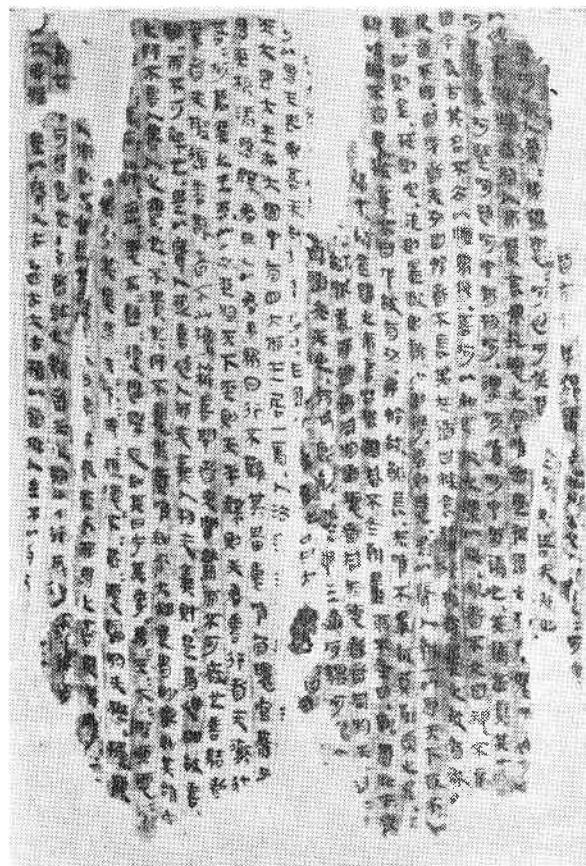
of which contained writings on silk totalling more than one hundred and twenty thousand characters.

The earliest written records found in China are the oracle-bone inscriptions of the Shang Dynasty (16th to 11th century B.C.). Writing on bamboo slips or silk was introduced during the Western Chou Dynasty (11th century to 770 B.C.), and by the Spring-and-Autumn Period (770-475 B.C.) it was quite common. Bamboo was of course the cheaper writing material, but silk was easier to handle and records made on silk were more legible. For quite some time after paper was invented, silk was still being used for writing on. Silk, being more costly, was reserved for more important records. The fact that it was less widely used than bamboo and rotted away more easily underground accounts for the rarity of archaeological finds of writings on silk, whereas records on bamboo slips have often been found. This discovery in the No. 3 Tomb of Mawangtui throws fresh light on ancient writing on silk.

The silk used for these records is about 18 cm wide. The writing follows the woof of the fabric. Each line is 6.7 mm wide. Some records, but not all, were written between red lines. Apart from a few written in the older minuscule style, most are in the regular, vigorous clerical script adopted during the Chin Dynasty (221-207 B.C.), although they probably date from the reign of the Han emperor Wen-ti (179-157 B.C.). This shows the lasting influence of the First Chin Emperor's standardization of writing.

Among the writings on silk discovered here are two copies of *Lao Tzu*, writings attributed to this ancient philosopher, one in the minuscule script and the other in the clerical script. There are also four lost treatises attributed to the Yellow Emperor, some sections of the *Book of Changes*, a handbook on the anatomy of the horse, sections of the *Anecdotes of the Warring States*, early works on astrology and medicine, and ancient maps — more than twenty different works in all. Since most of these were lost more than a thousand years ago, the discovery of these ancient records has great significance.

The extracts from the *Anecdotes of the Warring States* total more than twelve thousand words. Judging by the minuscule script in which they are written they were probably copied in the Chin Dynasty or



A copy of *Lao Tzu* written on silk

early in the Han. Half these extracts do not appear in the edition of this work which has been handed down. One extract is the well-known anecdote about the advice given by senior statesman Chu Cheh to the Queen Dowager of Chao. Apparently this Queen Dowager so doted on her youngest son and was so lacking in forethought that she ignored her ministers' advice. But Chu Cheh managed to convince her that young people should not just live on their patrimony without winning credit for themselves, and persuaded her that

it was important to make plans for her children's future. This story reflects the redistribution of wealth and authority in the landlord class during the transitional period from slave society to feudalism. Although the content of this version's anecdote is basically the same as in other editions, there are minor discrepancies too. So this copy enables us to correct certain mistakes in previous editions and thereby come closer to the original.

The four silk paintings from the No. 3 Tomb are more interesting than that found in the No. 1 Tomb, having a richer and more lively content. One of the best-preserved is the rectangular silk painting from the west wall of the tomb, 212 cm long and 94 cm high. The right upper corner shows an orderly procession of several dozen carriages, each drawn by four horses, depicted in black, grey, blue and white. The right foreground shows rows of some hundred horsemen in armour with their backs to the rest of the scene, drawn up at attention. In the left upper section are three rows of men and women clad in red, green, purple, blue and white, their hands folded, facing each other. The left foreground shows four men beating drums and chimes. In the centre of the painting is a nobleman wearing a high hat, one hand on a sword at his waist. Behind him is an attendant holding a sunshade, facing the carriages approaching them. The scene evidently depicts the dead lord inspecting his retinue during his life time. It reflects his power and might, extolling the magnificence of his house.

This unknown artist's composition is compact, devoid of all superfluous details. He has successfully integrated dozens of carriages and more than two hundred horses and men into one organic whole. His use of a bird's-eye view conveys a sense of great space, the lines are concise and masterly, and the traditional technique of figure-painting is employed — first drawing outlines, then adding in the colours.

The corpse in this tomb is that of a man in his thirties. A wooden tablet records that he was buried in 168 B.C.

The coffin and the funerary objects in the No. 2 Tomb had turned to dust, but three seals were found bearing the inscriptions "Prime Minister of Changsha", "Marquis of Tai" and "Li-tsang", showing



Coloured painting on silk

that this was the tomb of the First Marquis of Tai whose name was Li-tsang. According to historical records, he served as the Prince of Changsha's chief minister before being made the Marquis of Tai in 193 B.C., and he died in 186 B.C.

The foregoing notes deal with only a few items from the more than a thousand finds unearthed from these two tombs. These cultural relics are still being studied.



CHRONICLE

“Selection of Poems from Hsiao-chin-chuang”

The Tientsin People's Publishing House recently published a selection of poems by peasants in Hsiao-chin-chuang, a production brigade of more than 500 people in Lintingkou Commune, Paoti County, Tientsin. During the current mass movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius, these villagers filled with political enthusiasm are using a variety of revolutionary art forms to capture the cultural front in the countryside. In 1974 alone, they wrote over a thousand poems. The present selection comprises 108 of these written by cadres, poor and lower-middle peasants, members of the militia, educated youth and Little Red Soldiers. The poems breathe the love of the poor and lower-middle peasants for the Party and Chairman Mao. They sing the praises of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, the movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius and the newly emerged socialist things. Simultaneously, they repudiate Lin Piao's counter-revolutionary revisionist line and the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius which preach retrogression, restoration and betrayal. Rich with the flavour of real life, vivid in language and strong in artistic force and militant spirit, they are characteristic of our times.

Some of these poems were printed in our October issue 1974.

Selection of Children's Songs

I Write Songs to Join the Battle, a selection of songs written by children, has been printed by the People's Literature Publishing House. It is a new fruit of the countrywide popularization, deepening and sus-

tained development of the movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius.

This group of songs and poems was written by Little Red Soldiers of the Hsissupe Primary School in Peking. In response to the call of our great leader Chairman Mao, and under the leadership of the Party, they have been taking part in the repudiation of Lin Piao and Confucius, using children's songs as weapons. The selection was chosen from among a thousand such songs.

Rich in content, radiating the characteristics of the times and of China's children and full of national flavour, the songs express clear-cut love and hate with freshness of language and militancy of spirit. They strikingly reflect the healthy growth of Little Red Soldiers in the mass movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius, and their determination to become worthy successors to the proletarian revolutionary cause.

Three New Films Open on New Year's Day

The feature colour film *Reconnaissance Across the Yangtse* and two full-length colour documentaries *Ode to National Day* and *The Seventh Asian Games* were released on New Year's Day, 1975.

Reconnaissance Across the Yangtse was made by the Shanghai Film Studio. Its background is the crossing of the Yangtse River, that formidable natural barrier, by the People's Liberation Army during the War of Liberation. It tells how a reconnaissance unit penetrates into the enemy rear, discovers the enemy's dispositions with the co-operation and support of the local guerrillas and villagers, and thus makes an important contribution to the army's crossing. The film lauds these valiant scouts, their spirit of daring to fight and daring to win, and their revolutionary heroism.

Ode to National Day shows with soaring revolutionary enthusiasm how the people of the capital celebrated the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the People's Republic of China. It reflects the great achievements of our socialist revolution and socialist construction. *The Seventh Asian Games* is a vivid record of that gala gathering in Teheran, the capital of Iran. It is an embodiment of the Asian people's common wish for unity and friendship.

Some new science films in colour and short documentaries were also released during the New Year.

"Album of Paintings by Educated Youth"

The Cultural Bureau of Szechuan Province has compiled and published an album of paintings by educated youth showing their achievements in spare-time art activities after settling down in mountainous and other rural areas. It consists of 22 works including traditional Chinese paintings, oils, woodcuts, New-Year posters and gouaches. From different angles these paintings delineate the magnificent socialist new countryside in China, celebrate the noble character of the poor and lower-middle peasants, and express the revolutionary ideals and feelings of the educated youth. Original in theme and extremely true to life, they have been well received by the masses.

Important Relics Unearthed in Hsisha Archipelago

Since January 1974 a large number of porcelains, stone tablets and copper coins have been unearthed in the Hsisha Archipelago. As many as 95 porcelain objects were found, dating from the Tang Dynasty (A.D.618-907) to modern times. From their characteristics, it is apparent that they came mainly from Kwangtung, Fukien, Chekiang and Kiangsu. They show that since the Tang Dynasty the population of the archipelago has consisted mostly of people from Kwangtung and Fukien. Among the stone tablets found on the islands, the two earlier ones were already fragmented when unearthed. The inscriptions on them were identical, commemorating an inspection in the 28th year of Kuang-hsu (1902) of the Ching Dynasty, and showing that they were erected following that event.

Many coins used by the people from the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D. 220) to the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) and *A Record of the Waterways*, used from generation to generation by the fishermen as a guide to navigation, were also found on the island.

The unearthing of these valuable relics is another eloquent proof that Hsisha Archipelago has been Chinese territory since ancient times.

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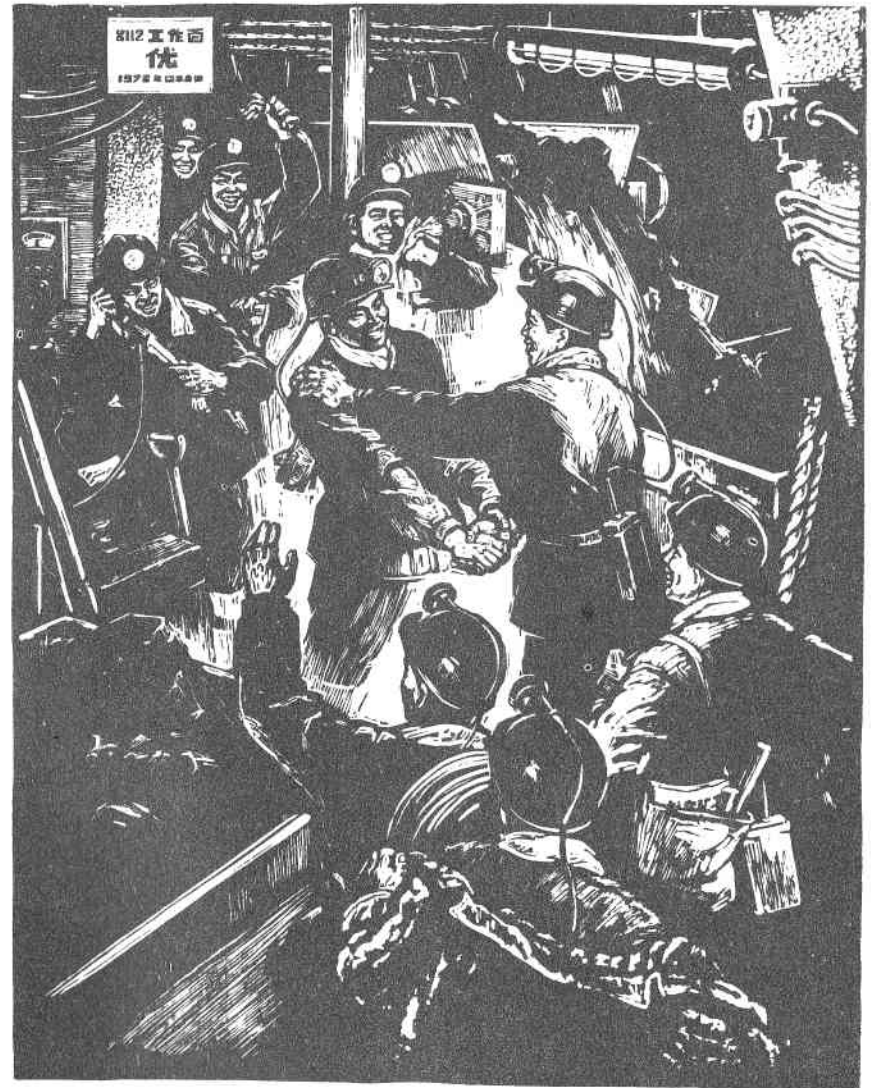
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