Mainstream

CHINA ISSUE

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/HAT HAVE WE WRITTEN?

LAO SHEH

ERE I want to say two things only.

First, what has been the main subject of Chinese novels, stories, ays and poems during the last ten years? I believe I am not too far out hen I say that, apart from some reminiscences about past episodes in e revolution, we have been writing about the new relationships be- een men. Yes, these ten years have seen stupendous changes in man relationships. Actions based on selfish motives are criticized. o satisfy his personal greed, a man may take advantage of others and ab at their rice-bowls. Of course he deserves to be criticized. To our inds, the tireless "fight" to get rich is not the noblest way of living. n the contrary, only those things which benefit all are worth doing. metimes to help others we should even sacrifice ourselves. So our erature upholds public-spiritedness and altruism and comes down hard selfishness.

Back in the years of the May the Fourth Movement we showed at we were against feudal ideas: this is even more true today. We aise freedom and equality. The women, once cooped up at home, n now go out if they wish, to do work suited to their capacities. ou have only to look round to see women engaged in public work erywhere. There are women ministers, factory managers, school incipals; women take part in all kinds of construction work, receiv- g the same treatment as men. No longer weak creatures with bound et, they have become independent. Human relationships are cer- nly changing now that men and women are equal. We praise free-

dom and equality, we praise progress, we condemn conservatism an backwardness.

Secondly, our literature has nothing to do with the cold war or th hot war, but speaks with passion of construction. We can build onl in a peaceful environment. We want to build, to change our countr which was so poor into a happy land of plenty. For this we need peac We are not against the people of any country; we have never spoke harshly about the American people; we know the difference between th American people and the ruling class. We have always had grea respect for the wisdom of the American people and want to be thei friends for good. We are sure, no matter how viciously America's rule may attack and slander us, the American people will see the truth fo themselves. Since the United States' government does not permi Americans to come to China, an exchange of literature at least shoul be useful. Our works may not be well written, but through them yo can see clearly our fervent longing to rebuild our country, our peaceful aspirations and work for peace.

N THE ROAD

TENG HUNG

JUNE of 1930, disguised as a watch repairer, I was doing secret work for the Party in Chentou, Liuyang County, Hunan Province. hat time, the Party's underground organization was active through- the northeastern part of the province. Guerrilla bands, led by the mmunist Party, roamed the countryside. In some places the peasants in spontaneous insurrections. The revolutionary tide in northeast an was rolling along swiftly.

The reactionary garrison stationed in Chentou discovered two sacks ed arm bands which we had intended to issue in an uprising we were ning. They suspected me, and I was arrested. Luckily, they had no of. But only after I found an influential man to vouch for me ncially was I able to escape from the tiger's mouth.

Because I could no longer operate in Chentou, the Party decided end me to Liling, a county seat, about thirty miles away. I ar- ged to travel with a man named Li, also a watch mender. He was in the revolutionary movement. We both wore snowy white tunics trousers of cotton cloth and carried small leather instrument kits, standard accoutrements of our trade.

We set out at daybreak. Before we had gone very far, a peasant ed us. Walking behind us, he shouldered a sack. Evidently he had ght some things in the town and was bringing them home. He ed with us all the way. When we stopped to rest, he did too. When began walking again, so did he.

Late in the morning we came to a hamlet called Lime Mouth, ttle market center, consisting of about a dozen shops. This time n we sat down and rested, the peasant with the purchases dis- eared. After a while, two other peasants approached us. They d our names, our occupations and where we were from. Finally, they politely:

"Our captain would like to have a chat with you."

I recalled hearing that not long before a Red guerrilla group had n formed in Lime Mouth, but I had never had any direct contact h them. The Party organization in northeastern Hunan had given nderground workers certain signs and phrases by which we could

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Teng Hung is now vice-governor of Kiangsi Province. The sketch published depicts an episode during the Second Revolutionary Civil War in the early ies.

recognize one another. Since these people were Red guerrillas, I thoug I could use this means to establish my identity. And so I boldly agre to go with these two peasants to see their captain. Li, my traveli companion, grew frightened. He stared at me with wide hysteri eyes, his face iron grey.

At the door of a small shack a peasant wearing a red arm ba stood guard with a spear. He looked at me and Li, then winked at t two peasants. We went in. The room was quiet. Its sole occupa was a big powerfully built man seated on a chair, his head and ch high. He had bushy brows, large eyes and a tanned ruddy face. Bla bristles sprouted on his cheeks. He wore a simple blue cloth tunic a trousers. The moment we entered, he pointed his finger at Li a me, and shouted:

"Who-who-who are you?" He was a stammerer and when he spo the effort made him blink his eyes rapidly.

I told him our names, where we were born, where we were comi from, where we were going, what we did for a living—the wh story. In the meantime, several other guerrillas emerged from a rear roo All were dressed in regular peasant garb.

"You-you-you're sp-spies!" yelled the big man.

Why in the world did he say that? I wondered. Surely there v nothing suspicious about our costumes?

"We're not spies, captain," I assured him calmly, "we're wa repairers."

"D-d-don't argue! Ye-ye-yesterday we consulted a fortune-tel He said today-today two spies were coming." Turning to the m beside him, he directed, "T-t-tie them up!"

When I saw that he was serious, I began to argue, at the sa time making some of the secret signs. But he didn't respond to a of them. I asked him what were the "five continents" and to na the "four military leaders." He didn't understand this either. I v getting worried. What kind of guerrillas were these, anyhow?

By now they had trussed our hands behind us and proably cause I had been doing all the talking, suspended me from a ra and started to beat me with a bamboo stick, demanding that I rev who sent me to spy on them. It was the hottest part of sumn and perspiration ran down my face and streamed from my chin l water. His hands also tied behind him, Li stood off to one s weeping:

"How awful! How awful! I've an old mother at home, an wife and kids!"

Furious, I drew strength from the knowledge that the Party would
k me up.

"You call yourselves guerrillas?" I shouted. "Who do you take
r orders from?"

"We-we-we're Red Army guerrillas! I-I-I give the orders myself!"
e savage guerrilla chief roared. He was hopping mad.

"If you're Red Army guerrillas, why didn't you recognize the signals
ist gave you? How could you miss them? Now get this straight—I'm
Communist!"

"You-you still dare to pretend!" the guerrilla leader thundered.
pulled out a gleamingly sharp chaff knife and threw it at my feet.
n inviting you to the platform!"

That was bandit talk for "I'll cut your head off." I was shocked,
I immediately got hold of myself and said stubbornly:

"I'm not an easy man to kill—I belong to a strong organization.
ore you cut any heads off you'd better wait a couple of days; send
neone to higher headquarters and check on my story first."

The guerrilla chief opened his mouth to yell at me when a man
ide him interposed: "Do you know anybody around here?"

A watch mender called Pan at once flashed into my mind. I had
ned my trade from a former apprentice of his. Pan told me that
came from Lime Mouth. I had met him often in Chentou. Now,
entioned his name.

The guerrillas stopped beating me; they exchanged glances. The
ef strode from the room. One by one, the others followed. Li and I
e left alone. Beads of sweat ran down my face like little insects.
clothes were soaking wet. A pool of perspiration formed at the
und beneath my feet. I looked at Li. Although I was the one who
hanging from the rafter, he seemed to be suffering worse than
His face was absolutely colorless.

Before long, some men came in with bowls and chopsticks and
e large platters of steaming chicken, fish and pork. They untied
nd told us to eat. Li was still weeping; he couldn't swallow a morsel.
I ate a hearty meal. After it was over, the men tied our hands
in, though they didn't hang me from the rafter.

A noisy clamor rose outside. We saw a peasant pushing a wheel-
row laden with sacks that were full and bulging. Many men walked
ind him. The barrow halted. A few of the men dumped the sacks
a large wicker hamper—good white rice. Others threw the bar-
pusher to the ground and flayed him with bamboo switches that
been whittled to cut deep.

Struggling, the man cried: "Don't hit me, your worship! I'm the rich despot, I'm only his hired hand!"

"Who told you to work for the rich despot!"

"Who told you to push his wheelbarrow!"

The guerrillas shouted at the man and cursed him.

His family had no land, the man pleaded. He had to take hired hand's job, or they'd starve. Besides, if he hadn't pushed barrow, the grain wouldn't have fallen into the hands of the gu rillas!

But none of these explanations were of any avail. They beat h cruelly, then slashed the sacks to ribbons and wrecked the barrow

Watching this spectacle, I didn't know whether to laugh or Was this a way for guerrillas to behave? It was just my luck to into this gang of unreasonable wild men. How was I going to cope w them? I was really in a pickle.

Just then a man came in and introduced himself to us. He s his name was Tang. Smilingly, he apologized:

"We're terribly sorry. It's all a mistake. We've made you su needlessly."

He untied our bonds.

I told him who I was and requested him to send a man to sixteenth district in Liuyang County and verify my identity. He rea agreed. After talking with us a while, he went out, still leaving us the same room.

Some time later, Pan the watch mender arrived. With a fri around, things ought to go better, I thought. I explained to him w had happened, and repeated my request that the guerrillas send so one to investigate me at higher headquarters.

"Don't worry," Pan urged. "There's been a misunderstand No one's going to harm you." He said he was also a member of guerrillas and that he would help me get matters straightened out.

"Your chief's kind of hot-tempered, isn't he?" I asked.

The watch mender smiled and nodded. "Yes, everyone calls The Barbarian behind his back." Probably feeling he shouldn't h said this, he at once added solemnly: "But he's a fine fellow— direct, courageous. When he says he's going to do something, he it. Whether in our guerrilla band or among the peasants, every respects him." Pan paused a moment. "If it weren't for that ten of his, he might have become a big officer in the Kuomintang arm

"He served in the Kuomintang army?"

"For many years.'

The guerrilla chief had risen from a foot soldier to the rank of mpany commander. Extremely brave in battle, he had been cited number of times during the Northern Expedition. Confused by e shift of events, he continued to serve in the Kuomintang army even er Chiang Kai-shek turned traitor to the revolution in 1927. But ıen he saw how the Kuomintang did nothing but persecute the poor asants, unable to control his rage, he deserted.

"He's illiterate," Pan continued, "and his family is very poor. After came home, he tilled the fields himself. He joined the Red guer-las as an ordinary soldier in April of this year. His unit was scat-ed in a battle with the enemy. Now he's come back again and formed s own band. We've been in existence less than a month."

Pan said that they had indeed consulted a fortune-teller the day fore. The fortune-teller had predicted that two spies would come ɔm Chentou within three days. The guerrilla chief had immedi-ely dispatched a scout to the city. That was the peasant with the ck upon his back who had trailed us for half a day.

Hearing Pan's recital, I felt much relieved. Sixteenth district was ly a few dozen miles away. The guerrillas would certainly send some-e to check on me. Maybe they had done so already. As soon as the ın came back, we'd probably be able to get away.

But, to my surprise, when the sun was setting behind the hills, the errillas again tied our hands and led us out on the end of a rope! hy? Where were they taking us at this hour of the day? If they uld savagely beat a hired hand merely for delivering a landlord's grain, ɔuld they hesitate to kill someone they suspected of being a spy? couldn't help feeling tense.

On a level stretch of ground in front of the house about a hundred en were lined up in two rows. They were armed with everything ɔm spears and fowling pieces to big knives and iron rods. Not one them had a rifle. Although dressed in a variety of garb, each wore a d arm band on his sleeve. In his coarse voice, the chief was stam-ering some sort of orders. I think he was saying that they all had observe discipline. He hadn't spoken more than a couple of sen-ıces when he abruptly concluded.

I don't know what got into me, but I suddenly felt that I had to eak out, perhaps because I was angered at the way they had been having.

"Can I have your permission to say a few words to the men, ɔtain?"

The guerrilla chief looked at me. "G-g-go ahead," he consented

surlily.

I stepped out in front of the ranks. It was as if I was leading th man holding the other end of the rope that bound me, rather than th opposite.

"Comrades, there are a few things I'd like to say to you!" I crie

A HUSH fell on the assembled guerrillas. All eyes were upon m I wanted to take the opportunity to tell them everything I kne about revolutionary principles and the first thing that came into my hea was the "three disciplines" of the Red Army. I must have spoke for about an hour. The men listened with rapt attention. No o even coughed.

By the time I finished, it was dusk. The guerrillas marched o of the hamlet, taking Li and me with them. At first, because I w still buoyed up by the enthusiasm of my speech-making, I didn't gi much thought to danger. But when we left the hamlet and the gue rillas turned off the main road to a path leading to the mountains, became worried. The mountain path was narrow and steep, lined trees on both sides that blocked out most of the yellow light of th dying day. All that could be heard were the footfalls of the hundr men, soft, persistent.

My hair stood on end in spite of myself. I've escaped from th tiger's mouth of the enemy, I thought, only to die at the hands of o guerrillas. It was really ironic!

Crossing a ridge, we came to a hollow containing a small rel tively flat clearing. Here we halted. The guerrilla chief walked t to me.

"Is there anything else y-y-you want to say?" he demanded rough

Beads of sweat big as yellow beans sprang out on my forehea I replied:

"Nothing much. Only that you mustn't announce that you kill me because I was a counter-revolutionary. Also, please notify m father and have him come for my body. But you mustn't harm hi He's a good man. I have a few dollars on me. Please give the to my father."

The chief neither replied nor explained. The guerrillas resum their march. We halted again beside a ramshackle hut. The chi addressed the men. He said everyone should go to sleep early and n make any noise during the night. He also asked whose turn it w to stand guard. . . .

So, they had taken us into the mountains to spend the night, not

us. A weight seemed to drop from my chest. It must be because were militarily weak and didn't dare remain in the hamlet for fear n enemy encirclement in the dark. But why did they keep us bound? y not tell us the reason we were going into the mountains instead errorizing us like this? Hadn't they already said they arrested us by ake? They even apologized. These fellows were a complete mys- to me! I breathed a long sigh that came right from my heart.

Li and I were given a room to sleep in. Our hands were freed. two men lay on a pallet outside our door, guarding us.

Later—it must have been after midnight—the guerrilla chief and or six men came in and lit an oil lamp on the table. Every one d seats. They began to question me.

At first they asked things concerning me, personally. But then the gradually switched to questions concerning the revolutionary situa- to the activities of the enemy garrison in Chentou. The tone of tions changed, too—the inquisition became a discussion. The rilla chief said little. After we had been talking for some time, uddenly ordered me:

"Y-y-you stay here and do some work!"

So that was what he wanted!

can't do that, captain," I said. "I've got a job to do, the job the y has given me."

"Then y-y-you're a spy!" the chief shouted, pointing at me. The rs also joined in menacingly.

"How can I work with you? You're not taking part in the revo- n, you're just running riot!" I was sorry I said it, the moment words were out of my mouth, for I was sure the hot-tempered chief d be furious.

But he wasn't. He only asked in surprise: "Wh-wh-what do you n—r-r-running riot?"

Starting with their beatings of the hired hand, I pointed out many rs they had committed. I explained Communist Party policy to , and told them how they ought to act in the future.

Wide-eyed, the guerrilla leader listened in silence. The others ex- ged glances which seemed to say: So that's how it is!

paused and the chief immediately stated: "We'll do it your way you be our political commissar."

"Me? Political commissar?"

"Yes."

hastily shook my head. "I can't, I haven't got the ability."

"Y-you're a Communist." His voice grew unexpectedly soft. He

seemed to be trying to placate me.

"If you want a commissar, why don't you ask the Party to s you one?"

He looked rather embarrassed. "W-w-we're an independent out

At last I undertood. They weren't Red guerrillas led by the Comm nist Party. They had organized themselves and were operating alo

"No wonder you're still superstitious, go to fortune-tellers."

"What's wrong with fortune-tellers? S-s-some of the most fam strategists in history consulted them!"

I had to laugh. "If I become your commissar, you'll have to lis to me."

"W-w-we will," the guerrilla leader promised earnestly.

I had hated that fellow from the time the guerrillas had seized because he had been so pig-headed and his men had tormented me day for no reason whatever. Now, I suddenly discovered how lika he was. It seemed to me that people like him and his men were grass-roots of the revolution. They ought to be won over. As l as I had run into them, it was my duty to bring them under the of the Party, especially since they themselves were pleading for P leadership.

"All right," I said. "I'll stay."

For the first time I saw the bushy-browed large-eyed guerrilla c look happy. He grinned like a pleased child.

The next day, I made contact with the Party. The guerrilla b was taken under the wing of the sixteenth district of Liuyang Cou The chief remained in command as captain. I was appointed polit commissar. In July of that year, the guerrilla unit was reorgani into the Sixteenth Regiment of the Red Guards. I became head q termaster. The chief rose to the rank of vice-regimental comman

He was extremely loyal to the Party and performed his duties fa fully. The organization took special pains with his education. Not l after he officially joined the revolution, on my sponsorship he was mitted to membership in the Communist Party of China.

That winter a group of recruits he was leading was attacked by enemy while on the way to reinforce one of the main Red A forces. He fought courageously but, unfortunately, he was killed battle.

Translated by Sidney Shapiro

illage School Hsin Chun

THE WRITING OF THE LAST TEN YEARS

SHAO CHUAN-LIN

I. GREAT CHANGES AND DEVELOPMENTS IN LITERATURE

A Literature Closely Linked With the Masses

SOCIALIST literature, as Lenin has said, is a genuinely free literature having open ties with the proletariat, a literature that serves the millions of toilers. Our writing conforming to this Leninist principle, resolutely follows and implements Chairman Mao Tse-tung's directive to serve workers, peasants and soldiers. However much this slogan may disgust the bourgeois gentlemen who believe in art for art's sake, it has brought about closer links than ever before between our literature and the working people. Our writers give a truthful reflection of the life, thoughts, ideals and aspirations of the working people, and by so doing increase their political consciousness. Our laboring people—the masters of our land—are occupying a leading position and have become heroes in our liberation and that is why our literature is warmly welcomed by them and has become an indispensable part of their life. *The working people have not only accepted literature but are writing it themselves.* Thus apart from work done by professional authors, many people in other walks of life are writing in their spare time. Following the policy of combining popularization with an improvement in quality, a large-scale literary revolution is going ahead in full swing. Our writers are no longer literati and scholars who remain for long years in the seclusion of their studies, but warriors who, hand in hand with the masses, plunge into the thick of the fray. They have been tempered and virtually born anew by sharing the life of the people for long periods, by labor, struggles and study which have greatly raised their level of understanding and broadened their vision of life. These ten years have witnessed a most far-reaching change in the relationship of intellectuals to the laboring people. Before liberation the great majority of intellectuals outside the liberated areas did not even have the freedom to establish contact with workers, peasants and soldiers. The extensive ties between literature and the laboring people, the intimate relation between writers and the laboring people, constitute

he basic change and greatest achievement of the last ten years in litera-ure. This is the key to the prosperity and progress of our writing.

In this period the number of new works has gone up 16.66 times, rom 156 in 1950 to 2,600 in 1958; the number of copies printed has one up 18.51 times, from 2,147,700 in 1950 to 39,364,094 in 1958. Over twelve thousand works have been published not including classics nd writing by non-professionals published locally. The number of major iterary magazines has increased nearly five times from eighteen in 1949 o eighty-six in 1959, according to figures from the Chinese Writers' Jnion. The annual circulation of a good literary work, which used to e a few thousand copies before liberation, rose after 1949 to some tens f thousands and during the last year or so has run into hundreds of thou-ands or over a million. These figures illustrate the broader relationship etween literature and the people. At the same time the decadent or eactionary works of feudalism, imperialism and the bourgeoisie which sed to clutter up the bookshops before liberation have been discarded nd their place taken by socialist, revolutionary works. This has resulted n a considerable growth in the literary ranks. In 1950 the All-China Vriters' Union had no more than 401 members; but today there are ,136 members in the central and local branches, the latter having ncreased from six in 1950 to twenty-three in 1959. There are now nine ational literary research institutes as compared with one before. The mprovement in quality has been equally striking. In the expanding iterary ranks have appeared two great new forces: one consists of new vriters recruited from intellectuals, workers and peasants, the majority f whom are young. There can be no doubt that these new recruits will o from strength to strength to take over from the veterans. The econd force is drawn from old revolutionaries steeled on the political, conomic or military fronts, whose rich experience of life and revolution nd long schooling in political and cultural matters have given them he urge to write and resulted in numerous poems, essays and reminis-ences about the revolution written in their spare time. Some of these vorks are of a fairly high artistic level. Moreover, in addition to these ew forces, a reserve army of writers is rapidly growing. Literary ocieties and writers' groups have been formed in factories, villages, nd army units throughout the country as well as among university stu-ents and young intellectuals; and the members of these are eagerly trying heir hands at writing. The tempering in the thick of life, ideological re-orm and improved political consciousness of the old writers, combined vith the emergence of new forces from the ranks of workers, peasants nd intellectuals, has made possible the establishment in a relatively short

time of a genuine, powerful literary army of the working class.

The Development of Socialist Realism

STRIKING progress is evident in many works of the last ten years in the greater scope and profundity of the reflection of life and the spirit of the age, in characterization, language and style. Socialist realist literature is gradually attaining maturity in China.

There has been a considerable extension in the range of life reflected in literature. The stupendous changes in social relations and men's lives have naturally given rise to deep and complex changes in our people's outlook and feelings. These have been ten years of unprecedented development in production, ten years of unprecedented progress in men's ideas and political understanding. This has provided literature with the most rich and varied themes, expanding the fountain-head of creative writing. Our writing should not only give rapid reflection to every aspect of modern life—this is our main theme, which predominates quantitatively—but should also describe the heroic and arduous revolutionary struggle led by the Party during the years of the democratic revolution. Since it was virtually impossible for writers under the reactionary rule in Kuomintang-controlled territory to portray this struggle, it is up to us now to fill in these gaps in our literature.

But the general tone of the great majority of works, whether dealing with present-day life or the revolutionary struggles and other historical events of the past, is closely bound up with the revolutionary spirit of today, permeated with revolutionary heroism. Revolutionary heroism sets the main tone of the writing of the last ten years, in striking contrast to that of the thirty preceding years which for the most part exposed, criticized and protested against the oppression of reactionary rule. Most of the characters in the writing of that time are peasants, the city poor or intellectuals, who were persecuted and resisted persecution, or negative characters of the landlord class and bourgeoisie. But today the main place in our literature is occupied by splendid revolutionary heroes and other positive characters who have been taken to the hearts of Chinese readers. . . . The atmosphere of revolutionary heroism is even more marked in poems and essays. During recent years our poets have written stirring narrative poems about heroes and lyrics filled with revolutionary romanticism.

This is natural enough, for we live in a heroic age which demands high, resounding tones and bright colors in literature and a strong spirit of revolutionary romanticism. This romanticism is no idle dream di

rced from actual life, no empty clamor, but the lofty aspirations of the orking class drawn from the heart of life itself and of the struggle. me of our best works show us heroes not set on pedestals above the ople, cut off from daily life, but closely linked with the masses, not stract types but individuals with clearly marked personalities; and most them are ordinary workers, soldiers or functionaries. In these works eroic character is always revealed through the contradictions and con-cts of life; it develops through action and is expressed through the edium of mental activities. . . .

Some of our best writers have held fast to the principles of realism, cognizing and reflecting reality and creating typical characters through e development of contradictions in society. Chairman Mao Tse-tung's eory on the correct handling of contradictions among the people has ven writers a better theoretical understanding. Thus how to create w heroes and express the contradictions among the people has today come a frequent subject of discussion. The clash of old and new ideas particularly striking in certain works describing the changes in village e. This is only natural. China's more than five hundred million peas-s have in ten years experienced land reform, mutual aid, cooperation d the general establishment of people's communes; they have advanced m a predominantly individual economy to a largely collective one, m liquidating remnants of feudalism to liquidating those of capital-n. These changes, which used to require centuries, have been com-essed into a mere decade in China. This lightning speed is bound find reflection in literature. . . . These works mirror the desire of rich sants and some rich middle peasants to take the capitalist road, of most or and lower middle peasants to take the socialist road, the complex ggles of some wavering middle peasants, the development of relations ween town and countryside, the alliance of workers and peasants, and reflection of all these things in men's minds and hearts—the overcom-of old selfish ideas, the growth of a new morality, the rise of a gen-tion of new peasants. This is, indeed, a rich, varied life we lead, and on base writers have created positive and negative characters of every ss, typical figures of the old generation and the new. . . .

The richness and variety of actual life, the aspiring revolutionary rit of the age, the close links between literature and the masses and improvement in craftsmanship have helped our literature to develop a healthier direction, to become more varied in style, more truly Chinese l more popular. In 1957 the publication of Chairman Mao Tse-tung's eteen poems with their incomparable scope and heroic revolutionary rit set an outstanding example not for poets alone but for all writers.

The outpouring of folk songs during the last year and more has a opened broad vistas for modern poetry. Our poets are eagerly grop and experimenting with new styles and new forms, and are engaged lively debates in the spirit of "letting a hundred schools contend." T fresh, vivid style and strong national flavor of Kuo Mo-jo's *Tsai Wen-* made its production an outstanding event in the theater this year, wh Tien Han's *Kuan Han-ching* has also a distinctive national style. T most striking feature of these two plays is the powerful way in wh each author's individuality is expressed. There is development, too, in craftsmanship of the novels. Authors today are paying serious attenti to the nationol tradition in literature, national forms, technical skill a individuality in writing. The bourgeois critics' claim that socialist lite ture has no respect for the individual is utter nonsense. The fact is t only by observing the Party principles of socialist literature and ma taining close links with the laboring people can revolutionary writ develop their individuality; and this is the freest literature with greatest variety of styles, whereas those modernists, formalists and visionists who cut themselves off from actual life and create false forms use bizarre mannerisms while they clamor for "Freedom for writer are heading towards a decline in individual styles and the destructi of individuality.

Owing to the development of realism and the public demand a reflection of the revolutionary spirit of the age, the question has be raised of the synthesis in literature of revolutionary realism and revo tionary romanticism. In the days of the Big Leap the laboring peo not only want literature to express their life profoundly and truthfu but also to express ideals and aspirations which will spur them on. this age of ours the development of ideals is linked up with reality, ideals are grounded in reality and lead it forward. Hence a revolution realist must also be a revolutionary idealist. This question has be raised in literature in order to explore and define better the inter lation of realism and romanticism in socialist realism. It is undenia that socialist realism is the basic method of socialist writing. It car forward all the best traditions of classical literature with creative in vations. Hence it is also undeniable that revolutionary romantici is an integral part of socialist realism. China's classical literature an old, rich tradition of positive romanticism, which often correlates complements realism. Our main task now in raising the standard of writing is to carry forward these traditions of Chinese classical literatu learning from the experience of socialist literature in other countries that our socialist realist works may have more distinctive national cha

teristics and better fulfill Chairman Mao Tse-tung's directive: "Life as reflected in artistic and literary works can and ought to be on a higher level and of greater power and better focussed, more typical, nearer the ideal and therefore more universal than actual everyday life." And our task today is to raise our artistic level. The style, forms, themes and methods of expression of socialist realism are many and varied, developing in coordination with the writing of different nationalities, but they must be firmly based on the aesthetics of Marxism-Leninism. So while raising this question we must guard against and oppose empty romanticism divorced from reality and vulgar naturalism devoid of ideals. These tendencies are counter to the principles of socialist realism.

A High Tide of Mass Literature

IN THE literary development of this decade the spare-time writing of the laboring people occupies an important position. At the First National Conference of Writers and Artists, Premier Chou En-lai told us: "We must pay serious attention to the growth and achievements, however small, of the new art and literature in the field of popularization." After ten years we are able to say that there have been rapid growth and great achievements, especially since last year with its unprecedented high tide of folk poetry and writing throughout the country. As Gorky said: "There has blazed up a great conflagration, fierce and exhilarating." And the intense heat of this conflagration was the incomparable enthusiasm of people throughout the country in creative labor. Inspired by this enthusiasm, enjoying an ever-richer cultural life, the broad masses were bound to feel the urge to use their own language and ideas to express their irrepressible feelings. Although they cannot master literary techniques overnight, their true feelings and sentiments born of labor, their strong, fresh style and language, their intelligence and talent undoubtedly possess great artistic vigor. The popularization of literature and the upsurge of mass writing have laid a broad foundation for raising the standard of all literature and art. This is part of the socialist cultural revolution. In this sense we must fully recognize its great achievements, its present and future position in the development of our literature.

The upsurge of folk songs all over China during the last year has been a great event in the history of modern Chinese literature. Judging by incomplete figures from the Institute for Research into Folk Literature, municipal and provincial publishers printed nearly eight hundred anthologies of folk poetry; and even if we make a strict selection of

these, the richness of the output is something unknown before. It i clearly evident from these new songs that China's unbroken, centuries old tradition of folk songs and ballads has after ten years of effort un dergone unprecedented development on a new base; bold reforms hav been introduced and innovations in form and style. The distinguishing feature of these folk poems—fresh imagery, clarity, fine musical rhythm bright colors, concise lively language—have greatly enriched our new poetry and formed part of the foundation for developing modern poetry. In addition to folk songs, workers, peasants and soldiers hav written innumerable poems, short stories, plays and ballads. Indeed not a few of the best new poems and stories of the last two years com from workers and peasants.

Many factories, people's communes and army units are writing their own history. This is a new venture: collective authorship by workers, peasants and soldiers in collaboration with intellectuals. Al though a bare beginning has been made, good results can already b seen in such works as *The History of Anyuan Mine; The Ten Thousand* Li *Yangtse,* an account of a construction site; *Green Trees Make a Shade* the story of the new people's commune in Hsinfan County, Szechuan and *History of Maitien People's Commune.* Our laboring people are writing not poetry alone but also their own history.

Prosperity of China's Multi-National Literature

China is a multi-national country and many of our national minori ties have their own literary tradition, but oppressed by reactionary rule and Han chauvinism in the past, the minorities were deprived o their political, economic and cultural rights, and had no equality in literature either. Some past histories of literature written by Han authors make no mention of the works of the national minorities. Since the establishment of the People's Republic of China, the age-old system of national oppression has been done away with for good, and our different nationalities have entered upon a new age of equality, unity and cooperation in one united socialist family. So for the first time we see our multi-national literature developing and prospering. Some national minorities which had no written language now have scripts of their own in which they publish their own books and newspapers; while those minorities with a long literary tradition—Mongolian, Tibetan, Hui Uighur, Kazakh, Uzbek, Korean and the minorities of the southwest—have scored tremendous successes in preserving their literary heritage and in producing new works.

The Mongolians have edited anthologies of folk poetry and classical erature including *Gadamirin,* a well-known epic poem. More noteworthy still, they have discovered a manuscript copy of the last six oks of the ancient epic *The Tale of Geser.* There are thirteen books all, of which the first seven were printed in Peking in Mongolian 1716. This epic is a great contribution of the Mongolian people Chinese and to world literature. In the field of new writing there are ntsogt's collection of poems *Our Valiant Cries,* his long poem *A ght of Wild Mirth* and his story *The Spring Sun Rises from Peking,* lchinhu's novel *On the Boundless Steppe,* Ulanbagan's *Beacon on the ppes,* Tsogtnarin's play *The Golden Eagle,* Punsek's novel *The Golden ingan Mountains,* and a long poem by the well-known folk poet -ohin.

The Uighurs have published poems and poetic dramas left by the olutionary Lutpulla-Mutallep, a play *Happy Occasion* and a collection short stories *Steeling* by the contemporary writer Zunun Kadyrov, l *Waves of Hope* by the poet Alkat Ahtam. The Kazakhs have ted and published a collection of poems written in prison called e *Nomad's Song* by their revolutionary leader Kalman Akit, *The n Girl* and many other stories and poems by the modern writer hara. The Uzbeks have also produced a number of new works.

Tibetan works translated into the Han language include the old folk end *Tsemakyid, Red Flowers on the Grassland* and *Gold Bridge, Jade lt* by the modern poet Ngagwanglozang, Rabgyaepamzang's *Mother* l many lyrics. Recently fine epics have been edited, including the i *Song of the Hero Bayanhu* and the Tibetan *King Geser.* Poems, vels and plays have been written by Korean writers of Yenpien like Hong Kiu, Li Wuk, Li Kyn Tsun and In Ho.

A fact worth noting is that the minority peoples of the Southwest, o had a relatively backward culture, have achieved remarkable results ring this decade in collecting and editing their traditional works. e Shani people's *Ashma,* and the Chuang people's *Hundred Birds Coat* fine poems admired by all, which are now being further edited. ner good works which have been re-edited include the Pai people's e *Cloud Maiden* and the Tai poem *Chaushutun and Namarona.* Outnding new works are the Tai singer Kang Lang-shuai's *See Peking m the Woods* and the Yi novelist Li Chiao's *The Joyful Golden Sand ver.*

These ten years have seen notable achievements and exceedingly id developments in Chinese literature. This is a great victory of rxism-Leninism on the ideological front in China, a great victory

of the working people in the cultural revolution and in cultural co struction. On the common basis of Marxism-Leninism our writers ha attained unprecedented unity and are striving to achieve yet more, contribute their skill and energy to socialist construction. This does n mean, of course, that we are satisfied with what we have done. W must never rest on our laurels. Compared with the past our achievemen are tremendous. But from the viewpoint of national construction an the people's needs, neither in quality nor quantity do our works me the demand. Many stirring events have not yet been adequately r flected in literature, much of the original writing and criticism magazines and organizations is still crude and over-simplified; o theoretical criticism is not yet soundly established; our body of write is still too small. We must not gloss over these shortcomings b face up to them and welcome well-meant criticism. Marxists never co ceal their faults, but strive by every means to overcome them. O urgent task at present is to raise the level of our writing, further e tend popularization, strengthen our writers' political and cultural u derstanding, improve our craftsmanship and strive to write more an better works, to achieve a still greater leap forward. This is o urgent task today.

II. WHAT EXPERIENCE HAVE WE GAINED?

Without Ideological Struggle Literature Cannot Advance

DURING these ten years Chinese literature has gone through a seri of sharp ideological struggles. These are the reflection in t realm of ideas of the class struggle in the period of socialist revoluti in China. So long as the class struggle exists, ideological conflicts li this cannot be avoided. Some people are thoroughly tired of the struggles, the very word "struggle" scares them, they want to live peace and quiet, and imagine this is the only way to write well. This an idle dream of timid intellectuals, for revolutionary literature is hot-house flower but is steeled and grows in wind and frost, in t tempest of revolutionary struggle. All the great periods of literatu in history have been times of sharp battles of ideas. This is true the past and the present, of China and of the rest of the world. Regar less of differences in the time, in the content and form of the strugg this is a law of history. Those who say the Communist philosop is a philosophy of struggle are quite right. For it scientifically refle the laws of historical development.

The series of struggles in the Chinese world of letters during the ast ten years can be summarized as a struggle between the bourgeois ne and the proletarian line in literature. This runs like a red thread nrough the history of our socialist literature. These struggles include ome antagonistic contradictions between the people and their ene- nies and some contradictions within the ranks of our people; but all re reflections of the class struggle in literature. . . .

The anti-rightist campaign dealt with contradictions between our- elves and the enemy. Even so, the Party's attitude towards all rightists xcept "those who are prepared to carry their stubborn granite heads nto their graves" was first to give them thorough-going criticism to elp them to reform and really recognize their mistakes, then to en- ourage them to return to the people and serve the people again.

During all these campaigns against reactionary bourgeois tendencies, re have also combatted over-simplified, crude dogmatism. The Party as consistently kept up a struggle on two fronts in literature; but uring this decade the main attention has been paid to reactionary ourgeois thought, since that constituted the chief danger. In 1953 and 954 we criticized Chen Chi-hsia's harsh literary criticism. In essence nis harsh criticism, which used "leftist" attitudes to attain rightist ims, was still a manifestation of bourgeois ideas.

What have we learned from these struggles? They teach us that ne class struggle in men's minds will outlast that on the economic ront and will prove more stubborn and tortuous. Even after the pro- tariat have seized political power and the economic system has nanged, a considerable length of time is still required to determine which de will triumph in the realm of ideas. It is imperative that we rasp the length of time needed to combat bourgeois ideas and the stub- ornness and complexity of this struggle; we must not underestimate ne danger, or think that from now on we can rest secure. That would ean making ourselves defenseless. Art and literature are always the ost sensitive class organs, the barometer of the age: that is why the eological struggle in the field of art and literature during the last ten ears has been sharper than in other cultural fields. We have seen that e root of our intellectuals' bourgeois ideas is their individualism. More- ver, they have long been influenced by the individualism of bour- eois literature. The struggle between individualism and collectivism literature is one of the major problems of modern writing. Nor can e say that it has been solved completely: a fairly long struggle still es ahead of us. It is only by dint of such struggles that Marxist erature can prove its validity, its correctness, can establish itself. Just

as Chairman Mao Tse-tung has pointed out: "What is correct alwa develops in the course of struggle with what is wrong. The tru the good and the beautiful always exist in comparison with the false, t evil and the ugly, and grow in struggle with the latter. As mankin in general rejects an untruth and accepts a truth, a new truth will beg struggling with new erroneous ideas. Such struggles will never en This is the law of development of truth and it is certainly also the la of development of Marxism." (*On the Correct Handling of Contradi tions Among the People.*) The struggle in the world of letters durin these ten years have proved to us this law of literary developmen without struggle, literature cannot advance. After destruction ne things are set up, and building is very hard, but without first destro ing we cannot build: the construction can come only through destru tion. This objective law is one basic part of our experience.

Some "kind-hearted" gentlemen fear that these fierce ideologic struggles may hamper such a delicate activity as literature. They sa debates cannot produce works of literature. True, no literature can b produced at the debating conference, but can we produce literature b avoiding these struggles? We should tell these gentlemen: You a rather like Chekhov's "man in the shell" who really could produ nothing. The facts are not as you imagine. After the criticism *Wu Hsun,* the Party urged writers to plunge deep into life, with th result that after 1953 a new crop of writing appeared. After the crit cism of Yu Ping-pai and the smashing of Hu Feng's counter-revol tionary clique, the Party put forward the directive: "Let a hundre flowers blossom, a hundred schools contend." This was followed b intense activity by writers and artists. After the anti-rightist and rect fication campaigns, we had a big leap in art and literature. And if w look further back, the brilliant essays of Lu Hsun and Chu Chiu-p were produced at a time of acute ideological struggle. Does th then, impede the delicate activity of writing or assist it? How is that after these struggles our authors are keener to write than ev before? How is it that there are so many new works? These facts a worth pondering well.

The Basis for Socialist Realism

ONE fact that emerges from the best works written during the la ten years is that the great majority of the authors have lived a worked for a long period with the people, acquiring a rich experien of life, and that during each ideological struggle they have stood fi

The same thing is true of the promising new writers who have appeared in the last ten years: their experience of life often outstrips their cultural level. On the other hand, most of those who commit mistakes and are backward politically, morally and artistically, or who have some little talent but never produce much good work are divorced from life and from the people. This contrast is clear enough. These facts are strong proof of the correctness of the Party's policy that writers should live among the masses.

We emphasize this point because the first prerequisite in literary creation is a deep understanding and intimate knowledge of people. For us this means understanding and knowing the laboring people. Since we only have few writers of working-class origin, our proletarian literature has to rely in the main on writers from other classes who will serve as spokesmen for the working class; and it is much harder for them to do this than it was for bourgeois writers in the past to deal with the life of their own class. In addition to identifying themselves with the masses in thought and feeling, they must understand the people's life, character, psychology and language. It takes a writer a long time to pass from one class to another. And this involves personal thought-reform, accumulation of new experience and improved powers of observation, analysis and expression. His gifts can find full play only if he draws continuously from the spring of life. Living among the masses is, to my mind, the expression of Chairman Mao Tse-tung's mass line in literature. This is the foundation for the literature of socialist realism.

Naturally this does not mean that any writer who lives among the masses will automatically produce good works. This is an over-simplification. Writing is a complex mental activity which must include the phases of practice, cognition and expression. We must learn to observe, experience, analyze and study life and our fellow men, to share our thoughts with the masses, to master technique. A writer's political understanding, experience of life and technical skill are inseparable, and the basis of all three is practice and cognition. A writer must not only know and understand the phenomena of life and the people around him, but must be able to evaluate them correctly, must have noble ideals in life, must feel a true sense of responsibility towards the mass struggle; and to this end he must never cease to raise his ideological and moral level. Some writers live among the masses for the sole purpose of collecting material, as if going into the woods to gather mushrooms; some, though they spend a long time with the masses, achieve very little because they lack the sense of responsibility towards mass struggles or are deficient in their understanding of life or judgment.

An important question in our literature is the unity of politics and art. The main key to this problem, to my mind, lies in the mingling of writers with the masses. Politics is no abstract concept but the concentrated expression of the ideas, sentiments, opinions and needs of the people. The task of art is to give concentrated, generalized expression to these through concrete images: only so can our works have a high political and truthful quality and be genuinely truthful writing. Those who criticize schematic and stereotyped writing often put forward the strange argument that these are caused by an excess of politics. This shows that these men do not understand what politics is. On the contrary they are caused by too little politics, too little understanding of how the people think and live or what they need. The main reason for stereotyped works and writing according to formulas is the author's lack of political understanding and knowledge of life which forcess him to add form to some abstract idea, taking politics as some abstract thing to be imposed upon his characters from without. In the early days of our Republic this tendency was relatively common for writers had not yet had time to familiarize themselves with the new life and new people.

Of course life is the fountain-head, but to present it adequately we need the ability to sum up, the ability to express. It is very important to improve our technique, but this is done primarily on the basis of deep observation and knowledge of life, familiarity with the people's language and character. Without these, the greatest skill is useless. In the relationship between ideology and art, ideology always has the leading role.

Our literature should have one consistent political trend but vary in style, form, themes and modes of expression. Unity in the political trend reflects the unity in the revolutionary aims and will of the great majority of the people, while variety in style, form and themes reflects the variety in our people's life and the free development of different tastes. This is a dialectical relationship of unity and variety. Only writers who keep close to the people can freely grasp this and achieve the highest degree of unity in their art.

There are many ways for a writer to penetrate deep into life, and he should make his own choice according to his individual needs. Each writer has his own plan of writing, his own experience of life, his own methods. A writer's wishes should be respected, and no cut-and-dried rules laid down. There can be no mechanical equalitarianism or standardization in writing. Some writers have asked whether they should confine themselves to one district or not—this should be left to

em. But apparently writers need a permanent base, judging by the perience of many. Our literature must not merely reflect life but ake a correct evaluation of it and adumbrate the future. Writers eed high ideals and vision; but the extent of their understanding is etermined in the first place by the extent to which they come to grips ith life. The deeper a tree strikes roots, the wider the area from hich it draws nourishment and the more luxuriant its growth.

The close ties between writers and the masses illustrate the relaonship between writing and the source of creation—life. This is the istorical materialist view, a law of literature, and one of the main ssons we have learned over the last ten years.

The Path for the Development of Socialist Literature

N *Party Organization and Party Literature,* Lenin pointed out that in literature we must definitely guarantee wide scope for individual eativeness and individual likes, wide scope for ideas and fancies, form d subject matter; but at the same time since literature is a part of arty work it must submit to Party leadership. From the bourgeois oint of view this appears paradoxical, but from ours it is the unity of pposites. It is the dialectical relation of unity and variety mentioned efore. And this applies in all cases. Chairman Mao Tse-tung has lled on a hundred flowers to bloom, a hundred schools to contend, d given us six criteria for distinguishing between flowers and weeds, xplaining this relationship. Without criteria there might be anarchy d confusion between right and wrong; without the policy of a hunred flowers and a hundred schools we might fall into the error of gmatism which hampers the free development of literature and art. hese opposites must, therefore, be combined and unified. Precisely ecause of this, we have defined the fundamental difference between our olicy of a hundred flowers and the spurious freedom of the bourgoisie, which is in fact a monopoly. Our hundred flowers must bloom n a socialist soil. The style of socialist literature is varied and free, hich means that we must guarantee free competition between writs, free development of individual style; but all these must serve the asic interests of socialism. This prerequisite is natural enough.

The policy of a hundred flowers and a hundred schools may be escribed as a law of development in the history of literature and art a whole, and in China today it suits the requirements of socialist nstruction. Our literature must reach higher standards with greater eed, its basic path is the implementation of the directives to "let a

hundred flowers blossom, a hundred schools contend" and "weed throug the old to let the new emerge." We must have free competition i present-day writing as well as in the reforms and innovations intro duced in traditional art. New works of art and literature must carr forward our national traditions and absorb the best experience fro the world, improving and developing these and absorbing them an making them our own. This is an unalterable truth, and on the basis c Marxism-Leninism we can call all our creativeness into full play. Marx ism-Leninism has discovered the laws of development in art and thu given the greatest freedom to artists. A good deal is talked abou individuality and originality in art, but what is the best way to affor it a healthy development? I think it can only develop when writer have the widest, most thorough understanding of objective reality thanks to the scientific outlook of Marxism-Leninism, when they ca break the chains of old outmoded theories, emancipate their mind and by drawing upon their wide experience of life, of tradition, of th best of world literature, gain true freedom of choice and call thei creativeness into full play. Hence freedom for the individual is de veloped in a collective, originality springs from the mass base, fro past tradition. This affords literature the greatest scope in form an content. The policy of a hundred flowers and a hundred schools, o weeding through the old to let the new emerge, is the path which wi lead our literature and art to their goal. This year we have witnesse heated debates on literary theory, on poetic form, on the question o realism and romanticism, on the history of literature and the evalua tion of certain classics. In these debates old authorities and youn intellectuals met on an equal footing to state their views frankly an argue their case. This atmosphere is a healthy one. The Chinese pe ple have never in their history shown such creative ability. It is amazin to see the number of poems written by the laboring people, the num ber of their scientific and technical inventions and improvement And further implementation of the Party's policy will bring about mo rapid development still. This is a new and most valuable part of th experience of the last ten years, which provides a key to future deve opment in our writing.

III. WE ADVANCE TOWARDS NEW HEIGHTS

THESE have been ten great years in China, and a greater future li ahead. Communists never cease to forge ahead. Our socialis literature is still young, but it will rapidly gain strength and maturit

Our present level is not very high, but we are determined to press on to the heights of world literature. This is not easy, the most arduous effort is required. In the past as a rule literature acquired great height only after considerable period of preparation. Nowadays we no longer need so much time as before because we have a new economic basis, a new social system, and invincible Marxism-Leninism, the Chinese Communist Party and our great leader Chairman Mao Tse-tung to guide us. We are fully confident that we shall continue to advance, but we must not think this an easy matter or grow complacent and boastful. We must gird up our loins to press forward, learning from past experience, overcoming our past mistakes, continuing to struggle against all reactionary bourgeois ideas, to link ourselves closely with the laboring people, to carry out the Party's policy: "Let a hundred flowers blossom, a hundred schools contend. Weed through the old to let the new emerge." We must go ahead with popularization, work harder and study harder to raise the quality of our writing. The future of our socialist literature is illimitably bright.

Shao Shuan-lin is a well-known literary critic; now vice-Chairman of the Chinese Writers' Union.

PIONEERS

TIEN CHIEN

1

A rainbow like a colored bridge
Has spanned the wilderness,
By this bridge of seven colors
Lingers a girl.

On her two long braids
Are purple butterflies,
The butterflies flit to the well,
To the clear well water.

Mirrored in the well
The two bright butterflies
Flutter above the water,
Happy and free.

Seated by the well,
The girl opens a book:
"Only those building happiness
Know how wonderful life can be!"

Tien Chien's distinctive style blends modern and traditional elements. He has travelled extensively in China and knows its people and places intimately.

2

Come here, comrades,
Good is this water, good these meadows;
The soil here is not unfit for flowers,
But no one has planted flowers in this wilderness.

We can raise horses wherever there is grassland,
We can settle wherever there is water,
When the wild mountains see these young pioneers
They will cower in fear.

The rainbow like a colored bridge
Spans the horizon,
Are there people over there
Who long for her still?

If you long for her,
Cross the bridge;
For she will settle here,
Here she will marry.

Translated by Rewi Alley

Going to Market by Lan Tien-yu

PEASANT SONGS

Recently, over a hundred million peasants undertook the building of dams, reservoirs and dykes, and the digging of irrigation ditches on a nationwide scale. Altogether over 27,000,000 acres of land were put under irrigation. In the course of the work, innumerable poems and songs appeared. They were written, often by groups of people, on large wall posters (*tatze pao*) in villages, printed in local newspapers, and sung on work sites to the swing of picks and hoes, and the tread of feet moving rock and earth. One can feel through them the vigorous, confident spirit which has brought the countryside to life with a huge increase of productive activity.

For Happiness

One year's hard work,
Ten years happiness.
Ten years' hard work,
Ten thousand happy years.

Move the earth to build a mountain,
Dig the earth to make a river;
Make the rivers change their courses,
Turn the valleys into lakes.

—Quoted by peasant deputies to the National People's Congress

Two Days in One

Seize the bright day,
Grasp the dull day.
Wind or rain—make it a good day!
Turn night to day with bright lamps;
Then one day becomes two days.

—Young irrigation workers, Chenhsien county, Chekiang province

ELECTRICIAN'S SONG

LI YU-YUNG

Strumming on my guitar,
I sing my song.
Yellow River, Yellow River,
Look up at me here!

The hills are high, but the hills lie at my feet;
The river is wide, but my wires have crossed the river;
My fingers, plucking telegraph wires,
Broadcast my cheerful song to distant parts.

Let the wind blow, let rain pelt,
They wash the dust from my shoulders;
Let the sun blaze fierce as fire,
My bronze skin is a present from the sun.

To make a mighty symphony for the work-site,
Time flies through my pliers as I make fast the lines;
My time-table is not the calendar
But the number of new telegraph poles on the hills.

Often I strum my guitar,
Sending my song to the heart of this great land:
Now spring has come to the plains,
Boatloads of telegraph poles have crossed the river!

Translated by Gladys Yang

by Ssutu Nu, a mechanic in a Shensi motor works

THE GIRL AT THE LATHE

Silver filings fly from her lathe
Like drops from a fountain;
Her rosy, perspiring cheeks
Are peonies bathed in dew.

The larger filings scatter the ground,
The smaller filings spatter her face;
She works hard at her lathe all day,
The love in her heart turned to thousands of silver filings.

ON TOP OF THE PRESS

by Fang Teh-wen, a worker in a motorcar works in Kirin

On top of the press
I feel on top of the clouds,
And look ten thousand *li*
Into the distance.
Like a swirling waterfall
Anshan's furnaces pour out their flaming iron—
Mount Tai is nothing to this city of steel!

Which construction site is that?
A crowd of men push lights to the horizon:
Are those the drills for Tienshan thundering?
Tractors are rolling through the land,
Old peasants are sowing moonlight in their fields:
Do you see how, right behind you,
Each drop of sweat will raise up pearly crops?

I raise my head
And sing aloud to the moon.
Let me play with the clouds,
Let me reach for the stars to thread a necklace for you,

Let me lift down the Milky Way and fix strings to it
To make a lyre and sing of my heart's delight—
Sing to my country, to this mighty land.

NIGHT SHIFT

by Han Hsueh-chiang and Hsiao Lu, electricians of Inner Mongolia

Bright flames leap in the furnace,
The wheels are whirling;
The young electrician in her spotless cap
Lever in hand is studying the meter.

Night muffles the sky like a cloak,
Flames sparkle in the furnace,
And time flies second by second
As the engine turns.

The furnace reddens the stoker's cheerful face,
The engine thuds in time to the engineer's heart-beats;
The young electrician is completely absorbed—
She has given all her love to this beautiful night.

ON THE BUS

by Li Cheng-yung, a pharmaceutical worker in Shanghai

Big raindrops patter on the bus
And splash through the open window
Where sits a night-shift worker,
Fast asleep.

A Young Pioneer tiptoes up and reaches out,
She pushes hard to close the window tight;
Then she takes a snowy handkerchief from her pocket
And softly wipes the moisture on his shoulder.

By the window a night-shift worker sits,
Fast asleep.
Has the small hand of the girl in the red scarf
Appeared to him in his dreams? . . .

OETIC TRADITION IN CHINA

REWI ALLEY

N CHINA, the necessity of man living in harmony with his environ- ment, and in ever seeking that which is most natural for his growth, s been the theme running through the lines of many of her greatest ets, great by any standard in our world.

A few months ago, while in the western part of Hunan province ith friends, we halted for a while at the site of the Peach Blossom rden—a scenic valley now beautifully maintained in its natural state the local farm commune. It was this place, which during his jour- yings the poet Tao Yuan-ming visited, that inspired him to write his opian peace poem in the fifth century of our era.

At the time of our coming, it was still winter, and mist drifted rough the hills, dissolving into a fine rain as we walked up the lley through tall bamboos, looking at the old stone tablets, so old at the weathering of centuries had obliterated the characters, leaving em covered with moss. On the highway below, the commune farm- s had put up one of their "Leap Forward" archways, carrying pictures an attainable paradise in their own times—the hills being made to ve up their ores, furnaces converting them into the metals great fac- ies needed to turn out all that would lighten the burdens of the ople. A long way from Tao Yuan-ming in the times of Tsin, one ght say. Yet actually, something directly in succession to his life d thought, which above all dealt in terms of things concerning ordi-

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Rewi Alley is a New Zealander who has lived the last thirty years or so in ina. Mr. Alley is the author of volumes of poetry and impressions of the new ina.

nary folk. He loved the chrysanthemum because it so bravely rais its beautiful head despite the frost of autumn. Intuitively he felt t deep meaning of many simple things, but he did not like being sh of food or winter clothing any more than did his neighbors. In poetry he wrote directly, departing from the style of his time th had become stereotyped and no longer expressed original thought the way that Chu Yuan of the Warring Kingdom period, and t early Han poets had done. He left the hollow mockery of a pompo feudal court, to find reality amongst the common folk of his nat village. In the poem that this scenic valley commemorates, he envisag a group of people whose ancestors had somehow escaped from t cruel wars then wracking the land, and after coming up into t previously unexplored and remote place, had lived in perfect pe together. Describing them he said,

> "no roads went
> to the outer world; there were hens
> cackling, and dogs barking; people's
> customs and their clothing were of days
> gone by; children banded themselves
> together, and came singing; the old
> and white haired, looked happy, satisfied;
> strolling around, visiting each other;
>
> "there was the glory of harvests
> standing so peacefully; the trees
> sighing as they waited for winds
> to come; in such a place who would
> worry to keep a calendar with the
> four seasons marking off each year?"

He toiled as hard as his neighbors did, the dew on the grass in evenings after sunset brushing against his bare legs, the moon seem to hang from his hoe as he carried it on his back—and when furt words failed him, he just talked of his pleasure in drinking the h rice brew of his native Kiangsi, which down to today the farm find so comforting after their work in the paddy fields. And so could write:

> "Life is a changing thing
> like the swirling dust on roads

changing its form with each
twist of the wind; nothing
lasts for ever, and man from
his birth is brother to all
other men. . . ."

His lines, which breathe peace and simplicity in living, his interest the people around, in his own and their children, their crops, their ruggles, and the beauty of his surroundings, undoubtedly inspired some f the greatest of tht poets in succeeding ages—Tu Fu, Li Pai and ai Chu-yi of T'ang, Su Tung-po of the Sung especially—who too looked nong simple people, the hills and the streams and found much to rite about. So much so, indeed, that their lines still stand as some f the greatest peace and humanistic poems between their day and urs. Tu Fu, for instance sat through the night during the last period f his life and wrote:

"and I, pondering on a strange thing—that all
the world depends on war rather than
on peace, sit through the night in sadness."

e might well have been a peace partisan of this century, as indeed s many passionate lines for peace still make him.

THE modern men of action in China, whose lives and work have changed so much for their fellow men, and who struggle so dently for world peace, are also poets of no mean order, following e tradition of their land. Like Tao Yuan-ming, they have grown p in lovely country surroundings, amongst peasant people. Traveling Szechuan last month, the fan makers of Roongchang showed me a ry lovely specimen of their art, inscribed with three of Mao Tse-tung's ost famous poems. A couple of years ago while at Chindechun pot-ries in Kiangsi, I took away a porcelain mug carrying his verses. Pai u-yi in the T'ang period, was pleased when he found country folk ging his poems and writing them on walls. Mao Tse-tung, Chu Teh, uo Mo-jo—to name but some of the elder leaders of thought in China ho are poets, find now the spirit of their lines permeating through at of a whole people who especially in this last year have written poems erally by the million, which greet one wherever ones goes. Kuo o-jo, the scientist and peace fighter, has joined in with the people this time, and his new, enthusiastic verse is frequently published in

papers and magazines. Recently the poet Emi Siao, has published a collection he has made of the poems of revolutionaries who struggled in the darkest night before the dawn. The opening one is by Li Da-chao, the first Communist Party leader, who was executed in Peking by the reaction. It is called "Yu Chuan Shan"—the"Jade Fountain Hill." Written back in 1915, it says:

"A great palace beside Peking
contrasting with the Afung one of old;
and now behind the wall you can hear
the sound of waters rippling
like that of the blood and sweat
of the people ever running away."

One by Yu Feng Chou written before his execution by the Kuomintang in 1928, is called "Examining Oneself":

"Ever the hot red blood
courses through our veins,
and in bitterness, tears
run down our cheeks;
the tears dry up, but the blood
does not; useless to be
too sad at this moment, best
just imagine that long ago
one has already died."

—both of which sets of lines remind one of much of the poetry that has gone before. A culmination of it, as it were.

The Peking "People's Daily" of a couple of day's ago lies on my desk as I write. In it a set of verses laughs up at me, just as they do from village walls, factory notice boards, and the magazines and papers of the whole country. Tao Yuan-ming would have liked these, one feels, for they are about his native Poyang Lake not far from the village of Tsai Sang Chao, where he lived and wrote. They are written by Wang I-ming:

"Spring breezes blow so that all
turns to green around the banks
of Poyang Lake, telling fisher folk
now comes the time for fishing

and the commune sends out the call
so that all gather like some
elemental force, to carry through
the task in hand; waves behind
push the boats ahead, making them
cut through waves in front, and around
the four hundred li of lake
peach blossom shows red, the people laugh
and the carp are fat."

and then

"Fishermen know not tiredness
the more fish they catch the happier
they are; the loveliness of Poyang Lake
is too great ever to be fully told:
sunset, and still they do not return;
across the lake there spreads a mist
with boats cleaving through it
and over all shines the light
of a great silver moon."

Yes, Tao Yuan-ming would have liked to have been out with all these folk—his descendants in all probability, who now write poetry as they move mountains, catch fish, build irrigation canals and mammoth power projects, living the poetry that they feel.

TWO POEMS

Song

What kind of vine bears what kind of melon,
What kind of tree has what kind of blossom,
What kind of era sings what kind of song,
What class of people speaks what kind of language.

Factory Chimney

Rising high into the white clouds
With smoke rolling across the blue sky,
What tree is taller than you,
What heavenly bamboo is sweeter than you?

You are an iron arm,
Holding a socialist flag in the sky,
You are a giant paintbrush,
Tracing out the spring of our land.

—From *Workers' and Peasants' Poems,* an anthology published in Shanghai, August 1958.

ing Behind the Willow Veil — LI TSCHUNG

MY FIRST SUPERIOR

MA FENG

SOON after I graduated from the provincial Water Conservancy School last summer I was assigned to work in this county. I was in quite a state at the time—I don't know whether it was from excitement or tension. Probably all young students feel the same way when they go to their first job.

With my luggage strapped to my bicycle, I rode off to "take office." The reason I didn't travel by bus was because I wanted to start training immediately for long trips by bike. Surely I would need that ability, working in the countryside.

I set out before daybreak. It was nearly noon by the time I reached the county seat. No sooner did I enter town that I had an accident. The streets were rather narrow and as I pedalled along I saw an old man coming towards me. He was a queer duck. Although it was the hottest part of the summer, he wore a lined jacket and black cotton padded trousers tied at the cuffs. Yet his head was covered by a big straw hat. Was he avoiding the heat, or was he afraid of being cold?

Head down, back bent, hands clasped behind him, he advanced at a stately gait, his toes pointing outwards. I rang my bell loudly, but

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Ma Feng is a young story writer. He joined the revolutionary army when he was fifteen. Later he did cultural work in the guerrilla bases behind the Japanese line. Many of his stories have as their background the resistance against the Japanese invasion.

he didn't even raise his head. He just kept ambling along at the same deliberate pace. When we were only a few feet apart, he suddenly looked up and moved two steps to the right.

But it was too late. For when I saw that he didn't give way, I cut right to pass him just as he was stepping in the same direction to avoid me, and I knocked him down. I fell too. Tired and hungry, I had been irritated by his hogging the road. Now my tumble made me furious. I crawled to my feet and picked up the bike.

"Where are your ears!" I shouted. "Didn't you hear my bell?"

I felt ashamed as soon as these discourteous words left my mouth. He hadn't refused to get out of the way; he had only been a little slow. What's more, I had run him down. Of course, he must be very annoyed. I was sure he wasn't going to let me get away with it; I though I was in for a row.

He picked up his hat and rose slowly. Much to my surprise he said calmly, "Don't lose your temper and I won't either. We've both had a fall, now let's each go his own way."

This time I got a good look at his face. He wasn't an old man at all. He couldn't have been more than forty. His square face was pale as if from some recent illness. His hair was cropped short. He stood up, glanced at me, and brushed the dust from his clothes. Then, clasping his hands behind his back, head down, he walked off with his peculiar skating gait as if nothing had happened.

Dumbfounded, I stared after him until he turned off into a side street. Only then did I mount my bicycle and ride on. He certainly is queer, I thought.

My work was decided upon as soon as I arrived at the organization section of the county Party committee. I was assigned temporarily to Flood Control Headquarters.

It's office was in a large building on the southern side of the compound. I was received by a young fellow about the same age as mine. He introduced himself.

"My name is Chin Yung-chang. Just call me Old Chin . . . or Young Chin, if you like. It's up to you." Pointing around the room, he said, "This is our office. It's also our reception room, and our dormitory. Comprehensive utilization, you might say!"

Young Chin was a merry lad, and quite warm-hearted. As he talked, he helped me lay out my bedding and unpack by belongings. Then he brought me warm water to wash my face with and half a big watermelon. In less than an hour, we were old friends.

After a mid-day nap, Young Chin gave me a brief explanation of our

work. Flood Control Headquarters was a temporary organization under the first secretary of the county Party committee. The actual day to day leadership was exercised by his second in command, Vice-Director Tien of the Rural Construction Bureau.

"Come on," said Young Chin. "I'll introduce you."

He stood up and left the room. I followed.

The Rural Construction Bureau was diagonally across the road in a simple hollow square compound of one story buildings. Tien's office was in the east wing. When we entered, he was seated writing at a desk.

Young Chin said, "The organization section has assigned us a new man, Old Tien."

"Good!" said Old Tien, without looking up.

"This is Comrade Peng Chieh," Young Chin said hastily. "He's just graduated from the Water Conservancy School."

Only then did Old Tien put down his pen and raise his head. I started involuntarily when I saw his face. What a coincidence. My "immediate superior" was the man I had knocked down on the street that morning. Recalling my rudeness to him, I felt terribly embarrassed.

Like a gracious host, Young Chin brought forward a chair and poured me a drink of hot water from the thermos flask, then arranged the books and newspapers that were strewn over the desk into neat piles.

Old Tien didn't move. My first job, he said, was to familiarize myself with all the rivers and streams in the county; after that, there were several key villages he wanted me to visit. Old Tien spoke in a low voice, very slowly, as if he hadn't had a decent meal in a long time. When he finished telling me about my work, suddenly he said:

"You look kind of familiar. Haven't we met before? Ah, that's right. We've met."

"Where?" Young Chin inquired curiously.

A hot blush suffused my cheeks. I didn't know what to say. Luckily, someone came in just then with a document for Old Tien and I was saved from any further embarrassment.

As we were returning to the Flood Control office, Young Chin pressed me to tell him how I had met Old Tien. I had no choice but to relate what had happened that morning.

"It's all right," Young Chin assured me. "Old Tien won't hold it against you. Don't worry about it."

"I was a little sore at the time," I said. "I kept ringing my bell, but he didn't even look up."

Young Chin laughed. "What good's a bell? An easy-going fellow like him—he wouldn't hear you if you fired a cannon!"

DURING my first week I saw little of Old Tien. He came to our office only twice; Young Chin and I went to his place once to report on our work. From these few contacts I got the impression that he was a very lethargic person indeed. His abstracted air when he walked, his listless way of talking, his casual approach to problems—nothing seemed to arouse him. It was just my luck to get a washout like that for a superior. But whatever duties he gave me I performed to the best of my ability.

My main task then was to familiarize myself with the work. At the same time I helped Young Chin push flood control preparations in the various townships. I studied the maps of the county's waterways and read a lot of material. The country had three rivers, all flowing from the mountains in the west to the valleys in the east.

These so-called rivers as a matter of fact were mostly dry beds. There had been a big flood in August of 1954, but the years that followed were uneventful. I didn't see much likelihood of anything happening this year. The season for floods was just about over, and there wasn't any sign of rain.

But the night of the ninth day after my arrival, we were hit by a cloudburst.

During the day, the sky was clear. Towards evening, clouds began to pile up in the west. At about ten p.m. Young Chin had already climbed into bed; I was seated beside the table lamp reading aloud to him from a novel. The telephone rang. I answered it. The Water Commission of Chang Family Gully reported that mountain torrents were pouring into the Yungan River; they estimated its flow exceeded 100 cubic meters per second.

I was shocked. According to the materials I read, the Yungan hadn't moved that fast even in '54. I hung up and hastily told the news to Young Chin. Just as each seized separate phones and started to notify the villages lower down the river, a call from Anlo Village came in. Their report nearly scared me silly. I threw down the phone and shouted:

"Anlo has a breach in the dyke!"

I dashed out of the room and ran to inform Old Tien. I got to his office in practically one breath, pushed open his door and plunged in. He had already retired; though his lamp was still lit.

"Get up, Old Tien!" I shouted. "The Yungan River is in flood!

There's a breach in the dyke at Anlo!" I was sure he would hop right out of bed and hurry with me to headquarters.

But he lay without stirring. His face didn't even change expression. "What's the flow?" he asked. I told him. "Oh," he said. "Where in Anlo is the breach? How big is it?" he wanted to know.

I said that it was east of the highway, that it was over forty feet wide. Still lying in the bed, he said matter of factly, "It doesn't matter. Some of the villages downstream will get a little less water for irrigation, that's all."

"Didn't you hear me?" I demanded angrily. "Anlo has a break in the dyke!"

"So what?' he said. "Anyhow, we can't stop it. Just let it flow."

I wanted to haul him out of bed and paste him one. How did he ever get to be leader of Flood Control Headquarters? I never met anyone so spineless!

Just then, Young Chin flew in through the door, crying, "Sancha River is rising too!"

Old Tien sat up, electrified. "What's the flow?" he asked urgently.

Young Chin said the Party secretary of Sancha Township had phoned. The secretary hadn't been sure of the rate of flow, but he said that the water was up to the rear of the Dragon King Temple.

"That means at least ninety cubic meters per second," said Old Tien. Hastily throwing on his clothes, he instructed us: "Notify Haimen and Tienchia villages to get everyone out on the dyke, fast!"

Young Chin and I turned and ran.

By the time I reached the office, several people had arrived; Comrade Hao, the new secretary of the county Party committee; Comrade Wang, head of the committee's general office; Director Niu of the Military Service Bureau; and a number of village officials. Obviously, Young Chin had let them know.

Some were phoning. Others were discussing something around a map of the county's water courses. Everyone looked grim. The atmosphere in the room was very tense. When they saw me and Young Chin enter, they asked anxiously, "Where's Old Tien?"

"Be here in a minute," said Young Chin.

I hurriedly put through a call to the village of Haimen. By the time I finished, Old Tien had already arrived, a staff in one hand, carrying his raincoat. He was dressed the same as before, but he had changed completely. He was full of energy; he looked serious but cool. Striding into the room, he tossed his things on to the bed, then swiftly approached the director of the Military Service Bureau.

"Round up all the standing militia and lead them to the south dyke. ou take charge personally!"

"Yes sir!" Director Niu replied smartly, like a soldier acknowledging n order from his general. He turned on his heel and left.

To Comrade Wang, head of the Party county committee's general fice, Old Tien said, "Get a car and have it waiting at the door." hen he picked up the telephone and began calling the different llages.

Everyone watched him silently. He shouted into the receiver: "Cen- al, get me Tu Village, Shangshe and Kuchen. . . . Tu Village? Who's peaking? . . . This is Old Tien. Listen, open one sluice gate of the ird branc hditch. . . . What? You've opened them all already? I was fraid of that. Close two immediately. . . . We built that sluice channel nly last winter. It can't take that much water all at once. . . . Stand your dam. There's another big crest coming after midnight!"

OLD TIEN put down the phone and picked up another. He gave detailed instrutcions to Shangshe and Kuchen . . . what section of hich dyke should be watched, which channel gate should be opened, hich should be closed, which emergency reservoir should be filled rst, which second. . . . I quickly got the map of the county's water net- ork and placed it on the table in front of him, but he didn't even ance at it. He seemed to know every ditch and its branches in the rigation system. It was truly astonishing.

Finishing his calls, Old Tien wiped the sweat off his brow. To the ad of the general office he said, "Old Wang, you and Young Chin y here and handle the phones. Secretary Hao, you and the others go ck to bed." He turned to me. "You and I are going to Haimen. I'm raid their south dyke is in for trouble."

"The south dyke is strong," I said. "It's their north dyke that isn't good." I had been to Haimen only the day before. This was one oint I felt sure of.

"The gale's from the northeast," said Old Tien.

I had never noticed the wind direction.

"Your health is poor," Comrade Wang said to Old Tien. "Let me . You look after things here."

"You couldn't manage," retorted Old Tien. He took his staff and ncoat and went out. I grabbed a padded jacket and followed.

A jeep was standing at the door. We got in. Old Tien said to e driver:

"Haimen. Make it snappy."

I hadn't dreamed Old Tien could be so positive, so confident. Bu a couple of things had me puzzled. Why had he been so unconcerne about the breach in the dyke at Anlo, and so upset over the rate of flo of the Sancha River? It was only 90 cubic meters per second. knew that Sancha used to cause lots of trouble, but in the past five year many flood control projects had been built along it. Only the previou winter several emergency reservoirs were constructed to take its overflow Its lower reaches were very broad, and were capable of carrying a flo up to 200 cubic meters per second. Surely 90 wasn't anything to get ex cited about? . . . Also, Old Tien had said there'd be another crest afte midnight. How did he know?

In the car, I told him what was on my mind.

"Yungan River has a steep gradient, and its basin is small," Ol Tien explained. "Its waters move fast, but in four hours at most th river is dry again. Could you plug the breach in four hours? Beside a break there can't do much damage. All the fields east of the highwa have long-stemmed crops. The water won't swamp them. From ther the fields drain into the Bumper Harvest Canal, which leads to north o the village to fields that seldom get enough water. . . ."

"What makes you say the Sancha River will have a flood crest afte midnight?"

"No doubt about it. That 90 flow is just the water of the centra branch. The mountain basins of the northern and southern branche have better retention; the water from those slopes won't come down til at least three hours later. That's after midnight, isn't it?"

Old Tien paused, then continued, "The gradient of Sancha keep diminishing after it leaves the mountains. When it reaches the san flats in Haimen gorge it's nearly flat. All that water piling up, and n place to drain off. The force is simply murderous!"

He lapsed into silence. Plainly, he was worried about Haimen. didn't say anything either. I remembered Young Chin having told m that Old Tien was the county's "home-made" flood conservancy exper At the time I thought he was kidding. Now I realized it was no jok Listening to Old Tien's analysis of the situation, I could tell he kne what he was talking about.

Haimen was about seven miles from the county seat. A mile fro Haimen, Old Tien told the driver to stop the jeep. "There's water i the second branch by now," he said. "You go on back." He got out an started walking. I followed.

It was a dark night with few stars. We advanced into the northea wind. Holding his staff, Old Tien led the way. I tailed close behi

He traveled so fast I almost had to run to keep up. When we reached the river bed of the second branch, sure enough there was water in it. We waded across, but instead of entering the village of Haimen we followed a path leading directly to the southern dyke.

Emerging from a field of tall sorghum, we saw many lanterns moving on the dyke in the distance. We could hear faint shouts and the roar of water. Old Tien quickened his pace. I trotted panting behind him. When we climbed the dyke, we found that the water was only a few feet from the top. The dyke was piled with straw mats, skeins of brush, sand bags. . . . People were bringing material, carrying earth to make the dyke higher, endless lines coming and going, calling, shouting.

WE CUT our way through and traveled east along the dyke until we reached the command post—a little shack surrounded by heaps of flood-fighting material. We entered. The small room was jammed. The secretary of the township Party committee, the Party secretaries of the villages of Haimen and Tienchia, the chairmen of the local people's communes—all were there. Everyone looked glum. Tobacco smoke hung so thick you could hardly breathe.

"Hey, Old Tien!" someone cried joyfully as we entered the room.

Startled, everyone stood up. They all started speaking at once:

"Is that you, Old Tien?"

" I knew you'd come!"

"You're here at last! . . ."

The men's expressions brightened. Their voices were full of emotion. Obviously, everyone had great confidence in Old Tien. It was as if now that he had arrived they wouldn't fear the flood waters no matter how big they might grow.

Old Tien asked what material had been prepared, how many men had been organized for an emergency squad, how fast the river was rising.

"The bed was only half filled an hour ago. You've seen where it is now," the township Party secretary responded.

Old Tien thought a moment. "The water from the north branch is starting to come down. It'll get worse before long. Set those mat breakwaters up along the dyke in a hurry. The wind shows no sign of dying."

Several men ran out to execute his orders.

Old Tien's eyes swept the room. "Why isn't Old Man Chiang here?" he asked.

"It didn't seem that serious," Old Chin, Haimen's Party secretary, responded. "So we didn't call him."

"We can't afford to take any chances," Old Tien snapped. He reached for the telephone. Old Chin said the line was broken; a man was out repairing it now. Old Tien pushed the phone aside and said, "Go back to the village and ask him to come." Turning his head, he said to me, "You go with him. Phone Director Niu from the village and tell him to put mat breakwaters up on the dyke at the county seat right away; tell him to pay special attention to the section at Wangchia Slope."

I hastily followed Old Chin through the door.

Everyone was busy putting up mat breakwaters as we walked along the dyke. I overheard a conversation between two men.

"Now that Old Tien's here, we don't have to worry," said one.

"Not worry?" retorted the other. "If there wasn't any danger he wouldn't have come!"

"It can't be too bad," said the first man "Old Man Chiang still hasn't shown up!"

In a low voice I asked Old Chin what sort of person was this Old Man Chiang.

"Breach repair expert," said Old Chin. "Sending for him means we're in for trouble." Old Chin sighed. "If this dyke really goes, seven villages south of here will be under water!"

I felt very depressed. I told him if this were next year, there'd be no problem. In the autumn a big reservoir was going to be built on the river's upper reaches. I had seen the plan in the county office.

We hurried along the channel and soon reached Haimen Village. While I made my phone call, Old Chin went for Old Man Chiang. Before long, Old Chin returned, supporting a white-bearded oldster. He introduced me to Old Man Chiang. The old fellow appeared to be at least seventy; he tottered so when he walked I was afraid he was going to fall. But he refused to let Old Chin get him a donkey.

"You go on first," he said. "I'll get there a little later. If there's trouble, it won't be till after midnight."

"Go ahead, Old Chin," I urged. "I'll look after old uncle."

Old Chin hurried off towards the dyke. The old man and I slowly followed, with me supporting him on my arm.

"How's Old Tien's ailment?" the old man asked me. "Better?"

"What ailment?" I countered. I hadn't heard anything about Old Tien being sick.

"You mean you don't know? His legs were so bad last winter, he

ıldn't get out of bed. He's got what-do-you-call-it? Ah, that's right rheumatism!"

No wonder Old Tien always moved so slowly, no wonder he wore dded trousers even in the hottest weather. Suddenly I remembered w quickly he had walked when we got out of the jeep. It must have en awfully painful!

LD MAN CHIANG liked to talk. He said: "Old Tien got his rheumatism in 1954. We had a lot of rain that autumn. This ole region was flooded. Old Tien was out in the rain, wading from age to village, for seven days and seven nights, leading the flood nting. By the time the water receded, both his legs were badly ollen." The old man heaved an admiring sigh. "He certainly gets ngs done! Even better than his father did!" He went on to tell about Old Tien's background:

Old Tien came from Tienchia Village, a kilometer away from imen. His father, before he died, had been good friends with Old n Chiang, and was a famous swimmer. Whenever there was a ach in the dyke, these two, and a few others, took charge of repairs. In his early teens, Old Tien was already helping his father and Old n Chiang with dyke work. The boy was courageous, thorough and rgetic. By the age of twenty he had a reputation in the region.

After liberation, the county government appointed him a water servancy technician. Old Tien was everywhere—deepening the ers, digging irrigation canals. . . . Later he took courses for several nths in a special school run by the regional government. Many the water control projects in the county were designed by him.

We had already reached the southern dyke. Old Man Chiang n't want to go up there, but insisted that we walk along through the ds in the rear and only mount the dyke at the command post. I ed him why. He laughed.

"If the people see me, they'll think it's a bad sign."

I brought him to the command post in the manner he preferred.

The room was quiet. Only Old Tien and a young woman doctor e there. Old Tien was saying to her, "You stay here and take the ne calls. Don't leave even if the heavens collapse!"

Evidently the phone had been repaired. When Old Tien caught t of us, he rushed up to shake the old man's hand warmly.

"How does it look?" the old man asked him. "Is the dyke going to the night?"

Old Tien frowned. "The wind's too big. It's dangerous. Uncl rest here on the brick bed. We'll call you when we need you. I'm going to take a look at the east end."

He went out the door. I followed.

The water was much more turbid than when I had left for th village. Although it was still a meter from the top of the dyke, th wind whipped it into huge waves and flung up their froth. Were not for the mat breakwaters, the dyke would never have been able t bear up under their pounding. Old Tien and I hadn't gone very fa before our shoes and socks were soaked by the flying spray.

Suddenly there was a tremendous crash, followed by the urgen beating of a big cymbal. The alarm signal. That could mean on one thing. A section of the dyke had collapsed.

Without waiting for Old Tien's order I whirled and dashed to th command headquarters to get Old Man Chiang. The emergency squa was running towards the break, carrying materials and pressure lamp At the door of the command post I met Old Man Chiang coming ou

"Where is it?" he shouted. "Where is it?"

I pointed east. He started off and I hurried to help him. But h pushed my arm aside and walked rapidly with large strides. I w confused. How had his old legs suddenly become so agile?

At the danger spot, the lamps were burning brightly. Peop shouted and ran back and forth, delivering sandbags. When they sa Old Man Chiang, the crowd hastily divided to let him through. W reached the break. It was over seven meters wide. Tumbling mud water was roaring through it.

Old Tien was directing the placing of sandbags. His back was us and I couldn't see his face. But from his gestures and the to of his voice it was plain that he wasn't frightened in the least. On t contrary, he seemed cooler and steadier than before.

The sandbags were useless. The tearing water swept them aw The edges of the break continued to crumble. The breach was growi wider. Comrade Hao and Old Chin and their men on the other sid were also trying to fill in sand bags. Their efforts were also in vain.

Old Man Chiang silently inspected the scene. Finally, he shout "Stop!"

Old Tien turned around and saw the old man. "What no Shall we drive stakes?"

"Yes, but we've got to strengthen the ends of the break first."

"You give the orders!" said Old Tien. Turning to me, he sa "Telephone the county to spread the alarm. . . . But tell them—

finitely will plug the breach! Definitely!" His voice was firm, confi-
nt.

Waving my way through the noisy crowd, I hurried to the small
ick.

By the time I had made my call and came back, things were much
ore orderly. People were lined up in two rows on top of the dyke.
ey were steadily passing along stakes, mats, sandbags. . . . I walked
ound them to the edge of the break. Five stakes had already been
nted, starting at the edge and advancing towards the middle, and
ndbags piled in front of them. This section was already up to the
ter level. Old Man Chiang stood by chanting cadence for the men
ving in the sixth stake. Old Tien and some other men continued
pile sandbags.

On the other side of the break, Secretary Hao was supervising men
ving another row of stakes in our direction. The hammering of the
kes, the chanted cadence, the roar of the water, the howling of the
nd . . . created an ominous, tense atmosphere.

The work proceeded smoothly. Slowly the gap narrowed. Some
ne after three in the morning, a breach of only a dozen or so feet re-
ined. It looked as if we'd close it soon. But then, a powerful
sh of water swept away the stakes half driven in, taking Old Man
iang and several young pile-drivers with them. Their safety ropes
pt them from being washed very far. A dozen willing hands hauled
em back to the dyke.

Old Man Chiang was dripping wet. His face was ashen and
trembled violently. "We can't plug this one!" he panted to Old
en, as he crawled to his feet. "It's too much for me!"

Hearing this, the men standing around were quite alarmed .

Let the people go home while there's still time," the old man
eaded. "They ought to start working on the village dykes. Other-
se, the villages will be finished too!"

His listeners became even more panicky. There were excited
cussions. Several men turned to run.

"Don't move, any of you!" cried Old Tien. His face was dark as
n and his eyes were fierce.

Everyone froze. There wasn't a sound. Old Tien turned on Old
an Chiang like a tiger.

"That breach must be filled!"

To the other side of the break, he shouted: "Old Hao, organize
ur men immediately. We're going into the water!"

At once, we could hear Secretary Hao calling through his mega-

phone, "All Communists and Youth Leaguers who know how to swi step forward. Get ready to go in!"

Here, while shouting to the men in the rear to hurry with sandba and stakes, Old Tien was removing his notebook and fountain pe from his pocket. He obviously was going in too.

"Old Tien, you can't," I urged him. "You've got rheumatism!"

He glared at me and thrust his belongings into my hands. Turnin to the crowd, he yelled: "Those who can swim, come with me!"

There was a hasty exchange among the men.

"Old Tien's going in!"

"What are we waiting for?"

Five or six young fellows ran up, then more, and more. . . . Ar in arm, they formed a long chain. Old Tien jumped in first, Th water was up to their waists, then up to their chests. The ragin river knocked them staggering, but they continued to drive acros A human chain led by Secretary Hao struggled towards them fro the opposite side. Three times Hao and Old Tien almost touche hands, but each time huge waves smashed them apart.

SQUATTING on the dyke, Old Man Chiang rose abruptly to his fe To the men around him, he cried, "Bring a long telephone pol quick!" When the pole was brought, he instructed them to cast into the breach, then he called to the men in the water, "Grab i Grab the pole!"

Old Tien and Secretary Hao each seized one end and dragg themselves along it until they could clasp hands. A solid human cha was formed from one end of the break to the other, with the po reinforcing the middle. At this, other men, shouting, jumped into t war hand in hand to make a second and third row directly behi them. The river could never break this barrier.

Wave after wave broke on the heads of the human barricad When a wave struck, the men vanished. Only when it receded did they appear—choking on the muddy water, gasping for breath, ge ting ready for the next wave. . . .

We, on the dyke, were also very busy. Old Man Chiang count cadence and directed the men driving the stakes. I and others we rapidly piling sandbags into the breach that were passed to us by t rows of people along the dyke. The wind and waves pushed in relen lessly, but the men in the water stood firm.

An hour passed. The line of driven stakes stretched across the brea

forming the backing for growing piles of sandbags. Gradually, the break narrowed. The sandbags mounted higher and higher. . . .

It was darker now, and much colder. I was shivering, though I stood on the dry dyke and was dressed in a padded jacket. You can imagine how the men in the icy water must have felt. I could see them clenching their teeth against the wind and the waves and the cold. Old Tien stood like a rock. He kept shouting:

"Stick it out! Stick it out and we'll win!"

He seemed to be exhorting not only the others but himself as well.

At dawn, the breach was closed at last. The flood waters were locked in the river bed. When Old Man Chiang cried, "She's closed!" everyone cheered. Shouting for joy, men crawled out of the water on to the dykes. They were trembling with cold and plastered with mud from head to foot, but on each man's face was a happy grin. They crowded around bonfires which had been prepared in advance, and dried out.

Only Old Tien remained in the water, his eyes closed, his teeth clenched. Hands clutching the telephone pole, he lay atop a sandbag, motionless.

Frightened, I yelled, "Save him! Save Old Tien!"

Secretary Hao, Old Man Chiang and a few others hurried over and dragged him on to the dyke. He was unconscious. Both legs were drawn up in a tight cramp. His breath was very faint.

We rushed him to the command post shack. Secretary Hao ordered some men to prepare a stretcher, then called the county and told them to send a car immediately. We removed Old Tien's soaking garments. Old Man Chiang, tears in his eyes, took off his own gown and gently covered Old Tien with it. I stripped off my padded jacket and laid it on Old Tien's legs. From outside the shack, men passed in garment after dry garment, which they had just removed from their own bodies. People crowded the doorway, anxiously wanting to know how Old Tien was faring.

The young woman doctor quickly gave him two injections and rubbed his legs with turpentine. His knees were red and swollen. The veins in the calves of his legs stood out in bumpy knots.

The stretcher was ready. Someone had run into the village and brought back two thick quilts. We laid Old Tien on the stretcher. Everyone wanted to carry it. As we left the shack and came out on the dyke, the sun had already risen from behind the mountains and the wind had died. The river was flowing quietly. The men on the dyke gazed at the stretcher, very moved. When we crossed the second

branch, a car was there waiting. We placed Old Tien in the car and went directly to the county hospital. . . .

Two months later, Old Tien was out again. Once more it was on the street that I saw him. He was still the same—shoulders haunched, head down, hands behind his back, walking slow and stately.

Watching him approach, I had the strangest feeling. He didn't seem at all queer now. He was my first superior on my first job, an unassuming, hard working man whom every one rightly respected.

ming of the Yellow River LI HUA

KUNLUN

MAO TSE-TUNG

Rising straight in the air above this earth,
Great Kunlun, you have witnessed all that was fairest in the world of me
Your three million white jade dragons in their flight
Freeze the sky with penetrating cold;
In summer days your melting torrents
Fill the streams and rivers over the brim,
Changing men into fish and turtles.
What man can pass judgment
On all the good and evil you have done these thousand autumns?

But now today I say to you, Kunlun,
You don't need this height, don't need all this snow!
If I could lean on the sky, I would draw my sword
And with it cut you into three pieces.
One I would send to Europe,
One to America,
One we would keep in China here,
So should a great peace reign in the world,
For all the world would share in your warmth and cold.

—From *Mao Tse-tung 19 Poems*,
Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 19

SU SHAN

REWI ALLEY

They say that Emperor Shun
came to the park of Su Shan
and played on a flute so well
that even the phoenixes returned.

Down in a quiet valley below
the peasant lad Mao Tse-tung
herded buffaloes, planted cut rice
pondered deeply, relating each thought
to action, climbing hills until
he had reached the righest peak
speaking quietly with his fellows
but his words reaching out
so that millions upon millions
listen enthralled.

FLICKERING CAMP FIRES

CHU CHIA-SHENG

DARKNESS had fallen over the far-stretching grasslands: hills, bushes and marshes were swallowed up in the gloom. The sprinkling of stars looked faint and far away. The night wind was wailing and by fits and starts from somewhere in the vicinity we heard the eerie howling of wolves.

We were four days' march from Ahpa. The few of us were badly blistered where our straw sandals had chafed feet already festering from immersion in brackish water. At each step, we oozed pus and blood. It was many hours since our last meal of wild herbs and we were utterly spent. Fallen behind the main force, we were clinging together, urging each other forward.

At last we struggled up a hummock and saw a hollow not far ahead dotted with camp fires like some evening fair. Above the red fires leaped flickering brilliant flames which higher up turned blue before merging in the darkness to be lost in the night. In a flash I felt well-fed and sound of limb—gone was all my fatigue. We who had been like the maimed leading the blind were transformed into strong men, each marching unaided towards the fires.

"We've made it!" cried someone eagerly. "There's our detachment."

"What d'you suppose they're doing now?" I asked.

One man limping along with a stick answered solemnly:

"Doing now? They've had a good square meal and are all set for a

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Chu Chia-sheng, a veteran Red Army man who took part in the Long March in 1934 is now working in Sinkiang. The reminiscence published here is based on his personal experience during the historical march of the Chinese Red Army on their way to North China.

ound sleep. They've kept two pails of rice for us, leaving them by the re to keep hot so that the moment we get there we can tuck in."

Instead of contradicting this patent untruth, we all accepted it. It was o dark to see the others' expressions, but I know a smile crossed my ce and my heart glowed. I could just imagine it: two big tubs of real ce, piping hot, giving off a good, appetizing smell. . . .

We went up to one of the fires. It was the largest, the wood on it as cracklin, its flames flickered in the air like scarlet silk, and the fierce eat carried sparks high up into the night sky.

Men were crowded round this fire, sitting, lying down, back to back, esting their heads on a friend's shoulder or knee. Instead of chatting n this and that as usual, they might have been holding their breath, so uiet were they now.

". . . That old traitor Tseng Kuo-fan, determined to take Nanking nd destroy the Taipings,* led an army, hundreds of thousands strong, om Hunan. Then Li Hsiu-cheng, one of the finest Taiping generals, ith a few tens of thousands of men put up a fierce resistance for over orty days near Nanking. In the end, though, the enemy surrounded anking, its communications were cut and Li Hsiu-cheng couldn't hold ut. The city was in terrible danger. . . ."

A MAN with a crisp Hunan accent was telling this story. Skirting some of the seated men, by the light of the fire, I looked at the ory-teller sitting cross-legged on a small piece of oxhide, dressed in abby old blue cotton. His gaunt face was heavily bearded, and he ad his army cap in his hands. His unkempt hair was matted like a ssock of grass. I squatted slowly down and nudged my neighbor:

"Comrade, who's that?"

The fellow stared at me, "Our chief."

I said no more but listened.

"The enemy tied Nanking up so tight not a drop of water could et through. Soon the grain in the city was finished. But in face of l these difficulties, Li Hsiu-cheng led his men to battle to the death. hey ate bark, they ate roots. When these were finished they cooked hides to stave off starvation. But at last the enemy broke into anking and Li Hsiu-cheng was killed by Tseng Kuo-fan."

Someone asked gruffly: "Weren't they finished then?"

"Not they!" The story-teller raised his voice. "The people will

* The Taiping Revolution (1851-1864) was one of the biggest agrarian revolutions in China.

always remember Li Hsiu-cheng. They used to sing a folk song in those days:

> Bamboo shoots' two ends are yellow,
> Li Hsiu-cheng is the peasants' leader.
> The landlords dread him like the King of Hell,
> The peasants love him like a mother.

Besides, the seeds of the Taiping Revolution were sown all up and down the Yangtse Valley, growing up to help the Nien army* and other revolutionaries in the fight against the ruling class. Men like that can't be finished— aren't we carrying on the work they started?"

The fire blazed higher, as if to burn up the shades of night and change darkness into day.

The men round the fire were pale and haggard, not having had a decent meal for days, in addition, they had been constantly on the march and engaged in frequent skirmishes with the enemy intercepting or pursuing us, till they were exhausted. But what a change was here! Spirits rose a hundred fold, every face in the light of the fire was ruddy and shining. I, for one, forgot all our troubles. Hunger? Exhaustion? These had never worried me, surely.

That night I fell into a fitful sleep and dreamed I saw Li Hsiu-cheng in his battle dress beside a blazing camp fire, roasting oxhide with his starving men. The hide, crisp and brown, looked very appetizing!

A burning spark fell on my foot and woke me. A good many people were still awake. Some were busy cooking, one was prodding the fire with a stick. I crawled over and smelt musty leather. So they'd decided to copy the Taiping heroes and cook some oxhide for us.

The man poking the fire with a stick heard me approach. He turned and said with a grin:

"Secretary Chu, is it? I'm roasting oxhide. I didn't call you just now because you were sleeping. I meant to wait till this was ready."

"My sandal thongs are leather; you can have them too."

"There's no hurry. I've much more than you! Keep yours for next time."

The leather hissed as it burned and grease bubbled out in countless tiny beads. As these fell into the fire dense flames leaped up.

When the hide was cooked he gave me my share: a piece two

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* The Nien army fought the Ching government for some years in North China after the Taipings were crushed.

gers wide and two inches long. Holding it in my hand I looked at curiously. It was charred a rich, dark brown. I bit off a morsel and tasted good! It was like eating a cake fried in deep fat.

Two days later my feet were in such bad shape that I could hardly ble along. Many of the others were the same . Owing to disease hunger—all our leather was gone—more and more men were ing out of the ranks. But whenever we thought of that night and chief's story about the Taiping rebels, it put fresh heart into us. n in arm, or with sticks, we struggled on.

Oddly enough, the same thing happened again that night. It was ally black and stars were winking in the distance. The night wind led and far away rose the eerie howls of wolves. Hard as we ve ourselves, we could barely put one foot in front of the other, and r hours of exertion we still seemed to be on the same spot. I remembered my sandals suddenly and cried: "Find some firewood, rades, and we'll roast some leather!"

"Leather? There's none left."

"I've still some leather sandal thongs."

That gave them new life and they groped in the dark for fuel. Some e in favor of roasting; others of boiling. The latter reasoned that ugh boiled leather tastes disgusting, the fact that it is difficult to est makes it stave off hunger longer. This most powerful argument vinced us all. We fetched a pot of water from a nearby ditch and ted our cooking.

When the leather was ready, each man's share was a fragment no er than a finger-nail. It was nothing like as good as roasted her! We were hardly able to chew or swallow it. For the sake he revolution we forced it down!

Then—either for psychological reasons or as a result of eating scrap of leather—we actually stopped feeling so ravenous and nd strength to plod on.

We trudged on and on till suddenly in front we saw camp fires n, just as we had seen them that night from the hummock: above red fires leaped flickering brilliant flames which higher up turned before merging in the darkness to be lost in the night. . . .

"Comrades, down there by the fire the chief's telling more about Taipings!" someone shouted. "Hurry!"

"Right!" I cried. "If we're late we'll miss it."

Once more hunger and pain were forgotten as we headed for the p fires.

Translated by Gladys Yang

TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

PA CHIN

THOUGH I have never been to America and have no America friends, I have always had considerable respect for ordinary Amer cans. When I first studied English, I read Washington Irving's *T Sketch Book* and Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography,* while Jack Lo don's stories also gave me courage to struggle for a better life, a there is no space here to enumerate all the modern American literatu that I enjoy. A book written by an American which I have read and r read in the last thirty years is Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass.* I li this book because through these poems I can see the life and aspiratio of American working men and women, and lines such as these fire r blood:

> We live!
> Our scarlet blood seethes with the fire of
> unspent strength!

I like this book because the men and women in Whitman's poe are full of youth and joy; they have radiant health and rich vitali and instead of despairing in the face of odds they are confident in th future and their own strength. Thus Whitman with his vigorous, p sionate language gives us a clear picture of an ordinary America his gaiety, vitality, heroism, magnanimity, justice, optimism, indust courage. . . . These are unforgettable poems, loved by Chinese as w as American readers. To love the same thing means that there is mu in common in our feelings and aspirations. For are not the charact istics of an ordinary American as described by Whitman the same

those of a Chinese? It is very natural, then, that we have always admired the fine achievements of the American people, always respected American culture. We have always wanted to understand the Americans, and we believe that in the not too distant future close friendship and mutual understanding will be a reality as always between our two peoples.

Four years ago we held meetings in Peking and Shanghai to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of the publication of *Leaves of Grass*. At one of these meetings I affirmed that Whitman is still living among us, fighting shoulder to shoulder with us for world peace and progress. These were not empty words: this is a fact. Indeed, not only are Whitman and his *Leaves of Grass* with us today, but all the finest men and women and the best literature of America. I hope Americans will have opportunities to read our writings and understand our way of life, to know that on the western shore of the Pacific six hundred and fifty million Chinese are toiling, devoting their strength and wisdom to make this earth beautiful, and working like one man to build up their country, improve their life and fight indefatigably for world peace and human progress. And the hands of these six hundred and fifty million Chinese are held out to the American people.