

NEW WOMEN IN NEW CHINA



FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS

TALES FROM THE FRONT

A Collection of Revolutionary Stories and Poetry

Communists are known for our reliance on and understanding of theoretical knowledge. Our conception of education and self-education comes directly from Lenin's famous formula: "Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement." Yet, in our ongoing effort to acquire practical and theoretical knowledge, it may be necessary to engage with historical accounts of concrete struggles in which theory was both forged and applied in the sometimes murky complexity of real life. *Tales from the Front* aims to provide activists with concrete historical examples—both fictionalized and non-fiction—of those instances in which theory and practice mutually produced and intertwined with each other.

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EDITORS' NOTE FOR THE 2023 EDITION OF *NEW WOMEN IN NEW CHINA*

Foreign Languages Press is pleased to publish this new version of *New Women in New China*. The original pamphlet, published in 1972 by Foreign Languages Press Peking has seen fairly wide dissemination in PDF on the internet, but we felt it worthwhile to print a hard copy edition with some, what we hope to be, helpful revisions.

For one, we continue with our work to change the Wade-Giles spellings of all of the names in our texts to modern *pinyin*. This task led us to looking to multiple sources to try to locate the women referred to in the pamphlet, to find their correct names—which in turn led us to understand that this compilation was actually taken from many sources, often adding or omitting parts to change the focus to fit the theme of new women in new China. In the multiple versions of each article uncovered, we found better translations, more details and sometimes whole narrative sections that made the women's stories more understandable and a richer experience for the reader.¹

1. Texts were taken from various issues of: *Peking Review*, *Renmin ribao*, *China Reconstructs*, *Great Changes in Tibet*, *Xinhua she xinwen gao*, *Survey of China Mainland Press*, and *Xiao chang chuang qiji*.

The best example of this was *Housewives Can Make Electronic Equipment*, an article about previously unskilled women workers who overcame many obstacles to build and produce China's first modern diffusion furnace, which had been embargoed by the imperialists and was critical for producing semiconductors and the development of the electronics industry. The text in the original document had the basic framework of the factory's story, but other articles provided interesting details about its history, including a class struggle with an "expert" who attempted to wrest the innovative process away from the workers because of their "low skills" and "lowly backgrounds".

Our question as editors was whether to combine the best elements of the different translations (and in one case, make a new translation from the original Chinese article) to make what we believed would be a vastly improved compilation—or to reprint it as it was.

Predictably, we decided on the former, as we believe in this new version, people who have read the previous version will find new meaning and different lessons from this more detailed text. In that vein, we also included some different pictures of women workers from that time period.

We are grateful to all of the people who helped make this publication possible, including proofreaders, researchers, translators, and copyeditors—and, of course, the women workers and peasants in socialist China, who smashed through feudal barriers to shoulder the immense responsibility of constructing a new society and shared their stories with the world.

EDITORS, FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS

Foreword

In China, men and women are equal. The broad masses of working women are politically emancipated and economically independent. There is scarcely a field of work from which women are barred, the only exceptions being those that might injure their health. There are women machine-tool operators, geological prospectors, pilots, navigators, spray-painters, engineers, and scientific researchers. Women are playing increasingly important roles in China's socialist revolution and socialist construction.

Women also take a direct part in managing state affairs. Communist Party and revolutionary committees at all levels, from the people's commune to the provincial and national bodies, all have women members. Women are elected to

the National People's Congress and the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China.

In new China, equal pay is given for equal work, and special protections are guaranteed for women workers. Women workers receive pre- and post-natal care free and a fifty-six-day maternity leave with full pay. Medical treatment is free of charge for both men and women workers, while their dependents pay half the regular fee. Many women workers have been sent to schools at various levels for systematic education. The retirement age for women industrial workers is fifty, after which they draw 50 to 70 percent of their wages as pensions.

None of this would have been conceivable before China's liberation in 1949. The old society gave women the lowest status. In addition to being exploited and oppressed by imperialism and bureaucrat-capitalism, they were subjected to the domination of the feudal systems of political authority, clan authority, religious authority, and the authority of the husband.

The establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949 opened up broad prospects for China's women to achieve emancipation.

During the long years of armed struggle for national liberation, Chinese women of all nationalities in the revolutionary bases did their share. Some took a direct part in the fighting;

others served in the army as couriers or medical workers. Those staying in the rear areas joined the men in production in support of the front, stood sentry, maintained public order, made clothing and shoes for soldiers, and sent their sons or husbands to join the army. Many women gave their lives for the revolutionary cause. Among these was the fourteen-year-old martyr Liu Hulan, who was beheaded by the Kuomintang reactionaries.

The nationwide land reform that followed liberation was the first step in bringing about economic equality between men and women. Everyone got a share of the land, irrespective of sex or age, freeing the hundreds of millions of landless and land-poor peasants from feudal landlord oppression. For the first time in history the women in China's villages had their own names on land deeds.

After the land reform, the peasants actively responded to Chairman Mao's call to organize mutual-aid teams and, following that, agricultural producers' cooperatives. Production rose steadily. More and more women participated in farm work: in some places, half the women joined in collective labor. This raised their social status considerably.

The adoption of the Marriage Law in 1950 emancipated women from a centuries-old feu-

dal system of bondage. The new law stipulated free choice of partner, monogamy, equal rights for both sexes, and protection of the legitimate interests of women and children. It has done much to foster the building of a new society in which women are the equal partners of men.

Women's emancipation entered a new historical stage in China during the Great Leap Forward of 1958, when the country's agricultural and industrial production rose to new heights. Tens of millions of housewives stepped out of their homes to join in socialist construction. The formation of rural people's communes diversified the economy, introduced extensive irrigation projects, and developed industry, opening to women much wider fields of work. Women were trained to operate modern farm tools, machines, and tractors and served as technicians in water conservation, forestry, fishing, and meteorology.

In the cities, housewives set up and worked in small factories that were mushrooming everywhere. This was followed by the establishment of public dining rooms, nurseries, kindergartens, and other services by factories and enterprises or neighborhood committees to relieve working women of household chores. Children can stay in the nurseries or kindergartens during the day or live there throughout the week and go home

on Saturday afternoon to spend the weekend with their parents. Many neighborhood committees run service centers where laundry, tailoring, mending, and many other jobs are done for working women.

Engels said: "To emancipate woman and make her the equal of the man is and remains an impossibility so long as the woman is shut out from social productive labor and restricted to private domestic labor. The emancipation of woman becomes possible only when woman can take part in production on a large, social scale, and domestic work no longer claims anything but an insignificant amount of her attention."² From their experience in 1958, Chinese women began to understand how to emancipate themselves completely.

Chinese women now work, study, rest, and take part in political and cultural activities alongside men. Many women have emerged as socialist-minded and professionally expert cadres. Instead of having their vision confined to the four walls of their homes as in the past, they now concern themselves with state and world affairs. Enthusiastic, bold, and devoted to

2. Friedrich Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2020, 146.

the people, they are accomplishing feats China's women could not dream of before.

Chairman Mao says: "Times have changed, and today men and women are equal. Whatever men comrades can accomplish, women comrades can too."

In Guangzhou, a group of young women electricians who had previously only worked on the ground are now doing maintenance work on 220,000-volt ultra-high-tension transmission lines without interruption of power, nimbly climbing the thirty-meter transmission towers to change the porcelain insulators.

The Xicheng District No. 1 Semiconductor Equipment Factory in Beijing is one of the new neighborhood factories. Its predecessor was a small workshop for repairing scales, formed in 1958 through a merger of several handicraft cooperatives. Eighty of its one hundred workers are former housewives. It had no technicians and was set up with only two old machine tools and a bench drill. Now, with three hundred workers, the factory produces various types of electronic equipment.

A Daqing oil extraction team of young women intellectuals, helped by veteran workers, is doing a good job of oil field management after two years of practice. In Heilongjiang Province, a women's bridge-building team, after a short

period of training, completed in seventy days a 110-meter five-arch highway bridge in the depths of the forests of the Greater Khingan Range. Alongside the men commune members, the Iron Girl team of the Dazhai production brigade in Shanxi Province is building a prosperous socialist countryside by transforming a barren hilly region into fertile fields. Under the care of the Party, orphans who in the old society roamed the streets are among China's first generation of women pilots. Former Tibetan slaves have become good women cadres.

All of this reflects the great political and economic change in the status of China's women today.

During the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, China's women are playing a militant role together with the men, bringing about a still greater change in their outlook.

A Liberated Woman Speaks

*Lü Yulan*³

I have grown up in the new society. My village—Dongliushangu Village in Linxi County, Hebei Province—was liberated in 1945 when I was five years old. I was able to go to school like the boys in the village. After I completed primary school, I returned to my village to work in the farm collective and took part in revolutionary work,

3. Lü Yulan has served as chair of an agricultural producers' cooperative and as Party branch secretary of a people's commune production brigade. She attended the Ninth National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in 1969, where she was elected a Party Central Committee member. Now, at the age of thirty-two, Comrade Lü is secretary of the Linxi County Party Committee and deputy secretary of the Hebei Provincial Party Committee.

cherishing the ideal of building a new socialist countryside in China.

I am far from being the only ordinary working woman of Linxi County who has matured and become a leading cadre. Thirty percent of the county's Party and government cadres today are women, many of whom hold leading positions of responsibility at various levels. Our situation is indicative of the status of women in the new socialist China. Women manage state affairs alongside the men. They have been emancipated politically.

Changing Society and the Family

The road of women's emancipation is not a smooth one. At first, some did not understand the relationship between the improvement of women's position in the family and participation in society's class struggle, thinking that women win their freedom simply by seizing power in the family. To assert their rights, they often quarreled with their husbands and in-laws, disrupting family harmony and failing to win public sympathy.

Then the Party organized women to study what Chairman Mao says about women's emancipation: "Genuine equality between man and woman can be realized only in the process of socialist transformation of society as a whole."

Women began taking a broader view. They began to understand that to achieve genuine emancipation they had to look at things in terms of the whole society—to see the family as a basic social unit that can only be transformed by transforming society as a whole. It was realized that after women take their position in society, changes in family relations will follow, establishing the conditions for equality between men and women.

When I returned to our village to participate in agricultural production in 1955, I was only fifteen years old and was already active in women's work. Chairman Mao called on China's peasants to organize co-ops, and I went to the poor and lower-middle peasants' homes to talk it over. Soon, we set up an agricultural producers' cooperative. I also went door to door mobilizing women to take part in collective productive labor outside the household and opposed the old idea some people still held that "men go to the county town, but women's place is in the home." Those who clung to this old way of thinking did not want women to take their place in society and forbade the women in their families to participate in collective labor.

One instance was that of a young married woman whose parents-in-law insisted on the old ways and wouldn't allow her to go outside. I took my sewing basket and visited her in the

evenings. While learning needlework from her, I would talk to her about women's emancipation. Once, I asked her, "Wouldn't it be nice if women took part in collective productive labor and both men and women were co-op members?" The young woman agreed, and before long she was working alongside the others. She worked well and earned an income just like the men in her family. Soon she had won over her husband and his parents. Thus, more and more young women in our co-op took part in collective labor, finding their way out of the confines of their homes.

We women went from there into wider fields. A dozen or so of us organized a "March 8th"⁴ afforestation team. We didn't have any saplings or a tree nursery at the time, so we walked for miles a day collecting tree seeds. In three years we planted over 110,000 trees on more than twenty hectares of sandy wasteland. By 1971, we women with the poor and lower-middle peasant men of our village had planted more than a million timber and fruit trees, covering 220 hectares of sandy land with green. This checked the wind and shifting sand, ensuring good harvests for years to come. Our grain yields increased in some cases by as much as 650 percent. People gradually changed their old views about a wom-

4. International Working Women's Day, established in 1910.

an's "place" and said that women were really doing their share of the collective work.

Changing Economic Status

Women with young children used to be tied to the home by household chores. Agricultural collectivization changed these old relations of production. With the consolidation and development of the people's communes, more and more welfare and maternal and child health facilities were set up, and their services were steadily improved. Maternal and child health centers, short-term kindergartens during the busy farm season, mechanized flour and rice-husking mills, and tailoring groups to make clothing for commune members have socialized a lot of household labor, creating the conditions for women to participate in collective production.

Women receive the same pay for their work as the men. Receiving their own incomes changed the economic status of women, and family relations also changed accordingly. The Lin family of the Sunzhuang brigade in Libozhai Commune has thirteen members belonging to four generations. Three women in the family contribute substantially to the family's labor force. What they earn for their labor forms a major part of the family income, and they have thus gained a voice in family affairs. Women no

longer have to ask their menfolk for the spending money they need as was the custom in the old society, and all major family expenditures are decided through democratic discussion. The family's daily food and clothing have improved over the past several years. Two young women in the family suggested enlarging the house, and eight new brick rooms were added when all the members agreed. By respecting their elderly members, treasuring their young, and showing concern for each other, the family lives a harmonious and happy life.

Women have gradually mastered different kinds of production skills and become a strong force on the agricultural front. Not only do they drive tractors and operate flour mills, crushers, and pumps, but they also make contributions to agricultural scientific experimentation. Fifteen women of one brigade formed a scientific experiment group, with a Party branch deputy secretary and a poor peasant's daughter as leaders. Both are primary school graduates and were not even twenty years old when the group was founded in 1967. Although they didn't have much schooling, they had the spirit of the Foolish Old Man who removed the mountains, and they raised their educational level and learned while doing. Over the past few years, they have developed more than thirty improved seed strains.

Their work not only contributed to the state and the collective but also won public acclaim.

Maturing in Struggle

The key to winning women's emancipation is for women to concern themselves with the country's affairs and to take part in political struggle. Owing to the influence of old ideas and traditions, not many women took part in political activities or were firm in waging struggles. Plunging into political struggle to brave storms and face the world, women have acquired a better understanding of revolutionary principles, raised their political consciousness, and gained experience in class struggle. Many women activists and cadres have matured in the course of political struggle. On our county Party committee are five women. There is Hei Yuejing, a thirty-seven-year-old woman of Hui nationality, who encouraged Hui poor and lower-middle peasants to set up people's communes in enthusiastic response to Chairman Mao's call in 1958. This promoted the all-round development of farming, forestry, animal husbandry, and side occupations in the county. Hei Yuejing has matured into a competent woman cadre. Xia Xiumei, Yang Ailian, and Yang Xiuzhi are just over twenty years old, but they all have records of staunch struggle in defense of Chairman

Mao's revolutionary line during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. They fought manifestations of Liu Shaoqi's counterrevolutionary line and exposed and repudiated the criminal efforts of Liu's agents and other unreformed bad people to restore capitalism in the countryside.

In the past ten-some years, I too have experienced quite a number of political struggles in my work. In 1959 a former rich peasant in our brigade, hand in glove with local capitalist roaders in the Party, felled and sold more than 100,000 young trees that our March 8th afforestation team had planted. They also slaughtered pigs and sheep that belonged to the collective. This seriously undermined the collective economy, and I joined the poor and lower-middle peasants in waging a sharp class struggle against them.

When the brigade Party branch committee was reorganized and I was elected secretary, these class enemies spread rumors and superstitions such as "With a woman at the head, the trees won't grow" and "A woman in the leadership will bring bad luck." At the same time, they compiled a list of "crimes" I had supposedly committed in a vain attempt to get me removed from my post.

Chairman Mao's teaching "What is work? Work is struggle" took on a deeper significance for me. All the rumors, slander, and mistrust

spread by these class enemies were aimed not only at me personally but at the socialist road I was following together with the poor and lower-middle peasants. We stood steadfast, struggled against the rumormongers, and won.

Facing turbulence has strengthened us. Since that struggle, the brigade's work has improved, and I have also made new advances.

A Slave Before, I Now Help Rule My Country

*Pasang*⁵

I was born to a slave's family in Gonggar County, Tibet. Under reactionary feudal serfdom, I was a slave and lived like a beast of burden for nine years. Chairman Mao and the Communist Party saved me from slavery and brought me up as a Communist and responsible cadre.

Living Hell

For generations my ancestors were slaves ruled by feudal lords—the reactionary Tibetan local governments, the nobility, and the monasteries.

5. Vice-chair of the Revolutionary Committee of the Tibet Autonomous Region and secretary of the Tibet Autonomous Region Committee of the Chinese Communist Party.

We had mouths but no right to speak. We had legs but no freedom of movement. When my mother and younger brother died of hunger, the feudal lord took my elder sister away as payment of "death tax" and forced me to become his slave. His agent threateningly said to my father: "Pasang is born our slave. If you dare to resist, we'll throw you into prison and drag her away tied to a horse's tail."

I was nine when I was taken to the feudal lord's estate. Two years later, they took me to Lhasa, and I became a house slave of his wife Drolma and her daughter. I was treated inhumanly, forced to perform the most demeaning services, and driven from one estate to another at the will of the feudal lord.

They beat and abused me every day. If the butter tea I served was too hot, the vicious Drolma would throw it in my face. If it was cold, she used her whip on me. They beat me black and blue, and it hurt all over when I lay down to sleep. I had only one threadbare Tibetan robe for the severe winter, and the rags I used to mop the floor were my only bedding. In the winter I shivered all night from the cold.

Drolma and her daughter called me "ape" as though I had no name to debase my personality. When they called me that, I had to answer immediately or they would beat me. Every night while

Drolma chanted her sutras before she went to bed, I had to kneel behind her and massage her back. If I didn't do it right or dozed off, Drolma would take her brooch and poke it into my head. Blood would stream down my head, and I would get dizzy. Nine years of this enslavement had me on the verge of death.

One day in July 1956 when I was eighteen years old, Drolma's daughter beat me unconscious because there was no mutton in the market so I couldn't buy her any. Covered in bruises and blood, I groped in the dark. . . . Who could save me? I thought of my People's Liberation Army brothers and sisters. I remembered the PLA soldiers who had been stationed in our village in 1954 and the stories they told us about the changes that had taken place in the lives of workers and peasants in other parts of the country since liberation. (Although Tibet was peacefully liberated in 1951, democratic reform had not yet been carried out, and the feudal lords continued to rule over the serfs.)

At the thought of the PLA, I forgot my pain and looked up at the sky. It was pitch dark, but the sky seemed filled with stars. I made up my mind to escape and look for the PLA even at the risk of my life. That night the masters were having a party, and I took advantage of their drinking and carousing to run away. I trekked the

mountains in the daylight, only coming down at night to pick pea leaves in the fields to eat. After five days and six nights, I finally found the PLA I had so longed for.

I Grow Up with Mao Zedong Thought

That was my life's turning point. I began to see the sunshine and live like a human being. The soldiers treated me like their own sister. At first, I became a worker; later, I was sent to study in a medical training class, then in a Tibetan cadre school. In the autumn of 1957, I was given the opportunity to study at an inland institute for minority nationalities. I studied politics and learned to read and write. I began to understand many things about revolution, and my class consciousness gradually rose. I used to think that it was fate that the feudal lords should own large herds of cattle and sheep, and we slaves nothing. In the Tibetan institute, I studied Chairman Mao's theories on classes and class struggle and came to understand why we were oppressed and exploited. The reason was that political power was not in our hands. The root of my suffering in the old society was a class root. During a meeting on class education, I took the floor to accuse the serf owners of their monstrous crimes. I decided to be a Communist and dedicate my life to the struggle for communism.

In May 1959 I had the honor of being admitted into the Communist Party of China. For several days I was so excited I could hardly sleep. I thought of my past life and realized I owed my newfound happiness to Chairman Mao and the Party. I told myself that I was no longer an ordinary emancipated slave but a vanguard fighter of the proletariat. From now on, I had to redouble my effort to study Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought in the course of struggle and make revolution all my life by closely following Chairman Mao's proletarian revolutionary line.

I returned to Tibet in 1959 and took part in the struggle to quell the rebellion of Tibet's reactionary upper-strata ruling clique led by the Dalai Lama. I then participated in the democratic reform movement to overthrow the reactionary system of serfdom. These sharp struggles educated and tempered me as nothing else could.

I became chair of the Nang County women's association and later deputy head of the county. It was not easy for me to step from thralldom into the position of leading cadre, but I studied and acted according to Mao Zedong Thought and resolved to overcome all difficulties.

In autumn 1965, I was asked by the county Party committee to direct the work of 1,500 people in building a highway. It was shock work. Following Chairman Mao's teaching, I persistently

put proletarian politics in command of our work, and the project progressed rapidly. Then as we neared the last stretch of the highway, we encountered a hard mountain wall that stood in the way. We blasted for two weeks, but progress was slow. It looked like we'd lag behind schedule. I organized the workers in a conscientious study of Chairman Mao's brilliant article "*The Foolish Old Man Who Removed the Mountains.*" The study raised the workers' morale. They said that in the manner of the Foolish Old Man who removed the mountains, they—the emancipated serfs—could trample down the thousands of miles of plateau if need be. We organized a shock brigade, and with the hard and skillful work of the masses, we completed the work in four days.

In the rush work of building the highway, not only did we successfully fulfill the task the state had entrusted to us but there emerged a good many Tibetan activists in the study of Mao Zedong Thought, and the study of Chairman Mao's works became a countywide mass movement. I always try to keep in mind Chairman Mao's teachings, persistently disseminate Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought among the emancipated serfs, and patiently help them, looking forward to the day when they mature.

Pema Gyatso was also born into a slave family, suffered as I did in the old society, and has a

deep class hatred. I met him in 1962 when I was working in Dengmu, and we became fast friends. We studied Chairman Mao's writings together and recalled our past sufferings in contrast with our present happiness. Discussing how to wield power well for the Tibetan people, we talked over a plan for changing Dengmu's backwardness. Now Pema Gyatso has become one of the most competent township Party branch secretaries in the county, and Dengmu is an advanced township. To help in the study of Mao Zedong Thought, I used my own money to buy Chairman Mao's works and other political books and periodicals for the cadres and commune members. Emancipated and educated by Mao Zedong Thought, I want to propagate it among the masses. The Party has brought me up. I want to tell of my own experience to encourage my class brothers and sisters to advance together along the revolutionary road pointed out by Chairman Mao. This is my thinking and what I have tried to do since becoming a cadre.

*Leadership in the Interest
of All of Tibet's Nationalities*

In 1968 when the revolutionary committee was set up for the Tibet Autonomous Region, I was elected vice-chair. I concurrently became chair of the Nang County Revolutionary Committee

when it was organized in 1970. I often remind myself: Though my position has changed, I must not lose the fine qualities of the working people. I must never waver in my determination to make revolution all my life. Nor must I withdraw from the masses but, in accordance with Chairman Mao's teaching that "Direct reliance on the revolutionary masses is a basic principle of the Communist Party," always keep close ties with the people.

Auntie Trinley Pedron of Jianxian People's Commune, Jindong District, is well known in Nang County. Over sixty, she is an active propagandist of Mao Zedong Thought. During the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, Auntie Trinley Pedron was elected vice-chair of the Jianxian People's Commune Revolutionary Committee. I used to stay at her home when I was in Jindong, and we would study Chairman Mao's works together. We talked about our misery in the old society and the happiness of the new. Once, she said to me with tears in her eyes, "Pasang, it would be so nice if you were my daughter!"

I answered immediately, "Auntie, I am more than your daughter!" and she smiled. I explained Party policies to her, and together we criticized and denounced the renegade, hidden traitor, and scab Liu Shaoqi and his agents in Tibet for

their crimes. She kept me informed about the situation in the village and made revolutionary suggestions. When she had news or wanted to set me right on something, she would walk miles to see me in the county town or send the message to me in Lhasa. I learned much from this revolutionary auntie who always encouraged me forward.

In August 1971 at Tibet's First Party Congress, I was elected secretary of the Communist Party of China Tibet Autonomous Region Committee. This Party committee wielded power on behalf of the million Tibetan emancipated serfs and the broad masses of people. For a former slave, and a woman, to hold such a post was a first ever on the Tibetan plateau!

My seventy-two-year-old father used to say to me earnestly: "Daughter, Chairman Mao is the great emancipator of us Tibetan people, and he is your personal benefactor! You must be loyal to the Party and the people whatever happens and wield power well for the emancipated serfs of Tibet." I will always remember the road I have traveled—from the edge of the grave to a second life, from a slave to a master of my country—and never forget Chairman Mao and the Communist Party!

During the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, I was most happy to see Chairman Mao

five times. National Day of 1966 was the most unforgettable day of my life. On that day, as a representative of China's minority nationalities, I met Chairman Mao, the great leader of the people of all China's nationalities, on the Tiananmen rostrum. How happy I was when I shook hands with Chairman Mao! There were so many things I wanted to say, but all I could do was weep tears of grateful happiness and say to myself, "Chairman Mao, I'll never forget the misery we have been delivered from. I must arm myself with your great thinking and wield power well for the proletariat. I will live up to your expectations."

The Party Keeps Me Young

*Lin Qiaozhi*⁶

Living in the excellent situation of China today and having seen the darkness of the old, thoughts flood my mind: the many changes in new China, the emancipation of her working women, the rapid progress of our country's medical and health work. . . .

But what impresses me most is that guided by Chairman Mao's revolutionary line and tempered by the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, the broad masses of China's intellectuals

6. Noted gynecologist and obstetrician Lin Qiaozhi (Dr. Kha-Ti Lim) is currently a member of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, a standing committee member of the Chinese Medical Association, and head of the Department of Gynecology and Obstetrics at Beijing's Capital Hospital.

have profoundly changed in mental outlook, and I myself, at seventy, feel younger every day. When I recall the road I have traveled, how can I not be overwhelmed with emotion?!

No "Ideal" Above Classes Can Be Realized

In my early days, I studied in England and the United States. Since returning to China, I have practiced medicine for nearly fifty years. One would think I should have learned long ago how to be a doctor. However, this is not so easy if one wishes to be a doctor who really serves the people. It involves a thorough change in thinking, feelings, and style of work.

In 1921 when I was nineteen, I came to Beijing from my home in Xiamen, Fujian Province, to take the entrance examination to the Union Medical College sponsored by Americans. (The Peking Union Medical College Hospital is now the Capital Hospital.) Why did I choose the medical profession? At that time, our motherland was under semifeudal, semicolonial rule; the laboring people were oppressed by imperialism and feudalism and tormented by natural disasters and diseases. Out of sympathy and pity for my fellow compatriots and cherishing the ideal of "kindliness and love for all," which takes no account of classes, I was eager to be a "good person" who "saves the world and helps people," a

doctor with a "conscience." Chinese women were especially oppressed and discriminated against, but I cherished this ideal and buried myself in medical studies day and night for years. Cool and aloof, I occupied myself in a lone struggle, closing my eyes and ears both to the jeers and ridicule hurled at me as a woman breaking into the medical profession and to the upheavals and unrest all around me. My efforts, however, could not alleviate the suffering and hardship of the laboring people in old China. Not only was my ideal of helping and saving people unrealized, but the many horrible, cruel happenings in the hospital educated me.

One of the US imperialist elements in the hospital, Department of Neurology head Richard S. Lyman, while experimenting with Cardiazol⁷ to differentiate between genuine and symptomatic epilepsy, injected the drug into forty-nine patients in the mental ward. The patients were thrown into violent convulsions and suffered agonizing injuries. Lyman callously filmed these horror scenes and wrote his thesis on the subject. In doing research work on typhus and relapsing fever, another US imperialist element experimented by fastening

7. Pentylenetetrazol, a stimulant used to instigate seizures.—Ed.

boxes of lice on Chinese children. These pitiful, tricked children were subjected to the greatest suffering from lice bites and fever. And there were many more such experiments on human beings. We never knew how many Chinese people died miserably from the US imperialists' experiments with drugs and bacteria.

Imperialism extracted material wealth and scientific knowledge from the Chinese people's sweat, blood, and bones. How could it claim "civilization" and "humanity"? The imperialists use medical science as a tool in their policies of war and aggression, and yet they mouth "benevolence" and "friendship." Science, which should bring happiness to mankind, is used by imperialism to brutally slaughter people. . . . I began to realize how naive and laughable my "conscience" and my desire to help and save people were! In a society where classes exist, an ideal that takes no class stand is only a dream. No matter how industrious I was in my own efforts, how adept I was at my calling, I could only serve the wives and daughters of bureaucrats and overlords and could do nothing to change the miserable fate of the laboring people.

One Needs the Spirit of Serving the People

In 1949, our country was liberated, and the sunlight of the Party shone into the hospital. As an

old intellectual coming from the old society, I too gained a new lease on life. I saw with my own eyes the Chinese people, led by the Party and Chairman Mao, build the beginnings of prosperity in a socialist state on the ruins of the old society.

I was excited and enthusiastic. I went on working hard, thinking I could now contribute my share to China's medical and health work. But I was still shut in all day long in the small ward of the hospital and as time went by became more and more out of touch with the broad masses of the people. I was still serving the minority in the city.

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution taught me that this situation was due to the interference of the renegade, hidden traitor, and scab Liu Shaoqi's counterrevolutionary revisionist line, which stresses medical and health work for the cities, leaving the vast countryside in want of doctors and medicine.

With his great concern for the broad masses of the laboring people, the great leader Chairman Mao in 1965 issued the call: "In medical and health work, put the stress on the rural areas." This instruction lit the broad road for the development of medical and health work and oriented China's medical workers. It led me to

understand why medical science should serve the majority and how it could do so.

In response to Chairman Mao's call, I went to the countryside for the first time in my life to do mobile medical work in Hunan Province. I saw for the first time the admirable qualities of hard work and plain living of the poor and lower-middle peasants, and they began to have a place in my mind.

After liberation, the orientation of my service changed greatly, but the stress was still not placed on the right things. I didn't know the first thing about the broad masses of the poor and lower-middle peasants. When they welcomed us as "the medical team sent by Chairman Mao to the countryside," I was enthusiastic but felt that it was only natural that they should show this respect. I thought that it was creditable for a person over sixty to go to the countryside and said to myself, "I've come to save you from your sufferings."

Once, I was called to help a woman about to give birth. A local girl, who as a medical attendant was learning from me, went along. Upon examining the woman in her home, however, we found her time had not yet come, and I was a little impatient. But not the medical attendant. As if in her own home, she treated the patient like a member of her own family. Fetching water for the empty vat, building a fire for the stove,

washing the woman's clothes—she didn't sit idle for a minute.

Her warmth and manner deeply moved me. Why was she like this? And why was I so cold toward the poor and lower-middle peasants? Although she was not yet my equal professionally—I was more experienced and her teacher—she was head and shoulders above me in service to the people and was a model for me to learn from.

I thought of Chairman Mao's warning about intellectuals: "If they do not discard the old and replace it with the proletarian world outlook, they will remain different from the workers and peasants in their viewpoint, stand, and feelings and will be like square pegs in round holes." How far from the poor and lower-middle peasants my thoughts and feelings were! How different from me was the medical attendant, whose feelings were closely linked with those of the poor and lower-middle peasants! She considered the patient one of her own and treated her with such warmth. She often examined patients on her own bed and covered them with her quilt. Although these were small things, I was unable to do them.

I made friends with this young medical attendant and looked at her as my teacher, and for years now we have kept up correspondence. Her skill has improved. Now, when I'm lazy or start

thinking of personal gains and losses, I think of her serving the people unstintingly and I am roused and spurred on, inspired to be a new-style revolutionary medical worker.

In the wider scope of the rural areas, I kept broadening my views. I became convinced that if one does not have the spirit of serving the people and Dr. Bethune's feelings of utter devotion to others without any thought of self, even if one possesses superior medical skill, one cannot make real use of it.

A Doctor Whom Workers, Peasants, and Soldiers Like

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution has greatly revolutionized China's medical and health work. In the short span of a few years, wonders have been achieved in the field of medicine that I had never before seen in all the decades of my medical practice, and my thinking has also undergone profound changes that had not occurred in those years.

Guided by Chairman Mao's revolutionary line, the broad masses of medical workers leave their large hospitals and go to mountainous areas and the countryside, to the grassroots levels, and to the border areas to serve the workers, peasants, and soldiers unreservedly. Comrades have a significant saying: "When there is illness, we send doctors and medicine;

when there is not, we send our warmth.” Our responsibility as medical workers is to relieve the suffering of the broad masses of the people from disease. Above all, we should carry the Party and Chairman Mao’s concern for them to their very hearts so as to unite our people to struggle together in the socialist revolution and socialist construction. This is the meaning of the work of a people’s doctor.

One who wants to serve the majority and is determined to conscientiously remold one’s own world outlook must also take active part in day-to-day struggle.

I had an experience in 1970 that taught me a valuable lesson. A seventy-year-old poor peasant woman suffering from a large tumor in her abdomen was admitted to the hospital from the countryside in Shandong Province. She told me about her misery in the old society and how she suffered from her disease. She could not lie down because of the tumor and had to sit all night with her back to the wall. We received her warmly, giving her treatment and a single room with a spring bed, a liquid diet, etc.

But after only a few days, she asked to leave the hospital. We were surprised. Were we lacking in warmth or care? I talked with her and learned that she felt lonely in her single room and the spring bed was very uncomfortable. With her

big tumor, she could hardly breathe. And unused to the liquid diet, she always felt hungry. I still lacked a real understanding of the poor and lower-middle peasants.

When we better understood her symptoms as well as her thinking, we learned the fine qualities of this old poor peasant who had endured long years of suffering. After careful study and detailed analysis, we planned her operation and finally removed the oppressive tumor. It weighed twenty-five kilograms. I gave constant bedside care following the operation, and the other medical workers and nurses did the same. To tempt her to eat, we gave her the Shandong-style pancakes that she liked. When I made ward rounds, she always took my hands, warmly calling me elder sister, and I called her elder sister too. After she recovered, she said excitedly, "It's Chairman Mao's good doctor who relieved me of my misery!" In my fifty years of medical work, this was the first time I was referred to in such glowing terms. It was the highest honor that the poor and lower-middle peasants had paid me, and I was greatly encouraged. Before returning home, she went to Tiananmen to have her photograph taken to express her gratitude to Chairman Mao. Our department arranged a farewell for her, where she and I shouted together: "Long live Chairman Mao!" I cannot forget this.

After she left the hospital and went home, we often wrote to each other, and she sent me a parcel of pancakes and peanuts, specialties of her native Shandong. Her gifts conveyed the deep affection and ties of the poor and lower-middle peasants. Only after liberation with the education of the Party and Chairman Mao and through the cleansing flames of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution did I learn how to genuinely serve the workers, peasants, and soldiers and understand what it means to be a people's doctor.

I realize that being a doctor welcomed by the workers, peasants, and soldiers means first and foremost fostering proletarian feelings and understanding their hopes and needs. Only when we really integrate with and learn from them can we remold our old ideology. It is better to say that I daily receive education and help from worker, peasant, and soldier patients than that I daily diagnose and cure their diseases. I treat their physical ills, while they treat my sick thinking.

I Feel Younger Every Day

For many years now, especially through the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, I have understood well the care and concern of Chairman Mao and the Communist Party of China for intellectuals, particularly for intellectuals

brought up and educated as I was. I have done very little for the Party and the people, who have nevertheless given me so much. The people elected me deputy to the National People's Congress and a member of its Standing Committee. Many times, I have mounted the Tiananmen rostrum on National Day and seen the great leader Chairman Mao. Comrades have repeatedly recommended me for the post of department head. How could I think of this in the old society where women were looked down on? It was the Party and Chairman Mao who enabled the broad masses of us women to be emancipated, become masters, and raise our political status.

Although I am seventy, I am still full of vigor. I feel that the road of serving the people becomes broader as I follow it and that I grow younger every day. It is the Party that has brought spring to my life, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution that has invigorated my spirit, and it is from the masses that I have drawn strength and wisdom. I feel that I still have much unfinished work to do, tasks given me by my great motherland and her people. I have resolved to conscientiously study Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought to remold my world outlook and serve the Chinese and the world's people still better.

The March 8th Fishing Boats

Huang Hai

Each spring, fishing boats shuttle back and forth across the blue expanse of the Bohai and Yellow Seas. Among them is a pair of deep-sea motorized junks piloted by young women. Aside from a few veteran fishermen along to give them technical guidance, the captain, first and second mates, engineers, winch operators, radio operators, and political instructors are women.

These are the March 8th fishing boats out of Zhangzi Island in Changhai County, Liaoning Province. Dedicating all their energy to the revolutionary cause, their crews have operated for a decade and caught 3,700 tons of fish for the state. The boats are a red banner unit on China's fishing front.

China's Daughters Aim High

Any fishing community knows that men have always gone out to sea, while women have kept busy at home or worked on shore. In 1958 the Party Central Committee and Chairman Mao called on the Chinese people to "go all out, aim high, and achieve greater, faster, better, and more economical results in building socialism." Like the rest of the country, Zhangzi Island responded to the call.

Wen Shuzhen, an eighteen-year-old fisherman's daughter, was anxious to start work. She recalled her blood- and tearstained family history: in the old society, her family had wandered from place to place trying to make a living. Her father was caught by the Japanese invaders and forced to work as a coolie on a fishing boat before dying tragically at sea. After her father died and when Wen was not even two years old, her mother took her around begging for food. Her mother became ill and died of starvation and broken health, leaving Wen a homeless orphan. . . . It was the Communist Party of China and Chairman Mao who saved her from this miserable life. She stood up as a master of her own country and embarked on a new, happy life. Conscious of the change in her life between yesterday and today, she made up

her mind to break the bonds of tradition and sail the seas to fish for the revolution like the men. She and three of her female companions went to the Zhangzi Commune Party Committee to make their request. The committee considered their proposal—which showed the daring spirit of new China's women to think and to do—and approved it.

When the news got around that women were to go out fishing at sea, tongues began to wag. One said, "Who ever heard of women going deep-sea fishing? Impossible!" Another said, "Women want to go to sea to show their strength, do they? Just like a baby chick trying to eat a soy-bean—they'll choke!"

"Don't look down on us!" Wen Shuzhen replied to all this. "As long as we're led by the Party and Chairman Mao, we're not afraid, and we can do anything men can do! Hasn't Chairman Mao said that 'times have changed, and today men and women are equal. Whatever men comrades can accomplish, women comrades can too'? We women aren't disabled. Why can't we go out to sea?"

But the revolutionary course wasn't all plain sailing. Their second day out, the four young women ran into a storm. A gale came up, and their boat rolled and pitched on the rough sea. In no time, all four were seasick, and the cap-

tain ordered them below to rest. Lying in her bunk, Wen Shuzhen thought about how she had expressed her determination to the Party and what the commune Party committee had told her before they set out: "Stand against the wind and waves, break a new path for island women."

Crawling out of her bunk, she encouraged the others. "It doesn't matter if we're seasick. Everything's hard in the beginning. If the Red Army overcame all the difficulties of the Long March, why can't we get over our seasickness?" Lifting their spirits, the young women went up on deck. They worked the sculls, hauled in the net, and sorted fish. Gradually, they got used to life on the sea.

Under the influence of these four young women's revolutionary actions, more and more young women soon boarded the fishing boat. In 1960, Zhangzi Commune bought its first pair of 60-horsepower motorized junks. To commend Wen Shuzhen and her comrades for their daring, the commune Party organization announced the creation of the March 8th unit and placed the boats under the women's command.

Wen Shuzhen had no formal schooling and did not understand the technical work involved in running a boat, so she studied as she worked. Unable to read the charts, she asked an old hand to teach her. With the help of her com-

rades and the tempering she received at sea, Wen Shuzhen became the first captain of the March 8th team, to the great joy of the women. In 1962 they caught over five hundred tons of fish, setting a record for annual production. People who had been doubtful before could not help but exclaim that “the women of new China are really capable!”

Since becoming the captain of the March 8th team, Wen Shuzhen has always been concerned about the progress of other fisherwomen. Whenever newcomers arrive, she joins them in studying Chairman Mao’s works and talks with them about her experience in applying Mao Zedong Thought to fishing. She tells them about how the women before them have fought the wind and waves on the sea. When she sees the unskilled hands of the newcomers, she shows them how to manage.

During the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, the masses elected Wen Shuzhen to the new leading groups, and she became vice-chair of the Lüda City and Changhai County Revolutionary Committees. In April 1969 she attended the Ninth National Congress of the Communist Party of China and was received by Chairman Mao.

The Making of a Captain

As the March 8th unit gains experience, a generation of new women matures. In early 1968, the eighteen-year-old fisherman's daughter Zhang Jianhua came aboard. She had been inspired in primary school by her teacher's moving story about Wen Shuzhen and the March 8th unit and had made up her mind that when she grew up, she would follow Wen Shuzhen to sea.

Her first day on board, Zhang Jianhua was given a lesson on class struggle by the veteran fisherman Shi Yuexiu, who contrasted the bitter life of the old society with the good life in the new. Wen Shuzhen gave her a notebook and encouraged her to conscientiously study Chairman Mao's works. "Fishing for the revolution is what I want to do," Zhang Jianhua wrote in the notebook. "Fighting the wind and waves, I won't fear hardships or difficulties." Everyone said that Zhang Jianhua had the vitality, boldness, and drive characteristic of the women of new China. After only half a year aboard the ship, she was admitted to the Communist Party. Before long she became the captain of the March 8th unit, succeeding Wen Shuzhen.

Captaining the boat is quite a responsibility. "I haven't been to sea very long," Zhang Jianhua worried. "Can I lead a crew?" But paths are made

by people walking, she thought. Someone has to carry the heavy load.

One windy day not long after she became captain, Zhang Jianhua was in the wheelhouse directing the hauling of the net when suddenly a big wave came in. Nervous, she lost control of the helm. Because the boat was not in the right position, the net slipped underneath. Much was at stake. If the boat was not promptly brought around and the net pulled out, the net could very quickly foul the propeller. The people on deck shouted to her to bring the boat around. Zhang Jianhua used all her strength but the boat did not budge. What was she to do? Fortunately, the veteran fisherman Shi Yuexiu saw what the trouble was and directed her to put the helm hard to port, solving the problem.

That night Zhang Jianhua could not sleep. She went up on deck and studied Chairman Mao's "Serve the People," "In Memory of Norman Bethune," and "The Foolish Old Man Who Removed the Mountains" under the anchor light late into the night. She was thinking of the day's events and realized that one reason she had been so nervous was the self-interest in her head. She did not have the Foolish Old Man's spirit of despising difficulties. Her lack of skill at the helm also showed that she was not constantly perfecting her technique as Dr. Bethune had done. She

opened up her notebook and wrote down what she had learned from that day's incident. From then on, she studied Chairman Mao's works more conscientiously.

To become familiar with the habits of schools of fish, Zhang Jianhua asked veteran fishermen to teach her as they worked. She observed and studied the surface of the sea in different areas and the movements of other fishing boats. Whenever an experienced hand was at the helm, she stood in the wheelhouse, carefully watching how he held the wheel, set the course, and relayed the wind direction. She studied the charts, following the boat's course. Modest and diligent, she made rapid progress, eventually becoming a technically skilled captain with a firm will.

One morning as Zhang Jianhua and the others were fishing in the middle of Bohai Bay, the sky suddenly darkened and a gale blew up. One giant wave after another crashed down on the two boats. Zhang Jianhua ordered the net hauled in at once—a dangerous job with the boats violently pitching and rolling. After a short, tense battle, they got the net up and headed for the port of Qinhuangdao at full speed. The wind got stronger and the waves higher. Suddenly a wave broke right over one of the boats, washing the hold cover into the sea. Water filled the hold, and the boat began to sink. Captain and crew started

the pumps and began bailing furiously to beat the storm and save state property. After battling for two days and a night, the March 8th unit sailed safely into port at Qinhuangdao.

Fishing for the Revolution

The comrades of the March 8th unit say, "We fear neither hardship nor death to fish for the revolution." The March 8th collective continues to train people with wisdom, strength, and courage.

Zhao Shuying joined the crew in 1969. When she got over her first seasickness, she was assigned to the engine room where the smell of oil made her sick all over again. But she stuck it out and kept working to improve her skill. When the engine's exhaust pipe got caked with soot, she cleaned it out by hand. Often covered in grease, she never complained.

One night after the boats had dropped anchor, Zhao Shuying was on duty. When she went into the engine room to inspect the spare parts, she discovered the boat was leaking and the water almost covered the clutch. She knew that unless she started the engine and pumped out the water, not only would the next day's fishing be affected but the engine's life would be shortened. Although she had not been a machinist for long and had never started the engine by herself, she decided to try. When her first two attempts

failed, she thought of Chairman Mao's teaching "Be brave, firm, and cool and learn in the struggle." After calmly analyzing why she had failed, she successfully started the engine on the third try and pumped out the water.

Ji Guiying, a graduate of the Lüda City Normal School, joined the March 8th unit in 1969 with the desire to learn from the fishermen and temper and remold herself into a person with the thoughts and feelings of the working people. Hardship and difficulty steeled her into a firm, unyielding young woman.

One day as they were hauling in the net, a big wind came up, and the waves started to beat the net back into the sea. Instantly Ji Guiying jumped onto the net and held on with both hands. She and the others who came to help her fought the wind and waves until they were able to haul the net up.

In the winter of 1969, heavy snows approached and the fish moved southward in the Yellow Sea, marking the arrival of the fishers' traditional winter rest season. To keep on fishing would mean going to the distant open sea south of the Shandong peninsula where waters were rough and dangerous even in calm weather. Only big boats attempted it. The high seas present many problems for 60-hp boats such as those of the March 8th. But the young women wanted to try.

“We like the wind and waves,” they said. After preparing for sailing in a snowstorm, they set out for the deep sea. They caught over thirty tons of fish in less than a month, establishing a precedent for small boats in winter fishing.

With the arrival of the shrimp season in the autumn of 1971, the March 8th unit confidently prepared for big hauls. But because they had not grasped the laws governing the distribution of migrating shrimp, they ran into problems right from the beginning. They had set out following the big schools of shrimp but wound up chasing waves, and the catch on their first trip was small.

What had happened? The women held a meeting analyzing their experience and arrived at the answer. They hadn't realized that unlike past years, this year the schools of shrimp were small and relatively dispersed, moving over large areas. In view of these changed conditions, they decided to fish steadily around the clock, hauling in the net carefully and often. In this way, they got one good catch after another, fulfilling their quota with flying colors.

The women of the March 8th fishing unit continue to make contributions to the building of socialism.

Women Pilots

Xin Gongyuan

China's first squadron of women pilots was formed in 1950. They celebrated Women's Day in 1952 by flying in formation over Tiananmen Square.

Many women pilots have matured in the twenty-two years since then. Conscientiously studying and applying Mao Zedong Thought, they cultivate a proletarian ideology and continuously revolutionize their thinking. With China and the world at heart, they fly for the revolution and the building of socialism.

One of these women is Zhu Huifen whose family slaved for generations for landlords. In 1939 when she was two years old, the Japanese imperialists ravaged Jiading, her hometown

near Shanghai. Foreign aggression on top of class oppression left her family with no way to live. Her father put their few belongings on his shoulder pole, and the family fled the countryside, begging their way to Shanghai. In Shanghai, her father did backbreaking work for the capitalists but the family still went hungry. He soon died of hunger, cold, and exhaustion. Not long after Zhu's father was buried, her younger brother starved to death. To provide for Zhu, her mother worked as a maidservant in a capitalist family until, on a snowy day in 1944, she too died from the oppression of the capitalists. In just three years, the vicious old society had killed three of her family members. The orphaned girl roamed the streets of Shanghai alone, keeping herself alive with discarded melon rinds and rotten vegetable leaves. Hatred for the exploiting classes and foreign aggressors burned in her heart like a hot coal.

Then the sound of spring thunder shook the sky, and the red sun rose in the east. Chairman Mao and the Communist Party led the people to freedom. Shanghai was liberated in 1949, and Zhu Huifen was rescued from her misery and sent to school. In 1956 she joined the air force. Standing in front of a portrait of Chairman Mao while wearing her military uniform for the first time, she was moved to tears. There was so much

she wanted to say to Chairman Mao. “Thanks to Chairman Mao, I, who was once a poor child, could be where I am today,” she said to herself. “Thanks to Chairman Mao, China’s suffering women could fly to the sky.”

Her first difficulty in training was not having enough strength. When she had to use both feet on the rudder pedal while learning to fly a twin-engine plane with only one engine running, she would perspire profusely and get exhausted—her feet aching for a long time after each practice. The squadron’s Party branch helped her compare the present good life of the working people with the exploitation and oppression they suffered in the old society. Zhu Huifen’s simple class feelings developed into a higher political awareness of class struggle and the struggle between the two lines. She drew strength from Chairman Mao’s teaching “In times of difficulty we must not lose sight of our achievements, must see the bright future, and must pluck up our courage.” She persisted in daily physical training, running, and working out on spinning ladders with the men pilots.⁸ As she developed her strength, she redoubled her study of Chairman Mao’s works and became a

8. Spinning ladders are used to train pilots to learn orient themselves when turned upside down and sideways.—Ed.

competent pilot. On June 1, 1962, she was admitted to the Communist Party of China. Today she is a deputy group commander.

Zhu Huifen and her comrades in arms were once assigned the urgent task of rescuing a Red Guard who had been wounded while on duty. They took off that night in the face of strong winds and after a whole day's workout.

Zhu Huifen said: "Chairman Mao has taught us that 'Our duty is to hold ourselves responsible to the people.' The Red Guards have made great contributions in the Cultural Revolution. We must discharge our duty without delay."

They quickly got their plane ready and, at the order to take off, soared into the sky. The flight lasted several hours. When they landed, Zhu Huifen helped carry the Red Guard onto the plane. The attending doctors and nurses came aboard and they took off again.

The flight back was through clouds. It was rough but Zhu Huifen kept a firm hold of the control stick. Then she thought: "Before liberation, I went around with a begging bowl in my hand. Now I hold the control stick of a plane for my motherland. The Party trusts me. I must faithfully serve the Party and the people." With this thought, she climbed higher, out of the clouds, so the wounded Red Guard would have a smoother journey.

The temperature in the plane fell at the high altitude, and the crew again thought of the Red Guard. Was he warm enough? They offered to cover him with their clothes, though none of them had worn their heavy suits. Zhu Huifen and her comrades in arms relaxed only after their wounded passenger was safely in the hospital.

Communist Party member Yue Xicui was already a fine pilot by the time she turned twenty. Since joining the air force, she has constantly kept in mind Chairman Mao's injunction to "build a powerful people's air force to defend the motherland." By studying hard, she quickly finished the theoretical courses in aviation. But just before she started flight training, she felt a numbness in her joints. The doctor diagnosed it as arthritis and advised against training for a while. Yue Xicui was very disturbed. Did this mean that she would never fly? Urged by the leadership and the doctors, she agreed to undergo treatment.

In the hospital, she studied Chairman Mao's teaching on daring to struggle and daring to win, which gave her confidence that she could overcome her illness. She kept up her study of Chairman Mao's works and spent hours outdoors every day doing physical exercises, even in the middle of winter. When others rested, she picked up a broom and swept the hospital skat-

ing rink. When the treatment and exercise had improved her condition, she requested to return to flight training.

Back in her unit, she found that she had fallen far behind the others. In preparation for her first flight, she ran three kilometers every day to increase her endurance.

The leadership soon decided she could participate in flight training. How happy she was as she climbed into the cockpit! But she had trouble landing, bringing the plane in either too high or too low. Even with her instructor's help, she failed to make the grade.

Yue Xicui turned to Chairman Mao's teaching: "Will the Chinese cower before difficulties when they are not afraid even of death?" She decided she had to train her eyes rigorously and never missed an opportunity to do so.

On the bus back from the airfield, she would fix her eyes on an object ahead and practice estimating distance as if landing a plane. Despite being tired after returning to the barracks, she still continued to practice. She would take off the transparent plastic map case, hold it in front of her eyes like a cockpit windshield, and using the downstairs floor as her runway, run up and down the stairs to train her eyes. In this way, she conquered her difficulties and took to the skies.

Communist Party member Yu Fulan is another staunch woman member of the squadron.

Once, when heavy rains and rising waters threatened to breach a reservoir and sandbags were urgently needed to save nearby factories and towns, the leadership decided to air-drop them. Yu Fulan and her comrades were given the task.

Their plane took off in the storm. The reservoir lay among hills one hundred meters high and shrouded in low-hanging clouds and mist. To locate the reservoir, they had to descend below the clouds at the risk of colliding with the hills. Faced with this situation, Yu Fulan and her comrades did not hesitate, knowing that the maneuver would be difficult and dangerous. They took the plane down to the altitude of two hundred meters, one hundred meters, then eighty meters. Still, they saw nothing but clouds. At this point, the command post radioed in ordering them back to base immediately to consider another plan.

On the way back, Yu Fulan looked at the pile of sandbags on the plane. She immediately thought of the poor and lower-middle peasants who lived around the reservoir and were fighting the torrential rain and flood. At the base, she reported to command, and with the backing of the whole crew, she asked for permission to

try again. "The people are waiting for the bags," she said. "We must deliver them!" After serious consideration, the leadership approved their request. Yu Fulan and her comrades summed up the experience of their first flight and discussed how to cope with similar problems on their second attempt. Then they took off again.

A bold and careful navigator, Yu Fulan guided the plane's course. When the plane descended from three hundred to eighty meters, a blanket of dense clouds still obstructed their view. They were already flying lower than some of the hilltops, and their plane was liable to crash at any moment. Disregarding this danger, Yu Fulan firmly told the pilot, "Descend another twenty meters." The pilot lowered the plane to sixty meters above the ground. They broke through the clouds and saw below their wings a white expanse of water. Waving their hands, the flood fighters on the ground ran to greet them. Yu Fulan and her crew had found the reservoir. They boldly but calmly flew the plane along the route they had planned, circling low over the reservoir and dodging the hills as they dropped the bundles of bags precisely on target.

The Women Oil Extractors of Daqing

Xin Hua

One morning in September 1970, as the glorious rays of the sun reddened the sky over the vast Daqing Oil Field, about a hundred young women oil extractors, led by the political instructor Zhao Qingzhi and three veteran workers, went to the site where “Iron Man” Wang Jinxi dug Daqing’s first oil well ten years ago. They went there to learn the spirit of “Iron Man” Wang and Daqing’s admirable tradition of the battle for China’s oil production. This was Daqing’s first all-women oil extraction team, formed not long ago. Its members’ average age was twenty-one. All had been brave Red Guards at the early stage of the Great

Proletarian Cultural Revolution, and most had been to Beijing for review by Chairman Mao at Tiananmen Square. Acting on Chairman Mao's teaching to become one with the workers and peasants, they had come to Daqing from various parts of the country.

Today, guided by Mao Zedong Thought and inspired by the spirit of Wang Jinxi, the women oil extractors are playing their part in the work at the Daqing Oil Field. They successfully manage dozens of oil wells and are known as the Iron Girl Oil Production Team of Daqing Oil Field.

Braving Difficulties

From the day of its formation, the young women's oil extraction team faced up to difficulties. On the eve of October 1, 1970, the twenty-first anniversary of China's founding, the team decided to expedite putting a new oil well into production so that it would be ready in time for the next day's National Day celebrations. But the difficulties were many. Electricity for lighting had yet to be installed, and it was pitch dark at night. The water-jacket heater that warms the oil pipeline needed water, but the water tankers had not arrived. The paraffin removal equipment weighing several hundred kilograms was a mile away. Party branch secretary Zhao Qingzhi asked the team what they should do—wait, or

create the conditions? Everyone replied in unison: "Learn from Iron Man, overcome all difficulties, and ensure that the new well is put into production today!"

The struggle for the new oil well began. They quickly connected the electricity. In rain and mud, they carried more than a ton of water with buckets and washbasins from a pond hundreds of meters away in order to fill the water-jacket heater. Finally, they carried the heavy paraffin removal equipment to the well. Their clothes were soaked through with rain and sweat, and some had swollen shoulders, bruised feet, and cuts on their faces. But no one complained. They said proudly: "We didn't have the opportunity to participate in the hard battle to open the oil field. Nor did we experience the test of war like our elder comrades did in the early days of the revolution, when all they had to eat was handfuls of fried [dried] noodles between handfuls of snow. Why shouldn't we endure a little hardship today if it means more oil to support China's socialist construction and the world revolution!" At 11:30 p.m. on September 30, their new oil well went into production. Smiles lit up the faces of the young women as they heard the sound of crude oil rushing into the pipeline.

Struggling against severe cold and blizzards their first winter, the women's team overcame more difficulties and kept the oil flowing.

Team member Zhang Caifeng was born to a poor peasant family that had suffered bitterly in the old society, and she harbored deep class feelings. Her parents died toiling for a landlord. Chairman Mao rescued her from the abominable old society, giving her the opportunity to become an oil worker. At the oil field, the team became like her own family. She took pride in doing hard jobs and did her work carefully, devoting her energy to the development of China's petroleum industry. One winter day in 1970, the temperature suddenly dropped, and she noticed a water-jacket heater was running erratically. If the heater froze and stopped working due to a lack of water, the oil well would malfunction. To prevent this, she had to manually recirculate the hot water. Braving the biting cold, she opened the outlet valve and began drawing hot water and returning it into the circulation system one bucket at a time. The well cover was crusted with ice, and there was nowhere for her to rest the bucket while she worked, forcing her to hold it in her arms as jets of steam sprayed her with beads of scorching water. Her clothes soon froze stiff in the driving wind but she persisted, pour-

ing bucket after bucket of water into the heater until she had prevented it from freezing.

Qiao Qinglian, another of the women oil extractors, came to Daqing with a strong will to be reeducated by the working class and temper herself in difficult circumstances. She displayed the revolutionary spirit of fearing neither hardship nor death in whatever she did. Once, on an inspection tour, she noticed a blazing fire caused by oil vapors leaking out of a separator valve. The vapors had been set afire by a gas burner for water-jacket heating. Qiao Qinglian ran for a fire extinguisher and rushed to the fire to protect the wells, disregarding her own safety. Her eyebrows and hair were singed, but she did not retreat even half a step till she had closed the valve, preventing the escape of the oil vapors and saving state property.

Scientific Management

The underground strata of the several dozen oil and water wells the team worked on were mostly under low pressure. The movement of oil, water, and air pressure below the earth's surface is variable and unsteady, affecting the stability of oil production. Managing such oil wells to produce more and better oil for the country became the team's new challenge. One well was especially difficult to manage. It had a lot of paraffin wax

and often failed to function. Following Chairman Mao's teaching "Practice, knowledge, again practice, and again knowledge," the girls began by experimenting with the laws of movement of underground oil, water, and pressure. Then they studied the difficult problems that arose when managing the well while learning from the veteran workers who were experienced in subduing unruly oil wells. In this manner, they developed methods for solving the problems of wells containing a lot of wax.

The women's team had not yet repaired oil wells or measured well pressure, both jobs being done by specialized teams. But with the improvement of their skill in managing oil wells, the girls volunteered to take on the jobs.

Immediate repairs were needed for one of the team's water wells in the winter of 1971. The repair team, however, was on another important assignment and could not get back for some time. The team decided to do the repairs themselves. A special hydraulic machine was needed for repairing wells, but none was available. Resolving to build it themselves, they promptly formed a technical group for the purpose. Deputy team leader Liu Kuangyuan volunteered to take charge. Guided by veteran workers, she, Li Xiuzhi, and the other team members collected discarded parts and other used materials from

scrap heaps on the Daqing grassland, which they rushed back on trucks, horse-drawn carts, pushcarts, and any other vehicle they could find. With the help of other units, they succeeded in building the needed hydraulic machine after sixteen days and nights of hard work. They were then able to repair the well using the machine they had made.

Measuring well pressure is hard work and means getting up before dawn and going to bed at midnight. It requires a fairly high level of skill to lower the very heavy pressure gauge to the bottom of the well several thousand meters deep. In the past, these difficult tasks were done by specialized teams of men comrades, but the Iron Girls said, "If the men can measure well pressure, so can we." Under the guidance of veteran workers, three women, through repeated practice and painstaking study, learned the essentials of the job. Now, the women's oil extraction team has its own special unit capable of independently measuring the pressure of all the team's oil and water wells. Learning how to measure well pressure helped the girls better understand the laws of variation in the underground oil-bearing strata. They measured the underground strata of every oil well to collect firsthand data, which they then studied and analyzed.

One night, torrential rain poured down after midnight, around the time data needed to be collected for two of the wells. Deng Yanxia, a Communist Youth League member, said firmly: "Any delay in measuring the well means means losing one piece of data for judging the stratum. With Mao Zedong Thought leading the way and 'Iron Man' Wang Jinxi as our example, rains as heavy as daggers won't stop us from getting the data we need."

Carrying the pressure-measuring tools, they set out in the storm and successfully collected the data from the two wells. In this way, the women oil extractors persistently worked day after day in all kinds of weather to understand the oil field's variation below the earth's surface. They have now measured each of their oil wells 230 times and accumulated tens of thousands of datapoints from them, generating a large amount of the firsthand information needed for the scientific management of oil wells.

* * *

Nurtured by Mao Zedong Thought and tempered in the class struggle, struggle for production, and scientific experimentation, the women's oil extraction team has matured steadily in the past couple years. Many of them have been admitted to the Communist Party of China

or the Communist Youth League. Some have become cadres of the women's team or elected members of the Daqing Oil Field Party Committee. Known among the team members as "Little Iron Woman," Zhang Caifeng has studied Chairman Mao's works conscientiously since joining the team and has been trained into an advanced woman oil worker in a little over a year. By carrying forward the revolutionary spirit of Daqing, the young women's oil extraction team has made its contribution to the development of China's petroleum industry. As the team's representative, Lü Hua went to Beijing and had the joy of seeing our great leader Chairman Mao, which greatly inspired the whole team. Now, these young women are determined to live up to Chairman Mao's expectations and make still greater contributions to the development of China's petroleum industry.

Housewives Can Make Electronic Equipment

Gong Ye

Only five years ago, the Xicheng District No. 1 Semiconductor Equipment Factory in Beijing was a neighborhood workshop that manufactured steelyards and repaired scales. Most of its workers are former housewives with little formal education. Yet the factory now produces a variety of modern electronic equipment that fills the needs of hundreds of factories throughout the country. Some of these products have earned international praise at the Chinese Export Commodities Fair in Guangzhou.

How did these former housewives master the production of modern electronic technology?

The Women Dare to Do

In 1965, revolutionary students and teachers at Qinghua University designed a diffusion furnace with automatic temperature control, essential for producing semiconductors. This advanced diffusion furnace was an important piece of equipment for the development of China's electronics industry and had long been included in the imperialists' embargo against China. The small steelyard factory was selected for trial production.

Did they dare accept this task? There was a heated debate in the factory. The masses of workers, especially the women workers, were determined to take on the task. A few people opposed it: "We have no engineers, no technicians, not even an electrician—only a hundred pairs of hands used to handling heavy steelyard weights. How could we possibly build a diffusion furnace?" One worker even contemptuously said: "Housewives are only good at taking care of children. They know nothing about electronics, and they want to build a diffusion furnace? What nonsense!" The women workers were furious hearing these remarks. "We're in the new society now," they argued back. "Whatever men can do, women can do. We can also add a brick to socialist construction." Backed by

the Party branch, the women workers resolutely took over the task.

Li Hua, Wang Jincai, Song Jinlan, and some other women workers and a few newcomers who had just completed junior middle school were put in charge and assigned to go to Qinghua University to receive technical training. The women were excited on the one hand but worried on the other: excited because they were given the honor of fulfilling an urgent need for the country, worried because they hadn't had much schooling and were afraid they wouldn't be up for the task. The Party branch secretary, Di Rongxue, called them together to study Chairman Mao's inspiring essay "The Foolish Old Man Who Removed the Mountains." "The Foolish Old Man dared to remove mountains," he said, "but we, the people of the new era, fear the difficulty of lacking a little education?" Li Hua—a former child bride who had suffered greatly in the old society before being rescued by the Party after liberation—was encouraged hearing these words. She said with conviction, "With Mao Zedong Thought to guide us, we can overcome our difficulties and make that furnace!"

Once their training began, they first had to learn how to read a circuit diagram. To Li Hua, who had never been to school at all, the densely packed lines just looked like a maze of spider

webs. One time when the women were concentrating on the diagram, the Qinghua students sitting across from them laughed, "Li, are you showing the diagram to us?" Only then did Li Hua and the others realize they were looking at the diagram upside down. Li had a heavy heart but remained steadfast, replying, "It's hard never having gone to school, but it's also a test." The women told the Qinghua students about their tragic experiences in the old society, which deeply moved the students. Learning about Li Hua's suffering as a beggar and a child bride aroused the students' anger toward the old society and their sympathy for her. The students and the women workers soon became close friends. The students enthusiastically helped the women workers technically, while the women workers helped the students grow politically. With the warm and patient help of the university students, the women soon learned to read the diagram.

Having learned to read the circuit diagram, it was time to learn the actual operation. Soldering is a relatively simple technique, but it was still very challenging for Li Hua and the others. Accustomed to handling much heavier weights weighing as much as twenty kilograms, the women struggled to hold the slender soldering iron steady, their hands trembling whenever they picked it up. "What to do?" worried Li Hua.

She thought of Chairman Mao's teaching: "What really counts in the world is conscientiousness, and the Communist Party is most particular about being conscientious." "That's the key!" she thought to herself. "Don't be afraid of new techniques, be afraid of not being conscientiousness." She cut the solder into very small pieces the size of rice grains and, practicing with great care, soldered them one by one until she finally mastered the technique.

Song Jinlan and Wang Jincai, a mother of three children, also studied hard day and night. They both carried a small notebook of study materials with them everywhere they went, taking it out to study after getting off work, at meals, and while out walking. In time, Song Jinlan and Wang Jincai respectively mastered wire assembly and debugging, becoming skilled technicians on the team.

Learning While Doing

A month later, having finished their study at the university, the women returned to the workshop with the joy of victory, ready to pass on the skills they had learned. They were warmly welcomed by their fellow workers, and the work for the trial production of the diffusion furnace was about to begin.

At this time, the leadership sent an “electronics technician” to the factory, whose expertise was welcomed by the workers. However, within a few days, the technician said to Li Hua and the others: “This is the latest technological achievement in the electronics industry in the world. Those who are uneducated can’t do this work. You better just go back to repairing the scales!”

With this douse of cold water, the women’s hearts sank. They thought: Maybe this technician is right; we just superficially learned the techniques of spot welding and debugging according to this drawing, but we still don’t understand the whole furnace! But Li Hua said to Wang Jincai: “He is educated, and he may learn faster than us. But if he can build a diffusion furnace, that means we can do it!”

Although the technician brushed them aside, Li Hua and the others cared intently about the project and kept track of its progress. But half a month passed without any movement. All they saw was that the small room where the work was supposed to take place changed every day: a rubber floor was laid on the floor, the walls were papered white, and people wore white coats with cotton slippers. . . . There was also a wooden board nailed to the door with “Idle people are forbidden entry” written in big characters.

Forbidding people from entering the work room? This was a big issue! They grew more concerned. Another half a month passed without any development; two months passed, and still there was no news. Unable to stand it any longer, the workers went to the party branch secretary and said, "We think waiting for all this time is a complete waste." Understanding the workers' frustrations, the secretary asked the technician to report on the trial production situation. The "expert" refused at first, but relented when he saw he had no choice. As soon as he saw the workers, he said, "This isn't as simple as cooking for your children. This is a new technology in the electronics industry!"

Hearing his vigorous report, everyone believed he had really accomplished something. But when Li Hua and the others saw that the wiring was a mess, they were dubious. They sent it to Qinghua University for them to test, and the result was that none of it worked. When the workers heard the news, they exploded, immediately calling the technician out of his workroom and demanded: "You have ruined tens of thousands of yuan of state property for nothing. What the hell have you done?" He hesitated and couldn't answer. It was later found out that the "expert" was a bad element.

It was then that the workers realized that building a diffusion furnace was a class struggle—and so they became more determined.

They smashed the wooden sign saying “Idle people are forbidden entry,” swept the house, washed the floor, and hung up the portrait of the great leader Chairman Mao. The party branch held a meeting, and the workers stood before the portrait committing solemnly: “For the sake of the revolution, we will build a diffusion furnace!”

The workers were determined to do it themselves. One of the biggest problems they faced was not knowing how to make a furnace body. Li Hua and the other women workers had learned how to make the furnace controls at Qinghua University, but none of them knew how to make the furnace body. Led by woman worker Guo Jingzhi, they studied the problem and also sent several workers to other plants that were equipped with diffusion furnaces to learn and ask for advice. Told that it was impossible for people who knew nothing about thermodynamics to make a diffusion furnace, they asked for an expert from a research institute to teach them. The expert was enthusiastic about helping them and taught them a lot about the basic principles of thermodynamics. But then, how were they to apply the principles to make a furnace?

Guo Jingzhi and others requested: "Let's talk about it while doing it, so that we can learn faster." Unexpectedly, the expert was stymied. He said: "I'm sorry, I only know some principles; I don't know how to build a furnace."

"Why do they call him an expert if he doesn't know how to do anything?" someone asked after they sent the expert away.

"It can't be all his fault; the old education system just told them to read books!" Guo Jingzhi said, "It seems that learning thermodynamics first and then trying to make stoves after won't work. . ." The women approached party branch secretary Di Rongxue for some ideas. He turned to Guo Jingzhi and asked, "What do you think should be done?"

"Let's just figure it out as we go!" she responded.

"Yes! Learning by doing." Di Rongxue opened his copy of Quotations from Chairman Mao Zedong: "Our chief method is to learn warfare through warfare. A person who has had no opportunity to go to school can also learn warfare—he can learn through fighting a war. A revolutionary war is a mass undertaking; it is often not a matter of first learning and then doing, but of doing and then learning, for doing is itself learning." Chairman Mao's teaching was the key that opened the women's minds.

“That’s it!” they agreed. “As the saying goes, ‘To see something once is better than hearing about it a hundred times, but to do a thing once is better than seeing it a hundred times.’”

After repeated practice, they worked out methods for making many parts of the furnace, but they still weren’t able to set up a constant temperature zone, without which there could be no diffusion furnace. The women worked on it day and night but failed to solve the problem.

He Zhensheng, a worker at the factory, said to Guo Jingzhi, “Why don’t we take our problem to the masses? Maybe they can come up with a solution.” Guo Jingzhi went to the Party branch comrades with this idea, and the next day they called a “Zhuge Liang meeting”⁹ in the yard so all the workers could put their heads together. Guo Jingzhi and the other women first introduced the situation to the assembled workers, summing up the team’s progress and the challenge they now faced. Then, they disassembled the

9. Zhu Geliang was a historical figure popularized in the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, a historical novel about the end of the Han Dynasty and the beginning of the Three Kingdoms in 168 AD. Zhu Geliang was a famous strategist and inventor with great intelligence. His name became synonymous in China with those traits and so meetings calling for creative strategy and inventiveness were named for him—Ed.

furnace part by part so the workers could have a better look. As soon as the women finished, the workers began discussing the problem. One said, "I thought the inside of the furnace body would be the same as a cooking stove. I didn't know it had such a long tube."

"Cooking stove?" Guo turned the words over in her mind and suddenly had an idea. While it's true that a diffusion furnace and a cooking stove are different in structure, the heating principle is the same. The temperature in the diffusion furnace is uneven because the cold air at both ends of the furnace quickly dissipates heat, while heat dissipates slowly in the middle of the furnace where there is no cold air. To heat a pot just right when cooking, rather than stacking the firewood in the middle of the stove, people stack it close to stove door. Thus, the fire burns hottest where the cold air enters, evening out the temperature of the stove as the heat is drawn inward.

When Guo shared her analysis with everyone, they agreed that she had put her finger on the problem. "In that case," a worker volunteered, "if we wind the furnace wire densely at the ends and thinly in the middle, wouldn't that be like stacking the firewood close to the stove door?"

They tried the suggestion on the spot and found that it did in fact reduce the temperature difference, although it did not yet produce

a constant temperature zone. After more than thirty experiments to improve the winding of the heating element, they finally produced one that created a constant temperature zone. Thus, after hundreds of failures and setbacks and seven months of hard work, these former housewives and a few junior middle school graduates produced China's first advanced diffusion furnace.

The news that this small factory had produced modern diffusion furnaces and furthermore that illiterate housewives had become electronics technicians spread like a spring breeze throughout the country. People came from factories and scientific research units all over the country to study its experience, and many foreign friends were also welcome visitors.

Iron Girl Team of Dazhai

Hong Nong

Energetic young women throughout China's countryside have formed shock forces that have become known among the people as Iron Girl teams. Guided by Mao Zedong Thought, they take an active part in class struggle, the struggle for production, and scientific experimentation. These young women, with their hearts and minds set on farming for the revolution and not afraid of hard work, play an important role in building China's new socialist countryside.

The first Iron Girl team was formed in the Dazhai production brigade of Xiyang County

in Shanxi Province. The county now has 457 of these groups with 5,200 young women members.

The team was formed in a hard battle against nature. In August 1963, heavy rains fell steadily for a week, raging through Dazhai in the middle section of the Taihang mountain range. Most of the houses and cave dwellings collapsed, while field embankments and even some stone dams were swept away. It was the most serious disaster in a century. The poor and lower-middle peasants of Dazhai did not accept the consequences of this calamity, however, but rose heroically in the emergency. Led by the brigade Party branch, they studied Chairman Mao's teaching: "Of all things in the world, people are the most precious. Under the leadership of the Communist Party, as long as there are people, every kind of miracle can be performed." They refused the relief funds, grain, and other aid offered by the state, having resolved to rely on their own efforts to overcome the destruction caused by the flood and rebuild their village into a new Dazhai.

The task at hand was gigantic. They had to build new homes, salvage the crops, repair the washed-out terraces, and rebuild the dams. It was in the face of these formidable tasks that twenty-three young women formed the first shock team. These girls, who ranged in age from fourteen to eighteen and had basic school edu-

cations, were led by a poor peasant's daughter named Zhao Sulan to reset the battered plants on dozens of hectares of muddy fields. Not stopping even when the hot August sun was directly overhead, they raised each plant by hand. Not one of the girls thought of complaining about her aching back or sore muscles!

The crop was gathered that autumn, but the repair of the terraces remained for the winter. These young women kept up their iron spirit, and they joined the men commune members working in the snow and at temperatures as low as twenty degrees below zero Celsius. The Party branch comrades became concerned for these girls and urged them to leave such hard work to the men, but they would not. "We should learn from our elders. The older generation didn't get tired when they built Dazhai, and we won't get tired either till we've built it anew." The commune members said these girls were made of iron, and the name stuck.

That was nine years ago. Since then, the team's leadership has changed three times and new members have succeeded the old, but these groups have remained a young and vital force in the continued development of Dazhai's agriculture. The girls plunge into any job that needs to be done—sowing, hoeing, harvesting—including

jobs that were formerly considered to require people with special skills.

The Iron Girls tackle the hardest jobs. One year, in addition to working in the fields, they went into the mountains to gather grass for compost. It was hard work, out early and back late, and the girls bled from cuts on their hands; still, they never complained. In ten days they cut fifty-five tons of grass.

Last year, fostering their elders' revolutionary spirit of self-reliance and hard struggle, the Dazhai Iron Girl team joined in the work of leveling the land into smooth fields. In order to remove a hill, the Party branch decided to break a path on it so bulldozers could get into position to push the earth down from the top. Who was to do the job? It was the Iron Girl team that took it on.

Wielding picks amid flying sand, they went about filling in the gullies. Guo Ailian always seemed to be where the work was hardest. At the end of a deep gully where a slope was so steep she couldn't even stand on it, she thought that as a Communist she must not lose heart. She dug a toehold with her pick and steadied herself against a rock, and a dozen girls were able to follow her. Once, they wanted to pull down a dam and move the stone to another place, but the long slope was too steep for wheelbarrows.

They said proudly, "If wheelbarrows can't make it, we can carry the stone on our shoulders!" With heavy loads slung from shoulder poles, the girls moved all the stone and built the path for the bulldozers.

But to describe these girls only as shock workers in production would give a one-sided picture. They are also a good propaganda team of Mao Zedong Thought. Taking time to visit the homes of poor and lower-middle peasants, they hear and popularize accounts of class struggle. This helps raise their own class consciousness and the class consciousness of the commune members. At the same time, they help old folks who cannot read to study Chairman Mao's works. They also compose short songs and dances telling of outstanding people both in the mass movement for the study of Mao Zedong Thought and in the struggle to remake nature, and put on performances for the commune members.

In the storm of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, the Iron Girls affirm the great victories of Chairman Mao's revolutionary line with their songs and dances, which are also a weapon against the revisionist line of the renegade, hidden traitor, and scab Liu Shaoqi and his agents in the brigade who try to restore capitalism.

The Dazhai Iron Girls are brought up with Mao Zedong Thought. The brigade Party

branch often explains to them the class struggle and the struggle between the two lines of socialism and capitalism in their locality and the country as a whole, in the past as well as the present. The Party branch also educates them in Mao Zedong Thought, fostering in them a selfless devotion to the revolution and to the people. In the past few years, four of the team have become Party members.

One of these is Guo Fenglian, leader of the Iron Girl team and deputy secretary of the brigade Party branch. When she finished school and went to work in the Dazhai brigade in 1962, Party branch secretary Chen Yonggui told her about his own suffering in the old society and the struggle that has continued since liberation between the two lines of socialism and capitalism. He gave her a copy of *Quotations from Chairman Mao Zedong* and encouraged her to study it along with Chairman Mao's other works to overcome bourgeois ideas with Mao Zedong Thought. Chen Yonggui said, "Chairman Mao tells you young people: 'The world is yours as well as ours, but in the last analysis, it is yours.' In order to keep firm hold of the proletarian power the older generation has seized from the class enemy, you young people must arm yourselves with Mao Zedong Thought and be able to stand the test of class struggle." Chen Yonggui's words

were a profound education. Guo Fenglian has persisted in studying Chairman Mao's works and striven to steel herself into a successor to the revolutionary cause of the proletariat. When Dazhai was flooded again in 1968, she was the first to jump into the rushing flood water to save livestock that belonged to the collective, setting a good example for others to follow.

Remaining modest with their feet planted firmly on the ground, the girls learn from the poor and lower-middle peasants and from other Iron Girl teams, never wanting to lag behind the most advanced of any of them. They keep on raising their level of ideological revolutionization and continue the victorious advance along Chairman Mao's revolutionary line.

Women Work on Live Ultra-High-Tension Power Lines

Xin Bing

A March 8th team of young women maintains the high-tension electricity network in an area of several hundred square kilometers in the beautiful, fertile Pearl River delta in South China. Displaying the revolutionary spirit of daring to think, act, and break through, they work high in the air on 220,000-volt ultra-high-tension transmission lines without interrupting the current.

During the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, revolutionary workers and technicians of the Anshan Electric Power Administration in Northeast China developed a new method for free live-line operation on ultra-high-tension

lines. The new technique is used by the Guangzhou Power Supply Company. The idea of free live-line operation attracted the women workers after they saw the men workers doing it as an everyday matter. They saw this technique as a service to socialist construction and were determined to learn it too.

“Times have changed, and today men and women are equal. Whatever men comrades can accomplish, women comrades can too.”

Greatly encouraged by this teaching of Chairman Mao’s and warmly supported by the company’s revolutionary committee, they organized their March 8th team in October 1970 and started to work.

The new technique calls for strict adherence to work procedures. The women workers, who had previously only worked on the ground, had to overcome the difficulties of working at high altitudes. But they were confident and said that no matter how great the challenges their determination to make revolution was greater, that as women of new China they would tackle and defeat any difficulty. In order to conquer the high altitude, they practiced climbing rope ladders, walking on concrete frames high above the ground, and going up and down the transmission towers. At first they struggled with dizziness and their legs going numb, but they persisted. After

more than ten days of training under experienced workers, they were able to walk back and forth along the narrow ten-meter-high concrete beams and move around freely on tower platforms more than thirty meters high.

After overcoming the difficulty of high-altitude climbing, they immediately entered a hand-to-hand battle with the "electric tiger." Their first test was barehand live-line operation on 110,000-volt transmission lines. Seeing the blue flashes of electrical discharges from the conducting lines and hearing the crackle of electricity, they were both excited and a little nervous. But the thought that they were blazing a trail for China's women in the field of electrical work gave them courage, and they vied with one another to be the first up the tower. Comrade Deng Cuiqiong was chosen to go first. Without hesitating, she bravely and calmly started up the ladder, repeating to herself as she went: Be resolute and forge ahead! She entered the electric field, and as the electricity crackled around her, she grasped the wire tightly with both hands. When her whole body was charged with the 110,000 volts, the comrades below called out, "How does it feel?" With a smile on her face, she answered, "Just fine!" She had conquered the 110,000-volt electric field.

The women then carried out another bare-hand operation test, this time on 220,000-volt lines. At 220,000 volts, the electric field is larger, and the crackling electricity louder. The first time Comrade Zhang Guiying stretched out her hand to grab the wire, she felt an electric shock before reaching the wire. Her hand turned numb, and she felt pins and needles down her whole arm. She made up her mind: fight the electric tiger to the end! With her left hand, she firmly and repeatedly grasped the line until she had finally adapted to the electric field, subduing the electric tiger and winning a new victory in women's live-line work.

After summing up their experience, the women electricians continued to advance to the technical peak of live-line work, conducting a free live-line operation to replace the insulators on a 220,000-volt ultra-high-tension transmission line. Carrying out this work requires climbing a tower more than thirty meters high and then climbing along the round and slippery porcelain insulators to the wire. The team's Lin Yuming was proud to be assigned to be the first to try. The line and porcelain insulators swayed in the wind, but Lin Yuming was not deterred and she was soon up the tower. With every step, the electricity crackled around her legs, but she freely entered the electric field and successfully

changed the porcelain insulators. The comrades below cheered when Lin Yuming fixed the March 8th red banner on the conducting line.

Women Bridge Builders in Forest Areas

Long Jiang

The Greater Khingan Range in Northeast China is a center of the lumber industry. Extending for hundreds of kilometers, it's covered with larch, Mongolian red pine, Asian white birch, and other valuable trees. In the last few years, large numbers of educated youths from all over the country have settled here, enthusiastically contributing to socialist construction. Almost half the new settlers are girls.

Thinking of their physical limitations, at first the leadership only assigned the young women to auxiliary jobs. But they asked to do more. Then in November 1969, the leadership set up a bridge-building team of girls from Shanghai,

Jiamusi, Harbin, and other cities. The leadership also sent a workers' propaganda team and a PLA propaganda team to strengthen their political and ideological education. Two years of revolutionary struggle and experience in construction have given the girls valuable training, and their ideology, physical fitness, and skill have developed greatly. With the help of veteran workers, they have built a five-arch reinforced concrete bridge 110 meters long for a logging road.

Revolutionary Women Bridge Builders

There are altogether 103 girls between the ages of seventeen and twenty-four on the women's bridge-building team. Most of them are graduates of junior or senior middle school. When the team was set up, some of them had misgivings. Born and raised in big cities, they didn't know if they could get used to life in the frozen mountain forest and worried that they wouldn't be able to stand such heavy work. Some of them thought that an all-women's team might not be able to build a bridge and people would make fun of them.

Acting on Chairman Mao's teaching that "Ideological education is the key link to be grasped in uniting the whole Party for great political struggles," the workers and PLA men

ran a Mao Zedong Thought study class to resolve the girls' doubts.

The class studied Chairman Mao's works and repeatedly discussed the following passage: "We must help all our young people to understand that ours is still a very poor country, that we cannot change this situation radically in a short time, and that only through the united efforts of our younger generation and all our people working with their own hands can China be made strong and prosperous within a period of several decades." They also heard veteran workers speak about the class and national oppression they had suffered in the old society and visited an exhibition on class exploitation and oppression. They then held a discussion about what they had learned.

These activities raised the girls' class consciousness. They realized that if they were to build a bridge, they had to overcome old superstitions, dare to blaze new paths, and be good at struggling against hardships.

Take team leader Tian Lirong, for example. She came from Jiamusi with a desire to help develop the forest area and build up the frontier. When she saw the sea of trees covering the mountain range, she fell in love with the place.

"Without an understanding of class bitterness," she said after the study class, "you can't

understand how to make revolution. What does it matter if life is hard in this northern forest? Chairman Mao teaches us that ‘a good comrade is one who is more eager to go where the difficulties are greater.’ We are girls of the Mao Zedong era. We should trample difficulties underfoot and open the way for women to build bridges.”

The girls made up their minds to take root in the frontier, be revolutionary bridge builders, and devote their youth to the socialist construction of the forest area.

Led by the veteran workers, they looked for hard jobs to develop their strength, their will, and their ideology. In winter the snow on the mountains is knee-deep, temperatures usually between forty and fifty degrees below zero, and the wind piercing cold. Every morning, they rose before dawn and did exercises in the valley. Some of them pulled sleds up the mountains to fell trees, others hewed rock. Gradually they mastered skills and built up their strength, at the same time tempering their spirit of fearing neither hardship nor death.

Overcoming Obstacles

On April 18, 1970, the girls’ team received their first assignment—build a 110-meter bridge. The worksite was a steep gorge between high mountains deep in the forest. Building a bridge

under these conditions presented many difficulties to girls fresh from the big cities. But hardship does not frighten girls armed with Mao Zedong Thought.

In May when the snow starts to thaw, water rushes down the mountains, and the rivers and streams swell rapidly. When the project reached the stage of pouring concrete for the third pier, the river had covered the foundation pit and dumped a lot of silt into it. Until the water and silt were bailed out, the concrete could not be poured. Was the whole project to be delayed?

When the girls were warned not to wade into the icy water, they replied with Chairman Mao's teaching that "times have changed, and today men and women are equal. Whatever men comrades can accomplish, women comrades can too." "Chairman Mao supports us," they said, "and we will be a credit to him!"

Shouldering sandbags, they waded waist-deep into the stinging cold water and built a cofferdam around the third pit. Then they jumped inside and started to bail out the water with buckets. But there was so much seepage that the water would not go down. After studying the problem, they swiftly built a wall around the cofferdam. This stopped the seepage, but underground water welled up inside. It was still impossible to work in the pit.

That night they set up a pump to take care of the water, and together with the PLA men and other workers, they cleared the silt bucket by bucket from the pit. Their hands got numb and their legs cramped from the cold, but they just rubbed and massaged their pains away and kept on removing the silt without complaining. When the pit was finally cleared, they started pouring the third pier. By midnight everyone was busy at the worksite, with the mixer going and people hurrying back and forth carrying concrete. After five days and nights of intense struggle, the pier stood firm in the turbulent water.

Now they faced another challenging task—putting the fourth span above the main channel of the river. In order to place the hundred-ton beam over the river, they had to first sink thirty-five wooden piles in two meters of water.

The pile driver towered over the center of the river. The north wind whisked white clouds across the sky as the river rushed eastward. Liu Wenqin, an eighteen-year-old girl from Shanghai, jumped onto the shaking pile driver and climbed up. Perched high on the machine, she worked the control lever with one hand and held onto a rope with the other. Every time the 400-kilogram hammer banged down, the whole frame shook and her heart skipped a beat. Looking at the river rolling under her, she got ner-

vous. But when she thought that she was driving piles for the revolution, her spirits picked up. She thought of the pile as the head of an imperialist, a revisionist, or a reactionary, and brought the hammer down hard.

Pile driving is a tough and dangerous job. The cold morning breeze made her shiver even in her heavy winter clothing. The noonday sun burned her face. In the evening, insects bit her hands and face. But none of this bothered her. "Rain is like sweat," she said proudly, "and the wind is my fan. Night or day, we make revolution!"

The battle to build the bridge produced many advanced girls like Liu Wenqin who learned to fear neither hardship nor death for the revolution. The seventeen-year-old electric welder Chen Baomei is one of them.

In July, the heat at noon was stifling. Chen Baomei was worried. She had the task of welding seventy-two main reinforcing rods together for each span of the bridge. If she didn't work quickly, she would hold up the whole project. As soon as she finished lunch, she put on her mask, picked up her welding torch, and went back to work. The heat from the electric welding arc made her sweat. Sparks got into her shoes and burned her feet. But she went on welding, finding that working for the revolution brought fulfillment and happiness to her life.

Mao Zedong Thought Makes New Women

The women's team finished the work on the eve of National Day 1970. Standing by their first bridge, the girls were very moved as they recalled the struggles of the past year. Their militant collective of educated youths had progressed along the road pointed out by Chairman Mao of integrating with the workers and peasants. In the course of socialist revolution and construction, they are rapidly developing into a new generation of women armed with Mao Zedong Thought. Five of them have been accepted into the Communist Party of China and twelve have joined the Communist Youth League. Five have become pacesetters, while fifty-five have been rated as advanced workers. A group of skilled women workers is taking shape—carpenters, welders, forgers, cement workers, electricians, and machine operators. With the guidance of veteran workers, they can now work from blueprints on their own.

From their own experience, these girls know that Mao Zedong Thought is the beacon guiding them forward. It gives them the wisdom, ability, and strength to perform unprecedented deeds.





Peasant women working in the fields





Training session of women in the PLA in Shanghai





Women bridge builders





Women cadres featured on the cover of *China Reconstructs*

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