Return to Changing China

ARTICLE AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY
AUDREY TOPPING

Until recently, few reporters have been permitted more than brief, carefully guided visits to the world's most populous nation. One of the first to move widely in China was Audrey Topping. Her perceptive account reflects both two years of experience in pre-Communist China as a college student and the viewpoint of a Canadian, whose country has traditionally maintained a tolerant stance toward the land of Mao Tse-tung and Chou En-lai.
—THE EDITOR

EVERY MORNING for a week my sister Sylvia woke up to exclaim with a look of utter amazement, "Well, here we are in China!" She knew, and I knew, that she sounded naive, but I think I would have exclaimed in the same way, except that Sylvia always woke up first.

It was hard to comprehend that we were actually back in China—to us almost our ancestral land, for our grandparents had lived much of their lives here and our father had been born here. Sylvia had spent her early childhood in China, before I was born, and I had lived here in my teens. We were both eager to compare the new and old Chinas.

We found at once that the new China is highly visible—even palpable. The air seemed to bear an electric charge. There was obviously a job to do, and the Chinese moved with a sure step, vigor, and a look of determination to get it done. They were the first to admit there is still a long way to go and no time to waste. Portraits of Mao Tse-tung were everywhere, and the "little red book" of his sayings was in every pocket, from nursery-school toddlers' to army soldiers'.

But old Cathay, that exotic, enchanting land, was still around, too. The gold-tiled roofs of the imperial palaces glowed in the Peking sun. The Great Wall gamboled like a dragon's back over the northern hills (pages 810-11). Thousands of Buddhist pagodas and Confucian temples spotted the landscape.

Gone, however, but not grieved for, were the camel caravans laden with tribute silks and treasures for the emperors; gone too, were the mandarins, embroidered robes, bound feet, terror gangs, beggars, robbers, and opium dens.

Sylvia and I were traveling with our father, Chester Ronning, who had been a Canadian diplomat in China. Invited by his old friend Premier Chou En-lai, he was making his first trip back in twenty years. Our main purpose was to visit Fanch'eng in Hupeh Province to pay our respects to the memory of Dad's mother, Hannah Rorem Ronning. She,

The final authority: Soldiers of the People's Liberation Army turn to the words of Chinese leader Mao Tse-tung during a sight-seeing visit to Peking. Everywhere the author traveled, she saw Mao's "little red book" in use. Sometimes its text rails against U. S. "imperialism," but other sections carry gentler messages: "Of all the things in the world . . . people are the most precious."

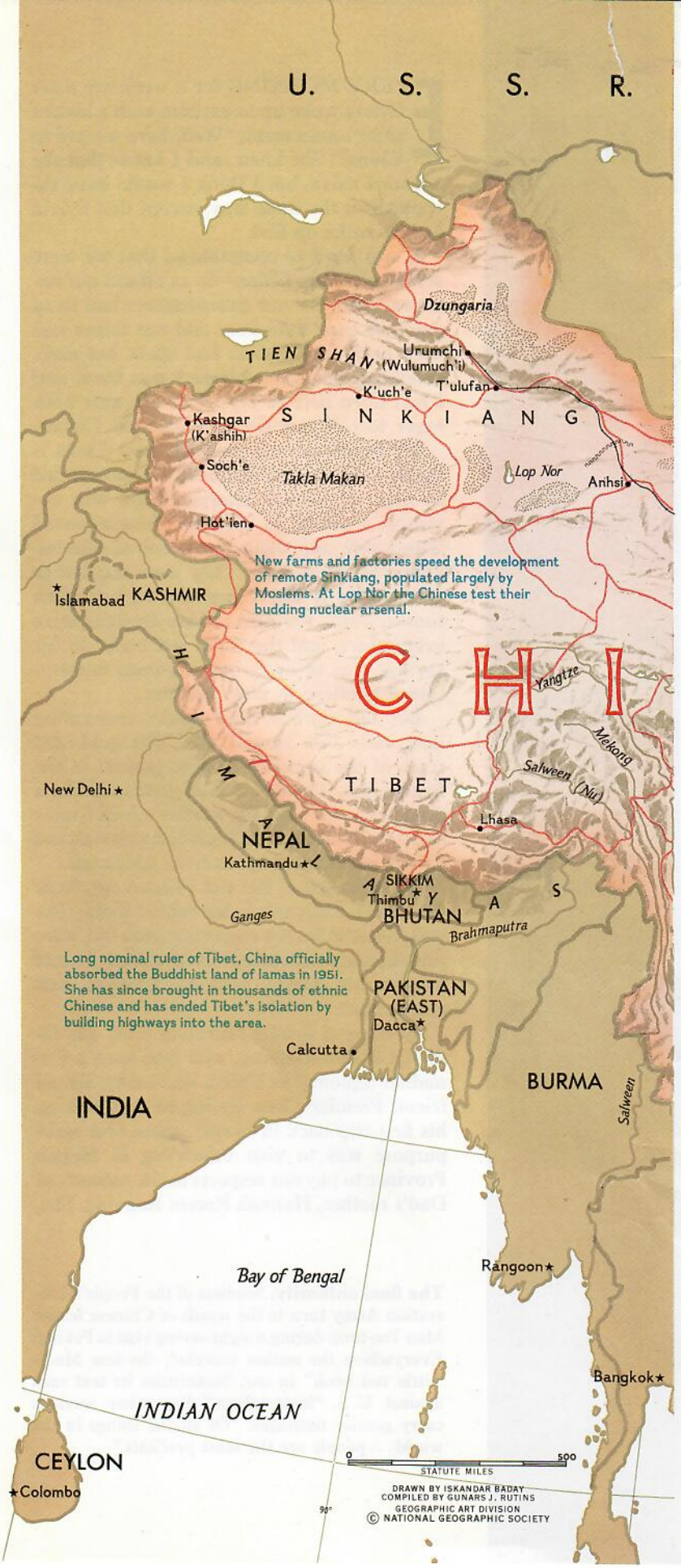
A TEN-WEEK, 7,000-MILE TOUR OF MAINLAND CHINA

BY TRAIN, plane, car, and boat, the author saw much of the eastern third of the People's Republic of China, where nine-tenths of its population lives. She traveled to China with her father, who was born there and returned as a Canadian diplomat in the 1940's. The Chinese press billed Mr. Ronning as a "Canadian friendly personage."

Communist China forms the heartland of eastern Asia, walled off by mountains, plateaus, and deserts. Two great rivers—the Yangtze and Huang, or Yellow—flow out of the western highlands, and in their fertile valleys civilization has flourished for more than 4,000 years. The Chinese gave the world such creations as woven silk, porcelain, gunpowder, paper, printing by wood block, the compass, the wheelbarrow, and the philosophies of Lao-tzu, Confucius—and Mao Tse-tung.

During their 22 years of power, Chinese revolutionaries have brought drastic change, collectivizing agriculture and industrializing a nation slow in developing its natural resources. Most of China still lives by farming.

AREA: 3,691,506 sq. mi. **POPULATION:** 772,900,000 (1971 est.). **LANGUAGES:** Mandarin the official national tongue, spoken by 70 percent; many regional dialects. **ECONOMY:** Rice, wheat, fruit, cotton, hemp, soybeans, tea, tobacco, and sugarcane important crops. Coal, iron ore, tungsten, antimony, copper are mined. Major industries include iron and steel, machinery, textiles, chemicals. **LARGEST CITIES:** Shanghai, Peking (capital), Tientsin, Shenyang. **CLIMATE:** In north, warm humid summers and long cold winters. Extreme south is tropical. Peking's average daily high in July is 89° F.; average January low, 15° F.




U. S. S. R.
Lake Baykal
Amur
Heilung
Sungari
MONGOLIA
★Ulan Bator
Hailaerh
MANCHURIA
Harbin (Haerhpin)
Vladivostok
Ch'angch'un
Chinese and Russian troops eye each other across river boundaries in the northeast and on the border in western Sinkiang, scenes of recent violent clashes. China claims that Russian czars forcibly imposed unfair boundaries on her a century ago.
GOBI
LIAONING
Shenyang (Mukden)
Fushun
Anshan
Chinchou
Sea of Japan
Huhohaot'e
Alashan Desert
Paot'ou
PEKING
T'angshan
Dairen (Lüta)
P'yŏngyang
KOREA
Tokyo★
Tientsin
Po Hai (Gulf of Chihli)
★Seoul
JAPAN
Yinch'uan
GREAT WALL OF CHINA
Wuwei
Koko Nor
T'aiyüan
HOPEH
Huang (Yellow)
Chinan
Tsingtao (Ch'ingtao)
Hsining
Lanchow (Lanchow)
Yenan
RAILROAD
Grand Canal
Yellow Sea
K'aifeng
Chengchou
Hsüchou
Sian (Hsian)
SHENSI
Yellow
Hanchung
Nanking (Nanching)
Fanch'eng
Hsiangyang
Shanghai
East China Sea
HUPEH
Han
Yangtze
Shayang
Hangchow (Hangchou)
Ch'engtu
Hankow (Hank'ou)
Chungking (Ch'ungch'ing)
Wenchou
Ch'angsha
Nanch'ang
Hsich'ang
KIANGSI
Only 100 miles from the mainland, Taiwan harbors the government of the Republic of China, whose president, Chiang Kai-shek, fled to the island with more than a million followers in 1949.
Hengyang
Foochow (Fuchou)
Kueiyang
★T'aipei
Formosa Strait
TROPIC OF CANCER
Kueilin
K'unming
Liuchou
KWANGTUNG
TAIWAN
Canton (Kuangchou)
Nanning
HONG KONG (U.K.)
MACAO (PORTUGAL)
AUTHOR'S ROUTE by rail, air, and road (shown in red) begins at Hong Kong-China border.
Hanoi★
Luang Prabang
Haik'ou
Gulf of Tonkin
Hainan
Cash registers clang and factories whir in trade-happy Hong Kong. The British colony provides indispensable markets and foreign exchange for its giant neighbor.
LAOS
★Vientiane
VIET NAM
PACIFIC OCEAN
Mekong
South China Sea
THAILAND
Manila
★Quezon City
PHILIPPINES
CAMBODIA
Phnom Penh★
★Saigon
20°
10°
120°
130°

like her husband, Halvor Ronning, was a Lutheran missionary and teacher. She died and was buried in Fanch'eng in 1907 at the age of 36, leaving her husband and seven young children.

The prospect of revisiting Fanch'eng was also exciting because no foreigners, to our knowledge, had been in the area since the Communist Revolution. For a month we could explore a broad segment of China. As things turned out, I actually stayed two and a half months and saw much more of China than I had dreamed possible.

Smiling Welcome at the Red Border

We began our trip by train from Hong Kong. At Lo Wu on the border, we got off and carried our bags across a railway bridge into Communist China. Red flags over the customs buildings were flying full in the wind. Two People's Liberation Army soldiers with bayoneted rifles looked at us curiously.

"Ni hao—hello," I ventured.

Their faces broke into wide smiles. "Ni hao," they answered and pointed the way to the customs hall. A large color portrait of Chairman Mao hung outside the door and a huge white statue of him stood inside.

We were met by a representative from the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, Chu Chiu-sheng, assigned to accompany Dad on his travels. After a gourmet Chinese lunch, we boarded an immaculate air-conditioned train for Canton, sank into reclining seats, and were served hot jasmine tea in rice-grain china cups.

My father, who last saw China in 1951, was amazed. "I remember," he said, "when Chinese passenger trains were more like cattle cars, and sanitary conditions were unspeakable."

As we rolled through Kwangtung Province toward Canton, Dad was surprised to learn that the girls serving tea, as well as the passengers from the south, all spoke Mandarin, rather than Cantonese. In former days, the only southerners who knew Mandarin were the wealthy and well educated. When Dad talked with one of the attendants, everyone stared at this gray-haired giant of a man who spoke their tongue like a native (which indeed he was); then they began to exchange jokes and old Chinese riddles with him.

Thus, all through the journey, Dad eased our reception among ordinary Chinese. He was calling on firsthand experiences in China

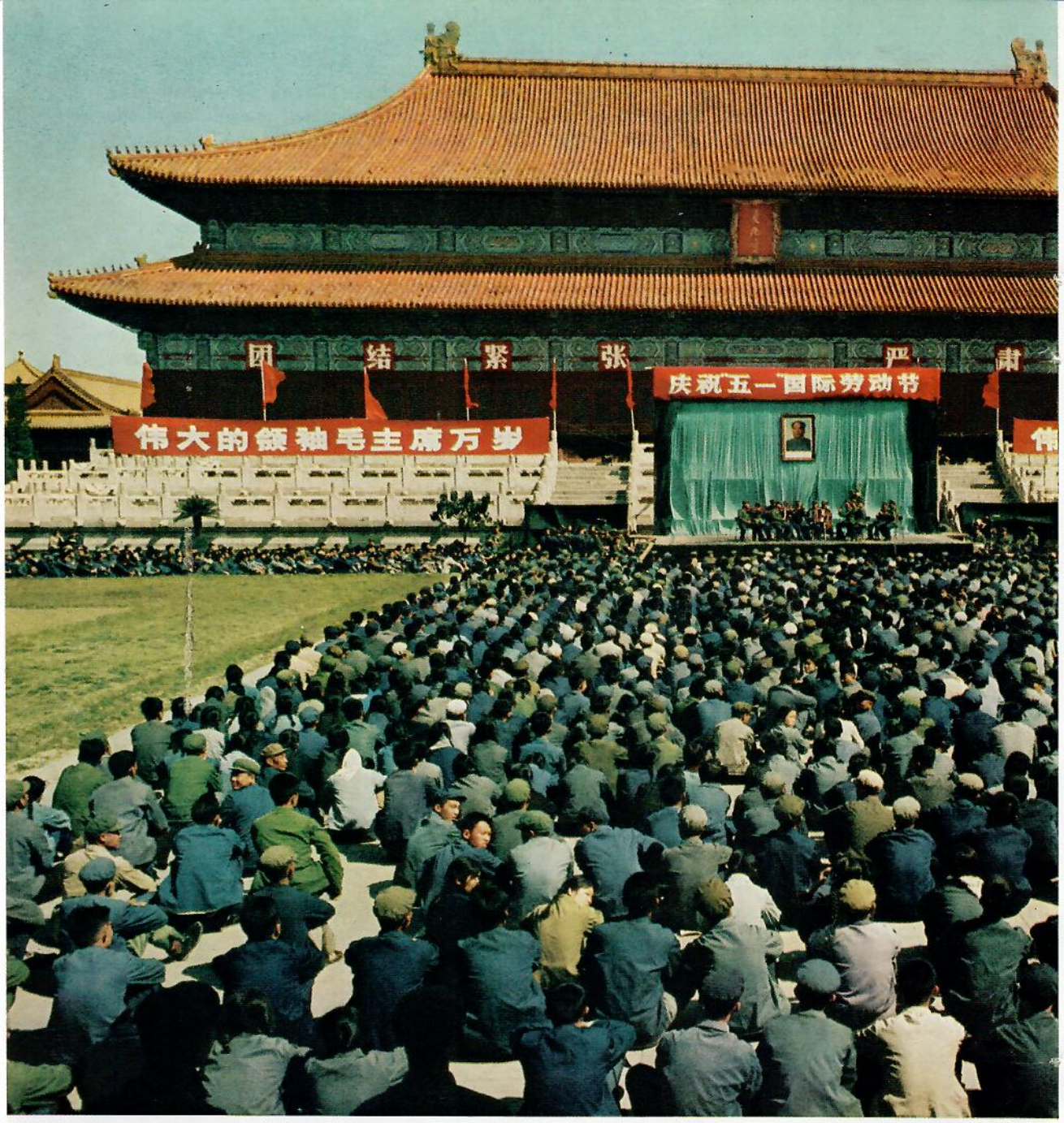
Schoolgirls in holiday dress swing into action during a tumultuous Peking welcome for Rumanian President Nicolae Ceauşescu. Half a million Chinese gathered to see his cavalcade roll down the city's main boulevard, Ch'ang-an, or "Eternal Peace." Beating drums, clanging cymbals, jumping, dancing, and waving banners, they shouted "Welcome! Welcome!" The bright-patterned garb of these girls contradicts the Western impression that everyone in modern China wears drab pajamalike garments.

from the 1890's to the 1950's. He was born in Fanch'eng in 1894, during the reign of the Manchus. When he was 12, he left for the United States and later went to Canada, where he married Inga Horte, my mother, then brought her and an infant daughter—Sylvia—back to China.

Between 1922 and 1927, when the warlords dominated the country, Dad taught school in Fanch'eng and Peking, until chaotic conditions forced him to return to Canada. He went back to China in 1945 as a Canadian diplomat, during the civil war period when power passed from Chiang Kai-shek to Mao Tse-tung. Dad advocated recognition of the new government, but when the Korean war ended that possibility, he closed the embassy and returned to Canada.

Change Visible in Every Direction

As our train sped toward Canton, Sylvia and I were enchanted by the countryside. The barefoot peasants plowing fields behind shiny water buffaloes were still there, and so were lotus-filled ponds and distant pagodas. But a new setting frames these scenes from eternal

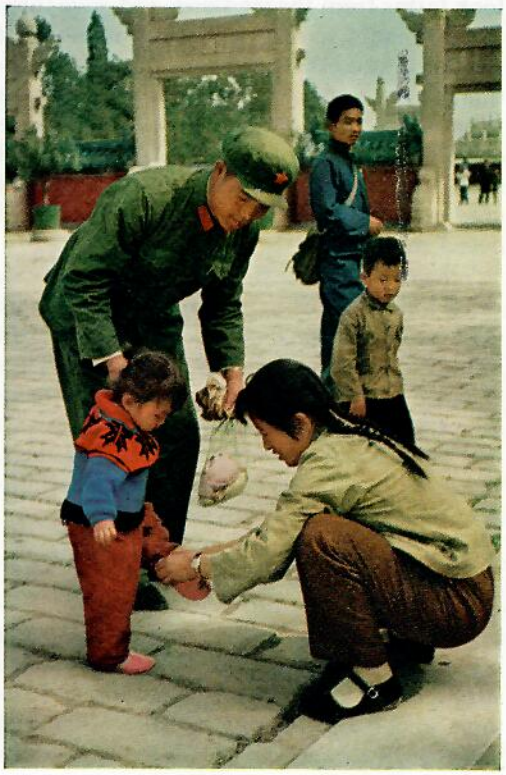


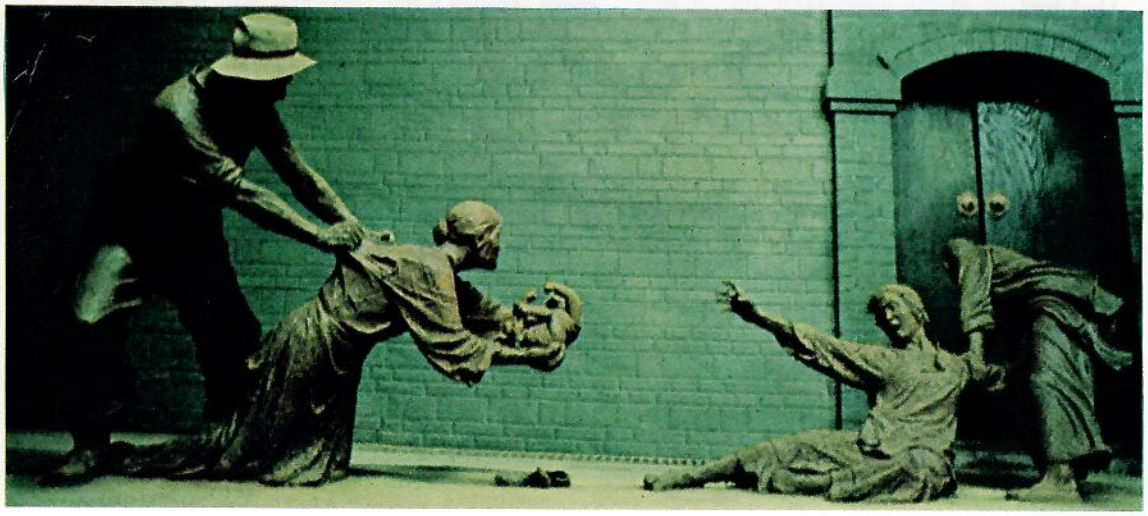
Revolutionary music entertains a holiday crowd in a people's cultural park within the confines of the old Imperial City. Once the scene of solemn ceremonies staged by the Chinese emperor and his court, the five-century-old pagoda-roofed Temple of Ancestors has been restored and is now open for the enjoyment of everyone.

All morning long last May Day, here and on ten other temporary stages set up in the park, professional troupes presented excerpts from the five operas, two ballets, and one concert work that comprise China's "modern revolutionary dramas." Sponsored by Mao's wife Chiang Ch'ing, the dramas put art to work as an educational tool in a government effort to keep alive the spirit that drove revolutionaries to establish Communism in China.

Life-size figures (**right**) in a museum within the Forbidden City dwell on the evils of life before the Communist Revolution. Here a grandmother, at left, clutched by the lackey of a greedy landlord, thrusts a hungry baby toward its mother, who is being dragged off by another lackey to nurse the landlord's child. After the Communists took power in 1949, uncounted thousands of landlords were condemned at mass trials and executed.

Small-shoe adjustment interrupts a family outing near Peking's Temple of Heaven. The father is a soldier, but he does not necessarily live in a camp, apart from his wife and children. Many in the People's Militia are assigned to civilian tasks and remain at home, reporting for duty in the morning like other jobholders. Since both parents usually work, leaving child care to grandparents or day centers, most Sundays are devoted to family excursions. In a country long plagued with overpopulation, the government actively campaigns for birth control and late marriages. A couple with two children is now considered the ideal family, the author was told.





China. The fields are big compared to the small private plots of former days. The clusters of mud-and-straw huts where peasants once lived with their chickens and pigs have in many places given way to tile-roofed brick houses, with detached chicken coops and pigsties. Communist slogans in large red characters cover walls and houses: "Down with U. S. imperialism," "Long live our great leader Chairman Mao," or, simply, "Be frugal, diligent, and honest."

We knew that these changes on the land had not been accomplished without convulsive changes in the society. The new rulers took farms from the landlords and gave them to the tenants. In mass trials, vast numbers of landlords and others deemed counter-revolutionaries were executed. When the communes were first organized in 1958, the forced pace of collectivization caused dislocations, food shortages, and some peasant resistance. But gradually the collective system took hold and began to prosper.

When we got off the train in Canton, we were surrounded by curious but friendly Chinese, all staring at us. They responded immediately to our smiles and hellos. They were all pictures of health and carried themselves with dignity. Dad remarked that this was a pleasant change from the old days, when we would have been assailed by hungry, ragged beggars.

Memories Re-create a Vanished World

I knew exactly what he meant, remembering my own introduction to China. It was New Year's Eve, 1946, and my mother, my sisters Meme and Kjeryn, my brother Harmon, and I arrived by ship in Shanghai to join my father, who had gone ahead to his diplomatic post a year earlier.

Dad met us at the gangplank and guided us through the swarms of hawkers and children begging for coins with outstretched hands. One coolie grabbed Kjeryn's handbag from her shoulder and fled down the street. In a flash, Dad was racing after him, followed by little brother Harmon yelling, "Stop, thief!" Soon the whole family was in hot pursuit. The robber took one quick look backward. The sight of these foreign devils after him was too much. He flung the bag into the air and disappeared in the crowd.

Our family piled into rickshas, and the coolies pulled us through cluttered streets toward the Cathay Hotel. A slew of beggars, some with open sores on their faces, followed us. When Kjeryn, then 12, had no more coins for them, one spat full in her face.

But when we walked into one of Shanghai's most luxurious hotels, we stepped into a different world. Chinese women in brocade gowns and smartly suited Chinese businessmen and officials mingled with the international set. Numerous servants escorted us through red-carpeted corridors to our suite.

For the next two years we lived in Nanking among the foreign diplomats, and I attended Nanking University. The civil war was wracking the countryside around us, and most of my fellow students were in sympathy with the Communists. Riding to school in a ricksha each morning, I often passed corpses of people who had died in the night—from starvation, disease, or accident. Bodies sometimes lay unclaimed for days. In the evening I would attend elaborate dinners and diplomatic balls. Contrasting the lives of the very poor and the very rich, I sensed that the revolution in China had been inevitable.

Canton Moves by Muscle Power

Now, in Canton, surrounded by the new Chinese, I thought that, instead of comparing the standard of living in China today with that of the industrialized United States or Europe, we should rather weigh modern China against China's backward past.

Industrialization is increasing, but slowly. The contrast with Hong Kong's automobile-choked streets was startling.* Canton's wide, tree-lined avenues were full of people walking, riding bicycles, and pushing carts, but there were few vehicles apart from a scattering of trucks, taxis, official cars, and buses. Man-pulled rickshas have been banned, but there are still a few pedicabs, which look like rickshas pulled by bicycles. All over the city are large political posters, portraits of Mao, and signs urging the people to keep the city clean, deposit refuse in the proper container, and refrain from spitting on the street. The admonitions seem to work, for the streets are impressively clean.

From Canton we flew to Peking in a Russian-made Ilyushin 18, just in time for May Day. That morning dawned warm and sunny, and Ch'ang-an, the city's main street, filled

*Joseph Judge described present-day Hong Kong in the October 1971 GEOGRAPHIC.

with thousands of people, marching or strolling to a people's park in the old Imperial City. We followed the crowds across a marble bridge into the gardens, where 11 outdoor theaters had been set up (pages 806-7). Each presented excerpts from the Eight Revolutionary Exemplary Works (five operas, two ballets, and one concert) produced under the sponsorship of Mao's wife Chiang Ch'ing. A hundred thousand people had come to profit from the new culture.

Pollution Not Yet a Major Problem

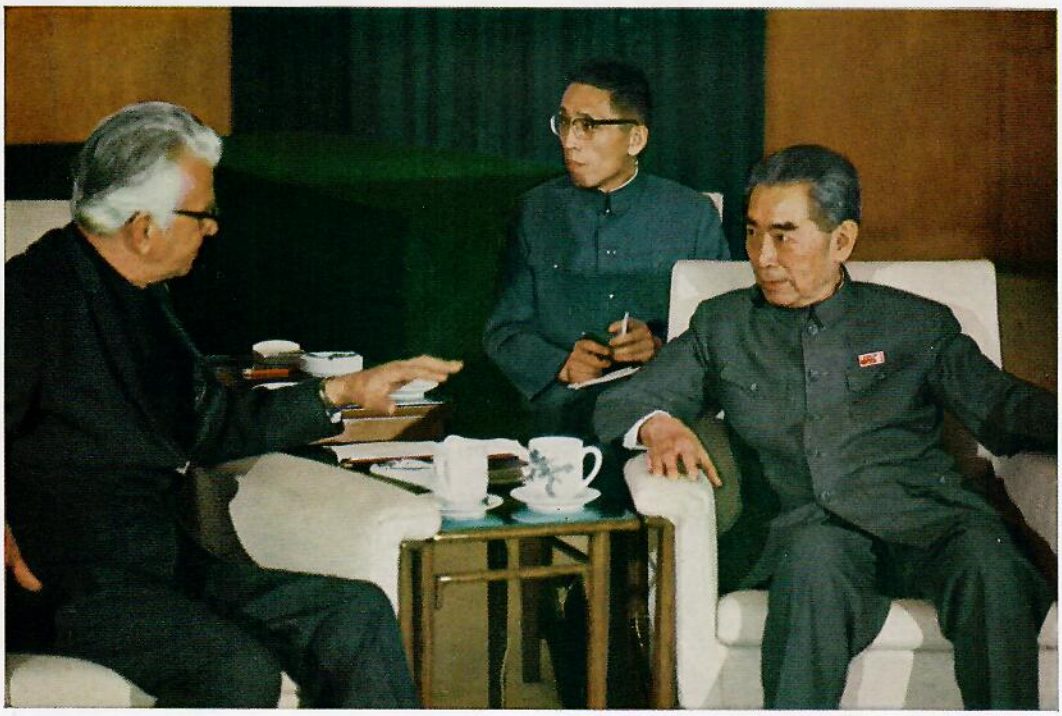
That evening we were informed that Chou En-lai would like to see us, and so we proceeded to the Great Hall of the People, situated on T'ien-an Men Square, Peking's main plaza.* The air was vibrating with music and the hubbub of a huge throng assembled for the May Day fireworks.

We walked through the open doors of the Great Hall to meet the Premier. He wore a neat gray Chinese tunic suit with a small Mao button reading "Serve the People." His eyes sparkled as he grasped my father's hand and welcomed him back to China. Then, after introductions, we went in to tea (below).

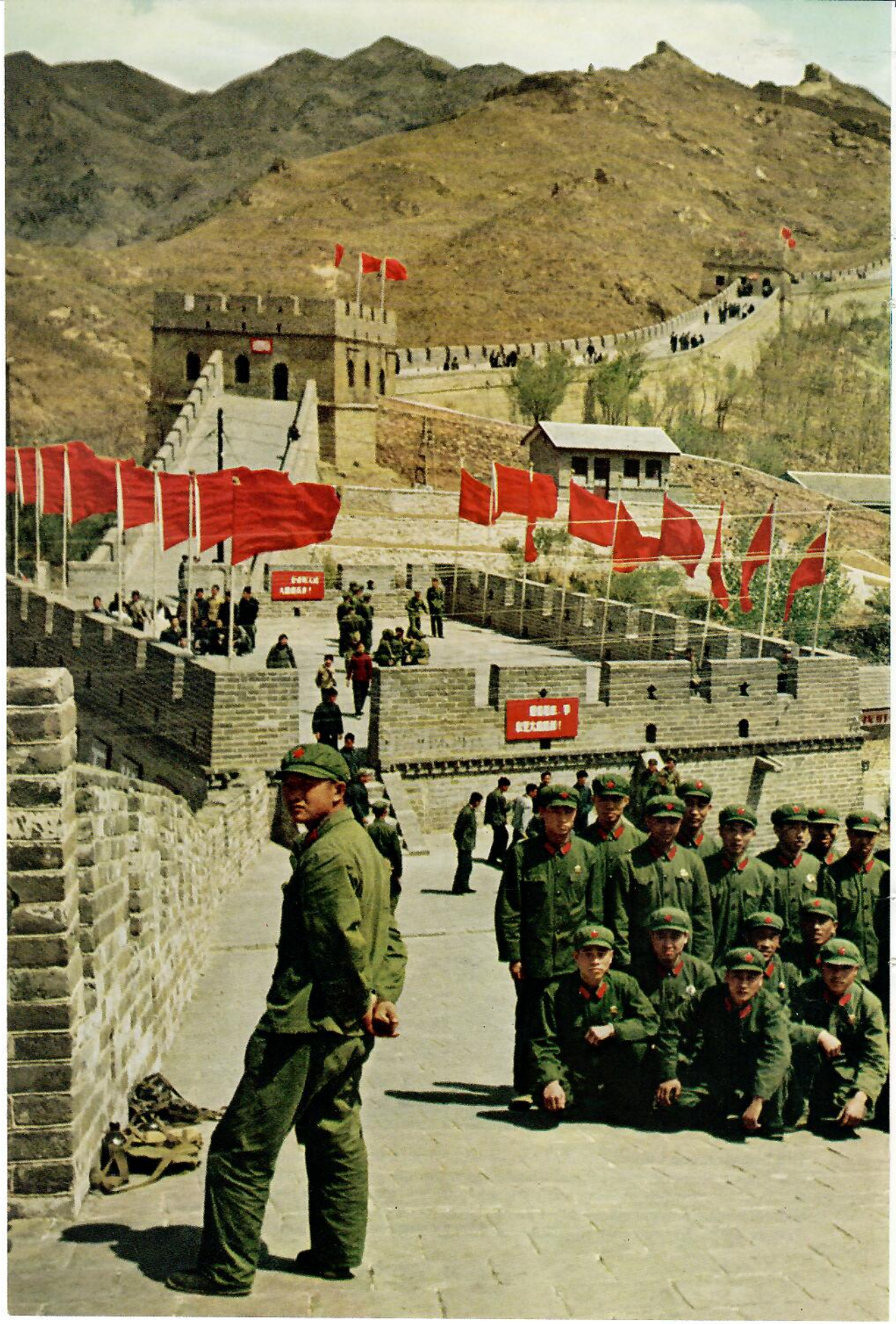
While the Premier and Dad sipped and chatted, I sat transfixed, staring at this living legend. It seemed incredible that this suave, handsome, almost delicate-looking man of 73 had been one of the leaders of the torturous Long March that saved the hard-pressed Red Army to fight again another day. The vanguard, about 90,000 men of the First Front Army, left Kiangsi Province in the south in 1934. After 368 days, 18 mountain ranges, hundreds of skirmishes, and untold difficulties, 7,000 arrived in Shensi, in the north, where they were joined by other Red forces (map, pages 802-3).

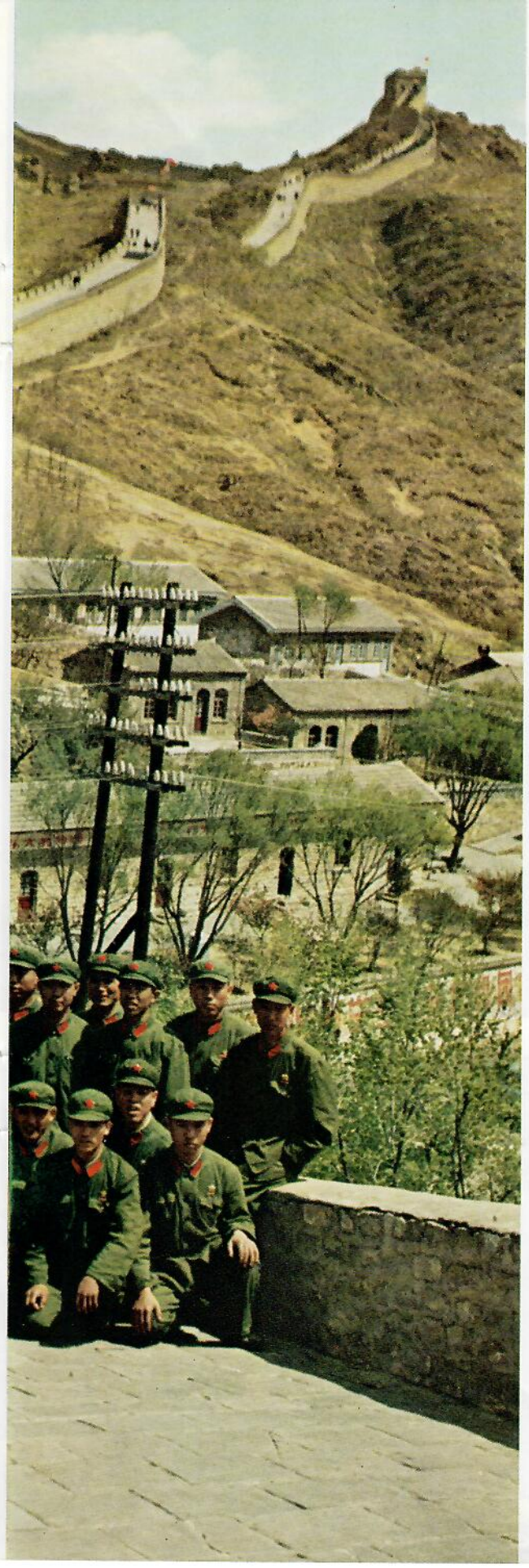
The Premier and Dad, whom Chou often referred to as his *lao p'eng-yu* (old friend), reminisced about their various meetings in

*See "The City They Call Red China's Showcase," by Franc Shor, and Brian Brake's "Peking: A Pictorial Record," GEOGRAPHIC, August 1960, and "This Is The China I Saw," by Jørgen Bisch, November 1964.



Old friends meet: China's Premier Chou En-lai, at right, welcomes the author's father, Canadian diplomat Chester Ronning, whose fluent Chinese made the interpreter unnecessary. The two statesmen first met in 1945 when Mr. Ronning was stationed in China. Jokingly, the Premier accused his 76-year-old guest of having retired "too early." "I know you are three years older than I," said Chou with a smile, "but we are exceptions to the rule. Take me, for instance. Now why should I retire?"





former days. Then Dad said that if *his* lao p'eng-yu would come to Canada, he would personally cook Chou a Chinese meal there.

Chou said he would like that, but asked, "Do you still have fish to eat in your area, or have they died as a result of pollution?"

Dad assured him that there were still plenty of fish, but added that pollution was a big problem. Chou showed much concern, and went on, "The greatest pollution has taken place in the most advanced industrial countries. Developing countries, like China, not as far advanced industrially, can benefit from the experiences of those countries and avoid similar problems."

I thought of this remark of the Premier's later, when I was struck time and again by the clean air in most Chinese cities. The lack of pollution, I think, is mostly due to the scarcity of cars with their exhaust fumes.

Confidence Flows From "People Power"

The Premier invited Dad to return another day for dinner, then took him off to review the fireworks from a rostrum atop the Gate of Heavenly Peace. In the course of the festivities, Dad saw Chairman Mao make a ten-minute appearance and disappear.

Sylvia and I went to the stands near the gate. The fireworks were stupendous—and so was the ocean of humanity viewing them.

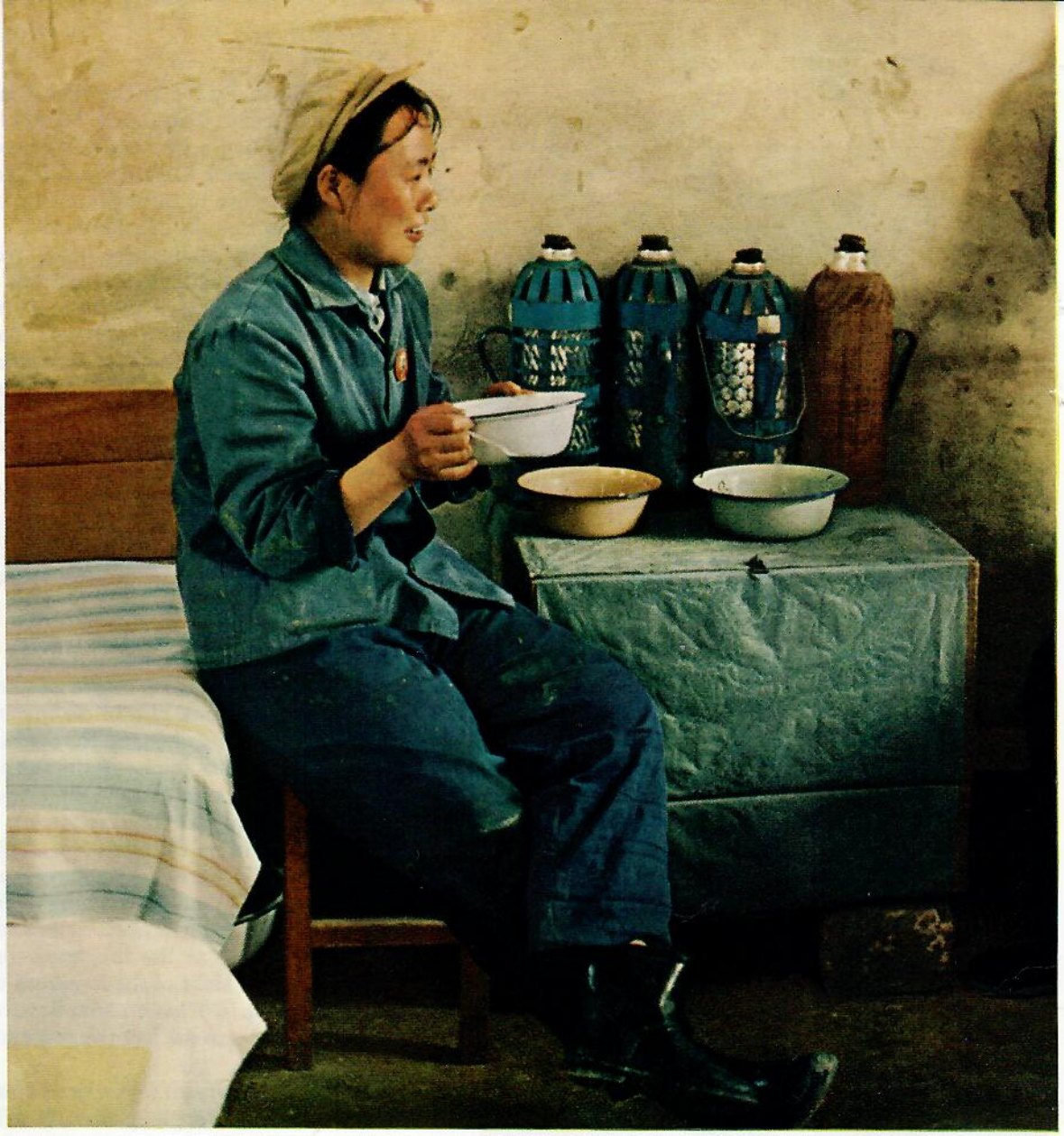
Later Dad told us he had been "wild with excitement," not only at the fireworks display, but also at the sight of the hundreds of thousands of people in T'ien-an Men Square. In them, he said, he could feel the presence of a new power.

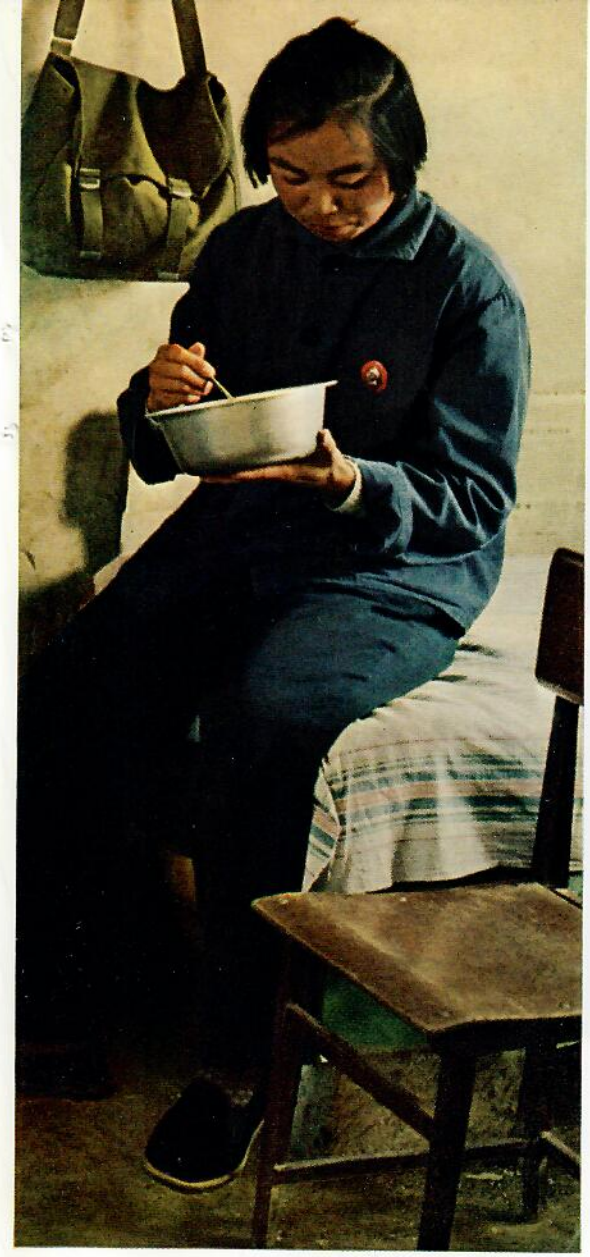
This is a power no visitor to modern China can fail to discern. People power. Nearly eight hundred million people all thinking the same thoughts, reading the same books, talking about the same things, wearing similar clothes, living in a similar style.

There is little room for tolerance or dissent. "Armed with Mao's thought," they believe that nothing is impossible, that they can move

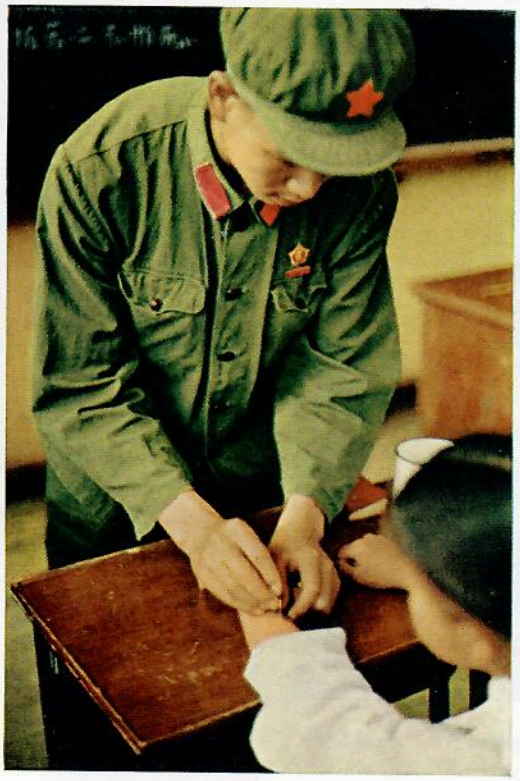
(Continued on page 816)

Mustering at battlements of old, soldiers-turned-tourists gather atop a section of the Great Wall restored with army labor. Chinese from every province pour in by the truckload to marvel at the colossal barricade, here only 35 miles from the capital. Built 22 centuries ago to hold off barbarian invaders from the north, it writhes 1,500 miles across mountain and desert.





Supper at bedside ends a day of farm work and Mao-thought study for two community leaders undergoing ideological training at a Peking school. The program, designed to give intellectuals the labor experience of common workers, began in the late 1960's during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. The movement aims to strengthen the Communist ideal of a classless society. When the author asked, "How long is the course?" one woman replied, "It depends on our attitude."

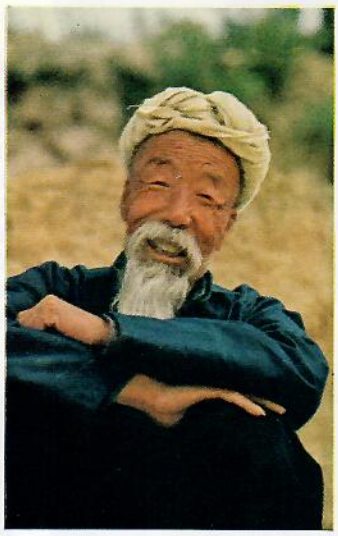


Practitioner of an ancient art, an army specialist in acupuncture treats a deaf-mute. Inserting needles at specific nerve points—here in the wrist—acupuncturists claim to cure many cases of deafness caused in childhood. Developed thousands of years ago but still scientifically unexplained, acupuncture is used throughout China as a means of anesthesia and as a treatment for afflictions ranging from appendicitis to migraine.

Tapped for higher education, military men attend a mathematics lecture at Peking's Tsinghua University; most wear buttons bearing Mao's profile. In the tumult of the Cultural Revolution, Mao closed the nation's secondary schools and universities. Only last year did Tsinghua reopen to an enrollment of 2,800 students.

In the kaleidoscope of Chinese life, the author found these faces: The pipe-smoking young man (**below**) called himself "an ordinary peasant"; to Chinese Communists, the once degrading word "peasant" now is the proud designation of one who farms. He and his wife—a pediatrician—their two children and a grandmother are members of a rural commune near Peking. They love music; both parents play the lute and sing.

Skin crinkled with age, this 85-year-old man (**right**) lives near Yenan. "The classic Chinese regard for the elderly endures," notes the author, "but not to the fanatical extent of the past."

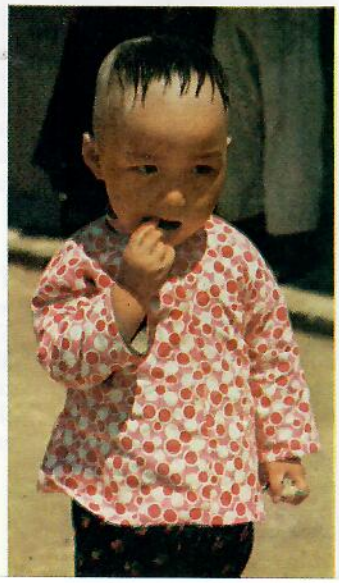


Girls of Hangchow, in a region noted for its lovely women (**below**), labor in a commune that produces fine green tea.

Diplomat's daughter, 17-year-old Hsiao Chou (**right**) took leave from the army to accompany the author's party to Fanch'eng. The girl's father, former Chinese Ambassador to the People's Republic of the Congo, served as escort for the journey. Asked why she joined the army, Hsiao Chou replied: "For the adventure! There are so many girls my age in the army, it's more fun than being at home."

Shaved head of a boy in Sian (**right**) retains the topknot that his parents believe will trick evil spirits into mistaking him for a girl, unworthy of being harmed.

No diaper, no laundry: Caring for a tyke while his parents work, a Fanch'eng grandmother (**opposite**) dresses him in a practical garment.



mountains with teaspoons, turn deserts into arable land, change the direction of rivers, and harness the tides. All with people power.

For the Chinese Communists, the power of what they call "collective positive thinking" is enormous. To take a single example, on one day during the building of the Yangtze River Bridge at Nanking, 50,000 soldiers and civilian volunteers pitched in to assist the 6,000 regular bridgeworkers.

Red Guards Brought a Period of Chaos

No one knows the power of the people better than Mao Tse-tung. In 1958 he wrote, "Apart from their other characteristics, the outstanding thing about China's people is that they are 'poor and blank.' This may seem a bad thing, but in reality it is a good thing. Poverty gives rise to the desire for change, the desire for action, and the desire for revolution. On a blank sheet of paper free from any mark, the freshest and most beautiful characters can be written, the freshest and most beautiful pictures can be painted."

Sometimes the artist who wielded the brush encountered difficulties. In 1966 Mao summoned millions of young people known as Red Guards to a great proletarian cultural revolution—to purge the society, party, government, and schools of those he accused of returning to the "capitalist road."

The Red Guards carried out the purge too enthusiastically, often acting without close direction from Peking. Commanded to sweep away the "four olds"—old culture, old ideas, old customs, and old habits—some Red Guards attacked historical buildings and treasures and humiliated college faculty members. In the provinces thousands were killed or injured in clashes between rival Red Guard factions. By 1968 the army had to step in. Revolutionary committees were set up to administer the provinces, and Mao regained full control of the country.

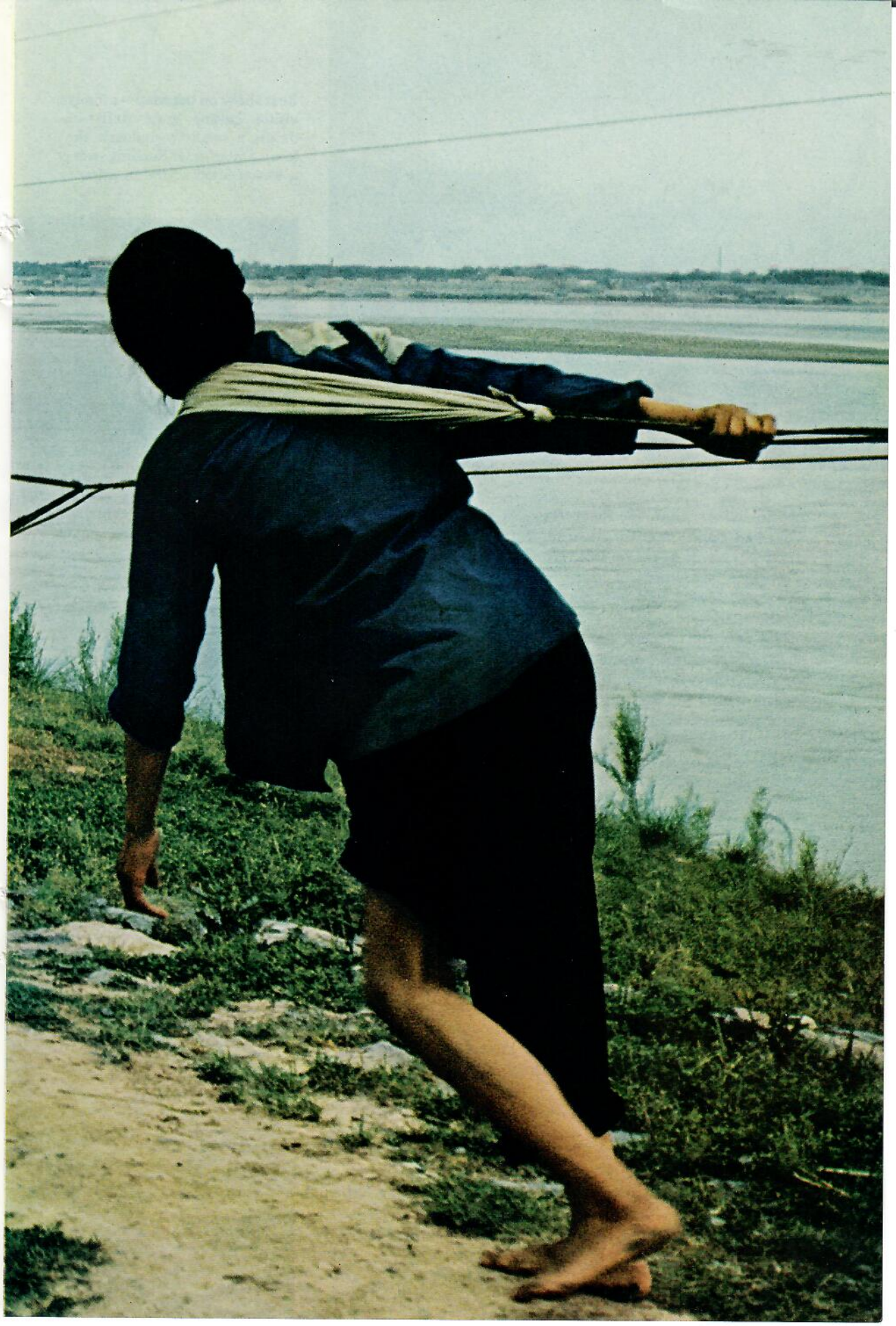
Today, Mao is a revered father figure.

Many of the Chinese peasants learned to read after the Communist Revolution, and the first and probably only book many have ever owned is the little red book, *Quotations From Chairman Mao*. They study it as 19th-century evangelists studied the Bible. To Mao's wisdom they attribute their new sense of security and well-being. All over China we asked farmers and workers over 30 years of

Doorway to industrial China, smoke-shrouded Shanghai throbs as the nation's largest city and busiest port. Home of ten million people, it sprawls strategically at the mouth of the Yangtze River, funnel to China's heartland.

On a Yangtze tributary, the silt-clouded Han River, freight junks with worn bamboo-ribbed sails breast the current (**below**).

Tug-of-war with water: Brother and sister pull a junk around a bend in the Han River (**following pages**). On deck, mother shouts orders and steers, while father poles to keep the boat off the bank. Towing harnesses slip off easily should the current drag pullers backward. Foot by laborious foot, such hauling may go on for hours, even days. If the wind picks up, the two hop back aboard.



Best show on the road—a foreign visitor cutting grain (**left**)—enthralls a small-fry audience (**below**). Ambassador Ronning swings a basket-fitted scythe in a barley

age to tell us what, for them, was the most important thing Mao had done. "I never have to worry about my children. I know they will never be hungry, as I was," said a woman at a workers' settlement in Shanghai. "I have a warm house to live in. Before, I had nothing," said a bearded old shepherd on the road.

Not only the Chinese peasants believe that if the "thoughts of Mao" are studied and applied correctly, there is a solution for everything, from improving crops to curing the deaf. In a Peking school for deaf-mutes, Wang Chen-ying, a member of the school's propaganda team, told me, "Previously our doctors said that deaf-mutes were incurable, but nothing is incurable. Mao teaches us that if we understand the problems, we can master the way."

Patient Conscious During Heart Surgery

Through such indomitable thinking, the Chinese claim they have found a cure for deaf-muteness. In 1968 an army medical team began applying acupuncture, the ancient Chinese medical practice of stimulating certain nerve points with needles, to the cure of deafness (page 813).

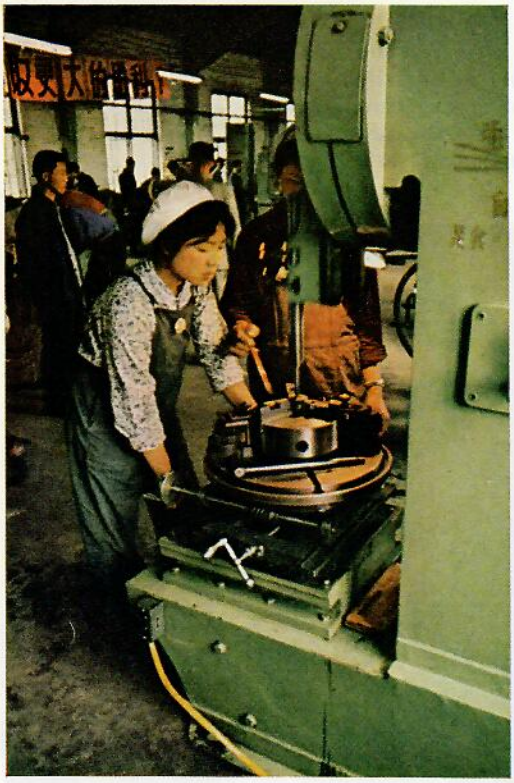
Wang Chen-ying explained: "Chairman Mao says, 'If you want to know the taste of a pear, you must eat it yourself.' We tried needles on our own bodies to find the proper acupuncture points. We sometimes feared we would injure ourselves, but with Mao's thought 'Die for the people' in mind, we continued the experiments." Now, Wang said, after a year's treatment, 90 percent of the students at the school have a certain capacity for hearing.

"After hearing is recovered, we teach them how to speak. In little more than a year, 11 of our 238 students have been completely cured. We can thank Chairman Mao's teaching for this."

We saw startling demonstrations of acupuncture in Hankow, where we were invited to observe some major operations in which needles would be used as the sole anesthetic—another development attributed to the inspiration of Mao. We

field near Fanch'eng, his birthplace. The youngsters popped up to watch from a nearby village.

Most of rural China lives under the commune system. A single commune may consist of only a few villages or more than 200, organized in brigades. A revolutionary committee representing the army, the party, and the peasants administers each brigade.



watched both open-heart surgery and the removal of a tumor from the throat of a 54-year-old woman. It was true—the only anesthetic we saw used was acupuncture needles.

When the surgeon, Dr. Chu Yu-kuang, made the incision into the throat to remove the tumor, the fully conscious woman never twitched—which is more than I can say for the observers. Seconds after Dr. Chu tied the last suture, she sat up and ate mandarin orange sections. Then she rose unassisted from the operating table, thanked the surgeon and the two acupuncturists, and walked out,

Women machinists operate a precision metal cutter (**top**) at a shop in fast-industrializing Fanch'eng. Women enjoy pay and promotions equivalent to men's; female managers run several of China's largest textile mills.

Made in China: The 10,000-ton freighter *East Wind* rides at anchor in Shanghai harbor. Shipbuilding is a relatively new industry for China, and blueprints for future construction call for vessels of 30,000 tons—still small compared to Japanese-built behemoths of ten times that size.

waving and smiling at the amazed observers. She was not even pale.

Professor Chu Fa-tzu, head of the surgical department, explained to us that thirty minutes before the operation, two needles had been inserted into the nerve points of each wrist, numbing the tumor area. Throughout the operation, the acupuncturists kept twisting the needles; the moment it was over, they withdrew them.

For the heart surgery, in addition to the needles in the wrists, a needle was placed in each forearm. The chest was opened, a rib and some tissue removed, and the rapidly beating heart exposed. The woman patient remained fully conscious, and while the surgeon cupped her heart in his hand, she drank orange juice through a straw and smiled at observers. We almost passed out.

Professor Chu told us, "There are 500 to 800 nerve points in the body that we know we can use in acupuncture. We know the results we will get, but we cannot explain scientifically why we get them."

Leaving Hankow, we entrained for Fan-ch'eng, 300 miles up the Han as the river

Taking fun to work, students rehearse for an operetta in a bucket factory, where they share the life of workers while undergoing ideological training. Chinese delight in amateur concerts and dramas, invariably on revolutionary themes.

Dragon mouths of open furnaces breathe fire in the huge Anshan Iron and Steel Works, set amid Manchuria's vast coal and ore deposits. When the Japanese—who occupied the region for 14 years—surrendered to Soviet troops in 1945, they were put to work dismantling industrial plants for removal to the U.S.S.R. Despite such massive disruption and the subsequent ravages of civil war, the northeast now stands as the powerhouse of the Chinese nation.

flows (map, page 803). Too excited to sleep, we rose with the sun to see the countryside from the train window. It was hilly and green, bordered with rich red soil. Lush weeping willows hung low over streams, where in the early morning peasants beat their clothes clean on flat rocks.

As we passed a group of white adobe houses, Dad said, "The walls and watchtowers are gone. In the old days the villages were clusters of mud huts surrounded by high mud walls. Every village had a tower as a lookout against robbers and wandering, looting soldiers."

When we arrived, we were installed in a comfortable guesthouse in Fanch'eng's twin city of Hsiangyang, across the Han River. The management, worried about the quantities of hot water Sylvia and I might require, assigned four girls to bring us all we could use. Each time we returned to our adjoining rooms, we were ushered into the bath.

Dad took us to the old Lutheran mission compound in Fanch'eng, where he and my grandparents had lived, and where my sister Sylvia had lived for four years. In the courtyard my grandmother's tombstone still stands. The old church that grandfather built is no longer used for formal services, though some of the older church members meet occasionally in one of the smaller rooms. The school my grandparents founded and where Dad taught still functions; the number of students has risen from 200 in 1927 to 8,000 today. My parents' old home has been rebuilt and is now occupied by soldiers.

Beds Heated by Charcoal Stoves

In Fanch'eng I learned the truth of the old adage, "Poverty is a state of mind." While visiting a commune, we were taken to see the peasants' houses.

The grandparents, who stay home with the children while the parents work in the fields, were eager to show us how they live. The typical house was small, built of whitewashed brick, with a gray tile roof. It had a living room with a wooden dining table, a few hard-backed chairs, and perhaps a radio or chest of drawers. The two bedrooms had wardrobes and mirrors and broad beds called *k'angs*. The beds were warmed by charcoal stoves inside concrete casings, and were covered with cotton mattresses and colorfully embroidered quilts. Some houses had separate kitchens with iron stoves; others had the stoves in the living rooms. All the homes were immaculately clean, and the old people showed them to us with touching pride.

The next day we sailed on the Han in a *pien-tzu,* a freight junk. We fell in with a picturesque fleet of similar craft, heading upriver with their patched, bamboo-ribbed sails full blown in the wind (page 817).

When the fleet got into the lee of a bend, it was forced to stop, and then we saw a scene from centuries past. The boat immediately in front of us was a one-family enterprise. The two grown children, a boy and girl, jumped off carrying harnesses and a bamboo cable and climbed to a path on the bank. Mother stayed at the rudder, steering, while father stood on the bow with a long bamboo pole with an iron point, which he used to prevent beaching or collision.

The son and daughter slipped into their harnesses. The other end of the cable had already been fastened to the mast—at the very top, so that, if necessary, it could be tossed over the mast of any passing boat. The young people pulled against the swiftly flowing current (pages 818-19); mother shouted orders; slowly, grunting in unison, leaning almost flat against the harnesses, the boy and girl got the junk moving upstream.

Foreigners Pass as "Lumps of Mud"

Being aboard a pien-tzu again brought back vivid memories for Dad. In just such a boat, he and Mother, Sylvia, Meme and my brother Alton (both babies then) had fled Fanch'eng in 1927, during the fighting when Chiang Kai-shek came to power. The British consul had ordered the family to leave because of brigandage and violence against foreigners. Dad persuaded the captain of a pien-tzu to take them down the Han River to Hankow. The captain and crew of the freight junk were members of the secret Red Spear Society, organized for self-protection against warlords, marauding Kuomintang soldiers, and bandits. At Shayang, about halfway to Hankow, they met boats coming upriver that had been fired on by brigands. Sailors' bodies still lay on the bloody decks. The captain of Dad's boat refused to go any farther.

After two days in the Shayang dock, Dad set out with two other foreigners to find the telegraph office and send word to the British consulate in Hankow. Having got the message off, they stopped on the way back for tea and buns. Before long, a group of hostile students came into the teahouse.

"Look at those foreign devils!" they

shouted. "Destroy the foreign devils! Down with imperialism!"

On impulse, Dad jumped onto the table and shouted in a flawless local accent, "You are absolutely right! Down with foreign imperialists! Let us destroy them!"

As the amazed students listened, he went on: "That is exactly why we want to go down the river and cross the Pacific to our homes. If we attack imperialism from our side and you from yours, we shall crush it."

The mood of the crowd changed. Here was a foreigner who sounded like a true "lump of mud"—which is what the natives of the area jokingly called themselves. They escorted him and his companions back to the boat and persuaded the captain to go on.

Author Greeted by Birthday Surprise

The 500 miles from Fanch'eng to Hangchow is measurable in time as well as distance. Old Cathay survives almost untouched in Hangchow. Known to the Chinese as "a paradise on earth," it was a resort for the emperors for centuries.

Today a luxury hotel stands beside West Lake. The calm blue waters are interspersed with islands dotted by pavilions and moon bridges. A Sung Dynasty garden named the "Park of Orioles Singing in the Willows," a monastery known as "Soul's Retreat," the "Cave of the Morning Mist and Sunset Glow," the "Pavilion of Calm Lake and Autumn Moon"—all these fantasies are real in Hangchow. Few propaganda posters mar the landscape, and martial music is rarely heard.

Hangchow is renowned for beautiful women—ladies with high cheekbones, large almond eyes, glowing complexions, long, flowing, often braided hair, and smooth carriage. On secluded benches around West Lake, one often sees courting couples.

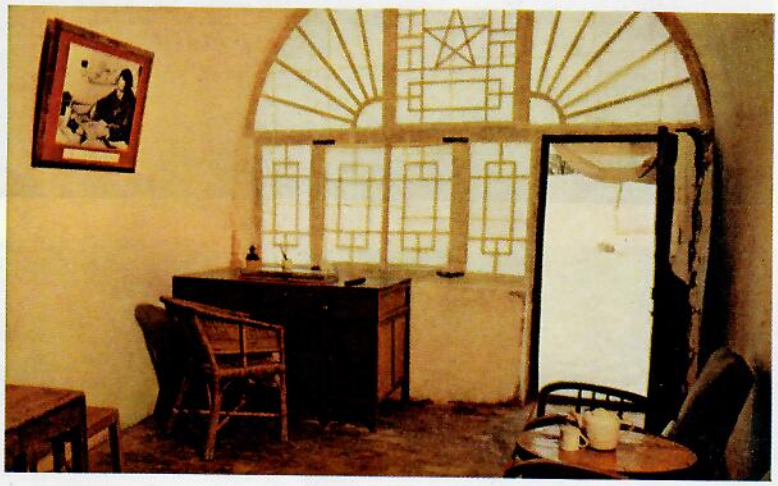
I began to feel a little forlorn, having been parted from my husband Top and our five children almost a month now. But I had a pleasant surprise. Top, who is assistant managing editor of the *New York Times,* came to China on assignment, and, by some mysterious Oriental manipulation, was delivered to me in Hangchow on my birthday.

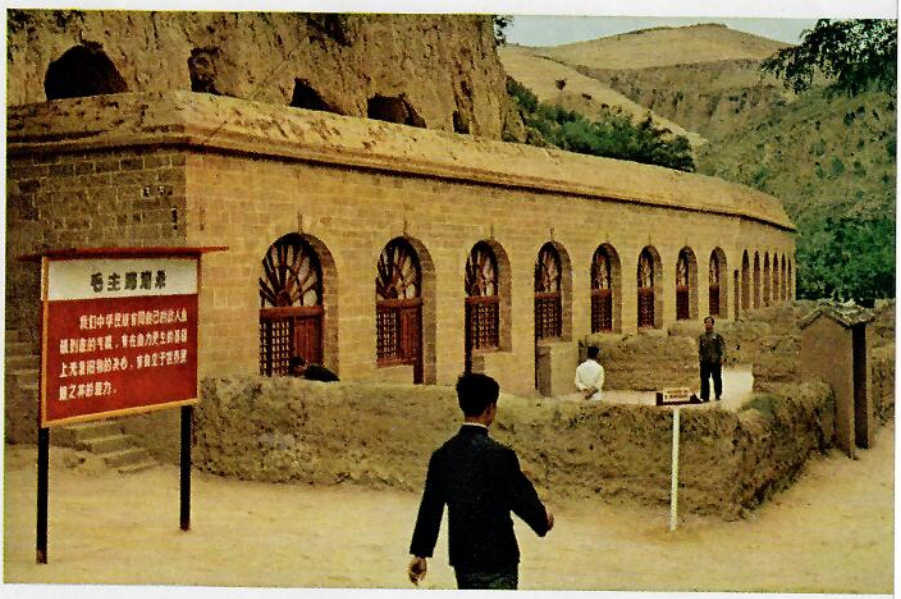
Top had still another surprise for me. He and our children had talked things over and agreed that I should stay on with him. So, a few days later in Shanghai, we parted with Dad and Sylvia, who were to spend a week in the south before leaving China.

Top and I, accompanied by his interpreter,

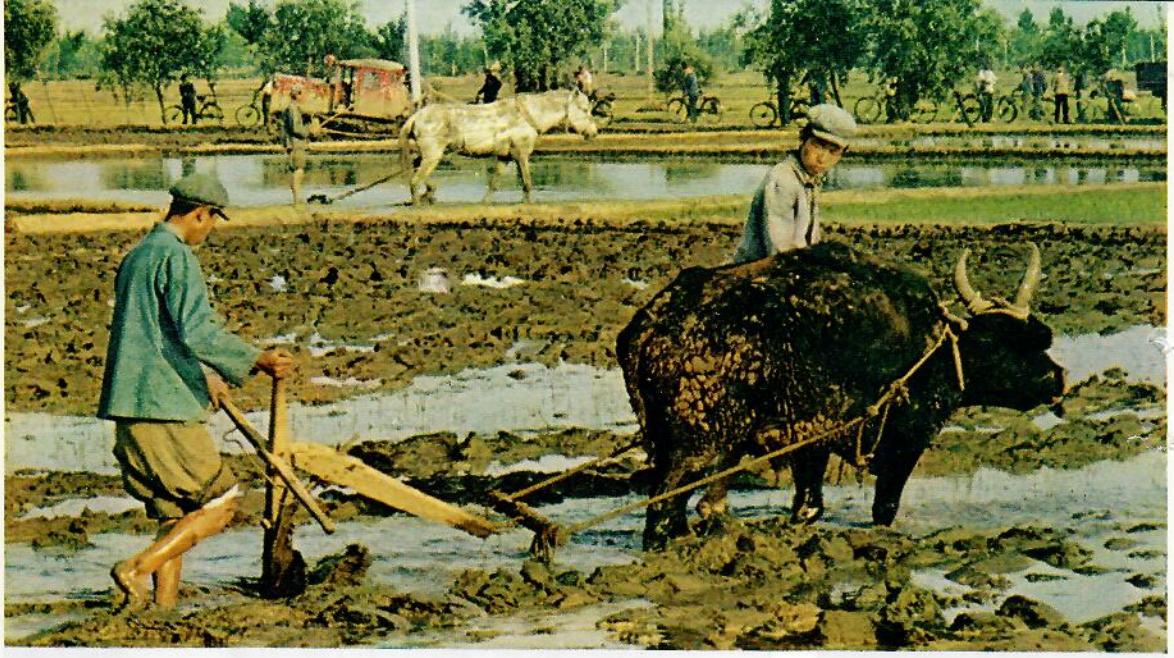
Right arm duels left as a Peking resident performs a sword dance. Each morning across the land, streets and squares fill with physical-fitness buffs vigorously exercising or moving gracefully through such ancient, stylized rituals. Body building bears the blessing of Chairman Mao and enjoys enormous popularity among Chinese of all ages.

Woven portraits of Chairman Mao roll from the looms of a Hangchow silk mill. Distributed to department stores, they will find their way into homes in the most remote villages. One of the most striking aspects of life in China today, the author discovered, is the reverence paid to the wisdom of Mao Tse-tung. His thoughts are given credit for all manner of successes.



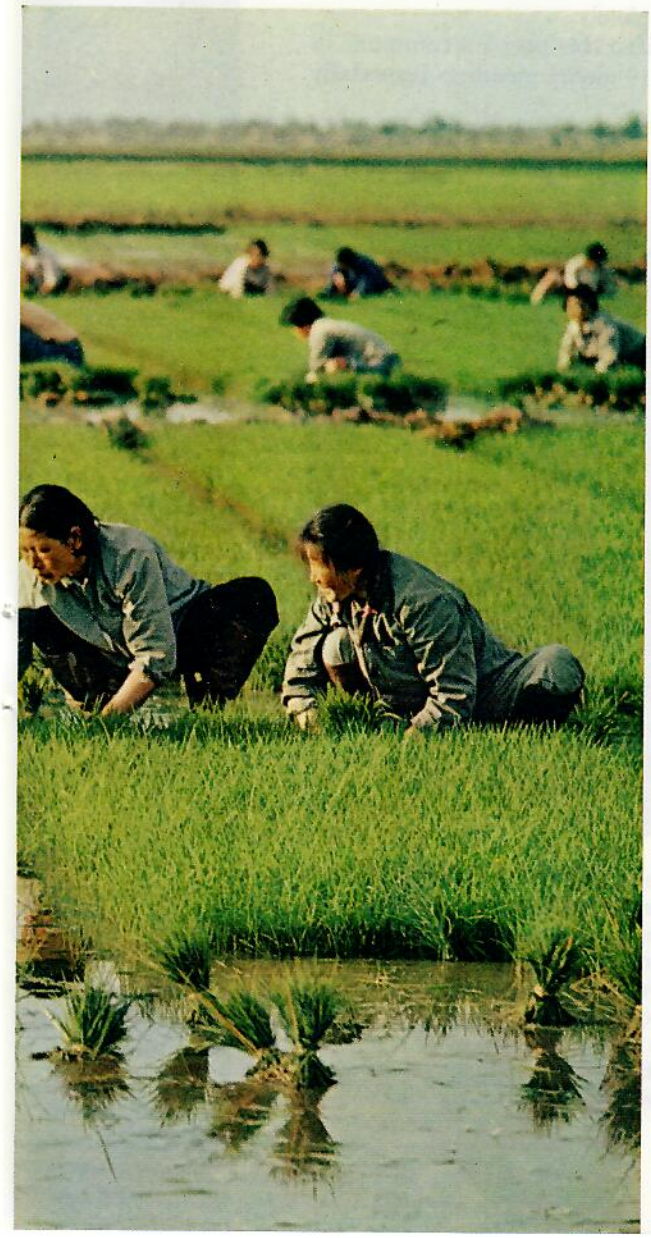


Shrines of the Revolution: Arched entryways lead into the hand-hewn caves of Yenan. In 1934, facing annihilation by Nationalists in south China, Mao led 90,000 troops on the epic Long March—a 6,000-mile retreat across 18 mountain ranges and 24 rivers. A year later, the survivors reached Shensi Province and eventually the safety of Yenan's caves, there to rebuild for the revolt that swept China from 1946 to 1949. A sign quoting Mao (**lower**) marks one of four cave complexes where he and other leaders lived. Inside one cave (**upper**), a photograph of Mao hangs above a desk he worked at during the war.



Muckbusters on a new frontier, peasants till a rice field (**left**) recently brought under irrigation near Shenyang in the northeast. Water buffalo and horse compete with a red tractor, evidence of a beginning in farm mechanization. But only hands can do the job of these women (**below**). Toiling elbow to elbow, they bundle rice seedlings for transplanting.

Only 12 percent of China's land is cultivated. In a continuing effort to increase food production, the Chinese push ever farther into the dry, rugged interior. Intensified farming and controlled distribution of grain have banished scenes of starvation that marked the China of decades past.



Yu Chung-ching, flew to Peking and later to Manchuria, an area which the Chinese now call the Northeast. Our first stop there was Shenyang (formerly Mukden), capital of Liaoning Province. Seen from the air, the capital's back country seemed a sea of paddy fields, and it was hard to believe that two decades ago, rice had to be imported to this area. It was also hard to believe we were flying into one of China's chief industrial centers.

Top had been in Shenyang in 1948 during its siege by Communist troops. He had flown in on a U. S. plane bringing supplies to the Nationalists. After the city had been surrounded for almost a year, the Nationalists tried to break out and were defeated.

Today there are few reminders of the former ravaged and exploited Manchuria. This land of forests, fertile plains, and enormous mineral wealth was victimized by imperial Russia and then by the Japanese. After decades of exploitation and 14 years of occupation, the Japanese surrendered Manchuria (or Manchukuo, as they called it) to Soviet troops in 1945. The Russians systematically dismantled and shipped home much of the region's industrial machinery. Extensive looting as well, and the subsequent fighting during the civil war from 1946 to 1949, left Manchuria in sad shape.

Today the Chinese are proud of the way they have put it back together. At the once-ruined Shenyang Machine Tool Plant No. 1, the chairman told us that the large complex of brick buildings now employs 6,000 people. But when we asked about production, we got a classic evasive reply: "In 1969 the total output increased 90 percent over 1966. That increase was 100 percent over designed capacity. On this basis, in 1970 we fulfilled production 42 days ahead."

Present Speaks Loudest in Old Sian

We returned to Peking, and shortly Yu Chung-ching and I joined a group of correspondents for a nine-day trip southwest to Sian and Yenan. Top had to stay in Peking.

Our plane was due to leave "approximately in the morning," so, hoping for the best, we were at the airport by 9:30. At 11:30 we were treated to a multicourse Chinese lunch, while we watched costumed teen-agers on the airport tarmac waving banners and shouting welcome to a Peruvian trade delegation. Then we listened to a long concert, after which the teen-agers gave another wild welcome to a newly arrived North Korean delegation.

About 4 o'clock, we got the word, "Sorry to keep you waiting. The weather has cleared now. Please hurry."

We landed three hours later in Sian, ancient capital and cultural center of China. Here, more than two thousand years ago, the first emperors ruled by the Mandate of Heaven over the Middle Kingdom, which the Chinese regarded as the center of the earth. Masterpieces of enduring art and literature were created in Sian during the golden T'ang Dynasty (A.D. 618-906). It was a cosmopolitan city of travelers, merchants, and people of many faiths—Confucians, Buddhists, Taoists, and even Christians and Moslems.

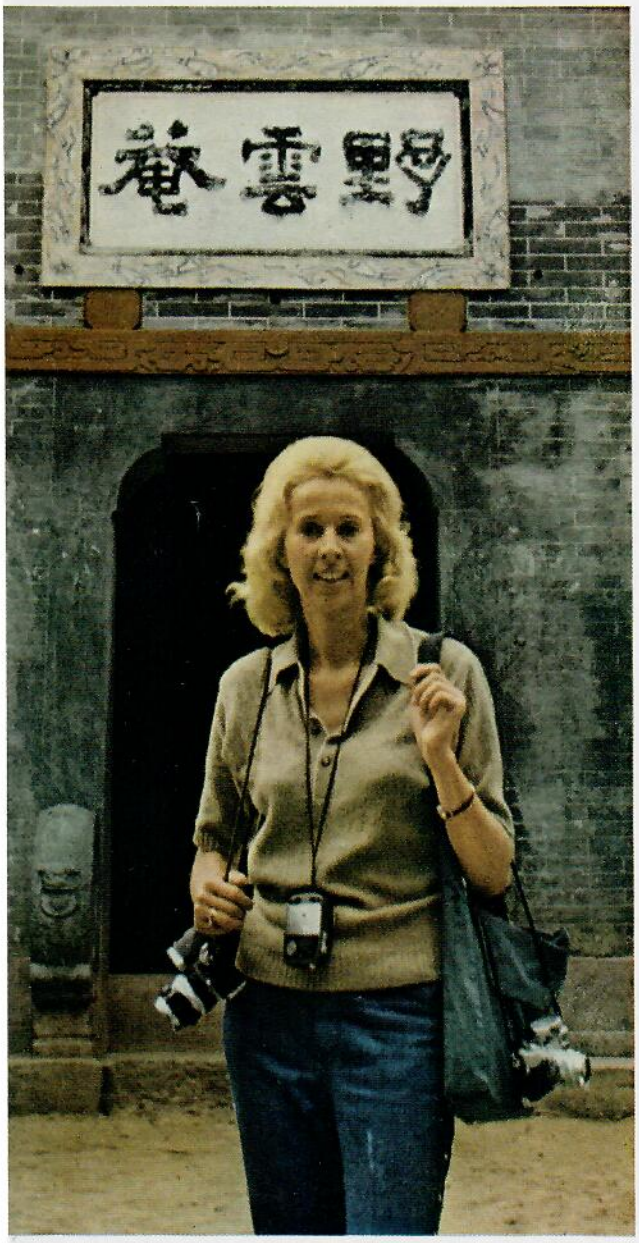
Aside from great museums tucked away in temples or behind earthen garden walls, I saw few traces of Sian's glorious past. But its Communist present was much in evidence when we visited one of the brigades of a commune near Sian. The chairman, Liu Shu-chen, who had a weather-beaten face and shaven head, welcomed us.

"There are 11 administrative units, or brigades, in this commune," he said. "This brigade consists of five villages. We have seven production teams, 356 households, and 1,812 members. We have 2,750 *mou* of land [about 460 acres]. Before the liberation there were 49 households here. Four were landlords and the other 45 were poor peasants. Thirteen of these families were forced to sell their children as slaves and servants. Seven families became beggars and seven other families died out completely.

"In 1949 we became the masters. We organized this people's commune in 1958. Of our brigade's 812 laborers we have 419 model members [especially

Where people move by pedal power: Crammed to capacity, a bicycle minibus zips across T'ien-an Men Square in Peking (**above**), on the way to a day-care school. Cycling squad of commuters (**right**), passing a colossal statue of Mao in Shenyang, pumps homeward through evening shadows with only buses for competition. Everywhere workers, peasants, and officials travel by bike in a China that counts the private auto an extreme luxury. But they enjoy one blessing: an almost complete absence of pollution from car exhausts. Premier Chou En-lai believes that by starting late to industrialize, China may avoid the pollution now plaguing other nations.


中国共产党万岁！



SYLVIA RONNING CASSADY

Wearing journalism's tools, the author pauses before the venerable Convent of Scattering Clouds at Fanch'eng, midway on her journey. Daughter of an "old China hand," Mrs. Topping grew up on stories of the vast land; then, in 1947 and 1948, she studied at Nanking University. She returned briefly to China in 1966 during the Cultural Revolution.

sincere workers], and 66 activists in the study of Chairman Mao's works."

From Liu's exposition, and from discussions with other people all over China, we gained a basic picture of commune life:

Each is a self-sufficient unit, as are many of the brigades. The families work together, and even the leaders labor in the fields.

Commune members rise early and get lots of fresh air and exercise. They have adequate food and clothing. Each brigade has a health station giving medical care at nominal cost.

Children are pampered and educated in commune schools. Adolescents are completely involved, and have no time for drugs or vandalism. They travel extensively to other parts of China to help out as needed on large projects such as dams, canals, and bridges.

A propaganda team in each brigade is responsible for political education. Brigade members put on shows and concerts. They listen to government broadcasts. They discuss and rediscuss ways of improving their production and their lives.

Revolution Nurtured in Yenan's Caves

From Sian we flew 150 miles north to Yenan, the shrine city of Chinese Communism. The people of Yenan live in cave houses carved into the slopes of dry loessial hills. It was in these caves that the Communist leaders found sanctuary at the end of the Long March. Mao Tse-tung, Chou En-lai, Lin Piao, Chu Teh, and many others arrived exhausted at the head of the Red Army. They lived in Yenan from 1937 to 1947 (page 827). The armies were expanded and directed from Yenan, and there Mao wrote most of the articles that comprise the *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung.*

The people of Yenan have lived in cave houses since time out of mind. One early morning we watched Yenan wake up. The cave dwellers emerged from the snugness of their abodes with buckets of water and willow brooms to sprinkle and sweep, sprinkle and sweep. The swishing noise was punctuated by an occasional rooster's crow or the bleat of a white goat scrambling up the yellow honeycombed hills.

Feeling that we had intruded on a fairy-tale scene, we drove back to the hotel. There we learned that the Premier had requested us to return to Peking and dine with him.

The event took place in the Great Hall of the People. William Attwood, publisher of *Newsday,* his wife Sim, and Robert Keatley

of *The Wall Street Journal* and his wife Anne also attended. The Premier shook hands and escorted us to dinner. Leading us past a lacquer screen, he motioned us to be seated at a round table set with blue-and-white porcelain, place cards, silver knives and forks, ivory chopsticks, and glasses for beer, wine, and the Chinese liquor known as *mao-t'ai*.

When we had found our places, the Premier offered a toast to peace in Viet Nam.

"Can you all drink mao-t'ai?" he asked.

"Oh, yes," replied Top. "When trade develops between China and America, this may be one of your most successful commodities."

"Well, we probably won't be able to supply so much mao-t'ai," laughed Chou.

The Premier recalled that during the Long March, the Red Army passed through a small valley and discovered mao-t'ai. He explained that it is made from sorghum, and that the water from that valley is especially good for making liquor that doesn't go to one's head. "But the percentage of alcohol is high," he warned. "If you don't believe it, try lighting a match to it."

Then began a nine-course dinner superbly prepared and served. The first course included small dishes of cold chicken and paprika, crab meat, spiced pork, bean curd and string beans, ham, mushrooms, and cucumbers. The second course was a cloudy broth with a jellylike mushroom floating in it. This was followed by sea cucumbers (slippery creatures reputed to cure hardening of the arteries), abalone, and spicy meatballs.

Premier Espouses Women's Lib

As we began the next course—chicken slices, shrimp, and peas—Chou said in answer to a question, "You asked why China doesn't want to be a superpower? Countries should not think in those terms."

He went on to explain that China had learned from watching the difficulties experienced by superpowers. "China should not be a superpower. All countries are equal and nations and races are equal, and men and women too. Like tonight. You all have the right to raise and answer questions."

At that moment no one exercised that right, for we were all eyeing the shad arriving on huge platters. It was served with sweet-and-sour sauce and sprinkled with almonds. Miss Tang, one of the Premier's interpreters, explained that the shad came from where the fresh water meets the salt.

She apparently triggered a connection in Chou's mind. "Is it true there is a women's liberation movement?" he asked.

We all assured him there was, and Anne Keatley added, "I'm impressed by the equal pay for equal work you have for women here."

"Yes, but there are still a lot of old customs hindering progress," Chou said. "We must admit the hindrances and support the women—not throw cold water on them. Old customs take effort to overcome. Chairman Mao says, 'Don't believe everything they say if you didn't look into it yourself.' In some places it is just like the old days. First there is a girl born, then a second, third, fourth, until there are nine girls. By that time the wife is 45, and only then can she stop trying for a son. Is this equality?"

"As a father of five girls, I sympathize," laughed Top.

"No sons?" asked Chou, surprised.

"He's tired," Bill Attwood quipped.

"No," answered Chou quickly, "Mrs. Topping is tired. I'm talking on behalf of women."

"There Is Only One China"

As we ate mushrooms and lima beans, our questioning resumed. Chou replied adroitly.

Why does China conduct nuclear tests? "For the purpose of breaking down the nuclear monopoly and blackmail and to try to bring about a complete solution to the disarmament problem."

About Taiwan? "Even Chiang Kai-shek is opposed to the concept of one China, one Taiwan. Although we fought for decades, we agree on that point. There is only one China."

Not knowing that President Nixon was already negotiating to come to China, Top recalled that Mr. Nixon had expressed a desire to see the country. Would the government receive the President? The Premier replied obliquely: "Since he made the suggestion himself, he would know under what circumstances he would come."

As we finished dinner, we thanked Chou, expressed a wish to return his hospitality, and said we hoped for an improvement in relations between China and the United States.

"I'm certain it will come," he answered. "When, depends on you. We have already opened up the Chinese contacts."

We left China two days later, and I thought of those words as our plane headed homeward. As Chou seemed to understand, China and the U. S. have much to learn from each other. If there is wisdom and goodwill on both sides, the learning can begin. □

DOUBLE MAP SUPPLEMENT: THE MANY FACES OF AFRICA (page 737)

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NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

SEE "THE LAST TRIBES OF MINDANAO" ON CBS TV (page 882A)

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