

New Chapter in History of Water Control

— Great struggle by Hopei people to harness Haiho River

OUR great leader Chairman Mao's great call "The Haiho River must be brought under permanent control!" was issued on November 17, 1963.

This great instruction of Chairman Mao's expresses the ardent desire of the people of Hopei Province. Overjoyed, they vied with each other to go to the work sites. After seven years of hard work, they have successfully harnessed five major rivers of the Haiho River system's southern and western waterways. This has basically controlled floods and waterlogging in the Haiho basin and ended the prolonged history of grain-deficiency in this area. They have thus written a brilliant chapter in the history of water control.

1,000-Year-Old Destructive River Turned Into Beneficial One

The Haiho, which empties into the sea, encompasses several major rivers in Hopei Province. All the rivers flowing into the sea through it make up the Haiho River system, the largest in Hopei. This system ranges from the Taihang Mountains in the west to the Pohai Sea in the east and from the Yenshan Mountains in the north to the Yellow River in the south. The area it drains is 265,000 square kilometres, more than 70 per cent of all Hopei.

The rivers of this system brought great damage to the people of Hopei for centuries. The courses of many rivers in the Haiho basin are not very long and their currents are swift. A big rainstorm would suddenly pour a flow of up to 10,000 cubic metres per second into the Haiho. Because its channel close to the sea could only discharge around 1,000 cubic metres per second into the sea, flood waters overflowed the river banks and deluged the vast plains. Historical records show that there were 387 floods and 407 droughts during the 580 years between 1368 and 1948. There were many years when both drought and waterlogging struck the basin. This is how the poor and lower-middle peasants used to describe their plight in the old society: "The Haiho River flows a long way, just mentioning it breaks our hearts. Nine out of ten years its effects are catastrophic and we poor people have to flee from famine. Whenever the government talks about harnessing the Haiho, it means officials pocketing what they

squeeze out of the people. The poor, whose tears and blood drip into the river, await the liberation day and night."

The Hopei people built many water conservancy projects after liberation. However, the Haiho was not controlled for good because of interference by the renegade, hidden traitor and scab Liu Shao-chi's counter-revolutionary revisionist line. Our great leader Chairman Mao in 1963 made his militant call: "The Haiho River must be brought under permanent control!" With profound proletarian feelings for Chairman Mao, the people of Hopei organized big contingents to harness the river. They first tamed several major rivers of the Haiho River system's southern and western waterways and fought seven "battles of annihilation," thereby bringing big changes to the centuries-old destructive river.

Of the Haiho system's southern and western waterways, 19 large river channels, totalling more than 1,600 kilometres long, were excavated or dredged and 14 big dykes with a combined length of more than 1,400 kilometres were built. These projects now have the enormous capacity of discharging over 13,300 cubic metres of flood or rain water per second and have thus ensured the freeing of over 50 million *mu* of farmland from flood and waterlogging.

In Hopei's mountainous areas the people built and enlarged more than 1,400 big, medium and small reservoirs which detain huge amounts of flood water and water unused in winter. Thousands of pumping stations and more than 200,000 pump-operated wells dot the vast plains criss-crossed by ditches. This has enabled the province to have one *mu* of irrigated farmland per capita. The saline and alkaline soil area has been halved and good crops now grow on the low-lying land. Hopei has been self-sufficient in grain for three years. The grain yield in one-third of the counties and municipalities this year reached or went over the 400 *jin* per *mu* target set by the National Programme for Agricultural Development.

Mention of the changes brought about by the taming of the Haiho evokes from the people in the Heilungkang area the repeated cheers: "Long live Chairman Mao! A long, long life to Chairman Mao!" People formerly described the pre-liberation situation

in this area's 46 counties and one municipality as follows: "What we harvest in a drought year is grasshoppers, and in a year when there's waterlogging we're rich in frogs. In a normal year alkaline crust is produced, but what's hard to get are crops."

Some water conservancy projects were built in this area after liberation and things did improve, but the drought and waterlogging threat could not be completely done away with. Even as recently as three years ago, 45 counties and the municipality could not produce enough to be self-sufficient in grain. Thanks to the completion of the Heilungkang area drainage project, one of the projects to harness the Haiho permanently, and its benefits to this area, all 46 counties had enough grain or a surplus this year.

Following completion of the key project in Hsienhsien County, Wei Yung-ken, a poor peasant in his eighties, travelled a dozen *li* on foot with the help of his grandson to get to the site. Viewing the rushing waters which over the centuries had run wild and overflowed the banks, the old man said in a voice trembling with emotion as he watched the New Tzuya River flowing east: "You mighty river! Thanks to Chairman Mao's leadership, we've finally got you under control!" As he spoke, tears of happiness coursed down his cheeks.

What Wei Yung-ken feels is what everyone in the Haiho basin feels. They know that finish has been written to the centuries-long scourges brought by flood and rain, just as they know that pumps now send out jets of streaming water to sprinkle the seedlings. It is no wonder that under such circumstances they celebrate their rich harvests with a song: "The Haiho River runs far, golden rays sparkle under the red sun. The Foolish Old Man — a million there were — battled to tame the river and did away with the endless years of calamity from the Haiho. Red Tachai flowers bloom everywhere, wasteland and hills have been changed into granaries. The happiness we have we owe to Chairman Mao, and we will always follow the Communist Party."

Inexhaustible Power of Mass Movement

The course of harnessing the Haiho is filled with sharp struggles between the two classes, the two roads and the two lines.

Like a clap of spring thunder, Chairman Mao's great call "**The Haiho River must be brought under permanent control!**" shook all Hopei. The 47 million people in the province responded with enthusiasm. "Chairman Mao's words," they said, "express what we poor and lower-middle peasants want to say from the bottom of our hearts! We will do whatever Chairman Mao calls on us to do and must firmly and speedily carry out Chairman Mao's great call!"

It was precisely at that time that Liu Shao-chi, driven by his counter-revolutionary motives, came up with the sinister directive which said it should "take about 20 years" to control Hopei's rivers. His agents in water conservancy work followed this up by saying: "The years before 1970 should be devoted to planning and construction should start after 1970." They even spouted such malicious drivel as: "We have to be prepared for floods in Hopei for another ten years."

Having encountered tremendous suffering from flood and waterlogging, the people of Hopei solidly opposed the counter-revolutionary fallacies of Liu Shao-chi and his agents. Guided by Mao Tsetung Thought, they fought sharp struggles against the counter-revolutionary revisionist line. As the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution went deeper, they took part in revolutionary mass criticism everywhere at the Haiho River construction sites and in the mountain areas and on the plains. The poor and lower-middle peasants, revolutionary cadres and revolutionary engineering and technical personnel specializing in water conservancy angrily denounced Liu Shao-chi and his gang for their crimes in undermining the work of permanently controlling the Haiho.

An all-out mass movement to harness the river started. Over the past seven years the peasant workers have built large numbers of water conservancy projects involving 1,500 million cubic metres of earth work. If this were piled into a dyke one metre high and one metre wide, it would circle the globe 37 times. This fully shows the people's tremendous power to remove mountains and fill in the seas.

Started in September 1966, the key project for the New Tzuya River in Hsienhsien County consists of a regulating sluice-gate, a flood inlet gate and a highway bridge. To finish the project before flood struck, the workers, cadres and peasant workers taking part in construction proposed diverting the water by May Day, 1967 and completing the regulating sluice-gate by July 1, 1967, so as to wind up the whole project ahead of schedule. However, the bourgeois technical "authority" was dogmatic, saying: "In my opinion the project cannot even be completed by September 1." And when the workers offered to continue construction in the winter, he replied: "If you want to go on, you'd better get a complete heating unit!" Putting aside their indignation, the workers held meetings at which they pooled their wisdom and solved the heating problem at the construction site. They used grass sacks and reed mats to cover over the site and set up dozens of stoves made from kerosene drums on different levels of the scaffolding. As a result of the joint efforts of the masses, the regulating sluice-gate was completed according to the schedule set by the workers, cadres and peasant work-

ers. And the entire key project was also successfully finished on time.

More than 40,000 bridges and culverts have been constructed on the Haiho River building sites in the past seven years. Most were built through the combined efforts of the workers, peasant workers and revolutionary technicians, all of whom broke with foreign conventions and adopted and integrated indigenous methods with modern ones. These imposing projects, sparkling with the brilliance of Mao Tsetung Thought and embodying the wisdom of the working people, strengthen the people's conviction of the great truth **"Under the leadership of the Communist Party, as long as there are people, every kind of miracle can be performed."**

Understanding and Changing Nature

Our great leader Chairman Mao teaches us: **"For the purpose of attaining freedom in the world of nature, man must use natural science to understand, conquer and change nature and thus attain freedom from nature."** During the great struggle to harness the Haiho once and for all, the people of Hopei studied and applied Chairman Mao's brilliant philosophical thinking in a living way and learnt to apply materialist dialectics to water control.

How could the Haiho be brought under permanent control? Should the water be controlled in isolation or should all the problems of flood and rain water, drought and alkalization be dealt with in a comprehensive way? Guided by Chairman Mao's philosophical thinking, Hopei's cadres, masses and water conservancy engineers and technicians made large-scale investigations and studies and summed up their practical experience. They repeatedly studied Chairman Mao's teaching to **"ensure that there will always be water for irrigation in times of drought and adequate drainage in times of heavy rain."** They then came to realize that drainage without irrigation cannot defeat drought, and irrigation without drainage will cause waterlogging and alkalization. They gradually worked out a body of practical experience for water control, that is, with an overall view of the entire river basin, to take both the upper and lower reaches as well as the areas along both banks into consideration; to combine building key projects with subsidiary ones, flood prevention with drainage, drainage with irrigation, the transformation of mountains with water control, and the use of surface water with tapping underground water. In the struggle to permanently harness the Haiho, the people of Hopei made full use of this experience.

To ensure that every basic unit carry through the big task of getting the Haiho under permanent control, every area, under an overall unified plan and according to their local conditions, adopted many important

measures to co-ordinate the building of key projects. These measures helped deepen the struggle to permanently taming the Haiho.

In the western mountain areas, great effort went into planting trees and building terraced fields and dams so as to conserve water and soil. Garden farming and the rational use of water and scientific farming were vigorously carried out on the plains. In the eastern low-lying saline and alkaline areas, the people did everything in their power to adopt comprehensive measures, which included building platform fields, draining water and alkaline elements, soil improvement, using good strains, building irrigation facilities and roads, and planting trees. These measures to transform mountains, water and farmland and plant trees were adopted from an overall point of view with a common goal and in accordance with special local conditions. They accelerated the progress of controlling the Haiho permanently.

Haiho Building Sites Train New People

The building sites of the projects to harness the Haiho were battlefields in the fight against nature and big revolutionary crucibles that trained and tempered many dauntless fighters unafraid of hardship or death.

An unusual seaquake took place on October 5, 1968 while peasant workers were battling at the mouth of the Tuliu flood-escape channel to the sea. When tidal waves breached a dyke, a great many of these workers jumped into the rough waters to save the dyke. Knocked down by the big waves, they got back on their feet full of determination. "As long as we're here," they shouted, "the dyke will stand!" and "A human wall will be the sea dyke!" When one such wall was not enough, they formed a second and then a third wall. It took more than two hours of exacting effort and the effects of the seaquake were conquered by the heroic people working to get the Haiho under control for all time.

Taking the Liberation Army as their example, several hundred thousand peasant workers taming the river during the past several years walked hundreds of li to the construction sites. Even when their routes were near the railways, they did not take the train. Passing through villages, they slept on the streets rather than stay the night in villagers' houses. Wherever they stopped, they put up slogans and made propaganda among the masses, helped local commune members harvest autumn crops or sow wheat, and carried water and swept courtyards for dependents of revolutionary martyrs and army men and for those, like old people without family support, who are guaranteed an adequate livelihood by the production teams. They propagated Mao Tsetung Thought wherever they went. "They really keep alive the working style of the old Eighth Route Army!" is the way commune members praised them.