

# PEOPLE'S CHINA

1

JANUARY  
1956





### **Grotewohl in Peking**

Chairman Mao Tse-tung entertains Prime Minister Otto Grotewohl of the German Democratic Republic. The government delegation which he heads arrived in Peking on December 8, 1955

**Millions of Co-operators** The movement for agricultural co-operation is advancing apace throughout China. By mid-November last, 1,240,000 had already been formed, and the number increases daily. These peasants near Peking—over 90 per cent of all peasant households in that area are now in co-op farms—are listening to a reading of Chairman Mao's historic report on the movement



# PEOPLES CHINA

No. 1, 1956

January 1

## CONTENTS

REFLECTIONS ON THE NEW YEAR —Pa Chin . . . . .	4	CULTURAL LIFE . . . . .	41
A YEAR OF KEY IMPORTANCE —Teng To . . . . .	7	IN THE NEWS . . . . .	43
SUGAR REFINERY ON THE GRASS- LANDS (Built under the 5 Year Plan)	11	INTERNATIONAL: WHAT THE PAPERS SAY . . . . .	44
IN LHASA TODAY (TIBETAN JOURNEY—2)—Israel Epstein . . . . .	13	CHRONICLE OF EVENTS . . . . .	45
AMERICAN NEGRO SINGER IN CHINA —Aubrey Pankey . . . . .	18	LETTERS . . . . .	46
AT SANMEN GORGE—Hua Shan . . . . .	20	PICTORIAL PAGES . . . . .	23
WE LIKED THOSE INDIAN FILMS . . . . .	29	Tractors for the Countryside; Scenes in New Peking; Chinese Acrobatics	
CHANG HENG—ASTRONOMER —Chang Yu-che . . . . .	31	FRONT COVER: Young Pioneers in a parade before the Tien An Men (Photo by Tan Pet-chang)	
ACROBATS AND MAGICIANS —Yang Yu . . . . .	38	BACK COVER: The Yellow River at San- men Gorge—where a huge dam and power station are to be built. The pic- ture shows samples of water being taken from mid-stream to ascertain the silt content (Water colour by Chin Wei)	
CARE FOR PENSIONERS AND THE OLD (Answering Your Questions) —Li Wen-teh . . . . .	39		

## From the Editor's Desk

For the Chinese people 1955 was a good year, another stage on the road to socialism. Our industrialization programme made new headway. By the end of 1955 no less than 271 great new factories and enterprises had started up. The value of our industrial output was 62 per cent higher than in 1952. The agricultural co-operation movement spread like wildfire in the countryside—a great swing in the direction of socialism—and profound socialist changes are taking place in private industry and commerce.

And thanks to the efforts of the people of all nations we saw a definite relaxation of international tension during the year.

So 1956, the fourth year of our first Five-Year Plan, is a year of promise. From it we expect even bigger things. But socialism will not come of itself: it will mean a year of hard work.

We know our readers—friends of China all over the world—are eager to know how we are getting on with our work to bring about a better life and peace

between nations. We on the staff of *Peoples China* promise to do our best to give you what you want.

This is our first issue for 1956. You will notice some new features—the result of comments and suggestions you so kindly sent us—for instance, the revival of a chronicle of events and the “Letters” column. “*International: What the Papers Say*” takes the place of “Notes and Views.”

In this issue we have cast our net wide and tried to give something for everyone, for instance, Teng To's “A Year of Key Importance,” “In Lhasa Today,” “At Sanmen Gorge” and “Chang Heng—Astronomer.” “Built under the Five-Year Plan” continues our series of thumb-nail sketches of the latest achievements of the Five-Year Plan, and in “Cultural Life” we do our best to keep you abreast of what the Chinese people are doing in this sphere. Finally, there is an extra page of pictures on page 2 and a selection of cartoons and sketches on the inside back cover.

A very happy New Year to you all!

# Reflections on the New Year

Pa Chin

NEW YEAR was drawing nearer and nearer.

My five-year-old child, Hsiao Tang, after a happy day, had been prevailed on to go to bed, but was still lying awake. He gave me a smile of pleasure. "Daddy," he said, "it's New Year soon, and I'll be going up a class at kindergarten. Isn't that nice?" "Very nice," I said, and then added, "but you'd better be getting to sleep now, hadn't you?" He opened his bright little eyes wide, as though brooding over something. Then he gradually dropped off, murmuring to himself, "I go to sleep, a hundred people go to sleep, and the whole world's going to sleep." A little while after, I heard his light, even breathing.

## Joy Unbounded

I thought about the words he had murmured. Then I walked across to the window, looking out on the city glittering with lights, looking forward to the coming 1956, and feeling my whole being filled with happiness. I sat down at my desk, trying to let my readers know my feelings, as Hsiao Tang had let me know his. Hsiao Tang likes the phrase "the whole world." His little brain hasn't the faintest idea what "the whole world" means. He thinks that a hundred is the biggest figure you can imagine. But one thing is clear: he never thinks simply in terms of himself. When he is happy, he wants all people to be happy too.

And that is exactly what the whole Chinese people want. It is only natural for human beings to want to share their

happiness with others. We want people in all countries, in every country, to lead a happy life. We Chinese usually speak of perfect joy as "joy unbounded." Perfect joy cannot be hemmed in by artificial bounds. On the threshold of 1956, we hope that peace and peaceful work will bring happiness and prosperity to the world, that children the world over can sleep peacefully and that the sunshine can illumine their little minds when they wake; we hope that people in every nation will have the chance of freely applying their strength and wisdom in the way of life they have chosen and exerting their efforts to build a fine future for succeeding generations.

As everybody knows, vast changes have been wrought in China. What many people do not know is that the people of New China, especially the children, now lead a very happy life. Our children do not understand the bitter call of our great writer Lu Hsun in 1918 to "Save the Children!" It was real enough to us then! Nowadays our children are growing up in a completely different world. The whole country has changed.

But I don't want to obliterate the past, obliterate from memory those days of humiliation and suffering. At the gates of some parks in China there used to be notices reading: "Chinese and Dogs Not Admitted." The parks were reserved for the imperialists. If we wanted to hold demonstrations in our own streets, we did so at the risk of our lives. How many generations of our people groaned and pined, worked like beasts of burden and died under the rule

---

Pa Chin is a noted Chinese novelist.

of tyranny! But finally the Chinese people broke the chains that bound them, threw off the burdens on their backs and stood up to their full height!

Those who have not endured so many days of insult and pain can hardly realize what "standing up" really means. Perhaps I should compare the Chinese people to Prometheus chained to his rock in the Caucasus. What could he not do unbound?

Everyone must know from experience how much we love and cherish something won only after years and years of patient search. All those who understand this will understand how the Chinese people feel. They now have got what they sought for for years and years: the chance of being masters of their own fate, of devoting all their strength to the creation of a great, socialist country. Now they are speedily changing the face of China, and they are themselves changing in the process.

#### A Simple Wish

I am a writer, and perhaps I understand better than some the sentiments of my people. People have a habit of pouring out their deepest feelings to writers, treating them as friends and confidants. I get letters from all over China. I find they all have the same simple wish: to do a useful job for their country and people. Our six hundred million people are a family of many nationalities, and every one of them wants to give of his best. When the state asks people to do something, they respond as eagerly as if they had been invited to a feast.

Some six months ago I had a letter from 182 girls who had finished their training as kindergarten teachers at Nantung Women Teachers' Training College. In it they said: "We are keen to lay our very own little bit of the foundations on which a socialist China will rise—eager to plunge into life, a life of honest work and struggle, a life of laughter and happiness. . . . We are determined to devote our whole lives to teaching kiddies in kindergarten. We don't mind where our country sends us. We will bravely and cheerfully accept our duty."

Only two or three weeks afterwards I had another letter from six hundred graduates from Tsinghua University, Peking. "We've been studying electrical, radio and civil engineering, water conservancy and power engineering," they said. "Now we are being sent to different jobs in industry. This is the time when our first Five-Year Plan is in full swing, so we are properly excited. . . . We are going to take the rough with the smooth; we're going to storm the fortresses of science and become builders of our new life."

Not only young people, but people of all ages, in factories, on building sites and in the villages, send letters to writers, and voice much the same sentiments.

Of course, anybody can write like this; but the important thing is that they live up to their faith!

#### Love for Their Country

When our young people set out to create a new life, they do not choose a road strewn with roses. They start for desolate mountains, snow-bound wastes, deserts, plateaux, forests, rivers and moors. They go to these places, first because such places need them badly, and secondly because this is one of the ways to express their deep love for their country—to do anything and everything for it.

In the past, Chinese women lived in perpetual bondage. Now, without a trace of reluctance, they leave the cities where they might live comfortably. Groups of them go off to work in Tibet. They find themselves having to scale great snow-covered mountains. They travel for days on end without seeing a human habitation, trudging along paths frozen hard as iron, in conditions that make it practically impossible to light a fire or cook themselves a meal. But one such group, writing home after arrival at their destination, said: "We're very happy, for now we feel we can do a useful job and exert greater strength. When we ran into difficulties en route we were a bit low-spirited. Then we thought how your warm send-off had encouraged us, and went on without complaining."

I'd like to give another example, about an old fellow, foreman of a shift at a firebrick works in the north-east. They had an urgent order to meet and wanted to speed up output, and the problem was how to shorten the time needed for cooling the kiln and turn out the bricks ten days ahead of schedule. He wondered whether the habitual long, slow cooling was really necessary. Suppose they exposed the firebrick to cold air, would it crack? There was only one way of finding out, and that was to get right inside the kiln and see.

He drenched his overalls with water till it squelched out of his trousers at every step, pulled a dripping hat down on his forehead, opened up the kiln and jumped in. The fiery blast nearly knocked him backwards. He felt as if he were being stabbed by thousands of hot needles. The air inside was chock-full of swirling sand and dry dusty clay, parching his throat, blocking his nostrils and making it difficult to breathe. He covered his face with his hands, peered through his fingers, and observed everything round him with keen eyes.... The cold draught came pouring in, and the fiery red roof gradually turned grey. As the air came in contact with the glowing bricks, they sizzled ominously, with little beads of magnesium dancing like water in boiling oil. But the bricks themselves remained unchanged. One minute, two minutes.... There was a dreadful smell of burning: his overalls had caught. Hastily he grabbed a brick nearest the opening and clambered out into the open. Yes, the brick was as sound as a bell, with never a crack in it. And the first batch of firebricks really was turned out ten days ahead of time.

Of course, shortening the time for cooling a kiln isn't so important a thing, but the heroism of this worker is noteworthy. In our country you hear of such persons every day, and similar deeds are performed everywhere. Our foreign friends, even those who take the greatest interest in New China, think such deeds are something astounding, almost incomprehensible. But they happen every day of our lives.

People in China are familiar with these people of heroic stature and love them, set them up as shining examples. Their achievements are not so much due to their wisdom or special talents as to their ardent love for their own country, and for those who come after them, and to their conscious, active desire to build a socialist society.

### A Happy 1956

As we enter upon 1956—the fourth year of our Five-Year Plan—we know for certain that before us is a year in which we shall be living still better. All our people, including the lassies who went to Tibet and that old worker at the kiln, are working conscientiously and enthusiastically for a single aim, devoting their all to their beloved country and future generations. So you can imagine with what eagerness and excitement we welcome in the new year.

In the coming year, we shall accomplish many new things. Every achievement of the Chinese people can, I think, be regarded as a victory for the people all over the world. For such exploits show how mankind can change the face of nature; the recital of them will sound a paean in their ears. Every Chinese who has played his part in this noble cause can well feel a sense of pride.

Isn't that something a man can be happy about?

I step across to Hsiao Tang's bedside. He has been sleeping soundly all this time. No one can witness a smile on the face of a child without feeling a greater faith in the future. In my mind's eye I see what our next generation will be like: they will not only complete the work we have started but not finished, but also see a host of beautiful things we can as yet hardly imagine. I gaze at the boy: suddenly he gives a little wave of his hand and chuckles. But his eyes are still closed. I can't tell what joyous things he is dreaming. But I know what all of us dream of: of a 1956 which shall bring greater happiness, greater prosperity to China and the world.

# A Year of Key Importance

Teng To

**W**E who are working hard to build a happy socialist life enter 1956 with great hopes. It is the fourth year of China's first Five-Year Plan. It will decide whether the targets of the whole Plan are reached or surpassed. To us, therefore, this year is pivotal.

As a result of the past three years of unremitting exertion under the Plan, the Chinese people can show many achievements. These are still only a beginning, but far from insignificant. Already China's national economy presents a new picture—a picture of continuous, rapid progress.

There is much evidence that the present Plan will be substantially overfulfilled. This is because we enjoy three decisive advantages. First, our state is led by the tried and seasoned Chinese Communist Party. Secondly, our state is a people's democracy supported by 600 million people. Thirdly, we receive genuine, selfless and all-sided help from a number of brother countries headed by the Soviet Union. Hence the outstanding characteristics of construction under our Five-Year Plan: tremendous speed, huge scale and high quality.

## Speed, Magnitude, Quality

Why do we say the speed is tremendous? During the present Plan period, China's industrial output will almost double in value. The average annual rate of growth in our modern industry is 15.3 per cent. That is very fast indeed.

---

The author is Editor-in-Chief of the Peking People's Daily.

The hugeness of the scale is also confirmed by figures. Investments under the Five-Year Plan total 76,640 million yuan (equivalent to more than 700 million taels\* of gold). The Plan covers the building of 694 large industrial enterprises and 2,000 requiring smaller outlays. This is building on a very big scale.

High quality in our socialist industries is guaranteed by the support and co-operation of the Soviet Union and People's Democracies; particularly important is the immense, systematic and all-round aid we get from the Soviet Union, with its excellent technical standards. That is why we can talk of high quality.

Looking back over our construction in the Plan's first three years, we see that its speed and scale have indeed been great, and its quality high.

## Three Years' Accomplishments

In many places in China, both in regions where there was industry previously and in those where there was none, one now sees forests of factory chimneys, rows of water towers and immense structures of concrete and steel. Up to the end of 1955, no less than 271 new industrial plants of considerable size had begun operating. Many were turning out products old China did not dream of making.

Modern industry is rapidly changing the main aspects of our economy. While there is no need to pause on plants built two or three years ago, like the big heavy

---

\* 1 tael = 1.1023 ounces.

rolling mill and seamless steel tubing mill at Anshan, we will note some of the more recent ones.

On January 18, 1955, the Harbin Measuring Instrument and Cutting Tools Works, the first of its kind in China, went into full operation, turning out more than 100 products we never made in the past. The Shenyang Pneumatic Tool Factory, which started production on January 21, 1955, has become a regular supplier of many types of such tools to 150 factories and mines in the past twelve months. These are instances of how we are beginning to stand on our own feet in the matter of industrial equipment.

On August 26, 1955, China's first high-temperature, high-tension power and heat station began its work. On September 20, the first products of the new, fully mechanized Tungshan shaft of the Hokang coal-mine in north-east China began coming to the surface. It is a joyful sight to see the glistening jet-black coal rising swiftly and incessantly, by belt-conveyor, from the bottom of the 492-foot shaft.

In the sphere of light industry, new plants that began work in 1955 include the big sugar refineries at Paotow and Kiamusze, and cotton mills in Peking and Chengchow.

As fresh units go into production and old ones make fuller use of their potential, the value of the nation's industrial output rises uninterruptedly. By 1955 it was already 62 per cent higher than in 1952, the last pre-Plan year—and modern industry accounted for 33 per cent of China's total industrial and agricultural output. In 1955, the output of important industrial goods was much higher than in 1952. Production of iron and steel was almost double, and about 50 per cent more coal was being dug.

People were heartened by the manufacture of some important new products. In May last year, our engineering workers turned out their first steam turbine and 40-ton steam boiler. Together with a 6,000-

kilowatt generator made a short time earlier, this constituted the first complete set of power-station equipment ever produced in China. Foreshadowing the mechanization of our agriculture, we have succeeded in manufacturing the first Chinese combine-harvesters, capable of handling 54 acres a day, as well as 4-row mechanical sowers for cotton.

In transport, some 1,550 miles of new railways were laid and 4,290 miles of highways were opened to traffic in the three years 1953-55. Throughout the country freight carried increased in the same period by 70 per cent.

The Five-Year Plan provides for an increase in agricultural output. One important measure in this regard is the bringing of waste land under cultivation. In the past three years, 3,788,000 acres of waste land have been reclaimed. Yields on existing farmland have gone up as a result of improved methods—including deep ploughing and more intensive cultivation. Despite the occurrence of natural calamities, crops went up year by year. In 1955, China's grain output was 9 per cent more than in 1952, while industrial crops were 10 per cent greater (in value).

### Higher Earnings

Expansion of all branches of the national economy led to higher earnings. Average wages in 1955 were 20.5 per cent higher than in 1952. Allocations for labour insurance and welfare were more than doubled, going up by 113 per cent.

Cultural and educational facilities were extended to meet the new needs of the people. The increase in facilities for higher education, in terms of the number of instructors and of building-space, was very striking. During the three years, growth was greater than in all the fifty years (1898-1948) of existence of colleges and universities in pre-liberation China. Student enrolment in higher educational institutions in 1955 was nearly double that of the record year before libera-

tion, and that in trade training schools 50 per cent more.

### Looking Forward

But we are far from satisfied with what has been done. Investments in capital construction, in these three years, were only just above half the total planned for the five-year period. This means that almost half the investment must be made in the two remaining years. Since the pace of construction is being accelerated, and certain economies have been made, the actual sums to be invested will certainly exceed the planned figure.

In 1956, it is anticipated, the building of 500 big factories and mines, previously commenced or newly begun, will be under way. Some will be the biggest and most technically complicated in this Plan's schedule. In this sense, too, the year 1956 is the decisive one for the present Plan.

To complete most of the planned big industrial enterprises and put them into operation by 1957 we have to work still harder. When this has been done, industrial output should be 22 per cent above that of 1955. In fact, some such projects are expected to start work ahead of the set dates. The Shihtzetan hydro-electric power station on the Lungchi River in Szechuan Province, which was not supposed to be built till 1958, may finish and begin to supply power this year. The No. 1 Motor-car Works and the No. 1 Tractor Plant may also be completed ahead of schedule. In all probability the targets for new railways and other forms of transport planned for the next two years will prove to have been set too low.

### Pivot Year for Agriculture

We are keenly aware that only by way of socialist industrialization can our country grow constantly richer and stronger, that only in that way can life become better and happier. That is why we must not only push our socialist industrialization forward vigorously, with the expansion of heavy industry at its centre, but simultaneously speed the socialist transformation of agriculture, handicraft pro-

duction and capitalist industry and commerce. These two processes are inseparable. The second is necessary to keep in step with socialist industry, and even to spur industrialization.

In June 1955, there were about 650,000 agricultural producers' co-operatives in China. Only six months later, on the threshold of 1956, the number had jumped to nearly 1,800,000. Except for some sparsely-peopled border regions, about 50 per cent of the rural population has joined such co-operatives. The rapidity of the increase is a result of Chairman Mao Tse-tung's report *The Question of Agricultural Co-operation*\* delivered last July, and of the decisions of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party adopted in consequence.† Both stirred the socialist enthusiasm of our peasant masses and gave an added impetus to the co-operative movement.

The rapid development of co-operation in agriculture shows how well the policies, principles, methods and comprehensive planning set out in Chairman Mao's report fit the situation in rural China since the land reform. Not only are the poor peasants enthusiastic about co-operation. The lower strata of middle peasants, both those who have long been in this position and those who moved up from the poor peasantry after the land reform, are also enthusiastic. These are the main forces on which the Chinese working class can rely in promoting the socialist revolutionary movement in the countryside. With regard to the upper strata of middle peasants, new and old, the policy is actively to unite with them and to draw them into a firm alliance.

The high tide of this colossal movement of the 500 million peasants of China will continue to flow rapidly. In about another year, Chinese agriculture may in the main reach the stage of semi-socialist co-operation. Afterwards, gradually, it

---

\*For full text of the report see *People's China*, No. 21, 1955.

†See supplement to *People's China*, No. 23, 1955.

will change to fully socialist forms. So the year 1956 is pivotal for agriculture too.

The rapid growth of the agricultural co-operation movement in 1956 is bound to bring about an increase in agricultural production, the biggest ever known to us. In the light of the rich harvest in 1955, we can expect an even greater harvest this year, if no serious natural calamities occur. This will make our domestic trade more brisk, our foreign trade grow on a more extensive scale and the whole national economy even more prosperous.

### Handicrafts and Private Enterprises

To keep pace with the upsurge in agricultural co-operation, handicrafts are moving with big strides along the co-operative road. By the end of 1955, about a quarter of the handicraftsmen, representing some one-fifth of all handicraft output, had joined their own producers' co-ops, handicraftsmen's supply and marketing co-ops or producers' teams. By the end of 1957, we expect, the proportion will be half or better.

To keep pace with socialist construction, we are also advancing the socialist transformation of private industry and commerce. State capitalism, in its various forms, moved forward considerably in the past few years. Statistics for Shanghai, Tientsin and ten other cities for the first half of 1955 show that 85.3 per cent of the output of private industry (by value) was to fulfil state contracts and orders or was purchased and distributed by the state. Other statistics, covering 32 cities, show that 42 per cent of private retail trade had come within the sphere of state capitalism by the second quarter of 1955.

In November 1955, Chairman Mao Tse-tung invited members of the Executive Committee of the All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce for an exchange of views. This served further to speed the socialist transformation of private enterprise, which has now entered a

new stage. We are now passing to the method of transforming whole trades, one after the other, under a comprehensive plan and with unified control of production. There are already whole trades under joint state-private ownership and management. There are eight of these among Shanghai's light industries: cotton mills, wool textiles, linen textiles, the manufacture of paper, cigarettes and enamel-ware, flour-milling and rice-hulling. In many other branches, small enterprises which were technically backward and scattered have been merged with the big ones to co-ordinate and facilitate production.

In commerce, private concerns dealing in cotton piece-goods, and department stores and tea shops in Peking, have either become state-private or will soon do so *en bloc*. This ensures a better future for industry and commerce that benefits the national welfare and the livelihood of the people. In carrying out the change, care is taken to see that capitalists who have actually worked in these enterprises are properly provided for. They are given certain positions in the new joint concerns, and continue to receive a share of the profits, or a fixed interest at stated times.

Altogether, about 3,400,000 people in China are private owners or managers in industry or trade, or their dependants. They have gradually come to understand the need for over-all arrangements, and economic reorganization and transformation of entire trades. They have also seen the merits of this process, and are taking active steps to accept socialist change.

All six hundred million Chinese people are working hard for greater achievements in 1956, a year of key importance for all of us. To build up their country undisturbed, they hope earnestly for an international environment that will always be peaceful. They are putting all their energies into peaceful construction for the great rewards which they are confident it will bring.



## *Built under the 5 Year Plan*

### **Sugar Refinery on the Grasslands**

**W**HEN "Grasslands" castor sugar recently came on the market in the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region and north China, it was an immediate success. Snow-white, finely granulated and very sweet, customers quickly spotted its superior quality. "Grasslands" is the trade mark of the new state-owned Paotow sugar refinery which the German Democratic Republic helped us build last autumn.

Paotow is best known today as the site of the great new iron and steel works under construction. But it is surrounded by the rich grasslands of the western part of the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region where soil and climate are excellent for sugar-beet. There is plenty of sunshine, not too much rain and the beets are rich in juice with a high sugar content. Construction of the big new beet sugar factory began in the spring of 1954 and neighbour-

ing farms immediately began making whatever changes were necessary in production plans.

Paotow sugar refinery is highly mechanized and semi-automatic. The sugar-beets are fed into the plant by a conveyor which carries them to be washed and cleared of weeds and stones. Slicing, extraction of the juice and so forth, is done in a series of automatic processes, at the end of which the sugar is screened, weighed, packed and stored, all automatically. The plant can handle 1,000 tons of beet a day and produce 26,000 tons of sugar a year.

The German Democratic Republic supplied the equipment for it. Experts came all the way from the Elbe to this city on the grasslands of the Yellow River to help design and build it. Their rich ex-

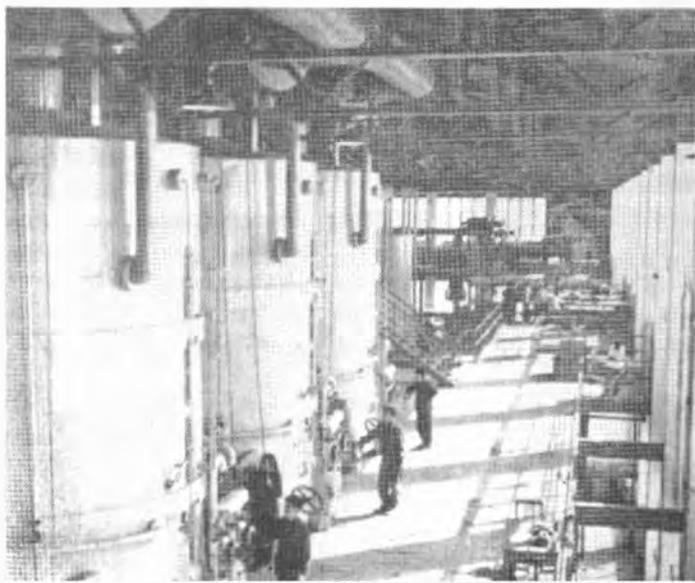


**A specialist from the German Democratic Republic showing two eager pupils how to set automatic equipment in Paotow refinery**

perience proved invaluable. They helped survey the site and lay foundations. They were on hand to help install and test the machinery, and found time to give lectures and assist individual technicians and workers on the job. At their suggestion a special shop was added to dry the used beet pulp and turn it into livestock feed. This will greatly assist the further development of animal husbandry in Inner Mongolia.

Many enterprises all over China helped build this plant. Factories and institutes in Harbin and Shenyang in the north-east, Tsinan in Shantung, Shihchingshan in Peking and as far south as Kwangtung between them trained over 300 skilled workers for it. Anshan sent seamless tubes; Tientsin sent other steel products; timber came from Kiangsi; fire-bricks from Tangshan and cement from Liuliho. Building

**Beet syrup is crystallized into sugar in these big vacuum pans at the Paotow refinery**



workers came from Peking and railway workers from Taiyuan to help lay its tracks and sidings. A team of some 400 fitters from sub-tropical Kwangtung braved the cold of this windy northern grassland to make a splendid job of installing the machines.

The Paotow beet sugar factory has already brought great changes to the economic life of the region. The babies of Inner Mongolian herdsmen now drink their milk with locally produced sugar, and their fathers have a high opinion of the beet pulp as food for their stock. Peasants along the Peking-Paotow Railway are growing profitable beet crops for the first time—18,100 acres of them. In 1955 they got an average yield of 9 tons an acre, and in some places top yields of 30 tons an acre. They get a good price from the state for their crop, so they are making a better income than when this land was being used for grain.

Before liberation the sugar refinery at Acheng in the north-east was the only one in China manufacturing castor sugar from sugar-beet—a mere 7,000 tons a year. Sugar-beet had a very limited market then and growers nicknamed their beets “knots of sorrow.” Now they have a new name for them: “golden knots.” Today there is a growing market for beets based on a planned economy.

The Paotow refinery is one of eighteen big sugar factories and refineries to be built during the first Five-Year Plan. In the fourth quarter of 1955 alone, eight others were completed and started up at almost the same time as the one at Paotow. Two of them, in Kirin and Heilungkiang in the north-east, are equipped with the latest type of Polish automatic machines. They are producing alcohol and livestock feed as by-products. These nine new plants will provide China with an extra one to two hundred thousand tons of sugar a year. In the old days, only the privileged few used sugar. Nowadays, with the steady rise in standards of living, it is taking its proper place as a daily necessity in the diet of the people.

## In Lhasa Today



LHASA greets the visitor with scenes of fairy-tale beauty. Its natural environment is magnificent: a mountain-locked green river valley studded with the wooded parks the Tibetans love. Overlooking it from an eminence, and visible from any point, is the superb Potala Palace—the greatest monument of Tibet's traditional architecture and one of the world's most impressive buildings. In the heart of the city is the massive Jokang Temple dating back to the seventh century, a sacred goal for Buddhist pilgrims who come immense distances, a treasury packed with works of art testifying to the Tibetan people's great talent. Around this temple runs the main market street, the Ling Kor. The varied costumes and ornaments of the towns-folk are bright with colour. This is doubly vivid in the crystal-clear, sun-drenched highland light.

The first article of this series, "On the Sikang-Tibet Highway," appeared in *People's China*, No. 23, 1955.

Walking through the city, one might be in the midst of an animated tapestry of the Middle Ages. Leather craftsmen in their open-fronted shops stitch away at ornate boots and harness. Silversmiths beat out utensils and jewellery. Peasants with long queues, their wives wearing gaily striped aprons, come in with loads of produce. Shaggy-haired herdsmen, dressed in a single sheepskin garment, drive yaks loaded with rawhide bags full of butter. Caravan merchants wearing wide-brimmed felt hats ride by, armed with swords or antique firearms, beside their long lines of pack beasts. Boatmen walk through the streets carrying their strange craft of yak-hide on a willow frame, which weighs only 50 pounds but can transport a ton. Monks of the different sects of Lamaist Buddhism can be told apart by their robes. Lay nobles wear the vivid dress and headgear allotted long ago to each rank, and each is followed by the prescribed number of red-hatted retainers. Dwellings vary too—from palaces and mansions to mud huts and

tents. Modern municipal sanitation and services are still in their infancy.

But Lhasa is no longer merely a "living historical museum," as it was long called. Even on the surface, one quickly notices new things that have appeared since the liberation, particularly since the opening of the Sikang-Tibet and Chinghai-Tibet Highways. A couple of years ago, there was hardly a wheel used for transport in the whole city—even on a cart or barrow. Now the streets are often blocked by traffic jams of big trucks loaded with supplies. Tibetan cyclists and motor-cyclists mix with the horsemen. Some peasants bring in their produce on stout rubber-tired carts instead of on pack-donkeys or on their own backs.

Lhasans of all walks of life refer to having visited other parts of China, or to sons, daughters, brothers or sisters studying there. People jostle each other in the busy state trading company where tea, cloth and other goods are to be bought at reasonable prices. In the post-office, many use the inexpensive radio-telephone which enables them to converse with friends or relatives in Peking. And over all flies the five-star flag of the People's Republic of China.

### Common Destiny

Tibet is a part of China, and has been for many centuries. Everywhere in Lhasa one meets evidence of the common destiny and ancient close connection of its people with the other Chinese nationalities.

In the Jokang Temple and the Potala Palace we saw ancient sculptures and paintings of the Princess Wen Cheng, whom the Tibetans named Gyasa. Coming from the imperial family of China under the Tang dynasty, she married King Songtsan Gambo, unifier of the hitherto scattered Tibetan tribes, in the year 641. This was not merely a dynastic match. Tibetan children ever since have learned how the princess's retinue brought new agricultural methods, flour-milling, house-building and

other crafts and arts. Tibetans still use Han words for carpenters, masons and many of their tools, for some vegetables, and such every-day implements as scissors.

In front of the same temple stands an ancient stone engraved with the terms of the "Uncle-Nephew Alliance" concluded in the year 821. The uncle was the Tang emperor and the nephew the Tibetan king. The ties of alliance, cemented by growing trade, led later to unification within one state. In the thirteenth century, Tibet was made a special administrative region of the Chinese empire.

Ever after, because it was to the advantage of both peoples, Tibet remained a region of China. Carefully preserved monuments in front of the Potala describe how, in 1720 and 1791, large numbers of Han soldiers came from the interior provinces to help the Tibetans to beat off invaders. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the imperialists tried to establish direct "diplomatic" relations with Tibet, in order to subordinate it. The Tibetans took a patriotic stand. They replied that all contacts must be through Peking, and set up forts on the border.

Gradually, however, the decaying Ching (Manchu) dynasty proved unwilling and unable to do its duty in national defence. The Manchu government gave the Tibetans no help when the imperialists invaded Tibet in 1904.

Separation and enslavement of Tibet were part of the century-old imperialist effort to partition and enslave China. The two collapsed together with the success of the Chinese people's revolution.

### Seeing the Dalai Lama

Now the Tibetans know that they are respected and equal citizens of a strong, independent country. Patriotism for the whole multi-national motherland has become a great force for cohesion and progress. We felt this very strongly in our interview with the Dalai Lama, leader of

the Tibetan local government and one of the two heads of the Lamaist faith.

"Many things that we could not make before, we can now manufacture for ourselves," he told us with obvious pride, in his carpeted, tapestried audience chamber. He was not speaking of local affairs, but of his recent personal observation of the big new state industries in interior China. "I have come to the firm conviction that the brilliant future for the people of the whole of China is also the prospect for the Tibetan people," he added, "and that we have no other way than the way of our entire country."

The Dalai Lama then said that "within the Tibetan people itself, all the old hatred and discords have been replaced by mutual trust and close unity." This, he explained, had been achieved by amicable consultation, initiated and led by the central authorities. He looked very pleased as he spoke of the solidarity which now exists between him and the Panchen Ngoerhtehni, the other high ecclesiastical dignitary of Lamaism, in place of the estrangement long fostered by the "divide and rule" policy of the imperialists and Kuomintang.

Speaking as a religious leader, the Dalai Lama said the repair of temples and monasteries he had seen all over China showed how freedom of religion was being respected and protected. He asked us newspapermen to make public his hope that Buddhists and the devout of other faiths everywhere would work for world peace.

We had already had many proofs of the abhorrence all Tibetans feel of the very idea of mass slaughter in war, and in particular of imperialist efforts to make their region a base or battlefield against the other peoples of China. The region, with its widely scattered population of only a million, responded actively to the most recent appeal of the World Peace Council for the prohibition of nuclear weapons. Over 240,000 signatures were collected—among peasants

and herdsmen, merchants, nobles and clergy. The new women's and youth organizations formed in Tibet after the liberation took a leading part in the campaign.

### An Important Step Forward

Not long after we were received by the Dalai Lama, we attended a meeting that helped lay the groundwork for the establishment of the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region, which will also include the huge Chamdo area to the east. The delegates, who had gathered from various places, were conscious that their task was historic. The Preparatory Committee will assume certain administrative powers even before the final structure of Tibet's autonomy is set up. Its director is to be the Dalai Lama, its first deputy director the Panchen Ngoerhtehni.

On an all-China scale, the Dalai Lama is Vice-Chairman, and the Panchen Ngoerhtehni a member of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, the nation's supreme organ of power. The Panchen Ngoerhtehni is Vice-Chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, while the Dalai Lama is a committee member. All these facts demonstrate, to the Tibetans, the reality of the guarantees contained in China's Constitution:

The People's Republic of China is a single multi-national state.

All the nationalities are equal . . . .

An archery contest on the Potala Palace square during the 1955 National Day celebrations



January 1, 1956

All the nationalities have freedom . . . to preserve or reform their own customs or ways.

National autonomous areas are inalienable parts of the People's Republic of China. (Art. 3)

The form of each organ of self-government may be determined in accordance with the wishes of the majority of the people of the nationality or nationalities enjoying regional autonomy in a given area. (Art. 67)

### National Day in Lhasa

On October 1, 1955 we took part in the National Day celebration in the Potala square which has witnessed so many important events of Tibet's history. On a huge red dais got up in the Tibetan style were the Kalons (high officials of the local government) in yellow silk, other clerical and lay notables from all parts of the region, and leading Han personnel working in Tibet. On either side were stands with specially invited guests, including consular representatives of two friendly neighbouring countries, India and Nepal. Units of the People's Liberation Army and of Tibetan local troops were drawn up in front. The bands of both, the Tibetan musicians wearing leopard skins over their uniforms, played the national anthem of China.

The entire great square was filled with men, women and children of Lhasa in their gayest attire. As is usual on festivals, many of the people had set up finely embroidered picnic tents, outside which their colourfully caparisoned horses were tethered. Flanking the assemblage were immense scarlet streamers inscribed in the Han and Tibetan languages "Long Live the People's Republic of China," "Long Live the Unity of the Nationalities," "Produce More and Economize More to Carry Out the Five-Year Plan," "Demand That U.S. Forces Leave Taiwan."

Many speeches were made, among them one by Ngabou Ngawang Jigme, a Kalon of the Tibetan local government and an important figure in the preparations for autonomy. Briefly, he spoke of the changes that have taken place since the liberation.

He recalled how Tibet had rejoined the motherland, and the reconciliation of previously contending Tibetan factions. He mentioned the opening of the two great highways, the discovery of hitherto unsuspected mineral and agricultural resources, the new services for the people, and the beginnings of economic, social and cultural advance. Even at that moment, he said, the new roads from Lhasa to Shigatse, and from Shigatse to Gyantse, were nearing completion.\* Blueprints were being made for Lhasa's first factories, for dams along various troublesome rivers, and for a great expansion of electric power facilities—as decided on during the recent visit of the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Ngerhtehni to Peking. These things, he pointed out, had been brought to Tibet thanks to the whole country's planned economic advance to socialism, and were part of that plan.

After the speeches there was a tournament of Tibetan archery, weight-lifting and other sports. Then followed whirling, joyful dances and music, and scenes from old Tibetan operas. And on the second day of the festivities a series of football and basketball games was played (the Tibetan youth drew with the P.L.A. in the main football match). An Exhibition of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Culture and Health opened to become the chief centre of attraction in the city.

### Science for More Wealth

We who were there will never forget the vast and eager crowds which surrounded the combine-harvester being demonstrated in the square before the Potala and flocked through the many halls of the exhibition. Nothing could show more clearly how precious to the Tibetan people is their new belief in the certainty of progress in their own land, in the application of science to the region's resources.

A few short years ago, the objects on display would have been mere curiosities,

---

\*Both these roads were opened to traffic on October 20, 1955.

almost from another planet. Now things are different. The Tibetans can connect them with their own experience, and see in them their own future.

Just outside the city, I talked to two peasants—Samo Guden and Samo Gyatso. They have begun to use seeds and methods introduced by the Lhasa Experimental Farm, operated and financed by the state on a formerly uncultivated tract given by the Dalai Lama. Samo Guden, who is fairly well-to-do, has succeeded in raising very high yields of a wheat strain brought from north-west China. Samo Gyatso, a poverty-stricken grower of turnips and flowers, received both technical aid from the farm and an interest-free loan from the People's Bank. This year he got fine crops of tomatoes and gourds, never before known in Tibet, which he sells on the Lhasa market.

Both among their immediate neighbours and in meetings regularly called by the Experimental Farm and its affiliates, such men are enthusiastic propagandists of the new ways. In Samo Guden's village, eleven other households have followed his example. Though still working with the traditional tools, they can already discuss new farm machinery, and they have seen it in action.

Everyone in Lhasa is ready to talk at length about the possibilities of increased production which the Experimental Farm has shown. On the sun-drenched Tibetan earth, enriched by the grass that has been growing on it for centuries, the opportunities are indeed immense. Hu Ko-chun, assistant director of the farm, showed us around its flourishing plots and gave us figures. In wheat it has obtained 48 cwt. per acre. In oats, its yield reached 42 cwt. per acre, in rye 58.8 cwt. Among new crops, sugar-beets and an inland strain of potatoes have been grown at a rate of 480 cwt. per acre. On our visit, we lunched on huge and delicious tomatoes more than one and a half pounds in weight, from a 600 cwt. an acre crop.

The farm is also doing experimental irrigation and windbreak-planting. Both



Tibetan students at a Class for Social Education in Lhasa

Tibetans and outsiders long believed their soil to be poor, but who can say so now?

### Health and Education

The tremendous work of the Lhasa People's Hospital has been described in many places: the faces of Tibetans light up at its very mention. It was interesting to meet there, working in the out-patient department, Sonam Dingje and Renchin Pintso, young lama graduates of the ancient teaching hospital of Tibetan medicine, the Mendze Kang. After six years of study there, they went on to special courses at the People's Hospital in surgery, eye and other diseases. Now they treat the sick in both hospitals. They are the first Tibetans to practise modern medicine, but the plans are for many others to follow in their footsteps in the near future.

The Lhasa Primary School, with over a thousand pupils, carries on the first modern elementary education Lhasa's children have ever had. At the Class for Social Education, young men and women are getting a scientific view of the world and society. From the city, a constant flow of students goes to the Institutes for Nationalities at Chengtu, Peking and elsewhere, where there are facilities for more advanced training.

Such is Lhasa today. The framework is old, but everywhere the new is sprouting—not least in the minds of men and women who will build the future.

# *American Negro Singer*

## *in China*

**Aubrey Pankey**

WHEN I first received the invitation to come to China for a concert tour I was naturally overwhelmed with joy, especially when I learned that I would be the first American singer to come since liberation. There has always been a feeling of deep friendship between the American and the Chinese people and a close kinship between my own people—the Negro people—and the Chinese people. After only three weeks in China I am convinced that if more Americans could come to China, this friendship could be greatly strengthened.

China, with its ancient culture and very old civilization, has always had a great allure for many Westerners. But the emergence of the Chinese People's Republic through the struggle of the people over so many hard years of oppression, occupation and exploitation, has thrilled with admiration all peace-loving peoples of the world. As a member of an oppressed minority in my own country I have a special admiration for what has been won in China for all its peoples. I wish all Americans could see the Central Institute for Nationalities which I visited and see

---

Aubrey Pankey, a noted American baritone, toured other Chinese cities after performing in Peking in late November.

what respect and love for each other's customs are being developed there.

### **Friendship for American People**

One of the concrete examples of China's friendship for America was its recent commemoration of America's great people's poet, Walt Whitman, together with Cervantes, to which I had the honour to be invited. It was the first time I had ever been to a meeting honouring Walt Whitman (not even in my own country) and I had to come all the way to China for it!

If Chinese audiences enjoy my songs as much as I have enjoyed the Peking Opera, I shall be very happy. This is the first time that I have heard Chinese music, and I understand from my Chinese friends that few people here have ever heard Negro spirituals before. So we both start out with something in common—we can learn from each other. From all indications so far, my Peking audiences have been most enthusiastic. Three concerts were first planned in Peking, but, in response to the demand, I was asked to give two more. In addition, I gave two other concerts, one for the Institute for Nationalities and the other for the students of eight universities and colleges combined, making a total of seven concerts in one week.

I have also been greatly impressed with the efficiency and attention to every detail in the organization of my concerts under the auspices of the Chinese People's Association for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries.

I have found an unusually warm and spontaneous response from my Peking audiences. I was not surprised that my audiences appreciated and understood the Negro spirituals, and for several reasons. Firstly, despite the fact that many Chinese had never heard them before, the Negro spiritual is built on the same musical scale (pentatonic) as a considerable part of the Chinese folk

music; secondly, the Chinese people can easily identify their own past sorrows and struggles for freedom with that expressed in the Negro spirituals, that is, the Negro people's struggle against slavery; and thirdly, the Negro spirituals have a universal appeal.

Chinese music is not as difficult to the European ear as one might suppose. It contains a melodic strain that one can easily follow. Its construction is consistent and straightforward. Of course, the European is accustomed to hearing a greater number of harmonic combinations of chords than those confined in the five and seven tone scales. And also he is accustomed to listening to music played on sturdier instruments than those of the Chinese folk orchestra. But the more one hears Chinese music the greater one's appreciation can be. For example, one night, sitting in the Peking Opera listening to the singing and trying to identify the melodic theme of the orches-



Aubrey Pankey and Marie Knotková (first right) acknowledge the enthusiastic applause of an audience of Peking university students

tra, to my great surprise there was a melody which almost note for note was the same as in a Negro folk song called *Oh Freedom*.

### A New Spirit

The cultural level of the music audiences in Peking seems to me one indication of the new spirit prevailing in China—the tremendous enthusiasm for every phase of work and culture which makes for a richer and happier life. The enthusiasm of the new Chinese youth as evidenced at my concert at the Tsinghua University for about 2,000 students is one that I shall long remember. These young men and young women extended to me and to Marie Knotková, Czechoslovakian pianist accompanying me on my tour, their hands and hearts in comradely friendship. They gave me a feeling that they were proud of their culture, eager to learn, and sure of the great future of their country.

# At Sanmen Gorge

## Hua Shan

WE had crossed the vast north China plain and the Yellow River, and from there the train travelled westward. In 27 hours a Peking-Sian express took us from the capital to Shanhsien in Honan.

Outside Shanhsien Station a car was waiting to take us to Sanmen Gorge, about 14 miles away. I was accompanying a group of Soviet and Chinese experts entrusted with the designing of the reservoir and hydro-electric power station at Sanmen Gorge.

It was the time of year for sandstorms on the Yellow River and the sun above looked very dim indeed. Thick columns of yellow dust whirled into the car as it started, and, before you knew it, the hair of the Chinese comrades turned brown and the skin of the Soviet comrades yellow. My uniform turned from dark blue to a yellowish-grey. "Well," said someone, "at least you can see why they call it the Yellow River."

Our car sped through Huihsing, trailing a cloud of yellow dust. Huihsing is a small station east of Shanhsien. If we had been travelling by a slow train, we should have got off here instead of at Shanhsien, for it is ten and a half miles to Sanmen Gorge. It is still a quiet little place, though in the future it will be the junction of a branch road between Sanmen Gorge and the Lunghai Railway.

---

Hua Shan, noted Chinese writer, is the author of *Heroic October*, the theme of which is the War of Resistance to Japanese Aggression and the War of Liberation, and of *The Shepherd's Message*, a favourite story with Chinese children. He is now a reporter on the Hsinhua News Agency.

After bumping across three gullies, our car was now on a loess tableland. The river, though still miles away, came dimly into view through the sandstorm. The car dropped us at Shihchiatan. The offices of the reconnaissance survey were there—a new building up on the tableland hard by the river. You have to walk another mile and a quarter before you reach Sanmen Gorge. We took a short rest at Shihchiatan before going on.

### A Bird's-Eye View

If you climb the hill on the south bank of the river, you have the whole valley under your eyes. You see the river placidly coming down from its upper end, running faster and faster as it moves east. The moment it enters Sanmen Gorge, it comes up against two rocky islets, round which it splits into three raging torrents. Below the islets it plunges along like mad till it meets another obstacle—two huge rocky promontories jutting out from each side of the river and forming a bottle-neck no more than 390 feet across. Through it the mighty flood batters its way, the whole valley resounding with the noise of water thundering against the rocks.

Sanmen Gorge—Three-Gate Gorge—takes its name from the parting of the river into three channels by the islets. They are called the "Kueimen" (Demon's Gate), "Shenmen" (God's Gate), and "Jenmen" (Man's Gate). The islands bear the same names, Kueimen Island being about 330 feet across and Shenmen Island quite narrow. There is actually a third, Jenmen Island, which was originally a promontory but was

cut off in the Tang dynasty when a canal was dug for shipping grain.

It is a precarious business piloting a boat through Sanmen Gorge, always touch and go. Before the Lunghai Railway was built men had to risk their lives passing the gorge in wooden barges. One of the villagers thereabout told me how they used to have to shoot the rapids.

At that time there was only downstream traffic, never the other way round. Some boats came down the Wei from Sian, others from north of Tungkuan, loaded with wheat, cotton and other agricultural produce, timber, jute, medicinal substances, and so on, to Shantung. There the goods, together with the boats, were sold. The return trip was by land.

Before attempting Sanmen Gorge, all boats used to halt at Miao Wo (Temple Wharf) at its upper end. The crew then left the boats and went to the hillside Temple of Emperor Yu, where vows, donations and offerings of meat and wine were made, incense was burned and fireworks let off. This done, all the helmsmen sat down for a good blow-out. Nobody talked shop, but every one of them knew that that might be their last meal, and they made the most of it.

After the meal they used to walk down to the gorge and inspect the current. They had to decide whether to risk it or not. Which channel were they to use, and how? It sometimes meant hours of argument before they reached agreement. Once the decision was made, they returned to their respective barges and cut them loose.

Meanwhile crowds would have been assembling on both banks, letting off fireworks or shouting at the top of their voices, apparently more anxious than the helmsmen themselves. The barges got caught up in the race, sometimes hurtling through the rocks as swift as an arrow; sometimes seeming about to be crushed to smithereens and making a sudden, last-second turn, escaping one peril to be almost instantly threatened by another. If they got through safe and sound it was sheer luck.

Nobody can tell how many lives have been lost there. There is a local saying that runs: "At the narrows you always hear the boatmen's despairing cry and widows' weeping."

### China's Dnieper

But today, men come to Sanmen Gorge as conquerors — conquerors of the Yellow River. The rock there is extremely hard, of a type known to geologists as diorite-porphry. The whole gorge is one great mass of this rock. Tens of thousands of years of erosion by wind, rain and current have barely worn it. Even surface fractures are few and negligible. It is, therefore, an ideal place to build a gigantic dam.

When Soviet experts first visited Sanmen Gorge, they exclaimed, "Why, it's another Dnieper!" It was, of course, on the Dnieper that the Soviet Union built a great hydro-electric power station during her first Five-Year Plan. Today the Sanmen Gorge Hydro-electric Power Station is to be built for the same purpose—to produce a tremendous amount of electricity at low cost. It is China's first experiment in building dams of such size. And the building of it will train technicians of all descriptions for the coming electrification of the whole country.

Above the gorge is a huge natural basin among the mountains, like a vast cooking-pot, getting larger and larger towards its top. When Sanmen Gorge is sealed, the sluices will regulate the flow. The basin will hold for four days an amount of water equal to the greatest volume of flood water ever recorded for a thousand years, and allow it to be released at will.

This reservoir will not only prevent floods but also control the volume of the flow in such a way as to allow the best use to be made of the waters of the Yellow River all the year round—for irrigation, navigation and for generating electric power. There is not a better site for the purpose on the whole river.

For a year and more over a thousand people, and twice as many during the busiest days, have worked on the site. On

the west island, in the river-bed and along both banks, the whole place is full of drilling teams. All along the Yellow River and among its neighbouring hills resound the footsteps of young people. Above the din of the torrents beating on the rocks rise the noise of drilling and the songs the people sing at their work. When night falls, the whole place is flood-lit and it looks far more like a small town than a river valley.

Soviet experts have worked over practically every inch of a twelve-mile stretch of either side of the gorge, trying to find answers to all the problems that arise: how and where to build the dam, where all the building materials are to come from and the best position for the entire building site.

The party I am with consists of geological experts, topographers, hydrologists and constructional engineers. At its head is Koroliev, corresponding member of the Soviet Academy of Sciences. He also holds the "Red Flag" Labour Medal, and is the chief designer of the Sanmen Gorge project. He and his colleagues were the conquerors of the Volga and the Don, and are well versed in the construction of great hydro-electric power stations. Now they know this place almost like the palms of their hands. Sometimes they are let down by cable-drawn cars to make on-the-spot investigations on the islets.

On Shenmen Island Savilyev, the Soviet geological expert, and our own technicians in this field are hatching something big. For several days they have been studying sample cores drilled from the gorge, and from them have gained a pretty accurate idea of what the whole rock mass is like. But the Soviet expert is not satisfied: he will not draw hasty conclusions. He wants to sink a shaft, right on the island, deep into the bed of the river and from the bottom of it make a horizontal tunnel right through the rock across the whole width of the river. In order to know exactly what the rock is like on the banks, two horizontal tunnels are also to be dug along both sides of the river. In short, he

wants to go and look at everything with his own eyes.

Some of us were rather stunned at this idea, but on second thoughts we know it's the right way. It must be done like this, because this is going to be no ordinary project but one of the world's most massive man-made masonry structures: the ultimate capacity of the power station is going to be a million kilowatts! This dam will be a great concrete mass 295 feet high to hold back the water of the Yellow River and use its fall to generate electric power. The smallest crack, the slightest seepage would seriously impair its efficiency.

### A Big Job

All this implies organization on a vast scale. We shall, for example, need a regular supply of several thousand tons of concrete every day, equivalent to the whole output of an entire cement factory. We shall need ample supplies of sand and stone. Unless automatic cement-mixing equipment is installed right on the site it will be well-nigh impossible to mix several thousand tons of cement, stone and sand a day. A waterworks will be needed, too, for the filthy water of the Yellow River is not fit to drink, or for much else, a saw-mill and factories for turning out wooden formes, steel ties, and so forth. As long as the site has no power station of its own, we shall need at least a relay station to bring electric current from Loyang, 87 miles away. A machine shop is also something that this place cannot do without.

Thousands of tons of material for the dam and all its subsidiary installations will be brought in every day by a special branch railway line. Traffic on it is bound to be heavy, so there will have to be a spacious shunting yard as well. All these things will call for an army of workers. They will need housing, dining rooms, public baths, hospitals, libraries, clubs, cinemas, post offices, shops, banks and vegetable growers' co-operatives. In short, a new industrial city will come into being, spread-



Admiring peasants in a Szechuan agricultural producers' co-operative watching a tractor from the M.T.S. at work on their land

## Tractors for the Countryside

China has now 126 machine and tractor stations and is machine-ploughing six times as much land as in 1954. Another 164 M.T.S. will be set up in the next two years



The same M.T.S. is training more peasants as tractor drivers



"Look! A furrow that deep!"

# SCENES IN NEW PEKING

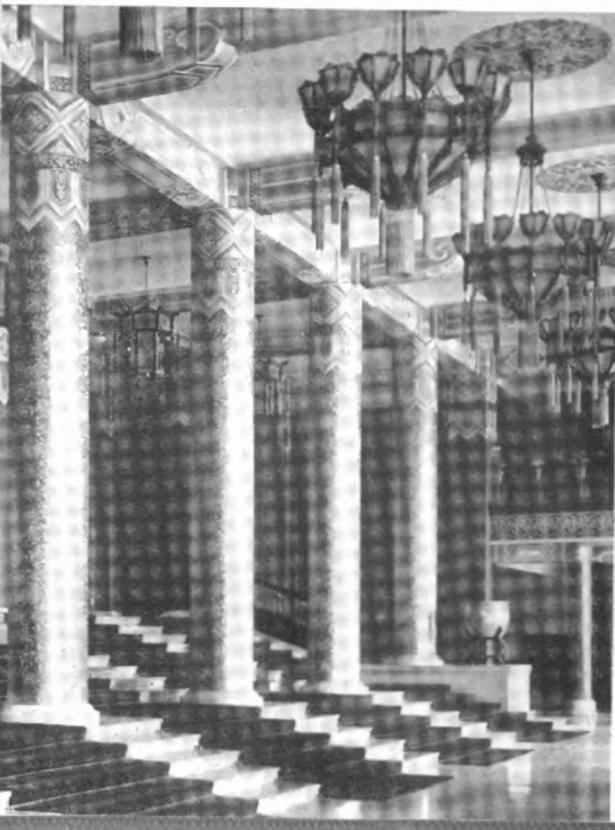


New houses, offices, factories, schools, hospitals and other buildings spring up almost overnight inside the old city and in the new suburbs around it. Here are the Hsinchiao Hotel (left) and the Tung-jen Municipal Hospital

A vista of new buildings from the top of Coal Hill



Inside the new extension of the Peking Hotel

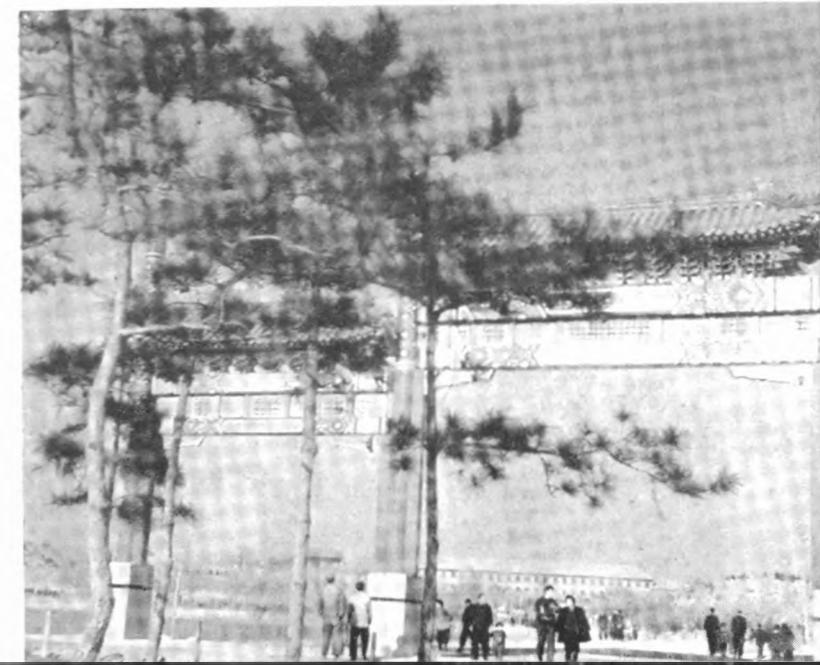


New offices on the western outskirts



The Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference building, completed last year

Taojanling Park, once an untidy stretch of waste ground and weedy ponds. The *pailou* (memorial arch) is one moved from inside the city and rebuilt here





Trick cycle riding  
by members of  
the State Acrobatic Troupe

## Chinese Acrobatics

Quite simple—when Liu Yu-ching does



And so is this—to  
Ho Shu-wang (*right*)  
and Chou Chin-yung

ing out from the immediate surroundings of Sanmen Gorge as far as Huihsing—the whole set-up a part of, and subservient to, the Sanmen Gorge project as a whole. When the towering dam lies athwart the river, and when the great new lake and the city around it are lit up by this new power station, Sanmen Gorge will really be a sight worth seeing.

### **On the Bottom of the Lake**

When the group of Soviet experts had finished investigations at Sanmen Gorge, we returned to Shanhsien by car. On the way an old engineer consulted a barometer. It gave a reading of something under 1,150 feet above sea level—roughly, the high-water mark in the future reservoir. Everything below 1,150 feet will be submerged.

As we were passing Huihsing, I saw a large stretch of kitchen gardens. Some time in the future it will certainly be at the bottom of the lake. Of course it will probably survive for some years yet before it finds itself under water, and till then go on supplying fresh vegetables to the growing population.

The size of the future reservoir is astounding. It will cover Shanhsien to the east, all the areas along the Yellow River between Linchin and Chaoyi north of Tungkuan to the west, both sides of the Wei above Tungkuan and below Lintung, and the region along the North Loho below Tali. It will, in fact, have an area of 910 square miles. We travelled west along the Yellow River by train from Shanhsien to Sian. Much of this region will be the site of the reservoir. Our train was running on the bottom of the future lake!

Leaving Tungkuan, the train ran along the south bank of the Wei. Looking out of the window I saw to the south the Tsinling ranges, peak after peak rising sky-high. The irrigation canals were glistening under rows of poplars. But before long, part of the Tsinlings will form the rim of this artificial lake and part of the farms there will be drowned. All who now live within the perimeter of the reservoir

will have to move. But no one will mind very much, seeing that it will mean safety for more than 80 million people living on the lower reaches of the Yellow River and happiness for the whole nation.

Besides putting an end to floods on the lower reaches, the Sanmen Gorge project will permit the irrigation of close on 3,300,000 extra acres of farm land which should yield an extra 2,460,000 tons of grain a year, perhaps more. The power station will generate a tremendous amount of electricity for the industrial development of three provinces—as much as twenty average 50,000-kilowatt thermo-electric power stations could provide. In three years, the money received from payments for electricity will cover the whole cost of the project. Steamboats of up to 500 tons will be able to ply between the estuary and Sanmen Gorge and on the reservoir itself!

### **An Old Fairy Tale**

People used to believe that the waters of rivers, lakes and seas were controlled by dragons. Once upon a time, says an old fairy tale, there lived in the Yellow River valley a nasty, hot-tempered dragon. Every so often he plunged his jaws into the river, drank up the water in it and left the land parched and dry. And when he was in a particularly bad humour, he flared up, great thunder storms burst and in no time the earth was flooded.

For thousands of years men lived in fear of him but could not do without him. They tried everything to appease him. When the autumn harvest was in, the people who lived alongside the Yellow River put on plays to entertain him, and threw jars of wine and basketfuls of meat and bread into the river. In short, nothing that could be done to show the dragon how men respected and revered him was left undone.

But alas, the years went by, and the wicked dragon's temper remained as bad as ever. When he was white with rage, the people in the valley fell victim of drought and floods. How they longed to have a good-tempered dragon who would

regulate his drinking properly! For thousands of years men prayed for a good-natured dragon and for thousands of years they waited for him, but he never appeared.

It is only today that men realize that it is no use relying on dragons to regulate the waters. They have to be dragons themselves. It is men who are, in the five years from 1957 to 1961, going to build a great reservoir capable of holding the water of the greater part of the Yellow River, as the dragon did in the fairy tale. This one reservoir alone will largely put an end to the havoc which the Yellow River wrought in China for thousands of years.

There will be few hydro-electric power stations in the world as large as this one—one of the earliest of the great schemes to be carried out during the first Five-Year Plan. It is true that comparable projects have been carried out in the United States, but there modern industry was already more than a century old, and still both

the Boulder and the Grand Coulee schemes took decades to build. We, with the help of the Soviet Government, are going to build Sanmen Gorge in five years, that is, as fast as the Soviet Union built the Kuibyshev and Stalingrad power stations.

And our scheme is still more ambitious. We are going to make the Yellow River run clear. We are going to cover the dry loess plateaux with verdure. We are going to slow down this stream that races wildly through our land for thousands of miles by creating forty-six artificial lakes, like a string of pearls, in its path. We are going to make every drop of the water of the Yellow River serve us.

From time immemorial, the Chinese people have dreamt of taming the Yellow River and making better use of it. Now this great task has fallen on the shoulders of this generation, our generation. It seems as if we are living in a time when fairy tales come true.

## MADE IN CHINA

### Combine-Harvesters



A considerable number of S-No. 6 combine-harvesters will be manufactured this year by the Peking Farm Machinery Works to meet the needs of state farms and fully socialist co-operative farms.

The first combine-harvester made by this factory helped to bring in the 1955 wheat crop on the Tunghua State Farm in Heilungkiang. It harvested 300 acres of land and showed itself efficient and sturdily constructed. It is modelled on the Soviet Stalinetts No. 6 harvester and can harvest and thresh  $5\frac{1}{2}$  acres of grain an hour. In harvesting alone, it does the work of two hundred men.

## We Liked Those Indian Films



*The Indian Film Week held in China last October was such a success that cinemas, in response to popular demand, put back their programmes for extra showings of Indian films. Translated into Chinese and featured in broadcasts, the theme songs of "Two Bighas of Land" and "The Vagabond" have become popular favourites. Periodicals and newspapers have published hosts of articles and numerous letters on the Indian cinema. The notes below give a glimpse of the enthusiasm with which Chinese audiences received these Indian films which have done so much to strengthen the fraternal ties between the peoples of the two countries.*

—Editor

**SHANGHAI** Bookings for seats started ten days before the Indian Film Week actually began. In three days practically every house was sold out. There were always a hundred or so disappointed cinema-goers crowding the entrances to cinemas on the off chance of getting a returned ticket. So many requests poured in that showings were extended another fortnight.

The press carried many letters with frank and appreciative comments on the films. A student wrote: "I liked the film *Indian Art and Construction* very much. My only regret was that some of the pictures weren't held on the screen long enough for me to have a good look at the beautiful things they showed."

A worker at the No. 1 Chunghua Cotton and Knitting Mill commented: "As a result of imperialist propoganda, when we heard India mentioned in the old days it was usual to think of her legacy of backwardness. Now we know better. The Indian films have made it clearer to me than ever that India was and is a great

country with a great culture and an immense future. I saw how industrious, intelligent, brave and patriotic the Indian people are."

**CHANGCHUN** When artists of the Indian film delegation to China made personal appearances at cinemas in Changchun, as in other cities enthusiastic crowds waylaid them for autographs. In the Children's Cinema they received a particularly tumultuous welcome. Mr. P. R. Kapoor, leader of the delegation, who plays the judge in *The Vagabond*, told the children: "When you clap, please remember: one hand is India and the other China. When the two hands clap together there will be peace and happiness for the world!"

**PORT ARTHUR-DAIREN** Extra showings of the Indian films had to be organized as queues were still forming outside box

The picture above shows Mr. P. R. Kapoor, the noted Indian film actor, autographing for Chinese cinema-goers at Peking's Capital Cinema where he made a personal appearance.

## BETWEEN FRIENDS

● Eleven Chinese scientists visited Japan in December. The delegation was headed by Dr. Kuo Mo-jo, President of the Academia Sinica.

● Specialists from the Soviet Union, Rumania, Poland, Japan, Burma, Bulgaria, Indonesia, Viet-Nam, Mongolia and Korea were observers at the recent Antibiotics Research Conference in Peking. They are now visiting research institutes in various parts of China.

● A delegation of Soviet scientists led by Professor I. I. Novikov is now touring China. Some of its members, experts on the peaceful use of atomic energy, will pass on to their Chinese colleagues the results of the International Atoms-for-Peace Conference in Geneva.

● A Chinese folk music and acrobatic troupe now touring the Mongolian People's Republic gave its first performance in Ulan Bator, the capital.

● The famous Soviet dance group, *Beryozhka*, has just finished a successful two months' tour of ten Chinese cities, where they gave 41 performances.

● A group of Chinese journalists recently completed a 25-day tour of Yugoslavia. They are now visiting the Soviet Union.

● The Shanghai Philharmonic Orchestra has been giving a series of concerts of the music of Sibelius to mark the great Finnish composer's ninetieth birthday. Martti Simila, the guest conductor, came from Finland specially for the occasion.

● *Sipintjang* (The Lame), an Indonesian film, was recently shown in Peking by the China-Indonesian Friendship Association. It won a prize at the 1952 International Film Festival in Karlovy Vary.

● Some 600 Czechoslovak oil paintings, sculptures, lithographs, etchings and woodcuts were exhibited in December in Peking. They were shown earlier in Nanking and Shanghai.

offices when the last tickets for the special week were sold out.

A pupil of the No. 13 Secondary School wrote to the papers: "India is indeed a country with a rich language and lovely music and dancing. Now we have seen the present-day life of the Indian people, we have a better idea of what their life will be like in the future. I particularly liked the music."

**CHENG TU** The members of the Szechuan Opera Company and Song and Dance Troupe went in a group to see the Indian films, and gave their collective opinion: "This art is of the highest order. The work of the scenario-writers, directors, cameramen, actors and actresses—the exceptional artistic power and the vivid national features they display—is a real example to us."

**SIAN** *The Vagabond* was first shown in two parts. The audience enjoyed it so much that many made suggestions to the man-

agement to adjust its schedule so that the film should be shown uninterruptedly.

Many had wet eyes after seeing *Two Bighas of Land*. Two workers wrote that they felt akin to Sambhu because in the old days they themselves had suffered in much the same way.

**PEKING** The Indian Film Week was regarded as one of the outstanding events in the cultural life of the capital. *Popular Cinema*, the leading film magazine, received many letters from readers praising the films shown in enthusiastic terms.

"This is the first time I've seen Indian films. I was greatly impressed by them," says a typical letter. "I was immensely moved by *Two Bighas of Land* and *The Hurricane*. I particularly liked *The Vagabond*. As an ordinary Chinese cinema-goer, I hope to see many more and even better Indian films in future. We are anxious to understand more about our great and rising neighbour."

# Chang Heng— Astronomer

Chang Yu-che



CHANG HENG (78-139 A.D.), the great astronomer, was a contemporary of Ptolemy. His most notable achievements were the development and enrichment of ancient Chinese astronomical theory. He invented an armillary sphere or celestial globe not essentially unlike the modern planetarium, and a seismoscope which indicated the location of earthquakes with considerable accuracy. His talents were not, however, limited to science: he was also an outstanding author and painter. His all-round genius reminds one of Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) in Italy and Lomonosov (1711-1765) in Russia. In an essay on ancient China's contribution to astronomy, Chu Kochen, Vice-President of the Academia Sinica, has well said: "A man like Chang Heng would be an eminent personage in any country and at any time."

In ancient times, China, Babylonia, India and Greece were pioneers in the science of astronomy. The Chinese took to agriculture at a very early time. Their new economic status called for a knowledge of the laws of meteorological changes. In fact, it was in the early part of the second millennium B.C. that astronomical observa-

tions were first made and recorded and the calendar invented. In the fourth century B. C. the *Kan Shih Hsing Ching* (A Manual of Stars, compiled by Kan Kung and Shih Shen), which gave a catalogue of fixed stars, appeared. In this connection it may be noted that Ptolemy's *Almagest*, which also contains a list of fixed stars and was based on the results of Hipparchus' observations in the second century B.C., was not written till the second century A.D. It is true that the *Kan Shih Hsing Ching* catalogue gives a smaller number of stars, but in point of scientific accuracy it is by no means inferior to Ptolemy's. This shows that the history of Chinese astronomy is of hoary antiquity and that by Chang Heng's time quite an appreciable amount of astronomical knowledge had accumulated.

### Chang's Astronomical Theories

Chang Heng wrote two famous treatises on astronomy, the *Hun Tien Tu Chu* (Description of the Celestial Globe) and *Ling Hsien* (The Celestial Constitution). Both these books have survived. They contain the essentials of his astronomical theories. "The universe," he said, "is like an egg. The earth is the yolk and the sky the shell." This theory was a bold advance on

---

The author is Director of the Purple Mountain Observatory of the Academia Sinica at Nanking.

---

The above portrait of Chang Heng is by Chiang Chao-ho.

previous astronomical theories which affirmed that the sky was round and the earth flat. Evidently Chang Heng knew a good deal about what the universe was really like. It is noteworthy that Chang Heng arrived at the conclusion that the earth was more or less spherical.

A few details of Chang Heng's astronomical theories may be of interest. It must be borne in mind that he made all his observations of heavenly bodies at Loyang, the then capital of China, and based his theories on generalizations drawn from the facts he found out. As everyone knows, the earth rotates on its axis, and because of this the sun, moon and stars seem to rise and set and show the phenomenon of diurnal motion. The earth's axis is not perpendicular to the ecliptic but at an angle to it. The north and south celestial poles are the two opposite points of the celestial sphere where the earth's axis, produced, would meet it. Geographical latitude is the angular distance of a place on its meridian from the plane of the equator. Now Loyang is 35 degrees north. Seen from Loyang the north celestial pole is, therefore, 35 degrees above the horizon. Thus in their diurnal motion all stars within 35 degrees of the north celestial pole never fall below the horizon. Chang Heng was clearly aware of this fact. He divided the celestial sphere into  $365\frac{1}{4}$  degrees, equal to the number of days in a year. (As nowadays we divide the celestial sphere into only 360 degrees Chang Heng's degree is slightly smaller than ours.) Thus, to an observer, when half the celestial sphere is "above" the earth, the other half is "below." "The north celestial pole," he said, "is in the middle of the heavens. It lies due north and 36 degrees above the horizon. So there must be a region around the north pole with a diameter of 72 degrees that is always visible. The south celestial pole is also in the middle of the heavens, due south and 36 degrees below the horizon, and there is a similar region around it being always invisible." When Chang Heng said "above" or "below" the horizon he was evidently using Loyang as a point of reference. As

the quotation shows, he had worked out how many degrees the north celestial pole, seen from Loyang, was above the horizon, as well as the extent of the circles (with a radius of 36 degrees) round the north and south celestial poles within which, at Loyang, stars were always or never visible. (See Figure 1.)

#### The Sun and the Moon

Scientific progress in Chang Heng's time had not reached a stage which permitted a true understanding of the laws of rotation and revolution of the earth. These laws were not discovered till the years when European capitalism was taking shape, when Copernicus (1473-1543), the great Polish scientist, wrote his *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium*. But that epoch-making book was written only after fourteen centuries had elapsed since the death of Chang Heng. Chang Heng's astronomical theory, as indicated above, was still geocentric. But even so, he came to understand how the sun "moved" in the course of the year.

Briefly his theory is this. The equator of the celestial sphere lies midway between the poles. The equator and the ecliptic—the apparent course of the sun—intersect at an angle of 24 degrees. At the southernmost point of the ecliptic the sun is furthest from the north celestial pole—on the shortest day of the year, the winter solstice. At the northernmost point of the ecliptic the exact opposite is the case, and we have the summer solstice. When the sun reaches the points where the equator and the ecliptic intersect, it is equidistant from the two celestial poles, and we have the vernal and autumnal equinoxes. (See Figure 2.)

His theory about the moon is also worthy of notice. He thinks that the moon is a non-luminous body and that its brightness is due to the light of the sun. This makes it possible for him to give a rational explanation of the phenomena of the crescent and full moon. He thinks that a lunar eclipse is caused by the sun and the moon being in opposition and the moon being obscured by the earth's shadow. He

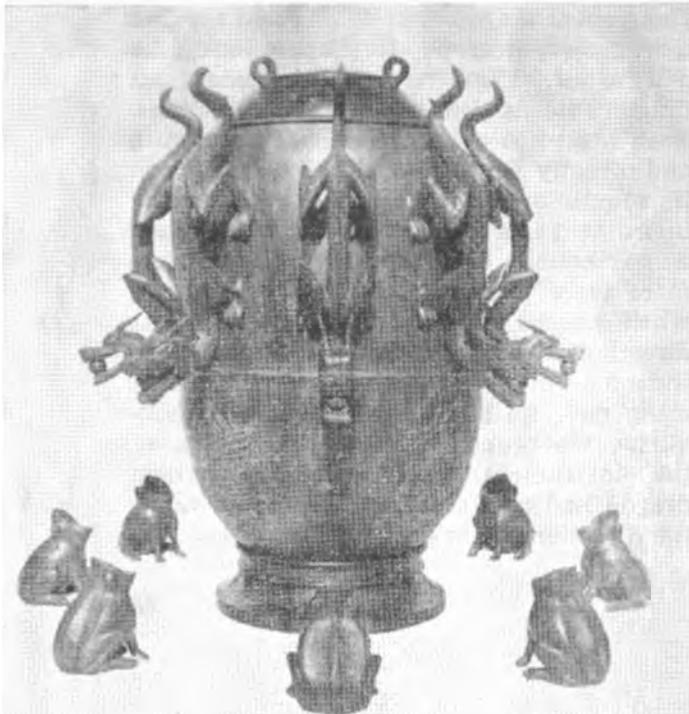


Chang Heng's seismoscope was used for some time and found to work admirably. It is recorded that once a ball dropped from the mouth of a dragon but no news reached the people of Loyang of any earthquake. Several days later, however, when people were beginning to doubt the reliability of Chang Heng's device, a courier suddenly arrived from Lunghsi, in the south-east of what is now the province of Kansu, and about 620 miles from Loyang, with a report of an earthquake which occurred on the very day and in the very direction which Chang Heng's seismoscope had indicated.

Chang Heng's seismoscope was the first made anywhere in the world. The original instrument has long been lost, but from descriptions given by various writers we have a pretty good idea of how it was made. Below is a picture of a recent reconstruction made in wood.

#### A Man of Talent

Chang Heng was born in 78 A.D. of an impoverished family of landlord-officials who lived in the Nanyang prefecture (what is now Nanyang County, Honan). A hard-working student as a boy, in his teens he became a scholar. Later he left home, went to the great city of Changan (now Sian, in Shensi) and subsequently entered the Im-



perial Academy, at that time the nation's highest institution of learning, in Loyang.

Chang Heng lived about the middle of the Later Han dynasty (25-220). This was a time when, as a result of progress in agriculture and commerce and of territorial expansion, the sciences, such as astronomy, mathematics, geography and medicine, were all making rapid progress. It was also the time which produced such men as Wang Chung, the great materialist philosopher, and Tsui Yuan, Chang Heng's intimate friend at the Imperial Academy, who specialized in the sciences of astronomy, computation of the calendar, and mathematics. Somewhat unusually, Chang Heng, great scientist as he was, was in his youth intensely interested in literature. He spent ten years writing his *Erh Ching Fu* (Essay on Two Capitals), a masterpiece written in the poetic, rhythmic prose and florid diction so much in vogue during the Han dynasty. In this essay he gives a vivid description of Changan and Loyang, the two capitals of the title, and subtly cast reflections on the extravagance of the rich. And, as already mentioned, Chang Heng was also a great painter. In the *History of Great Paintings Through the Ages* compiled in the Tang dynasty, he is listed as one of the six great painters of the Han dynasty.

At the age of 33 he was appointed to serve the government as an adviser on cultural and educational affairs. While holding this office he happened to come across a copy of the *Tai Hsuan Ching* (Mystery of the Universe) written by Yang Hsiung, a philosopher of an earlier period in the Han dynasty. Reading it he found that part of the book dealt with astronomy and mathematics. This so aroused his interest that he resolved to study natural science himself.

Several years later he was transferred to another government post—that of *Tai Shih Ling* (Official Astronomer), in charge of astronomical research and observation and earthquake records. For twenty years

A wooden model of Chang Heng's seismoscope made by Wang Chento, a Chinese archaeologist, in 1951

he devoted his life to scientific work, and became the most enlightened astronomer of his time. Besides inventing the hydraulic armillary sphere and the seismoscope, both of epoch-making significance, he wrote treatises on mathematics and computation of the calendar, and compiled astronomical and topographical charts. Some books credit him with the invention of many other mechanical devices, including an "automatic cart" which recorded the distance travelled, and a wooden bird which could fly for quite a long distance. It is notorious that in feudal society what attracted the intelligentsia most, as a rule, was position and emolument, and that science and technology were held in small esteem by the ruling class. Because Chang Heng, in his many years as official astronomer, remained content with the simple life and profoundly devoted to the study of science, he was considered eccentric, was discriminated against and slandered. To defend himself he wrote an essay in which he said: "A true gentleman is concerned with virtue, not with official advancement; he is ashamed of insufficient knowledge, but not of meagre income."

### A Reformer

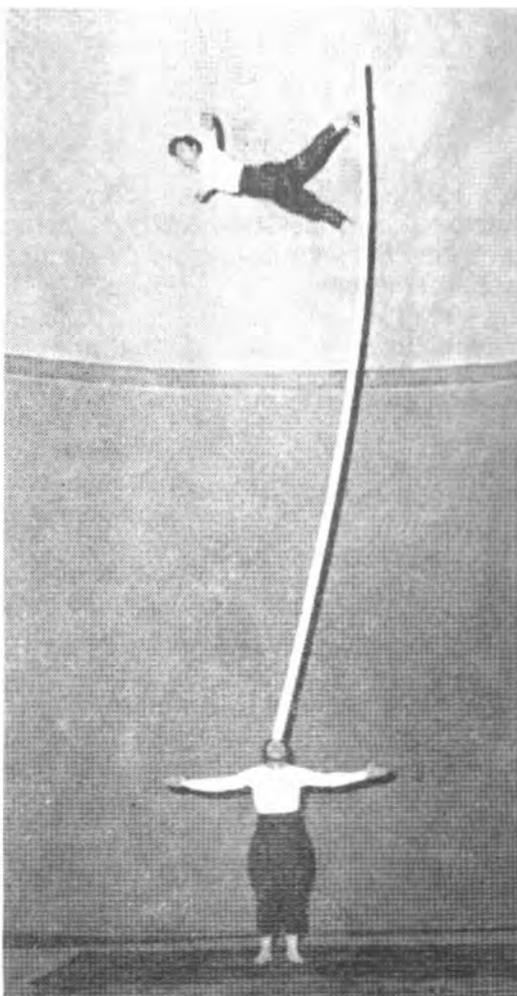
It should not, however, be thought that Chang Heng tried to stand aloof from politics and society. He was a reformer, not a time-server. He set his face against the astrology which, despite the great strides made in astronomy, was rampant in his time, and sent a memorial to the emperor asking for reform. He castigated prevailing superstitions and advised the banning of all astrological books. He was greatly worried, too, by the gradual corruption of the government through the ascendancy of the eunuchs, believing that the government, in promoting officials, paid more attention to literary accomplishment than to integrity. On these matters, too, he petitioned the emperor to introduce political reforms.

At the age of 55 Chang Heng was promoted *Shih Chung*—High Counsellor to the Emperor. Fearing that Chang Heng might on occasion speak ill of them the eunuchs conspired together to vilify him. The

emperor, believing what they said, eventually transferred him to a local office in the prefecture of Hochien (in what is now Hopei). In his new office he arrested, punished or exiled all lawless local despots. Order and peace were restored and the people were again able to live unmolested.

But the antagonism of the feudal nobles, eunuchs and local despots became increasingly menacing and Chang Heng grew hopelessly lonely and dejected. All the poems and poetic prose which he wrote during this period of his life have a note of melancholy and pessimism. In the year 139, the year after he was recalled to office in the capital, Chang Heng, the great scientist, passed away, in his sixty-first year, a disappointed and melancholy man. In the inscription written for his tomb, his close friend, Tsui Yuan, praised him in these words: "His mathematical knowledge and skill unravelled the mystery of the universe. His inventions and creations rivalled those of Nature herself." These two sentences summarize Chang Heng's life-work, the enormous contribution he made in the realm of scientific research.

In pre-liberation China scant attention was paid to the nation's cultural heritage. The work of Chang Heng and other outstanding scientists of ancient China never received the recognition it deserved. Worse still, even their names were gradually forgotten, till only a few knew them. Only after the birth of New China were steps taken to remedy this deplorable state of affairs. The Academia Sinica not only vigorously promotes modern scientific research but makes a close study of the history of science in ancient China. In 1955 China issued commemorative postage stamps depicting four scientists of ancient China—Chang Heng, Tsu Chung-chih, Yi Hsing and Li Shih-chen. (*People's China*, No. 1, 1955 had an article on Li Shih-chen.) The planetarium in Peking, now being built, will have a section devoted to materials connected with the old Chinese astronomers. One of them will be Chang Heng, the astronomer who made the first celestial globe.



Left: Acrobats performing on a pole. A detail of a late Tang mural, "The Retinue of the Lady of Sung," in one of the Tun-huang grottoes

Right: Members of the Chungking Acrobatic Troupe in a modern version of an ancient acrobatic feat

## ACROBATS AND MAGICIANS

Yang Yu

Our Correspondent

LIKE all the other arts, magic is being practised with renewed fervour in People's China. After all, it is something to see a rather elderly gentleman in a long gown appear on an empty stage and from the folds of a yard-square piece of black cloth produce a brazier with burning charcoal, sixteen dishes of food, a vase of flowers and a bowl of live gold fish and, after a somersault, another bowl of water for the washing up. That is an art that is worth encouraging.

So too with acrobatics. The *Wu Hua Tan* (Playing with a Jar) practitioner tosses a ten-pound jar into the air and catches it on his forehead where he makes it spin. (Novices are advised to catch the jar just as it starts to fall rather than after it has had time to gather speed.) The trident and plate spinners make similar use of natural laws to achieve the seemingly impossible. The *Tsuan Ti Chuan* (Going Through the Hoop) performer, after demonstrating that the bamboo hoop he carries

is narrower in diameter than the breadth of his shoulders, proceeds to manipulate himself through it without touching its edges as it stands balanced on the edge of a bench. But these are only the ordinary wonders. Those who have not seen Chinese acrobats yet have a treat in store.

### An Ancient Art

Down through the ages, we have admired the arts of prestidigitation and equilibristics. The Hans of 2,000 years ago enjoyed these arts, as tomb bricks of that time show. The Tang had their acrobats at court. One of the Tunhuang murals recently brought to light shows the Lady of Sung with her entourage preceded by acrobats performing on the tops of poles. Learned scholars of the past with a passion for systematization have divided these wonderful arts of acrobatics into ten divisions depending on the objects employed, viz, bottles, plates, balls, bowls of water, clubs, jars, rods, spinning bowls, sleight of hand with various objects and silken streamers.

Like tumblers and magicians everywhere, of course, Chinese mostly use ordinary every-day objects for their tricks. The jar is just a farmers' grain jar, the hoop is the side piece of a sieve. The trident was an ancient weapon. But that is the least of it. The extraordinary skill with which these homely things are manipulated is the result of long and patient training. Ten years is not too long to produce a magician or master acrobat.

And yet such was the perverse character of the times of the warlords and the Kuomintang that these arts were being driven to extinction, and men who had spent a lifetime in their service were faced with starvation. Skill had to give place to sensation. Trifles like sword-swallowing took top of the bill, followed by such entertainments as *Pounding Bricks on the Head with a Hammer*, which one commentator piously described as being "injurious to the health."

Just after liberation when the Ministry of Culture set about organizing a State Acrobatic Troupe, old stagers with priceless skills were found wandering about in rags and down to their last copper.

During the last few years, nine other national troupes have been formed and training groups organized to produce new performers. The State Acrobatic Troupe alone has trained over forty young acrobats. All these troupes and local companies too are now touring the country with enormous success. The best items have been shown abroad in tours of fourteen Asian and European countries in the last five years, during which a thousand performances were given.

### The Old and the Young

Tan Chun-chuan began tossing the trident when he was a country lad of 18; he led village festival processions like a drum-major on parade. At fifty he had lost nothing of his skill, but the poverty-stricken people of warlord and Kuomintang dominated Peking had no coppers to throw his way, and his was an art of the lanes and fair grounds. He had to leave his home in Peking and walk the 75 miles to Tientsin in search of new work. "In those days," he recalls, "we used to say: 'Old age, grey hair, rusted trident, and that's the end of the tour!'"

And now? "I'm eighty-one and I've never lived so well. The People's Government sent me on my first tour abroad. I get a monthly pension of 60 yuan. I've no worries about the future. I still like to go down to the training troupe and watch and teach the youngsters. I'm as happy as a lark!"

At the other end of the age scale is seventeen-year-old Li Tsui-yun who has just graduated from the training group. She comes of a family of troupers. Both her parents are acrobats. She started serious training in a troupe at 14. She received a government grant enough for board and pocket money. In addition to her professional training she got a normal

middle school education. She joined the Pioneers and is now a Youth League member. Her speciality is twirling saucers on the ends of thin bamboo canes, but she is also taking up juggling with clubs and trick cycle riding.

Old Tan Chun-chuan likes to expatiate on the marvels of today. "We put on shows now which you never saw in the old days. Many's the time our people have had to tumble on the bare ground. Now we have spotlights, costumes of silk and brocade, orchestras and all kinds of frills. And we don't have to worry about customers either. Every show is packed out, and in the best theatres too."

### New Ways

In the old days, life was a constant struggle for a bare existence. It was the general rule that each acrobat did his turns alone. There was little co-operation, and national planning and organization of the profession was not even dreamt about. Now,

just as the People's Government helps them, they all help each other. And they find the same spirit among their confreres during their tours in the Soviet Union and People's Democracies. They learnt not a few things in the way of production from circus artists there. Last year, for instance, they put on the *Chien Chin Tan* (Thousand-Pound Weight Trick) in a new way. Before, one huckster used to do the patter while another lay on the ground with a big flat stone balanced on his feet holding up four other men—that was all there was to it. Now they've made this into a playlet of peasants enjoying themselves after the harvest and challenging each other to tricks. That's where the "1,000-pound weight" comes in. Audiences like it better this way.

The magicians too are filled with the spirit of emulation. Three magicians today co-operate to perform the *Ku Tsai Hsi Fa*—the "Ancient Flowery Magic"—and by the time they have finished their act, which begins with only three yard-square bits of black cloth, the whole stage is littered with flowers, food and ribbons topped off with a flock of peace doves. All seemingly conjured out of the empty air.

Yin Yu-hung has the gleam of the enthusiast in his bright black eyes. He is an acrobat who takes a tray full of crockery and water-filled glasses and proceeds to tumble to the ground, head over heels, down a tall pyramid of balanced benches—with everything upright and whole at the end.

"What we've done," he says with the wisdom of two thousand years of acrobatic skills behind him, "is only a beginning. We feel our art has a great future and infinite possibilities of development!"



Tan Chun-chuan gives a demonstration of "Playing with the Chientze" (a kind of shuttlecock played with the foot) to a training group attached to the National Acrobatic Troupe

## Care for Pensioners and the Old

*Mikio Tokumoto, a Japanese shop assistant in the sandal trade, has written to ask us how Chinese workers who have reached retirement age are cared for. He also wants to know something about their life in New China. Several other readers have asked for similar information, so we passed on their letters to Li Wen-teh of the Labour Insurance Department of the All-China Federation of Trade Unions. Here is his answer.*

—Editor

First of all I should like to tell you that in New China the people's state has assumed responsibility for care of the aged. In the old days before liberation, only a few years ago, the state took no such responsibility. Apart from those few who could be cared for by voluntary philanthropic effort, the aged had to depend on themselves or relatives. It was therefore not surprising that in the state of war and chronic economic crisis that characterized Kuomintang rule, millions of old workers ended their lives as beggars.

### A Fundamental Right

Now Article 93 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China states:

Working people in the People's Republic of China have the right to material assistance in old age, and in case of illness or disability. To guarantee enjoyment of this right, the state provides social insurance, social assistance and public health services and gradually expands these facilities.

We have, of course, not been able to do all that we should like to do for the old, but we have some achievements to our credit. One of the most important steps we have taken was passing the Labour In-

surance Regulations in 1951. These provide that on the railways, in navigation, posts and telecommunications, and factories or mines with more than a hundred employees, all male employees who reach the age of 60 and have worked for twenty-five years, including five years in their last place of work, and all women employees who reach the age of 50 and have worked for twenty years, including five years in their last place of work, may retire with a monthly pension amounting to 50 to 70 per cent of their wages.

Workers engaged in occupations injurious to health may retire earlier. Miners working underground, for instance, may retire five years earlier, and each year's service counts as fifteen months.

Workers who have reached retirement age but prefer to go on working get both their regular wages and a pension equal to 10 to 20 per cent of their wages.

As I was beginning to write this, I received a report from Shanghai, and a few sentences of it are well worth quoting here: "Lu Shih-ying, who is now 58, worked in the state-owned No. 1 Cigarette Factory in Shanghai. Her husband died

many years ago, and in the old society she always dreaded the day when she would lose her job and, poor and helpless, become a wandering beggar. Now she has retired and receives a monthly pension of 53 yuan. She has no worries about food and clothing. She takes her grandson out for walks. She goes to the theatre two or three times a month. A little while back she and eighteen other retired women workers from the same factory even organized an excursion to Soochow, one of China's beauty spots."

Here I must explain to our friends abroad that 53 yuan a month is not a very large income, but remember, such solicitude was unimaginable in old China.

### Old People's Homes

Old workers who have no families may live free of charge in any one of the nation's 15 Old People's Homes run by the government. Most of them are situated in mining areas, because it is old miners, more than any other kind of workers, who most often have no families that they know of, because usually they are men who, under the Kuomintang, were pressganged or trapped into mining in their youth and have long lost touch with their folks.

Aged miners playing cards in Fushin Aged Miners' Home in north-east China



Now let Liu Hung-sheng, a retired worker staying in the Workers' Old Age Home at Fushun, coal capital of north-east China, give you in his own words a glimpse of what life is like in these homes:

"We have three tasks," he says, "eat well, sleep well and enjoy ourselves!" We eat rice and flour every day. There's meat at every meal. Twice a week we have meat pies and dumplings. Compared with life in the old society, this is wonderful. Here we have a club with a recreation room and a clinic. . . ." Most of the old men have a hobby—gardening, fishing, collecting prints . . . or keeping birds as pets. Life is by no means lonely. Young workers often come to consult these veteran workers. Students put on amateur entertainments for them. School children come to pay them visits, and not a few of them have been made "honorary Pioneers."

More and more helpless old people who are not entitled to the privileges of labour insurance are also being cared for by the state. Scattered in cities throughout the country, there are more than 22,000 old people in special institutes for old folks run by the government and various people's organizations. They run educational courses for the old people and organize cultural activity and light work which enables them to pass their time more pleasantly. They receive all the profits derived from the work they do.

All this, however, is only a beginning. We won't boast that we are taking good care of all old people in China. Only when our socialist society is built shall we be able to take care of all our aged workers as they deserve. That day is not too far off.

*People's China*



## **China's First Planetarium**

An attractive group of buildings is now going up just beyond the north-west corner of Peking's ancient city wall. This is China's first planetarium. Besides the planetarium itself it consists of an exhibition hall, a sizable observatory and a meteorological station. These will be surrounded by a large open lawn and gardens, the whole occupying an area of about ten acres. Under the direction of the Academia Sinica it will undertake research as well as serving as a centre for the popularization of astronomical and meteorological knowledge.

The planetarium projector, specially made for China, is one of the few made in the German Democratic Republic since World War II by the famous firm of Zeiss. It will project thousands of points of light simulating the form and motion of the celestial bodies on to the smooth dome, 75 feet in diameter, of the central hall. The audience will see, as in a clear sky, the motions of the moon, the planets and all stars up to the sixth magnitude—that is, all those which are normally visible to the naked eye. It will also show the face of the heavens at various times in the distant past and future.

The observatory attached to the planetarium will provide opportunities for the general public to observe the heavens through its 5.1-inch telescope. This will be powerful enough to see the mountain ranges on the moon, the four larger satellites

of Jupiter, the rings of Saturn, and other phenomena. The observatory will also engage in constant study of sun-spots and variable stars, and co-ordinate its work with that undertaken up to now by the National Tzuchinshan (Purple Mountain) Observatory in Nanking, which is the largest in China.

Activities organized by the planetarium staff will be designed to popularize astronomical research. It is hoped to build up a corps of amateur observers of variable stars. The medium sized meteorological station attached to the planetarium will be well equipped, and besides its practical work of compiling meteorological data will help to spread a knowledge of this science. In suitable weather the planetarium lawn will be used for evening classes for young people interested in astronomy. Eight fine bronze astronomical instruments cast in the Ching dynasty will be placed in the exhibition hall.

## **Children Demand More Books**

A little while ago the Young Pioneers in Peking gave a party for writers, and, having these distinguished guests at their mercy, presented them with a little poem they'd written:

*Every week we take a look  
Around the bookshop for a book.  
The counter girls say, "No!  
Too bad—  
Nothing you've not already had."*

*Perhaps you do find something new.*

*Five minutes later you're half way through!*

*Come on, you writers! It's a sin*

*To fob us off with books so thin!*

*And plots—why, most of them have none;*

*You guess the end in chapter one.*

This was part of a campaign on behalf of a hundred and twenty million potential young readers who, as the *People's Daily* said in an editorial, are not getting a fair deal from either writers, editors or publishers.

That is not to say that a great deal hasn't been done. It has. But it's a huge task that calls for far more effort. From liberation till May 1955 New China published 2,800 new children's books—stories, poems, plays, fairy tales, science fiction and much else—in editions totalling 60 million copies. Several writers have made the grade. Every child knows Chang Tien-yi's stories, especially the one about Lo Wen-ying, who is always getting into trouble till the Pioneers help turn him into a good school-boy. Kao Shih-chi's science stories are prime favourites. Kao, a biologist, became paralyzed as a result of an accidental infection contracted when he was doing research. Now he writes books on popular science and science fiction for the children.

Besides books by Chinese writers, 850 children's books from all over the world have been translated into Chinese. Bookshops have sold over 12 million copies of stories by Pushkin, Gaidar, Hans Andersen, Mark Twain, and other famous tales from Russia and the Soviet Union, India, Korea, Burma, Viet-Nam, and so on.

But New China's youngsters are voracious and insatiable readers. In old China there were never more than 21 million children getting primary schooling. Now a good 70 million are learning to read and write, not to mention the older children at middle school. That is why the Writers' Union and the Youth League are calling on writers, both professional and non-professional, to write more for children. Seventy established writers have already said what they intend to do in the coming year, and several hundred more have promised to pay more attention to this. The Children's Book Publishing House has revised its plans and is going to put out an extra 10 million copies for the winter season, and in each of the next two years there will be a 25 per cent increase. The Hsinhua Bookshops are extending their network of special shops and services for children.

### **Youth Art Theatre**

The Chinese Youth Art Theatre of Peking has been building a name for itself as one of the most dynamic of the repertory groups in the country, staging plays in modern style. Their productions of Gogol's *Inspector-General* and Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya* made theatre history in Peking. Impeccably costumed and staged and excellently acted, they achieved an astonishing sense of period. They were directed by Sung Wei-shih, a graduate of the Lunacharsky Theatre School of Moscow. The theatre followed up these successes with two modern plays, Buryakovsky's *Julius Fucik* and Hsia Yen's *Fascist Germs*. Now it has turned to a series of one-act plays on topical questions: love and social conscience in the new

society; the ethics of co-operative farmers and the need for vigilance against counter-revolutionaries. All are the work of new, young playwrights.

The first takes its name from its heroine, *Liu Lien-ying*, a young woman worker in a textile mill, shyly in love with and loved by the shy leader of her brigade. In the midst of a tense emulation drive he is asked to lend one of his team to a rival brigade. Anxious to win the red banner, he wants to send one of his weaker members. Liu Lien-ying, however, criticizes this attitude as utterly foreign to the spirit of the Communist Party. She insists on his sending the best worker in the brigade. This causes a flare up between the pair. He accuses her of not caring whether his brigade loses the contest or not. But when congratulations begin to pour in praising him for his "fine socialist attitude," he realizes how wrong he has been, and the playlet ends on a tender reconciliation.

*Two Hearts* is a comedy for two players. A woman member of a new co-op farm sees another member, who they have all been told should be their model, taking—so she thinks—some of the co-op fertilizer for himself. So she does likewise. By the time this comedy of errors is put right she has learnt that co-op members can't have two loves, one for the co-op and one for themselves, but only one—for their own co-op.

*Be Vigilant* is an excellent little satire. A plausible stranger comes into an office thickly placarded with slogans stressing the need for vigilance. He effusively congratulates the director on his alertness: "If every office was like yours, we'd get what we want in no time"—and proceeds to cart off all the office

plans and cash. Only the vigilance of the office caretaker and a demobbed PLA man saves the situation in a surprise ending.

This evening of comedies has now been playing to packed houses for more than two months. Two other mobile troupes are taking six one-act plays to the factories and villages.

The Youth Theatre inherits its name from the Yanan Youth Theatre where most of its veteran members worked during the revolutionary wars. Formed in Peking in 1949, under the guidance of the Ministry of Culture, it was the first of New China's modern repertory theatres. It has its own stage and costume designers and a talented company of actors and actresses.

\* \* \*

### **More Village Cinemas**

The cinema industry is making a big drive to carry films to the villages. Two thousand three hundred mobile teams are now working in the rural areas. This is 800 more than in 1954. Practically every county in the country now has at least one. It is estimated that 380 million people in the rural areas saw films last year, 16 per cent more than in 1954.

\* \* \*

### **Swimming Records**

Eight new national records were made at the national swimming competitions which ended recently in Peking. Twenty-two swimmers shared the honours. Times showed a steady all-round improvement in our swimmers' style. Lin Chin-chu's winning time for the men's hundred metres free-style was 58.9 seconds. The new breast stroke time over that distance is one minute 13.6 seconds. Nearly half of the 90-odd competitors were under twenty and new-comers to this sport.



# IN THE NEWS

## Wiping Out Illiteracy

China plans to wipe out illiteracy among rural youth within seven years. With this aim in view every province in China has now drawn up its own special plan to provide spare-time literacy classes for peasants. Kiangsu's plan, for instance, is, between now and 1960, to provide schooling for 13 million people. At the end of that time it is reckoned that eight out of every ten rural young people who are now illiterate or semi-literate will be able to read and write. In China as a whole we estimate that there are something like 200 million illiterates—mainly in the rural areas—who will be able to read and write inside seven years. There are over 45 million peasants now studying in their spare time. Something like 45 million young people in the countryside are already literate, and they will be drawn into this great campaign.

## Farm Co-op Movement in Full Swing

The tide of agricultural co-operation is running fast. Latest reports show that Hopei is the first province in which the drive for semi-socialist farming is practically complete. By the end of November last, 70 per cent of all peasant households in the province had joined co-ops. Heilungkiang and Shansi are the

runners-up, and most other provinces expect to complete, in the main, the switch to semi-socialist agricultural co-operation some time this year.

Meanwhile all over the country wholly socialist agricultural producers' co-operatives are also being formed.

## More Good Harvests

Good harvests are being reported all over China. The figures for Anhwei, Honan and Kiangsu are now in, and they show that the 1955 grain yields are far and away higher than those forecast for 1957, the last year of the first Five-Year Plan. Anhwei, notorious as a calamity-stricken area, reports a grain output 1,771,000 tons heavier than its 1957 target. Honan's grain harvest is some 236,000 tons heavier and Kiangsu's over 98,000 tons heavier than what was expected in 1957, while Kiangsu's cotton crop is up by 63,000 tons. (All weights in tons avoirdupois.)

## Progress in Agricultural Research

Since liberation Chinese agriculture has benefited enormously from research.

Hundreds of new methods and improvements have been introduced in farming. What this means in terms of output is seen, for instance, in the fact that over

49 million acres are now growing improved strains of grain. A new variety of rice introduced in Liaoning in north-east China is giving yields anything from 15 to 40 per cent heavier than the strains traditionally grown there. In the north-east, too, they are growing several new varieties of rust-resistant wheat. In years when rust is prevalent their yield is nearly double that of non-resistant strains, and even in "normal" years they can be counted on to produce yields 30 per cent above the average.

The East China Agricultural Research Institute, working on Michurin's theories of vegetative and distant hybridization, has succeeded in fixing three new sorts of long-staple cotton, one of which, known as sea-island cotton, has fibres seldom less than 1½ inches long and sometimes as long as 2 inches.

In the field of stock-breeding, artificial insemination has been widely adopted with highly satisfactory results. Most horse-breeding areas in China using it claim that 90 to 100 per cent of the mares so inseminated go into foal.

## Large Factories Turn into Joint Enterprises

By the middle of December 1955, almost every large private factory in the country having 500 or more workers had become a joint state-private enterprise. At the end of 1953 there were 176 private factories of this size. By the end of October last more than 70 per cent of them had become joint state and private enterprises, and the movement quickened rapidly in the past few months.

Most of these factories are in Kiangsu, Szechuan, Chekiang and Kwangtung Provinces, the

bulk of them in such cities as Shanghai, Tientsin, Canton and Chungking. Most of them are in the light consumer goods industries such as cotton spinning and weaving, silk reeling, match and cigarette making, and so on.

### Socialist Change in Handicraft Industry

Handicraft industry, which in 1952 accounted for 14.8 per cent of China's total industrial and agricultural output, is undergoing a process of rapid socialist transformation. By the end of June last year there were more than 50,000 handicraft co-operative organizations with some 1,459,000 members. By September, in Hopei Province over 38 per cent of all handicraftsmen had joined co-ops, while in Shansi Province the figure was 43 per cent. Most of the new co-ops have succeeded in increasing production and improving the quality of their goods. Some have partly or completely mechanized production and become wholly socialist co-operative factories.

### Kirin Coal-field

In November 1950 work started on the sinking of two new shafts at Liaoyuan, in the province of Kirin, north-east China, and production started on December 1 last. The equipment and workings are modelled on those of the Donbas coal-field in the Soviet Union. Everything is highly mechanized and automated, and special attention has been paid to safety at work. It is estimated that output will be four or five times as much as that of older pits in this field.

### China Admitted to Inter-Parliamentary Union

During its three-day session in New Delhi which ended on November 30, 1955, the executive

committee of the Inter-Parliamentary Union resolved by four votes to three to admit China to the Union.

### Amenities for the Capital

Much work has been done in the past year to beautify Peking and improve public services. Three new parks, including a special one for the children, and the one round Coal Hill, after many improved works, have been opened. Forty-three thousand

fresh trees have been planted along the streets. Many imposing new buildings have gone up, including the Capital Theatre, the huge new department store and the gymnasium. Thirty-one miles of new road have been laid, and this year the last of the dirty old sewage ditches which disfigured Peking in the past is disappearing: it is being replaced by a proper sewer. Some twenty miles of new sewers were built during the year.

## International

# WHAT THE PAPERS SAY

### Dulles Defends Portuguese Colonialism

"Granny, what big teeth you have!" cried little Red Riding Hood when she saw the wolf disguised as her kind old granny. And this about sums up the reaction of Chinese public opinion to the latest pronouncement of John Foster Dulles when, in a statement made jointly with the Portuguese Foreign Minister on December 2 last, he described Goa, Daman and Diu as Far Eastern provinces of Portugal and followed this up soon after by assigning the same status to Macao.

Dulles cannot for long maintain the pose of anti-colonialism. The voracious attributes of U.S. imperialism cannot be hid.

Many angry denunciations of these provocative statements have been published in the Chinese press. "No one knows better than the Indian and Chinese people to whom Goa and Macao belong," writes Observer in his commentary in the *People's Daily* of December 11. "They have no

need of a judgment handed down by the U.S. Secretary of State. No matter how often he repeats his absurdities, Dulles cannot alter the facts or shake the determination of the Indian and Chinese peoples to recover territories that are theirs.

"Still, what Dulles said does have some value. It helps the peoples of Asia see more clearly that the U.S.A. is in the van of the colonialists.

"Condemned by the people of India and the rest of the world, the Portuguese colonialists dared not stand up to speak for themselves, because they knew they hadn't a leg to stand on. But Dulles has no scruples about defending the aggressive acts of the Portuguese colonialists. He even stresses that his joint statement was issued after very careful consideration, as much as to say that the United States takes full responsibility for the consequences of this act together with Portugal. Dulles has now exposed the U.S. in its real role as protector of the colonial system and tries to blackmail the

Asian peoples with a show of American 'strength.'

"Dulles has attempted to confuse world public opinion by alleging that the Soviet leaders' just strictures on colonialism made in India demonstrated a lack of desire to ease tension in Asia. He talks as if opposition to colonialism is tantamount to preventing an easing of tension in Asia. But the Asian peoples know very well that the present tension in Asia arises from aggressive attempts by the U.S. to maintain colonial rule in Asia. The record is blatant: the U.S. is obstructing a peaceful settlement of the Korean and Indo-Chinese questions. It is in indefinite occupation of Japan and is forcing Japan to re-arm. It has seized China's Taiwan and is creating tension in the Taiwan Straits. It has organized a military bloc in South-east Asia and is preparing a war in which it schemes to make Asians fight Asians. It is whipping together what it calls the 'northern tier defence' in the Middle East and trying to sow discord among the Middle East countries and between those countries and the Soviet Union.

"The people of Asia are becoming increasingly aware that the struggle against colonialism is an integral part of the struggle to ease tension in Asia and safeguard peace. The achievements of the Asian-African Conference gave a clear demonstration of this."

Observer concludes with the warning that "the time is long past when the U.S. could intimidate Asian peoples by its 'strength.' Dulles's attempt, by threats and blackmail, to hold back the mounting anti-colonialist struggle of the Asian peoples will only make them more determined than ever to oppose U.S. aggression."

## Sino-Syrian Trade Agreements

On November 30, a trade agreement and an agreement on payments between the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Government of the Republic of Syria were signed in Damascus. Coming soon after the signing of the Sino-Egyptian trade agreement, this is another milestone marking the growth of friendly relations between China and the countries of the Middle and Near East.

"These agreements provide a splendid example of the economic co-operation between Asian and African countries which was urged at the Bandung Conference," says a commentary in the *Tientsin Ta Kung Pao* on December 3. The underlying spirit of the agreements is equality, mutual benefit and respect for each other's sovereignty. In the trade agreement, the governments of the two countries engage themselves to take all necessary measures to encourage and enlarge trade between the two countries and to do everything possible to balance imports and exports. The two signatories will enjoy "most-favoured-nation" treatment under the agreement, and trade representatives of the two countries will be exchanged. Syria will send agricultural and animal products including cotton, grain, wool and sheep skins, and China will send steel and iron products, machinery, telecommunications equipment, building materials, light industrial and other products.

*Ta Kung Pao* recalls that Syria has concluded similar agreements with the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Poland and the German Democratic Republic, and says that "the road taken by Syria is in her nation-

al interests and in the interests of strengthening international co-operation."

These agreements, the commentary concludes, not only mark the opening of a new stage in economic relations between the two countries, but are an augury that the general relations and friendly ties between the two countries will become stronger and closer.

## CHRONICLE OF EVENTS

December 1—Central Committee of China New Democratic Youth League takes decision to wipe out illiteracy among young people in the countryside within seven years.

New coal-mine at Liaoyuan in Kirin starts up.

December 3—Herr Richard Gyptner, new Ambassador of German Democratic Republic to China, presents credentials.

December 6—Antibiotics Research Conference, which was sponsored by Academia Sinica and opened in Peking on December 1, closes. Scientists from ten countries took part.

December 8—A government delegation from the German Democratic Republic, headed by its Prime Minister, Herr Otto Grotewohl, arrives in Peking.

December 10—Delegation from the Chinese People's Republic, headed by Chu Teh, leaves Peking for the German Democratic Republic to attend celebrations of President Wilhelm Pieck's eightieth birthday. Chu Teh also leads a delegation from the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party to attend

the second Congress of the Rumanian Workers' Party.

December 15 — Conference on Minority Languages called by the Academia Sinica and the Central Institute for Nationalities closes. The conference decided to help minorities which had as yet no written language to devise one, and to help those whose language in its written form was imperfect or not in common use to improve it.

Exhibition of Economic and Cultural Achievements of the Soviet Union in Canton closes. It had been open for two months, and more than 2,350,000 people had visited it.

---

## LETTERS

---

### What We Want to Know

We want to know more about New China: tell us how you are changing your country from a medieval and feudal nation to an industrialized socialist country. We want to know more about the progress of your Five-Year's Plan, the drawbacks, if any, from which your country suffers and the efforts that are being made to remove them.

China, like other Asian countries, is principally an agricultural country—and thus like other Asian countries, the main problem of China is *how to raise the living standard of the majority of the people*—those who live in villages. No doubt

your government has taken certain steps in this connection, but we want to know more about them. Have you completely abolished landlordism? What is the maximum quantity of land that your government allows a peasant to keep for himself? How long will it take to collectivize land in China? What is being done to modernize farming in your country? All these questions are of immense importance to us! For every Asian country wants to ameliorate the miserable condition of the peasants.

It is generally admitted that industrialization is the key to progress. As nearly all the Asian countries face this problem as well, we want to know how your country is solving this important problem. I have read some very excellent articles in *People's China*, and I hope you will continue such articles in future.

But the matter should not end here. People throughout the world want to know how your country reacts to various international problems. Tell us how your country reacts to big developments. You must always support the freedom struggles of Middle-East countries—the voice of 600 million people of your country has great weight in international affairs, and so you should not miss any opportunity to raise your voice in defence of people fighting against imperialist exploitation and slavery.

India  
AZAD

### A Vote for a Coloured Cover

Being a great admirer of China, both ancient and modern, its political development, culture, art, history, and Chinese ways of life, devoting a lot of time to the study of Chinese, I welcome every single copy of your magazine. Owing to the unfortunate political developments in this part of the world, we seldom have any chance to hear anything about the free nations of the Far East, and this is the more deplorable since international understanding and friendship is something the world needs so badly these days. So I am very glad indeed that there is a good paper like yours which gives us the opportunity to see what is going on in New China.

... Though I read *People's China* mainly for general interest, I like your theoretical articles. They are good as they are, including some statistical documents and speeches. The most interesting article so far has been Mr. Chou En-lai's "Report on the Work of the Government" (No. 20, 1954). Very good too are your features on culture and arts, but your historical articles should be as objective as possible. Your picture section is excellent, but please show us the daily life of a worker or a farmer too. . . . I would propose for *People's China* a colour photo cover, but please continue your ink-paintings on the last page!

K. G.

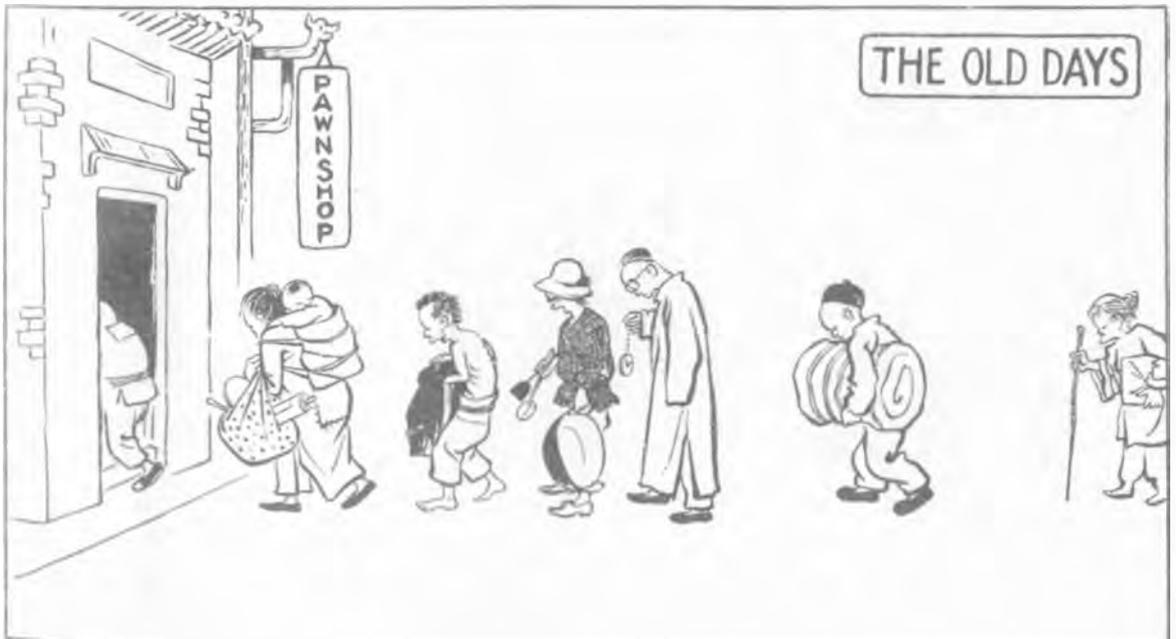
Cologne Deutz  
Western Germany

---

Published by the FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS, 26 Kuo Hui Chieh, Peking, China

Entered as First-Class Printed Matter at the General Post Office of China

Printed in the People's Republic of China



Cartoon by Su Kuang

