

## RED GUARDS ON LONG MARCH

Peiping, Jen-min Jih-pao, 22 November 1966

Among the revolutionary teachers and students coming on foot to Peiping to exchange revolutionary experience was a detachment comprising thirteen young fighters. In late October, cherishing infinite love for our great leader Chairman Mao and obeying Chairman Mao's teaching of "becoming hardened under storm and stress and seeing realities of the world," they walked more than 1,000 li, crossing mountains and rivers. The next day after they arrived at Peiping, Chairman Mao received revolutionary teachers and students from other parts of the country for the sixth time. They happily passed seven hours and more on the reviewing stand by the side of our great leader. This detachment was the "Long March Red Guard Detachment" of Ching-chung Agricultural Middle School, Lin-tzu Hsien, Shantung Province.

Hardship and fatigue were the first obstacle in their journey on foot to exchange revolutionary experience. The attitude adopted by the young fighters of this "long March Red Guard Detachment" could be expressed by one word: Struggle! Depending on the invincible thought of Mao Tse-tung, emulating the heroism of "the Red Army that fears not the trials of a distant march," and resolutely deciding to prove themselves red successors to the Old Red Army, they overcame hardships one after another.

In order to temper their spirit of enduring hardship and fatigue, they often looked for difficulties consciously. Let us begin the story

with the start of their long march. Originally they planned to set out in daytime. Later, they felt that march at night would give them greater training. Therefore, they chose to set out at night. In order to learn the example of the Old Red Army of preparing their meals in the course of the march, they brought with them food and cooking utensils.

That night, they each carried a knapsack weighing 10 to 20 chin. Pulling a cart loaded with portable stoves and cooking utensils and grain enough for about one month's consumption, they set out. They walked 40 to 50 li without a stop. Some of them had their feet swollen, while some others felt their legs tired. Then they came to a section of the road under repair. Their feet sank into mud and water measuring more than half a foot deep. Should they move on? Some of them hesitated.

Then, the political instructor, who was elected by them, led them to recite a quotation from Chairman Mao: "Be resolute, fear no sacrifice and surmount every difficulty to win victory." The propagandist in the team conducted them to sing in unison: "... You youths ... are like the sun at eight or nine o'clock in the morning, We rest our hopes in you."

The great thought of Mao Tse-tung gave them incomparable courage and strength. The young fighters plucked up their courage and advanced in broad strides. Pulling their cart and chanting the slogan, "Perseverance brings victory," they marched forward bravely again...

It was noon one day when they came to a vast stretch of low-lying alkaline land. There was no village for 40 or 50 li around. They set up their stoves to boil water and cook their meals, using the tree branches and rice stalks they had collected on the way and fetching water from a nearby river. The water boiled, but when they drank it, they found it salty and bitter. Some of them looked at this bucketful of water, shaking their heads.

Seeing this, the political instructor told them a story about the Red Army eating wild grass and tree bark during their Long March. He said meaningfully: "Schoolmates, the water we have today is not very tasty. However, it still is very sweet if compared with the hardship our revolutionary fore-runners formerly suffered."

These words cheered them. Talking and laughing, they drank the bitter water and ate their meal. After that, a female student said in deep emotion: "If we do not experience personally the hardship our revolutionary forerunners formerly suffered, we youths brought up in sweet water can never apprehend that our happy life is gained through hardship!"

"We must respect the masses, keep contact with them, carry out propaganda among them, and help them do everything that is possible, so that the masses may feel that students educated by Chairman Mao serve the people

and carry the revolution everywhere they may be." This is a task which the "Long March Red Guard Detachment" has specified in its declaration. This is a part of the content of their learning from the Old Red Army. They have said so, and they have acted accordingly.

Before setting out on their long march, the young fighters held a discussion: What meaningful gifts should we give the masses on the route of our march? They decided to use their income which they had earned from part-time jobs to buy over 1,200 copies of pamphlets containing single articles by Chairman Mao. Chairman Mao's works are the life line of the laboring people and an invaluable treasure for the revolution! Taking in their hands this batch of precious gifts, the poor and lower-middle peasants and the revolutionary masses all felt ineffable joy and were greatly excited...

During their long march, the young fighters publicized the thought of Mao Tse-tung and the 16-Point Decision of the Party Central Committee. They carried out propaganda in every village and every family they came to. Some of them helped the production teams publish blackboard newspapers, some others studied Quotations from Chairman Mao together with the commune members, and still others taught the peasants to sing songs with words from Chairman Mao's quotations.

All along their way, the young fighters, taking Lei Feng as their example, consciously did a great deal of good deeds for the masses. As soon as they came to a place, they laid down their luggage and went to help the poor and lower-middle peasants and surviving dependents of martyrs and dependents of servicemen carry water, cut their hair and clean their courtyards, despite their fatigue...

In the course of their long march, the young fighters followed the example of the Liberation Army and strictly observed the Three Main Rules of Discipline and the Eight Points for Attention everywhere they came to. They said: "We are servants of the people. We have only the duty of serving the people and have no right to harm the interests of the masses."

When they asked for a cup of water from the masses, they paid for it. Though carrots were planted by the roadside, none of them tried to take them even if they were very hungry.

When they came to a village in Pin Hsien the young fighters lived in the house of an old man surnamed Chao and used a few bundles of his firewood and hay for fuel. They paid him according to the market price, but this old man refused to accept the money no matter what they said. Before leaving his house the next day, they secretly put the money under a kerosene lamp...

During their long march, the young fighters humbly learned the distinguished qualities of the workers and peasants and took nourishment from them. They often examined their thinking side by side with the advanced

deeds of the workers and peasants, so as to promote remolding of their thinking. They said: "This is Chairman Mao's teaching. This is an example set for us by the Old Red Army and the Liberation Army."

After setting out on their march, they saw that portraits of Chairman Mao were pasted in every house and placards of quotations from Chairman Mao put up everywhere in fields and worksites. Some commune members could recite quotations from Chairman Mao more fluently than they did. The strong political atmosphere in the vast countryside and the surging enthusiasm of the workers and peasants in their study greatly surprised the young fighters.

Before setting out, some students thought that they might excel the peasants in the study of Chairman Mao's works. After this comparison, they blushed with shame. "If we do not study diligently, we shall fall behind a long distance!" This was the common feeling of the young fighters. "We must make haste to catch up and must not fall behind." This was their unanimous decision...

When they came to a village and as soon as they laid down their baggage, many poor and lower-middle peasants came to greet them and helped them prepare their meal. One night, the young fighters were so very tired that they went to sleep without packing their cart. When they got up early next morning, they saw that their stoves, ovens, and bellows had already been put back in the cart. Lifting the lid of their cooking pot, they saw it was more than half filled with red dates. The young fighters were so moved that they almost shed tears.

On another occasion, the young fighters had gone astray. A local resident led them along winding paths for over ten li until they came to the highway.

Whenever they thanked the poor and lower-middle peasants, the latter always said: "This is what Chairman Mao has taught us to do. You should thank Chairman Mao instead!"

"How have we done our part?" Before the clear mirror of the poor and lower-middle peasants, the young fighters examined themselves time and again and asked themselves this question. Some said: "Chairman Mao has taught us to be extremely enthusiastic to our comrades and the people. We have read this teaching very many times. Compared with the poor and lower-middle peasants, we are far behind in putting this teaching into effect." They decided to keep contact more frequently with the masses, serve the people in a better way, apply the thought of Mao Tse-tung in thoroughly remolding their thinking and sentiment, and temper themselves into really capable red successors to the Old Red Army!