

PEKING RED GUARDS SETTLE IN INNER MONGOLIA

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[Text] Huhehot--A group of 10 Red Guards from Peking have happily settled down in a herdsmen's community on the Inner Mongolian grassland.

Path-breakers in the great proletarian cultural revolution, they decided to carry on the revolution by saying good-bye to city life and its modern conveniences in order to take part in building a prosperous socialist countryside and remold their own world outlook in the process.

Their decision was inspired by Chairman Mao's teaching: "How should we judge whether a youth is a revolutionary? How can we tell? There can only be one criterion, namely, whether or not he is willing to integrate himself with the broad masses of workers and peasants and does so in practice. If he is willing to do so and actually does so, he is a revolutionary; otherwise he is a non-revolutionary or a counterrevolutionary."

They are only a few of the large group of volunteers from Peking who have settled down in Inner Mongolia to become members of the growing generation of educated herdsmen.

The day they entrained for Inner Mongolia, 9 October 1967, the 10 Red Guards gathered in Tiananmen Square in the heart of Peking and made this pledge before a portrait of our great leader Chairman Mao: "We will always remain loyal to Chairman Mao, to Mao Tse-tung's thought and Chairman Mao's proletarian revolutionary line. We will advance along the bright road Chairman Mao has pointed out to us, and live up to the expectations of the party and Chairman Mao."

They were overwhelmed with difficulties upon arrival. None of them could speak a word of Mongolian or ride on horseback. They did not like the piping hot strong tea drunk locally and took a long time to get used to the diet of large helpings of mutton and beef with little green vegetables. There were so many difficulties to overcome and new things to learn, living in a yurt (felt tent) and working out of doors.

They drew encouragement from Chairman Mao's teaching: "What is work? Work is struggle. There are difficulties and problems in those places for us to overcome and solve. We go there to work and struggle to overcome these difficulties. A good comrade is one who is more eager to go where the difficulties are greater."

As they steeled themselves, they gradually overcame the difficulties and grew used to a herdsman's life. But they soon found out that in welcoming them so warmly, the herdsmen's production brigade had given them better accommodation than the ordinary herdsmen had for fear that life on the grassland would be too hard for the newcomers. They were also given lighter work to do.

The Red Guards immediately asked to be treated as ordinary members of the brigade and refused any preferential treatment. They were determined to live the life of an ordinary herdsman, take part in the common struggle and share the joys and difficulties of the community. "Otherwise, how can we identify ourselves with the herdsmen and remold our world outlook, let alone serve the herdsmen?" they asked themselves.

It was after they became as one with the herdsmen that the young Red Guards began to notice, appreciate, and gradually acquire the former's many good qualities. They learned how the herdsmen would readily give up their own blankets on cold winter nights to keep the sheep warm, and how they always tended the collective's sheep before they looked after their own private flock. They learned that, when in doubt, the herdsmen always consulted Chairman Mao's works and studied the relevant quotations before they made decisions.

Hu Chih-chien, one of the Red Guards, was tending sheep one day when he felt cold and thirsty. He ran home to have some hot tea. When he returned he found that the sheep had strayed. After he had rounded them all up, he studied Chairman Mao's article "In Memory of Norman Bethune" and made a self-criticism. Since that day, he has never attended to his personal affairs while on duty and has never let the sheep go out of his sight however cold, hungry, or thirsty he might be.

As the commune hospital was far away and the production brigade did not have its own medical assistant, Chin Kun volunteered to do this job. She studied hard to complete her courses ahead of schedule so that the herdsmen would not have to travel to the hospital for minor ailments. She is now a well qualified medical assistant.

The herdsmen treat the Red Guards like members of their own families. They tell the Red Guards how they suffered in old society and what liberation meant to them. Their relations have become closer in the common struggles of the cultural revolution.

At a recent conference in the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region, the 10 Red Guards were cited as an advanced unit because of their wholehearted devotion in serving the people, the socialist revolution, and the socialist construction.

The Red Guards, on their part, pledged that in future they would redouble their efforts to be loyal to Chairman Mao and to follow his proletarian revolutionary line. For they know they have only just begun to revolutionize themselves ideologically. There is still a long way to go before they become staunch proletarian revolutionaries and worthy successors to the proletarian revolutionary cause.