

BEIJING REVIEW

北京周報

A CHINESE WEEKLY OF
NEWS AND VIEWS

- 5th National Women's Congress
- Developing Trade With Third World
- China's TV Plays



LETTERS

Personality Cult

Beijing Review is very informative and enjoys a higher prestige among its readers today. I'm most interested in An Zhiguo's articles in the column "Notes From the Editors."

"A comeback of personality cult?" in issue No. 32 has far-reaching significance. Frankly speaking, many Japanese do worry that a personality cult similar to that towards Chairman Mao Zedong has reappeared in China.

Although China is a big neighbour of Japan and, either from personal feelings or historical and cultural traditions, Japan has been on intimate terms with China, I still think that our people lack understanding about China. In the more than a decade since the two countries restored diplomatic relations, the Japanese people have befriended and shown great concern for China and the Chinese people. However, they lack basic knowledge about China. In this sense, your magazine carries a heavy responsibility. In my view, it is necessary for the Japanese press to give more reports about China's active, forward-looking attitude. On your part, it is equally necessary to attract the attention of the Japanese TV, press and other media.

After reading the introduction to the *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping* in issue No. 28, I understand that they are important writings which guide your modernization drive. This article also helps readers have a better

understanding of "A comeback of personality cult?"

Yoshikazu Konishi
Yokohama, Japan

Deeper Understanding of China

Many of your readers take great interest in China and wonder about the life and thoughts of its people — one-fourth of humanity. What are their preoccupations, their aspirations, their joys and their sorrows? How do the housewives, peasants, workers, employees, herdsmen, cadres and technicians who make up the Chinese society live? What are the relations between society and the individual?

The *China Today* series helps me understand China. Here are my impressions:

China has one billion inhabitants. We do not question the need for birth control. But people worry when children are limited to one per couple: what if the child dies after the mother has been sterilized? And, in the countryside, only two children per couple at the very most—who will take care of the land if a couple has only two children?

Your explanation of the functions of the neighbourhood committees helped me a lot. Each committee runs a medical station, takes care of vaccinations and assists in family planning. Whatever opinions the committee hears from the inhabitants it brings to relevant government organizations. The committee for maintaining order and the mediation committee also seem to bring improvements.

"Life on Farm: Qianzhou Peo-

ple's Commune" (*China Today* 2) describes very well the administrative system, factories run by the peasants and the people's commune system. It also discusses changes of the administrative system of the people's commune. This system has since 1958 been responsible for the transformation of the relations of production and of productive forces. The commune has played a role in the construction of great water conservancy projects, the consolidation of big fields and the development of industry and sideline activities in the countryside. I think, it is right to trust the ability of the peasants.

Collective economy now still dominates rural production. Thus, the welfare and labour protection of the peasants are different from those of the urban workers. However, the livelihood of childless old people and orphans in the countryside is guaranteed. I think, the rural labourers should enjoy the same welfare as the urban workers do.

Basele Iyolow, Y Wa
Henry-Whitelow
Kinshasa, Zaire

Suggestions

It is interesting to know how China is trying to achieve modernization. The statistics, if they are precise, are also very interesting. As I major in Chinese studies, I very often use them. I would like very detailed articles on one particular subject: for instance, a textile factory in Suzhou, what it does and what its plans are, or, one particular university, describing its activities, saying if it is really possible for a foreigner to go and study in China, telling about evening classes, if there are any, for the Chinese or for foreigners, etc.

I find your magazine interesting, especially in the past few years. Couldn't you, to further dialogue with other countries and bring their peoples closer, also describe life in some of the countries that are friends of China and whose customs are not well-known, and write about their diplomatic, economic and political relations with China?

I sometimes find it troublesome to see the end of an article several pages later instead of on the next page.

Monique Chataigner
Paris, France

Chinese Documents

The First Session of the Sixth National People's Congress

- Report on Government Work
- Report on 1983 Plan for Development
- Report on 1982 Final State Accounts
- New Government Leadership

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HIGHLIGHTS OF THE WEEK

5th National Women's Congress

The fifth National Women's Congress, held in Beijing from Sept. 2 to 12 and attended by more than 2,000 representatives, revised the constitution of the Women's Federation and elected its new leadership. Kang Keqing was re-elected its chairwoman. She delivered a report at the congress reviewing the achievements of the women's movement and setting forth new tasks for the next five years (p. 5).

Trade With Other Third World Countries

Chen Muhua, State Councillor, reviews the development of China's trade relations with other third world countries and outlines the principles and measures for promoting these relations (p. 15).

Development of China's TV Plays

With TV sets coming to more and more rural homes, TV plays are enjoying growing attention. In this issue, *Beijing Review* recounts the development of this art form, which came into its own in China only a few years ago (p. 18).

Helping the Rural Poor to Catch Up

One-third of the countryside where the peasants used to have low incomes have become relatively well-off in the last few years. We provide report about how the Laian County authorities assist poor rural families to raise their earnings (p. 23).

Kampuchea at the United Nations

UN resolutions on Kampuchea enjoy more support from the international community, which wants the world body to apply greater pressure on Viet Nam to reach a real political settlement (p. 4).

Solution to the Palestinian Question

A stable and lasting peace in the Middle East depends on a comprehensive, just solution to the Palestinian issue. This means restoring the inalienable rights to the Palestinians, including the right to return to their homeland and establish their own independent state in Palestine (p. 11).



Minority nationality delegates to the Fifth National Women's Congress.

Photo by Shen Yantai

NOTES FROM THE EDITORS

Kampuchean issue on the UN agenda

The Kampuchean issue has been on the agenda of the United Nations General Assembly sessions for four years. Each year, the session adopts a resolution demanding that Viet Nam withdraw its troops from Kampuchea. However, the Vietnamese authorities stick to their stand of aggression and do not intend to pull out their troops from the territory they have illegally occupied. Thus, the question remains, and the issue continues to be included as an item on the agenda.

Under these circumstances, some countries have lost patience waiting for the past four UN resolutions to be carried out. They are anxious to seek a political settlement of the problem. This attitude is understandable. The international community is seeking such a settlement through a number of channels. The 37th Session of the UN General Assembly has resolved to hold an international conference at an appropriate time to find a comprehensive political settlement of the issue.

But what kind of political settlement should we seek? There may be many alternative proposals in people's minds. Various ideas have been mentioned in the UN resolutions as well as in the statements made by the Vietnamese authorities. They are not the same, and must be studied with care.

The so-called political settlement advocated by Hanoi is essentially a negation of the relevant resolutions of the UN General Assembly and the Dec-

laration of the International Conference on Kampuchea. It also requires a withdrawal of support for the Kampuchean people in their struggle against the Vietnamese aggressors, and recognition of the fait accompli created by Vietnamese aggression in Kampuchea. This is not a political settlement in any sense, but capitulation of a weak nation to a strong one.

A few people have tried to resolve the problem by accepting the Vietnamese occupation of Kampuchea as an irreversible event. Such an attitude will only increase the arrogance of the Vietnamese aggressors.

An old Chinese saying goes, "To tolerate evil is to abet it." Viet Nam's invasion of Kampuchea is a part of its plan to set up an "Indochinese federation" and to seek hegemony in the whole of Southeast Asia. The Soviet Union, which stands behind Viet Nam, is eager to thrust southward into Southeast Asia and the west Pacific as part of its global strategy. Those going out of their way to cater to Viet Nam's needs will only whet its appetite for expansion and invite more aggression in the future.

There are also some kind-hearted people who believed Vietnamese proposals of "partial withdrawal," "bloc dialogue" and other tricks were demonstration of "flexibility." They would have liked to seek a compromise with Viet Nam by meeting some of its demands in exchange for withdrawal of its troops from Kampuchea. How-

ever, the Vietnamese soon showed their true colours and resumed their insistence that the situation in Kampuchea is irrevocable. Instead of bringing about an early solution, this approach will make the issue more complicated and delay the process of resolving it.

China is in favour of a political settlement. But this must be one based on principles which have been set forth in the resolutions of the UN General Assembly sessions and the Declaration of the International Conference on Kampuchea. The key to such a settlement is the total withdrawal of foreign troops from Kampuchea and the Kampuchean people's exercise of their right to self-determination. Since the problem originates from Viet Nam's sending its troops to invade a sovereign state, its solution logically demands the end of this aggression and an unconditional and complete withdrawal of the invading troops. Whoever started the trouble should end it. This is the only way to break the current deadlock. Although this solution may require time and energy, it is the correct one for securing a just and reasonable resolution of the issue.

In the past four years, the UN General Assembly sessions have successively adopted correct resolutions demanding Viet Nam's withdrawal, and four times have accepted the credentials of the delegation from Democratic Kampuchea. These actions have greatly deflated the arrogance of the aggressors while upholding the dignity of the UN Charter and basic human justice. They have given enormous encouragement and support to the Kampuchean

The Fifth National Women's Congress

people in their struggle to resist Viet Nam and save their nation.

The UN resolutions are enjoying more support from members of the world organization. The number of nations who uphold the lawful seat of Democratic Kampuchea in the United Nations increases year after year. In 1979, 71 nations supported Democratic Kampuchea. In 1980, 74 nations did; 77 in 1981 and 90 in 1982. The number of nations favouring the resolution calling for Viet Nam's withdrawal was even larger; in 1982, there were 105, representing an overwhelming majority of the member states. This bears out the truth that a just cause enjoys abundant support, while an unjust cause finds little support.

Now, the heroic struggle of the Kampuchean people and the correct stand taken by the international community have landed Hanoi in a difficult position. Time is on the side of the people, and against the invaders.

It is the responsibility of the international community to apply political pressure on and economic sanctions against Viet Nam, to give aid and support to the resistance struggle led by the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea and to urge the Soviet Union to stop its support of Viet Nam's aggression. Only thus can Hanoi be forced to come to terms and accept a real settlement of the Kampuchean issue. This is one of the major tasks confronting the current UN General Assembly session.

— International Editor
Mu Youlin

More than 2,000 representatives from the country's 56 nationalities attended the Fifth National Congress of Chinese Women, held in Beijing from September 2 to 12. Many of them are model women who have contributed to the long years of revolutionary struggle and the building of socialism.

Party and state leaders Hu Yaobang, Deng Xiaoping, Zhao Ziyang, Li Xiannian and Peng Zhen attended the opening session and extended their warm greetings. Deng Yingchao delivered a congratulatory speech on behalf of the Party Central Committee.

In her speech, Deng Yingchao spoke highly of the revolutionary traditions and fine qualities of the Chinese women, described the tasks which face the women's movement in the new historical period, and called on the whole society to safeguard

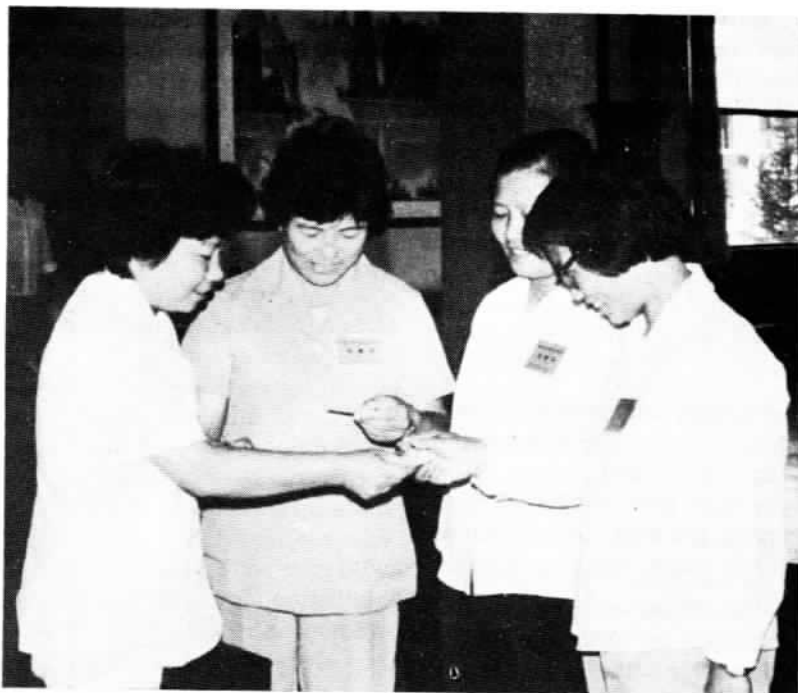
the legitimate rights and interests of women and children and support women in their work.

The congress revised the constitution of the All-China Women's Federation and elected new leadership for the Fifth All-China Women's Federation. Kang Keqing was re-elected chairwoman of the federation. Luo Qiong, Wu Yifang, Lei Jieqiong and 10 others were elected vice-chairwomen and Zhang Guoying was appointed the first secretary of its secretariat.

The congress commended nearly 10,000 model workers and collectives, as well as 10,000 exemplary families.

Major Points of Kang's Report

The representatives discussed and approved the work report by Kang Keqing, the Chairwoman of the Fourth Executive



Zou Hong (first from left), the manager of the Friendship Restaurant in Shenzhen, chats with three other representatives from Guangdong Province.

Committee of the All-China Women's Federation.

The report reviewed the women's movement in the past five years and set forth tasks for the movement in the next five years.

Major achievements in the past five years:

—The number of women workers and staff members in state and collectively owned undertakings and enterprises rose from 31.28 million in 1978 to 40.93 million in 1982, accounting for 36.2 per cent of the total number of workers and staff members as against 32.9 per cent in 1978. In textile and commercial departments, women comprise more than 80 per cent of the labour force. In addition, a considerable number of young women are self-employed.

—Since the implementation of the system of responsibility for production in the countryside, rural women have created more wealth for the state, their collectives and their families than they ever had since the founding of the People's Republic of China.

—In 1982 there were 1.93 million female scientists and technicians, compared with 1.67 million in 1978. The number of senior women professionals in the natural sciences went up from 1,412 in 1978 to 6,588 in 1982.

—Fifty-four women won world sports championships from 1981 to July 1983; this is more than half to all the championships won by Chinese athletes in the same period.

—In most of the people's congresses at various levels, 20 per cent of the deputies are women. All Party and state departments have women as leading members.

—Altogether, 3.84 million model families and 0.42 million "March 8th red banner pace-setters" and "March 8th red banner units" at or above the county and city levels have been commended.

Kang Keqing pointed out that only when women become more involved in social labour and work can the equality between men and women and the complete emancipation of women be realized. The idea that "too many people are employed in China now, and as women shoulder a heavy burden in the families, they should return home and perform their household duties" is wrong because it is incompatible with the principle of equality between men and women and is bound to weaken the socialist modernization.

Major problems:

—The feudal idea of regarding men as superior to women has reappeared, along with other prejudices. For instance, in some places, open and subtle discriminatory demands have been put forward in order to impose restrictions on the involvement of women in study and work and on the selection and promotion of women cadres. In production, labour protection for women has been ignored. Arranged marriages have encroached upon women's freedom to choose their husbands. What is most intolerable is that some ugly things which had been eliminated since the founding of New China have recurred. Crimes such as female infanticide, abuse of women, maltreatment of mothers who give birth to girl babies and abduction and persecution of women and children have been reported from time to time.

—The cultural, scientific and technical education levels of most women are rather low.

About 70 per cent of the 200 million illiterates in the country are women.

—Heavy household chores still adversely affect the progress and health of women.

Tasks for the future:

The principles adopted by the Party Central Committee for future work with women are "resolutely defending the legitimate rights and interests of women and children, ensuring the healthy growth of the young and giving full scope to the great role women perform in building socialist material and spiritual civilization." In line with these principles, Kang Keqing asked women throughout the country to do the following:

(1) Foster lofty revolutionary ideals, work and study hard to constantly enhance their ideological and political consciousness, raise their level of cultural and scientific knowledge and improve their professional skills, so as to make new contributions to building the material and cultural wealth of socialist society.

(2) Actively publicize and implement the Constitution and state laws, courageously defend the lawful rights of women and children and struggle against all manners of discrimination and persecution of women.

(3) Pay attention to and improve family education, energetically develop child-care centres and take good care of the younger generation.

(4) Use socialist ideology to correctly handle the relationships between love, marriage and child-care on the one hand and work, labour and study on the other.

(5) Work to promote reunification of the motherland and to safeguard world peace.

Diversified economic forms encouraged

"The Party Central Committee and the State Council fully support the urban collective and individual economies," said Hu Yaobang, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, on August 30.

Hu was speaking to 300 delegates to a national conference held in Beijing from August 23 to 29 to commend 609 individuals and units who have made advances in developing the collective and individual economies. He spoke highly of the role these two economic sectors play in China's economic development.

Hu said that in 1982, collective enterprises produced goods to the value of 119,300 million yuan (about US\$60,000 million), accounting for 21.4 per cent of the nation's gross output value for industry.

In the first half of this year,

the number of people employed in the collective sector reached 26.81 million. The number of self-employed labourers was 1.86 million, with 54 per cent working in commerce, 9.3 per cent in catering and 7.2 per cent in repairing services. (The proportion for the latter was small because few people like this kind of job.)

Hu Yaobang criticized outdated values which regard working in state-owned enterprises as more respectable than working in collective enterprises, and give no credit to the self-employed.

"We have abolished the system of exploitation," Hu said. "Every job which benefits the country and the people is to be respected."

"What would our market and people's lives be like if there were no collective and individual economies to serve the daily needs of the people?" he asked.

However, an important characteristic of China's socialist

economy is that the state-owned economy occupies the dominant position and the collective and individual economies supplement it. Collective enterprises take sole responsibility for their own gains and losses and follow the principle of distribution "to each according to his work." They are scattered about and can better meet the demands of the market. As a necessary supplement to the socialist public economy, the individual economic sector plays a positive role which should not be overlooked. It creates more jobs and provides many conveniences for the people.

China's collective and individual economies have developed rapidly since 1979 when a policy was adopted to allow diversified economic forms to coexist with the leading state-owned economy. By the end of June 1983, there were 6.327 million more people employed in collective enterprises than in 1978; this represents 23.7 per cent of the working population. Individual labourers increased by 1.71 million, accounting for 1.62 per cent of the labour force in the cities and towns.

46.5 million people employed since 1977

From 1977 to the end of last June, 46.5 million Chinese city-dwellers have been given jobs. The unemployment rate has fallen from 5.5 to 2.6 per cent.

He Guang, Vice-Minister of Labour and Personnel, said that in 1977 and 1978 an average of 5.3 million people were given jobs each year, and from 1979 to 1982 an annual average of 8.3 million people were assigned



Some representatives to the conference.

jobs. In the first half of this year 2.5 million people became employed. Of these, 1.7 million had been out of work for some time.

He Guang said, "The employment problem has been basically solved in 30 cities, or one-eighth of all cities in the country." Many jobless people have also been given jobs in most provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions.

The vice-minister attributed these achievements mainly to the development of the collective and individual economies. Thirty-seven per cent of those employed work in units owned by the state in 1980. The figure dropped to 20.9 per cent in 1982. Those who were assigned jobs in units owned by the collective and those who became self-employed rose from 42.9 per cent and 20.1 per cent respectively to 50.4 per cent and 28.7 per cent.

China has rich labour resources, but its economy is underdeveloped and development is uneven in many sectors. "Proceeding from conditions in



President Kim Il Sung meets with Peng Zhen, head of the Chinese Party and Government delegation.

China, we have adopted a policy on employment, that is, under the guidance of overall state planning, labour departments are responsible for assigning jobs to the unemployed, the collectives are encouraged to run enterprises and the individuals to get self-employed," he said.

The labour service companies have played a remarkable role in solving the employment problem, the vice-minister said. At present there are more than 17,000 labour service companies of various kinds set up all around the country. Since 1979

they have trained and placed 4.2 million people.

Celebrating Korea's 35th anniversary

A Chinese delegation led by Peng Zhen, Member of the Political Bureau of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee and Chairman of the National People's Congress Standing Committee, visited Korea to join in celebrating the 35th anniversary of the founding of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK).

Korean President Kim Il Sung met with the delegation on Sept. 8. He emphasized the significance of the close relations between Korea and China, and said friendship between the two countries will last for ever.

At a banquet DPRK Vice-President Rim Chun Chu gave in honour of the Chinese delegation, Peng Zhen stressed the deep friendship between the two countries, which has been sealed in blood, and reaffirmed China's firm support for the just struggle of the Korean people to peacefully reunify their country.

The DPRK's birthday was also celebrated in Beijing on



Rong Zhiren, self-employed proprietor of a provisions shop in Guangzhou, finds his shop is a welcome addition to the community.



On Sept. 4, President Li Xiannian met with President Charubutr Rusangsuwan of the Thai National Assembly and his delegation, which visited China at the invitation of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress from August 23 to Sept. 6.



President Li Xiannian on Sept. 5 met with Chairman Bhupal Man Singh Karki and members of his delegation from the Nepalese State Council, which was visiting China Sept. 3 to 6. The two sides expressed satisfaction with the friendly co-operation existing between them.

Sept. 8, when Korean Ambassador Jon Myong Su gave a banquet attended by President Li Xiannian.

At the banquet, Foreign Minister Wu Xueqian praised the brilliant success achieved by the Korean people in the past 35 years, under the leadership of Comrade Kim Il Sung and the Korean Workers' Party.

In addition, Chinese leaders Hu Yaobang, Li Xiannian, Peng Zhen and Zhao Ziyang sent warm congratulations to President Kim Il Sung and Premier Li Jong Ok on Korea's national day.

China, Japan hold successful talks

Both China and Japan have agreed that the third Sino-Japanese governmental meeting was a success and will help promote relations and economic co-operation between the two countries.

This view was formally expressed by chief representatives of the two countries to the talks — Chinese State Councillor Gu Mu and Japanese Foreign Minister Shintaro Abe — at the close of the three-day meeting on Sept. 6. An agreement was signed by the foreign ministers of the two countries that day for avoiding double taxation and preventing income tax evasion by corporations, institutes and individuals.

China's satisfaction with the meeting was expressed earlier, on Sept. 5, by Hu Yaobang, General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee, when he met with the six Japanese ministers to the meeting. He extended his congratulations on the meeting's good results.

Premier Zhao Ziyang, who met separately with the Japanese ministers the same day, also commented on the success of the meeting. He said that

meetings between important government officials of the two countries are very effective, and "show the trend of growing relations between the two countries."

At a joint press conference on Sept. 6, Gu Mu said the two sides believed the volume of their bilateral trade could very well be quadrupled by the end of this century, "so long as we co-operate well in the economic and technological fields."

Foreign Minister Abe said he hoped the two countries would start talks soon on how to promote and develop co-operation in the peaceful use of atomic energy, in conformity with the principles set by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

On the question of a second Japanese government loan to China, Abe said that feasibility studies of proposed projects are being undertaken, and he hoped "something concrete might be started next year on the basis of

China-Japan economic ties

With the steady growth of trade and economic ties between China and Japan since their normalization of diplomatic relations in 1972, Japan today is China's top trading partner.

The volume of trade between them in 1981 reached a record US\$10,000 million. Because of China's economic readjustment programme, in 1982 China reduced its import of complete sets of equipment from Japan and the volume of trade between them slipped to \$8,600 million that year.

In 1978 an eight-year non-governmental trade agreement was signed between the two countries, which provided for China exporting crude oil and coal to Japan and importing technology and equipment from Japan. In the following year, the agreement was extended to cover a period of 13 years during which both parties will export to the other between \$20,000 million and \$30,000 million worth of goods.

Not long ago, a 1983 loan agreement was concluded by the two governments in which Japan will provide the Chinese Government with 69,000 million Japanese yen (about \$276 million) in loans.

As for Sino-Japanese joint exploration of China's oil resources, five oil-bearing structures have been found in the south-western part of the Bohai Sea. The seven coal projects financed with the loan from the Japanese Import and Export Bank are going ahead at full speed.

Twenty joint venture projects have been set up, seven in China and 13 in Japan.

A Sino-Japanese taxation agreement was signed on September 6. It includes stipulations for the avoidance of double taxation and the prevention of fiscal evasion with respect to taxes on the income of enterprises, institutions and individuals.

Furthermore, an investment protection agreement is under negotiation.

the interim report to be worked out in December."

He announced that the Japanese Government has decided to grant 47 million Japanese yen (about US\$ 188,000) to the Beijing and Shanghai Institutes of Foreign Trade to purchase audio equipment and materials to teach Japanese.

Gu Mu said the two sides exchanged views on the international situation, and in particular, the situation in Asia.

"Both sides shared common opinions on such issues as Kampuchea and Afghanistan," he said.

The foreign ministers of the two countries in their talks had agreed to maintain and enhance the momentum of economic cooperation, and adopt active measures to promote cultural

exchanges and increase visits by young people.

Chen Muhua, State Councillor and Minister of Foreign Economic Relations and Trade, in her talks with Japanese Minister of International Trade and Industry Sosuke Uno, said the falling prices for oil and coal would lead to a decrease in Japan's imports from China. China's imports from Japan were expected to grow, giving China a trade deficit with Japan this year. Chen asked Japan to increase its imports from China.

Chen pointed out that Japan accounted for only one per cent of all foreign investments in China. This, she said, failed to match up to the close economic relations between the two countries.

Chen also said that China had relaxed its policies and improved economic regulations to clear the way for foreign investments. She hoped an investment protection agreement between the two countries could be concluded at the earliest possible date.

Rules for Chinese-foreign marriages

Under a new regulation — the first of its kind — a Chinese citizen can marry a foreigner within a month of submitting an application, the Ministry of Civil Affairs announced.

The new rules, issued on August 26, state that marriage applications will now be granted within one month, provided the wedding is to take place on Chinese soil and complies with China's marriage law.

However, such marriages will not be possible for Chinese diplomatic personnel, public security officers, servicemen or people involved in confidential work or any other work considered "important."

Chinese nationals serving prison sentences or receiving "re-education through labour" will also be ineligible for marriage with foreigners.

The Chinese applicant must produce a residence certificate and a certificate issued by the local county government or institution where he works listing marital status, trade, work position and the name of his prospective marriage partner. The foreign applicant must present a passport, a certificate of nationality, a residence permit, and a certificate of marital status issued by a notary public from his home country. Furthermore, both applicants must produce their health certificates.

*Palestine***The way to peace in the Mideast**

THE international tension pervading the Middle East for several decades worries all nations and peoples. The key to a lasting peace in the region lies in restoring the inalienable rights to the Palestinians, including the right to return, the right to self-determination and the right to establish their own independent state in Palestine.

The main obstacle to a comprehensive, just solution to the Palestinian question is Israel's, and her supporter's, denial of these rights. This has been affirmed at the UN-sponsored International Conference on Palestine, held in Geneva, Aug. 29 to Sept. 7.

Israel has occupied Palestine and other Arab territories and slaughtered innocent Palestinians for too long. Arrogantly ignoring the relevant UN resolutions, Tel Aviv also has stepped up efforts to establish settlements on the West Bank in an attempt to legitimize and perpetuate its occupation.

Naturally, these Israeli acts of aggression and expansion were strongly condemned by representatives from 138 nations at the International Conference on Palestine. In their final document, the Geneva Declaration on the Question of Palestine, they demanded an end to Israel's occupation of all the Arab territories, including Jerusalem. They also demanded that the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, be given the right to partici-

pate in all efforts, deliberations and conferences on the Middle East.

These demands reflect the will of all countries and people who uphold justice. Any attempt to settle the Palestinian issue at the expense of Arab interests will certainly be boycotted by the world community.

It is common knowledge that the Israeli administration maintains its intransigent position on the Palestinian question because it has American support. Washington has not only given generous military aid to Tel Aviv, but has also tried to shield it diplomatically. More than once the

US vetoed proposals at UN Security Council meetings condemning Israel's policies of aggression. A notable no-show at the recent Geneva conference on Palestine was the United States. Numerous other facts show that Washington must take some responsibility for the failure to achieve a timely solution to the Palestinian issue, and for the deteriorating situation in the Middle East.

The Chinese Government and people have always opposed Israel's expansionist policies and supported the Palestinian people's struggle to attain their legitimate rights. We believe that as long as the Palestinian people close their ranks and keep up their struggle, they will eventually win.

— Ren Pin and Yuan Quan

*Lebanon***A risk of exploding into civil war**

THE Lebanese situation has been deteriorating, with repeated factional fighting drawing in the multinational peace-keeping force stationed in that country.

Following the four-day clash between Moslem militiamen and Lebanese government troops in Beirut August 28 to 31, bitter fighting broke out on Sept. 4 between the Christian and Moslem Druze militiamen in the Chouf mountain area.

Reports said that two French warplanes were searching over Beirut and the Shouf area for the artillery positions from which the French troop head-

quarters has been shelled. Two US aircraft were on a similar mission after several American marines were killed in the bombardments.

Israel's Designs

Last April, when Lebanon and Israel entered into talks, the Begin administration was planning a partial troop withdrawal from Lebanon. Its purpose is to extricate itself from difficulties caused by its aggression against Lebanon and to tighten its occupation of the southern part of the country. This scheme, designed to delude the people at home and abroad, was immedi-

ately opposed strongly by the Lebanese Government.

On July 20, the Israeli cabinet formally decided to redeploy troops in Lebanon. It refused to accept Lebanon's repeated demand that the partial troop withdrawal be part of an overall withdrawal with a fixed timetable. Israel, however, did agree to co-operate with the Lebanese Government to ensure that the latter should exercise its jurisdiction over the Aley and Chouf areas.

This set off a struggle among the different factions in Lebanon as to who should fill the vacuum left by the Israeli pull-out.

Backed by Syria, Chairman Waïld Jumblatt of the Progressive Socialist Party, former President Suleiman Franjeh and ex-Prime Minister Rashid Karami formed the opposition "National Salvation Front" last July. They came out with a 10-point plan, which included calling for the cancellation of the Lebanese-Israeli accords, resignation of Prime Minister Wazzan's government, closing down the Phalange barracks in the Chouf Mountains and a political solution of domestic issues. They said they were firmly opposed to government troops entering the areas vacated by the Israeli troops before their demands were fulfilled.

In the face of such intransigence, President Amin Gemayel called on the leaders of all factions and parties to hold a conference on national reconciliation. Saudi Arabia and Jordan tried to help mediate.

However, Israel, rejecting the Lebanese Government's requests to delay its troop withdrawal under the pretext that the Lebanese Government did not try its best to bring about a reconciliation of the various factions,

suddenly started moving its troops within Lebanon on Sept. 3. The Lebanese troops were unprepared and were in no position to take over control of Chouf and Aley. As a result, the conflict which had just simmered down erupted again. Some observers believe the Israeli move was a stab in the back to the Lebanese Government.

Deep Factional Contradictions

Since the Israeli invasion of Lebanon last summer, the Moslem forces have been weakened, while the Christian faction has come to dominate the country politically and militarily.

This imbalance of power has sharpened the conflicts between the two major factions.

Fearful of the emergence of a Phalange Party dictatorship, the Moslem factions are eager to negotiate an agreement on

their future, using Syrian influence. President Gemayel, however, has obviously given top priority to the problem of foreign troop withdrawal and restoring the country's sovereignty, rather than domestic political reform. However, he has promised to guarantee equality to all Lebanese, whether Christian or Moslem. The Christian faction seized the opportunity to extend its power, and this, naturally, confirms Moslem suspicions.

The Israeli withdrawal, therefore, has set off the expected conflict between the two major factions for control of the Chouf and Aley areas.

The Lebanese internal conflict has worried the whole world. And the situation becomes more complex as the risk of foreign armed intervention grows.

— Wang, Dadao

Geneva

US-Soviet missile talks' last round

THE final and decisive round of talks between the United States and the Soviet Union on limiting medium-range nuclear missiles in Europe started in Geneva on Sept. 6 with the United States determined to go ahead with the deployment if the negotiations fail and the Soviets threatening to take counter-measures.

Prospects

What are the prospects? While any firm prediction would be premature at the present stage, one can say for certain that the negotiations will come up against mounting differences, though the possibility of a compromise cannot be ruled out.

The 21-month-old talks have shown that it is not easy for the two sides to reach an agreement because of their sharply contrasting positions. The Soviet Union has been trying hard to maintain the balance of force in land-based missiles in Europe while the United States has sought to change the status quo, which it considers unfavourable to the West, through deploying its own land-based missiles there.

The various proposals presented by Moscow for Euromissile reductions may differ somewhat from one another and contain different concessions, but the basic Soviet position, that the



Our positions appear to be getting closer!

Cartoon by Chen Fengxiang

United States must not deploy new missiles in Europe, has remained unchanged and no concession has ever been made in this regard.

The United States, however, has decided to deploy its new missiles in Europe by the end of this year if the talks fail. It believes that only a definite plan on missile deployment can force concessions out of the Soviet Union.

Signs of Flexibility

All this shows that the bargaining between the two sides is likely to become harder than ever during the last round of talks. But neither side has closed the door, as they have both declared that they will take "flexible" approaches and claimed that the possibility of an agreement before the end of the year exists if the other side shows real "sincerity."

Of late, a little flexibility has been detected in the stances of the Soviet Union and the United

States. The Soviet Union has allowed some political dissidents to go abroad and hastened to forge a five-year accord with the United States on grain sales. It made some concessions on the issues of human rights and human contacts, which helped to break the deadlock at the follow-up European Security Conference in Madrid. A slight change has taken place in the Soviet stand on the strategic arms and Central European disarmament negotiations. It has also switched from opposition to consent concerning an improvement of the Soviet-US "hot line." Above all, Soviet leader Andropov indicated a willingness last month to scrap those missiles to be reduced if an agreement is reached on specified conditions.

The United States, on its part, has dispatched senators and an exceptionally large trade delegation to Moscow and offered to improve the "hot line" between the two countries. It has also taken other steps including

the lifting of a ban on exporting oil pipe-laying machines to the Soviet Union.

In making these moves, however, both the Soviet Union and the United States are trying to gain benefits and win public opinion by making small concessions.

Whether this flexibility will produce an effect on the negotiations remains to be seen.

Accidentally or not, West German Foreign Minister Genscher recently called on the Soviet Union and the United States to reconsider the once-rejected "walk in the woods" formula—a compromise formula reached unofficially between the Soviet and US delegates to the effect that the United States, while abandoning the Pershing II missiles, will deploy only 75 cruise missiles in Europe, while the Soviet Union will reduce to 75 its SS-20 missiles targeted on Western Europe.

Background

The background for the emergence of these circumstances is that the Soviet Union probably has found it necessary to lessen the heavy burden caused by the arms race, in order to focus attention on its economic and political difficulties and gain real benefits by developing economic relations with the West. The US Government, on the other hand, has had to consider the pressures of anti-nuclear movements at home and from Western Europe and at the same time make preparations for next year's presidential campaign. It would be in their own interests if the Soviet Union and

the United States could reach some degree of compromise on the Euromissile issue.

Even if some sort of compromise is reached, the Soviet-US

arms race would not cease. The contention and confrontation between the two superpowers will not disappear in Europe or the world.

— Tang Shan

South Pacific

Marching towards independence

CALLING for independence and decolonization of their region, the 14th South Pacific Forum (SPF) closed on August 30 after a two-day meeting in Australia's capital, Canberra. Heads of government at the meeting issued a communique which said, "The principles of self-determination and independence apply to non-self-governing Pacific territories."

In the communique, they declared their "support for the independence of New Caledonia, determined in accordance with the expressed wishes of its people."

On economic issues, the communique said the South Pacific island countries would "take concrete steps to promote closer economic relations" between them. Leaders also endorsed "the lowering of tariff barriers to promote regional trade."

Course for Independence

The national independence movement in the South Pacific islands began in the early 1960s. Western Samoa declared independence in 1962, becoming the first island country. Nauru followed in 1968.

Entering the 1970s, the independence movement has become more vigorous. Seven other island groups — Tonga, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, the

Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Kiribati and Vanuatu — declared independence during this decade.

The new island countries attached great importance to developing their own economies, and set out to transform the irrational economic structure left behind by colonialism. Some mapped out long-term economic development plans attuned to local conditions, and have achieved remarkable results. For example, Fiji, with sugarcane previously its main crop, was economically controlled by foreign monopoly sugar corporations. But now, the new government encourages diversification, supporting grain production and the manufacturing industry, so as to reduce its dependence on imports.

In furthering their political and economic independence, these countries have emphasized regional co-operation. The South Pacific Forum, set up in 1971, offers opportunities for the leaders in the region to meet regularly. In addition to the above-mentioned nine member states, the forum also includes Australia, New Zealand, the Cook Islands and Niue Island. Leaders of the SPF member states meet once a year to discuss various regional issues.

The focus now is the problem of independence for Micronesia

and New Caledonia. After World War II, the United States occupied most of the Micronesian islands, constructing military bases there as part of a major US military chain in the Pacific. Since the 1960s, when the Micronesians first appealed for independence, and the United States has been dragging their feet. Washington calls for the establishment of a "federation" or "free association" with the United States, an effort to maintain American political and military control over the islands. Negotiations over the fate of the islands continue.

New Caledonia and French Polynesia are French colonies in the South Pacific. Although the people of these islands have also been campaigning for independence, France has shunned their appeals by various stalling tactics and even declared these islands to be its "overseas territories." This is in direct conflict with the islanders' wish for independence.

Economic Development

Underdeveloped economies and trade patterns inherited from long years of colonial rule pose serious obstacles to the development of these countries. Most of the South Pacific nations are still dependent on exports of their raw materials such as coconuts, cocoa, coffee, tropical fruits and mineral products. Many daily necessities, including vegetables and other foods, are imported. The result is economic instability and dependence on bigger nations. The current economic recession in the West and the drastic fall in the price of raw materials on the international market have hit the island countries hard.

— Han Xin

Developing Trade With Other Third World Countries

Chen Muhua, State Councillor and Minister
of Foreign Economic Relations and Trade

THIRD world countries are China's major trade partners. To actively develop trade relations with these countries is our established principle in foreign trade.

The third world now comprises 126 independent countries, or 76 per cent of the world's 164

countries. Their combined population is about 3,000 million, accounting for 72 per cent of the world's total, and their territory covers about 100 million square kilometres which is 65 per cent of all the land in the world. They are rich in natural resources.

China and other third world countries have had common experiences and face the same tasks today of consolidating their national independence and developing their national economies. Countries of the third world are the basic force today opposing imperialism, colonialism and hegemonism and safeguarding world peace. Developing our trade relations with other third world countries, therefore, is of great importance in speeding up our own socialist construction, promoting South-South co-operation and establishing a new international economic order.

Historical Retrospective

China's trade relations with other third world countries date back to the early 1950s. These bilateral relations have developed gradually in the past 30 years from trade via a third party to direct trade and from trade between the people to trade between the governments.

In the 1950s, the Chinese Government successively established official trade relations with



India, Pakistan, Burma, Indonesia, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Syria, Iraq, Kuwait and Oman. During this period, people-to-people trade relations with Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Qatar were also developed.

Since the African countries declared independence one after another in the 1960s, our country has steadily developed trade relations with them as well. At present, with the exception of South Africa, China has established inter-government trade relations with almost all the African countries.

In the 1970s, our country resumed direct trade relations with Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Singapore, all members of ASEAN. Since then, official and people-to-people trade relations between us have grown day by day.

The trade relations between China and the Latin American countries have also developed.

Today, China has signed inter-government trade agreements with 57 other third world countries, 48 in Asia and Africa and 9 in Latin America. We conduct trade in cash with most of these countries and on credit with the others.

Total Volume and Makeup of Trade

China's volume of trade with other third world countries increased 62-fold over the past 32 years, from US\$150 million in 1950 to US\$9,300 million in 1982 (see table I).

Roughly speaking, we have maintained a favourable balance in our trade with Asian and African countries and an unfavourable balance with Latin American countries (see table II).

Like other third world countries, China is a developing country. This can be seen by the types of goods it imports and exports.

It mainly imports primary products from other third world countries. These include copper, colbat, zinc, crude oil, diamonds, phosphates, chemical fertilizer, cotton, rubber, tim-

Table I

**Proportion of Trade With Third World Countries in China's
Total Value of Imports and Exports**

Year	China's total value of imp. & exp. trade (US\$ 1 million)	Value of imp. & exp. trade with third world countries (US\$ 1 million)	Proportion of trade with third world countries (percentage)
1950	1,135.14	151.68	13.4
1960	3,809.20	860.78	22.6
1970	4,585.86	1,280.77	27.9
1980	37,230.58	8,193.04	22.0
1981	40,375.21	8,381.86	20.7
1982	38,938.23	9,307.00	24.0

dropped and their trade as a whole has deteriorated. Their unfavourable balance of international payments has become more serious and their debts have increased, thereby adding to their economic difficulties. As a result, they firmly demand the reform of the old international economic order and the establishment of a new one on the basis of the principles of reasonableness, equality and mutual benefit. This is absolutely justified, and we resolutely support it.

ber, coconut oil, jute, cocoa, coffee, cashew nuts, tobacco, Arab rubber, leather and wool.

China's exports to these countries are primarily cereals, edible oil, foodstuffs, light industrial products, textiles, articles for daily use and chemical products, as well as a small amount of machinery.

Although the make-up of the commodities China trades with other third world countries has somewhat changed year after year, the change is in general a modest one (see table III).

Equality, Mutual Benefit and Mutual Support

Because of prolonged colonial rule and plunder, most third world countries have a poor economic foundation. They must also trade primary products for finished goods. Yet foreign trade plays an important role in the economic life of these countries. In recent years, due to the price cuts in primary products, their income from exports has

China has actively promoted trade relations with other third world countries according to the principles of equality, mutual benefit and mutual support. After decades of effort, we have established good trade relations with these countries.

Generally speaking, the prices of China's

Table II

**Total Volume of China's Trade With Asian, African and
Latin American Countries (US\$ 1 million)**

		Asian and African countries	Latin American countries	Total
1961	Total value	596.85	230.52	827.37
	Value of exports	358.91	108.16	467.07
	Value of imports	237.94	122.36	360.30
	Balance of trade	+120.97	-14.20	+106.77
1971	Total value	1,141.57	172.06	1,313.63
	Value of exports	783.65	71.45	855.10
	Value of imports	357.92	100.61	458.53
	Balance of trade	+425.73	-29.16	+396.57
1981	Total value	5,939.82	1,506.86	7,446.68
	Value of exports	4,332.89	631.02	4,963.91
	Value of imports	1,606.93	875.84	2,482.77
	Balance of trade	+2,725.96	-244.82	+2,481.14

Table III

**Commodities China Trades With Other
Third World Countries**

(Percentage of Overall Trade)

	1965	1970	1980	1982
Cereals and edible oils				
Imp.	20	9.5	13	22
Exp.	21.7	25.5	13.3	11.8
Textiles				
Imp.	22	15.4	20.4	14
Exp.	32.7	27.6	17.8	19.1
Native produce & animal by-products				
Imp.	9	10	7	7
Exp.	11.8	13.4	10	10.9
Light industrial products				
Imp.	0.4	0.5	0.015	2
Exp.	11.9	15.8	20.2	19.3
Metals and mineral products				
Imp.	12	18	21	4.4
Exp.	10.6	6	7.8	8.9
Chemical products				
Imp.	15	27	28	16
Exp.	4.2	3.7	26.4	27.8
Machinery				
Imp.	4	14	2	4
Exp.	5.3	3	7.1	7.6

Note:

1. In textiles, China mainly imports cotton; in cereals and edible oil, chiefly sugar; in native produce and animal by-products, mainly timber, coffee and cocoa.

2. The 1982 figures are estimated.

export commodities are lower than those of the Western countries. This better suits the consumption level of the third world countries. When importing commodities from other third world countries, we consider their economic conditions and offer them appropriate preferential treatment. Through bilateral trade activities, we try to help them expand import channels and outlets for their goods. This is conducive to helping them gradually free themselves from control by international consortia over their export and import trade. This also helps ease the shortage of some raw materials in our own market and expand our exports. The support China is able to give other third world countries takes the following forms:

— Exporting and importing commodities at preferential prices.

— Importing an appropriate amount of primary products or finished goods at the request of countries which have difficulties in selling these goods because of changes in the international market. We do this even when China actually needs little or none of these goods, but solely to tide these countries over their temporary difficulties.

Three Measures for Promoting Trade

The third world countries are rich with natural resources and different kinds of cash crops, making them major suppliers of primary products and a large potential consuming market. They are the main outlet for China's light industrial products, textiles and articles for daily use. To develop trade relations with other third world countries, therefore, is the common desire of all of us. In addition to measures commonly followed in the international community for promoting trade, we will consider the special aspects of each case, according to the following guidelines.

First, we will continue to follow the principles of equality, mutual benefit and mutual support, actively expand imports and gradually balance our imports and exports.

Second, we will explore various forms of commerce to promote bilateral trade, including:

1. Gradually developing barter trade according to the needs and potential of both sides so as to promote each other's exports and imports:

2. Developing compensatory trade with regard to products which we need in large quantities and which they have in abundance, so as to help them produce certain products;

3. Organizing the export of semi-finished products and spare parts, setting up joint ventures abroad to assemble parts, expanding the outlet for our own products, and helping our partner-countries develop their economies according to their economic conditions;

4. Participating in commodity bids so as to expand the volume of business transactions.

Third, we will actively expand the export of electrical products. For this, we will make full use of such methods as contracting projects abroad, setting up joint ventures and extending

credits, in order to promote the export of our electrical goods and complete sets of equipment, so as to combine economic co-operation with foreign trade.

While supplying equipment to other countries we will also help them master the technology involved. For this purpose, we will provide them with necessary technical reference mate-

rials, pass on our skills and help train technicians and skilled workers for these countries.

There are broad prospects for the trade relations between China and other third world countries. We will make consistent efforts to promote such trade relations and South-South co-operation for the common prosperity of all the third world countries. □

China TV Drama, a Growing Art Form

by Our Correspondent Ling Yang

CHINA began making TV plays shortly after it launched television broadcasting in 1958. Before they were banned during the black decade of the "cultural revolution" (1966-76), over 60 TV plays were produced. They came to life again after 1978 and have shown impressive development since.

In 1979, Central Television showed only 35 TV plays, but the figure shot up to 103 and 118 respectively in the following two years. Last year audiences saw more than 277.

Today, TV plays feature prominently in China's TV programmes; and with TV sets coming to more and more urban and rural homes (at present the nation has a daily TV audience of over 100 million), TV plays are enjoying the growing attention of society.

Both central and local TV stations (all non-profit state enterprises) devote major efforts to developing TV plays.

The achievements in the production of mini-series are representative of China's TV dramas. Of the 13 mini-series screened in 1982, the following five are the most popular.

— *Lu Xun*, a biographical production about this great man of

modern Chinese letters (1881-1936) in his childhood and youth. Although only the first four episodes have been aired, they already have impressed audiences with a painstaking quest for excellence on the part of the scriptwriter, director, cast and photographers. All the scenes were shot in Shaoxing, Lu Xun's hometown, and this gives the serial a unique south China flavour.

— *Arduous Years*, a four-episode production adapted from a novel of the same title, depicts the ups and downs of a number of young people entangled in the turmoil and confusion of the "cultural revolution." Finally, a sense of responsibility for society awakens in them, and



A scene from "The Wreaths at the Foot of the Mountain," a TV play about the 1979 counterattack against Vietnamese aggressors in defence of the motherland.

they pick up their courage on their road to maturity. This TV production passionately retraces China's recent past, showing the traumatic process by which Chinese youth pursued a better cultural life. Its faithful interpretation of the lifestyles of youths rings true to everyone who suffered in those arduous years.

— *Wu Song* is an eight-episode serial adapted from the 14th century Chinese classic novel *Outlaws of the Marshes*. Alternating incisive depictions of personalities with breathtaking *wuda* (armed and unarmed combat scenes)—the most striking of which, no doubt, is when the hero, dead drunk, comes across a tiger, fights it with bare fists and finally beats it to death—the production sets off the heroism of Wu Song, the Chinese Robbin Hood, in bold relief. The screening of *Wu Song* represents a pioneering effort in China to adapt literary classics to the TV screen.

— *Wedding in a Rich Harvest Year* presents some of the new problems that have arisen with the improvements in rural life in the last few years since the adoption of flexible rural policies. It depicts the dilemma of a village Party branch secretary who must decide how lavish to make his son's wedding. Its popularity stems both from its humorous treatment of a serious issue but without ridicule, and the excellent performances of members of the Beijing People's Art Theatre. Performed in Beijing dialect, the play is appealing and believable.

— *The 1861 Coup d'Etat* recounts how, 120 years ago, a royal concubine of Emperor Xian Feng of the Qing Dynasty—who later became the notorious Empress Dowager—seized power from her son, a 6-year-old boy who had just taken the throne. Her 47-year rule was one of the most decadent chapters in modern Chinese history. The play is set in the former royal residences and palaces, furnished just as they were more than a century ago.

Many works on historical themes have appeared recently in Chinese theatres, cinemas and TV screens, but none matches *The 1861 Coup d'Etat* in its realistic portrayal of the heroine's capricious inner world.

Each of these five mini-series was nominated for the best TV play prize last year. Neither the TV viewers nor the appraisal committee composed of prestigious TV experts found it easy to decide which was the best. *Arduous Years* and *Wu Song* both placed first, followed by *Wedding in a Rich Harvest Year*. *Lu Xun* won a special prize and the actress who played



In "The 1861 Coup d'Etat," the empress dowager attends to state affairs from behind a screen, despite repeated attempts by the Qing court ministers to dissuade her.

the role of Empress Dowager in *The 1861 Coup d'Etat* captured a prize for outstanding acting.

A few years ago, when the first new crop of TV plays was harvested, many voices said that artistically they left much to be desired. For a time, the Chinese TV screen was occupied by foreign TV dramas such as one about Marie Curie. This kindled a yearning for something home-made. However, when China's first TV mini-series did appear in the spring of 1982, audiences were disappointed by its lackadaisical plot, artificial acting and superficial ideological value. Fortunately, that is now history.

Last year, more than 200 short TV plays (each lasting less than an hour) were produced. *A Day in the Life of Premier Zhou* has been recognized as the best. It depicts a day in the 1960s just before the premier left for a goodwill tour abroad. He begins the day by arranging some activities for visiting foreign guests. Then he attends a staff member's wedding. Afterwards he is seen in a factory studying pollution control methods and having lunch with the workers. Later, he helps a kindergarten solve its housing problem and praises the teachers' strong sense of responsibility. When he learns that China has successfully carried out its first nuclear bomb test, he immediately informs

Chairman Mao. Late night finds him in his office reviewing state documents.

Audiences, who hold the premier in high esteem, were spellbound by the actor's believable performance and life-like makeup.

About 70 per cent of the 200 TV plays produced in 1982 were based upon real life of people: their careers, friendship, love, marriage and so on. Some extol exemplary deeds, moral behaviour, good ideas and fine style of work; others censure the seamy side of society.

About 50 of the plays are quite short, ranging from a few minutes to a quarter of an hour. Some explain an old saying, a familiar anecdote, or an episode of history. Some comprise only a few shots to call public attention to a certain problem, ranging from the buck-passing work style at a construction site to what mothers should say when their children have been fighting. In their efforts to provide both education and entertainment, TV artists find these short plays a useful form for promoting the modernization drive. Critics and viewers alike praise them as "visualized prose."

The Story of a TV Play Devotee

Today, TV plays are produced in many big and medium-sized cities, where a vast contingent of scenario writers, directors, actors and actresses, cinematographers and art workers is gradually taking shape.

Xi Lide, of Shanghai Television, is a respected TV director and scriptwriter. In a recent national annual TV play appraisal conference, *A Virtuous Wife*, which he shot together with some of his younger colleagues, won a prize as an outstanding work. *The Little Toddler*,

which he wrote, was listed as the best children's TV play of the year.

In the 1950s, Xi was already a well-accomplished artist with a children's performing troupe sponsored by Soong Ching Ling. When he graduated from junior middle school at the age of 14, he left his worker parents and joined the ranks of the revolution. During the eventful days of the War of Resistance Against Japan, he became member of a children's troupe led by Zhou Enlai and Guo Moruo, where he learnt the basics of the performing arts. He came to maturity during the raging fire of war.

In 1958, Xi Lide joined others in establishing Shanghai Television. Before that he did not know what a TV set was, still less anything about TV broadcasting. He had to learn while doing.

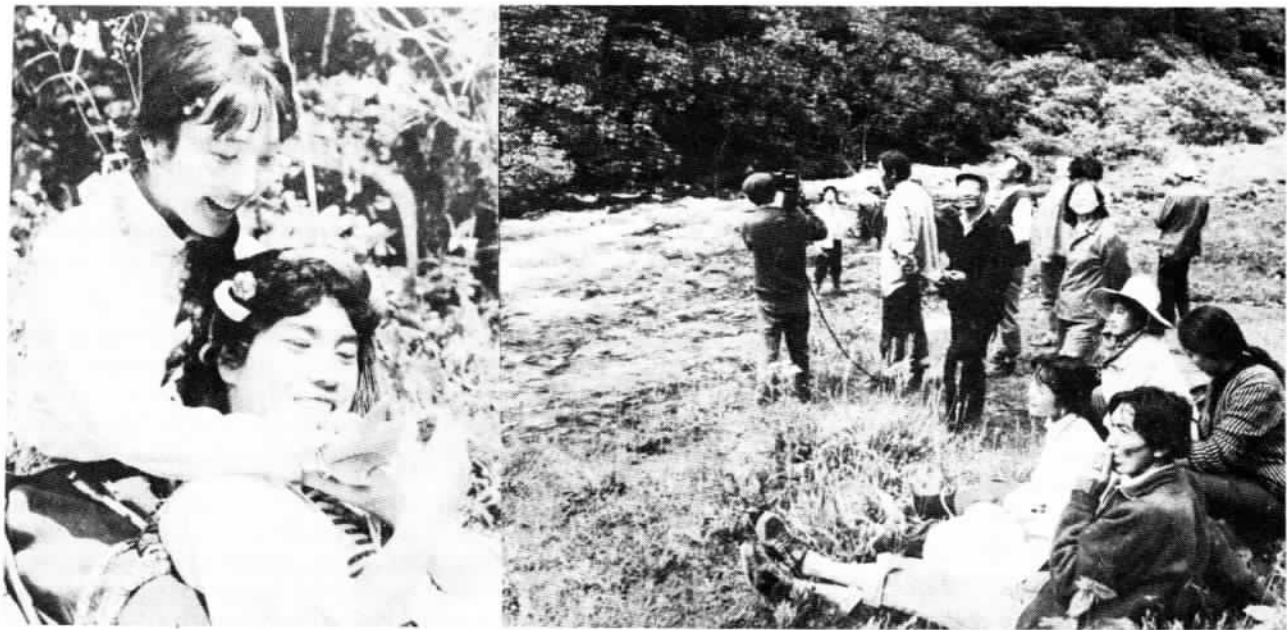
At first, Xi was put in charge of televising live theatre performances. Later he developed a desire to write scripts for TV plays. Today, as vice-director of Shanghai Television, China's biggest local station, he supervises its art programmes. Under his careful coaching, many young TV artists have come to the fore. Last year Shanghai Television produced 20 TV plays, more than any other station in China.

These TV productions vary in their ideological content and artistic attainment. They represent different genres and styles, but each stirs with vitality in creative work and provides some food for thought.

The prize-winning *A Virtuous Wife* is about an engineer who encourages his only daughter to defy traditional biases and marry a poor brick-layer. Stories like this, which give expression to China's fine traditions and moral



Two scenes from "Wedding in A Rich Harvest Year."



Two scenes from "Pilgrimage," the first TV play produced by Tibetan Television.

values, are numerous in real life. Chinese artists, Xi holds, should do their best to cast them in vivid images.

In 1979, Xi Lide read a press account of Zhang Zhixin, a young Communist who was hounded to death because she opposed the tyrannical rule of the extreme Leftist Jiang Qing and her ilk. The same day, together with a TV crew he rushed to the northeast Chinese city of Shenyang, the site of the incident. There, after two weeks' intense work they came up with what was called "TV reportage," *A Red Flower That Never Withers*. It captivated the audience with its gripping accounts of the moving deeds of Zhang Zhixin and its biting sarcasm about the cruel, shameless enemy.

Inspired by a choral piece, *The Song of Forest*, Xi Lide presided over the creation of a poetic TV musical, *The Diary of the Forest*, which heralded the emergence of a new form of Chinese TV plays.

For many years he has continued a quest for a broadcast art that is uniquely Chinese. In his own words, he wants to "present the most beautiful things to the TV viewers."

The Artists

China's colleges and universities only recently began to train professional TV artists. Therefore, the "professionals" currently operating TV stations mostly came from the theatre or movie studios.

Cai Xiaoqing, who won an award as the best director in the recent national TV play appraisal conference, graduated from the Beijing Cinema College in 1966. However, her career actually began in the late 1970s, after the "cultural revolution" came to an end. Now 41, she has directed 10 TV plays, mostly about youth of contemporary China. "Portraying real people" is the task she has set for herself.

The four-episode *Arduous Years* shows her artistic talent to best advantage. Compared with her past productions, this play unfolds against a much wider setting and interprets its subject matter with more depth. Different personalities are interwoven into a harmonious whole but each is an independent active component in the complex, stormy reality. Cai Xiaoqing also is an expert at bringing out the inner feelings of her characters in a style at once sensitive and bold.

Ke Bizhou, the hero of the play, epitomizes many an innocent soul distorted during the 1966-76 decade. He is one of the innumerable city-bred middle school graduates who settled in the rural areas. He is insulted repeatedly because of his "undesirable family background" but, a thoughtful man, he clings to the faith that he will find something better. Finally the depression becomes unbearable and he attempts suicide, only to be saved by the villagers, who show him warmth and give him renewed hope. Finally he regains his faith and becomes determined to dedicate his love to the people.

But the limelight of *Arduous Years* is stolen by Du Jianchun, the heroine. She is the daughter of a ranking Party official as well as a Red Guard during the early days of the "cultural revolution." With an ardour that borders on frenzy, she throws herself into the drive to "smash the old world into smithereens" and then, piously, she arrives in the countryside to "remould herself."

Her life takes a drastic downward turn when news comes that her father has been branded a "renegade." Disillusioned, she decides to follow the inevitable road of escape, suicide. However, just when she is trying to hang herself on a tree, she is saved by Ke Bizhou, the hero. Cruel reality and the fierce struggle with life teach her a lesson and transform her stubbornness into well-meaning staunchness.

She meets a new challenge when she decides to marry Ke Bizhou, which is opposed by her family who want her to return to the city, where her father has been exonerated. Finally, she flees the comforts of her family, willing to share the hardships of building a new countryside.

A well-knit story and distinctive personalities accentuated by realistic dialogue contribute to the success of *Arduous Years*. The frequent use of landscape to set off the characters' passions also adds to the work's artistic appeal.

For example, after the hero is saved by a peasant girl and her father who instill in him a new-found hope for life, he goes together with the daughter to help on a survey for the construction of a small hydropower station. At this juncture, the camera captures the two people in silhouette against a circle of glistening, golden sunshine, a suggestion that the man who was once weighed down by pessimism and disillusion has now started his life anew. The mountains in the background symbolize the people's support and faith in him.

With its eloquent depiction of characters in times of adversity, this play struck a deep chord among audiences, particularly the young. In the first five days after the screening, Central Television received 400 letters of congratulation from all over the country.

Wang Lan's is another success story in Central Television. He graduated from the Beijing Cinema College two years earlier than Cai Xiaoqing. Three of the TV plays he directed won favourable responses from the viewers.

Who Is He? (1979) is a comedy about a man who tells everybody that he is the son of a provincial Party secretary and makes swindling and bluffing his way of life. He is finally exposed for what he really is. Simple though the play is, it pokes fun at the concept of special privileges for important people and other unhealthy tendencies that began during the "cultural revolution."

Director Qiao Assumes Office (1980) is the story of one man's efforts to aid the modernization drive, while *The Other Coast* (1981) describes the intricate feelings of a young woman who has just been released from prison.

Both Cai Xiaoqing and Wang Lan are representatives of Chinese TV play directors. Artistically, they may need improvement, but they are among founders of what is expected to become China's own TV play industry. They are always ready to break new ground, imbued with a desire for excellence.

Among Minority Nationalities

During the Spring Festival this year, Central Television presented *Pilgrimage*, a Tibetan TV play. Produced by Tibet's first generation of TV artists, it is about an old Tibetan who is a pious Buddhist believer on a pilgrimage to Lhasa with his daughter. Such pilgrimages have been encouraged since the reinstatement of the Party's policy regarding religious freedom. The presentation combined a skilful cast with unique landscapes on the roof of the world and the mysteries of Tibet folklore.

It was masterminded by Mima Cering, 39, who served as its photographer. He learnt Chinese and finished middle school in the 1950s at the Central Institute for Nationalities in Beijing. Then he became a cinematography student at the Broadcasting Institute. He worked a stint with Central Television before becoming one of the founders of Tibetan Television in Lhasa, now operating six evenings a week on a trial basis. He is the station's deputy director.

Losang Cering, director of *Pilgrimage*, is an experienced actor with the Tibet Autonomous Region's Modern Drama Troupe. His early training in performing arts was with the Shanghai Theatrical Institute in the 1950s.

In the play, the old Tibetan's pilgrimage is fraught with misfortunes. After he fulfils his desire to see Lhasa, his daughter is injured by a bandit and he himself suddenly dies of illness. The character calls for a wide range of emotions.

and the actor Lhagba Toinzhub portrays them all with a rare talent.

This play provided the first dramatic role on TV for 18-year-old Cering Zhoma, who plays the part of the daughter. A member of the Tibetan Song and Dance Ensemble, she previously studied in the art department of the Central Institute for Nationalities.

Pilgrimage has both a Tibetan and a Chinese language sound track and has won nationwide praise.

Dainzin, 28, is one of a new generation of Tibetan TV artists. He has just finished a three and a half year programme for TV directors at the Beijing Broadcasting College and will become a director with Tibetan Television. He is but one of the 13 Tibetans who studied TV journalism, video art and radio technology at the college.

Tibet's first TV play was produced with aid and support from Beijing. However, with more equipment and more staff, Tibetan Television will produce its second TV play by relying on its own efforts. "I know we are fully capable of this," said a confident Dainzin.

Inner Mongolian Television produced its first TV play in 1979. In the following years it produced two more, *Motherly Love* and *The Young Living Buddha*. Both depict local life and are based on novels by Mongolians. All the scriptwriters and directors are of the Mongolian nationality, as are most of the cast members.

A three-member group is now in charge of the TV station's production of TV plays and other entertainment programmes in the native tongue.

T. Qemut is one of the trio. Before he became a scriptwriter for Inner Mongolia's first TV play, he was a scenario writer for radio plays.

Despite the achievements of recent years, T. Qemut is still unsatisfied with the station's progress. Mongolians, he said, are known for their long cultural tradition and their dance and music are famous far and wide. Their wealth of outstanding literary works, both ancient and modern, is an inexhaustible source for TV plays. Besides, Inner Mongolia has many excellent actors and actresses. "The potential is good," said T. Qemut. "but the problem is that we need to strengthen our organizational work and we need strong leadership."

The television station of the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region to the east of Inner Mongolia has been much more prolific because its leadership has paid due attention to the creation of TV plays. The station produced its first TV play in 1980. Two years later, the annual output reached 10, nine of which were telecast nationwide.

For China, TV drama as an art form is still in its infancy. Critics and viewers alike agree that there is much room for its improvement.

A national TV play art committee was established in January 1982, upon the suggestion of Jin Shan, a well-known modern drama and movie artist. The committee's task is to co-ordinate the relations between TV play creation and other fields of endeavour and rally the strengths of the theatre, cinema and literary circles to boost TV play production. □

Assisting the Rural Poor

by Our Correspondent Tian Yun

IT has always been one of the major goals of the Communist Party-led revolution in China to overcome class polarization and secure common prosperity in the countryside. The land reform of the early post-liberation years and the 1956 movement to establish agricultural producers' co-operatives removed the root causes of class polarization. But they could not pos-

sibly eradicate the differences in people's labour ability and income, differences which exist throughout the historical period of socialism.

For more than two decades after the co-operative movement, China has tried to bridge the income gaps between the peasants with large-scale egalitarian collective management

and egalitarian methods of distribution. By arbitrarily equalizing the peasants' incomes these methods only crippled the peasants' enthusiasm for work, and held back the growth of agricultural production which even came to a standstill in some places. As a result, the peasants' standard of living did not improve as expected.

After the adjustment of the rural economic policies in 1979, new management methods — chiefly the contracted responsibility system based on the household — have been introduced within the framework of the collective economy of the production teams. While peasants are encouraged to earn as much as they can, no effort is spared in assisting those who have difficulties in rapidly boosting their incomes. This has considerably improved the standard of living in rural areas.

During the period from 1979 to 1982, the value of China's total agricultural output increased at an average annual rate of 7.5 per cent, as against the average annual rise of 3.2 per cent for the 26 years between 1953 and 1978. The peasants' incomes averaged 270 yuan per capita in 1982, which, after deducting incom-

parable factors, meant a 92.7 per cent increase over what they earned in 1978. The actual increase in the four years from 1979 to 1982 far outstripped that of the 26 previous years. The relatively backward rural areas which made up one-third of the countryside and poor households that embraced one-tenth of the rural population are now diminishing quickly.

Today, most poor families in China's rural areas are those without able-bodied members, funds or technology, and those impoverished through natural or other causes. They need to be helped. The remaining poor include the physically handicapped, childless senior citizens, and members of revolutionary martyrs' families that lack able-bodied members. The government or collective economic organizations issue regular allowances to ensure their decent living.

In the last few years, 3.27 million families across the country have received help in labour, funds and technology, and 1.09 million of them have shaken off poverty. The experience of Laian County in Anhui Province's Chuxian Prefecture has been a model in assisting the poor. Its methods are being popularized nationwide.

Indispensable Assistance

During the Spring Festival in February 1980, Laian County celebrated its best harvest in years. It supplied the state with twice as much marketable grain as in 1979. The local people attributed this to the new contracted responsibility system based on the household which was instituted the previous year in the county, one of the first counties to do so in China. As part of the local custom, the peasants pasted couplets on their house doors to praise the system. Almost all the couplets expressed happiness at the new-found prosperity. But the one put up by Zhou Xinggui, head of a poor household in the Shaoji commune, expressed a very different sentiment. He wrote, "While I borrow one bowl of grain after another, I roll in debt deeper and deeper."

This caused quite a stir in the county and led leaders of the county Party committee and county government to study the situation carefully. They agreed that while the responsibility system had helped rid many families of poverty (in the Shaoji commune, for example, three formerly poor families had each gathered between 4,000 and 5,000 kilogrammes of grain), there were still many others who continued to need help. Without this assistance the su-



Hu Junying (left), deputy county head of Laian, chatting with a peasant woman in the field.

periority of the socialist system was not fully realized, and the responsibility system, then in its infant stage, could not be consolidated. The county decided to assist the needy as part of its strategy for improving the responsibility system.

Experiments were first conducted in the Shaoji commune in 1980. After gaining valuable experience there, a "help the poor" programme was launched county-wide in 1981.

Due to frequent dry spells and mild floods, grain output in this county was low, and many families were not well-off. After an extensive survey and discussions among the people, 5,300 families, or 6.7 per cent of the county's rural households, were found to be in need of assistance. Files were established for them, with such information as the number of family members, their financial situation, the reasons for their poverty, the assistance to be given, a schedule for getting the family on its feet, and the person or unit who would help them. These families were issued certificates entitling them to preferential consideration on loans and supplying the means of production, a reduction in medical expenses, and free education for their children.

Effective Help

Altogether 1,900 people took it upon themselves to help the poor. They included leaders of county Party committee, county government, communes and production brigades. They were required to get in close touch with their charges, help them arrange production, solve difficulties and lend a hand during busy farming seasons.

A "help the poor" committee, comprised of major county leaders and heads of the civil affairs bureau, county supply and marketing co-operatives and banks, was established to provide overall planning and guidance. The day-to-day work was handled by a county office, which co-ordinated its efforts with the related groups in the communes and production brigades. They were to examine the progress of the work, exchange experiences, commend those doing a good job and encourage those who had done badly to catch up.

Most of the cadres involved in the assistance programme have proved a real help to the poor. They encouraged their charges to pull themselves together during difficult times, and taught the indolent to work hard. Instead of relying on government relief, the cadres helped these families boost production and diversify

the economy by offering loans, labour, farming know-how, etc.

To date 3,607 families, or 68.8 per cent of all poor families in the county, have benefited from this assistance. One thousand and seventy of them have happily bid farewell to poverty.

Two Peasant Households

Before the aid programme was launched Ye Deming, a peasant of the Shunshan commune, was in dire poverty. He was also 400 yuan in debt after his parents died a few years ago. He is the only one who can do farm work in his four-member family. His wife suffers from a mental disorder, his brother has congenital dementia, and his daughter is still in school.

In June 1981, Fu Dingzhu, the head of the county water conservancy bureau, volunteered to help the Ye family. When Fu first visited the family, he was shocked by its bare, hand-to-mouth existence. "It's natural disasters and sicknesses that did you in, but do pull yourselves up," he said to his host sympathetically, assuring Ye of his help.

Ye Deming was moved by his friend's warmth, but doubted if he could be of any real help. Fu is, after all, a veteran government functionary who could not possibly know how to farm. Besides, he lives in the county seat, eight kilometres away. "So, at first I did not place much hope in him," Ye recalled.

The next day Fu came again with some borrowed bean seeds, which he helped sow in the family's neglected farm plot.

Since then Fu has visited the family more than 60 times. Rain or shine, he arrived by bike and went directly to the fields. And he really knew how to pitch in. He got a loan for the family from the county "help the poor" office, with which Ye Deming bought chemical fertilizers, fine strains of seeds and fodder, and repaired the pigsties. The family has an old sow which it had tried unsuccessfully to sell. Now, better-fed, she has produced four litters, earning the family 1,000 yuan.

In May this year, the county bureau head bought 20 young geese for the family. He even loaned them some money and helped them purchase the materials they needed to build a new brick-and-tile house.

Last year, the Ye family had enough to eat and good clothes to wear, cleared a debt of 500 yuan and, together with another family, bought a buffalo. This year Ye Deming has his

own draught animal, enough fertilizer and enough water for irrigation. He has plans to repay the government loans and build the new house after the coming autumn harvest.

The county water conservancy bureau head is not the only devoted friend of the poor. Many other leaders in the county, communes and brigades are equally enthusiastic to assist poor families.

In a remote village of the Fuxing commune's Sanwan production brigade, a new farm produce processing workshop was opened last autumn. The workshop, housed in three old thatched huts, is equipped with rice and flour mills, a gin for separating the seeds from cotton and a fodder crusher. All are power-driven. Beside the workshop, which is worth approximately 4,000 yuan, stands a new five-room brick-and-tile house.

It is hard to imagine that Xu Hongquan, the owner of this going concern, was desperately poor a few years ago.

Both Xu and his wife have been Party members since the 1950s, and each had served a long stint as the production team leader. Before the institution of the responsibility system, however, grain output was so low that for nine consecutive years the team failed to deliver any grain to the state. Although Xu Hongquan was skilled in farming and planning, he ran into a deficit for about 200 yuan each year because he had to support a big family.



Ma Fuxiang, deputy secretary of the Zhangshan township Party committee, helps a peasant family till the land together with a group of young people.

A change has taken place in the family since Cheng Decai, the brigade Party branch secretary, came into the picture. Cheng arranged for Xu's oldest son to sign a contract with the brigade, joining with two other families to run a brick kiln. Loans totalling 500 yuan were granted by the county civil affairs bureau and the bank. With these the family began raising cattle, pigs and poultry and running the farm produce processing workshop, while attending to the farm plot under their contracted responsibility. In two years the Xu family was "well-to-do."

Because of their intimate knowledge of the villagers' situation, the brigade and commune leaders know better than other officials how to best help the families with low incomes. If all these leaders joined the assistance programme, Laian would change even more quickly.

Sharing the Wisdom

Agrotechnicians, both those on the government payroll and those chosen from among the peasants, play an important role in assisting the needy. Last year alone, they provided technical training to 5,000 peasants from poor families or more than 70 per cent of the labour force of those families under the county's assistance programme.

Wang Guandong, a peasant agrotechnician of the Fuxian commune's Liangtian production brigade, became affluent shortly after the institution of the responsibility system. In the two years since early 1981, at the request of the commune and brigade and one of the peasant families, he has helped three poor families get their first taste of a prosperous life. The key to Wang's success is his persistent efforts to teach his charges the techniques needed in choosing fine strains of seeds, applying fertilizers and treating and preventing insect invasions.

By agreement Wang and the three other families synchronized their steps in farming. Before beginning any phase of production, Wang



Zhang Zhifu (left), who earned 10,000 yuan from scientific farming, sells his fine strain of hybrid rice cheaply to those who are still poor. He also passes on the related technical know-how.

Ge Zaifa's family belongs to the Xinqiao production team of the Shuangtang commune. Although there are four in the family, only one of them is able to work. But now Ge has the help of the production team leader, the accountant and a veteran peasant, who arrange production for him. The team members decided to give the family special use of the draught animals, irrigation facilities, etc. Youngsters in the village came by to help from time to time. Last year the Ges enjoyed a better life and were able to build a new house. Now they can rely on their own efforts to make a good living from farming and sideline occupations.

Guandong would show them the correct methods in his own field. Then he would go to their fields to be sure they mastered the skills. He also helped these families take advantage of the preferential provisions granted by the county authorities. When they reaped a high yield, all three families were convinced that scientific farming could work miracles and that it would no longer do to stick to outmoded farming methods.

A warmhearted man, Wang Guandong has also provided technical guidance to 20 other poor families in the brigade, and runs a regular agro-science bulletin board, which is now in its 13th issue.

Wang explained his eagerness to help others. "Since I have seen bad days myself, I know how it is to be poor. When my poor neighbours increase their grain output, I am even happier than when I have made money for myself. The people have given me the knowledge, and I should give it back to the people. On no account should I feather my own nest."

In the last few years, young people — many of them Communist Youth League members — and peasants in Laian County have formed 1,600 "help the poor" groups. Many of these groups have done everything for families in need of help, from sowing and field management to harvesting. During the busy farming seasons last year, 17,500 cadres, workers and staff went out of their way to assist the rural poor in sowing and harvesting.

The experiences of these Laian peasants fully express the main-stream ideology of the Chinese peasantry, who have been part of a collective economy for more than 20 years. They demonstrate that class polarization is not just impermissible under Chinese law and our socialist system, but enjoys no popularity whatsoever among the peasants.

The poor families in Laian County have begun a journey down the road to affluence. In 1982, despite a long dry spell followed by a mild flood families under the assistance programme increased their grain yields by 40.6 per cent and oil-bearing crops by 250 per cent over 1981. Most of them also raised their incomes from household sideline occupation by more than 20 per cent. Their grain output averaged 655.5 kilogrammes per capita; by contrast, that of the whole county averaged 651 kilogrammes.

The figure, needless to say, is still low, and much remains to be done to secure a good life for all the families.

In reviewing the actions they took in 1982, the county leaders discovered their work to help the poor was doing well in some areas but not in others, and that some "help the poor" groups had not played their role as well as they should. They are determined to redouble their efforts so that poverty will be eliminated in Laian County by 1985. □

CULTURAL PALACE

Workers' home

"Workers' home" is what the Chinese workers call their cultural palaces and clubs, where they take part in all kinds of cultural activities and enjoy varied entertainments. China now has about 24,000 workers' cultural centres, sponsored by trade unions.

The Beijing Working People's Cultural Palace, located beside the red-walled Palace Museum, is the biggest of its kind in the capital. It contains four classrooms, a science and technology hall, a library and several exhibition halls. Every day hundreds of people come to learn about science and technology. Ten other entertainment sites are open to workers and staff members from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., offering them such activities as physical exercise, creative writing and art, performances, film

shows, chess and electronic games.

Cultural centres like this have been set up in most of the country's provinces and municipalities. Even mines, businesses and workshops have their own clubs where cultural activities are organized according to what is available.

"Let the workers accept education through entertainment and gain knowledge outside of school," are the guiding words of the "workers' homes," which provide healthy, vigorous and interesting activities for the workers.

The Workers' Cultural Palace in the city of Fushun, Liaoning Province, organized a 120-member story-telling group in 1962, which has given 4,800 performances and entertained one million. The stories are compiled from historical material and real life episodes. Many of them praise ancient national heroes and contemporary figures.

Among the most recent is the story of Zhang Haidi, a young woman who, although paralysed below her chest, studies diligently and has cured many patients with acupuncture and other therapies. The vivid storytelling has helped spread Zhang's deeds and encouraged young workers to follow her example.

China's modernization drive needs workers with a better understanding of technology. The cultural palaces and clubs have sponsored varied courses to meet this demand. For instance, the Beijing Working People's Cultural Palace has sponsored 579 technological courses including machine-building, electronics and hydraulic pressure and heat treatment, which have trained more than 40,000 workers. The Shanghai Workers' Cultural Palace has helped more than 10,000 young workers finish their junior and senior middle school education. At the same time, the trade union-sponsored libraries have helped thousands of youths become successful through their own efforts.

The more than 9,000 workers and staff members who attended training courses in the cultural palace of Wuxi, Jiangsu Province, have made at least 3,000 innovations in their respective factories. Some of these trained workers have been promoted to leading technological posts. Others have enrolled in workers' colleges or TV universities.

The "workers' homes" also encourage young people to live a healthy and happy life. One



In the reading room of the Beijing Working People's Cultural Palace.



Leaping in the air, young women train at the palace's course of "wushu."

young worker used to wear outlandish clothes and play decadent music on a guitar. However, the factory's club enrolled him as an electric guitar player in the band and helped him improve his musical skills. As a result, he turned out to be an excellent guitar player.

Another example is a woman worker who lacked confidence because she was shy and often found it difficult to do her work well. After the workshop club began inviting her to participate in cultural activities, she gradually became skilled in dance, singing and drama. A dance she created and staged won prizes both for choreography and performance during the city workers' festival. Now aware of her own ability, she is a girl with vigour and purpose.

Older people and retired workers also take part in interesting activities at the cultural palaces and clubs such as philately, chess, playing cards, breeding goldfish, growing flowers and guessing riddles. An ever increasing number of workers and staff members are being attracted to these cultural centres, seeking activities which benefit their physical and intellectual health.

CULTURAL RELICS

Repairing ancient buildings

What if ancient buildings, like the Leaning Tower of Pisa, should need repairs? Should they be bolstered with modern techniques and materials to make them more sturdy? Or should they be reconstructed according to the original blueprint with as similar materials as possible? This is the problem facing the specialists concerned.

Recently, experts in repairing the ancient buildings of China gathered in Beijing to discuss how to cope with this problem. They supported the principle of sticking to the originals, which became part of the Law on the Protection of Cultural Relics

promulgated last year by the National People's Congress.

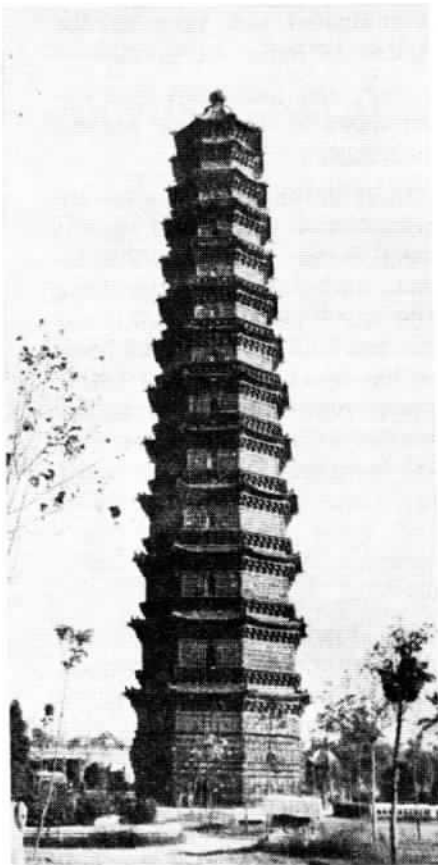
They also recounted their experiences in repairing ancient buildings:

In 1973, for instance, a square brick tower was found in An-yang, Henan Province. The tower, dating back to the Tang Dynasty (618-907 A.D.), is cloaked in 3,775 pieces of brick in bas-relief. Extending to 300 square metres, the relief depicts people, animals and lotuses in 119 sketches. But, the tower's top, three of the four cornices and some 1,500 bricks were missing. Repairs were badly needed.

In China, these kinds of ancient buildings are everywhere, but in various states of disrepair. Their age, architecture, etc., give them great intrinsic value. Substituting modern materials for the ancient ones would endanger



Repairs saved Jiaxiu Pavilion—a famous ancient building (built in 1597) in Guiyang, Guizhou Province.



A new look for the 54.6-metre-high Iron Tower in Kaifeng, Henan Province, which was built with iron-colour glazed bricks in the early 1050s.

them. And a slight modification in structure might even mar the whole thing. Therefore, for buildings in tolerable condition, maintenance is advisable. Badly damaged ones such as the tower in Henan, however, need large-scale repairs.

Some experts believe configuration is the first and foremost consideration in restoring ancient buildings. For example, the White Tower in Jixian County, Tianjin Municipality, a Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) building, was shaken to its foundations by the Tangshan earthquake in 1976. When dismantled for reconstruction early this year, another tower from the Liao Dynasty (916-1125) was found inside. Though highly

valuable, it was in a terrible state. The problem was: to copy the outside tower or to imitate the insider? The finished replica answered the question by having the Liao tower inside the Ming one as they had been before.

The next consideration is the inner structure. Most, if not all, of the ancient Chinese buildings used wooden tenon-mortise joints, which have succumbed to time and the elements. Some experts suggested introducing cement in place of wood. While it may save labour and materials, this approach destroys the original flavour of the buildings. The Qiniandian of the Temple of Heaven in Beijing is typical of these wooden buildings. When it was restored in 1971, similar wooden materials were used to replace the roof, so that the features of the building would be accurately represented.

Another restoration was begun in Fujian, where the residence of Lin Zexu, a viceroy of the Qing Dynasty who banned opium trade in the 19th century, was to be renovated. Following the original plan to the letter, experts rebuilt the main entrance, the gate, the veranda and the south and north halls, all in dovetailed wooden design.

In dealing with the brick tower in Henan, substitute materials were also rejected. The bas-relief was copied in plaster moulds, and replicas of Tang bricks were cast and baked. The copied Tang bricks were used only where the originals were missing. In some cases only a fragment of the original brick needed replacement. Because of this care, the Tang style of the tower is truly represented.

The final consideration is building techniques. Our ancestors could rightly boast of their wis-

dom and craftsmanship in a time when productive capacity was much lower. But today, when we have the technology to put a man on the moon, their ancient and cumbersome skills are obsolete. What used to take days of adzing along a log can now be accomplished in a matter of seconds with an electric plane.

However, the experts believe using traditional techniques will not only save the ancient buildings, but will save the techniques as well. And their idea has been working well.

Some sixty- and seventy-year-old Beijing residents were invited to pass on their traditional skills when the Beijing city gates were renovated. A section of a door, 3 metres high, needed one coat of hemp and five coats of a mixture of lime, flour, pig blood, tung oil and brick scraps. Thirteen delicate and complex procedures are required for this ancient, traditional building technique.

Sticking to the original is the fundamental principle when repairing ancient buildings, whose value depends upon the quality of the repair work. This principle is being adopted by more and more experts in the field.

CORRECTIONS: The 15th line from the bottom left-hand column on page 12 of issue No. 37 should read: "Act in 1964, the Fair Housing. . ."

The fifth line of the first paragraph in the left-hand column on p. 14, issue No. 37, should read: "achieving the goal of doubling China's energy. . ."



Jin Hongjun—Painter Of Flowers and Birds

Jin Hongjun, of Manchu nationality, was born in 1937 in Beijing. A 1962 graduate of the traditional Chinese painting department of the Central Academy of Arts, he is now a lecturer at the academy.

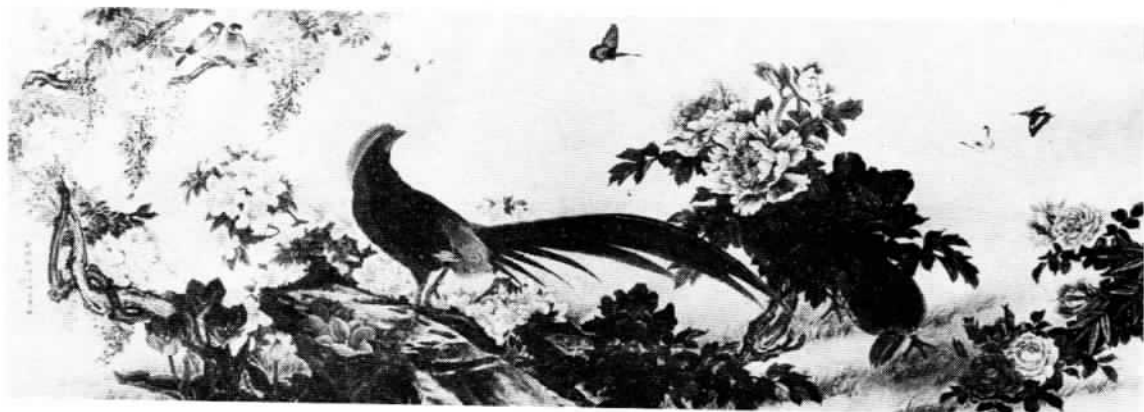
While carrying forward the art of traditional painting, he is always exploring new ideas and themes. His works, which interweave the beauty of decorative art with the natural beauty of flowers, are meticulous but not rigid or monotonous.



White Plum Blossoms.



Dawn in Spring.



Birds Singing Amid Flowers.

