

Mao Tse-tung Thought Guides Us in Conquering Nature

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Helped by the P.L.A. personnel supporting agriculture, the Revolutionary Committee of the Hengling People's Commune, Huailai County, Hopei Province, has made great efforts in studying and applying Mao Tsetung Thought in a living way and has used the world outlook of materialist dialectics to know and change the world. This has given a push to the vigorous progress in both revolution and production and changed the commune's former state of poverty. The commune in the Changchiakou region has become an advanced collective in the living study and application of Mao Tsetung Thought in the county, the special administrative region and the province, and a red banner of emulating the Tachai Production Brigade in the region.

Bringing Man's Positive Factors Into Full Play

Carved by many gullies, the Hengling commune lies on steep mountain slopes at the foot of the Great Wall. This remote mountain area has little farmland. In the autumn of 1965, when peasants in their hundreds of millions launched an upsurge in response to Chairman Mao's call, "In agriculture, learn from Tachai." several young Communists, entrusted with heavy tasks by the Party, came to the Hengling commune and formed its new leading body.

Faced with the towering mountains and deep gullies, but encouraged by

the poor and lower-middle peasants who aspired to change the face of this area, members of the new leading body studied Chairman Mao's teachings and, as they pondered their responsibility as Communist Party members, they were very much eager to tackle several mountain peaks at once. So they surveyed the mountains, drew designs and soon worked out a plan to transform the mountains. Work began immediately thereafter. At the beginning, the masses were full of enthusiasm, but within a short time fewer and fewer of them showed up. Some even expressed pessimism. The commune's leading body meditated over this problem time and again. They studied Chairman Mao's teachings on grasping the principal contradiction and his teaching that politics is the commander, the soul in everything. The study helped them see things clearly. They understood that laying first stress on transforming the mountains and ignoring man's thinking, not giving prominence to proletarian politics and not grasping the principal contradiction was like seeing material things only but not the people. A good job could never be done in this way.

Investigation revealed to them that some people still had doubts about the possibility of conquering nature. After carefully analyzing the living ideas current among the masses and with this knowledge in mind, the commune leading body organized them to study Chairman Mao's great teaching: "Of all things in the world, people are the

most precious. Under the leadership of the Communist Party, as long as there are people, every kind of miracle can be performed." This brilliant concept of Chairman Mao's was the guide in analyzing the relations between man and mountain, enabling the commune members to appreciate the significance of man as a living being as opposed to the mountain which is dead, and therefore that man plays the dominant role in transforming the mountain. The mountain would certainly be transformed provided the people's thinking was well revolutionized.

In line with Chairman Mao's teaching that "we must first raise the political consciousness of the vanguard," the commune leading body assembled all the Party members and cadres in study classes to learn from Tachai. In the course of study some people threw overboard the cowardly idea of being unable to do anything before nature and the participants fostered the bold resolve "which dares to make sun and moon shine in new skies." Commune members and cadres were organized to visit the Tachai brigade and learn from it. Later a big debate got underway among the masses on the question of whether to follow the example of the "Foolish Old Man" or the "Wise Old Man." In the process the commune members further strengthened their confidence as pioneers in transforming the mountains for the sake of revolution. Unanimously they determined to become new "Foolish Old Men" who dare to transform nature and definitely not "Wise Old Men" enslaved by nature.

To wage a more effective struggle against nature, the commune leading body, cadres of its brigades and teams and many of the poor and lower-middle

peasants once more investigated and surveyed the commune's natural features. Guided by Mao Tsetung Thought, they pooled the wisdom of the masses and mapped out an eight-year plan for the transformation of the commune's mountains and gullies. They resolved to write the freshest and most beautiful characters and paint the freshest and most beautiful pictures on this blank sheet of paper — Hengling commune.

Persisting in Following the Road of Self-Reliance

This plan reflected the masses' aspirations and will. The whole commune soon organized four pioneering contingents which quickly went into action to conquer nature.

The Niushankou was a four-kilometre ravine encased by towering mountains, with huge rocks embedded in its base. It was there the Fangkou brigade began its first battle to dam the ravine and terrace fields. Though the Fangkou peasants worked hard for some time, they did not accomplish very much. Some elements wavered in front of difficulties, and bemoaned: "Our mountain area has little reserves and we're short of hands. Without state assistance, our efforts alone won't do!" However, the brigade's poor and lower-middle peasants retorted: "What we are concerned about is the lack of drive, and not the big difficulties. It is precisely by relying on our own revolutionary drive that we make the mountains bow to us. So long as we can walk on our own feet, we won't count on help from others."

Firmly grasping these living ideas, the commune leading body organized the masses to conscientiously study

Chairman Mao's teachings: "The fundamental cause of the development of a thing is not external but internal; it lies in the contradictoriness within the thing." "It [materialist dialectics] holds that external causes are the condition of change and internal causes are the basis of change, and that external causes become operative through internal causes." This helped them to understand more thoroughly that the commune's masses were the decisive factor in transforming the face of Hengling and that outside help and support were external causes which became operative through internal causes. Only when all the commune members took the initiative in transforming the mountains and gullies, determined to fight to the end, could the help and support become operative. This reasoning made them aware of the importance of their internal positive factor and the might of their own strength, and fostered their faith in pioneering the conquest of nature through their own efforts.

The cadres of the commune took the lead in this battle to transform the mountain and create farmland, and went wherever the task was arduous. Comrade Chou Heng-fu, chairman of the commune revolutionary committee, joined the peasants of the Fanganyu brigade in strenuous labour for 15 days at the Chinhuling gully, 30 metres wide and 15 meters deep. They quarried, built check dams and terraced fields. Upon completion of the damming of the commune's first big gully and the creation of its first high-standard terraced fields of the Tachai type, groups of cadres and commune members from all brigades were organized to inspect this gully. All the

Hengling people were called upon to implement the commune's eight-year plan.

By undertaking the hard jobs the commune's cadres set an example, and the revolutionary masses followed suit. They themselves produced the tools, made up the dynamite they needed. To overcome the shortage of labour, men and women, old and young, all turned out. They shouldered their tasks of farming while transforming the mountains. To meet the problem of additional funds, they resorted to their own resources. Lacking technical personnel, they trained their own "local experts" by learning through practical work. Relying on their own efforts, the masses did everything required without asking for even one cent, one jin of grain or anything from the state. Meanwhile, the poor and lower-middle peasants of the Fangkou brigade, previously mentioned, guided by Mao Tsetung Thought, also worked hard, relying on their own vitality and picks. After a year or so, they, too, brought a new look to the Niushankou gully by building over 270 large stone embankments and terracing more than 240 mu of fields up to Tachai standards.

Fearing Neither Hardship Nor Death for Revolution

In transforming the Nantungkou gully, the Heng-ling brigade of the commune met with sabotage by class enemies who spread vicious rumors that those who took part in the work were just looking for hardship instead of comfort. They tried to slacken the pace of the poor and lower-middle peasants in building the new socialist

countryside.

Braving the storm of class struggle, members of the commune leading body along with the masses studied Chairman Mao's teachings over and over again and firmly engaged in revolutionary mass criticism on many occasions. They thoroughly exposed the criminal plots of the class enemies, relentlessly criticized the renegade Liu Shao-chi's "philosophy of survival," and dealt a head-on blow to the class enemies.

To help the masses foster the proletarian revolutionary outlook on "hardship" and "happiness," the commune leading body organized them to repeatedly study the "three constantly read articles" and Chairman Mao's teachings: "All contradictory things are interconnected; not only do they coexist in a single entity in given conditions, but in other given conditions, they also transform themselves into each other. This is the full meaning of the identity of opposites." "Without life, there would be no death; without death, there would be no life." "Without misfortune, there would be no good fortune; without good fortune, there would be no misfortune." From this study they deeply grasped the interconnection of hardship and happiness, and the fact that both terms are relative, not absolute. Without hardship, there would be no happiness. The greatest joy and happiness of a fighter who continues to make revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat is to take on hardship for the revolution, the laboring people of China and the rest of the world.

Communist Party member Sung Chih-shun, member of the standing committee of the commune revolutionary committee and demobilized army-

man, took the lead in doing hard jobs, going to the tough places and rushing forward at the dangerous moments. Once, while Sung was holding a billet, the man wielding the hammer missed the target and struck his leg. Sung fainted on the slope from the pain, but when he came to he immediately looked around for the billet with the intention of continuing his work. The comrades on the spot advised him to go to the hospital, but he firmly replied: "Without the sacrifice of the lives of the revolutionary martyrs, I wouldn't be living today. To transform the commune and help build communism, I'm willing to give my life, let alone suffer some hardship." As he spoke, he worked.

Taking Tachai's hero Chia Chin-tsai as his model, poor peasant Tu Shih-chang, who was over 50, persisted daily in building stone dams, even when there was ice and snow. Once a heavy rock fell and injured eight of his fingers. The pain was so severe that he could hardly eat and sleep. But he never discontinued working. On one occasion, as 21-year-old militiaman Chang Kuei-chu was blasting rocks on a 50-meter-high precipice, a boulder as big as a room was dislodged but remained wedged on the face of the cliff. If not removed, it would endanger those working below. The boulder could not be reached from below. To push it off the cliff also involved danger. Ignoring his own safety at this critical moment, Chang climbed to the top of the cliff, dislodged the boulder with a crowbar and in the process tumbled down with it. Though seriously bruised, he insisted on continuing his work. As others were dressing his wound and expressing concern over his injury, he stated in high spirits: "Will the Chinese

cover before injury when they are not afraid even of death? The fact that I've removed the threatening danger makes me happy and forget all fatigue and pain."

During the battle against nature, more than 280 members of the Hengling commune were cited as "Tachai people" because they are boundlessly loyal to Chairman Mao and outstanding in the living study and application of Mao Tsetung Thought, and because they showed high consciousness of the struggle between the two lines and were courageous in the struggle against nature. The vast majority of them have attended conferences of activists in the living study and application of Mao Tsetung Thought in either the province, special administrative region, county or commune.

Continuing Revolution and Always Advancing

After working hard for more than three years in the deep ravines, the peasants in the Hengling commune have built more than 1,700 stone check dams and terraced more than 1,800 mu of fields up to Tachai standards. The commune's state of grain deficiency has changed to that of grain surplus; the formerly "poor gullies" are now "rich gullies."

Having obtained success, some people became complacent and relaxed their efforts. When the commune put out a plan for a bigger leap forward, they shook their heads and said: "Though our production is not the highest, it's still considered high in this area to yield an average of 400 jin per mu."

The commune revolutionary com-

mittee felt that this living idea reflected that some people were still lacking the consciousness of continuing the revolution. Therefore, various types of Mao Tsetung Thought- study classes were held at which committee members and the masses repeatedly studied Chairman Mao's teachings: "The old process ends and the new one begins." "The ceaseless emergence and ceaseless resolution of contradictions is the dialectical law of the development of things." In this light they conscientiously summed up the experience and drew lessons from what their own commune and production brigade did in conquering nature. This helped them to understand that some projects could be regarded as completed if seen in the limited sense of transforming a mountain or a gully. But in fact they constituted only the first step in the long revolutionary journey to transform the natural face of the whole commune; much work still remained to be done.

The masses raised their political consciousness in these classes. Then, the commune revolutionary committee timely led them to begin activities to eliminate certain erroneous ideas and to substitute correct ones, namely. (1) to break down the idea that "the revolution has come to the end" and firmly bear in mind Chairman Mao's teaching of continuing the revolution, (2) to break down the idea of "self-conceit" and firmly bear in mind Chairman Mao's teaching to "guard against arrogance," and (3) to break down the idea of "seeking ease and comfort" and firmly bear in mind Chairman Mao's teaching to engage in "arduous struggle." After discovering where they lagged behind, the poor and lower-middle peasants turned the "end" into

the "beginning" and set out to create a new upsurge in the movement to "grasp revolution, promote production and other work and preparedness against war" on a still larger scale.

Inspired by the spirit of the Ninth Party Congress, the revolutionary

masses of the Hengling commune have mapped out a still bigger program for conquering nature between 1969 and 1975. They are resolved to make greater contributions in support of national construction and the world revolution.