



**CHINA CELEBRATES
THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY
OF MARCH 8TH**

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FOREWORD

The Chinese women celebrated the 50th anniversary of March 8, International Working Women's Day, with indescribable excitement and joy, ceremony and enthusiasm, and on a scale hitherto unknown.

To arrange for the celebration activities, a national preparatory committee was formed in February. It consisted of leading members of 19 national people's organizations in China including the National Women's Federation of the People's Republic of China, the trade union, youth, art and literary, science and peace organizations, and representative figures of women in all walks of life. Nine principal people's organizations, including the National Women's Federation, issued a notice calling upon the nation as a whole to warmly celebrate this great red-letter day. Immediately the Chinese women plunged themselves into a drive for new achievements to greet March 8. Under the sponsorship of the National Women's Federation, arrangements were made in various places to select the best women individuals and groups as bearers of the March 8 Red Banner. Red banner honours were given to women, either as individuals or as groups, who were politically progressive, had an outstanding working record to their credit, and were good at uniting with the masses. The process of selecting these Red Banner Bearers was accompanied by a broad mass movement to vie with and learn from the advanced.

The celebration activities reached their crest in the beginning of March. Between March 5 and 8, China's capital Peking witnessed four unparalleled gatherings: the meeting, which was broadcast over the nation-wide network, to cite and award the bearers of the March 8 Red Banner and to encourage women throughout the country to go all out for a continued leap forward; the mass rally attended by women of all circles in Peking to mark the occasion; the reception in honour of friends from various countries; and the evening get-together of the Chinese women and their foreign friends. Anniversary activities in various localities were varied and rich in content. All this showed in a crystallized way the great achievements of the Chinese women in production and other sorts of work, and demonstrated that the Chinese women, who have won their emancipation, got themselves organized, and have a high level of socialist consciousness, possess immense wisdom and strength. It also testified to the unswerving will of the Chinese women for promoting the continued leap forward in China's construction, strengthening the friendship and unity among the women of the various countries, and defending peace in Asia and the world over.

That the 50th anniversary of March 8 was commemorated in China with such great warmth and on such a massive scale was closely connected with the continued big leap forward in the country's socialist construction and the fact that the women's emancipation movement in China has entered a new, more deep-going stage, the stage of complete emancipation. Meanwhile, the unprecedented development of the cause of world peace and progress and the achievements attained by the women in various countries in safeguarding peace, democracy

and national independence and in their struggle for women's rights and a happy life for children have also greatly inspired the Chinese women and people. This is why they commemorated the 50th anniversary of March 8 with such unqualified joy.

Led by the Communist Party of China, the Chinese people are building socialism at a high speed. In January 1960, the heartening news was spread to every part of the country that thanks to the continuous big leap forward in the nation's production and construction in the last two years, China had fulfilled the main targets of its Second Five-Year Plan (1958-62) three years ahead of schedule. This means that China had accomplished in two years what was originally intended to take five years. This gratifying news not only showed the great achievements in the continuous big leap forward of 1958 and 1959, but also indicated that China's socialist construction could be developed at a high speed and that the Chinese people would be able to enjoy an even happier life in the future even sooner than was previously foreseen. That is why the Chinese women are more confident than ever in the flourishing and prosperity of their country and their own immensely bright future. As they hail the tremendous successes of the country's continuous big leap forward of 1958 and 1959, the Chinese people cannot but recall the meritorious services performed by their womenfolk in the national construction. In contributing so much to the nation, the Chinese women have also greatly raised their position, further changing the views of society on women. In China, therefore, March 8 is a festival not only for women but also for the people as a whole.

What make the Chinese women feel particularly joyous are the outstanding and thoroughgoing changes that have taken place in their own life during the past two years. The most important of these changes is that women are taking part in social production and services on a universal scale. The big leap forward in production and construction, and the universal setting up of rural people's communes and their firm development have opened vast perspectives for women to go out to work, either in production or otherwise. In the two years of 1958 and 1959, the total number of women workers and other employees increased by five million. By the end of 1959, it had reached more than eight million, over 13 times as many as in the early post-liberation days. In the countryside, nearly all able-bodied women are taking part in the various aspects of production and other sorts of work in the people's communes, and they have become a big force in agricultural production. In addition, large numbers of housewives in the cities have, together with the people living around, set up local industries from practically nothing and are going all out for production. The broad masses of women who are going out to work feel very happy that they are able to contribute their share to the national construction. In whatever job they do, they show a strong sense of their responsibilities as masters of the country and are tremendously keen on their work. They have not only fulfilled their production plans but have also made technical innovations and raised the production level. Many women have demonstrated their creativeness and gained noteworthy achievements in technical innovations and the manufacture of new products. Women have become a vital force in China's national construction.

Having joined social production on a universal scale, the Chinese women have rid themselves of their economic dependence and have thus raised their status in society and in the family. They also feel immensely proud of being the creators of social wealth. This was unmistakably shown on March 8 this year when great numbers of women in Peking and other cities as well as in the countryside turned out to mark their great festival with valuable contributions in the shape of the products they had made and achievements in their work.

Women's participation in social production has led to a change in their life. To enable the broad masses of women to go out to work with a light heart, collective welfare facilities such as community dining-rooms, nurseries, kindergartens and sewing teams have been developed extensively in the countryside and cities over the past two years, while neighbourhood service centres have been set up in the cities. The Chinese women have urgently demanded to have their burden of family chores reduced and to take part in production, because the big leap forward in production and construction calls for a huge labour force and they realize that they can contribute more to the nation's socialist construction and achieve genuine equality with men only by taking part in social labour. Under such conditions, it is necessary to transform household drudgery into collective socialist economic undertakings and thus bring about the socialization of household work, in order to meet the needs of national construction and satisfy the demands of women.

The socialization of household work which is now being carried out in China has great bearing on the emancipation of women. Tens of millions of women have been freed from the household drudgery which wore down

Chinese women over generations. They can now wholeheartedly devote themselves to their job, whether it be in production or otherwise, and take part in studies and other social activities. This paves the way for further wiping out the remnants of women's inequality with men both on the job and in daily life. The socialization of housework has brought about greater harmony and equality within the family, made family life more happy and pleasant, and enabled children to get a better social and family education.

The participation of the broad masses of women in production has brought about remarkable changes in their spirits. In recent years the Chinese women have become deeply aware that individual happiness must rest upon the foundation of the nation's prosperity. They clearly understand that for the happiness of the people as a whole, China must be built in the shortest time into a powerful socialist country with a modern industry, modern agriculture, and a modern science and culture, and must march towards communism in the future. It is precisely because they have a clear-cut and lofty goal of struggle that they have shed their feelings of inferiority, uphold high and lofty aims, dare to think and speak out boldly, and turn their wisdom and talents to all sorts of things and do them well.

In the course of collective production and collective life they have developed a collective spirit. To raise jointly the level of production, they are extremely keen in learning from the advanced and helping the backward, taking on the difficulties and hardships themselves and leaving the easier jobs and conveniences to others. It is already general practice among women to make sacrifices for the public good and take pleasure in helping others.

The broad masses of Chinese women have become a new type of women with socialist ideas and a new moral character.

The abolition of the private ownership of the means of production and the establishment of the socialist system in China have eliminated once and for all the social roots of the oppression of women and led to their emancipation. Over the last two years, as a result of the great leap forward in production and construction in our country, women have participated on an extensive scale in social labour and are freed from housework. A big change has taken place in their spirits. All this shows that the Chinese women's movement has entered a new stage, namely, that of the realization of women's complete emancipation..

Despite the tremendous progress they have made, the Chinese women feel that they are still unable to match up to the needs of China's swift development of construction. That is why during the celebrations they declared their determination to raise their ideological and theoretical level as well as their knowledge of culture and science, and to step up their physical training. In this way, they will make bigger contribution for a still better, over-all big leap in China's construction this year and for the defence of peace in Asia and the world over.

MARCH 8—A DAY OF GREAT REJOICING

All Peking was in a festive mood on March 8 and even for the few days preceding it. In honour of the 50th anniversary of International Working Women's Day, the women of all circles held a grand celebration on March 7 in Peking in the Great Hall of the People. The enthusiasm of the ten thousand people present was heightened by the participation of leaders of the Chinese Communist Party and Government. Among them were Chou En-lai, Vice-Chairman of the Party's Central Committee and Premier of the State Council, Teng Hsiao-ping, General Secretary of the Party's Central Committee, Peng Chen, member of the Political Bureau of the Party's Central Committee and Mayor of Peking, and Li Fu-chun, member of the Political Bureau of the Party's Central Committee and Vice-Premier. The foreign guests included the representatives of the Women's International Democratic Federation, specially invited to China for the occasion, women representatives from the Soviet Union, Korea, Mongolia, Hungary, Japan and other countries, wives of diplomatic envoys in China, women experts and wives of experts from the Soviet Union and other countries who have come from afar to help China in her construction. Altogether some 1,200 of them joined the Chinese women in making the celebration merrier.

Teng Ying-chao, Vice-President of the National Women's Federation of China, addressed the meeting.

On behalf of the Chinese women and the Presidium of the celebration meeting, she first extended a hearty welcome to the foreign guests and offered warm congratulations to all friends and comrades present. After mentioning and praising the work of Clara Zetkin, the initiator of Women's Day on March 8, she analysed the advance and the various achievements of the women's emancipation movements in different countries during the last fifty years. She said that these have convinced the people that, in this era when the East wind prevails over the West wind, the women's emancipation movement, as an important part of the cause of peace, democracy, national independence and socialism, will surely score new and greater victories. Citing specific facts, she explained how since 1958 the women's movement in China, guided by the general line for socialist construction and stimulated by the great leap forward and the people's communes, has leaped into a new stage — that of realizing complete emancipation. Millions of Chinese women have taken their place in social labour, gaining a high socialist consciousness and a certain level of culture and technical skill.

She warmly encouraged the women of the whole country to exert their best efforts to raise their political consciousness, increase their theoretical, cultural and scientific knowledge, actively participate in the campaign for increasing production and practising economy which centres on technical innovations and the technical revolution, work for mechanization or semi-mechanization, automation or semi-automation, and run both collective welfare and social services efficiently. She called on all

women to continue making great leaps forward, to strive for the safeguarding of world peace, as well as for women's complete emancipation and children's welfare. She analysed the current world situation, pointing out that there has been a certain trend towards the relaxation of international tension but that full vigilance must be maintained against U.S. imperialism, the arch enemy of world peace. She also expressed the Chinese women's earnest desire to strengthen their solidarity with the women of the Soviet Union, the other socialist countries, those of the Asian, African, Latin-American countries and all other peace-loving women of the world.

A message of congratulations was then read from Soong Ching Ling, Vice-Chairman of the People's Republic of China, which was greeted with enthusiastic applause.

Others who addressed the gathering were the representative of the Women's International Democratic Federation, leaders of women's delegations from the Soviet Union, Korea, Mongolia, Japan and other countries, a representative of the women of the embassies of the socialist, Asian and African countries in China and representative of the Soviet women experts and the wives of the Soviet experts. They conveyed the greetings of the women of their countries to the Chinese women and told the audience about the successes and struggles of the women in their respective countries. Their inspiring speeches were heartily received.

Then, to the sound of trumpets and drums, over 700 Young Pioneers, holding high bunches of flowers and colourful balloons, poured into the meeting hall. They came to offer the greetings of the 560,000 Young Pioneers in Peking. Five children read a long and moving poem

in praise of the achievements of their "aunts" and "elder sisters." They said in the poem:

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*Your contributions to the motherland are great,
Your achievements are as beautiful as poems,
You have set untold examples for us to follow.*

Then the children flew to the rostrum and presented their flowers to the Party and Government leaders, the women representatives from foreign countries and all the members of the Presidium. The entire hall rose and clapped enthusiastically. Many were moved to tears, for it is precisely for the children of our motherland, for the bright future of women and children that the Chinese women are throwing themselves so wholeheartedly into their work.

Following this came the ceremony to demonstrate the contributions women are making. Over 2,000 Peking women marched in to salute the rally with big charts, models, and products. The multifarious and colourful procession held the hall spellbound. Women workers and other employees passed the rostrum, bearing 122 of their products, evoking great admiration for their tremendous successes, the outcome of their fearless spirit and bold inventiveness. The women from the people's communes on the outskirts of Peking who engage in arable farming, forestry, animal husbandry, side-occupations and fishery followed, carrying high-yielding golden rice-ears, snowy-white silkworm cocoons, a huge cabbage weighing over ten kilogrammes, fresh big cucumbers, fat ducks and chickens they had carefully tended. This demonstration of the achievements of the people's com-

munes and the vital role the women members play in agricultural production was most impressive.

Then came the women of neighbourhood factories with various machines, examples of their technical innovations and samples of their new products, all made with their own hands. Two years ago they were housewives. Now they are actively participating in various kinds of social labour. They have plunged into productive occupations to serve the people. All this goes to show the great role of the city housewives and their marked success since they took part in various forms of socially productive labour after the start of the big leap forward.

Next followed militia women and women traffic police, marching vigorously and rhythmically as they passed the reviewing stand of the Presidium. Then came the sportswomen, full of energy and vitality, indicative of the vast transformation that has taken place in the physique of Chinese women. Women artists appeared, giving short performances of dancing, singing, or whatever they were best known for. They symbolized the growth of China's culture and art as a result of applying the policy of "letting a hundred flowers blossom."

One of the most colourful performances of the day was the programme given by children from the nurseries and kindergartens. They sang for their "aunts" and "elder sisters."

This multifarious and colourful procession lasted for more than an hour—an exhibition of the remarkable achievements made by the women of Peking in the nation-wide great leap forward. It exemplified the bold and creative spirit of the Chinese women on their way to complete emancipation. The appearance of the proces-

sion brought the gay spirit of the celebration meeting to its climax.

On the evening of March 8, a grand banquet was given in honour of the foreign guests. In the same Great Hall of the People more than 4,000 gathered in the most friendly and happy atmosphere. Everybody toasted *kan pei* to this glorious day and to the great unity of the women throughout the world. *Kan pei* now became a universally understood word expressing friendship, and no interpreters were needed. At the banquet, Tsai Chang, President of the National Women's Federation, made a speech on behalf of the preparatory committee for the occasion, warmly congratulating all friends from other lands. Chen Yi, member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party and Vice-Premier, on behalf of the Party's Central Committee and the State Council, drank to the health of the women guests, and congratulated the peace-loving women of the world on their success in the struggle to oppose imperialist aggression and defend world peace. The representative of the Women's International Democratic Federation and the leaders of the Soviet and Japanese women's delegations all expressed their good wishes. On behalf of the diplomatic envoys and their wives present, Mr. Abdul Samad, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Afghanistan to China, also proposed a toast. Continuous applause mingled with music throughout the festivities.

After the banquet a grand party for over 20,000 people commenced. A great variety of programmes catered to various tastes. They included ballroom dancing, Peking opera, film shows, operas and ballets, folk dances and acrobatics. Children flocked to the puppet shows and