

# TACHAI

## THE RED BANNER



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## **THE RED BANNER**

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FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS  
PEKING

First Edition 1977

Printed in the People's Republic of China

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## Foreword

Tachai, a production brigade of the people's commune of the same name in Hsiyang County, Shansi Province, stands over 1,000 metres above sea level in the Taihang Mountains. Guided by Chairman Mao's revolutionary line, its people, for more than two decades, have firmly carried out the Chinese Communist Party's basic line for the entire historical period of socialism. Amid fierce struggles between the proletariat and bourgeoisie, between the socialist and capitalist roads and between the Marxist and revisionist lines, this brigade has opened an avenue for the development of socialist agriculture through self-reliance and arduous struggle and with greater, faster, better and more economical results. It has thus set a brilliant example in building China's socialist agriculture.

Chairman Mao Tsetung in 1964 issued a great call, **"In agriculture, learn from Tachai,"** indicating for China's hundreds of millions of peasants the orientation for the development of her socialist agriculture. Premier Chou En-lai said in his "Report on the Work of the Government" to the First Session of the Third National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China in December that same year, "The principle of putting politics in command and placing ideology in the lead, the spirit of self-reliance and hard struggle and the communist style of loving the country and the collective, in all of which the Tachai Brigade has

persevered, should be vigorously promoted." This is high praise for the Tachai spirit and scientifically sums up Tachai's experience.

In response to the call of Chairman Mao and the Party Central Committee, and accelerated further by the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, a mass movement to learn from Tachai has been surging throughout the country. From regions south of the Yangtze to those north of the Great Wall, from the East China Sea to the Tibetan Plateau, songs of triumph resound and Tachai flowers bloom everywhere.

Tachai, this shining red standard of heroism, has attracted thousands upon thousands of foreign comrades and friends. Coming from afar to visit China they have seen here the face of China's new peasantry, learned what her peasants who have taken the socialist road are thinking and doing and witnessed the tremendous change and splendid prospects of her vast countryside.

## **Tremendous Changes**

The magnificent Taihang Mountains were the site of one of China's best known revolutionary base areas in the War of Resistance Against Japan, and later in the War of Liberation. These areas nurtured tens of thousands of China's finest sons and daughters whose countless deeds of heroism are lauded by the people. Today, in the socialist revolution and socialist construction, the people, with their hard-working hands, are creating new and beautiful scenes amid these mountains and rivers, with socialist Tachai as the best.

### **Wonders on Tiger Head Hill**

Tiger Head Hill, 1,100 metres above sea level, is situated southeast of Hsiyang county seat. Tachai lies at its foot. It comes into sight 5 kilometres up the highway from the county town.

First to strike the eye are the rows of "Tachai-type" buildings. They are unique structures, with a row of cave-style stone dwellings as the first floor, topped by more ordinary tile-roofed houses to form the second. They rest



neatly on the hillside. At night when their lights shine, the hill village resembles a galaxy of stars.

Between them is a wide asphalt road. It is flanked by willows which shield the houses from the glare of the sun and accentuate the beauty of the view, especially when they wave in the breeze. No one would imagine that this tree-shaded avenue was once a dry, rocky riverbed. In fact, all Tachai as it stands today was built after the particularly fierce flood of 1963, which rushed down this same channel.

Will the houses built in such a place be washed away by future mountain torrents? No, they are safe because a 290-metre-long masonry tunnel, built beneath them, will carry away flood waters without damage.

Past the village and ranging up Tiger Head Hill one sees rows of stone or earth embankments girdling the slope, protecting layer upon layer of level terraces. Visitors in the golden autumn are unfailingly impressed by the uncommonly large ears of maize standing out from the stalks like drumsticks, by the top-heavy millet rustling in the wind, and by the tall sorghum thrusting its plump, bunched purple heads into the sunny sky, like flaming torches in dense array. Everywhere on Tiger Head Hill – in Tachai's seven gullies and on its eight ridges – are level fields with thriving crops. A rich harvest to be sure! When the wheat is golden brown and ready for reaping, the entire hill glistens in the sun. When the wind blows, the wheat rolls ceaselessly like the ocean.

Many are the splendid sights here. On the hillside behind the village, a lone, round, brick building stands out conspicuously. "What is it?" the visitor asks. The neighing of horses and lowing of cattle soon give the

answer. It is the brigade's stock farm. In the early years after liberation, there were only seven donkeys, eight oxen and one pig in all Tachai. Now the brigade has over 400 livestock, including 80 draught animals – mules, horses and oxen – which average one per household, and over 200 pigs – more than two per household. Why are the animals kept on the hill? The stockmen answer that it keeps the village clean and means big savings in transporting fodder and moving manure to the fields. For the last job alone, the saving is 6,000-7,000 man-days each year.

Further up the hill runs a winding channel filled with clear water. Since there are no wells nor springs, where does the water come from? Piercing hills and bridging gullies, it is brought from the Kuochuang Reservoir by the seven-kilometre-long Army and People Canal, built in 1967 by the local people with the help of a People's Liberation Army unit.

Still higher, neat plots of emerald green come surprisingly into view. Paddy-fields! Who could have imagined, here on this formerly barren hillside, an experiment in rice-growing, with water shimmering and rippling?

Standing by the paddies, with the whole panorama of Tiger Head Hill spread out below, one can count the seven gullies. The last, Houti Gully, is nearest the village. It now consists of fairly sizable, level terraced fields which the commune members proudly dub "small man-made 'plains.'" Of old, Tachai's land was fragmented into small plots ranging from  $\frac{1}{10}$  to  $\frac{1}{5}$  of a mu\* each in area. Some were so tiny it took 48 of them to make a mu. And the two

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\* One mu equals  $\frac{1}{15}$  hectare or  $\frac{1}{6}$  acre.

biggest were only about three mu each. But now the biggest of the new small man-made "plains" covers about 20 mu, permitting mechanized farming and irrigation. Such man-made "plains" were built up in four of Tachai's seven gullies from the winter of 1971 to the spring of 1974.

Here, the hiss of fast-moving cable hoppers strikes the ear. It comes from the electrically-operated transport system overhead that carries compost to wheat fields high up on the hill and brings down quarried stone for construction needs. It is one of the advances towards mechanized farming made by the Tachai people since the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution began. Five such aerial cable-ways were built from 1967 to 1971, saving approximately 10,000 man-days a year. Tachai's ploughing, harrowing, shelling, hay cutting, fodder crushing, rice shucking, flour milling, irrigation and field construction are now wholly or partly mechanized as well.

Afforestation, too, has advanced. The top of the hill is now clothed in green by 400 mu of young pines. And half way up, the hill is rainbow-hued by orchards – 37,000 trees and vines bearing apples, pears, peaches, dates, walnuts, wild pepper and grapes. In 1973 the brigade harvested some 25,000 kg. of fruit, nearly 300 kg. per household. Over half its total income is now provided by forestry, animal husbandry and side-occupations. This shows *successful application of the policy of "taking grain as the key link and ensuring an all-round development."*

In short, under the guidance of Chairman Mao's revolutionary line, tremendous changes have taken place everywhere on Tiger Head Hill, giving it a completely new aspect.

Every day, as school lets out, one can hear the ringing songs of Tachai's children. Here is a favourite one:

Standing on Tiger Head Hill,  
Facing the rising sun I sing,  
In praise of Chairman Mao our saving star,  
In praise of the great Communist Party.

### **The Big Willow, Witness of the Past**

At the east end of the Tachai Village stands a big willow more than a century old. It has witnessed the change from the old to the new Tachai.

Before liberation, the big willow was used by the landlord and rich peasants to hang up and flog the poor people, so it was called the "tree of suffering." Year after year, in the endless dark night of the old society, many poor people were cruelly beaten here for being unable to pay rent and debts. Times without number, the willow heard the heart-rending cries of the bereft poor families when parents were forced to sell their children, or stood mute witness to the burials of poor people done to death by the oppression of the landlord and rich peasants, the corpses wrapped only in tattered matting.

At that time, the whole village had some 800 mu of land scattered in 4,700 fragments over its seven gullies and eight ridges on one hillside. None were protected by embankments, and none were level, the inner part being higher than the outer. Their top-soil, less than three inches deep, was mixed with sand and stones. The hill resembled a patchwork coat. In dry weather, it was wreathed in dust. When rains were heavy, the fields were slashed by torrents. The villagers lived in dread of both drought and flood. But even in the absence of such calamities, crops could not grow well here. Young plants

would turn yellow after only three rainless days. A strong shower would wash them away, and the soil as well. Toiling the whole year, the people could hardly reap 50 kg. of grain per mu.

The village had 64 households. But one landlord and three rich peasant families owned 70 per cent of its land. Out of 48 poor and lower-middle peasant households, 30 or so worked for landlords as long-term or seasonal labourers or as shepherds. Another dozen had to beg all the year round. In the famine year of 1920, over 20 poverty-stricken peasant families were forced to sell off their children. And seven died out altogether, having nothing to eat after paying rent and usury. A local rhyme described the miserable life of the very poor in old Tachai:

Working as a hired hand, I can't afford to buy bedding.

Selling my own children, I've become a beggar.

Even so, I can't pay up my debts to the rich.

Alas, no one will marry a daughter to a poor Tachai man.

Chen Yung-kuei is a representative of Tachai's impoverished peasants. He was born in Shihshan Village, about 30 kilometres away. His grandfather was utterly destitute. His father, Chen Chih-ju, had four brothers all of whom died prematurely under the brutal oppression of the old society. One was carried off by the Japanese fascists and burned to death in an alum kiln. One worked as a farm hand for more than 20 years, only to be thrown out by the landlord and die of hunger. One went begging and finally starved to death on the banks of the Yellow River. The fourth was so ground down by the man-eating old order that he went mad and met a pitiful end. When

Chen Yung-kuei was six years old, his father, seeing no other way out, fled from Shihshan to settle with his family in Tachai. But just as all crows under the sun are black, so the rich everywhere in the world are the same. Though the Chens drudged all the year round, they could not make enough to feed themselves. In the severe drought of 1920, the father, fearing that the whole family would otherwise perish, had to sell Chen Yung-kuei's mother, sister and brother. Then, on a pitch dark night, seething with grief and fury, he went back to Shihshan and hanged himself on a tree by the graves of his ancestors. Chen Yung-kuei, left an orphan, went to work as a shepherd for a landlord at the age of eight, and became a long-term hired labourer when only 10. Unable to endure cruel exploitation and oppression, he left Tachai to wander elsewhere. First he worked as a miner, then as an apprentice in a noodle shop. But nowhere could he avoid the common fate — curses, beating and starvation. Finally he had to come back to Tachai as a hired hand again.

In the summer of 1942, a group of underground workers of the Communist Party came to the village. The poor people welcomed it with the utmost joy as though the sun had suddenly appeared in the dark night. The county town of Hsiyang, 5 km. away from Tachai, was still a stronghold of the Japanese aggressors. Often they raided Tachai, to burn, loot and kill. Chen Yung-kuei, giving no thought to his own safety, became active in revolutionary work. He hid the underground Party workers, kept watch for the guerrillas, carried information for them, raised funds, transported grain. . . .

All of Hsiyang County was liberated in August 1945. From then on the red sun shone over Tiger Head Hill, illuminating land and water with its brilliance. Under

the big willow, the joyous poor of Tachai assembled to celebrate their liberation. Here too, in 1947, they launched their land reform, struggled against the landlord and distributed the land. In the winter of 1953 they gathered under the willow again to proclaim the establishment of an agricultural producers' co-operative in the village and take the road of collective farming. And under the same tree, in the autumn of 1958, they greeted the Big Leap Forward and the founding of the people's commune of which they became part. After that, the "tree of suffering" was renamed the "tree of joy."

### **What a Table Reveals**

A revealing table, hanging in the office of Tachai Brigade, shows the growth of production there. It gives key figures for representative years as follows:

Year	Number of households	Population	Total grain output (kg.)	Per-mu yield (kg.)	Public grain and surplus grain sold to the state (kg.)	Total income (yuan)	Annual addition to accumulation fund (yuan)
1953, year after co-op founded	74	295	101,640	125	22,500	17,672	
1958, year of the Big Leap Forward	80	318	208,520	271.5	95,000	39,539	3,847
1963, year of serious flood	83	367	210,000	372.5	120,000	65,402	8,588
1964, year when per-mu yield rose to over 400 kg.	83	364	285,445	404.8	150,000	73,270	11,918
1970, year when per-mu yield rose to over 500 kg.	83	434	374,950	535.5	120,000	125,206	28,377
1972, year of serious drought	83	444	331,450	473.5	200,000	168,630	38,732
1973, year of continued drought	83	448	385,000	513	150,000	182,421	47,457

This is not an ordinary statistical round-up. It records a glorious chapter of socialist development. Its com-



parisons are an iron-clad proof of the superiority of the socialist system.

Western bourgeois economists often babble about how it is impossible for production to grow as fast as population. This absurdity was thoroughly refuted in theory by Marxists long, long ago. It has now been completely refuted in practice by the brilliant achievements of new China's socialist revolution and construction. In Tachai during the two decades from 1953 to 1973, as this table shows, the population increased by 61 per cent, but total grain output rose by 278 per cent, and total income by 932 per cent. Here is proof that under the socialist system, so long as a Marxist-Leninist line is firmly adhered to and people work with might and main, production growth keeps ahead by big margins. Moreover, with family planning, there will never be any problem of "over-population." Neither will there be any possibility of a hopeless "agricultural crisis" such as the one now rampant in the super-power which boasts of having entered "the new era of all-round building of communism." Not long before the founding of the People's Republic of China, an imperialist pundit declared arrogantly, "The first problem which every Chinese Government has had to face is that of feeding this population. So far none has succeeded." He implied that China could survive only by begging from the imperialists. But history has proclaimed the bankruptcy of the imperialists' idealist conception of history. As Chairman Mao said long ago, **"revolution plus production can solve the problem of feeding the population."** As he also said, **"Not only can the Chinese people live without begging alms from the imperialists, they will live a better life than that in the imperialist countries."**

Tachai's economic growth table further tells us that