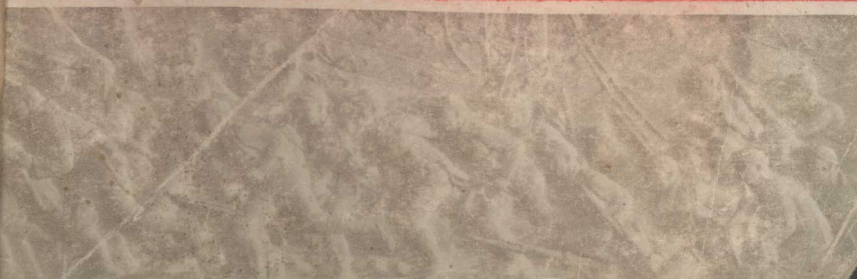




STORIES OF THE LONG MARCH



**STORIES OF
THE LONG MARCH**

**FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS
PEKING 1960**

First Edition
Second Printing

1958
1960

Printed in the People's Republic of China

Introduction

The Chinese people had long suffered ruthless oppression under feudal, imperialist, and bureaucrat-capitalist rule, eking out a bare existence. Nevertheless, they never ceased struggling to achieve liberation. Under extremely difficult conditions and over a prolonged period, in the course of the struggles, occurred innumerable soul-stirring, heroic incidents.

Many foreign friends have asked that these stories be recorded. They felt that, knowing through what vicissitudes the Chinese people had passed; knowing the incredible privations they had experienced, the unbelievable difficulties they had surmounted — knowing these things, they would understand clearly how, step by step, they had achieved their great victory, crowned by the declaration on October 1, 1949 of the Chinese People's Republic.

A collection has been made, of which this volume is part, giving incidents recorded by those who participated in them. They have been translated into foreign languages and are now being published.

In this volume are collected stories of the world-famous Long March of the Chinese Workers' and Peasants' Red Army during the period 1934-36. To help readers understand the stories, we give a brief description of the 25,000 li¹ Long March.

¹ A li is slightly more than one third of a mile.

When in 1931 the Japanese imperialists occupied the North-east, China was confronted with a critical situation. The Kuomintang regime, however, ignoring the demand of the people to resist the Japanese invaders and save the motherland, adopted a policy of non-resistance towards the Japanese. Instead, they concentrated their attacks on the revolutionary bases led by the Chinese Communist Party.

In October 1933, Chiang Kai-shek gathered together one million troops and launched the fifth campaign of encirclement against the revolutionary bases — mainly the central base in Kiangsi Province with Juichin as the centre. By then, the Red Army throughout the country had grown to 300,000 men; and the civilian armed forces had also greatly developed. Food and other materials were in good supply. The intensification of the agrarian reform in the revolutionary bases, the development of economic construction and the improvement in the life of the people made them — principally the peasants — enthusiastic in backing the revolutionary war.

In November of that year, the "Fukien Incident" occurred. The 19th Route Army, originally under Kuomintang command, led by Tsai Ting-kai and Chiang Kuang-nai, joined with Li Chi-shen and other Kuomintang members to form the "People's Revolutionary Government of the Chinese Republic" in Fukien, and signed an agreement with the Red Army to oppose Chiang Kai-shek and resist the Japanese aggressors. As a result, the Red Army had more advantageous conditions in this campaign against encirclement than in the previous four.

Unfortunately, the Communist Party was then under the domination of the third "leftist" line. The "left" opportunists who were in control of the Party, after

entering the central revolutionary base at the beginning of 1933, over-rode Mao Tse-tung and others and took over the leadership of the bases and of the Red Army. They had not co-operated well with the 19th Route Army, so that the latter, left to fend for itself, was annihilated by Chiang Kai-shek. But, what was more serious, was that they negated the correct strategy of Mao Tse-tung and advocated regular and positional warfare in face of the superior-equipped Kuomintang armies. Later they carried out the so-called all-out defensive by scattering the forces. Although after a year's bitter struggle, the Red Army had won some partial military successes, they could not break the enemy encirclement. On the contrary, the bases were contracting and the Red Army was getting more and more exhausted.

Under such condition, in order to preserve their strength, the Red Army decided that there was no alternative but to break through the enemy cordon and undertake the Long March. In July 1934, the Anti-Japanese Advance Detachment was formed by a part of the Red Army with Fang Chih-min, Su Yu and Hsun Hua-chou in the lead and marched from Kiangsi towards southern Anhwei. They suffered a setback, however, in January 1935, due to attack and encirclement by an overwhelming number of enemy troops. Not long after the Advance Detachment started, the 6th Army Corps led by Jen Pi-shih, Wang Chen and Hsiao Ke set out from the Hunan-Kiangsi base and reached north-eastern Kweichow, forming, with the 2nd Army Corps under the leadership of Ho Chung and Kuan Hsiang-ying, the Second Front Army and establishing the Hunan-Hupei-Szechuan-Kweichow base. Meanwhile, the 25th Army, led by Cheng Tse-hua, Cheng

Wei-san, Wu Huan-hsien and Hsu Hai-tung, arrived at Shensi from the border of Hupeh, Honan and Anhwei. The activities of these three advance units upset the arrangement of the enemy forces and enabled the Red Army in the central base—the First Front Army—to complete in the main preparations for the Long March.

In October 1934, the main force of the First Front Army, totalling 85,000 men (or 100,000 inclusive of the government functionaries), under the direct leadership of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, started from the central base on the Long March, leaving only a partial force led by Chen Yi, Hsiang Ying, Teng Tse-hui and Chang Ting-cheng in the base to carry out guerrilla warfare and cover the main force in breaking through the encirclement. After breaching four blockade lines formed by 400,000 enemy troops, the First Front Army arrived at the borderland of Hunan and Kwangsi in November 1934 and pushed towards the Hunan-Hupeh-Szechuan-Kweichow base set up by the Second Front Army. Chiang Kai-shek, in mortal fear of the joining of forces of the two Red Armies, hurriedly mustered a force about six times larger than the Red Army to intercept the latter in western Hunan. He also ordered the Kwangsi warlords to attack the Red Army from northern Kwangsi, trying to surround and annihilate the First Front Army. The situation looked serious. Because of the firm argument of Mao Tse-tung and the support of a majority of the leading comrades, the First Front Army altered its course and advanced towards Kweichow where the enemy defence was weak, quickly occupying eastern Kweichow. In January 1935 they crossed in force the Wukiang River, a natural barrier, and captured Tsunyi, the biggest city

of northern Kweichow. There they took a rest of 12 days, during which period they replenished their ranks with four thousand new fighters. The Communist Party also called an enlarged meeting of the Central Political Bureau — the "Tsunyi Conference" — which had great significance in the history of the revolution.

The leading members who were guilty of "leftist" mistakes, having caused the Red Army to suffer by carrying out an incorrect policy during Chiang Kai-shek's fifth campaign of encirclement, became frightened. They failed to do a good job of political agitation at the beginning of the Long March. Then, during the Long March, their sole thought was to steer clear of the enemy, with the result that the Red Army was often made to fulfil a passive role, and morale suffered. They also formed large commanding and rear-service organizations which slowed down the movement of the troops. Under the blocking and pursuit of the enemy, the Red Army was imperilled several times. By the time they reached Tsunyi in January 1935, the First Front Army had suffered a loss of 60 per cent of its strength.

This serious condition could not but open the eyes of a majority of the leading members and other members of the Party (including many who had been guilty of "leftist" mistakes) to the error of the "leftist" line. Led by Mao Tse-tung, they waged a resolute struggle against the line of "left" opportunism. Thus the rule of the third "leftist" line in the Party was ended at the Tsunyi Conference which elected Mao Tse-tung Secretary of the Central Secretariat. From that time began the correct leadership of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party headed by Mao Tse-tung.

After the Tsunyi Conference, the First Front Army adopted a mobile tactic, taking the initiative into its own hands. In February 1935, they wiped out four enemy divisions near Tsunyi and won the first great victory from the beginning of the Long March. After this, the First Front Army, confusing the enemy by feints, succeeded in giving them the slip. They crossed the swift Golden Sand River on the border of Szechuan and Yunnan in a matter of nine days and nine nights in May.

The Red Army had escaped from the blockade of hundreds of thousands of enemy troops. It was the decisive victory in the Long March. From that time onward, they went north along western Szechuan, crossed the Tatu River, scaled the Great Snow Mountain Range and reached Maokung in June 1935, joining forces with the Fourth Front Army led by Chang Kuo-tao and Hsu Hsiang-chien in the Szechuan-Shensi base.

Chang Kuo-tao, one of the leaders of the Fourth Front Army, lost confidence in the prospect of the revolution after the fiasco of the fifth anti-encirclement campaign. Between March and April 1935, he abandoned the Szechuan-Shensi base and moved off towards western Szechuan, intending to withdraw — flee, actually — towards south-west China. After the First and Fourth Front Armies joined forces, the Central Committee of the Party headed by Mao Tse-tung decided to re-establish the Szechuan-Shensi-Kansu base, so as to promote the growing national anti-Japanese movement. Chang Kuo-tao opposed this decision and demanded that the Central Committee be re-organized in accordance with his proposition. To convince him, the Central Committee ordered the Red Army to stop for two months in Sungpan in

north-western Szechuan, and called two important meetings to discuss the course to be taken by the Red Army. Finally, Chang Kuo-tao accepted nominally the line decided by the Central Committee.

In August 1935, the Red Army continued to march north in two columns—the right led by the Central Committee of the Party and Mao Tse-tung; the left by Chang Kuo-tao, Chu Teh and Liu Po-cheng. However, when the left column reached Apa (now under the Apa Tibetan Autonomous *Chou* in Szechuan), Chang Kuo-tao again refused to carry out the decision of the Central Committee and, detaining Chu Teh and Liu Po-cheng, took the troops south. He also ordered secretly the two armies of the Fourth Front Army, which had been put under the right column, to go south with him and retreat to Tienchuan and Lushan (now north of Yaan in Szechuan). Later, he openly raised slogans against the Central Committee, and even plotted to destroy it. The Central Committee then decided to continue to lead the right column north alone. In September, they captured the natural barrier Latsekou on the border of Szechuan and Kansu, crossed Minshan Mountain and entered southern Kansu. In the following month, they reached the town of Wuchi in northern Shensi and joined forces with the 15th Army Corps (formed by the 25th Army mentioned above and the Red Army guerrillas led by Liu Chih-tan, then manoeuvring in northern Shensi). In November, the two Red Armies together repulsed the pursuing enemy troops and consolidated the Shensi-Kansu base, which later developed into the famed Shensi-Kansu-Ningxia Border Region with Yen-an as its centre.

It was not until the eve of the victory of the War of Liberation at the beginning of 1948 that the Central Committee of the Party moved from this region to the vicinity of Shihchiachuang in Hopei.

In November 1935, the Second Front Army, having fulfilled the task of covering the First Front Army in the Long March by carrying out guerrilla warfare at the rear of the enemy, set out on the Long March itself, following approximately the same route traversed by the First Front Army. In June 1936, it reached Kantse in western Szechuan and joined forces with the Fourth Front Army led by Chang Kuo-tao which was biding its time there.

Chang Kuo-tao had already set up a bogus "party centre." He tried to incite the leaders of the Second Front Army to join with him in opposing the Central Committee of the Party, and support his runaway policy and his anti-Party, disruptive activities. This attempt, however, met with the firm opposition of Jen Pi-shih, Ho Lung and Kuan Hsiang-ying, leaders of the Second Front Army. Together with Chu Teh and Liu Po-cheng who were being detained, they waged a resolute struggle against the runaway policy advocated by Chang Kuo-tao. Because of this struggle, and because the Central Committee of the Party persisted in the policy of uniting and winning over those who had committed mistakes, together with the failure of the attempt to establish a base in western Szechuan, Chang Kuo-tao had to disband his bogus "party centre" and, in July, lead the Fourth and Second Front Armies northwards. They reached Hui-ning in Kansu in October and joined forces with the First Front Army. With the meeting of the three main forces of the Red Army — the First, Second, and Fourth Front

Armies — the Long March which had extended for two years¹ was triumphantly brought to an end.

The Long March is a great epic unexampled in Chinese history. The farthest distance covered by the Red Army was 25,000 li, extending, in terms of order, over Fukien, Kiangsi, Kwangtung, Hunan, Kwangsi, Kweichow, Yunnan, Sikang, Szechuan, Kansu and Shensi, totalling eleven provinces. Chiang Kai-shek had exerted his utmost efforts to mobilize his crack army and air force units, to unite with the troops of warlords and landlords' armed forces in various provinces, and to set up defence works at natural barriers along the route of advance of the Red Army, while never letting-up in his attacks. To avoid an enemy which was far better equipped and in much greater numbers, the Red Army had to advance along desolate regions, crossing lofty mountains and turbulent rivers, as well as dangerous shoals and treacherous paths, particularly in western Szechuan, with its snow mountain rising 5,000 metres above sea level, and its murderous marshlands. These regions were marked by their general poverty and sparse population and shortage of food. The national minorities of the areas, for historical reasons, were full of animosity towards the Hans. To add to all these, were difficulties that came from the revolution itself — the mistakes of the third "leftist" line during the early stage of the Long March

¹It is generally accepted that the Long March took one year, from October 1934 to October 1935, covering the time taken by the First Front Army of the Chinese Workers' and Peasants' Red Army from Kiangsi to northern Shensi. Actually the period covered by all the three main forces of the Red Army that went North was two years.

and, later, the runaway policy of Chang Kuo-tao and his anti-Party, disruptive activities.

All these difficulties and hazards, however, did not prevent the Red Army from achieving victory in the Long March. That was because, first and foremost, the Red Army was led by a Marxist-Leninist Party, the Communist Party. Since its founding in 1921, the Party, tempered through a long revolutionary struggle, had learned to combine Marxist-Leninist theory with the revolutionary practice of China, had accumulated much experience, particularly the experience of revolutionary war, and had trained a large number of leading personnel. After the Tsunyi Conference, the Central Committee of the Party headed by Mao Tse-tung was established, which carried out a correct line. Not only was it good at struggling with all kinds of enemies; it was good also at carrying out inner-Party struggle and overcoming shortcomings and mistakes within its own ranks. The victory of the Long March of the Red Army would have been inconceivable without the correct leadership of the Party.

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WITH CHAIRMAN MAO ON THE LONG MARCH

COLONEL CHEN CHANG-FENG

It was on one evening in April 1935, I remember, that we reached the Golden Sand River, we being the 9th, 1st, 5th and 3rd Red Army Groups, and the Cadres' Regiment — all belonging to the First Front Red Army. The Central Committee staff was also with us. The Golden Sand River was the first big river to face us after the crossing of the Wukiang. It was in spate, with angry dragon-headed waves confronting us. All the leaders were greatly concerned with the problem of crossing, as we had practically no craft at our command. Chairman Mao, of course, was in the thick of these discussions, which went on all night.

I was his personal bodyguard. Just before dawn I crossed with him. We had hardly landed when he was off to General Liu Po-cheng (the Chief-of-Staff) to plan the next stage of the march. I set about looking for somewhere for him to use as a temporary office and home.

It didn't look hopeful. The river bank was nothing but bare rocks, with a few holes in the cliffs, dripping with moisture, hardly big enough to be called caves. I sought in vain for planks or even straw to use for a bed. In the end I had to lay out a piece of oiled cloth and

put the blanket on that, feeling that that would at least give him something to lie down on—he hadn't rested at all the whole night. Come to that, he had had no rest for the last few days.

My next task was to lay out his documents—maps and papers. Usually I did it with his secretary, Comrade Huang, whenever we made camp. We used to rig up some kind of a table or desk. But now there was nothing at all to use even as a makeshift, and Comrade Huang was still on the other side of the river. I couldn't think what to do. I tried pinning one map up on the side of the cave, but it was no good—it was just sand and wouldn't hold the nail, and there wasn't room to spread the documents out. Already I had wasted enough time; I was expecting Chairman Mao back from his conference any minute, and I hadn't even got a drop of boiled water ready. I knew he would need it, after all he had been through. I put aside the problem of the documents and hurried out to see what I could do about the water.

It was broad daylight when Chairman Mao did come back and sent for me. When I reached the cave I saw that he was standing there, deep in thought.

"You've come back," I said.

"M'm . . . everything ready?"

"I've done what I can," I said, pointing at the "bed."

"There are no boards to be found, so I've made this up. Will you lie down for a bit? The water will be boiled any minute."

I turned to go to see how the water was getting on, but he called me back.

"Haven't you found me a place to work?" he asked.