



BATTLE HERO

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By a Liberation Army Daily correspondent

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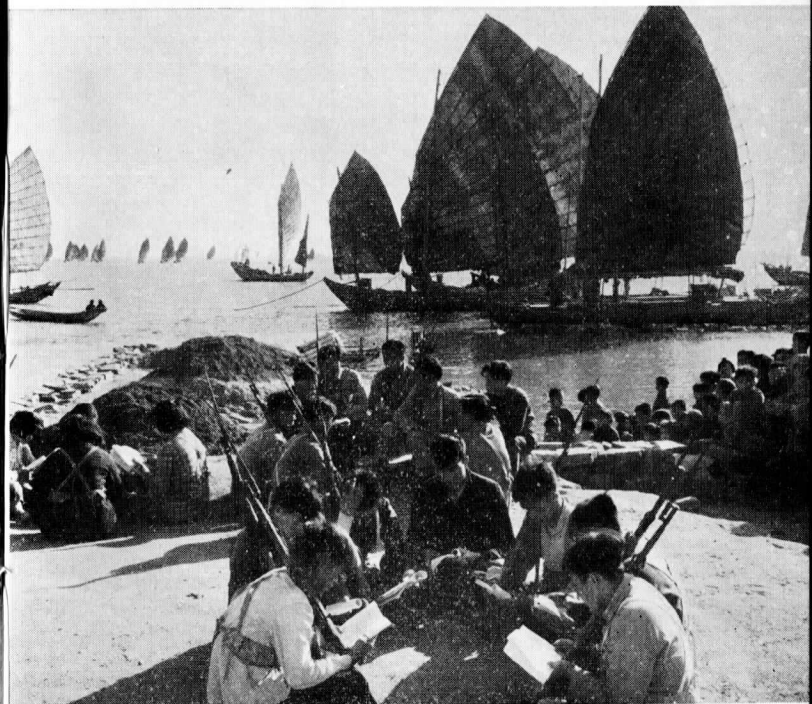
Every day Mai Hsien-teh and his nurse read
Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-tung

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With gradual recovery of health Mai Hsien-teh is able to take a walk

Militiamen from Mai Hsien-teh's home village follow his example and study Chairman Mao's works after a day's fishing





The *Hero of the Sea* and other gunboats patrol China's territorial waters. Like Mai Hsien-teh the crews are "ready to annihilate the invaders at any moment"

Publisher's Note

This is the story of Mai Hsien-teh, a 20-year-old engine-room man of the *Hero of the Sea*, a vessel of the Chinese People's Navy. In August 1965, in the sea battle which sank the *Cbienmen* and *Changkiang*, two of Chiang Kai-shek's U.S.-made ships, he was seriously wounded in the head. Blood streamed down his face, he could hardly see, but Mai Hsien-teh stayed at his post with amazing will power for three long hours until final victory was won. Later, he was taken to hospital where his life hung precariously in the balance. His body was half-paralysed, he was unable to speak. But with an indestructible spirit Mai Hsien-teh struggled bravely against the injuries that were threatening his life and slowly taught himself to speak and walk. In telling this inspiring story the book pieces together the life of this fisherman's son, Mai Hsien-teh. He was an ordinary man but because he had learnt through Mao Tse-tung's thought to rise above self he became an iron-willed fighter.

Such a hero has been brought up in the great era of Mao Tse-tung, in which countless heroes of his kind are emerging.

All of them have a boundless love, loyalty and esteem for Chairman Mao. Their faith in him is im-

measurable. They devote themselves wholeheartedly to the revolution, they aspire to serve the Chinese people and the people all over the world. Their spirit is that of daring to fight and win; theirs is the courage to overwhelm all enemies and never yield to them. They are always ready to put above everything else the interest of the revolution, the people and the cause of the liberation of mankind. They are deeply loved by the Chinese people who look upon them as models for their own conduct.

To acquaint our readers abroad with the deeds of these heroes we are compiling and publishing a series of their stories.

Dauntless Fighting Spirit

It was dawn on August 6, 1965. A vast expanse of sea was studded here and there with fishing boats which had not yet put out their lights. The *Hero of the Sea* and some other ships were on patrol, vigilantly protecting them.

Then they discovered that two of Chiang Kai-shek's U.S.-made warships, *Chienmen* and *Chang-kiang*, had again sneaked into the fishing area near the Tungshan Island, Fukien Province. The sailors were hot with indignation. Every man determined to protect the people's life and property, to avenge the fishermen who had lost their lives in previous encounters and to punish the enemy severely.

Mai Hsien-teh stood before the control panel with his eyes fixed on the meters. Suddenly the bell in the engine-room rang, signalling the captain's order for action. He at once pulled a lever and the *Hero of the Sea* made for the enemy warships, cutting through the waves.

On a small blackboard below a blue lamp on the bulkhead at the further end of the engine-room,

Mai Hsien-teh saw clearly these words of Chairman Mao:

Be resolute, fear no sacrifice and surmount every difficulty to win victory.

At a time when the enemy was about to be engaged he felt that the words of Chairman Mao were particularly significant and that they offered him a limitless reserve of strength.

For Mai Hsien-teh, born of a fisherman's family, his motherland's territorial waters were his second home. He never forgot the atrocities committed by the imperialists and Kuomintang reactionaries on his country's seas. He was filled with love for the people, a hatred, a wish to kill the enemy as a service to his motherland, and determination to avenge the wrongs done to his class brothers. He opened his eyes wide and gripped the control lever. He had only one object in his mind: to do all in his power to exterminate the enemy.

Like the thrust of a dagger, the dauntless *Hero of the Sea* and the other ships moved between the enemy warships, cutting them off from each other. The People's Navy first attacked the *Changkiang*. Shells rained so heavily on it that half of the sky was reddened with fire. Flames soon shot up from the *Changkiang*. Hearing their guns in action the engine-room men on the *Hero of the Sea* signalled to each other their determination to sink the enemy.

In the thick of the fight the port aft engine in the main engine-room stopped. Mai Hsien-teh at once went over to help start it again. Suddenly a shell

fragment hit him in his right forehead, passing to a place near the left temple. He lost consciousness and fell.

An enemy's shell may harm a fighter's flesh but it can never deprive one armed with Mao Tse-tung's thought of his determination to kill the enemy nor his will to fight. Mai Hsien-teh's sole aim was to win the day. As the deputy political instructor was dressing his wound he came round. Being unable to speak or stand up he desperately pushed the instructor with his right hand while pointing at the engine with his left. His comrades at once knew what he meant: "The most important thing now is to tend that engine." The instructor held Mai in his arms and said firmly: "You stay here! That is an order!" Mai Hsien-teh obeyed the order, allowing the instructor to dress his wound. But as soon as the instructor left the engine-room, he supported himself against the engine and stood up. During his study of Chairman Mao's works he had written in his notebook: "I will continue to fight so long as there is any breath in me." His will was so strong that he did just that.

Mai Hsien-teh returned to his post. Finding that the port aft engine, which had long been started, was already in good working order, he went back to the forward compartment of the engine-room. The passageway from the aft compartment to the forward compartment of the engine-room was oval, 40 cm. wide and 60 cm. high. It was difficult even for a normal person to squeeze through. But Mai Hsien-teh, badly wounded as he was, managed to get

through. He came to the forward compartment and at once began to examine the engine.

Under the barrage of the fleet of the People's Navy, the *Changkiang* was on the verge of being sunk. The *Cbienmen* could do nothing. She stayed at a safe distance and fired in a desultory manner. Blood dripped down from Mai Hsien-teh's forehead, clotting in his eyebrows and the corners of his eyes so that he could hardly see. But relying on his ability to work in darkness, a skill which he acquired after long practice, he held on stubbornly. Despite the rocking of the ship he went around and examined every pipe-line, valve and screw, feeling them with his hand. He knew that until the enemy vessel was entirely destroyed the fight must go on.

Possibly because Mai Hsien-teh had lost too much blood or because he was in a condition of shock, his balance became affected and his movements slowed down, though his determination to fight on was as strong as before. Among the hundreds of bolts and dozens of pipe-lines he succeeded in finding out that a small bolt had become loose! He tightened it with a wrench, ensuring the normal functioning of the engine.

Tenaciously, Mai Hsien-teh stayed at his post for three hours. Finally Chen Wen-yi, one of his comrades, forced him to lie down on a blanket to rest. Holding up two fingers, Mai Hsien-teh lost consciousness. No one knew whether the two fingers meant that the two main engines in the forward compartment of the engine-room were

working normally, or whether they were meant to enquire if the enemy vessels were sunk.

Actually both the *Changkiang* and *Cbienmen* were sunk and the battle ended in complete success for the People's Navy. A golden ray of the morning sun, coming through the porthole, lit the hero's face. With a feeling of great respect Chen Wen-yi gazed at his friend, while he pondered on one of Chairman Mao Tse-tung's sayings.

This army has an indomitable spirit and is determined to vanquish all enemies and never to yield.

A Common Sailor of the Revolution

Seriously wounded by the shell fragment in his brain, Mai Hsien-teh was sent to the army hospital in Canton. The Party decided that every means, however exceptional, was to be used to try to save his life. Many famous medical establishments in the country came to his aid. They were determined to cure the hero of his wound and rescue him from the danger of death.

Mai Hsien-teh arrived in the hospital in a state of shock. He could neither move nor speak. His blood pressure was high and the right side of his body was paralysed. But even at a time when his life was hanging by a thread he never faltered in

his loyalty to the revolution and love for Chairman Mao, for he began to sing the song *The East Is Red* as soon as he regained his power of speech.

Later, when his mind became clearer, Mai Hsien-teh saw a small wooden board hanging on the bedstead, inscribed with a quotation from Chairman Mao. He at once asked the nurse to bring the board to him so that he could study the words more closely.

When Mai Hsien-teh opened the *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* and saw the picture of Chairman Mao, he would be so moved with love and respect that his lips quivered.

As Mai Hsien-teh's right hand was incapacitated he tried to write with his left. The first words he wrote with his left hand were "Long live Chairman Mao!"

On August 30, 1965, Mai Hsien-teh was made a candidate member of the Chinese Communist Party. When the nurse handed him a letter from his unit, which announced the fact, many comrades came to congratulate him. Deeply moved, he read the letter over and over again for about a quarter of an hour. At that time his mind was still not clear for when the nurse asked him to write answers to questions concerning daily life they were often illogical. But even then his revolutionary will was very strong. Once when the nurse asked "Mai Hsien-teh, are you a fighter?" he replied in clear writing: "I am ready to annihilate the invaders at any moment."

As soon as Mai Hsien-teh could manage to get up he began to struggle stubbornly against his paralysis.

Every day he would go to the physical therapy room where he would make strenuous efforts to raise his paralysed right hand with his left and rest it on a ladder. He continued to raise his right hand higher and higher, and would not stop even though he was perspiring all over. As he felt some trouble in his right leg he practised walking with the help of the nurse. It was difficult for him to make even a single step but still he walked on and on enduring great pain.

While staying in his room he would persist in doing arithmetical exercises so as to restore his power of thinking. When he felt the pain of his wound unendurable he would gaze intently at Chairman Mao's saying on the wooden board:

In dealing with sickness, one must have a strong will to struggle against it.

Then he would feel he had gained renewed strength to fight his affliction and to persist in his exercises. This was how he constantly drew inspiration from Chairman Mao's works. As a result, in fighting against his enemy, the wound, he was always the victor.

With the solicitude of the Party and Chairman Mao, with the treatment given by doctors and specialists from various parts of the country, Mai Hsien-teh safely underwent a series of operations, and gradually recovered his health.

What Mai Hsien-teh, the heroic fighter who had been brought up with Mao Tse-tung's thought, had done made a deep impression on all the workers in

the hospital. They all looked upon him as a model from which they could copy. Admiring him greatly a nurse once wrote these words on a piece of paper: "Mai Hsien-teh is a battle hero of the People's Navy." When Mai Hsien-teh saw it he changed the term "battle hero" into "sailor".

Yes, Mai Hsien-teh was a sailor, and a very good sailor. His conduct in the hospital showed that he was a fighter armed with Mao Tse-tung's thought. It was guided by a great and noble ideal and was not merely the outward expression of modesty nor just the sign of a fighter's proper understanding of his duty. In the light of Mai Hsien-teh's fighting past, the word "sailor" had a much broader and deeper significance. Mai Hsien-teh considered himself a sailor of the proletariat, a sailor of the revolution and a sailor fighting in the cause of communism.

The First Lesson in Class Education

Coming of a poor fisherman's family Mai Hsien-teh was born in Jaoping County, Kwangtung Province, in December 1945. He had almost no experience of the bitterness of the old society and therefore was not able fully to understand the difference between the old and the new. Being ignorant of the sufferings of the past he was unable to appre-

ciate the happiness of the present. This is why he flew into a rage once while he was at school his mother failed to buy paper and pencils for him promptly.

This made his mother very unhappy. Taking Mai Hsien-teh's hand she sat on the bed and told him about their sad family history showing how his ancestors were humiliated, exploited and oppressed by class enemies in every way. At the age of eighteen his father, following his grandfather, worked on an ocean liner. He was grossly overworked but earned so little that he could hardly feed and clothe himself. Later, the Japanese aggressors entered Jaoping. They killed, looted, and seized the sea coast. Many boats were burnt by them, including one jointly owned by his father and some other poor people. Deprived of their means of livelihood his parents left their native county and went to Fukien Province where they became labourers. After having worked for half a year and earned a picul of dried potato strips they returned home. But, alas, his grandfather had starved to death only two days before! His uncle had been buried alive by a landlord. At the end of his resources, his father was forced to work for a landlord as an oyster breeder. Later, he was seized by Kuomintang bandit troops and was nearly beaten to death. . . . Then Mai Hsien-teh's mother said: "Hsien-teh, in the old society, we poor people were unable to make a living. Of three generations in the house, you were the only one who was able to go

to school. . . ." Hearing this Mai Hsien-teh felt so grieved that he cried. Throwing himself into his mother's arms he said: "Mother, it was my fault. I. . . ."

Mai Hsien-teh learned his first lesson in life from the miseries of his own family, which sowed deeply in his mind the seed of class hatred. It made him feel much older. He began not only to study hard in school but also to help his mother in her work whenever he had time — making bamboo baskets, collecting oysters, and doing household chores. When he was a student in the junior middle school he paid special attention to stories told by his teacher about the life of revolutionary martyrs. He was also interested in the study of history in relation to the origin and development of classes and always underlined those passages dealing with the subject.

In August 1961 when Mai Hsien-teh was sixteen he got a job in the fishing industry and joined the militia. Thus he was able to gain not only experience in production but also a vivid and profound class education. Through the listening to accounts of past miseries he was able to learn that in the entire district of Chingchow, Jaoping County, not a single family of the working people had not been the victim of bloody injustices or was without a sad tale to tell. During raids carried out by troops of the Japanese aggressors, 192 fishermen were killed by bombs and fires while 234 fishing boats were destroyed by fire. Once Chiang Kai-shek's planes carried out a raid and killed nineteen persons. Just

because the peasants Tsou Lin and Tsou Yu-yuan took four bricks belonging to the despot-landlord Mai Ming-shan, they and their families, numbering nine people altogether, were either beaten or starved to death.

At an exhibition for class education Mai Hsien-teh saw a chart showing the crimes committed by the American and Chiang Kai-shek reactionaries in the Chingchow district. He also saw a table which showed a comparison between two droughts. In the pre-liberation year of 1943 a drought lasted three months. All the poor people suffered from starvation and many fled to other places. In Chingpei Village alone, 380 persons were starved to death. In 1963, after liberation, there was in the same place a drought of eight months. But under the leadership of the Party and with the power of the people's commune, the people strenuously fought against the drought and, as a result, they had a bumper harvest, not a famine!

At the exhibition Mai Hsien-teh heard Mai Keh-fu, a battalion commander of the militia, talk about Chairman Mao's work "Analysis of the Classes in Chinese Society". Chairman Mao said:

Who are our enemies? Who are our friends?

This is a question of the first importance for the revolution.

To Mai Hsien-teh, who had no personal experience of class oppression and exploitation, this helped much to raise the level of his class consciousness,

made him see the distinction between the enemy and ourselves, between the good and bad, and enabled him to understand the meaning of love and hatred. Hitherto Mai Hsien-teh had only an abstract idea of class and class struggle, but now he had a real understanding of it. Hitherto young Mai Hsien-teh knew only the grievance of his own family, but now he had a general idea of the sufferings of all the class brothers in his home district.

Mai Hsien-teh and his fellow militiamen frequently said to each other: "We must always remember what Chairman Mao has said. Although the time when our fathers suffered from oppression is over we must never forget the sufferings and persecutions of the past. We must know that the Americans, Chiang Kai-shek and the landlords we have overthrown will not take their defeat lying down. So long as the enemy exists, there is always a possibility of war. We must keep our powder dry, learn the art of fighting and do our duty well. To defend the motherland we must fight the enemy to the very end; we must not let the miserable life of our fathers come back again."

One day, on his return from sea Mai Hsien-teh heard that there were enemy activities. He did not go home but, taking up his rifle, went to the assembly place. He stood on guard at a sentry post for a whole night in spite of a bitter wind. Once he and another militiaman were to keep the night watch. Suddenly the sky was overcast and a typhoon began to blow. They went on the boats and lashed their

sails. Then they rushed to the granary of the production brigade, which was in danger of being flooded, to salvage the grain. At dawn, Mai Hsien-teh heard that the embankment of the saltpan of another brigade had collapsed. Shouting "Let's go!" he braved the storm and rushed out again. This was how he performed his duty as a militiaman. While keeping a close watch on the enemy he also carried out his duty as a class fighter in protecting the life and property of the people. He was cited for meritorious work six times and was voted a "five-good"¹ militiaman.

In 1963 Mai Hsien-teh was eighteen. He applied three times for enlistment. In his application made on November 21 in the same year he said: "The speech made by the battalion commander of the militia this evening made me understand better the present situation; it told me clearly that American imperialism is the most ferocious enemy of the Chinese people. In the past, the Japanese imperialists and the Kuomintang persecuted us, making the Chingpei district and my own family suffer wretchedly. I am determined to enlist. I consider it my duty and honour to do so."

¹ Good in political thinking; in the "three-eight" working style; in production, work and study; in military skill; and in physical training. The "three-eight" working style refers to three mottoes and eight Chinese characters. The three mottoes are: 1. Firm and correct political orientation, 2. Flexible strategy and tactics, and 3. Industrious and simple style of work. The eight characters mean: Be united, alert, earnest and lively.

"I Swear to Carry the Revolution Through to the End"

Mai Hsien-teh enrolled in a naval training school at the mouth of the Pearl River. It was a time when the creative study and application of Chairman Mao's teachings by all officers and men in the armed forces was at a high tide and the armed forces were being steadily revolutionized. After his enrolment he received education in Mao Tse-tung's thought, was influenced by the glorious revolutionary tradition of the People's Navy and steeled himself in a life of intense struggle. As a result the level of his political consciousness was greatly raised.

Soon after his enrolment in the training school Mai Hsien-teh had a talk with his section leader. He said: "When the time comes for us to receive our assignments, I hope I could be sent to work in a unit near my own village."

"Why?" asked the section leader.

With strong feeling Mai Hsien-teh replied: "My home village is situated at the foot of a mountain facing the sea. It is now a prosperous socialist village. But before liberation, the history of every boat and every family was stained with tears and blood. I want to defend my home village and redress the wrongs suffered by my fellow villagers at the place where the wrongs were done to them. I will never allow those beasts to molest my fellow villagers again."

"Speaking of class hatred," said the section leader, "every one of our families suffered before liberation. But . . ."

"Anyhow my request is also in the interest of the revolution," Mai Hsien-teh urged.

The section leader relayed Mai Hsien-teh's request to the political instructor, who was greatly moved by it. That Mai Hsien-teh has the seed of class hatred deeply implanted in his mind is something worthy of note, the instructor thought to himself. But as a revolutionary fighter, his outlook lacks breadth and his revolutionary ideal is not high enough. Consequently much patient work has to be done to educate him to be a fighter who consciously serves the people of the whole country and the whole world.

One day an accusation meeting was held against the crimes of Chiang Kai-shek and the Americans by the unit to which Mai Hsien-teh belonged. One after another, the fighters, who came from all parts of the country, accused the American imperialists, Japanese aggressors, Chiang Kai-shek gangsters, fishermen-despots and landlords and spoke of the blood debts they owed. With class hatred burning in his heart Mai Hsien-teh thought to himself: Ah, I see, so these comrades I've never met before come, like me, from the same bitter root! So every inch of the motherland's territory, from the extreme north to the extreme south, is plagued by crimes committed by the class enemy! Unable to restrain his feeling he jumped up and shouted: "Comrades, we all

have our injuries. Your injuries are mine too! We must never forget our national and class hatred. Let us swear to carry the revolution through to the end!"

One Sunday, the officers took Mai Hsien-teh and many other recruits to the Humen Fort. A veteran section leader pointed at the old fort on a distant hill and said: "A century and a quarter ago, it was there that the imperialists bombarded their way into China from their gunboats. It was there that a famous battle of the Opium War¹ was fought. Proofs of the imperialists' slaughter of the Chinese people can be seen everywhere. Every rock and tree there was once stained with the blood of China's courageous sons and daughters. . . ."

After having visited the fort, the Party branch organized the men to study three essays written by Chairman Mao Tse-tung — "Analysis of the Classes in Chinese Society", "Serve the People", and "In Memory of Norman Bethune" — and also his other works containing the material relating to class and class struggle. It also asked the men to analyse the current situation from a class standpoint in the light of the newspapers they had read and the education on the current situation they had been receiving to bring into perspective the revolutionary struggle of the people of the world. From his studies Mai Hsien-teh gained a broader outlook on life. He

¹ The Opium War (1840-42), war of aggression waged by Britain against China, was so called because Britain wanted to gain by force the right of selling opium in China.

began to realize that two-thirds of the people in the world were still being ruthlessly exploited and oppressed by the imperialists and the new and old colonialists, thus leading a miserable life in many respects like that of the Chinese people in pre-liberation days. It became clear to him also that the most deadly enemy of the people of the whole world was U.S. imperialism; and that, as a revolutionary fighter of New China, he must have the whole country in his mind and keep an eye on the whole world, serve the people of the whole country and of the whole world completely and thoroughly, and resolutely fight the U.S. imperialists and their underlings to the end. This was what he wrote in his diary with regard to his resolutions:

To be a worthy Red successor in the revolution these are my five "never forget" resolutions: (1) Never forget the past and never allow myself to degenerate; (2) Never forget that the fruits of revolution did not come easily; (3) Never forget class struggle; (4) Never forget to work for the revolution; (5) Never forget the collective.

Mai Hsien-teh was determined "to be a successor in the cause of the proletariat, in carrying on the revolution to the end, in the excellent tradition of the People's Navy, in class struggle and building socialism, and in the realization of communism". He criticized himself sincerely before the political instructor for his desire to work in a unit near his own village. He pledged to devote his whole life

to the cause of the liberation of the people of the whole world.

In his twentieth year Mai Hsien-teh was no longer concerned merely about his own family, village and country. He was now concerned about the Vietnamese people's struggle to oppose the U.S. and to save their own country, about the Laotian people's revolutionary struggle, and about the struggles of the peoples of Japan, Leopoldville Congo, the Dominican Republic, and all the countries where the people were fighting to free themselves. While the U.S. imperialists were madly expanding their war of aggression in Vietnam he studied over and over again Chairman Mao's essay "Cast Away Illusions, Prepare for Struggle". He urgently requested the authorities to let him leave school and take part in the struggle for helping Vietnam to resist U.S. aggression. His motto was "one red heart and two preparations". By "one red heart" he meant loyalty. The "two preparations" were: first, if war should start and the order was given he would be ready to take up his rifle and go to the front to fight for the cause of the liberation of the people of the world; secondly, if war should not come in the near future he would be ready willingly to take up any kind of work that the Party might assign him. He would then preserve his fighting spirit by working steadily to maintain his state of readiness. He would never relax his will to fight and, to prepare for battle, would give himself a thorough training in ideology, style of work and technique. Determined to do the

duty of a patriot and an internationalist, he called on himself to be ready to do three things: first, to fight against the U.S. aggressors; secondly, to fight against Chiang Kai-shek; and thirdly, to help Vietnam to resist U.S. aggression. He said, "These are my three duties. As long as I live I will continue my struggle. I will never bow to the enemy. I will struggle to the end for the liberation of the suffering working people."

Strengthening His Morale in the Thick of Struggle

Comrade Lin Piao said: **If you don't know what class is, if you don't know what exploitation is, then you don't know what revolution is.** From conscientiously and regularly studying Chairman Mao's teachings on class and class struggle, from observing the facts of violent class struggle both within and without the country, Mai Hsien-teh had the seed of class hatred deeply sown in his mind and acquired the proletarian world outlook of serving the people heart and soul. It also made him realize that to work for the revolution, he must have the courageous revolutionary spirit of being without fear of privation, toil, difficulty or death, and be willing to undergo severe tests.

From childhood Mai Hsien-teh had a tough character. When he was a small boy he went to

the seashore to catch fish and his foot was cut by the shell of an oyster. Enduring great pain he sewed up the wound himself with a thread, and never told his mother about the accident. After enrolment in the naval school, owing to the limitations of his educational upbringing he always got poor marks for his work in engineering. He felt depressed and thought that he was unworthy of the Party and revolution. He even considered that he had better leave school and take up some other line of work.

Once the political instructor asked: "Mai Hsien-teh, what do you rely on in fighting?"

"On thorough training in the art of fighting," Mai Hsien-teh replied.

"Yes, you must have thorough training in the art of fighting," said the instructor. "But has it ever occurred to you that the most important, the most fundamental thing is courage, politics and Mao Tse-tung's thought. Without courage you will not dare to face the enemy. If you don't dare to face the enemy what is the use of your thorough training in the art of fighting? At present you are still an apprentice in the art of fighting. You must know that to retreat before difficulties does not befit a revolutionary fighter."

Mai Hsien-teh was startled at the instructor's words. But he remembered what Chairman Mao had said:

We go there to work and struggle to overcome . . . difficulties. A good comrade is one who is more eager to go where the difficulties are greater.

Why have I forgotten these words? he thought to himself. Why should I bow before difficulties? If I don't dare to fight against difficulties at ordinary times how could I overcome the enemy in time of war? To use it as a precept he carefully copied down this saying of Chairman Mao's:

In times of difficulty we must not lose sight of our achievements, must see the bright future and must pluck up our courage.

Once a dispute arose among the recruits with regard to the question: "Which is more powerful, the material atomic bomb or the spiritual atomic bomb?" During the debate the political instructor told the recruits a story about two cannons of the Ching Dynasty displayed near the training school. One of the cannons was made by Chinese patriots and was repeatedly used to bombard imperialist gunboats, thus earning the title of "Meritorious Cannon". The other one was bought by government bureaucrats from Germany. It was used for show and never employed in war. Why did the native cannon perform meritorious service while the comparatively modern one did nothing? The reason, commented the instructor, was that the native cannon was used by patriotic people who were not afraid of sacrifices and dared to struggle while the modern cannon was commanded by feudal bureaucrats who feared the imperialists and did not have the nerve to fight. Then the instructor told a story of a battle fought in 1950 to liberate the Wanshan

Islands when the *Vanguard of the Sea*, a small wooden vessel, displayed great valour in defeating an armour-plated enemy warship. After having given these examples the instructor wound up by citing a saying from Chairman Mao's works:

The outcome of a war is decided by the people, not by one or two new types of weapon.

The lesson on the spiritual atomic bomb given by the instructor made Mai Hsien-teh understand better the truth that the outcome of war depends mainly on politics, courage and the spirit of self-sacrifice. He made greater and greater efforts in creatively studying and applying Chairman Mao's works. He used Chairman Mao's thought as a powerful spiritual weapon for tempering his fighting will and for enabling him to overcome all kinds of difficulties. Making revolutionary heroes his models he decided to be strict with himself all the time and undergo all kinds of severe tests in the thick of struggle.

In the eighteen months after his enrolment he read "Serve the People" and "The Foolish Old Man Who Removed the Mountains", two of Chairman Mao's essays, dozens of times, wrote more than ten sections of notes on what he had obtained from his study and immediately put into practice the ideas he had gained. Following Chairman Mao's instructions on serving the people wholeheartedly he called on himself to be absolutely loyal to the Party and go anywhere the Party told him to go. He was determined to live after the model Comrade

Chang Szu-teh¹ who devoted his whole life to the cause of the interests of the people. Among his comrades he was always the first to take up the heavier kind of work. In planting vegetables he was the first to carry manure. While at sea he always insisted on doing the cooking for his comrades in the extremely stuffy galley. When a fire broke out in a fishermen's village he rushed to extinguish it at a place where it burnt the fiercest. Once a typhoon hit the coast. Although he was sick at that time he took part in a shock brigade for emergency work. . . .

While on watch, Mai Hsien-teh always kept in mind these teachings of Chairman Mao's: the nature of imperialism will never change and if the enemy is sharpening his swords we must sharpen ours too. He called on himself to seize every opportunity to undergo hard training to strengthen his will to fight so as to be ready to annihilate the invaders at any moment. Once his ship was carrying out a firing practice. He was sick and lying in bed at the time. But when he heard the sound of chugging he at once got up, rushed to the engine-room and stood at his post. The section leader told him to rest. He said: "The firing range is the same as the battle ground

¹ Comrade Chang Szu-teh was a soldier in the Guards Regiment of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party. A member of the Communist Party who loyally served the interests of the people, he joined the revolution in 1933, took part in the Long March and was wounded in service. On September 5, 1944, when making charcoal in the mountains of Ansai County, northern Shensi, he was killed by the sudden collapse of a kiln.

and to do firing practice is the same as to fight. How can a fighter lie down to rest himself while guns are roaring?"

Mai Hsien-teh was a new recruit and was not required to take training courses of a more complicated nature. But he insisted on taking part in the "night tiger" training course together with the veteran comrades. He said: "We may have to fight this very evening. In fighting there are bound to be casualties and, in that case, new comrades will have to do the work of old ones. We must act as circumstances demand!" The authorities knew that he had passed with honours the training courses for recruits and therefore approved his request. Making strenuous efforts he succeeded in mastering the skill of operating the engine in the dark, thus acquiring the title of "night tiger".

Mai Hsien-teh knew that fighting on the high seas requires stamina and fortitude. To steel himself he worked persistently in the small engine-room of the ship where rocking was more easily felt and the temperature was high. He did this not for once only but almost every time the ship was at sea.

Mai Hsien-teh knew that it is very important for one to be mentally prepared for continuous fighting. Every time the ship returned to harbour he would at once prepare its engines for a second trip, cleaning them and replenishing them with oil and water. He did this not for one day only but almost every day, even when it was late at night or when he was very tired.

He knew that in war a single minute or even a single second may make the difference between victory and defeat. Therefore, in doing anything, however small it might be, he never lost an opportunity to improve his time by a minute or even a second. Thus in going down to the engine-room from the deck he always slid down the rail to save time. In short, he tried to save time in doing everything.

Imagine what great stamina one must have in order to be able to do as Mai Hsien-teh did in everything, every time and every day! It was no easy thing for Mai Hsien-teh to persist in this way of steeling himself. But his persistence bore fruit and he eventually succeeded in building up a staunch revolutionary character.

Thus, in the thick of revolutionary struggle, Mai Hsien-teh, armed himself with Chairman Mao's thought on class struggle, intensified his hatred of the U.S. imperialists as well as of all other class enemies, and held high the ideal of the proletarian world revolution. He was able consciously to wage struggles against his own weak points, against the difficulties that confronted him, against adversities and all that obstructed his progress in his fight for the revolution. The longer he carried on his struggle the higher was his morale, the stronger his resolution, the "redder" his thought, and the greater his ability. Gradually he came to acquire the heroic character that enabled him to have the courage to vanquish all his enemies. It was with such courage

that he carried out his pledge that for the interests of the people he would not hesitate to sacrifice his own life. Thus it may be truly said that he has served the people with all his heart.

战斗英雄麦贤得
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