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MY COUNTRY TRAINS ME TO BE A TECHNICAL EXPERT

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The thought that I, the daughter of poverty-stricken peasants, unable to tell A from B, have now become a revolutionary fighter and shall one day be an technician, taking part in the economic construction of our nation, makes me so excited that sometimes I lie awake at night. Sometimes I cannot believe that it is really true. But true it is, and as true as daylight. Guided and advised by the school authorities, I have recently made up my mind to take a course in chemical

engineering next term, so that some day I may be a chemical engineer! When I think of this, I cannot help being grateful to the Chinese Communist Party and to Chairman Mao. Had it not been for them I would never have seen such days!

As a child I did all kinds of hard jobs, gathering firewood, digging for roots, and what not. My father worked for a landlord. Our life was very hard indeed. I wondered then why the landlord, who was idle all day long, should be comfortably off, while my parents, who got up with the sun and toiled far into the night, exercising the strictest economy, grew poorer every day. My father, exhausted with labour, was often in a bad temper, and vented his anger on my mother and on us children. When I asked him what was wrong with us, he angrily retorted: "It's feeding you daughters that's reduced me to poverty!" I could not understand his argument. How was it that we daughters should make him poor? Didn't we work all day long? Then I turned to my mother and she said: "Some people have been born under a lucky star and lead a happy life. We women-

folk are fated to suffer misery and hardship right from our birth."

After the war against Japanese aggression broke out on July 7, 1937, the anti-Japanese patriotic movement burst out everywhere. Under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, the Eighth Route Army* fought staunchly resisting the Japanese aggression. They marched to the enemy's rear and liberated my native place Shentse County in Hopeh Province. The Farmers' National Salvation Association, the Youth's National Salvation Association, the Women's N.S.A. and the like were set up in our village. Cadres regularly came to carry on educational work: "Women can do revolutionary work and contribute their share to the strength of our country just as men!" "Equality between women and men!" "Emancipation of women!" They told us that they were Mao Tse-tung's troops, Chairman Mao Tse-tung worked for the welfare of the common folks, and he was very much concerned about the emancipation of women. I thought then that these cadres must have been born under a lucky star, they were born cadres! But a

woman cadre said I was wrong in thinking that way. She herself had been a peasant girl and had suffered much. Then I pondered over the problem how the ill stars of these comrades could have changed into lucky stars. "If only I could join Mao Tse-tung's troops too!" I kept on thinking. One day, some women cadres came to see us. I insisted that I wanted to go with them to join the forces. They smiled and asked: "Why do you want to join us?" I felt very embarrassed and repeated what they had said themselves: "For the defence of our country against Japanese aggression, and for the emancipation of women!" On hearing this they consented to my joining them and asked me to work conscientiously among the women in the village. From then on, I no longer entertained any fatalistic ideas. I braced myself up and plunged into the great struggle for national liberation and women's emancipation.

I was very active in my work. Through the education and help of my superiors, I learned many revolutionary theories, my political consciousness was greatly raised, and I

realized that, in order to emancipate themselves, the poor must organize and follow the Communist Party. In understanding this simple theory, I worked all the more enthusiastically. I was busy all day long, but never felt tired.

When I was the leader of Women's Self-Defense Corps, I headed the women in going on sentry duty to watch over the enemy. Some time later, I organized a militia to fight in cooperation with the regular army, capturing enemy provisions and arms, blowing up pillboxes and ensuring the security of the people. I had in reality become a fighter for the revolutionary cause. The people around those parts liked us very much. They did their best to help us, making shoes and preparing meals for us, giving us informations and persuading their sons and daughters to join the anti-Japanese movement. Our strength increased daily. The enemy considered us a thorn in their flesh. In order to exterminate us they wrote me a letter one day, persuading me to surrender, and immediately afterwards surrounded the village where I lived, attempting to capture me alive. An old peasant

woman hid me in her cellar. The enemy thrust bayonets on her, trying to force her to give me up. She never uttered a single word. Then these devils threatened a worker with their bayonets, pressing him to tell them my whereabouts. This true son of the working class, in order to protect the anti-Japanese organizations and preserve the strength of the Communist Party of China, heroically and unflinchingly sacrificed his precious life. The firmness and heroism with which the masses struggled against the enemy inspired me with increasing confidence and determination in the fight against this enemy. Under extremely trying conditions, I persisted in the struggle until the final victory was won in the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the People's Liberation War.

Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, we have been consolidating the people's democratic regime, won at the price of the blood of countless martyrs. We will put our greatest effort into the work of economic construction, turning our agricultural country into an industrial one; and we

are going to pave the way that will lead our country to socialism. The People's Government has set up short term middle schools for workers and peasants, to train cadres of working class and peasant origin, enabling them to enter higher educational institutions after graduation and be trained as mainstay in the building-up of our motherland. The People's Government gives us all kinds of facilities, and pays for our education and our living expenses. My children are also provided for at the Government's expense, so that I am able to study without cares and worries. Eminent teachers have been engaged to instruct us. I have now studied a year and a half in the Short Term Middle School for Workers and Peasants Affiliated to the Peking University. Next term I will take special courses to prepare for university study.

I never had any regular schooling. Although I am no longer an illiterate, being tempered by my work, I still fear that I may not be able to accomplish this task of learning. I am obsessed with my lessons day and night, even during meals I think of

mathematics and I write compositions in my dreams. Like a hungry man I long to swallow all the knowledge there is at one gulp and digest it all.

After more than a year's study, through the enthusiastic and patient instruction of the teachers and with the help of my classmates, I have made considerable progress. I have been getting the highest mark "5" in all courses. I often think of the time when I first came to the school, how it took me half a day to write a composition of only three or four sentences; and what was written was incoherent and did not convey what I had wanted to express, besides many wrong characters! As to mathematics, I couldn't even do simple additions and subtractions. I knew nothing of history, not to mention astronomy or geography. Now I have studied not only arithmetics, but algebra and geometry as well as physics. When writing compositions I know I should first think about the theme, choose the proper material and have a sort of outline in mind before writing down the words. Composition writing is no



Liu Su-ying.



Liu Su-ying in the Short Term Middle School for Workers and Peasants.

longer such trying and arduous work as it used to be.

But learning, after all, is not plain sailing, there are still many obstacles in the way. As I have never been to school before, and so have a very poor foundation, it is certainly no easy job for me to complete the six-year regular high school courses in three years, and be able to keep pace with other students in college studies in the future. Whenever I encounter any difficulties, I say to myself: "When we were struggling against the enemy in the past, how much hardship didn't we have to go through, and yet we were always victorious! Now, on the battle-front of learning, we're certainly not going to lose either." When trouble arises I remind myself that this task of learning has been assigned to me by my motherland and from that, I gain the courage to overcome all trouble. I am determined to overcome my difficulties. I am determined to master knowledge, cultural and scientific. And I am, most of all, determined to undertake the

task of economic construction entrusted to me by my country.

July, 1952

* The precursor of the Eighth Route Army and the New Fourth Army was the Chinese Workers' and Peasant's Red Army. After the outbreak of the War of Resistance against the Japanese Aggression in July, 1937, the Chinese Workers's and Peasants' Red Army and the guerillas left in the southern provinces were at one time or another reorganized as the 8th Route Army and the New 4th Army and they marched into North China and East China to fight against the Japanese aggressors.

I Entered University

Li Feng-lien

Comrade Li Feng-lien is a national model worker of industry. She is now thirtytwo years old, of working class origin. In 1935, she joined the Chinese Workers' and Peasants' Red Army. From 1937 to 1948 she was a worker first in the Printing Press and later in the Bedding and Clothing Factory of the Shensi-Kansu-Ninghsia Border Region. There she showed her firm will in revolution and had a working style of steeping herself in her work and of uniting the masses. While she was in the factory, she kept up an unbroken production record of being "first in quality and quantity," and thus she was several times elected model worker. In 1949 she attended the First Session of the First National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and the First All China Women's Congress. In 1950 she was a delegate to the National Conferences of Combat Heroes and Labour Models. At present she is a mem-*

ber of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, Executive Committee member of the All China Democratic Women's Federation, and a candidate for the executive membership of the All China Federation of Labour.—Editor.

On July 2, 1950, when I entered the gates of the People's University of China, I noticed the neat, beautiful school buildings and met the Vice-President, Cheng Fang-wu, who received me as though he were my father. I could not find words to describe the feelings of gratitude that rose up in me then.

The fact that I should be able to study in a university, this fact plainly shows the tremendous change that has taken place in Chinese society. In the old society, whoever would have thought that a woman like myself, born and brought up in the family of a hired labourer who had been ground down by landlords, could ever have entered university!

It is impossible to recount all the hardships of my childhood. My father was a landlord's farmhand. What he earned wasn't enough to keep the whole family alive—there were seven of us altogether. Our food con-

sisted mainly of wild vegetables and elm-tree leaves. When I was twelve, there was a famine in my native place, Chingpien County, Shensi Province. Whenever there was any food at that time, my mother would give it to us children, going hungry herself. That was how she starved to death.

After mother died, father wanted to go away with my younger brothers to find a living somewhere, so there wasn't anything else he could do but sell me to a wealthy family to be brought up as the child-betrothal of their son. The life of a child-bride is worse than that of a beast. My prospective husband suffered from infantile paralysis so he couldn't work. Every day I had to fetch water, cook the meals, grind the grains, gather firewood—all kinds of heavy labour fell upon me. My mother-in-law always beat and scolded me at will. During the bitter winter nights, she slept on the warm k'ang while I lay on the cold ground without even a blanket. Once I got really ill after a beating given me by my mother-in-law, and for more than ten days not a soul came near me. I could hear my mother-in-law cursing outside the door, "Let

her die. If she dies, we'll buy a better one." I could only shed tears, by myself, thinking over and over again, "When will these bitter days come to an end?"

Then in the autumn of 1935, the Red Army came to our village and the exploited, oppressed peasants all rose in revolution. The whole village was filled with an upsurge of enthusiasm. And one evening, I secretly joined the revolution through a woman fighter of the Red Army.

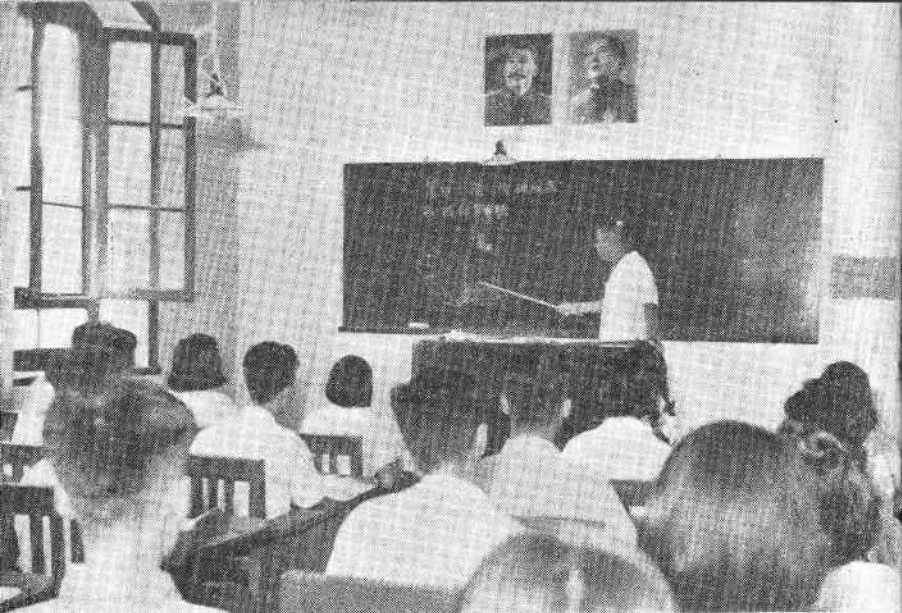
At first I cooked for the fighters of the Red Army; afterwards I worked in the Printing Press and the Bedding and Clothing Factory of the Shensi-Kansu-Ningshia Liberated Area. I've also been a nurse in a nursery. I was willing to do anything and do it to the best of my ability, for I knew that what ever was given me to do was revolutionary work. In 1948, when Shengyang was liberated, the Military Control Council sent me to take over the No. 2 Bedding and Clothing Factory of Shengyang, which employed two thousand workers. When I heard that they wanted me to undertake this important duty, I wonder-

ed how an ordinary worker like myself who didn't know more than a handful of characters could manage to do it. But immediately I realized that the revolution needed me just for this work now, so I had better go! I would manage somehow, for I could learn whatever was needed. When I arrived at the factory, the whole place was in a mess. The old employees were squeezing and making trouble, and the living condition of the workers were terrible. When I saw the situation, I felt pretty bad. I knew I should pull myself together and improve the conditions. My method was to rely on the workers and in the end we overcame all difficulties. We got through the accounts which at first we couldn't make head or tail of it, punished the old employees who were guilty of corruption, improved the food and the living quarters of the workers, and led production into normal channels. Then in 1949, I was transferred to the Bedding and Clothing Factory in Peking to do trade-union work. In 1950, in order to give me a proper training, the All China Federation of Labour sent me to the People's University.

In the university, I met over two thousand comrades from various factories and administrative posts of whom one thousand five hundred were labouring people of worker or peasant origin. The university is training these politically firm workers, peasants and intellectuals, who have had practical experiences in revolutionary struggle, to be cadres in the various fields of construction of New China. I began by attending the textile class in the Department of Factory Management, but because my cultural level was low, I had to join the preparatory class. I had trouble even with the courses in the preparatory class. I had never been to school. During more than ten years or so that I had been schooled in revolutionary work, I had learned to read a bit, but I wasn't much good at writing. I could understand everything that the professor said in the course on politics but I couldn't take down what he said, so the only thing was to copy the notes of my classmates. . . . Every free moment and even during the time when we were supposed to sleep, I was patiently copying notes, word for word. I encountered more difficulties in the



My husband and child.

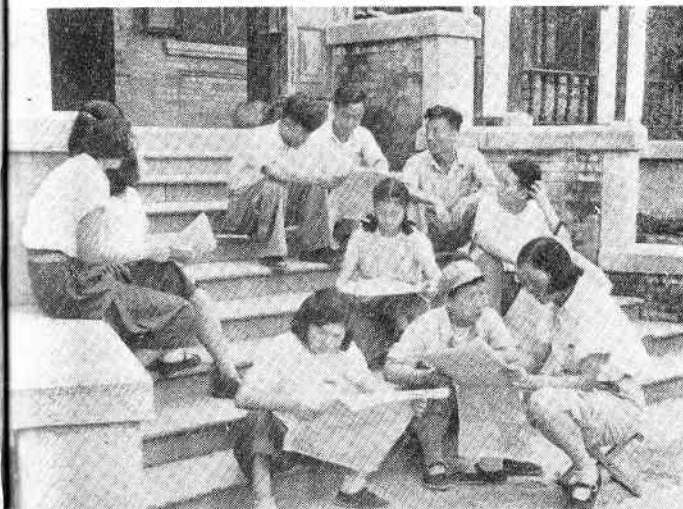


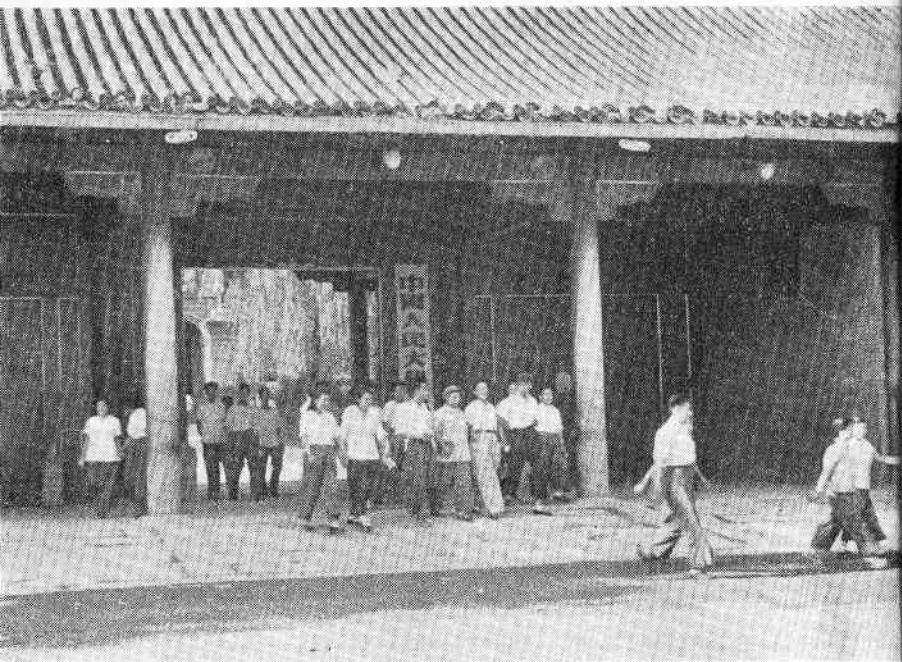
In the physics class.



A corner of the reading room often visited by our group.

Students of our group reading the daily paper in spare time.





Going to the movie.

mathematics class. I didn't even know how to add, subtract, multiply and divide! But I didn't lose faith in myself. Whenever I thought of the hopes placed in me by the people of my motherland, my courage was renewed. I was also encouraged by the example of Gorki's undaunted spirit. He attended school for only nine months, yet, due to his unflagging industry, he ended up by becoming a writer. So I resolved that I would overcome all difficulties, and study hard so as to do good work for our motherland.

Our professors are serious and responsible. They teach us according to the new method of relating practice to theory. In addition to lectures and practice, they also adopt the methods of "classroom discussions" and "extra-curricular instruction" in order to have us come to a better understanding of our work and to digest it thoroughly. Our method of study is collective. Each class is divided into several small groups. The students of each group are often together discussing their work and problems. We help each other; we want the students of the whole class to go forward

together. We will, on no account, allow a single member to lag behind. According to the results of the examination last term, the general average of our class ranked third; in geometry, we came out first. We are very busy in our studies, but our life, as a whole, passes very pleasantly. The students are together when taking part in extra-curricular activities, whether talking over problems, taking a walk, going to the cinema, or having a dance; and during the summer vacation, we organize a summer camp. Living this kind of life I feel young again.

After more than two years of study, I can now write articles. I've finished arithmetic and algebra, and have also studied physics, chemistry, geometry and trigonometry. By the summer vacation next year, I will have finished the work of the preparatory class, and then I shall begin the university courses. Having gone through these two years or so of most difficult preparatory study, I have increased confidence in that I will be able to fulfill the task given me by our mother-

land—to acquire technical knowledge and the ability to undertake factory management.

* On August 1, 1927, the Communist Party of China led more than 30,000 troops of the Northern Expeditionary Forces, workers and peasants in an armed uprising in Nanchang, Kiangsi Province. Subsequently, the army of Chinese people led by the Communist Party, was formed. This army was called the Chinese Workers' and Peasants' Red Army.

