



**LEI FENG,  
CHAIRMAN MAO'S  
GOOD FIGHTER**

向平當公作  
同共學子明  
一為集

Learn from Comrade Lei Feng.

Mao Tse-tung

子習雷鋒同志的  
榜樣 做毛主席  
的好戰士  
習彪

**Lei Feng,  
Chairman Mao's Good Fighter**

Follow the example set by Comrade  
Lei Feng and be Chairman Mao's good  
fighters.

**Lin Piao**

Chen Kuang-sheng

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**Quotation from Chairman Mao Tse-tung**

**Our Communist Party and the Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies led by our Party are battalions of the revolution. These battalions of ours are wholly dedicated to the liberation of the people and work entirely in the people's interests.**

**"Serve the People"**

## *1. Bitter Hatred*

Although I was only a child at the time I was filled with hatred for imperialism and the dark society I lived in, for I knew they were murderous and inhuman. I yearned for some of my own people to come and save me, for then I would get hold of a gun and shoot down those dirty brutes and avenge my parents.

From Lei Feng's diary

With rolling waves the Hsiang River flowed on and on. In the dark old society it bore the tears of the suffering people, the blood of the oppressed people; it was a witness of countless tragedies.

Lei Feng came from a poor peasant's family in Anching Township, Wangcheng County, Hunan Province. He was born on December 30, 1939, a time of storm and stress. The flames of resistance to Japanese aggression were burning everywhere in the motherland, both north and south of the Yangtse River. As for the shameless Kuomintang reactionaries, they kept on retreating as the Japanese invaders pushed forward. One huge area after another of the motherland's beloved territory fell into enemy hands. It was not long before the Japanese invaders were riding roughshod all over Hupeh and Hunan Provinces. Soon the areas on both sides of the Hsiang River became a hell for the people, with traitors, lackeys and landlords ruthlessly playing havoc with them. The toiling people floundered in a mire of misery and grief.

All that the old society gave young Lei Feng was one heavy blow after another.

Lei Ming-liang, Lei Feng's father, was a porter in a Changsha grocery store. And though he worked hard for the capitalist he only received a small pittance of a wage barely enough to keep his family.

In 1938 Japanese troops invaded the area around the Tungting Lake. They were still quite a distance from Changsha when the Kuomintang reactionaries, getting wind of the invasion, became frightened and hastily fled, setting fire to the city and leaving it in ruins. Kuomintang stragglers roamed everywhere, raping, pillaging and committing every kind of crime. During the big fire of Changsha, Lei Feng's father was beaten up by a Kuomintang deserter and returned home injured.

Back in his home village Lei Feng's father rented on deposit seven *mou*<sup>1</sup> of land from landlord Tan. Though he had not yet recovered from his injuries he began work in the fields where he sweated hard from dawn till dusk. Despite this he could hardly keep the wolf from the door. Several years later, life became increasingly more difficult for him. To make things easier he sent Lei Feng's elder brother — with the mother's consent — to work as a child labourer at an engineering plant.

Lei Feng's elder brother was only twelve at the time, and did not know much about the world. But still he had to leave his parents and home village in order to make a living, to work in terrible conditions in a factory and be exploited by a capitalist.

During the Japanese occupation of the Changsha area, Lei Feng's father was impressed for work as a porter and was once seriously beaten up by the Japanese fascists. His already poor health quickly deteriorated after this, and having suffered a

<sup>1</sup> One *mou* is roughly equivalent to one-sixth of an acre.

severe hemorrhage, he died. Lei Feng was then only five. His grief-stricken mother wept bitterly in despair.

In those days a poor family could hardly afford to buy a coffin and Lei Feng's family was no exception. They had nothing in the house to sell to pay for the burial. If they borrowed money they would have to get it from the rich who only advanced loans at exorbitant interest. That was like putting a noose around one's neck. Faced with the thought of being unable to bury her husband properly Lei Feng's mother grew terribly worried. Finally, she decided to get money from the several *mou* of land on which they had depended for a living. She asked someone to help her sub-lease three and a half *mou* of the plot. With the deposit she could only manage to buy a coffin and buried her husband with the help of her neighbours.

From that time on Lei Feng's mother and her two sons, Lei Feng and his younger brother, struggled for existence on the very brink of starvation and death. They prayed and prayed for help but none came. Their only help was the sympathy and consolation of their poor fellow-villagers for they, too, had felt the whip-lash of poverty. In those days, so many poor families had suffered like Lei Feng's, with women who had lost their husbands and children their fathers. However, Lei Feng's mother was determined to live on and bring up her children as best she could.

Just when Lei Feng's mother and her two sons were at the end of their tether, another cruel blow struck them. Her eldest son went down with tuberculosis. He had been working as a child labourer in a factory. His boss was ruthlessly indifferent about his workers, and was only interested in exploiting them. So when he saw that the consumptive boy could no longer be exploited he fired him without a second's thought. Unable to afford medical treatment for her son or support him, Lei Feng's

mother had to send him to work as an apprentice in a printing and dyeing mill at Jungwanshih near Changsha. Bad working conditions and economic difficulties soon combined to aggravate his lingering disease. Becoming thinner and thinner he eventually died from the malignant disease and the miserable and deprived life he had led. Lei Feng was only six years old at that time.

The death of her son pierced Lei Feng's mother to the heart, and she wept bitterly. Lei Feng was heart-broken, too. "I want my elder brother..." he stamped his foot and cried. But his brother lay silent. No longer would he take Lei Feng to play in the village...

With tears in her eyes Lei Feng's mother buried her eldest son. As the saying goes, misfortunes breed misfortunes. Shortly afterwards Lei Feng's younger brother contracted typhoid fever, and suffering from lack of nourishment he soon died in his mother's arms. Lei Feng's mother could no longer weep for she was beyond tears. Often she would hold Lei Feng, now the only dear one to her, in her arms and stare vacantly at him.

Struggling against every trial and difficulty the kind-hearted woman summoned up all her strength to bring up her son. She endured hunger and poverty, the slights and humiliations of the rich. Left to shift for herself she tried her hardest to find a way out of the darkness.

In order to earn a living Lei Feng's mother went to work for landlord Tan as a servant. His son — the Seventh Young Master — was a thoroughly bad and dissolute character. One day he took advantage of her helplessness and raped her. She returned home a humiliated and grief-stricken woman, and like an insane person wept all day long with her hair dishevelled. Often she would go to her husband's grave and cry tears of bitterness. Losing her husband and two children so tragically, the humiliation of being raped by the landlord's son,

and the burden of life, all this pressed heavily down on her, and soon her heart began to break. It was not long before there seemed only one way out for her — suicide.

It was only four days before the Mid-Autumn Festival in 1947. The rich families were getting ready for the big feasts. And the poor? They were so hard-up they couldn't even afford the simplest meal. As a folk song goes:

*The silver moon shines over all the land,  
How many in joy and how many in sorrow stand.*

Lei Feng's mother felt the depths of sadness that evening and tears streamed down her cheeks. Holding Lei Feng's hand and calling him by his nickname she sobbed, "Look how dirty your face and hands are! I don't know how you're going to get along without a mother to look after you!" Saying this she went out and fetched a basin of clear water. And then as she washed Lei Feng's face and hands she said tearfully, "Child, don't forget how the people in our family died!" Then she kissed him and said, "Go to your aunt's and stay there for the night while I go out to get some food." Of course, Lei Feng had no idea what his mother planned to do. Staring at her with wide-open eyes he said, "All right, but you must come back as soon as possible." Lei Feng's mother hanged herself that night.

Lei Feng's mother had found herself able to survive the tragic death of her husband and two sons. And she refused to surrender to the fate that had befallen her, enduring every kind of trial for months and months. It was the crushing humiliation of being raped by the landlord's son that finally broke her, and her heart being shattered with grief and bitterness, she hanged herself. Her death was a final act of accusation against the vicious old society.



Within three years Lei Feng's family had been destroyed by a holocaust wrought by the old society and now he was a helpless orphan.

Naturally, the poor help the poor and the distressed pity the distressed. When Lei Feng's aunt and uncle saw that the boy had lost his parents and had no one to take care of him, they let Lei Feng stay with them though they themselves were finding it difficult to make ends meet.

In his aunt's house Lei Feng's other uncles and aunts gave him their love and sympathy. Kind-hearted neighbours also helped the little boy and would often mend his clothes for him. Now little Lei Feng was a clever and sensitive boy, and seeing how poor his uncles and aunts were he began to go to the mountains to cut firewood for them.

Taking a chopper and a carrying pole Lei Feng would cut up branches and dig up bamboo roots and tree stumps on the mountainside. Then he would carry them to the market and sell them to help the family through its difficulties. Sometimes his body would be scratched by a twig, his hand or foot pierced by a thorn. Sometimes he cut his hand with the chopper. But whenever he was in pain he would simply cry "Mama!", and then when the bleeding had stopped he would pick up his chopper and begin work again. Once when Lei Feng was cutting firewood on the East Mountain the mother of Hsu Sung-lin, a landlord, saw him. Without saying a word she grabbed hold of his chopper and hacked his left hand several times with it. Lei Feng never forgot this savage act for the rest of his life.

Though Lei Feng often saw the children of rich families dressed in colourful clothes or eating meat and fish, he never felt envious. But when he passed a school and saw the same children run out with satchels in hand or heard the voices of school children reading aloud he always felt a pang of envy.

Knowing that he himself could not go to school he would roam gloomily over the mountains with his chopper and carrying pole.

Lei Feng's life was one of continuous struggle. Like all his poor fellow-villagers he hoped for the coming of dawn.

## 2. *The End of a Nightmare*

Thinking of the past I feel an intense hatred for the "three major enemies".<sup>1</sup>

Thinking of the present I feel I owe unbounded gratitude to the Party and Chairman Mao for their kindness.

Looking into the future, I feel full of energy and confidence. I am determined to fight to the bitter end for the cause of communism.

From Lei Feng's diary

In August 1949, the Chinese People's Liberation Army liberated Wangcheng County, Hunan Province. It was the beginning of a new dawn for Lei Feng and the other villagers who had suffered for so long. And like the people in the rest of the country they celebrated their liberation with the youngsters dancing to the music of drums and gongs and the old people standing by and excitedly saying over and over again, "We're liberated!"

Local governments were soon set up, and the people found that they were the new masters of China, and that all those

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<sup>1</sup> Imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism.

who had suffered in the old society would now be well taken care of by the People's Government.

Peng Teh-mao, an underground Party member who had always been specially kind to Lei Feng, became chairman of the peasant association's fifth branch in Anching Township, and later the township head.

Uncle Peng, as he was affectionately known to the villagers, often told Lei Feng, "The world is ours now. The landlords and local despots who persecuted us poor people will never dare to lord it over us again."

Listening attentively to Uncle Peng with wide-open eyes young Lei Feng remembered every word he said.

"Remember, lad," Peng continued, "our liberator is Chairman Mao, the Communist Party, the People's Liberation Army. It was the Party and Chairman Mao who emancipated us. When you grow up you must follow Chairman Mao's teachings."

Nodding his head Lei Feng repeated in a low voice: "When you grow up you must follow Chairman Mao's teachings..."

One evening, when the sun had just set, Lei Feng was standing at the end of a bridge when he suddenly saw troops approaching. It was the Liberation Army! Lei Feng was filled with joy. Having learnt that the army men were going to stay overnight in the village he gladly volunteered to act as their guide. Then, running here and there with a beaming smile, he helped the village cadres prepare lodgings and meals for the men. That evening he stayed with the soldiers for a long time, reluctant to part from them.

When they were about to leave the next day Lei Feng tugged at an officer's sleeve and said, "I want to be a soldier. Please take me with you!"

"Take you with us? But you're only a small boy. Why do you want to be a soldier?"

"I want to wreak vengeance on the enemy."

"We'll revenge you," said the officer. "Study hard at school and be Chairman Mao's good pupil. When you grow up you can take part in building New China."

The officer's advice kept running through Lei Feng's mind as he watched the men slowly pass out of sight.

A full-scale land reform movement was launched in Lei Feng's village in 1951. Educated by the Party the peasant masses kindled the flame of class struggle, and meetings were frequently held where many peasants spoke who had suffered from feudal oppression in the old society. They poured out their feelings of bitterness and traced the root cause of their poverty to the old society. The deep hatred generated by centuries of bloody oppression welled up in the minds of the awakened peasants. Rent, forced labour, loans at exorbitant interest, and many other cruel methods used by the landlords to exploit and persecute the poor, were exposed one by one. Many among the audience cried as the speakers spoke about their past.

"Down with the landlords!" "Revenge our brothers the poor peasants and farm labourers!" Slogans like these resounded through the village.

When Lei Feng heard the villagers' accusations and thought of his own past sufferings his eyes became filled with tears. Red with fury, he jumped onto the platform and stabbing his finger at landlord Hsu Sung-lin's mother he cried, "You old pig, your turn has come at last! Do you dare to hack at my hand again? You don't dare, do you? And even if you want to you can't."

During this stormy, anti-feudal struggle Lei Feng learnt a lot about the class struggle in China. And the Party's education and countless facts made Lei Feng gradually understand that the landlords, capitalists and imperialists were his as well as

his poor class brothers' deadliest enemy. It was the imperialists and the Kuomintang reactionaries who had killed his father. It was the heartless capitalists who had robbed his elder brother of his young life. It was the evil old society that had deprived his mother of the means of livelihood and driven her to commit suicide. It was the vicious old society that had prevented the poor people from emancipating themselves.

During the re-distribution of land Lei Feng, as an orphan, received two pieces of land in accordance with the government's policy. And in the share-out of the landlords' property he was also given preferential treatment by the peasant association. This made him realize how Chairman Mao had led the poor people to emancipation, and that only by following the Communist Party could the poor people have a bright future. All this left an indelible impression on Lei Feng's young mind.

Lei Feng entered a primary school in 1950 through the care and help of the Party and People's Government.

His happy school life made Lei Feng think a lot about all the things that had happened to him in the past. In the old society he used to enviously watch the landlords' children go to school never thinking for one moment that he himself could go. Every time he passed the school gate he would stand and stare at the children studying and playing. How anxious he was to join them! But no, it had been impossible for a poor orphan like him to enjoy the privilege of education. It was only in New China under the leadership of the Party and Chairman Mao that he could walk proudly into a school and be taken care of in every possible way. This sort of thing had never happened before in any period of China's history.

Deeply grateful to the Party and Chairman Mao, Lei Feng turned to the first page in his new book. Seeing a picture of

Chairman Mao's benign face he resolved there and then to study hard and be Chairman Mao's good pupil. As soon as he had learnt how to write a few characters he wrote "Long live Chairman Mao!" in his notebook.

There wasn't any senior primary school in Lei Feng's village in the early days after liberation, so having finished his studies at a local junior primary school he entered the Chingshuitang Senior Primary School about five miles from his home. Most pupils there boarded in but Lei Feng decided not to. He would rise at dawn and return after dusk, eating his dinner late in the evening. Sometimes when he got up late he would rush to school without his breakfast. He seldom stayed away from school or came late no matter how bad the weather was. In his free time he would go to the mountains to collect firewood or do some work in the fields. Even then he would take his books with him and read them while resting. Refusing to give in to any difficulty, Lei Feng went all out and studied industriously. He always received good marks for his school work, was keen on physical work and gave generous help to his schoolmates. In the autumn of 1954 he joined the Young Pioneers—a children's organization—of the Chingshuitang Primary School and proudly wore its badge of honour—the red scarf. "We're Chairman Mao's Young Pioneers," he often told his friends, "and we must do our best to study so that we can help build the new China when we grow up."

With the beginning of the 1955 school year Lei Feng changed schools and went to the Hoyehpa Primary School about a mile and a half from his home. There were only four Young Pioneers at the new school and Lei Feng soon became very active in helping them to organize a team of Young Pioneers. He fre-

quently talked to his schoolmates about the rules of the Pioneers and how they could join it. With some of his friends he patiently tried to make them feel more class conscious. "We must do our best to become Young Pioneers for we're the children of poor peasants and farm labourers," he told them.

Lei Feng treasured his red scarf very much but most of all he treasured a white summer shirt given him by the People's Government. And he would never wear the shirt without the scarf during the summer. Every day when he returned home from school he would wash the shirt and carefully fold the scarf and put them in his satchel.

Educated and inspired by the Young Pioneers, Lei Feng made rapid progress. In the classroom he listened attentively to the teachers and studied very hard. When it was time for manual work he put his back into it and never wasted a single minute. He took an active part in all recreational and athletic activities, and he always satisfactorily carried out every task assigned by the Pioneers. Once when the Young Pioneers were to spend Pioneers' Day in Changsha's Martyrs' Park Lei Feng was given the job of beating the drum. A small boy for his age, and with the park so many miles away, it proved quite an ordeal for him to carry the big drum. After four or five miles he began to sweat. The Pioneers' instructor noticed how tired he looked and suggested that he should let another boy carry the drum. But Lei Feng replied, "The Pioneers entrusted me with this task and I must fulfil it." Exerting every ounce of energy he finally succeeded in carrying the drum to the park.

When Lei Feng was in the sixth grade in the latter half of 1955 the local agricultural producers' co-operative decided to try and wipe out illiteracy. The big snag was that they could not

find a teacher. When Lei Feng heard about this he said to his schoolmates, "Let's teach in the night school to help the co-operative. What about it?"

His schoolmates were surprised. They were teen-agers while the pupils in the school were all adults. How could they teach adults?

"Come on," said Lei Feng. "This is something we can do and we must try and do it."

Encouraged and helped by the Party branch the night school was established. Lessons were given in the sitting-room of a villager's house to grown-ups who had had no chance to attend school in the old society. Every day after Lei Feng had returned from school and taken his dinner, he and the other "teachers" would go round and collect their "pupils". Whenever a "teacher" came up against a difficulty and lost heart Lei Feng would try to encourage him to go on.

In the old society Lei Feng had been ground under by imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism. Life had become almost impossible for him. But in the new society—under the care of the Party and government—he gradually developed and matured. He could never forget this. Here is a passage from his diary written at the age of twenty:

. . . . .

The people's great liberator, the great Chinese Communist Party, rescued me from a hell on earth . . . I feel in my bones that it is a happiest thing to live in a socialist society, in a big revolutionary family, in the great era of Mao Tse-tung. But we must not "forget the pain when the ulcer is cured". As an old saying goes, "When you drink water, give a thought to its source." Comparing the past with the present you feel an urge to think of everything in terms of the revolution. We must hold higher the red banner of Mao Tse-tung's

thought and carry on the hard-working spirit and keep on other fine traditions of the revolutionary martyrs. We must go all out to build up our socialist country and try to score greater and greater achievements. Only in this way can we fulfil the hopes of the revolutionary martyrs and show we're worthy of the concern and encouragement of the Party and our great leader Chairman Mao.

### 3. *Life Calls*

Youth is beautiful. But real youth belongs to those who always aim high, work selflessly and are modest.

From Lei Feng's diary

When Lei Feng finished his studies in the senior primary school in 1956 a nation-wide movement of agricultural co-operation was surging forward like a spring tide. The industrial construction of the motherland was being developed on a large scale. Life with all its richness was beckoning to every young person, and many took up jobs in industry and agriculture after they left school.

Like a newly fledged bird Lei Feng was anxious to take his first flight. Soon he took a job as a messenger in the local authority offices, dispatching letters and notices and helping to compile statistics, charts and forms. Whenever there was some work which he thought he was capable of doing he would always voluntarily ask to do it. Everyone was pleased with his work and attitude.

Later, at the age of seventeen, Lei Feng was transferred to work in the Party committee office of Wangcheng County. Here he began a new life. During the day he worked hard. In the evening he attended a spare-time middle school run by the county government. The Party has rescued me from the mire of misery and enabled me to lead such a comfortable life, he often thought to himself. How shall I repay its kindness?

His answer came in the excellent way he worked — taking good care of public property, making himself a driving force in the office for the sale of government bonds. It was not surprising that his comrades finally picked him as a model worker.

Lei Feng worked under Chang, secretary of the county Party committee, a friendly and kind man to whom he felt very attached. He dispatched letters and documents for Chang and made sure he was by his side whenever he needed him — in the countryside or at a meeting. When Chang worked late into the night, Lei Feng would see he had everything he needed such as hot water and tea. Although the secretary was very busy he always tried to find time to tell revolutionary stories to Lei Feng. He told him stories about the armed uprising against the counter-revolution of Chiang Kai-shek, launched by the Chinese Communist Party in Nanchang, Kiangsi Province, on August 1, 1927, about the struggle waged by Chairman Mao in establishing the revolutionary base on the Ching kang Mountains, as well as episodes of the Red Army's Long March and the War of Resistance Against Japan. In a story about the Autumn Harvest Uprising led by Chairman Mao in Hunan, he described how a Party member was arrested during a fight, how he was cruelly tortured by the enemy and how he refused

to yield, preferring death to submission. When Lei Feng heard this he exclaimed: "That's the kind of man I want to be!"

"Very good," said Secretary Chang, "then work well, study hard, and try to become a member of the Youth League and Communist Party. Remember, always try to make greater contributions to the cause of revolution."

Lei Feng remembered every one of Secretary Chang's words. He made a special point of trying to learn from his comrades in the county Party committee. Once when he accompanied Chang to a meeting he saw a screw lying on the road. He thought it was a useless thing and kicked it away. Chang turned round and saw what he had done. Without saying a word he bent down, picked it up and put it in his pocket. Lei Feng was surprised. What does a Party secretary want with a screw? he wondered.

Several days later Lei Feng was about to send a letter to an agricultural machinery plant, when Chang handed him the screw and told him to send it to the workers there. "Ours is a poor country," he said. "We have to work hard to build China up. A screw is a small thing but a machine can't work if one of its screws is missing. Remember, drops of water go to make a stream and grains of rice fill a bin."

Lei Feng stared at the secretary with wide-open eyes. From that time on he never squandered a single cent and deposited all his savings in the bank.

Secretary Chang not only helped Lei Feng with his day-to-day problems. What is more, he helped him with his political studies and ideological remoulding, enabling him to steadily raise his class consciousness. They became very close to each other, and Lei Feng always felt happy and content in working with Chang however difficult and exhausting a job he was given. In fact, he seemed to develop inexhaustible energy and could stay up night after night without feeling tired.

The warmth of brotherhood, the deep class love of his comrades, often made Lei Feng compare his present life with the bitterness of his past. Whenever he thought of his mother he felt a stab of pain and hot tears would roll down his cheeks. Once Secretary Chang saw Lei Feng sitting alone and crying. "What's the matter?" he asked him. Then taking out a handkerchief and handing it to him he said, "Don't cry. Take this and wipe your eyes."

"All right," Lei Feng sobbed.

Chang paused for a while. Then he took Lei Feng's hand and stroked his head, "It's good to think a lot about the past," he said. "You mustn't forget it. A revolutionary should draw strength from his past sufferings and let them spur him on to do better work for the revolution."

With tearful eyes Lei Feng gazed at the secretary. Every one of his words had stirred him.

Pointing to the scar on the back of Lei Feng's hand Chang continued, "The sufferings you've gone through are the sufferings of the proletariat. They are also the sufferings of the Chinese people. Your present happy life has been given by the Party and Chairman Mao; it has also come out of the blood shed by countless revolutionary martyrs. You're still a young man. You must study harder and harder. In the future you'll be asked to do many, many things for the revolution. . . ."

Chang's words seemed to clear the way for a burst of revolutionary truth that rushed through the mind of this young man who had suffered so much in his childhood. To work for the county Party committee was like marching under the torch of revolution. Now, from his personal experience, Lei Feng began to understand more and more clearly the great significance of revolution.

From then on Lei Feng made even bigger strides in his work and studies, and when he became a member of the

Communist Youth League on February 8, 1957 he felt greatly honoured.

Near Wangcheng County there was a big river called the Kuei. Before liberation it frequently flooded its banks, bringing disaster to the people living nearby. In the late autumn of 1957 the People's Government decided on a project to control the river. Many of Lei Feng's comrades volunteered for the job, and he put his name down with the rest of them. After three applications to the county Party committee he was allowed to go. He worked like a beaver on the construction site, digging and carrying earth, nimbly scurrying through the crowds of workers, and always recognizable in his rolled-up trousers. Because of his hard work and diligent attitude he was chosen as the site's model worker at a special meeting held on the completion of the project.

Shortly afterwards, the county Party committee decided to start a farm at Tuanshanhu. In response to the Party's call the county Youth League committee appealed to the youngsters in the county to donate money for the purchase of a tractor. Excited by the news Lei Feng immediately contributed all of his savings to the tractor fund. He told his League branch secretary, "The monthly wages paid me by the Party are more than I can spend. As there's no point in hanging onto my savings I gave the lot for the purchase of the tractor."

Lei Feng was one of many youths in the county who contributed fairly large sums of money to the fund. Pleased with Lei Feng, Secretary Chang said, "I've heard you've given all your savings to help buy the tractors."

"Why, haven't I done the right thing?" Lei Feng was a bit taken aback.

"Yes, you have. It shows you're keen on socialist construction," Chang replied.

Lei Feng was pleased with Chang's praise and encouragement, and he could not help smiling.

"Now let's turn to something else," Chang said in a gentle voice. "How about learning to drive a tractor?"

"Drive a tractor?" Lei Feng could barely suppress his excitement. What a wonderful job! he thought. It was not so long ago that he had donated all of his savings for the purchase of a tractor, a tractor which he hoped one day to see running around on the land near his home village. Now the Party wanted him to become a tractor driver. His heart leapt at the thought of it all. Only one thought saddened him—he would have to part from his dear friend, Secretary Chang.

In the spring of 1958, when the trees were in blossom, Lei Feng set out to work on the land. Shortly after arriving at Tuanshanhu Farm he began to learn to drive a tractor. When he first climbed into the driver's cabin he felt excited. He sat beside the driver and watched his movements closely; he carefully took note of how he made a turn, how he started the engine. While driving the machine the driver taught Lei Feng the simple mechanics of driving and told him the names of all the tractor parts. Lei Feng remembered everything the driver told him and wrote it all down when he got back to the farm. For the first few days he could not sleep properly, his mind restlessly turning over all that the driver had said. He wanted so much to master the skill of driving a tractor as soon as possible so that he could quickly serve his motherland.

After a week's training Lei Feng had succeeded in mastering the essential principles of driving as well as some basic knowledge concerning the mechanics of a tractor. His comrades then asked him to start his driving practice. When Lei Feng first swung himself into the driver's seat his heart beat

violently. He was afraid he might not be able to start the engine or have enough strength to control the steering wheel; and if he succeeded in doing this would he be able to effectively apply the brake? He was tense and excited. His hands and feet involuntarily began to tremble. The driver, sitting next to him, said, "Brace yourself and don't be so nervous."

Lei Feng opened the throttle and pushed the clutch. The engine began to chug and the tractor moved off. But he was unable to control its movements and it kept swinging from side to side. After a while Lei Feng grew calmer, his hands and feet stopped trembling and the tractor itself then seemed to become more manageable. Lei Feng suddenly felt very happy. Turning round he saw waves of fertile soil being rapidly churned up. And then, across his mind, flashed a vision of a huge expanse of land covered with lush crops. . . .

"Now, that's what I call a really good day's work," Lei Feng thought after he had returned home from the fields. He was still so keyed up with excitement while eating his meal that his body rolled slightly from side to side as if he were still in the driver's seat. When he picked up his chopsticks he thought he was still turning the steering wheel, and his feet kept on pressing on the floor as if they were treading on the brakes.

Lei Feng soon became one of the best tractor drivers in Wangcheng County, being frequently seen driving his tractor at full speed here and there in the Tuanshanhu Farm. When he saw that Tuanshanhu's virgin land, which had lain in slumber for ages, was now being ploughed by tractors and that it would soon yield golden crops of rice for the motherland he began to think of his own life. He considered that since he had been emancipated by the new society he should, like the fertile soil, make more contributions to his socialist motherland. Full of gratitude for the new society he wrote an enthusiastic article for the local newspaper, entitled "How I Became a

Tractor Driver?" in which he told the whole inspiring story. Later, in his diary he wrote a glowing song of praise for the socialist farm and the great Communist Party:

*Oh, swallow from the north,  
You bird of passage!  
Flying to the south  
You pierced the air over Tuanshanbu,  
Looking down with curious eyes.  
I clearly hear what you seem to ask:  
"How is it that the desolate Tuanshanbu  
Has changed its appearance this year?"*

*Oh, swallow from the north,  
Let me tell you why:  
It was the Party, great and strong,  
That reclaimed the virgin land of Tuanshanbu  
Changing it into a new farm.  
And it was the workers of the farm  
Who, with their untiring hands,  
Have given Tuanshanbu a new garb.*

*Oh, swallow from the north,  
Perhaps you've learnt the sad past of Tuanshanbu  
From your mother.*

*Then —  
Desolate and overgrown with weeds,  
A huge expanse of water it became in the season  
of floods.  
Ten years ago, as I remember,  
Thrice money was collected for its reclamation  
And thrice the money was embezzled.  
It was then but a dream  
To make this wasteland a farm.*



Now —

*It is a farm of a million mou,  
Planted with rice golden in colour,  
And soothing is its fragrance carried on the breeze.  
A new dike, like a wall of iron, has been built,  
And floods no longer cause havoc.  
A red flag flies over the socialist farm.  
Bins are full of grain and boats full of fish.  
Another land of plenty has been added to the  
motherland.*

*Oh, swallow from the north,  
Please don't be surprised.  
What you hear now is not a roll of thunder;  
It is the rumble of tractors.  
And there, it's not water flowing in a reverse  
direction;  
It's water being drained from the ditch by a pump.  
Why, you may ask, is there such a bustle in the  
pastures?  
They are stockmen herding their horses and cattle.*

*Oh, swallow from the north,  
How light and swift are your wings!  
Maybe you're admiring our beautiful landscape,  
With the Eight-Bend River winding its course like a  
silver ribbon,  
Bringing water to the fertile soil.  
Screened by the Wu Hills is Lake Tuanshanbu,  
It is a painting, a poem.  
Working on the painting and poem are the workers,  
Staunch warriors with the spirit of dragons and tigers.  
Some of them have wielded hoes all their life,*

*While others are soldiers and students new to farm  
work.*

*Their heart glowing with pride, they say:  
This is a new state farm;  
This is an open-air factory;  
This is a school training you to be really red and  
expert.*

*Oh, swallow from the north, you may ask:  
Why are the workers so busy?  
This is because you don't know what they want to do.  
They want to have melons bigger than pumpkins;  
They want to have pigs as strong as calves;  
They want to have rice plants as tall as man;  
They want to transplant on southern soil  
The northern plants of maize and sorghum.*

*Oh, swallow from the north,  
Don't look for the roof-beams of yesterday;  
For nowhere you'll be able to find  
The nests where you lived before.  
Only last year this place was desolate and bleak,  
But now tall factory buildings have gone up here.  
We'll welcome you if you can visit  
The new living quarters of our farm.  
But please tell us first, in the places you've travelled,  
How many farms like this one have been built  
During the big leap forward of this year?*

Lei Feng's work, prompted by a selfless spirit, resulted in many outstanding achievements. Consequently he repeatedly received commendations and awards from the leadership of the farm.

#### 4. *Follow the Instructions of the Party*

I know that if you follow the Party's and Chairman Mao's instructions and work hard you will be able to do many more things for the Party. But after all one man's energy is limited; he won't go very far or rise to great heights merely through his own efforts. For instance, if a small stream does not join a big river it can never flow majestically for hundreds of miles.

From Lei Feng's diary

In May 1958 the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party put forward the general line of "going all out and aiming high to achieve greater, faster, better and more economical results in building socialism". Responding to the Party's call with great enthusiasm the people of the whole country launched the big leap forward.

In the autumn of the same year, after a bumper harvest had been reaped from about 20,000 *mou* of land in the Tuanshanhu Farm, the Party issued a call for the manufacture of iron and steel on a large scale. This great call reverberated through the whole of China and the rest of the world; and young Lei Feng, like everyone else, felt its impact. Its immediate effect on him was to make him become a steel worker and stand by the flaming furnace and do his bit for the socialist industrialization of the motherland. Just at this time good news came from the county town. In view of the urgent need to increase production the Anshan Iron and Steel Company had sent men to Wangcheng to enroll new workers. Lei Feng decided straight-away to join the company and become a steel worker.

When Lei Feng asked his leaders for permission to go they were reluctant to part from him. Lei Feng was a newly

trained tractor driver, a model worker and a popular Youth League member. How could they let him go?

Then some of his fellow workers told him, "You can build socialism in a farm just as well." Others said, "Lei Feng, it's terribly cold in the Northeast. You're a southerner. You won't be able to stand it." "It can't be as bad as all that," said Lei Feng. "Millions of people live in the Northeast and I've never heard of a single person freezing to death. No, there's no reason why I should be afraid of the cold. Besides, if young people want to build up the motherland they should go to the toughest places."

Anxious to work in the Anshan Iron and Steel Company Lei Feng became more and more restless. He often dreamt of working at the plant, standing by the furnace in his denims with a long steel rod in his hand. The temperature would be fiercely high, and sweat would be pouring down him. Molten iron — wondrously reddish in colour — would cascade out of the furnace . . . and soon steel billets would be on their way to factories to be turned into tractors, trucks, planes and guns. Sometimes, he dreamt of a new village after a people's commune had been set up. There would be tractors running over vast stretches of farmland, trucks shuttling across a network of roads, big pumps splashing out water and an electric power station bringing light to every home. . . . Isn't this why Chairman Mao called on the people to make iron and steel on a large scale? How fine it would be when the whole vastness of China's countryside is mechanized!

At long last the Party agreed to let Lei Feng go to Anshan. As he left his home village and made his way by train to Anshan he felt right on top of the world.

The change from farm to factory work made Lei Feng tingle with excitement. He was amazed when he stood and looked

at the plant's great workshops and towering chimneys. "What a size this 'Steel Capital' is!" he muttered to himself.

Taking into account Lei Feng's experience and skill as a tractor driver, the personnel department sent him to train as a bulldozer driver at the coal washing shop in the chemical engineering section. Lei Feng felt rather disappointed, for his new job was not directly linked with steel-making.

When Lei Feng saw Comrade Yu, manager of the coal washing shop, he told him, "You know, I came here to make steel. Why should I have to drive a bulldozer?"

Manager Yu, originally an old worker, was pleased with Lei Feng's frankness. "Young Lei, you're a newcomer," he said. "You don't understand the process of production in a big industrial plant. You'll also help to make steel if you drive a bulldozer. Take our coal washing shop for instance. A huge quantity of coal is brought to the shop every day to be made into coke. Without coke iron cannot be smelted. The gas generated from making coke is sent to the steel-making plant — without gas steel can't be made. Large-scale industrial production may be likened to a machine. Every shop, every kind of work, is like a machine part, a screw, and you can't do without any of them. Look, do you think a machine can work without one of its screws?"

The machine and the screw! Secretary Chang had talked about them before but Lei Feng had forgotten. Now that he really understood their relation to each other he began to take a much more practical attitude towards his job. It was with still greater eagerness that he then began to learn to drive the bulldozer. He always went on duty a few minutes before time so as to get everything ready for his instructor. While his instructor drove he would help to guide the machine and at the same time closely watch how he worked. In between loading and unloading the coal waggons there was a few minutes' in-

terval during which they were able to take a rest. As the work in the coal yard was done in the open air and the weather was cold Lei Feng, out of consideration for his instructor, would always say, "You go into the shed and warm yourself — I'll look after the machine." After he had gone inside, Lei Feng would sit in the driver's cabin and study the control levers. As soon as the next lot of waggons arrived he would let his instructor know and then go on working. Whenever he saw a worker repairing a bulldozer he would stay behind after his shift had finished and try to help repair the machine. He learnt a lot about bulldozers that way. Once the lubricating oil pump broke down. Now, according to the usual practice it was the instructor's job to carry out repairs while the apprentice fetched tools and other things. Lei Feng, however, did not stick to the practice this time. He just swung himself under the machine, asked his instructor for directions, and got on with the job. Later, he asked him to inspect his work. It didn't take long with this sort of attitude for Lei Feng to find out how the bulldozer worked and to be able to drive it well. The instructor and other old workers soon felt very attached to Lei Feng whom they affectionately called "Young Lei".

Shortly after Lei Feng began to drive the bulldozer on his own he bumped into the railway track and dented part of the line. When his instructor sharply told him off for his carelessness he felt very depressed. Later, however, his instructor had second thoughts about the accident. Lei Feng had been a good worker, there was no doubt about that, and what had happened was only an accident. Had he not been too harsh with him? Having given it a lot of thought he then had a talk with Lei Feng and apologized for the way he had rebuked him.

"Don't worry so much," said Lei Feng. "I was a bit down in the dumps because I'd damaged state property. Actually, you ticked me off too mildly. Anyway, you only did it to stop

me from making the same mistake again. Look, one thing is definite — I'm still far from perfect as a driver. I hope you'll be strict and help me to improve."

A bulldozer's blade often sweeps up bits of earth when it shovels coal. Such tiny amounts of earth don't really matter much among big piles of coal and, besides, few workers at the plant were willing to slow down operations just for the sake of a clean job. Lei Feng was different. He thought the presence of even the tiniest bit of earth in the coal would lower the quality of the coke and that this in turn would affect the iron and steel. He felt the matter shouldn't be treated so casually. So whenever he saw some earth on his blade he would wipe it off; he also did the same with the blades of other drivers. His instructor and leadership often praised him for the careful way he worked. Once, after this had been done at a meeting, Lei Feng said to his instructor, "Could you point out more of my failings instead of praising me all the time?"

"Why do you always want people to go on about failings?"

"So that I may have less," replied Lei Feng.

Lei Feng became greatly attached to his job which, he now recognized, played an important part in the manufacture of steel. His work really started the moment the waggons rolled into the coal yard and dumped their loads of coal onto the ground. Lei Feng would then immediately drive his bulldozer to the piles of coal and shovel them to a crane which fed them into an oven where they were turned into coke and gas, two key materials for making rolled steel. All his working hours were spent in the open and he often suffered from the cold, but in his heart there was a loving warmth that more than made up for the rigours of the job.

One evening many of Lei Feng's young fellow-workers decided to go out. They bathed, put on their best clothes and

set out — some going to the cinema, others to the park. Lei Feng didn't wear special clothes. One of his comrades said, "Why don't you buy yourself some new clothes? You're single and got lots of money. Remember, this isn't Tuanshanhu — if you go out you should be well dressed."

His friend's advice did not make much impression on him then, but as time went by he began to become self-conscious of his old, shabby clothes whenever he walked through the smart streets of the town. After thinking about it for a bit he took a decision. Withdrawing his savings from the bank he went to the department store and bought a leather jacket and a pair of woollen trousers. As soon as he got back to his room he changed into his new clothes and stood admiringly in front of the mirror.

Seeing Lei Feng in his new clothes, one of his roommates patted him on the back and said, "Ah, so our friend Lei Feng is also following the fashion now!" Lei Feng felt rather embarrassed and, at the same time, secretly pleased with the attention his new clothes had attracted.

Shortly afterwards, the Party called on the people to increase production and practise economy, to build their country industriously and thriftily; the workers in particular were exhorted to foster the Party's tradition of simple living and hard work. Every speech made by the leading cadres on this question deeply impressed Lei Feng.

After a Youth League group meeting one evening Lei Feng found it difficult to get to sleep. He tossed and turned in bed as one question kept on running through his mind. Why had I thought so much about clothes and dressed myself up like that? he asked himself. I almost forgot the Party's worthy tradition of simple living and hard work. Oh, Chairman Mao! I'm unworthy of all the kindness you've shown me. I've

forgotten who I am. That night he re-lived the misery of his life in the old society, and tears ran down his face. . . .

The way Lei Feng looked back into his past that night, his remorse and self-reproach, revealed the extent to which he was determined to remould his ideas. The following passage from his diary — written at a later date — touched on this:

A screw must be frequently oiled and polished if it is to be kept from going rusty. It's the same with your thinking. It too must be frequently examined if it is to be kept from going astray.

From that night on Lei Feng studied diligently and worked hard. His dedicated study of Chairman Mao's works can, in fact, be traced back to that time, and the progress he then made was quite remarkable.

When he first read Chairman Mao's works Lei Feng found them very difficult. Some of the essays seemed quite beyond him — he could not understand them at all. Refusing to give up, he would read them over and over again, and if he still could not grasp their meaning he would ask someone to help him. Even after his comrades had gone to sleep, he would sit by his bed and continue reading. He made a point, in fact, of never going to bed until he had read one essay from beginning to end. And every time he had finished one he would be infused with a feeling of deep strength. He wrote in his diary:

I have come to understand a lot of truths through studying Chairman Mao's works. With an enlightened mind I work harder and become stronger, and all the time I feel as if I can work on and on without ever getting tired.

It was this inexhaustible energy that gave Lei Feng his firm determination and great courage in overcoming every difficulty. There was his bulldozer, for instance, which was a big machine with a driver's seat more suitable for a taller man than Lei Feng. Because he was small he had to drive standing up in order to see what was in front. To help Lei Feng the manager of the coal washing shop offered him a smaller bulldozer so that he could be seated while driving. But Lei Feng turned him down. "It isn't such a great difficulty," he said. "I can manage. Anyway, a big bulldozer does more work. As I've been driving one for so long I'd feel disappointed at having to switch to a smaller one."

Because of an increase in the output of iron and steel, the Anshan company decided to set up a coke plant at the local coal mine, and a number of workers were required to go there and help build the new works. Sun, assistant manager of the coal washing shop, got Lei Feng and a number of other workers together and had a talk with them. He said he was considering the question of transferring them to the mine and wanted to know whether they had any objections. Seeing the importance of the job Lei Feng stood up straight away and said, "I'll go! And I'm sure the others will go too. We'll do our best to see that things turn out all right."

After the meeting a young worker said, "Only a fool would want to go there! The food's lousy and so are the living quarters. Besides, there's no chance of a pay rise and there are no bonuses. I'll be damned if I go."

When Lei Feng heard this he was furious. "If everyone's as 'wise' as you are we may as well forget all about socialist construction. The Party has taught us to go to places where there're hardships and where we're needed. If it's foolish to do that, then I want to be a fool."

## 5. *The Construction Site*

I'd rather be a pine on a rocky mountain than a willow by the riverside. I'd rather steel myself in the storm of hard and arduous struggles than spend my days peacefully and tranquilly.

From Lei Feng's diary

Towards the end of August 1959 Lei Feng and many of his fellow-workers who were determined to do their bit in building socialism arrived at the construction site of the mine where they had to start right from scratch. As there were no special living quarters for them they lived with the local people in old mud houses. The houses did not afford much shelter and when the wind blew at night the workers felt so cold they had to curl up in bed to keep themselves warm. When it rained, water dripped from the ceilings on to their bedding making sleep difficult. The leaders tried hard to make sure the food was tolerably good but it was still inferior to what the men were used to at the steel plant. Perhaps, what upset the men most was that they had no club to go to in their leisure time and, as a result, there were not many recreational activities they could enjoy. Some of the young workers soon became dissatisfied with the kind of life they had to lead. But Lei Feng never complained. "Why, it's a blessing just to have a bed to sleep on," he often smiled.

Sleeping near Lei Feng was an old worker from a different section. One night he asked, "Young Lei, are you cold?" Saying this he took the quilt he covered his feet with and slipped it over Lei Feng.

"No, you have it," protested Lei Feng as he returned it to the old worker.

"You little southern devil," the old man smiled. "You're not so used to the cold as we northerners." The old man then put the quilt over Lei Feng again.

Living in such a big socialist family made Lei Feng so deeply aware of the power of class love, friendship and comradeship. It also brought back memories of his bitter past, for his old life used to be so different. Once he found himself talking about his childhood days to one of the old workers. "No one knows how much I suffered in the past..." he said, and then he broke into tears. His fellow-workers in the mud house also wept at hearing Lei Feng's story. Later, he told them, "Think of the past and just look at the present. What a wonderful life we've got now."

Shortly afterwards, the workers' living quarters began to go up. Lei Feng and the other workers immediately joined in the work, some laying bricks, others mixing the mud. Wearing knee-high rubber boots and wielding their spades and long-handled forks Lei Feng and some of his comrades mixed the mud. But as they worked slowly and many of their clods remained intact, the plasterers began to complain. "What kind of mud is this?" they asked. "Just look at it! Why aren't you more careful?"

Lei Feng was upset. It was clear to him that because he and the other men were working so badly the whole building project was going to be held up. Something had to be done. Lei Feng knew this and did it. He rolled up his trousers and stepped right into the mud, and when he found himself slithering about in his boots he took them off and stood barefooted in the pool.

"You're mad to do that in such cold weather," remonstrated one of his comrades as he tried to get hold of him and drag him out of the mud.

"Never mind, I'll soon get warm," smiled Lei Feng.

Lei Feng started to stamp on the clods and break them up, but the mud was freezing and his bare feet soon became numb. However, he just went ahead, singing as he worked. The other men then followed Lei Feng's example working so hard that they quite forgot about the cold.

As the walls of the buildings rose higher and higher, it became more and more difficult to pass the mud to the plasterers. Could a device be used to make the job easier? Lei Feng began to think about this as he went on stamping in the mud. Then he held up the handle of a spade, turned it round and round and made different measurements with it. One of his puzzled work-mates, Hsiao Yeh, who had come to Anshan with him from Hunan Province, turned to Lei Feng and asked, "What are you trying to do?"

"Hsiao Yeh, I need your advice," Lei Feng said as he climbed out of the mud. Then he called Yeh, Wang and some other workers together and explained, "If we get a couple of long poles together and tie a bucket to them we'll be able to swing the mud up to the plasterers." To make his idea clear he drew a diagram on the ground showing how it would work.

"It's bound to work," the workers exclaimed. Getting hold of Lei Feng's arm they took him to the office on the site and excitedly explained his idea to the leadership. The leadership immediately saw how practicable the suggestion was and encouraged the workers to keep on thinking daringly about their work. This encouragement gave Lei Feng more confidence and strength. And with the help of one of the old workers he rigged up his pole-and-bucket device that evening. It worked — and worked well; and the pace of the job was greatly speeded up in the next few days.

But another problem soon cropped up, this time involving the foundations of the buildings. These were normally laid

with stones picked up in the neighbourhood, but by the time the last house was being built the nearby source of stones had been exhausted and they had to be brought from the hills about a mile away down narrow, twisting paths. And since carts could not negotiate these paths the stones had to be carried by the men. When the leadership realized this was a waste of manpower they called on the workers to try once again to find some stones nearer to the site. In the vicinity of the site there was a shallow stream in which the workers found some suitable stones, but as the water near the bank was frozen and all the bigger stones lay in the middle of the stream the men were not able to drag many out. With the work going so slowly Lei Feng rolled up his trousers and jumped knee-deep into the stream to help move the stones. A nearby worker, Hsiao Wang, then followed suit, and wading through the cold water they fumbled for stones. Soon they had pulled out many stones and piled them up on the bank. By that time they no longer seemed to notice the cold. Moved by their enthusiasm the other workers all jumped into the stream to give them a helping hand.

After a day's work the young men frequently got together in the evening to play chess or cards. Lei Feng joined them occasionally but more often than not he would stick to his self-imposed discipline and spend a fixed amount of time studying Chairman Mao's works. If he attended an evening meeting that ran on late he would go with less sleep in order to keep up with his studies. One of the old workers frequently said to him, "You're going to have trouble with your eyes if you go on like this. It's good to read but you should take your time. What will you do if your health breaks down?"

Lei Feng was grateful for the well-meant advice but he forgot all about it as soon as he took up a book. When his comrades saw that he stubbornly persisted in his own way

they put their advice in another way. "Lei Feng," they said anxiously, "every time you read you do it for several hours on end. This means increased use of electricity which costs the company money and, also incidentally, disturbs our sleep." Lei Feng took this criticism to heart and later on when the control room of the shop was built he went there to study.

One night, when Lei Feng was studying in the control room, he heard of rain lashing the roof. He stepped out of the room and found that a storm had broken out. It was pitch dark and he could hardly see a thing. Just then he overheard one of the controllers say with a harassed tone in his voice, "There are seven thousand and two hundred bags of cement in the open freight cars on the site. They'll be damaged if they get wet. They must be salvaged!" With thoughts of a Youth League member's duty flashing through his mind Lei Feng ran back to the living quarters to muster as many young men as he could to help save the bags. More than twenty altogether decided to offer their help, and braving the storm they began to cover the bags with mats and canvas sheets. As there were not enough of these, however, several of the bags still remained uncovered. Without a moment's hesitation Lei Feng took off his jacket and shirt and covered one of the bags with them. Then he dashed back to his room and grabbed hold of his quilt to cover the last few with. Although his clothes and quilt were practically ruined by water and mud he felt content and happy that evening. . . .

Because of the selfless way Lei Feng worked and took good care of government property he was voted an advanced worker at the Anshan plant. Commenting on this in his diary, Lei Feng wrote:

. . . This is all due to the Party's training, the infinite strength given by Chairman Mao's teachings and the support

of the masses. I'll always remember that drops of water go to form the ocean and that man only acquires strength by linking himself with the collective cause.

Strength comes from unity and wisdom from work.

Thought is father to the action. Honour should always go to the collective.

I'll always try to stop myself from being arrogant and quick-tempered, for only then will I be able to make continuous progress.

Early one winter morning Hsiao Yeh set out for the market. A light north wind whirled polka dots of snowflakes in the air, and he shivered with cold. While he was walking up a hill with his hands buried deep in his sleeves he saw a man in the distance wearing a fur cap with ear-flaps that fluttered in the wind. He was carrying a straw basket in one hand and a spade in the other, stooping now and then to pick up manure from the road. Northerners are certainly tough, thought Hsiao Yeh. Just look how early they come out to pick up manure, and in such cold weather, too! But as he approached the man he got a surprise. It was Lei Feng!

Rushing forward to seize the basket, Hsiao Yeh asked in bewilderment, "What are you doing this for? Are you going to go in for farming?"

"Oh, no!" replied Lei Feng. "I'm merely helping the commune to collect manure. Haven't we all been asked by the Party branch to give as much help as possible to the commune? Besides, it'll do me good to steel myself in cold weather."

Lei Feng's words bit deeply into Hsiao Yeh, filling him with shame. If he had not decided to catch the early morning bus for the market he would probably still be lying comfortably in bed enjoying a sound sleep. Lei Feng was different, however. He had unhesitatingly answered the Party's call, collecting



manure for the commune early in the morning. The more Hsiao Yeh thought about this the more he realized it would be wrong for him to go to the market merely to do some personal shopping. His mind was made up. He would collect manure with Lei Feng instead.

As they worked together Hsiao Yeh noticed that Lei Feng was only wearing thin clothes.

"Where's your padded coat?"

"I gave it to Uncle Lu a short while ago."

Uncle Lu was an old shepherd of the Anping People's Commune whom Lei Feng had got to know during a Spring Festival performance for the local peasants. He learnt then that Uncle Lu had suffered a great deal in the old society and that only liberation had saved him from despair and abject poverty. It was for this reason, the old man had told him, that he completely devoted himself to farm work and intended to work hard to help build up his village and change it into a new socialist community. Lei Feng had got to love this old man with all his heart.

While collecting manure that morning Lei Feng had met Uncle Lu and offered him his padded coat to keep him warm. Proud Uncle Lu refused to accept it at first but after Lei Feng insisted he took it. Hsiao Yeh knew of the friendship between Lei Feng and the old man but he did not realize that it came out of the common lot both had shared in the days before liberation.

"Don't you feel cold with so little on?" Hsiao Yeh asked.

"I've come to learn," replied Lei Feng, "that if you do something for others you soon feel warm in your heart even though you may feel cold physically."

From that time on Hsiao Yeh began to collect manure together with Lei Feng early every morning. They also dug a manure pit behind their living quarters and whenever it was

filled up they would secretly take the manure to the Kusaocheng Production Team of the commune. Altogether they collected more than two thousand pounds of manure. One day the team's cadres found a big pile of manure heaped up beside one of the houses in the village and wondered where it had come from. Later, they learnt it was the work of Lei Feng and Hsiao Yeh. Immediately they made this known to all the commune members who were so deeply moved that they decided that from then on they would follow the example of the workers, particularly Lei Feng's, and try to step up production to support industry.

## 6. *Lei Feng Joins the Army*

I'm a rank-and-filer in the army now and have so far not done anything for the Party and people. But I'm determined to: obey the Party and Chairman Mao for ever; follow in their footsteps; always be loyal to the Party and work diligently for it all my life; serve the people honestly; and boldly fulfil the task Huang Chi-kuang<sup>1</sup> left unfinished. I'll always be ready to put myself at the service of the motherland. If necessary I will, like Huang Chi-kuang, sacrifice my life and be a worthy son of the motherland and its people.

From Lei Feng's diary

<sup>1</sup> Huang Chi-kuang was a hero of the Chinese People's Volunteers in the War to Resist U.S. Aggression and Aid Korea. On October 20, 1952, in the famous Battle of Sangkumryung he was assigned the task of blowing up certain enemy pillboxes. He had used up all his hand-grenades by the time all but one were demolished, so he blocked its machine-gun aperture with his chest, enabling his unit to advance and capture the height.

In 1959, after the yearly conscription began, the secretary of the general Party branch made a recruitment speech on December 3. After the speech Lei Feng went back to his room, excited and a little nervous. As the hours ticked into the night he still found sleep eluded him. Thoughts of the early days after liberation when he tried to get into the People's Liberation Army flooded back to his mind. At that time he was only a little boy and the army had refused to take him, but now that he was an adult they would have no grounds to turn him down, especially as he wanted so much to actively help defend the motherland. Then he thought of the newly set-up plant which would soon begin production and be of so much use to the nation. Should he desert it now? Finally he came to a decision. I used to be a poor orphan, he thought, but now I'm a master of my country. If I don't join up, who will?

It was snowing. Registration was to start at eight the next morning. But Lei Feng was so much on tenterhooks that he felt he could not possibly wait. He had learnt that the man in charge of registration, Secretary Li of the general Youth League branch, was on duty in the office attached to the workshop, so he got up at three in the morning, scrambled into his clothes and hurried off to the office, determined to be the first one to register. When Li opened the door he said with an understanding smile, "Why aren't you in bed at this time of the night?"

"Secretary Li, I want to register for enlistment," Lei Feng replied.

"You . . . well, you'd better put more clothes on first. If you catch cold you'll be unable to carry a rifle." Li then disappeared into the office, picked up a padded coat from his bed and put it around Lei Feng. Then he asked him to sit on his bed and tell him why he wanted to enlist.

If Lei Feng had been prepared for the question he would have been able to rattle off a number of sound reasons why he had decided to join the army, but Li's sudden and completely unexpected query caught him so much unawares that he just did not seem to know how to answer it. "I was a poor boy in the old society," he replied fumblingly, "and I have suffered a lot. After liberation I began to enjoy a real happy life. This happy life didn't come easily. Anyone who leads a happy life after suffering for so long would want to defend it. It's only natural."

Li thought about his request for a few moments and said, "You're right — very right — to want to defend the motherland. But, you know, you're not all that tall, and not very strong either. I'm not really sure whether you'll be able to pass the physical examination."

Sensing that Li was unofficially supporting his request, Lei Feng pressed him still further. "Secretary Li, can I say I've got your approval?" Li smiled. "If I get the plant's approval I won't be afraid of any examination. In any case, a small man makes a nimble fighter, you know."

As Lei Feng wrote "I want to join the army" in the register, he could not help thinking of the bitterness of his past. . . .

After the physical tests had been given at the plant four workers were notified that they had passed — but Lei Feng was not among them. Lei Feng himself did not know he had been turned down by the doctors until a few days later when the leading cadres at the plant gave a special send-off meal for the four who had passed the tests. When he realized his position, he felt stunned. Bitterly disappointed he made straight for Li and furiously demanded, "Why is my name not on the list? Tell me, why?"

Li pointed to a chair and asked Lei Feng to sit down. "You know lots of people have registered and it's impossible to

accept every one of them," he explained. "Because of your physical handicaps we couldn't approve of your enlistment. But don't worry so much. If you stay at the plant you can make equally important contributions to the country's socialist construction. . . ." Interrupting him an impatient Lei Feng implored, "I want to enlist and I have the right to enlist. Please contact the people in charge of conscription again and speak on my behalf."

Li was embarrassed. He knew that it was not only Lei Feng's duty but also his right to enlist. However, as the list of conscripts had already been decided on, it was too late to make any alterations. Then what could he do? Pondering over the matter he promised Lei Feng that he would contact the drafting centre in Liaoyang to see if anything could be done. Lei Feng felt relieved.

Later that day Li asked Lei Feng to have a meal with him and the four men just before they were due to go to Liaoyang for a final general examination. When Lei Feng saw how pleased and excited the four men were he felt terribly depressed. He just sat and picked at the food without any appetite. After the meal he returned to his room and sat on the bed where an irritating thought crossed his mind. What would he do if the drafting centre refused to accept him? Wouldn't it be better if he went to the drafting centre himself and made a personal request to enlist? The next day he told his superiors he wanted leave to go to the centre.

When he arrived at the drafting centre in Liaoyang he was received by the deputy political commissar named Yu. After he had explained why he wanted to enlist he said, "Imperialism still exists in the world and class enemies within our country are always trying to stage a comeback. Whenever I think of this I feel I must take up arms and defend the motherland."

Yu was pleased with this energetic, outspoken young man. But running his eye over Lei Feng he knew he was probably not up to the required standard. After a pause he said, "You'd better have a check-up first."

Yu's words filled Lei Feng with a tremendous relief, dispelling his dejected mood. His face brightened up instantly. He was so happy, in fact, he did not know what to say, and his eyes sparkled with joy.

Lei Feng returned to the plant and took some leave again to go to the medical centre where he saw youngsters from various places all of whom had come for a physical examination. He noticed that they were all much taller and bigger, and he began to feel rather nervous, afraid that he might fail in the examination. Still, he refused to let himself get downhearted even though he was as much as a head shorter than the others. When his height was being measured he secretly stood on tiptoe, but the doctor spotted him and said, "No point in trying to fool me, comrade!" Then he patted Lei Feng on the shoulder and told him to stand properly. Seconds later he had taken his measurement and was calling out, "Height: one point five four metres."

Lei Feng looked up at the doctor, a worried gleam in his eyes. "I know I'm small but I'm a bulldozer driver, you know," he told him. "Just look at my muscles - I'm really strong."

The doctor smiled and said nothing, continuing the examination.

When it was Lei Feng's turn to stand on the weighing machine he pressed down with all his strength on the scales but they only registered 47 kilogrammes. The doctor shook his head and murmured, "Ah, less than fifty kilogrammes!"

"But I came without my breakfast," Lei Feng explained. "If I'd had a heavy meal I'm sure I'd have reached the mark."

"Can a meal increase your weight by three kilogrammes?" asked the doctor, trying to suppress a smile.

Finally the doctor said, "Your height may pass the lowest requirement but your weight can't."

Lei Feng was dumbfounded. Then as the doctor was writing down his weight on the form, he said imploringly, "Doctor, please make it fifty. I pledge to make up for it afterwards. If enlisted, I'll do my best to improve my physique through physical exercises. He hoped against hope that the doctor would comply with his request but he knew really that it could not be.

But his troubles did not end there, for the next examination by the surgeon revealed that Lei Feng's breathing was affected by a deformed bone in his nose. Lei Feng grew more dispirited. After he had taken off his clothes for a body check-up, the surgeon noticed a scar on his back. "How did you get that?" he asked. Lei Feng became misty-eyed as he explained. "Doctor," he said, "this scar stands witness to all the wrongs I suffered in the old society. It's because I want to make sure the people will not suffer this kind of wrong again that I decided to join the army."

The surgeon sympathized with Lei Feng. He realized how badly he wanted to join the PLA, but he could do nothing to help him for he was obviously below the standard set by the army. Yet he felt he could not simply turn him down outright, so he suggested, "Perhaps the best thing is for you to explain everything to the leaders of the drafting centre, maybe they could make an exception in your case."

Taking his advice, Lei Feng hurried off to the drafting centre and making his case out to an officer in charge of conscription, he begged, "Please, let me join the army."

"We know all about your case," replied the officer rather stiffly, "but we can only enlist recruits if they're fit. You need

not keep on about enlisting because you're not qualified. People should work for the construction or defence of the motherland according to their respective ability."

"Do you mean I can't join up," Lei Feng cried. "Oh, comrade, please help me. Special consideration should be given to special cases. Although I'm not up to the mark, I'm sure I'll make a good soldier." The officer now found himself moved by Lei Feng's obviously sincere plea. No, he could not just send him away without any hope at all. "I tell you what," he said in an encouraging tone, "why don't you go back and wait for our notification."

Hearing this Lei Feng immediately thought that he had been approved. Approved! He wanted to skip with joy. "All right," he beamed, "I'll go back to the plant and wait. But you must notify me as soon as possible." The officer smiled.

Back in the plant Lei Feng found that time dragged by. After two days without news he could wait no longer. Determined to enlist he asked the leadership for some more leave and began to pack. He gave some clothes to Uncle Lu which he had no immediate use for, packed three volumes of Chairman Mao's works, several notebooks containing his diary and a few everyday things, and carrying his suitcase went to the drafting centre again. As soon as he saw the officer in charge of conscription he said, "I've come to report for duty."

The nonplussed officer gazed curiously at Lei Feng. "We've studied your case and still can't solve the problem," he told him. "What have you brought your luggage for? What will you do if you can't enlist?"

"Why, I thought everything had been settled," Lei Feng said rather uneasily. "You know I'm really in earnest about joining the army!"

"Comrade, we know that," the officer said. "But your physical condition isn't up to standard and we can't send a young man like you to the officer who signs on recruits."

"Please, tell me who he is."

"Battalion Commander Ching."

"I'll go and see him then."

Lei Feng then rushed straight to Commander Ching's office and explained why he had come. Then quite spontaneously he found himself pouring out all the wrongs he had suffered in the old society and weeping as he did so. The commander was so moved by his story that tears trickled down his face. Previously Yu, the deputy political commissar of the drafting centre, had already spoken to the commander about Lei Feng and suggested he give special consideration to his request. Now as he heard Lei Feng's story he agreed that something should be done for him. He told Lei Feng to wait for a moment in his office and went off to discuss the case with Yu. Soon the matter was settled—Lei Feng would be accepted as a recruit.

The train pulled into the Yingkou railway station on January 8, 1960 to the sound of drums, the clash of cymbals and the burst of firecrackers on the platform. Officers and men of the PLA had come to greet the recruits.

Glancing through the train window Lei Feng felt a flutter of excitement. He went into the toilet and as he tidied himself up in front of the mirror, his thoughts raced back to the time when he first wore the red scarf and he remembered how happy he then was when he put it round his neck. But it was all so different today, he was no longer a small boy with a red scarf but a fighter of the Chinese People's Liberation Army! A broad smile broke across his face.

As the train screeched to a halt the recruits clambered out to be immediately surrounded by tightening rings of people.

There was a flurry of greetings, handshakes and hugs, with the officers and men vying with each other to carry the knapsacks of the recruits. The soldiers at the back who could not reach them in the scramble shouted slogans of welcome. The whole station became a scene of unrestrained jubilation. Lei Feng was so overwhelmed with joy, with a glow of warmth for this big revolutionary family, that he could hardly speak.

After the recruits arrived at the barracks a meeting was immediately held to welcome them. The officers and representatives of the men all made speeches, followed by Lei Feng who spoke on behalf of the recruits. As he climbed onto the platform to a round of loud applause all eyes fastened on him. As has been said before Lei Feng was short of stature. Though he had been given the smallest uniform it still looked baggy on him, but there was a sparkle in his eyes, and a dash about his bearing, that made him look full of spirit. Two shining medals on his chest also caught the eye of the men. Introducing Lei Feng the chairman said, "Before his enlistment Comrade Lei Feng was a model worker on the land. While working in industry he was voted an advanced worker three times, a pacesetter eighteen times, and a red standard-bearer five times. Besides, he is also a model member of the Communist Youth League."

Enthusiastic applause greeted the introduction, and many in the audience began to whisper. . . . "Eh, this man's really something" and "It would be marvellous if we could have him in our squad!"

Putting his notes down on the stand, Lei Feng began to speak in his strong provincial accent, "Comrades, on behalf of the recruits, let me. . . ." But before he could get any further a gust of wind scattered his notes about. Laying them aside he decided to go on without them. "It is a great honour," he

said, "as well as a great pleasure for us to become soldiers this year, a year which begins such a promising decade. We come from all parts of the motherland. Among us there are workers, peasants and students. But we all have one common aim — to train thoroughly for the defence of China, to be good soldiers, good fighters of Chairman Mao."

After a round of applause he continued, "A short while ago our leaders told us to try to become 'five-good' soldiers.<sup>1</sup> It is my view that with the Party's leadership and the help of old comrades we can become 'eight-good' or even 'ten-good' soldiers, not to say 'five-good' ones." The audience laughed at this and Lei Feng felt embarrassed. Why are they laughing? he asked himself. I was only saying what I thought. Originally he had intended to make a longer speech but the laughter had broken his train of thought and he felt he could go on no further. So he wound up by saying: "I'm not much of a speaker and I think I'd better stop here."

After the meeting Lei Feng fell in and marched back to the barracks, and the veterans watched his departure with a look of admiration and encouragement.

After dinner an officer gave the recruits a talk at the club on the history of the unit which made Lei Feng feel all the more strongly that it was an honour to be part of the PLA. Deeply moved, he later wrote the following pledge in his diary:

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<sup>1</sup> A "five-good" soldier of the PLA is good in political thinking, in military technique, in the Three-Eight Working Style, in fulfilling tasks, and in keeping fit. The Three-Eight Working Style refers to three mottoes and eight Chinese characters. The three mottoes are: "Keep firmly to the correct political orientation", "maintain an industrious and simple style of work", and "be flexible in strategy and tactics"; the eight characters mean unity, alertness, earnestness and liveliness. This fine tradition fostered in the people's armed forces through long revolutionary struggles was summed up in these words by Comrade Mao Tse-tung during the War of Resistance Against Japan.

To overcome every difficulty and to carry on the excellent revolutionary tradition of the older generation I make this resolution: I may lose my head, I may shed my blood, but I will never submit or surrender to the enemy. I am determined to follow the examples of such heroes as Tung Tsun-jui,<sup>1</sup> Huang Chi-kuang and An Yeh-min.<sup>2</sup>

Shortly afterwards a film about Tung Tsun-jui was shown in the company's club. Though Lei Feng had seen the film before he found it all the more instructive the second time. When it came to the part where Tung Tsun-jui sacrificed his life for the people's revolutionary cause in blowing up an enemy fortification with a powder pack, he said to himself with tearful eyes, "That's the kind of fighter I want to be!"

Later, a comrade called Hsiao Tung gave Lei Feng a picture of Huang Chi-kuang whom Lei Feng considered as a model, like Tung Tsun-jui, for him to follow. He pasted Huang's picture in his new diary.

One day Lei Feng had a temperature and felt dizzy. He thought he had probably caught a cold but did not want to bother his comrades with it, so he told no one and went on working as usual.

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<sup>1</sup> Tung Tsun-jui was a member of the Chinese Communist Party and a hero of the Chinese People's Liberation Army. On May 26, 1948 during the War of Liberation he was assigned the task of blowing up an enemy fortification on a bridge at Lunghua, Jehol Province (now Hopei Province). When he dashed under the bridge and found no place to lay his charge of dynamite, he held it up against the fortification and died a heroic death accomplishing his mission.

<sup>2</sup> An Yeh-min was a model soldier of the Chinese People's Liberation Army. During a battle off Fukien on August 23, 1958 with the navy of the Chiang Kai-shek clique, an enemy shell set fire to an ammunition case threatening a nearby cannon. In risking his life to move the cannon to a safe place, An received serious burns and lost consciousness. But when he came to, he went back to his post and continued to fight till the battle was won. An died later of burns.

With a great-coat around his shoulders and a torch in one hand, Commander Ching made an inspection of the barracks during the night. He walked quietly down the centre of the room where Lei Feng slept and glanced at every bed. Once he picked up a quilt that had fallen onto the floor and put it back on the bed, then he saw an arm sticking out from under a quilt and tucked it in. Lei Feng who had not slept saw everything and was so impressed by the officer's kind-heartedness that he did not notice him moving towards his own bed. Quickly, at the last moment, he pulled the quilt over his head and pretended to be asleep, but it was too late—Commander Ching had already spotted him. Standing in front of his bed, the officer lifted up the quilt and asked, "What are you thinking about?" Then he pressed his hand against Lei Feng's forehead. Lei Feng felt nervous.

"You're sick," Commander Ching said with a worried frown. "Why didn't you report to me about it?" Dropping the quilt he walked quickly out of the room and returned a few minutes later with the doctor. The doctor soon found out what was the matter and gave Lei Feng an injection, then he put some medicine on his locker and left. Commander Ching handed Lei Feng the medicine and poured out a glass of hot water for him; after that he slipped his coat over Lei Feng's quilt to make sure he would be extra warm and comfortable and then he left too, telling Lei Feng to take good care of himself.

Commander Ching's kindness and tenderness stirred Lei Feng's memory, making him think of all the other cadres and comrades who had given him so much help in the past. They were as dear to him as his own parents and brothers. He was like a plant and they were the gardeners who were helping it to grow. As he thought about this, he said to himself, "Oh, Chairman Mao, you have given me such a wonderful life!

How can I ever repay the kindness you and the Party have shown me?"

## 7. *Studying and Training Hard*

I will make every effort to study Chairman Mao's writings and work untiringly in technical and military training; I will try to master Chairman Mao's teachings, use them to guide all my actions, and try hard to become a vanguard on the political front; I will study diligently to raise my technical skill and try to become a first-class technician. In short, I will try to become a red and expert revolutionary fighter.

From Lei Feng's diary

After being assigned to a transport unit as a driver, Lei Feng was then sent to a drilling platoon for elementary military training.

Lei Feng's squad leader, Hsueh San-yuan, an honest and hard-working veteran, liked Lei Feng very much, but was afraid he might not be able to make the grade because of his lack of height. At a squad meeting he said to Lei Feng, "Comrade, to acquire technical competence in revolutionary work we must help each other. If you have any difficulties, don't be afraid to ask for help."

"Squad Leader, don't worry about me," Lei Feng replied, "I'm not afraid of any kind of difficulty."

Military training began with hand-grenade throwing, a fairly easy exercise for any strong and solidly built recruit. Once he grasped the essential technique all he had to do was

take a training grenade in his hand, run a few steps and throw it — and it would skim through the air like a swallow. But in Lei Feng's hand the grenade felt heavy and awkward and however hard he tried he was still unable to do as well as the others. Slowly and patiently the squad leader explained the art of throwing a grenade to Lei Feng, correcting his movements over and over again. For the whole morning on the first day Lei Feng continued practising but he made little progress, and at the end of the training spell his arm ached.

After drill the recruits got together to talk about how they had got on. Some said, "Lei Feng just failed to understand the essentials of it." Others said, "It's not a question of essentials but of strength." One of the recruits then remarked almost casually, "Lack of height is a big drawback, you know. You can't build your strength up in a day or so." The squad leader threw him a glance as if to say, "You shouldn't pour cold water on Lei Feng like that."

Having heard what his comrades had said Lei Feng felt angry with himself. I enlisted to defend the motherland, he thought to himself. How can I do that if I'm unable to throw a grenade? Besides, if I'm not up to the mark the honour of the whole squad will be affected. The more Lei Feng thought about this the more dejected he became. . . . From then on, when drill was over and all the other recruits had taken a rest, Lei Feng would continue practising. But after several days he had still not made any appreciable progress; on the contrary, he seemed to be getting worse for with every throw his arm began to ache more and more until he could hardly control it. Lei Feng was so worried by then that he could not sleep or eat well.

One evening the political instructor asked Lei Feng to come to the company headquarters. When he stood to attention and saluted a sharp pain shot through his arm. The instructor realized

that Lei Feng's arm was aching from so much practising and he praised him for his plucky spirit and encouraged him to go on until he had mastered the technique of grenade throwing. "You can do it," he smiled. "Just keep on trying — and you'll succeed." The instructor's warm encouragement gave Lei Feng a feeling of new strength and confidence, and when he got back to his room he opened his diary and read a passage which he had once copied from a newspaper:

The time of greatest difficulty during a struggle occurs when victory is near and this is also the time when you can easily waver. Such a moment tests your stamina.

Those who can stand the test and successfully go through the ordeal will become noble revolutionary fighters while those who cannot will become worthless renegades.

Whether you become a noble revolutionary fighter or a worthless renegade depends on whether your faith remains strong and unwavering in the face of difficulties.

Lei Feng slowly read these words and then turned to the picture of Huang Chi-kuang pasted on the flyleaf of his diary. He looked at it for a few moments and thought about the hero's life. Suddenly he felt a surge of inner strength and jumping up, seized a training grenade and dashed off to the drill ground.

The full moon cast a bright light over the drill ground covered with ice and snow; apart from the souging of the north wind stillness and silence reigned everywhere. Forgetting his aching arm Lei Feng made throw after throw, thinking to himself: If I follow the essentials of the drill and throw the grenade with all my might there's no reason why I shouldn't be able to make the grade. Sometimes he would mutter to himself: "So my arm is aching, eh? That's because I haven't practised enough. The more it aches, the more I'll practise. I'll see whether it'll keep on aching or not." In an effort to build



up his muscles he exercised on the horizontal bar in between throws. The bar was much higher than him and he had to use all his strength to reach it, and to make matters more difficult it was icy cold and holding it with his bare hands chilled him to the marrow. But he doggedly kept on until his hands became so numb that they could hardly grip the bar. When that happened he warmed his hands by putting them in his sleeves. The taps had sounded long ago but he was so absorbed in drilling that he did not hear it. Nor did he notice his clinging shirt soaked through with sweat.

"Lei Feng!" someone cried. Lei Feng swung round and saw the squad leader. Looking at Lei Feng with disapproving but sympathetic eyes he said, "I thought you were in the company headquarters. I never guessed you'd be here. Now come along with me and go to bed." Saying this he took the training grenade out of Lei Feng's hand and led him off by his arm.

As they walked along Lei Feng implored: "Squad Leader, please let me do some more practice. I don't want to give up until I'm up to standard." Shaking his head in disagreement the squad leader said, "You can't sink a well with one turn of the spade. It's all right to practise but you have to do it in a more sensible way."

When they reached the barracks the other recruits had gone to sleep. The squad leader made Lei Feng's bed for him, urged him to lie down and said in a low voice, "Remember, from now on you must go to bed as soon as you hear taps, that's part of discipline."

Lei Feng's body ached all over as he lay on the bed, but he tried to forget the pain by thinking of his childhood when he was sometimes covered with heat-lumps that tormented him. I got over the pain then, didn't I? he asked himself. Now that I'm training for the defence of the motherland, can't I bear a few aches and pains? Before dawn he got up quietly and went

to the drill ground to practise again before the other recruits arrived. . . .

After the men had been practising for some time that morning the time came to use real live grenades. The men were excited as they lined up on the target range and waited for their turn to take the grenades out of their metal containers and hurl them at the "enemy" pillboxes some distance away. When it was Lei Feng's turn, the instructor shouted, "Ready!" Lei Feng's heart beat fast. "Take it easy, don't be so nervous," the squad leader advised him. Muttering "yes", Lei Feng opened the container, slipped the grenade ring through his finger, and jumped out of the trench. He seemed to be running for a long time before he threw the grenade with all his force. "Boom!" The grenade exploded exactly on the pillbox. The men cheered excitedly, and Lei Feng's throw was immediately jotted down in the instructor's notebook as being "excellent". As the men gathered around Lei Feng and congratulated him, he felt overjoyed—he had succeeded at last after so many setbacks and failures.

Not long after this initial period of training ended, the men were told they would start learning to drive trucks.

Thoughts of the exciting life the job would open up to him worked on Lei Feng's imagination and he began to picture all sorts of perilous situation involving a truck driver. . . . One dark evening, for instance, a Korean war battle hero of the Chinese People's Volunteers is driving a truck fully loaded with ammunition and war materials. Braving the sweeping fire of the U.S. air pirates, he steps on the accelerator and speeds ahead through flames and smoke. . . . Then again on the winding, serpentine Chinghai-Tibet highway a hero is driving a truck loaded up with materials for the frontier posts. A blinding snowstorm engulfs the truck but the driver spurts ahead . . .

down, down the twisting mountain road. So real did these daydreams seem to Lei Feng that he felt he was already a truck driver, speeding across the vast plains of China.

Once, during an evening's entertainment given by the company, Lei Feng recited one of his own poems to hearty applause from the men. At that time the unit's amateur cultural troupe was looking for a new man, and when some of its members heard Lei Feng's recitation they immediately asked his officer whether he could join them. He agreed.

Although Lei Feng was anxious to become a truck driver as soon as possible he obeyed the officer's decision without any hesitation and joined the troupe in their next discussion on the new items they were planning to put on. When parts had to be given out each member was told to state his preference. Lei Feng said he was interested in several items, and was given the script to study. He read the whole of it the next day and when he came to the part where some misfortune befalls one of the characters he could not help crying for the story reminded him of his own sad past.

During the first rehearsal Lei Feng read his part in a typical Hunan dialect which disappointed the other members of the troupe. Afraid that his accent might confuse the audience, they frankly told him of their misgivings. "Never mind," said Lei Feng. "I'll correct it by practice." For several mornings Lei Feng then practised reading the part in the more popular form of Chinese speech, trying hard to correct his accent.

At the second rehearsal, however, Lei Feng still read his part in what now seemed a strange, stilted Peking dialect, provoking peals of laughter from the troupe. Convinced that Lei Feng would not be able to make himself understood, the head of the troupe decided eventually that someone else would have to play Lei Feng's part. Not wanting to hurt his feelings the leaders of the troupe decided to try and soften the blow by

telling him as gently as possible. "Comrade Lei Feng," they told him, "the way you work so enthusiastically is worthy of praise. But, you know, we're a little afraid that some people in the audience might not quite understand your dialect. So, for the sake of the success of the play, we suggest that. . ."

Lei Feng immediately sensed what they were getting at. "That's all right," he reassured them, "please give my part to another comrade. That would be much more sensible." The leaders of the troupe were taken aback by this answer. They did not know what to say, and an embarrassed silence filled the air. After a while, Lei Feng said, "Well, as I'm not going to play that role, what shall I do? If there's no work for me, then perhaps I'd better go back to the company."

As the rehearsals were still in progress the troupe thought there was no point in sending Lei Feng away for he could still be useful in some other way. "I tell you what," said one of the heads of the troupe, "perhaps you can do some other kind of work. We're now all very busy with rehearsals but you can make yourself generally useful."

Without becoming depressed or moody — as others might have done in similar circumstances — Lei Feng set about trying to make himself useful to the troupe. He noticed, for instance, that the cast had no one to give them drinking water during rehearsals and that after they were over they had to clean up the room themselves. Couldn't he do this for them? Soon he had built an earthen stove outside the rehearsal room, collected some firewood from nearby, borrowed a pot, and begun to boil water for the cast. Whenever a pot of water had boiled he would take cups of water to the cast and say, "Please drink some water and moisten your dry throats." And after the rehearsals he would say to them, "Don't bother about cleaning up the room. You go and rest. I'll do it for you."

By doing things like this for the troupe he stayed on with them for nearly two months. And although he took no part in the performances all the little things he did for the cast helped them to make a success of their parts. Meanwhile, he made sure he did not waste his time, for whenever he was boiling water for the cast he used every single spare moment to study Chairman Mao's writings. By the time the performances were over and Lei Feng had agreed to go back to his own company he had finished the third volume of the *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* and so gained a great deal of political education. And when Lei Feng parted from the cast they made this comment on his work and attitude: enthusiastic, active, fond of study and anxious to make progress, concerned about the welfare of other comrades, and concerned about the collective interest.

Back in his own company Lei Feng found that the other comrades had been attending technical classes for some time, so he got busy at once and tried to make up for lost time. From his previous driving jobs he had learnt something about motor engines but this was far from enough for truck driving which required a different technique and knowledge. He listened to the lectures with unflagging attention and took notes with great care. Then in accordance with Chairman Mao's teachings in his article "On Practice" he would often take his notebook after the lectures, lie under a truck, and study its parts in the light of what he had learnt in the classroom. His method of study soon produced results, and it did not take him long to get to know the names and function of every part of the truck.

Theoretical study was followed by actual driving lessons during which Lei Feng noticed that some of his comrades in the class began to make models of the driver's cabin. Following their example he collected bits and pieces of wood and made one for himself. At classes he would practise driving a truck,

in his spare time he would practise with the model. Even in bed he made driving motions.

The last stage of the course consisted of trial driving runs at the end of which Lei Feng had succeeded in mastering the skill of truck driving. Proud of his new skill he wrote this poem in his diary:

*A young man's dream comes true,  
In military uniform for the first time,  
He stands before a mirror and looks at himself.  
He feels like a golden phoenix flying in the wind.  
The Party wants him to be a truck driver,  
And lovingly he cares for the motor.  
Polishing it every day, again and again,  
Protecting it like his own eyes.*

Lei Feng never stopped trying to improve his driving technique. Every time he finished a transport haul he would ask the men who rode with him what they thought about his driving — all the time he was trying to make improvements.

Once while driving, Lei Feng found that one of the rear wheels was unsteady but he did not know why. When he returned to the barracks he asked his instructor, who told him that the differential was loose. A check-up proved his instructor right. Greatly surprised Lei Feng asked him, "How did you know?"

"In making a diagnosis," his instructor said, "the doctor can find out what's wrong with a patient by auscultation. We truck drivers should follow the example of the doctor. When there's some trouble with the truck we should try to find out the cause by listening."

From what his instructor said Lei Feng realized that if he wanted to be a good truck driver, both red and expert, he would have to be both politically conscious and technically

competent. From then on he became all the more eager to learn.

The truck Lei Feng used, No. 13, consumed more petrol than all the other trucks of the squad, and was nicknamed the "Oil-eating Monster". He did not send it to the workshop for repair because he was afraid that might hold up his work. Instead, he tried every means to find out the cause of the trouble. Eventually he discovered that it was due to the fact that the needle valve of the carburetor was too thick. He readjusted the part and the rate of oil consumption immediately dropped. Lei Feng had no further trouble after that and easily completed all his assignments both punctually and economically.

### 8. *Sunshine, Rain and Dew*

To me Chairman Mao's works are like food, weapons and the steering wheel of a vehicle. To live you must have food, to fight you must have a weapon, to drive a vehicle you must have a steering wheel, and to work for the revolution you must read Chairman Mao's works.

From Lei Feng's diary

Lei Feng had said that he wanted to be like a pine tree on a rocky mountain. And just as a pine grows high and sturdy with lush foliage when nourished by sunshine, rain and dew, so to Lei Feng, Mao Tse-tung's thought was like sunshine and the Party's care like rain and dew.

Lei Feng had begun to regularly study Chairman Mao's writings from 1958. He had made a rule by which he studied one hour every morning and up to ten or eleven o'clock in the evenings. He had made a point of studying the *Selected Works*

of Mao Tse-tung during every spare moment when he worked in the coal yard of the Anshan Iron and Steel Company. After joining the army he had managed to complete volume three of the *Selected Works* while boiling water for the amateur cultural troupe. Then the army leadership called on the men to "study Chairman Mao's works, follow his teachings, act in accordance with his instructions and be good soldiers of Chairman Mao". Lei Feng took this call as a maxim and wrote it down on the front covers of his copies of Chairman Mao's works. But where the leadership had asked the men to "study Chairman Mao's works", he added "every day" so that he would study them more diligently. Lei Feng's job as a driver often took him to various places but wherever he went he always carried a satchel containing different essays by Chairman Mao, which he read at every opportunity. Soon his comrades had described his satchel as a "mobile library".

About this time one of his comrades grumbled, "There's so much work to do we haven't got enough time for our personal affairs, nor for rest." Lei Feng did not agree, and to encourage himself to work and study even harder he wrote this passage in his diary which he remembered from a book he once read:

How do you put a screw into a piece of wood which is perfectly smooth and has no holes? You use force and screw it in. Then just as a screw has to be forced and screwed in, so when you study you should bore firmly into the subject.

It was with this spirit that Lei Feng was able to complete Chairman Mao's *Selected Works*, from volume one to four. And among many of the essays he repeatedly read were: "In Memory of Norman Bethune", "Serve the People", "Carry the Revolution Through to the End", "On Practice", and "On Contradiction". Some of the volumes were so worn that the edges of the pages were tattered and frayed, but he still kept

on reading them over and over again. And every time he read them he got something new out of them.

As he read the essays he marked them in all kinds of ways, with lines and dots, with blue ink, and red and blue pencil. He also made brief notes interpreting various passages. Once he came to this passage in the essay "Rectify the Party's Style of Work":

**Every Party member, every branch of work, every statement and every action must proceed from the interests of the whole Party; it is absolutely impermissible to violate this principle.**

He underlined this passage heavily with a red pencil and wrote in the margin: "Take this to heart!"

Lei Feng found an inexhaustible source of strength and wisdom in Chairman Mao's works, and he gradually came to understand the meaning of life, of revolution and the laws of social development. He learnt how to treat one's enemy and one's comrades, and what attitude one should take to work. He felt he could see things more and more clearly, that his vision of life was broadening and that a new big world was opening up before him. Following the teachings of Chairman Mao, Lei Feng gradually became a conscious proletarian fighter. This was what he wrote in his diary:

After having studied volumes one, two, three and four of the *Selected Works* I feel most deeply that I know how to be a man and for whom I am living. . . . I think you should live to make others live better.

Lei Feng studied Chairman Mao's works in three ways. He applied what he studied as he went along; he studied and applied creatively; and he used Chairman Mao's teachings to remould his ideology and guide his actions. Whenever he came

across a difficult problem in his life he would immediately turn to Chairman Mao's works to draw strength from them.

One day Lei Feng drove up to the barracks with a truckful of grain and the comrades came out to help him unload it. Among them was Old Wang who belonged to Lei Feng's squad and was known for his great strength. He could carry a sack of grain weighing more than two hundred catties and run with it at a fairly fast speed. As Lei Feng was small and unable to carry such a heavy load, he and another comrade stayed on the truck and passed the sacks down onto the shoulders of the rest of the men. When it came to Old Wang's turn he leaned against the truck and teasingly said to Lei Feng, "If you're a better man than me, why don't you come down and carry a sack?"

Lei Feng did not reply. Then Old Wang added, "Ah, I knew all along that you didn't have the guts to compete with me. Of course not — you're so small!"

"Stop trying to stir me up," Lei Feng replied calmly. "We need people to carry the sacks and we also need people to hand them down from the truck. Let's see if you can carry as much as I can move. How about that?"

Lei Feng had not meant to challenge him but his pride had been hurt by Old Wang's cutting remarks about his size.

That night he again read the essay "In Memory of Norman Bethune" by Chairman Mao until he came to this passage:

**We must all learn the spirit of absolute selflessness from him. With this spirit everyone can be very useful to the people. A man's ability may be great or small, but if he has this spirit, he is already noble-minded and pure, a man of moral integrity and above vulgar interests, a man who is of value to the people.**

Everything seemed to slot into place when he read the passage, and he began to see things in a new light. No longer did he

seem to have a feeling of wounded pride, a brooding sense of grievance. "Although I'm small I'll do my best," he pledged, "to emulate Comrade Bethune's spirit of utter devotion to others without any thought of self."

A few days later the men decided to collect fodder in the mountains. Their plan was to set out after breakfast and return in the early evening, taking their lunch with them. After breakfast the thought suddenly crossed Old Wang's mind that it would be a nuisance taking lunch with him, so he ate his quickly before they set off.

As soon as the men were in the mountains they worked fast and hard, collecting grass and hay. At noon they sat on the mountain slope in twos and threes and began to eat their lunch. Lei Feng opened his lunch-box and was about to eat when he saw Old Wang sitting by himself without any lunch. He must have forgotten it or lost it on the way, Lei Feng thought to himself. Offering his own lunch to Old Wang he said, "Come on, take this." Old Wang looked at the lunch-box, then at Lei Feng, and shook his head and refused to accept it.

"Take it," Lei Feng said as he forced the lunch-box into Old Wang's hand. "You'll be able to work better on it."

"If I take it what are you going to do?" said Old Wang, returning the lunch-box to Lei Feng.

"My stomach is a bit upset and I don't feel like eating," Lei Feng replied. Then he walked away pressing his hand against his stomach as if it hurt.

Holding the lunch-box in his hand Old Wang stared into space as Lei Feng slowly went away. Then he thought to himself, "Fancy, I actually said he's a small fellow and can't do anything big. I'm a big fellow all right, but I've never given my lunch away to anyone."

One evening as the comrades were discussing the theoretical side of motor vehicles, they suddenly saw a building on fire in the distance. Clouds of smoke billowed up followed by licking, leaping flames. After staring at the fire for a few seconds — almost hypnotized by it — Lei Feng jumped up and shouted, "Look, it's the processing factory!" Hurling his book onto the floor he called to the men to go with him to save the blazing building.

Small as he was Lei Feng had soon outpaced all the others. Arriving at the building with sweat running down his face he breathlessly asked the men there what had happened and then joined them in putting out the fire. At first, he poured basins of water on the fire but soon found they were having no effect, for the fire blazed more and more fiercely until it gradually reached the ridge of the roof. Lei Feng felt he had to do something to save the building — and do it quickly. The face of Hsiang Hsiu-li, a heroic Party member who gave her life in helping to put out a fire in a factory, suddenly leapt across his mind. Dropping the basin and picking up a broom he rushed into the suffocating smoke-filled building. From one of the top floor window-sills he then clambered onto the roof, and there he tried to beat out the flames with his broom.

"Come down quick," someone yelled down below. "The roof is collapsing." But the sight of the licking flames destroying public property drove all thoughts of personal safety out of his mind. At that moment, the fire brigade arrived, so Lei Feng came down from the roof to help them, dashing here and there to put out the flames, going wherever the fire was the fiercest. His shoes and clothes were burnt and so were his hands, but he seemed to pay no attention to them. It was only when the fire was put out that he heaved a long sigh of relief. "Eh, your hair and eyebrows have been singed," his comrades

pointed out. Lei Feng ran his hand over his head, and a faint smile worked across his lips.

Old Wang, who was standing beside Lei Feng, muttered to himself, "We really should follow Lei Feng's example in protecting state property."

In studying Chairman Mao's works Lei Feng never passed over any passage which he did not understand; he always tried to find someone with a higher political and educational level or one of his comrades to explain it to him.

One day in the autumn of 1961 Lei Feng drove an officer to the railway station.

"Where are you going?" Lei Feng asked.

"To study at the School of Politics."

Lei Feng saw his chance. "I've studied 'On Practice' several times," he implored, "but there are still some places I don't understand. When you come back from the school you must give me some help."

Nearly a year later Lei Feng went to the railway station to pick up the same officer who had just finished his course. As soon as he saw him he said, "I hope you haven't forgotten my request. Since you went away I've studied the essay three more times. I can now understand some of the places I didn't understand before, but there are still some parts I can't follow. Now that you're back you must try and find time to teach me." The officer was greatly moved by Lei Feng's unmistakable sincerity.

In such a way did Lei Feng perseveringly study Chairman Mao's teachings which he used to remould his thoughts and guide his actions. This was what he wrote in his diary:

I'm deeply aware that if you want to go forward and do more work for the Party, you must make every effort to

study Chairman Mao's works, follow his teachings and act in accordance with his instructions, for it's only by doing that that you can become a good soldier of Chairman Mao. I'll use every moment of my spare time to study. I'll think carefully about everything Chairman Mao writes, overcome all difficulties and apply what I learn.

### 9. *A Drop in the Ocean*

Drops of water go to form the ocean. A man only acquires strength by linking himself with the collective cause.

From Lei Feng's diary

Lei Feng made up his mind to do his work conscientiously and work hard at his political studies so that he could qualify for membership in the Communist Party and be able to make more contributions to the cause of the revolution. This was why he always kept in mind Chairman Mao's call to serve the people heart and soul, why he judged all his conduct by the standards of a Party member, and was ever ready to be examined and tested by the Party in the hope that he might be granted Party membership when he had fulfilled all the requirements.

During one summer the River Liao overflowed its banks and flooded the Liaoyang region following a steady downpour lasting several days. It was the worst flood the area had witnessed in more than a hundred years. Meanwhile, the water level of Shangszu Reservoir in the outskirts of Fushun slowly began to creep higher and higher—if the reservoir burst its banks Fushun itself would be threatened.

Reading the newspapers Lei Feng saw that the Party's Central Committee and Chairman Mao had ordered air-drops of provisions to the people in the flooded areas. Lei Feng's heart went out to the flood-stricken people, and he was desperately anxious to help them. But as his unit had not received any orders to help fight the flood he felt he could do nothing. Then out of the blue he suddenly remembered that he had a hundred yuan deposited in the bank, so he withdrew it straight away and posted it to the Liaoyang municipal Party committee as a contribution to the relief fund. In their reply the committee returned the money with a covering letter thanking him for his generosity but pointing out that the Party and Chairman Mao had arranged sufficient relief for the flooded area and that the people there were confident they could triumph over the calamity that had struck their area. The committee advised Lei Feng to put his money back into the bank, for in this way he would also be helping national construction.

Then on August 3 Lei Feng's company were told to go to the Shangszu Reservoir to fight the flood. Lei Feng was slightly ill at the time so the company commander told him to remain behind and rest. "Commander," Lei Feng pleaded, "how can you let me stay behind at such a time?"

Later when the men were getting ready to leave, Lei Feng hurried to the company commander and implored, "The flood is threatening the lives and property of the people. How can I possibly stay behind? Please let me go!"

Knowing how Lei Feng felt, the company commander explained, "You're not very well, you know, and the leaders feel they must take your health into consideration."

"I don't want that sort of consideration," Lei Feng insisted. Then he glanced at the political instructor hoping that he would put in a good word for him. After a few moments the instructor said, "Wait until we think it over."

After carefully considering his request the company commander finally agreed to let Lei Feng take part in the battle against the flood.

At the Shangszu Reservoir an army of thousands of men and women were reinforcing the dam in an attempt to keep the flood in check. The rain had not yet stopped, and the water level of the reservoir was still rising. An overflow was expected at any moment. The anti-flood command of the municipal Party committee decided to open a spillway as an emergency measure and assigned this urgent task to the men of the PLA. Inspired by the important job that had been given to them Lei Feng and his comrades set out at night in a lashing downpour, waded knee-deep through pools of mud and began work on the spillway. Lei Feng dug frantically with his spade, singing as he worked, and the men joined him in chorus. Drowning the sound of the rain their voices echoed through the air. Suddenly, a big lump of clay, dislodged by the rain, hurtled past the men down the slope of the reservoir. Thrown off balance by the noise, Lei Feng lost hold of his spade which sank into the mud. He then groped for the spade but could not find it in the pitch dark, so he began to scoop up the mud with his hands. After working like this for some time he began to feel a burning sensation in his hands, and looking closely saw that they were cut and bleeding. A comrade working beside him urged Lei Feng to have his injuries dressed at the clinic, but he refused to go. He wanted to keep on working whatever happened.

Later on the company commander, who had heard of Lei Feng's cut hands, came up to him and said, "Lei Feng, go to the loudspeaker station and broadcast news and details about the heroic way our men are working."

Lei Feng immediately left the site and threaded his way through the army of flood fighters. As he passed one of the



men, who was working furiously, he noticed that he had no raincoat and was soaked to the skin. Lei Feng at once took off his own coat and slipped it over the man. When the man turned round to see who it was Lei Feng had already disappeared into the crowd.

Shortly after arriving at the loudspeaker station Lei Feng composed a rhyme describing the heroism of his company. "Comrades," he sang into the microphone, "many heroes have come from the transport company of the People's Liberation Army. . . ." As his comrades on the site heard Lei Feng's voice they felt inspired and worked against the wind and rain with redoubled energy.

It was raining hard when Lei Feng came out of the loudspeaker station and as he was only wearing thin clothes he shivered with cold. But paying no attention to the cold he ran quickly to the site and went on working, singing one of his favourite songs, *I'm a Soldier*.

Just before dawn when it was time for a change in shifts the company commander noticed that Lei Feng's face was terribly pale, and he told him to go back and rest. But thoughts of the danger the lives and property of the people were in made him feel that he must remain at his post however exhausted he was. He told his company commander, "To defend his motherland and the Korean people Huang Chi-kuang died a real hero's death by blocking the enemy's machine-gun aperture with his chest. So why should I worry about a little illness?" Because of the heroic efforts of the people the threatened flood disaster was averted. During the battle against the flood Lei Feng was not afraid of any hardship or difficulty, he was always ready to give up his life for the people, and this revolutionary spirit of his moved his comrades to launch a campaign to emulate him.

Because Lei Feng earnestly studied Chairman Mao's writings, worked hard, remained loyal to the Party and the revolutionary cause, and because he made strict demands on himself, he was given the honour of membership in the Chinese Communist Party on November 8, 1960. It was the greatest day in the twenty-two years of his life. With gratitude he wrote this in his diary:

November 8, 1960. I will never forget this day. This is the day when I had the honour of being made a member of the great Chinese Communist Party, thus realizing my highest ideal.

Oh, how thrilled my heart is! It is beating wild with joy. How great the Party is! How great Chairman Mao is! Oh, Chairman Mao, it is you who have given me a new lease of life! When I was struggling in the fiery pit of hell and waiting for the dawn it was you who saved me, gave me food and clothing, and sent me to school! I finished my studies in the senior primary school, put on the red scarf, and then I was given the honour of being admitted to the Communist Youth League, took part in the nation's industrial construction and later became a soldier in the armed forces of the motherland. It was under your constant care and guidance that I, a former poor orphan, became a Party member, a man with some knowledge and political consciousness.

Now that I have joined the Party, I have become stronger and my vision has broadened. I am a Party member and a servant of the people. For the freedom, emancipation and happiness of mankind and the cause of the Party and people, I am willing to climb the highest mountain and cross the widest river, to go through fire and water. Even at the risk of death I will remain for ever loyal to the Party.

Lei Feng never forgot his pledge. Whenever he faced difficulties he always acted in a way worthy of a Communist Party member.

A few weeks later in the dead of winter Lei Feng and his comrades drove out into a mountainous region; he and two other comrades, Yang Feng-fu and Han Yu-chen, were at the head of the convoy of trucks. The further they drove into the mountains the more winding and tortuous the road became. At three o'clock in the afternoon they found their path blocked by huge stones and shrubs that had been washed onto the road by a mountain stream. It would have been difficult for an ox-cart to cross the stream, not to say a motor vehicle. Lei Feng, however, drove on. The truck rocked violently as it crashed forward, one of its small lights and the flag-pole were torn off by the shrubs, but Lei Feng eventually succeeded in crossing the stream. A little further on the truck faced a steep slope. With the throttle opened wide the engine roared and shuddered, but the truck could not get up the slope. Six times Lei Feng opened the throttle wide, and each time the truck failed to climb up. Lei Feng became desperate. After discussing the problem with his two comrades he hit on the idea of collecting bundles of reeds and spreading them on the slope. The plan worked, and the truck drove on. But his difficulties were not over, for the road became more and more difficult. Once, for instance, they had to make a 90-degree turn as they approached a valley. On their left was an abyss at the bottom of which swirled a wild mountain torrent; on their right rose a sheer wall of rocks; ahead of them was a narrow twisting path which could only take one vehicle at a time. The slightest miscalculation by Lei Feng and the truck would either plough into the rocks or plunge into the abyss. With nerves like steel Lei Feng calmly told Han Yu-chen to hold the hand brake and be prepared for an emergency while he steadily controlled the

steering wheel. Slowly but surely the truck inched forward, and within a few moments they had passed the danger spot.

It was already dusk when the convoy reached its destination. When the villagers saw the trucks they shouted to the drivers in admiration, "Wonderful! How did you do it? We've never seen vehicles before in this mountain valley."

On the return journey Lei Feng was detailed to drive the rear truck in the convoy. As the trucks were being refuelled, Lei Feng said to his two comrades: "There isn't much petrol left. Never mind our truck, let the others refuel first. If they can get back all right, what does it matter if we're left behind?"

As they were re-crossing the stream the third truck got bogged down in a muddy pool, its six wheels spinning helplessly. Seeing the trouble ahead, Lei Feng drove past the truck and stopped, then he rolled up his trousers and jumped into the icy water with a towing rope which he tied to the stalled truck. Then he climbed back into his cabin and started his engine at a signal from the other truck. Both engines were now turned on at full blast, but the truck still did not budge. Later, the political instructor led a team of men to dredge up the mud and put grass under the wheels. It was only then that the truck was pulled out of the mud. By that time Lei Feng's clothes were spattered with mud and he shivered with cold. But he took no notice of his condition and drove on.

As the convoy passed a place called Muchi Lei Feng's truck ran completely out of fuel. It was raining heavily and the road was muddy. The other trucks were far ahead of Lei Feng's and there was no way of contacting them, so Lei Feng and his comrades decided to find a place where they could spend the night. Just then a messenger sent by the political instructor drove up and reported that truck No. 14 had broken a spring while climbing a mountain slope and needed the screw-jack on Lei Feng's truck. With petrol brought by the messenger

Lei Feng refuelled his truck and resumed the journey. It was inky black as he drove along the muddy road through wind and snow. The headlights of the truck only threw out two thin beams of light which made hardly any impression on the darkness that hemmed them in. It took Lei Feng more than forty minutes to get over a single height. The downward route was even more difficult to manage and as before Yang Feng-fu held the brake tightly in his hand. Faced with every difficulty — cold, fatigue, and a treacherous slope — Lei Feng and his comrades showed a high degree of perseverance, fortitude and judgement. They arrived at the place where truck No. 14 had broken down at eleven o'clock at night, and Lei Feng immediately began to help the comrades repair their vehicle.

In making the trip Lei Feng and his squad proved that they were the sort of men who could surmount any difficulty, men who had a fine spirit of comradeship. Lei Feng himself had also shown that he could pass the severest test likely to tax the skill of a truck driver.

### 10. *Comradely Love*

A Communist Party member is a servant of the people. He should regard other people's troubles as his own and other people's happiness as his own.

From Lei Feng's diary

Throughout his life in the army Lei Feng was an exemplary soldier. He was always concerned about the welfare of his comrades. He was good at story-telling and singing. When-

ever the editor of the wall newspaper asked him to write an article he never refused. At parties when he was asked to give a song or tell a story he always obliged. If he was free just before or after a meal he would pick out a piece of important news from the newspaper and read it to his comrades. He treated all his comrades just like his own brothers. He often quoted Chairman Mao:

**We hail from all corners of the country and have joined together for a common revolutionary objective. . . . Our cadres must show concern for every soldier, and all people in the revolutionary ranks must care for each other, must love and help each other.**

There was a man in the company named Hsiao Chiao who had enlisted at the same time as Lei Feng. He never complained about his work or drill, and his behaviour was exemplary in every way. There was only one problem with Hsiao Chiao — he lagged behind in his studies, being particularly backward in arithmetic which often gave him a headache. Gradually, however, he became resigned to the situation, a fact which soon began to worry Lei Feng. Once when Lei Feng was helping Hsiao Chiao with his arithmetic, Chiao said, "I've had little education. I can't get the hang of all these things — addition, subtraction, multiplication and division."

Trying to boost his confidence, Lei Feng told him, "Nothing is too difficult if you have the will to do it. Where there's a will there's a way. To a revolutionary no difficulty is too great to overcome." Later he got hold of a copy of an old newspaper which carried a story describing Chairman Mao's concern for the education of soldiers. Showing it to Chiao he said, "Look, here's a story written just for you!"

"Just for me?" Hsiao Chiao was puzzled.

"Listen, how really concerned Chairman Mao is about our studies!" Lei Feng said as he began to read the story and explain it bit by bit in the hope that this would encourage his comrade. Hsiao Chiao listened attentively, nodding his head from time to time. When Lei Feng had finished it Hsiao Chiao decided on the spot to buy some pencils and exercise books as soon as possible.

"You don't have to bother with those things," said Lei Feng and he handed Hsiao Chiao a fountain pen and an exercise book which he had anticipated Hsiao Chiao would need.

Hsiao Chiao was moved by Lei Feng's generosity but hesitated to accept the gifts. "If you give those things to me," he told Lei Feng, "what are you going to use?"

"Take them, I've got more," smiled Lei Feng. "If you want to be a part of the modernized Liberation Army you must have an education."

Grateful to Lei Feng for his help and encouraged by the interest he showed in him, Hsiao Chiao began to study arithmetic with much more concentration and initiative. And whenever he came up against something he could not grasp he would go to Lei Feng and ask him to explain it. Checking up on his progress Lei Feng asked him a few days later to solve a number of arithmetical problems. Running his eye over them Hsiao Chiao confidently said, "They're easy." Then he took out his pen and got to work on them. A few minutes later he had answered all the questions correctly. Lei Feng's eyes lit up. "You've made marvellous progress," he said with a broad smile.

"But without your help I would have got nowhere," replied Hsiao Chiao.

When the first test for technical knowledge was given Lei Feng achieved the maximum five points. As he lay on his bed that evening he felt pleased with himself, but the comrade next

to him, Tung Chan-pei, was gloomy and silent for he had only managed to get two points in the examination. When Lei Feng saw this his heart became heavy. We enlisted together, worked in the same squad and slept beside each other, he thought to himself. If he only got two points that shows I have not been a good comrade to him. I should have helped him more.

From then on Lei Feng decided he would help Tung with his studies. The next time they were in class Lei Feng noticed that Tung sat at the back and sometimes seemed to nod off. After talking to the teacher about Tung, Lei Feng made a stool for him and suggested he should sit at the front so that he could listen more attentively to the teacher. After class Lei Feng spent all his spare time helping Tung go over each lesson. Even on very hot days Lei Feng went without his midday nap rather than neglect Tung. Sometimes, he would take him to the yard where all the trucks were parked and explain how an engine worked. He would keep on explaining it to him until he understood it thoroughly, not minding how many times he had to repeat the same thing. When they had gone to bed Lei Feng would sit up and whisper, "Have you remembered what I told you today?" If Tung said he had Lei Feng would be satisfied; if he shook his head or hesitated, Lei Feng would patiently go over the problem again even after the taps had already sounded. Unless Lei Feng did this he could never go comfortably to sleep.

At the second technical knowledge test both Lei Feng and Tung got five points. Lei Feng was so happy with the results that he hugged Tung and danced.

Another one of Lei Feng's comrades, named Fan, was rather lax in discipline, and whenever the company commander told him off at a meeting he seemed to behave as if he were being picked on for no reason at all. Noticing Fan's long face after one meeting, Lei Feng said to him, "The company commander

is quite right, you know. A revolutionary army must maintain iron discipline. To avoid exposing his comrades' position Chiu Shao-yun, a fighter of the Chinese People's Volunteers, strictly observed discipline and kept absolutely still even when he was hit by an incendiary bomb. . . ."

"Shut up, and stop giving me political lectures," snapped Fan.

Lei Feng, however, did not feel offended. He knew Fan had suffered from terrible poverty in his childhood and that he was at heart a good comrade even though he sometimes burst into a temper. Then Lei Feng remembered that Fan had once told him, "Man lives so that he may eat." So when he calmed down, Lei Feng said, "The leadership wants to educate you and the comrades want to help you because they are concerned about your progress. Why do we join the army? To defend the motherland. If that's so, we should observe discipline. There's a lot of difference between serving in the army and working on the farm. To serve in a revolutionary army you must observe its strict discipline. Anyway, for that matter, the farm also has its own labour discipline, hasn't it?"

Fan looked thoughtful, as Lei Feng's words had obviously touched his heart. "I remember," Lei Feng went on, "when we first joined up our villagers told us over and over again to obey the Party, work hard, and be good soldiers. We should remember what they told us, otherwise we'll just be letting them down."

Fan hung his head low.

"We who have grown up in poverty suffered terribly in the old society. It's because of the leadership of the Party and Chairman Mao that we've been able to lead a happy life after liberation. You once told me, 'Man lives so that he may eat.' I don't agree. Many of the old revolutionaries continued to struggle against the class enemy, and many sacrificed their lives. Why? Because they wanted to eat well? No." Closely

observing Fan's facial expression, Lei Feng continued, "Take ourselves, for instance. Did we join the army because we had nothing to eat? We eat so that we may live, not live so that we may eat. As long as we are alive we should serve the people whole-heartedly and struggle for the realization of the great ideal of communism."

Fan burst into tears, and then he looked up, regret in his eyes. Suddenly getting hold of Lei Feng's hand he exclaimed, "Lei Feng, you just wait and see what I can do."

Trying to put Fan more at ease, Lei Feng said, "No need to feel so bad about what you've done. We all make mistakes. It's all right. The point is you've got to recognize your mistakes and try and change your ways. Screws in a machine sometimes go rusty. If we want to stop them from rusting we've got to keep on cleaning and polishing them. It's the same with our minds. If we want to keep on the right track we must frequently take a real hard look at ourselves. Let us be screws that never rust."

Fan took this lesson to heart and became a new type of person, and was later chosen as a "five-good" soldier.

Lei Feng's love for his comrades — an expression of his deep class feelings — was not just limited to the concern he showed for their studies and thinking. He was also concerned about their welfare.

For instance, it was not unusual for some of Lei Feng's comrades to go out on duty and leave behind a heap of dirty clothes and socks that needed mending. Whenever that happened they would invariably find that their clothes had been washed and their socks mended. Who had done it? No one knew. For weeks the riddle remained unsolved. And then the mysterious benefactor was discovered.

One night the bugles blew for an emergency roll-call. The comrades leapt out of bed and began to dress hurriedly, so hurriedly, in fact, that one of the comrades, Han Yu-chen, upset a bottle of acid and burnt his padded trousers. When the comrades returned from the drill they were so tired they immediately tumbled into bed and fell asleep. It was Lei Feng's turn that evening to inspect the men on sentry duty. Having finished his turn of duty at midnight he returned to the barracks where he read Chairman Mao's *Selected Works* for a while. Then he spotted Han Yu-chen's burnt trousers and tearing off some of the lining from his cap he began to patch them.

The next day when Han returned from drill he asked in surprise, "Who did this for me?" The duty orderly signalled with his eyes towards Lei Feng and said, "The squad leader patched them with some lining from his cap." The mysterious benefactor was known at last! It had been Lei Feng all the time who had washed and mended their clothes for them. The men were so moved that words failed them. His was a comradeship they would never forget.

Another one of Lei Feng's kind acts concerned Chou Shu-ming, a happy, jovial fellow. One day Chou got a letter from home, and after he read it a shadow crept over his face. It was so unusual for Chou to look unhappy that Lei Feng asked him, "What's the matter, Chou?" Not wanting to burden Lei Feng with his troubles, Chou casually replied, "Oh, just a letter from dad. There's nothing the matter. Everything is fine at home." Realizing that Chou did not want to tell him about his news from home Lei Feng did not press the matter any further. Several days later, when Chou was changing his clothes, Lei Feng accidentally picked up the letter and learnt that his father was ill and wanted Chou to return home or send some money back for medical expenses. Lei Feng knew that Chou was a

conscientious soldier who seldom made a fuss about his personal problems, and he guessed that he would therefore probably not ask for special leave or any money from the army. So he made a point of remembering his home address. Some time later he had to go to Shenyang on a special mission. There he wrote a letter in Chou's name and posted it to his father along with a money order for ten yuan.

Shortly afterwards Chou received a letter from home saying: "We've received the money you sent home which came just in time to pay for the medical fees. Your father is getting better. Give all your mind to work and don't bother about things at home. . . ." Chou was astonished and puzzled. Who had sent the money? For days the question preyed on his mind until Lei Feng admitted that it was he who had written to his father.

On the evening of the Mid-Autumn Festival four "moon-cakes" were given to each of the men in Lei Feng's company. Some of them ate the cakes quickly, others savoured them more slowly.

When Lei Feng was handed his share he stared at the cakes in his hands . . . and memories of that terrible Mid-Autumn Festival more than ten years ago flowed back. "Ma," he cried to himself with tears running down his face, "if only you were alive today!"

Somehow Lei Feng just could not bring himself to eat the cakes. Instead, he wrapped them up in a piece of paper and wrote a covering letter to the patients at the Workers' Hospital in Fushun. The letter read:

Dear class brothers, dear comrades who have been injured or fallen sick while working for the socialist construction of the motherland: These four cakes were given to me by the people. They made me think of the bitter past and the happy

present — and they made me think of you. Please accept them as a little present from an armyman. . . .

The next day while Lei Feng was driving past the Workers' Hospital he stopped his truck and handed in the parcel with a leaping joy in his heart. The patients were deeply touched by his kindness and some of them, who worked in coal mines, wrote a letter to Lei Feng's company. They said that they were moved and inspired by Lei Feng's noble spirit and that they would try to leave the hospital as soon as possible so that they could produce more "black gold" for the motherland.

## II. *A Respectable "Fool"*

I want to be a man who is useful to the people and nation. If this is what you call a "fool" then I'm willing to be a "fool". The revolution needs such "fools" and so does socialist construction. I only have one heart and it is turned towards the Party, towards socialism and communism.

From Lei Feng's diary

Once Lei Feng made a wooden box. And into it he put all the odds and ends that he picked up here and there — screw caps, bits of steel wire, used toothpaste tubes, rags, worn-out gloves. . . . He called his box a "treasure box".

Lei Feng's box proved to be of great value. If any small part of his truck, such as a screw, was missing he would first look for a replacement in his box before asking the supply store for one. He dusted the truck with the rags and worn-out gloves

and handed back the new cloth dusters issued to him. As for the used toothpaste tubes and bits of steel wire he would sell them and give the money to the army.

According to company regulations each man was issued two uniforms, two shirts and two pairs of rubber shoes for his summer outfit. But from 1961 Lei Feng asked for only one uniform, one shirt and one pair of rubber shoes. When the quartermaster asked him why, he replied, "If I patch the uniform I'm wearing now I'll be able to wear it for a long time yet. The clothes I've got on now are much, much better than the ones I wore as a kid even with all their patches, so I want to hand back the things I don't need."

Lei Feng could not stand any waste of public property however small the amount might be. One day, for instance, he was transporting cement when he found that some of the paper bags tore during the loading and unloading, leaving behind a thin layer of cement on the floor of the truck. Refusing to waste a single bit of cement he carefully swept the truck and collected all that was left over. When his comrades saw what he was doing they followed suit, and by the time they had all finished the job the amount of cement swept up in the trucks amounted to 1,800 kilogrammes.

Lei Feng led a simple life never wasting a single penny of his money. He spent part of his money on Party dues, buying Chairman Mao's works and paying for his basic everyday expenses — the rest was put in the bank. He loathed throwing old socks away and would mend them over and over again however odd they looked; his enamel mug and wash-basin became worn and chipped but still he would not buy new ones.

Some comrades said to him, "Lei Feng, you're single, you've got no family to support. Why do you discipline yourself so much?" Lei Feng replied, "Who says I've got no family? I've a big family of more than six hundred million. To rid China

of poverty and cultural backwardness Chairman Mao called on us to work hard for the prosperity of the country. How can you say I'm wrong in what I do?"

"But China can get along very well without those few yuan of yours."

"Bits of earth go to make up a mountain. If each person in the country put away ten cents a day the total amount saved would be enormous. Now that we have become masters of the nation we should live thriftily, shouldn't we?"

Some said Lei Feng was a fool and a miser. Lei Feng paid no attention to them. He remembered how Secretary Chang of Wangcheng County would not pass a screw on the road without picking it up. He remembered, too, that when he was working at the Anshan Iron and Steel Company he almost broke his habit of leading a hard and simple life. Didn't he begin to take an interest in fine clothes? Well, now he really knew what fine things were. Hard work, creation and a noble moral character — these were the things that were fine. Spurring himself on he wrote in his diary:

The faded and patched khaki uniform of a soldier is fine; the oil-stained blue overalls of a worker are fine; the strong callous hands of a peasant are fine; the dark tanned face of a labourer is fine; the simple but powerful chant of men working is fine; a mind bent on socialist construction is fine. These are the fine things of our era. Anyone who can't see that can't see the greatness of our era.

Hearing that some comrades called him a "fool" Lei Feng thought to himself: If a man who does what I have done is a fool, then I'm willing to be a fool. Both the revolution and the work of building up the motherland need such fools.

As a matter of fact Lei Feng by his actions had long given his answer to those who said he was a fool and a miser.

One day in the early summer when the sky was bright and the flowers were blooming, the people near the barracks were beating gongs and drums to celebrate the establishment of an urban people's commune. As an expression of his support for the new commune Lei Feng presented to the commune's Party committee two hundred yuan which he had saved in the bank during his time at the steel plant and his service in the army. When he handed the money to the Party committee he said, "The day I've long been waiting for has come at last. Here, please accept this money as a token of my support for the commune."

Deeply moved, the Party committee comrades said, "We accept your goodwill but not your money. Please keep it for your own use or send it home."

"The people's commune is my home," Lei Feng replied. "By giving my money to the commune I'm sending it home. As a kid I lived in bitterness, then I was brought up in sweetness. The Party and the people have given me everything and in return I should give them everything I've got. This money came from the Party. Let it do some work for the people."

But in spite of Lei Feng's repeated request the people's commune refused to accept his money. Finally, he broke down and cried begging them to accept his money. The comrades were so moved by his sincerity that they finally relented and agreed to accept half of his gift. Later, the commune's Party committee wrote a letter to the army authorities, saying:

Comrade Lei Feng's whole-hearted support for the people's commune is a source of great inspiration to all the cadres in the commune as well as to all its members. To show their gratitude to the Liberation Army many commune members have expressed their determination to make the new commune a success.



So the hundred yuan which the Liaoyang municipal Party committee refused to accept from Lei Feng for the relief of flood victims was eventually taken by the people's commune.

## 12. *Greatness Comes from Small Things*

A building is made up of bricks and mortar. There's no reason why we should not be like bricks and mortar. That is why I do so many little things every day.

From Lei Feng's diary

On Sunday some comrades would play basketball or cards; others would go to the cinema or do some shopping at the department store. Lei Feng, however, spent his day-off in different ways. Sometimes he would read Chairman Mao's works carefully and methodically, taking notes of the way he interpreted what Chairman Mao wrote. Sometimes he would go into the kitchen, roll up his sleeves, and help the cooks wash cabbages and cut turnips. Or sometimes he would get hold of a broom and sweep clean all the rooms in his barracks as well as the courtyard. If he happened to see any dirty clothes lying about he would wash them. If the latrines needed cleaning he would do it. His comrades jokingly called him the "night soil man". And he would tell them, "It's an honour to be a night soil man. The important thing is to help the motherland."

One Sunday Lei Feng was suffering from acute stomach-ache, and as he was to go on duty the next day he was a bit worried. Pressing his hand against his stomach he went to get some treatment at the clinic. On his return he passed a

building site and became fascinated by the hustle and bustle on the site. Carts full of bricks shuttled to and fro; bricklayers were busy putting up a wall; loudspeakers were broadcasting songs and slogans urging the workers on. Then Lei Feng discovered that the men and women on the site were government functionaries doing a spell of voluntary work, and that they had split up into competing groups.

Suddenly the loudspeaker roared out, "Will the comrades moving bricks please work quicker—the supply of bricks is running short. . . ." Lei Feng's interest quickened. Then he noticed that there were two men to each cart, one pushing and the other pulling. All the men with the carts were working very hard but they still could not keep up with the demand for bricks. Forgetting his stomach-ache he rushed onto the site, grabbed hold of a cart and started shifting bricks straight away. Though he handled a fully loaded cart each time by himself he managed to work at a quick pace and never fell behind the others. Within a short time he had shifted more than a dozen cartloads, and beads of sweat were running down his face and his shirt was soaked through. But he did not feel a bit tired; instead he felt happy and lively. When the workers on the site saw how hard he worked they praised him for his enthusiasm, wondering at the same time who he was and why he worked with such zeal. Lei Feng did not seem to hear their praise, all he could think of was that he had been able to be of some use to the motherland. Inspired by Lei Feng's selfless example the workers redoubled their efforts and the crisis of the brick shortage was soon beaten.

When the announcer at the loudspeaker station saw Lei Feng she ran out and asked him: "Hello, comrade. What's your name and unit? You've given us a lot of help and we want to commend you in a special announcement over the loudspeaker." Lei Feng wiped the sweat off his forehead, looked

at the announcer and thought to himself: There's no need to commend me for doing a bit of extra work in my leisure time. I can't see the point in letting her make a fuss about me. Meanwhile, she looked at him with questioning eyes. "The little help I gave you is not worth mentioning," he told her, breaking the silence. "I just belong to the local army unit." Saying this he turned round ready to go. But the announcer pulled him back.

"Comrade," she implored, "I came to ask for your name on my superior's order. If there's no special reason to keep it a secret, please. . . ."

"I'm a soldier of the Liberation Army and I've no reason to keep it a secret," Lei Feng muttered as he pushed his cart up a slope. The disappointed announcer looked at his disappearing back. Then she said to herself: If you don't want to tell me your name I'll find out anyway.

The entire building site soon became a scene of intense rivalry with everyone working with greater and greater energy. As a result the planned schedule for the day was completed in half the time. Wiping the sweat off his face with his sleeves Lei Feng felt tremendously happy. As he picked up his jacket and got ready to go he was suddenly surrounded by a crowd. Then a cadre in a white shirt stepped forward, pumped his hand and said, "On behalf of all the comrades on the site I want to express our sincere gratitude to you." Then there was a burst of applause and many workers and cadres rushed forward to shake hands with him. Feeling rather embarrassed Lei Feng said, "Like everyone of you here I only did my duty."

"You've worked for half a day here and we still don't know your name," the man in the white shirt said. "Come on, tell us it."

"Never mind my name, it's time for me to go," Lei Feng said as he edged away, but the rings of people drew closer and

closer around him and he could not get past them. Then a worker tugged his sleeve, pointed at the man in the white shirt and said, "He's the head of all building sites in the district and you don't have to keep anything secret from him." Lei Feng was very impressed when he heard that the man in the white shirt, who had been working alongside all the others on the site, was a leading cadre. Still trying to evade giving his name, however, he told the crowd, "I've learnt a lot here today. Your zeal for work has set me a good example."

"But we've asked you to tell us your name," smiled the announcer.

Lei Feng was beaten. He knew he had to tell them his name. A few minutes later the announcer's voice over the loudspeaker said, "We want to give our sincere thanks to the Liberation Army. We should all try to follow Comrade Lei Feng's example. . . ."

Then before the leadership of the site allowed Lei Feng to go they wrote a letter of thanks on a big sheet of red paper and sent him back to his barracks with an escort of workers beating drums and gongs.

Quite voluntarily and on his own initiative Lei Feng did many good things for the people and greatly contributed to the socialist construction of the motherland. Stories of Lei Feng's fine deeds went the rounds not only among his comrades and the people living near the barracks but also in many places along the railway lines in the Northeast. There was a saying which went like this: "If Lei Feng travels on errands a thousand *li*, he will do a trainload of good deeds."

Late in April 1961, Lei Feng's superior sent him by train to Lushun on a special mission. The train was crowded and the staff were kept very busy. As he leaned back in his seat and

thought about how it was a Party member's duty to serve the people whole-heartedly, he spotted an old woman who was having difficulty in finding a seat. Immediately, he jumped up and offered her his own. And then he decided it was about time he helped the staff on the train in some way. First, he swept the floor of the whole carriage, then he cleaned the windows and poured hot drinking water for the passengers. An old woman said, "Son, look at the sweat on your face. You'd better take a rest."

"It doesn't matter," Lei Feng replied. The fact was that Lei Feng felt extremely happy to be able to do something for the passengers.

Army life soon made Lei Feng a fit, robust young man. Once he went to Antung (now Tantung) to take part in a special physical exercise course held by an engineering unit stationed in the Shenyang area. While changing trains at Shenyang he saw a crowd at the entrance to the platform. Edging his way through the crowd he found a woman standing in the centre in a state of great distress. He pulled her aside and asked, "Sister, what's the matter?"

"I come from Shantung and am going to Kirin to visit my husband," the woman said. "While changing trains I went to a restaurant for a meal and lost my ticket there. I've no extra money and can't buy another. . . ." Her eyes glistened with tears as she poured out her story.

"Never mind," said Lei Feng, "you just come with me." Taking her to the ticket office Lei Feng bought her another ticket. Pressing it into her hand he said, "Go quick and catch your train or you'll miss it!"

"Comrade . . ." the woman was so moved that words failed her.

"Hurry up, the train will be leaving in a moment."

"But what's your name and which unit do you belong to?" the woman asked.

"My name is Liberation Army and I live in China," Lei Feng replied with a smile.

As the train pulled out the woman poked her head out through the window and waved her thanks with tearful eyes.

Not so long afterwards Lei Feng had to change trains again at Shenyang, this time en route for Fushun. It was just after five in the morning. With his knapsack on his back he passed the ticket barrier and walked onto the platform. As he was going through the underground passage he saw a white-haired woman carrying a big bundle on her back; she was walking with difficulty, using a stick. Lei Feng hurried up to her and asked, "Auntie, where are you going?"

"I've come from the other side of the Great Wall and am going to Fushun to visit my son," the old woman gasped.

Seeing that she was going his way Lei Feng quickly took the bundle from her and carried it for her. Supporting her with his hand he said, "I'll accompany you to Fushun." Grateful for his help the old woman kept on addressing him as "my lad".

When they got on the train Lei Feng saw that all the seats were taken, and while he was wondering what to do a student stood up and gave his seat to the old woman. Lei Feng stood beside her. After the train had started he took out two pieces of bread which he had bought at the station and gave one of them to the old woman. "Take it yourself, my lad, I'm not hungry," she said.

"Please take it, Auntie, and let's have a snack," Lei Feng said as he pressed the bread into the old woman's hand. She took it and was so moved that her hands trembled. She did not know what to do or say. Then she squeezed up to the next passenger and made some space for Lei Feng. "Sit down here, my lad," she said beckoning to the seat.

The words "my lad" made Lei Feng feel that his mother was talking to him. He sat beside the old woman and began to chat to her.

"My son is a worker," she said. "He left home several years ago but I've never visited him and don't know where he lives." She took out a letter and showed it to Lei Feng.

Lei Feng could not recognize the address, but seeing that the old woman anxiously wanted his help he said, "Don't worry, Auntie, I'll help you to find your son."

The train was now in the outskirts of Fushun. Huge buildings and tall chimneys began to rise up as the train sped by. The old woman obviously had not seen such big buildings before and she kept on looking out of the carriage window with surprise on her face.

"Auntie, this is our 'coal capital'," Lei Feng explained. "The coal produced here is known for its quantity and quality. When you see your son let him take you around and show you all the sights."

"Oh, I must see the sights," said the old woman. "I never knew I'd see such a big place in my lifetime!"

When the train arrived at the station Lei Feng put his bundle in a checking room and helped the old woman into the street, carrying her bundle for her. Supporting her with his hand they walked through the town inquiring after her son. After almost two hours of inquiries they finally found him. The first thing the old woman said to her son was, "If it weren't for the kindness of this lad, heaven knows when I'd be able to see you!"

When it was time for Lei Feng to say goodbye to the mother and son they held his hands tightly, reluctant to see him go. Finally, they all walked along together for a long distance before parting.

It may be asked why Lei Feng was so interested in helping others. The reason may be seen in this passage of his diary:

Man's life is finite but the cause of serving the people is infinite. It is my wish to devote my finite life to the infinite cause of serving the people.

### 13. *The Hard-working Gardener*

I consider that a real revolutionary is never selfish. Whatever he does is always for the benefit of the people. He feels that his responsibility is infinite. . . .

From Lei Feng's diary

Lei Feng kept a bundle containing an article dear to him — it was a red scarf. When he went from his home to the Anshan Iron and Steel Company and from there to the PLA he always carried the red scarf with him. Near the barracks were several primary schools, and when the children, going to and from school, saw the men of the Liberation Army, they always saluted or greeted them. Whenever Lei Feng saw the children he always thought of his younger days and how the children's organization — the Young Pioneers — had helped him go forward. He believed society should inculcate revolutionary ideas in children enabling them to become heirs to the cause of communism. He also believed he should do his part to help society carry out this task.

In October 1960 Lei Feng became a visiting instructor to the Young Pioneers of the primary schools in the Chiensheh and Penki streets at Fushun. And from that time on he had yet another task in his spare time.

When he first went to the primary school in Chiensheh Street he wore a neatly pressed uniform with a bright red scarf around his neck. In the Pioneers' office Lei Feng modestly and sincerely told the regular instructor of the Young Pioneers, "I hope you will kindly help me to promote the activities of the Young Pioneers."

The instructor, whose name was Chao and who had just finished his studies at a normal school, said, "I'm new at this and know very little about these things."

"Never mind, we'll learn together from the older instructors who are more experienced," said Lei Feng. "Since the Party has given us this task we must try to do it well."

After that Lei Feng used to go to the school in his spare time to help the children with their lessons and tell them stories.

Once Lei Feng was asked to speak to the Pioneers at a general meeting held to discuss the problem of how to follow the Party's instructions and be Chairman Mao's good children. While preparing his speech Lei Feng remembered the story of Chairman Mao's boyhood days and how it had had a great influence on him when he was a boy. Deciding to teach the children to love the Party and Chairman Mao he spoke on Chairman Mao's boyhood and touched on his own life and experience. His talk was lively and vivid and all the children listened with great interest.

Lei Feng paid great attention to the children's school work. Once six girls in a study group of the Penki school were wrestling with an arithmetical problem when Lei Feng came up to them and asked how they were getting along with their school work and whether there were any stumbling-blocks.

The girls were glad to see Lei Feng but hesitated to tell him of their difficulties. Noticing their shyness and trying to break down their reserve Lei Feng said, "Don't be afraid to ask if there's anything you don't understand."

Then the girls told Lei Feng about the problem they could not solve. Lei Feng at once showed them how to solve it and then asked them whether they were all clear about it. Five of the girls said they were but one remained silent with her head bowed. Lei Feng then patiently went over the problem again with her, this time in greater detail, until she had thoroughly grasped it. Finally he told the girls, "You must ask if there's anything you don't understand, otherwise you'll never be able to understand it."

Lei Feng frequently examined the children's school work and helped anyone who needed assistance. For instance, a pupil of the third grade in the Chiensheh school did fairly well at school work but his handwriting was poor. So Lei Feng taught him how to write, guiding the pupil's hand with his own.

Another pupil of the fifth grade in the Penki school often failed to do his homework. And when his schoolmates asked him to attend study group meetings, he often played truant. Once when Lei Feng looked in at a study group meeting he found that the pupil was absent again. The next day Lei Feng went to see him and asked, "You didn't attend yesterday's study group meeting, have you done your homework?" The boy stared at the ground. "You know, it's not enough just to listen to what the teacher says in class," explained Lei Feng. "You have to do your exercises as well. Otherwise, you won't be able to benefit from what the teacher tells you in class. Take driving, for instance. You have to keep on practising. If you don't, you'll lose your skill."

Ashamed of himself the pupil said in a low voice, "I promise to attend the study group meetings from now on."

"That's it," said Lei Feng. "What you learn now will be useful to your work in the future. If you don't give your mind to study now, what are you going to do when you're in need of knowledge later?"

Although Lei Feng was kept busy with his normal duties he always found time to go to the school either at the midday break or when bad weather interfered with his army tasks. Then he would talk to the instructors, teachers and Young Pioneers to find out how the children were getting on. He would then plan his work at the school to fit in with the children's needs, paying special attention to their all-round development.

Once when the pupils of the Penki school were collecting and storing manure they found they needed a long-handled scoop, so two girls in the fifth grade, Chen and Tsou, were asked to borrow one from the army barracks. Chen and Tsou used to be good friends but as they made their way to the barracks they walked separately, keeping a silent distance from each other. When they arrived at the barracks they met Lei Feng who guessed straight away that something had happened between them.

"You've quarrelled, haven't you?" Lei Feng asked.

The two girls blushed. They knew it was impossible to conceal what had happened, so they told Lei Feng the truth. The fact was that they had quarrelled over a pencil and a rubber and had not spoken to each other for a week.

Lei Feng smiled and said, "Don't make such a mountain out of a molehill. When you grow up you may have to work together for the socialist construction of the motherland. If you don't know how to unite and be friendly now, how are you going to co-operate with each other in your work later on?"

Lei Feng's words touched the two girls deeply, and they blushed with embarrassment. But neither of them, however, was willing to be the first to break the ice. Taking stock of the situation Lei Feng held the hands of the two girls and said, "If you think you should unite then shake hands and be good

friends again." Raising their heads the two girls looked at each other, burst into laughter and shook hands warmly.

Once Lei Feng found that some pupils in one of the grades were behaving badly in class, playing with mirrors and knives or reading picture-story books. Lei Feng made a point of helping those pupils, telling them several times the story of the great soldier Chiu Shao-yun who strictly observed discipline in battle at the cost of his own life. Every time he told the story the pupils of the class would listen with undivided attention, sitting perfectly still and quiet. Many of the children then resolved to observe discipline, concentrate on their studies and be Chairman Mao's good children. As for the children who used to play around with mirrors and knives or read stories in class, they, too, began to behave better.

Patiently and carefully Lei Feng taught the children to obey the Party and follow Chairman Mao's teachings, stressing the need to **"study well and make progress every day"**. Not satisfied with just talking to them about this, he also showed them how it could be done by setting himself as an example they could follow. It was in this way that he educated the children at every possible opportunity.

On Sundays and holidays the Young Pioneers would visit Lei Feng in his barracks. There they browsed over his copies of Chairman Mao's works, which he had read many, many times, and noticed the way he had underlined and marked the pages. They also saw his "mobile library", his patched but neat uniform, and the red scarf he had kept for more than ten years. And every time the children visited him he always warmly welcomed them and asked them how they were getting on at school.

Once some of the pupils in the fourth grade of the Chiensheh school visited Lei Feng as he was carefully reading a *People's Daily* editorial on the need to increase output and practise

economy. When he saw the children he put the newspaper down and greeted them, telling them to sit down and make themselves comfortable. Then he asked to see their homework. Looking at the exercise books he noticed that many pages in an arithmetic exercise book belonging to one of the children had been torn out.

"Why is your book so thin?" Lei Feng asked the child.

The pupil, a girl, blushed. His question made her realize how careless she had been with the book in the past. Seeing that she had recognized her mistake, Lei Feng said, "People have to work hard to make paper, so we should be careful in how we use it." Taking advantage of the opportunity he talked to the children about the importance of being industrious and economical in building socialism. He showed them his "treasure box" full of scrap iron, nails, rags and used toothpaste tubes. "Drops of water go to make up a river," he said. "Don't hold such small things in contempt. Everything in the box is useful in one way or another to the nation's industrial construction." After Lei Feng's talk the children began to keep "thrift boxes" for all sorts of odds and ends. They also economized on the pocket money their parents gave them and saved more than twenty yuan that way.

One morning in the winter of 1960 Lei Feng was collecting manure in the street when some of the school children saw him. Greatly surprised they asked, "Instructor Lei, you're a soldier, why are you doing this?" With a beaming smile Lei Feng explained that he was collecting manure because the people should make an all-out effort to develop agriculture and increase grain production. In such a way did Lei Feng work and live, with a single-mindedness and a sense of dedication that would always remain with the children as a shining example.

Once the children said, "The Communist Youth League calls on us to plant sunflowers but we want to collect manure as

well." Inspired by Lei Feng's example the Young Pioneers of the Chienhsieh school launched a movement for the collection of manure on holidays. As a result twenty-one heaps of manure were collected by twenty-one teams.

Like a hard-working gardener cultivating young plants Lei Feng helped to bring up the younger generation. He formed an intimate and immediate friendship with the Young Pioneers, leaving a lasting impression on their minds. The children often said, "We'll study hard and follow Uncle Lei Feng's example, and try to be heirs to the cause of communism."

#### 14. *An Immortal Soldier*

I should keep this well-known saying in mind: "Be as mild as spring with your comrades; be as hot as summer towards your work; towards individualism be like the autumn wind sweeping away the fallen leaves; and be as ruthless as winter towards the enemy."

From Lei Feng's diary

It was about nine o'clock on the morning of August 15, 1962. Lei Feng and his assistant, who had been driving in a drizzle, returned to their barracks. Jumping down from the cabin Lei Feng told his comrade to drive the truck away and get it washed down and cleaned.

Lei Feng's comrade took the driver's seat, got the truck in gear and turned the steering wheel. The truck chugged, shook itself, and backed, splashing mud all round. Meanwhile, Lei Feng waved and shouted, "Left, left, back, back. . . ."

The ground was covered with water and the road was slippery. While making a turn the truck bumped into a big wooden post standing by the roadside. Lei Feng was so busy directing the truck that he did not notice the post which crashed on his head knocking him unconscious. . . .

Within minutes the deputy company commander himself was driving at full speed to Shenyang to bring the city's most competent surgeon to Lei Feng's aid. Not a minute, not a second must be lost, the officer thought to himself as he raced against time for medical help.

Sweat was running down the deputy company commander's face as he returned with the surgeon, but it was too late — Lei Feng had died from a cerebral haemorrhage in spite of emergency treatment by the army doctors. And so Lei Feng parted from those close to him that morning, unable to hear his commander's call, his assistant's cries, his comrades' sobs. . . .

Lei Feng died on duty. He lived only twenty-two years, a short but glorious life. He was born in misery and poverty and brought up in happiness, and his life shed a brilliant light in the era of Mao Tse-tung.

On the agricultural front, Lei Feng was one of the best tractor drivers. Together with his comrades, he made the virgin land of Tuanshanhu, which had lain barren for ages, yield golden rice crops for the motherland.

On the industrial front, Lei Feng proved a conscientious worker in socialist construction. Within a short period he was voted an advanced worker three times, a pace-setter eighteen times, a red standard-bearer five times, and the most economical worker three times. He was also honoured with the title of "an activist in socialist construction who has fulfilled his target for 1960 fifty-three days ahead of schedule."

In the People's Liberation Army, he was cited once for second-class meritorious service and twice for third-class meri-

torious service. He was voted a "five-good" fighter and a pace-setter in practising economy and was honoured with the title of "model member of the Communist Youth League". He was also elected deputy to the People's Congress of the Fushun Municipality. In June 1961 he was put in charge of a transport squad, and in a period of eight months drove an accident-free total of 20,346 kilometres. Throughout his leadership his squad retained its title of a "four-good" squad.

For giving great help to the Young Pioneers the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League honoured him on March 23, 1963, with the posthumous title of "national outstanding instructor of the Young Pioneers".

Lei Feng's life was one of struggle. It was characterized by the communist spirit of loyalty to the motherland, the people and the Party as well as by complete selfless devotion to others. Lei Feng once said: "I think that you should live to make others live better." Again: "You should put yourself out for others as much as possible." This was Lei Feng's world outlook; this was the guiding principle in his life. And all of it reflected his extremely noble revolutionary character.

The people showered honours on Lei Feng but he never became conceited. This was what he wrote in his diary:

Oh, Lei Feng, Lei Feng! I call on you to remember this: You must never become swell-headed. You must never forget that it was the Party that delivered you from the jaws of death and gave you everything. . . . Whatever you can do, you should do. Any small achievement or progress you may have made is due to the Party and should be attributed to the Party.

Every river has its source, every tree its root. Lei Feng's character also had its source — Mao Tse-tung's thought and the Party's instructions. Lei Feng knew very well that "the more



often and the more intensely you study Chairman Mao's works the clearer will be your mind, the broader your views, the firmer your stand and the more far-reaching your thoughts". He compared Chairman Mao's teachings to food, to a soldier's weapon and to a vehicle's steering wheel. That was why he took to them with such great zeal, not only creatively studying and applying them, but applying them while studying them. This was essentially how Lei Feng, a poor orphan in the old society, became a hero in the new society and a communist fighter.

Lei Feng is immortal. In the words of a poet:

*What death does to you;  
From one Lei Feng come millions of Lei Fengs.*

To remember Lei Feng, Chairman Mao, our beloved leader, called on us to "**Learn from Comrade Lei Feng**".

Yes, we must listen to what the Party and Chairman Mao say and follow Lei Feng's example. We are now confronted with the heavy task of socialist construction and may face acute class struggle at any moment. Like Lei Feng we must always remember the misery suffered by the proletariat in the old society, take a firm stand in the class struggle, recognize whom to love and whom to hate, and devote ourselves entirely to the revolutionary cause of the proletariat. Like Lei Feng we must be a "screw that never rusts" in our work. Like Lei Feng we must, in our daily work, add brick after brick and stone after stone to the edifice of socialism. Above all, like Lei Feng, we must ceaselessly study Chairman Mao's works, constantly raise our level of class consciousness and Marxism-Leninism, and be good pupils of Chairman Mao.

毛主席的好战士—雷锋

陈广生著

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