

Lu Yu-lan Talks About:

Liberation of Women



I HAVE grown up in the new society. My village — Tungliushanku Village in Linhsi County, Hopei Province — was liberated in 1945 when I was five years old. We girls, like the boys, went to school. After I completed primary school, I did farm labour and joined in revolutionary work, cherishing the ideal of building the new socialist countryside.

Many ordinary working women in our Linhsi County have matured and become leading cadres. Many of them are in the county government, and many of them are principal leading posts at various levels. This shows the status of women in socialist New China. Like their men folk, women are managing state affairs. They have been emancipated politically.

Transforming Society and Family

The road of women's emancipation, as I recall, was not a smooth one. At first some did not understand the relationship between the improvement of women's position in the family and participation in society's class struggle, and they thought that as long as women got power in the family the liberation of women was completed. To assert their rights, they often quarrelled with fathers-in-law, mothers-in-law and husbands. But this adversely affected amicable relations in the family and failed to win public sympathy.

Later, the Party organizations led women to study Chairman Mao's teachings on women's emancipation. Chairman Mao pointed out in the 1950s: "Genuine equality between man and woman can be realized only in the process of socialist transformation of society as a whole." This helped women take a broader view. They understood that to achieve women's genuine liberation they must consider things in terms of the whole society. The family is a cell of society and only by transforming society can the family be transformed. After women have gained their position in society, changes in family

relations will ensue. Equality between man and woman will be put into effect.

I was engaged in women's work in my village in 1955. After I had talked it over with poor and lower-middle peasants, we set up an agricultural producers' co-operative. I also persuaded women to go out and take part in collective productive labour. At that time some people still held to the old idea that "the man goes to the county town but the woman remains in the

family. Her elder in-laws were strict and wouldn't let her go outside. I used to go to their house in the evening and learn needle work from her. Taking this as an opportunity, I chatted with them and explained the meaning of women's emancipation. I told them: "Wouldn't it be wonderful if women took part in collective productive labour and both men and women were co-op members!" She was very pleased with this and afterwards went to take part in farm labour. She worked well and got her earnings just like male members. Her in-laws and husband no longer opposed to what she did. Thus, more and more women in our co-op took part in collective labour and worked with increasing vigour.

To transform our poor village which had lots of sandy land, I and a dozen or so women organized a "March 8" afforestation team. There were no saplings

Lu Yu-lan, now 32 years old, has been chairman of an agricultural producers' co-operative and secretary of a production brigade Party branch under a people's commune. She has attended many conferences of activists in the study of Chairman Mao's works at the county, special region and provincial levels. She attended the Ninth National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in 1969 and was elected a Member of the Party's Central Committee. She is Secretary of the Linhsi County Party Committee and Deputy Secretary of the Hopei Provincial Party Committee.

Women Active on Various Fronts

Chairman Mao said in 1964: "Times have changed, and today men and women are equal. Whatever men comrades can accomplish, women comrades can too." Such an era has come to China.

Working women are playing an important role at the various posts in socialist revolution and socialist construction in our country.

There are women members in the Party committees and revolutionary committees at all levels, from commune to provincial level, which were established during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. There are also women members on the Party's Ninth Central Committee.

Except for work they are physically unequipped for, all other work is available to women. In the Taching Oilfield large numbers of women workers, cadres and technicians are engaged in the oil-extracting, refining and other departments. An oil-extracting team of more than 100 women in this oilfield is rated one of Taching's pace-setters. A group of young women electricians in Kwangchow has mastered the new technique of free live-line operations on 30-metre-high 220,000-volt high tension transmission lines. After working hard

at that time so we travelled scores of *li* every day to collect tree seeds. In three years we planted over 110,000 trees on more than 300 *mu* of sandy waste land. By 1971 our village's women and poor and lower-middle peasants had planted more than one million timber and fruit trees on 3,300 *mu* of sandy land. This checked wind and sand and ensured rich harvests for years running. The per-*mu* grain yield never exceeded 100 *jin* in the past, but it topped 650 *jin* last year. People gradually changed their view, saying that when women took part in collective production, they surely fulfilled half the task.

Changes in Economic Status

Day in and day out, women with children were tied down by household chores. Farm collectivization changed the old relations of production. With the consolidation and development of the people's commune, more and more welfare and maternal and child health establishments have been set up and their services steadily improved. Maternal and child health centres and short-term kindergartens during the busy farm seasons, flour and rice-husking mills equipped with machines and tailoring groups serving commune members have socialized a lot of household labour and thereby created conditions for women participating in collective production.

for 70 days, women workers in a forestry area in Heilungkiang Province built a 110-metre-long reinforced concrete bridge for transporting timber in a remote dense forest.

A women's shock team in the Tachai Brigade has always stood in the forefront in the battle to transform nature. At Shashihiu Village in north China, women and men together merged tens of thousands of small plots scattered on slopes and in gullies into large terraced fields. Women took part in the work of conducting water from a spring to their village by digging a 1,200-metre-long pipeline which crosses a 120-metre-high hilly ridge. Thanks to the efforts of the past dozen years or so, Shashihiu has become a new prosperous socialist village.

The number of women doctors, teachers, engineers, technicians, scientific research workers, geological prospecting team members and cadres is steadily increasing all over the country.

Large numbers of women fighters are maturing in the People's Liberation Army. Chu Hui-fen, an orphan who drifted around Shanghai before liberation, was one of China's first women pilots. She is now a deputy air group leader. Militia-women in the Hsiao Brigade on Hainan Island have not only mastered all the necessary skills of rowing boats and fishing at sea, but have also learnt sea defence and attack skills.

Women doing collective labour get equal pay for equal work. Having received their own income, women's economic position changed. Family relations also changed accordingly. At the Sunchuang Brigade in the Lipochai Commune, the Lin family has 13 persons belonging to four generations. Lin Chin-lan, her elder sister-in-law and her mother make up an important part of the family labour force. What they get for their labour forms a major part of the family income. This has changed the custom of the old society whereby women asked men for the money they needed. All major spending in the family is decided through democratic discussions. Their food and clothing have improved over the past few years. Chin-lan and her sister-in-law proposed building some new rooms, to which all the family members agreed. So the Lin family added eight new brick rooms. By respecting the old, caring for the young and helping each other, the family lives amicably and happily.

Women have gradually mastered different kinds of production skills and become an important contingent in production. Everywhere in the countryside women are tending pumps, driving tractors or operating flour mills and crushers. They have also made contributions to agricultural scientific experiments. At the Peihsiung-yuan Brigade in the Hsiapaoszu Commune, there is such an experimental group which was formed by 15

women. The leader is Yang Ai-lien, a deputy secretary of the brigade Party branch, and deputy leader Liu Huan-chin, daughter of a poor peasant family. Both are graduates of the primary school and were less than 20 years old when the group was founded in 1967. Both have not had much schooling, but they have kept the spirit of "the Foolish Old Man who removed the mountains." While experimenting, they have raised their educational level and learnt the necessary skills. Over the past few years the group members cultivated more than 30 fine strains. Apart from making a contribution to the state and the collective, they also won public acclaim.

Growing in Struggle

The more important thing for women in gaining emancipation is to be concerned with and take part in political struggle. Owing to the influence of old ideas and old traditions, not many women took part in political activities or were firm in waging struggles. Plunging into political struggle to brave storms and face the world, women have acquired a better understanding of revolutionary principles, raised their political consciousness and gained experience in struggle.

Many women activists and cadres in our county have grown in the course of political struggle. Take the five women members on the Party committee in our county for example. Hsi Yueh-ching, now a 37-year-old Hui nationality woman, led the Hui poor and lower-middle peasants to set up people's communes in 1958 in warm response to Chairman Mao's call. This promoted the

breeding and side occupations. She has grown into a fine woman cadre. Hsia Hsiu-mei, Yang Ai-lien and

Yang Hsiu-chih are 21 or 22 years old. During the Great Cultural Revolution, they waged a resolute struggle against Liu Shao-chi's agents and unreformed bad persons, exposed and criticized their crimes of restoring capitalism in the rural areas and thereby defended Chairman Mao's revolutionary line.

I have also experienced quite a number of political struggles in my work. In 1959 a rich peasant in our brigade colluded with capitalist roaders in the Party to fell and sell more than 100,000 young trees which were planted by the "March 8" afforestation team. They also slaughtered the collective's pigs and sheep. This seriously undermined the collective economy. Together with the poor and lower-middle peasants, I struggled against them.

When the brigade Party branch committee was reorganized, I was elected secretary. Soon afterwards they spread lies and slanders, such as "If a woman is in command, trees won't grow" and "When a woman takes the lead, there will be bad luck." At the same time they also made up a list of my "crimes" in a vain attempt to get me thrown out of my post. In studying Chairman Mao's teaching "What is work? Work is struggle" at that time, I felt I really understood its meaning. I knew very clearly that what they hated was not me but the socialist road which I and the poor and lower-middle peasants followed perseveringly. I was determined to struggle against them resolutely. With the support of the poor and lower-middle peasants we triumphed in the struggle.

that struggle, the brigade's work has been done better and I also have made new advances.

Minority Nationality Cadres Maturing

UNDER the guidance of Chairman Mao's proletarian revolutionary line, great attention has been paid by local Party organizations in training cadres of minority nationalities and helping them mature rapidly.

Great Efforts to Train Yi Nationality Cadres

Party organizations at all levels in the Liangshan Yi Autonomous Chou of Szechuan Province, southwest China, have trained a group of new cadres of Yi nationality to reinforce the Party's cadre contingent. This

has strengthened unity in the Party and between nationalities.

Before the Great Cultural Revolution, former slave-owners and their agents in the autonomous chow seized some of the leading posts and revolutionary cadres trained from among the emancipated slaves were discriminated against and edged out because of the counter-revolutionary revisionist cadre line pushed by Liu Shao-chi and his local agents. During the Cultural Revolution the Party organizations at all levels led emancipated slaves and other people of various

nationalities to expose and criticize this counter-revolutionary revisionist line. In accordance with Chairman Mao's instructions on training successors to the revolutionary cause of the proletariat, Party leadership at all levels trained and selected a number of new Yi nationality cadres who were tempered in the class struggle and the struggle between the two lines.

Now Yi cadres constitute 51 per cent of the leading members on the Liangshan Yi Autonomous Chou Committee of the Chinese Com-