

The original documents are located in Box 17, folder “November 28 - December 7, 1975 - Far East - Briefing Book - China - Mrs. Ford and Susan - Mrs. Ford's Copy (1)” of the National Security Adviser Trip Briefing Books and Cables for President Ford, 1974-1976 at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

Copyright Notice

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Gerald R. Ford donated to the United States of America his copyrights in all of his unpublished writings in National Archives collections. Works prepared by U.S. Government employees as part of their official duties are in the public domain. The copyrights to materials written by other individuals or organizations are presumed to remain with them. If you think any of the information displayed in the PDF is subject to a valid copyright claim, please contact the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.



ABOARD

Air Force One

2

OUR DESTINATION IS EIELSON AFB, ALASKA
THE EXPECTED ARRIVAL TIME IS 10:45 A.M.
THEIR TIME

TIME CHANGE ON THIS LEG: GAIN 5 HOURS

OUR FLIGHT ALTITUDE WILL BE 31,000 FEET,
AND OUR SPEED WILL AVERAGE 475 M.P.H.

WE WILL FLY OVER BUFFALO, EDMONTON,
WHITEHORSE

DESTINATION WEATHER FORECAST

CONDITIONS: CLOUDY AND COLD WITH SNOW

TEMPERATURE: 20



3a, 3b, 3c

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION
Presidential Libraries Withdrawal Sheet

WITHDRAWAL ID 030316

REASON FOR WITHDRAWAL ÇNational security restriction

TYPE OF MATERIAL ÇBiography

DESCRIPTION Chinese officials

CREATION DATE 11/13/1975

VOLUME 3 pages

COLLECTION/SERIES/FOLDER ID . 035800347

COLLECTION TITLE NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER. TRIP
BRIEFING BOOKS AND CABLES OF GERALD
FORD

BOX NUMBER 17

FOLDER TITLE November 28 - December 7, 1975 - Far
East - Briefing Book - China - Mrs.
Ford and Susan - Mrs. Ford's Copy (1)

DATE WITHDRAWN 06/30/2010

WITHDRAWING ARCHIVIST GG

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

BRIEFING BOOK FOR MRS. FORD AND SUSAN FORD

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Tab A A Brief Scenario of Your Activities in Peking

- Tab B The Role of Women in China
 - an excellent analysis done by State and CIA

- Tab C "Women in China"
 - the Chinese version of the position of women in China's political and social life, reprinted from one of their propaganda publications

- Tab D The Long March
 - a description of the epic event of Mao's revolution, from Andre Malraux's Anti-memoirs (1967); a romanticized account, but it reflects the power of the legend.

- Tab E Biographical Information
 - brief papers on Chinese leaders, including prominent women

- Tab F Peking and Its Environs
 - a CIA description of the city, with maps and photographs

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~



DECLASSIFIED

Authority NLF MR 80-4, #4

By RAO NLF Date 1/14/81

5
A



11/25/75
9:45 pm

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

MRS. GERALD R. FORD

PEKING, PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA
Monday-Friday, December 1-5, 1975

Monday, December 1, 1975

NOTE: Free day until 3:00 pm.

3:00 pm See President's schedule for Peking arrival.
7:15 pm See President's schedule for Welcoming Banquet.

Tuesday, December 2, 1975

NOTE: Free day until 7:05 pm.

7:05 pm See President's schedule for Cultural Event.

Wednesday, December 3, 1975

10:30 am Mrs. Ford, escorted by an appropriate PRC official,
boards motorcade.

Motorcade assignments as follows:

Official Car #2 Mrs. Ford
PRC Official

Car #1 P. Sorum
D. Kinley

Car #2 Mrs. Bush
S. Weidenfeld



Car #3	N. Chirdon K. Schumacher
Car #4	J. Merson J. Harrell
Press Bus #1	P. Matson
Press Bus #2	

MOTORCADE DEPARTS Guest Villa en route Palace Museum.

[Driving time: 15 minutes]

10:45 am MOTORCADE ARRIVES Palace Museum.

Mrs. Ford will be met by:
A responsible member of the Museum

Mrs. Ford, escorted by the responsible member, proceeds on a tour of the Palace Museum that Mrs. Ford did not see on her last visit.

11:25 am Tour concludes.

11:26 am Mrs. Ford proceeds to motorcade for boarding.

11:30 am MOTORCADE DEPARTS Palace Museum en route Guest House.

[Driving time: 15 minutes]

11:45 am MOTORCADE ARRIVES Guest House.

Mrs. Ford proceeds to her quarters.

PERSONAL/STAFF TIME: 1 hour, 45 minutes

1:25 pm GUEST & STAFF INSTRUCTION: Board motorcade. Assignments remain the same as morning tour.

1:30 pm Mrs. Ford boards motorcade.

MOTORCADE DEPARTS Guest House en route
Peking Dance School.

[Driving time: 25 minutes]

1:55 pm MOTORCADE ARRIVES Peking Dance School.

Mrs. Ford will be met by:

Mr. Chang Tse, Responsible member, Peking
Dance School

Mrs. Ford, escorted by Mr. Chang, proceeds to
second floor rest room for tea.

2:00 pm Mrs. Ford arrives rest room and takes her seat.

NOTE: After tea and cigarettes have been
offered, Mr. Chang will offer words of
welcome to Mrs. Ford.

2:10 pm Mrs. Ford, escorted by Mr. Chang, departs rest room
en route fourth floor classrooms.

NOTE: Classes will be in session.

2:15 pm Mrs. Ford, escorted by Mr. Chang, arrives
classrooms to observe class sessions.

PRESS POOL COVERAGE

NOTE: Mrs. Ford will be invited to learn
a portion of the dance which the students
are learning.

2:30 pm Mrs. Ford, escorted by Mr. Chang, departs classroom
en route School auditorium.

2:35 pm Mrs. Ford arrives School auditorium and takes her
seat.

2:36 pm Performance begins.

2:55 pm Performance concludes.

NOTE: Mrs. Ford may wish to go onto stage
to thank performers before departing.

3:00 pm Mrs. Ford, escorted by Mr. Chang, departs auditorium en route motorcade for boarding.

NOTE: Mr. Chang will bid farewell at the motorcade.

3:05 pm MOTORCADE DEPARTS Peking Dance School en route Guest House.

[Driving time: 25 minutes]

3:30 pm MOTORCADE ARRIVES Guest House.

Mrs. Ford proceeds to her quarters.

PERSONAL/STAFF TIME: 4 hours, 10 minutes

7:40 pm See President's schedule for Sports Exhibition.

Thursday, December 4, 1975

9:55 am GUEST & STAFF INSTRUCTION: Board motorcade. Assignments as on Wednesday's tour.

10:00 am Mrs. Ford, escorted by an appropriate PRC Official, boards motorcade.

MOTORCADE DEPARTS Guest House en route Peking Carpet Factory.

[Driving time: 30 minutes]

10:30 am MOTORCADE ARRIVES Peking Carpet Factory.

Mrs. Ford, escorted by the Responsible member of the carpet factory, proceeds to rest room for tea.

NOTE: Susan Ford will join the party at rest room. The Responsible member will give a background briefing on the factory operation.

10:45 am Mrs. Ford and Susan, escorted by the responsible member of the factory, proceed on tour of facilities.

PRESS POOL COVERAGE

NOTE: Tour will begin in design room and proceed through weaving rooms to cutting rooms before conclusion in finished product area.

11:30 am Mrs. Ford and Susan conclude tours and board their respective motorcades.

MOTORCADES DEPART Peking Carpet Factory en route United States Liason Office.

[Driving time: 20 minutes]

11:50 am MOTORCADE ARRIVES U. S. Liason Office.

Mrs. Ford will be met by:
Mrs. George (Barbara) Bush

Mrs. Ford and Susan, escorted by Mrs. Bush, proceed inside USLO Residence to greet USLO personnel at a buffet luncheon.

11:55 am The President arrives USLO.

12:40 pm Mrs. Ford bids farewell and departs residence en route motorcade for boarding.

MOTORCADE DEPARTS U.S. Liason Office en route Guest House.

[Driving time: 20 minutes]

1:00 pm MOTORCADE ARRIVES Guest House.

Mrs. Ford proceeds to her quarters.

PERSONAL/STAFF TIME: 6 hours, 15 minutes

7:15 pm See President's schedule for Farewell Banquet.

Friday, December 5, 1975

8:30 am See President's schedule for Peking departure.

B



NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION
Presidential Libraries Withdrawal Sheet

WITHDRAWAL ID 030317

REASON FOR WITHDRAWAL ÇNational security restriction

TYPE OF MATERIAL ÇBriefing Paper

TITLE The Role of Women in China

CREATION DATE 11/1975

VOLUME 7 pages

COLLECTION/SERIES/FOLDER ID . 035800347

COLLECTION TITLE NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER. TRIP
BRIEFING BOOKS AND CABLES OF GERALD
FORD

BOX NUMBER 17

FOLDER TITLE November 28 - December 7, 1975 - Far
East - Briefing Book - China - Mrs.
Ford and Susan - Mrs. Ford's Copy (1)

DATE WITHDRAWN 06/30/2010

WITHDRAWING ARCHIVIST GG

Sanitized 1/14/81

THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN CHINA

The role of women in Chinese society had begun to change under the impact of modernization even before the Communists came to power in 1949. The process was accelerated significantly after the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC).

Women in Traditional China

Traditional Chinese society was based on a hierarchy of age and sex, with young women at the bottom of the social ladder. Marriages were arranged by parents, often without regard to the personal wishes of the bride. Women could not divorce their husbands; nor could widows remarry. Higher education was available only to girls from wealthy and sophisticated families. Women did not work outside the home except in agriculture. Children were cared for at home by their mothers or other female relatives, unless the family was wealthy enough to employ a nursemaid.

Despite this theoretically low and subservient status, women, particularly older matriarchs, were often able to exercise considerable power behind the scenes. In the last years of the Manchu Dynasty, for example, the nominal Emperor was completely dominated by the reactionary Dowager Empress who was the actual ruler of the country.

Women in the Revolution

Women played an important, if often hidden role in both the Nationalist Revolution of 1911 and the Communist Revolution in 1949. They smuggled arms and ammunition, concealed revolutionaries in their homes, and, as women began to be more common as students in Chinese universities, organized revolutionary activities among students. Among the most

CONFIDENTIAL



PORTIONS EXEMPTED

E.O. 12065, Sec. 1-301 (d)

NLF MR 80-4, #5NLF Date DAD, 1/14/81

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

-2-

famous of such women, who organized strikes and political activities among female workers and students during the 1920s and 1930s, was Chou En-lai's wife, Teng Ying-ch'ao.

Women in the People's Republic of China

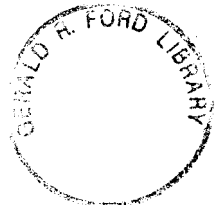
The first major law passed by the new regime was the Marriage Law, promulgated May 1, 1950. The law bans bigamy, concubinage, child betrothal, interference with the remarriage of widows, and other abuses of the old society. It defines the relationship between husband and wife in terms of equality. Both have an equal right to seek divorce. It guarantees women the right to work outside the home in the occupation of their choice, and permits women to own and inherit property on the same basis as men.

This law and the provisions of the Constitution of 1954 which guaranteed women full equality in political, economic, social and family life have brought about a revolution in the role of women in Chinese society. The new Constitution adopted on January 17, 1975, reaffirms the equal rights of women.

Today, most women work, out of economic necessity, and they are encouraged to do so not only by their families but by the government. Women can be found in virtually all professions--about half of the doctors in China are women--and some effort is being made to narrow the wage disparity between men and women. Women serve in the militia and the People's Liberation Army. In recent years, the Chinese have also gone out of their way to insure that women are amply represented among the relatively few students selected for entrance into universities.

The government has facilitated women's involvement in productive work outside the home by funding child care centers which are almost universally available. The law entitles those women employed in the modern sector of the economy to 56 days off with full pay in case of childbirth, and to additional time off thereafter for nursing.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~



~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

-3-

The Chinese have devoted somewhat more attention to women's issues this year in part because this is International Women's Year. The extent to which Chinese propoganda insists that men and women are equal and that women should be paid equal pay for equal work is an indication, however, that the deeply rooted belief in women's inferiority has yet to be overcome among large segments of the male population.

Women in the Party

Although women have long been much in evidence in the labor force, only in recent years has Peking made a concerted effort to recruit women into the ruling communist party and to give them positions of some responsibility. At the grassroots level--in factories, farms, the neighborhoods and on street party committees--women party members frequently outnumber men and often are the most important political leaders in their area.

There are fewer women at the higher echelons of the party apparatus, but in recent years women have been better represented than ever before. Women comprise over ten percent of the party central committee, which was elected in 1973 and has about 300 members. This is perhaps the largest number of women ever to be elected to such an important party organization.

The Women's Federation

The Women's Federation, a national organization that comes under the direct control of the party central committee, deals exclusively with matters affecting women. The Women's Federation, however, is not a lobby on behalf of women's rights nor does it play a policymaking role. Rather, it is an instrument through which the party organizes women throughout the country to convey and implement policies relating to women. Foremost among these is a rather stringent birth control policy, which prevents young couples from marrying until they have

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~



~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

-4-


reached the required age (which is about 25 for women and 28 for men) limits the number of children a couple may have, and in some cases imposes compulsory sterilization after the birth of the third or fourth child. The Women's Federation is probably used at lower levels to help educate women about birth control devices, which are dispensed with no charge.

The Women's Federation, like most other organizations, was dismantled during the Cultural Revolution of the mid-1960s. Women's groups have been reestablished at local levels, but the national organization has not yet officially been reestablished. Earlier this year, Peking announced plans to hold a national women's congress to elect a new Women's Federation at the national level. The congress has not yet been convened, but several women who are married to important party officials seem to be acting as officers in the Women's Federation.

Women in the Leadership

Most women at the top level of the political hierarchy are wives of important party officials. Many of these women enjoy considerable prestige in the party because of their long standing service to the party and because they fought alongside their husbands during China's civil war. Among the most highly respected women in China is Teng Ying-chao, wife of Premier Chou En-lai. Teng is a member of the party central committee and a former vice-chairman of the Women's Federation.

The wives of Chinese political leaders frequently hold official positions of their own, most often in the government bureaucracy that exists alongside the party structure. Their political fortunes usually parallel those of their husbands.

 The public profile of such women is often a clue to the status


~~CONFIDENTIAL~~



~~CONFIDENTIAL~~


-5-

of their husbands.



Although most politically important women are either married to or have close personal ties to powerful men, a few women with no such connections appear to have made it to the top ranks of the political hierarchy on their own. This is a rather recent phenomenon but is likely to continue, given Peking's determination to bring more women into political positions. One such woman is Wu Kuei-hsien, the only woman among China's 12 vice premiers and a member of the party's ruling politburo, who was only a factory worker until she came to the attention of party leaders in Peking a few years ago. Wu has met with visiting women's delegations, suggesting she may play a role in the new Women's Federation; and she appears to have some limited foreign policy functions as well.

Another newly prominent woman is Li Su-wen who led China's delegation to the International Women's Conference in Mexico earlier this year. Li holds the relatively unimportant position of a vice chairman of the National People's Congress, China's legislature, but the job has brought her to Peking from her home in northeast China and has put her into the limelight. Now that she holds a position in the national leadership, she is frequently called upon to meet with foreign visitors. As a member of the party central committee, she, too, may ultimately play a role in the reconstructed Women's Federation.

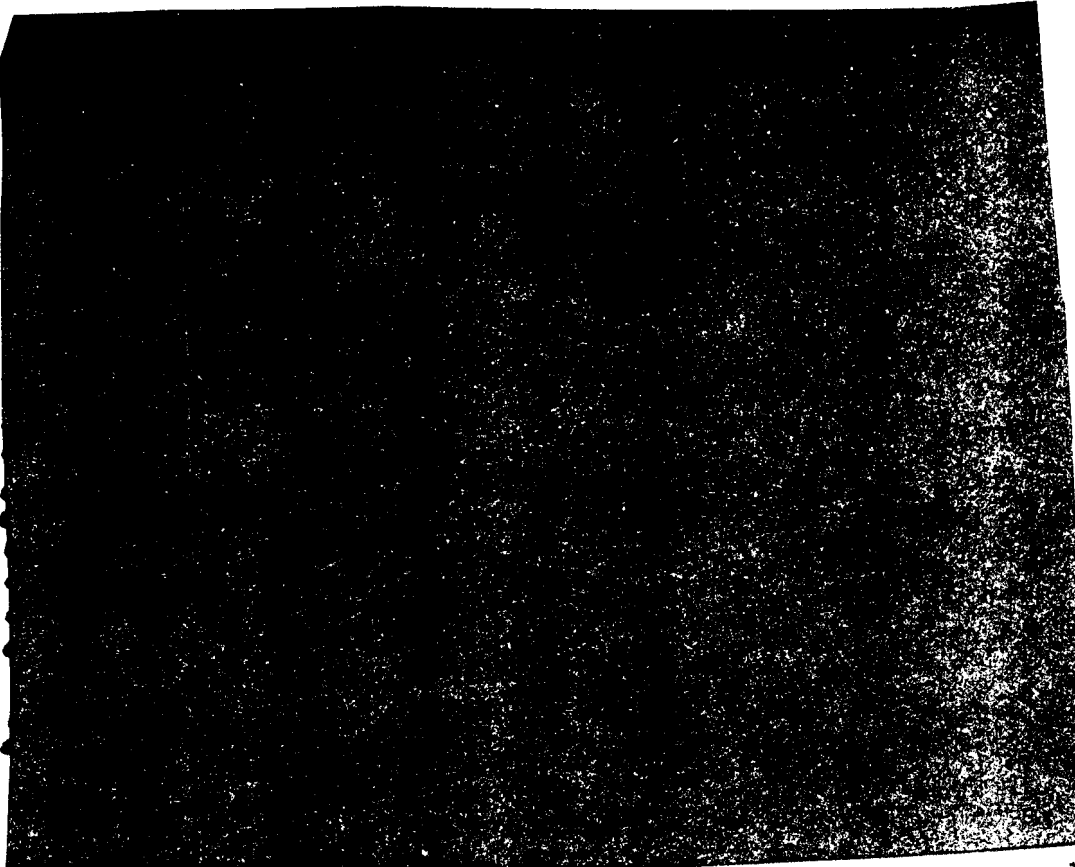


~~CONFIDENTIAL~~



~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

-6-



China has had a long history of politically ambitious women. Several of imperial China's most ruthless and notorious leaders in centuries past have been women, and it is no accident that ordinary Chinese people have often compared Chiang Ching to such women. These unfavorable comparisons, coupled with the unhappy history of women rulers and the continuing influence of traditional attitudes, suggest that prospects for the elevation of a woman to the top position in the hierarchy are quite limited.

Usage of Names by Chinese Women

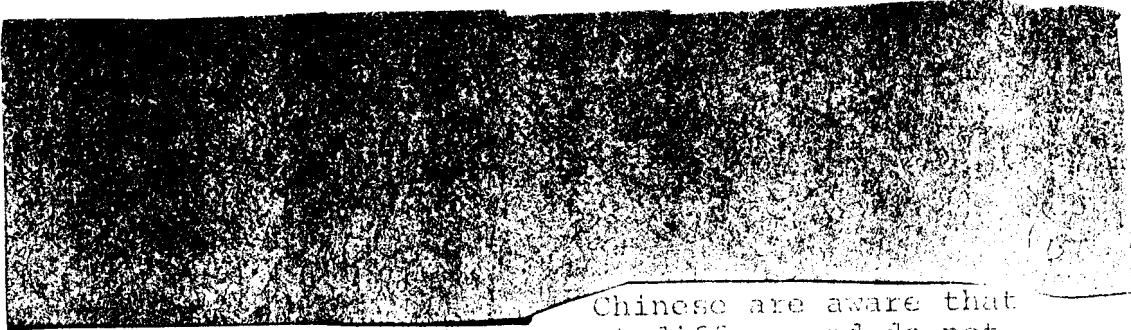
As a rule Chinese women do not take their husband's name after marriage, retaining their maiden name. This is particularly true in the case of professional women. However, if a woman is present at a social function in her capacity as a wife, rather than

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~



~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

-7-



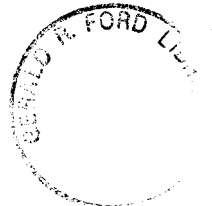
Chinese are aware that Western customs in this respect differ, and do not necessarily expect Americans to hold to Chinese usage.

American Women Visitors to the PRC

Quite a few American women have traveled to the PRC and the Chinese have invited several delegations composed entirely of women. In 1974, Shirley Maclaine led a group designed to represent a cross-section of American women and the film "The Other Half of the Sky" recorded their experiences in China. A delegation of prominent American women (including Special Assistant to the President Virginia Knauer) sponsored by the American Women for International Understanding visited the PRC this October. Congresswoman Margaret Heckler will head a delegation of Congresswomen to the PRC at the end of December.

November 1975

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~



C



WOMEN IN CHINA

— Interview with Comrade Liu Kuei-ying, a woman weaver and vice-chairman of the revolutionary committee of Peking No. 2 Cotton Textile Mill

Would you talk about women's position in today's political and social life?

Well, first of all, after the People's Republic of China was founded, it was specifically written into the Constitution that women "enjoy equal rights with men in all spheres of political, economic, cultural, social and family life". As the revolution and the building of socialism developed in China, this provision came more and more into full effect.

The history of the older women in our mill shows this. Before liberation, poverty forced many of them to become child brides or maidservants of the rich. When they came to work in the mill, they were oppressed and exploited more than the men by the capitalists and their bosses. Their life was so utterly miserable that you couldn't say they had any political or social status at all. Not only that, but most women were poisoned by the feudal and bourgeois thinking of the old society and did not know what kind of status or rights they should have. Only a very few who had progressive ideas recognized this.

Today, with equal rights in every field, women are handling all kinds of work. They are in leading positions at all levels. During the proletarian cultural revolution, when we elected members of the revolutionary committee, the leadership kept insisting that there should be a proper proportion of women. In our mill, one-third of the leaders in the revolutionary committee and the various workshops are women. Our women are also deputies to the National People's Congress, the highest organ of state power, and representatives to the national congresses of the Chinese Communist Party.

Is equal pay for equal work universal?

Yes. Women are paid the same as men for equal work. But in order to take over some jobs traditionally done by men, we need



first to master the skills. Thus the state pays a lot of attention to training women.

In the old society I could only keep from starving by picking over cinders. There wasn't any way to study. After liberation came in 1949, I went to a primary school for a year and a half. In 1954 I entered the mill when it was still being built and was promptly sent to a textile mill in Tsingtao to learn. Over 3,000 people went, most of them women. Then after we came back to Peking, we joined the sparetime literacy class run by our mill.

The Party paid much attention to the raising of our political consciousness. In 1959 I became a member of the Communist Party and in 1968 I was elected to the mill's revolutionary committee.

Since a high political level raises ability, the leaders of the revolutionary committee and workshops have a fixed day each week to study works by Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Chairman Mao. This helps us use the scientific principles of Marxism-Leninism to analyze, discuss and discover ways to solve practical problems in our work.

How does China protect the health and well-being of women?

In many ways. Women are not assigned heavy work. Beginning from her seventh month of pregnancy, a woman worker may work seven hours a day instead of eight. After the birth, she has 56 days of paid maternity leave—70 days for twins or difficult birth. The mill has a nursery for babies and a kindergarten for children up to seven years old. Mothers get two half-hours off to nurse their babies during each working day. If the baby is taken care of at home not near the mill, the nursing time can be increased.

Great attention is paid to the health of women and their families. The mill has a 30-bed clinic and health stations in the workshops, nursery, kindergarten and dormitories. This is time saving and convenient for women workers, their children and other family members. Medical charges for workers and cadres are free. Family members pay at half cost and the rest is provided by the state. All women workers have regular physical examinations. In addition, those over 35 years of age have a special medical check in order to detect in time diseases common to this age group.

What measures do you take for planned parenthood?

Most of us in the mill have two or three children. The comrades responsible for the well-being of women workers and the clinic medical workers explain the benefits of planned parenthood to the women and tell them how to do it. Now that women workers are

independent economically, they have equal rights in deciding family affairs — a thing that didn't exist in the old society. Workers in our mill pay attention to planned parenthood because it ensures the health of mothers and children, gives mothers more time for study and for educating their children better. The state also helps us women in other ways such as making the contraceptive pill, abortions and planned-parenthood operations available. This is all free of charge and the women have the right of decision in these matters.

(From *China Reconstructs* March 1972)

Women's Liberation Through Struggle

HSU KUANG*

I WAS BORN in a poor family in Nankung, a small county town in southern Hopei province, and in 1936 entered the normal school there. I was very indignant at the society that allowed the bloodsucking landlords and officials to ride roughshod over the poor, while the latter, after gruelling labor, still went hungry. A teacher named Chang often talked about why class oppression existed and introduced me to some progressive books. The elder sister of a classmate, who I later came to know was an underground Communist Party member, told us that the Communist Party had been leading the poor to make revolution and that after a 25,000-li Long March the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army led by Chairman Mao had set up an anti-Japanese base in Yen-an. I began to learn the truths of revolution.

It was the time of the Kuomintang white terror. Teacher Chang soon lost his job. Because I had led some of my fellow students to oppose this decision by the school principal, I was expelled and taken to the county government office where I was interrogated and

* HSU KUANG is deputy head of the revolutionary committee of Peking's western district. Working at organizing women since before the liberation, she later was chairwoman of the women's federation in Tientsin.

beaten. I had to leave town and finally got a job as substitute teacher in a primary school in a distant village.

In 1937 the Japanese imperialists invaded Peiping and pushed southward along the railway line. Nankung was bombed, and the Kuomintang officials fled in panic. Just as I was searching for the road to revolution the Eighth Route Army led by the Communist Party marched into Nankung and set up the anti-Japanese local government there. The Party organization carried out education among us young people first. Soon I joined the revolutionary ranks. In 1938 the first Women's Association for National Salvation in south Hopei came into being. I was elected head of the propaganda department. In that same year I joined the Communist Party.

Smashing Feudal Shackles

The women's association sought to mobilize and bring the women in the villages into the movement to save the nation from Japanese aggression. We intellectuals had had little contact with the peasants and when we first walked through the village in our Chinese gowns or skirts the people would just stare at us and talk behind our backs. When the village head beat gongs to call out the women to the meetings we were holding for them, only men and old women came, but no young ones. Later we found out that the landlords and rich peasants had spread slanders among the masses, saying, "They're a pack of wild women. Their words are not for young brides to hear."

In old China not only did the working women suffer the same oppression and exploitation by the landlords and officials as the men, but in addition they were fettered by the feudal concept that women were inferior to men. Marriage was arranged arbitrarily by the parents. The men ruled over the women. In southern Hopei it was very common for women to be kept from working in the fields out of the fear that they would be seen by strange men. The daughter-in-law or wife had to ask her mother-in-law or husband for every cent. Young women had no position at all in the family.

When the women's association was faced with the job of mobilizing the women for anti-Japanese work, two opposing views arose among its members. One view supported the demands of some young women that tyrannical husbands and mothers-in-law be taken to meetings and publicly criticized. This, they felt, would strengthen the women's determination and give vent to their anger. Others pointed out that at present Japanese imperialism was the enemy of the whole Chinese people, and that this method would undermine the unity of the people against the invaders and sharpen contradictions in the family. Through discussion we finally agreed that victory

in the war could be won only by uniting all those that could be united. Without national liberation, women's liberation would have no meaning. We went from house to house visiting and making friends with the women. They came to understand us and learned to reason patiently with their stubborn mothers-in-law and husbands.

This proved a good way. The change in the family of Sister Wang Erh in Hsiaowang village, Chulu county, is an example. She was married into the Wang family as a child-bride at the age of 12. Her husband was a tenant farmer and 17 years older than she. She had been ill-treated by the family, and whenever they got a poor harvest, as payment for the rent she was sent to labor for the landlord like a beast of burden. With the backbreaking toil and unhappy family relations, she rarely said anything all day long. People called her "the dumb daughter-in-law". She was not allowed to come to our mobilization meetings because her mother-in-law was afraid she might get out of hand and neglect the household work, while her husband feared she would be attracted to other men.

When I went to visit her, her mother-in-law received me coolly and wouldn't even allow the younger woman to show herself. Some comrades contended that the only hope for Sister Wang Erh's emancipation was for her to get a divorce, return to her mother's house and join the women's association there. I refused to be discouraged and went back again and again to visit and chat with the mother-in-law. I tried to help her see that women should contribute their share to the resistance — that if the invaders took over our country we would become slaves. I described the sufferings of our fellow countrymen in the northeast, which had been occupied by the Japanese invaders, and pointed out that if we were to lose our country, families would be broken up. I also told her about my own life.

When the mother-in-law learned that I too came from a poor family which had been persecuted by the Kuomintang, and that my mother had died when I was 15, she became very sympathetic. As we talked I would help her with whatever she was doing, like cooking the meal or feeding the pig. And when she was spinning I would prepare the cotton for her. She began saying, "These women have heads on their shoulders. They are also downtrodden people and are of one heart and mind with us."

One evening the mother-in-law sent her son away for the night and had me stay over with her daughter-in-law. Sister Wang Erh poured out her sufferings to me and said she wanted to get a divorce. I tried to help her see that her mother-in-law and husband were also poor people. This formed a basis for improvement of relations.

Actually the husband's own thinking was already changing under constant help from members of the Peasants' Association.*

In 1938 the enemy occupied the county seat of Nankung and often carried out mopping up campaigns in the surrounding villages. The enemy's burning, killing and looting also educated the local people. Later the husband joined the Peasants' Association and the wife and mother both joined the women's association. We students also changed in the course of doing mass work. We discarded our city dress and put on peasant clothes. We became very close to the local people and many of the elderly women "adopted" us as "daughters".

'Dumb Daughter-in-Law' to Chairwoman

After we got the women mobilized, we organized them to weave cloth and make shoes which were sold to the Eighth Route Army at cost. We also organized a self-defence unit of young women. They took turns guarding the village, tearing down town walls or destroying roads before the oncoming enemy, nursing the wounded, carrying stretchers, acting as secret messengers, hiding stocks of grain from the enemy and helping the soldiers' families. During the time of the mop-ups we organized young women's guerrilla units. To confuse and frighten the enemy, we took pot shots at them and threw hand grenades. Often we lit firecrackers in kerosene cans when we didn't have enough ammunition.

"Dumb daughter-in-law", Sister Wang Erh, was particularly active in supporting the front. She was a fast weaver and the cloth was very good. She could make twice as many shoes as the others. She was elected head of the village women's association. Her home and land lay just at the end of the village. One day while she was working in her garden and at the same time keeping a lookout, someone came along whom she suspected to be a spy. As she engaged him in conversation she reached for a string hanging outside her house connected to a signal in her mother-in-law's room, and pulled. This told the old lady to call the self-defence corps. They caught the man on the spot. Another time, Sister Wang Erh caught several more spies using the same method. "'Dumb daughter-in-law' has become a capable chairwoman," said the villagers.

Fighting shoulder-to-shoulder alongside the men, women made a great contribution in the struggle to repel the Japanese aggressors. This not only gave them encouragement but also educated the men and the people as a whole. In the course of the struggle the feudal

* An anti-Japanese organization open to all peasants except rich peasants. Landlords, too, were not eligible.

thinking and customs discriminating against women were broken down.

Reality also educated those of us doing women's work. We came to understand more clearly that the women's movement was an integral part of the revolutionary movement. We saw that if the women's movement had been divorced from revolution as a whole, and had fought solely for women's rights — thus becoming a struggle to wrest rights from men and making men the target of their struggle — it would have split the revolutionary ranks. Endless conflicts between the men and women, and between the young women and the old women, would have resulted. This would have been harmful to the struggle for national liberation and that for the liberation of all oppressed classes; it would have turned society against the women's struggle and put obstacles in its way.

The Same as Men

After eight years of war the Chinese people drove out the Japanese invaders. Supported by the U.S. imperialists, the Kuomintang reactionaries — who had always been apathetic about resisting the Japanese aggressors but very active in attacking the Communist-led patriotic forces — robbed the people of the fruits of their victory. Using the areas and cities taken over from the surrendering Japanese, the Kuomintang launched civil war on an unprecedented scale. This was opposed by all patriotic people. In 1948, as the People's Liberation Army moved from victory to victory, I was working in the liberated villages of southern Hopei, organizing the people to support the front and carry out the land reform, and on problems of women's welfare.

Steeled in the eight years of resistance against the Japanese invaders, women in the liberated areas were determined to carry the revolution through to the very end. Everywhere women were sending their husbands or sons off to the People's Liberation Army.

One of the most moving incidents is the story of Chao Hsiu-o, chairwoman of the Chaochia village branch of the Democratic Federation of Women in Chihhsien county (the name of the Women's Association for National Salvation had changed to the Democratic Federation of Women). There were only three in her family, two of whom were widows. Her father-in-law, a hired hand for a landlord, had died under the tyrant's maltreatment before the war. Her husband was killed fighting the Japanese. She had only one child, a son. The two widows were drawn together by their feelings of class and national hatred. Both Chao Hsiu-o and her mother-in-law joined the Chinese Communist Party, and she became secretary of the Party branch. Her mother-in-law would often say to me:

"At home, I'm head of the family, but with matters of the revolution, it's my daughter-in-law who leads me."

Then one day Chao Hsiu-o was preparing to send her son off to the PLA. Her mother-in-law could not bear the thought. He was the only grandchild, the last one to carry on the family name. Hsiu-o sat down to talk with the grandmother and together they recalled their sufferings under the landlords' oppression. She helped the old woman see that the Kuomintang reactionaries backed up the landlords because their power in the countryside was based on the landlord class. "If we don't overthrow these reactionaries," she said, "we'll have to suffer under them again." Finally the grandmother consented to let her grandson go.

Since most of the men were fighting at the front, women became the main force in agricultural and sideline production. They also enthusiastically made supplies for the army. To meet the clothing needs of the field army they produced 800,000 bolts of hand-woven cloth ahead of time, in a month and a half. The women also nursed the wounded, filled up trenches and tore down the enemy's barricades. In all these support-the-front activities the women displayed ability they had never shown before. It made even those who had always maintained "women's place is around the stove" acknowledge that women had become an indispensable force in every period of the revolutionary struggle.

Revolution and Women's Rights

In 1947 the Communist Party Central Committee promulgated the land reform program for the liberated areas. In this struggle to thoroughly destroy the feudal system, two views arose concerning women's emancipation. As the situation developed, some women's problems such as the question of marriage, woman and child care, were in urgent need of solution. In Chaochia village a number of women said to me, "Let the Peasants' Association work on the land reform, the women's federation should concentrate on women's problems."

Through discussion, we in the federation came to the agreement that while we must, of course, solve the particular problems of women — otherwise we would be divorcing ourselves from the masses and neglecting our duty — at the same time the most important of our duties was to carry out the main task of the revolution. The feudal landlord class oppressed men and women alike. Without overthrowing the landlords the working women could not really stand up either politically or economically. There would be no solution to their problems to speak of. The strength of both men and women must be concentrated on carrying out the land reform.

In the land reform the women took the lead in many ways. For example, at a struggle meeting against the landlords in Chaochia village, Chao Hsiu-o, supporting her mother-in-law at her side, was the first to stand up and accuse the landlord of his cruel exploitation. Her story of blood and tears roused the bitter memories of many and strengthened their determination to overthrow the landlord class. Every poor peasant, man or woman, was allotted a piece of land in the land reform. To emphasize the fact that women had economic equality with men we gave each woman a land certificate in her own name or wrote her name alongside her husband's on one certificate. Before, women had always been referred to by others as "so-and-so's wife" or "so-and-so's mother". Now for the first time in their lives many women heard their own names spoken in public.

At the meeting to give out the land certificates Chao Hsiu-o mounted the platform to talk about the new draft marriage law, attacking the feudal marriage system with its polygamy, concubinage, child-brides and arranged forced marriages. She called on the people to create a new kind of family based on democracy and harmony.

After the land reform the federation started work on woman and child care in a big way. In the villages, where once there was the bitter saying, "Pregnant women are seen, but no baby's laughter is ever heard", training classes for midwives were started. Before, in the villages in this area no girl ever went to school. Now we started night literacy classes and the sound of women reciting the texts could often be heard. After being allotted land the women organized themselves into mutual-aid teams for agricultural production and co-ops for manufacturing homewoven cloth. In this way they started on the road of socialist collectivization.

These activities again proved that at every stage of the revolution women were an important force. Equality between men and women, freedom of marriage and other women's rights and the solution of their special problems can only be achieved step by step as the revolutionary struggle, with the women participating, achieves victory and revolutionary state power is established.

The revolutionary struggle liberated women, and steeled and trained many women activists. After liberation those in southern Hopei became cadres of the various local governments, including heads of counties, districts or courts of justice. As for myself, I went to Tientsin and later Peking to continue to organize and mobilize women for socialist revolution and construction.

(From *China Reconstructs* March 1973)