

# After Learning From the Tachai Brigade

by Tsin Yen-shih

*Led by its Party branch committee, the Tachai Brigade in a mountainous area of north China's Shansi Province has displayed the spirit of self-reliance and hard struggle. Transforming mountains and solving the problem of water shortage 1,000 metres above sea level, it has turned barren slopes into farmland giving high and stable yields. A poor village before liberation, the brigade has become a vigorous socialist village.*

*In 1964, Chairman Mao issued the call "In agriculture, learn from Tachai" to the whole nation. Since the start of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, the mass movement of learning from Tachai in agriculture has spread everywhere in rural China. Hsiyang County where the Tachai Brigade is located has become a Tachai-type county. This article is an account of the situation of the villages in Shansi since the learn from Tachai movement got going in the province in an all-round way. — Ed.*

**D**URING my recent trip to Shansi's more than 30 counties I was pleased to find that promising changes have come about in the year since the province learnt from its Tachai Brigade.

## Widespread Popularization

In Hsiyang, the first Tachai-type county in the province, I was delighted to see the stairways of terraced fields on the slopes and the newly cultivated river-side farmland protected by strong stone dykes as well as the big ears on stout stalks. Last year, the county's average output per head was 1,000 *jin*. One then still could see the difference in crops on the plains, lower slopes and hills. In this year's mid-August trip to Hsiyang, I no longer saw this in many places. Green carpet-like crops are the same on slopes and plains. How did these changes come about?

In the past year, the Hsiyang County Party Committee continued to pay great attention to the revolutionization of the leading groups\*. Deepening the movement of criticizing revisionism and rectifying the work style, it promptly resolved problems arising among the leading groups. Leadership at the three levels—county, commune and brigade—was of one accord and the county's 200,000 people were of one mind. This was followed by better crops. Comrade Chen Yung-kuei, secretary of county Party committee,

said: "I'm quite sure the surplus grain Hsiyang will deliver and sell to the state this year will be close to or over the county's total 1966 output."

Going south from Hsiyang, I came to the basin in central and southern Shansi Province. Then I went up to the Luliang Mountain area in the north. I saw that the Tachai experience was gradually being spread everywhere, from brigade to commune and then to county. There were some advanced brigades in learning from Tachai in the province before, but no big changes took place as far as a large area was concerned. The Great Cultural Revolution has integrated Mao Tsetung Thought with the masses. Many Tachai-type counties and communes have come to the fore by following the Hsiyang County's example.

Last year's per-mu grain yield of Pingshun County in the Taihang Mountains reached its set target. This year there have been new developments. Model farmer and county Party secretary Comrade Li Shun-ta told me: "We were hit by three big floods this summer. But output in some 200 brigades in our county is expected to rise as a result of the Tachai spirit and the staunch fight against natural disaster." This was unimaginable in the past.

So long as there are revolutionized leading groups, there is a new outlook in learning from Tachai. This can be seen clearly in the changes in big brigades. Every county has big brigades with 500, 600 or as many as 1,000 households. Although the number of such brigades makes up one-third or one-fourth the

\* The leading groups of the Party committees and revolutionary committees at various levels refer to the collectives which exercise leadership. Revolutionization of the leading groups includes revolutionization of every member taking part in it. The main contents are as follows:

Conscientiously study Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought and adhere to the principle of integrating theory with practice;

Conscientiously implement the Party's line, principle and policies and adhere to the correct political orientation;

Conscientiously carry out the Party's democratic centralism, practise collective leadership and be united on the basis of Marxism-Leninism;

Persistently take part in collective productive labour, maintain a fine work style, go among the masses and not be divorced from reality;

Uphold truth and correct mistakes, be daring in criticism and self-criticism.

total number in the county, the percentage of population, farmland and output is far higher. So the changes in them have had a rather big influence on the whole county. In general, while these brigades have good natural conditions, class struggle is sharp and capitalist tendencies were grave. Their lagging behind was an important reason why their county or commune was backward for a long time. In the past year, based on Hsiyang's experience, many counties combined unfolding class struggle, Party rectification and Party building with the learn from Tachai movement. They strengthened the leading groups of these backward units, helping many of them to leap into the ranks of the advanced. Some brigades doubled production in a year. Originally dependent on the state for part of their food grain, some brigades now sell surplus grain, the amount of which surpasses the total grain sold by several communes in the past.

The Chinchia Brigade in Tunliu County usually sowed a large area but got fairly low yields because it has a small population and large tracts of land. By reversing the serious soil erosion situation, its per-mu output last year went up to 420 jin.

In some places, high yields have been reached this year in wheat and millet which used to be considered low yielding. The per-mu wheat output from 2,500 mu of irrigated land in one brigade in Wenshui County exceeds 700 jin this year, with yields of more than 1,000 jin each on 300 mu.

Some chilly high altitude regions also have reported big grain increases.

Encouraging news came from Chincheng County's Hsiaochuang Brigade, one of the typical brigades which saw a big change in the past year. In a hilly region, practically all the brigade's 2,300-mu farmland was not irrigated. After the agricultural co-operation movement per-mu output had been around 300 jin for a long time. Since October last year the new Party branch led the masses in a hard struggle in learning from Tachai, and they had turned additional 900 mu into irrigated farmland. When I visited the brigade, I saw commune members busy with capital construction to expand their irrigated fields. The brigade expects a big increase in grain output this year.

### Education in Ideology and Political Line

During my visit, I contacted many people, including commune members, cadres at the grass-roots level and leading cadres. The change in their mental outlook reflects the big results of the education in political line over the past year.



Reservoir built by Anping Commune's Anping Brigade in Hsiyang County.

The fundamental thing in Tachai's experience is educating people in Mao Tsetung Thought. Before, what some people learnt was only the superficial and not the fundamental and there were no results from their study. Last year, the Shansi Provincial Committee of the Chinese Communist Party and the Shansi Provincial Revolutionary Committee emphasized education in ideology and political line. This greatly raised people's consciousness in learning what is fundamental from Tachai.

I visited Yicheng County's Hsiliangpi Production Brigade. As I neared the village, I saw a stretch of cultivated land with a solitary block of houses. In talking with me, Comrade Yang Chuan-yuan, secretary of the brigade's Party branch, dealt first with this block of houses. He gave a vivid account of the ups and downs in learning from Tachai which began in this brigade in 1965. Six times it had sent people to Tachai. Seeing that Tachai had built new dwelling caves, they also started building new houses. But this was strongly opposed by the commune members and the work had to be halted because plots of the brigade's cultivated land were occupied and trees felled. Many times, they adopted such methods from Tachai as allotment of work points and mechanically applied them in their own brigade. As a result, farm output was unstable and backwardness remained unchanged. Last year, the masses were mobilized to draw a lesson from their failure to learn what was fundamental in Tachai's experience and conscientiously consolidated the leading body. The members of the new Party branch committee again went to learn from Tachai. After returning, they put politics in command, paid great attention to educating people in Mao Tsetung Thought and launched a mass movement to study

Chairman Mao's works. This helped raise the masses' political consciousness and bring about a leap forward in production and the brigade has thus entered the ranks of outstanding units in less than a year.

I received a vivid education in political line during my visit to the Shangyao Commune in Licheng County which is on the southern bank of a stream in the Taihang Mountains. The stream flowed into a deep gully and the farmland on the mountain slope was dry all year. Responding to Chairman Mao's call "In agriculture, learn from Tachai," Comrade Kao Chang-chun, secretary of the commune's Party committee, was determined to lead the poor and lower-middle peasants to build a canal in winter 1965. But he was reproached for this by a capitalist roader in power in the old county Party committee and they were not allowed to start the project.

Resisting coercion, Kao Chang-chun spoke in a firm voice: "No one can cow or subdue us!" At a mobilization meeting, he gave each of the 350 commune members taking part in the project a copy of Chairman Mao's works which he had bought with his own wages. After five years of hard work, they built a 50-li canal and dug 18 tunnels. Half the commune's land has been benefited this year, averaging one *mu* of irrigated land per person. This has fundamentally put an end to their dependence on the state for part of their food grain and has laid the foundation for farmland promising high and stable yields.

### Scientific Farming

In learning from Tachai, many counties engaged in large-scale farmland capital construction which fundamentally changed the basic farming conditions. Some mobilized the masses to develop local industries by relying on their own efforts and strive for farm mechanization. Others carried out scientific farming and technical revolution.

The production brigades I visited generally had their own scientific research groups and experimental plots. In many Hsinhsien County brigades, such groups were very active in studying many aspects of agricultural production. They experimented on small plots and popularized their achievements in large areas. The good strain of sorghum widely popularized in Shansi this year was obtained by the Liushih Brigade after experimentation. Per-*mu* yield of such sorghum generally reached over 1,000 *jin*, the highest more than 2,100 *jin*. The brigade's scientific research groups began cultivating high-yield seeds on two-fifths of a *mu* and the acreage sown to such seed has been extended to more than 320 *mu*. They increased the number of crops included in research items from two—sorghum and maize—to a dozen or so and the seed strains they experimented on rose from several to over 2,000. Apart from meeting Shansi's needs, the brigade has in the past three years supplied 25 other provinces and cities with more than 2.3 million *jin* of good strains, including maize and sorghum.



Members of a scientific research group of the Chitsun Brigade in Hsinhsien County pollinating a new strain of sorghum artificially.

In continuing to expand farmland capital construction, engaging in scientific and careful farming, many places felt the manpower shortage. Now it is imperative to quicken the pace of farm mechanization so as to release people from manual labour.

Starting from renovating farm tools, the Nancheng Brigade of Changchih County has blazed a new trail for attaining mechanization by self-reliance. Rows of wells, lines of electric poles and a network of canals are now in existence. The brigade has six tractors, 80-odd electric motors and thousands of other farm machines and tools. By building many small factories itself, it has basically achieved mechanization or semi-mechanization. Moreover, the brigade has set up a "May 7" agricultural middle school for students to study politics, science and technology and raise their educational level. It has trained a number of workers who have both socialist consciousness and culture and can farm with a hoe and work with a hammer. Like the Nancheng Brigade, some other brigades I went to use revolutionization to lead mechanization forward and bring about a big leap in agriculture.

Popularizing Tachai's experience from isolated points to a whole area so as to quickly build every one of the province's counties into Tachai-type counties like Hsiyang is still only beginning. But it is heartening that an upsurge in the mass movement to learn from Tachai has been going on and that there is a good situation in which people are vying with each other to move ahead.