

Fighting Cambodia



**REPORTS OF THE CHINESE JOURNALISTS DELEGATION
TO CAMBODIA**

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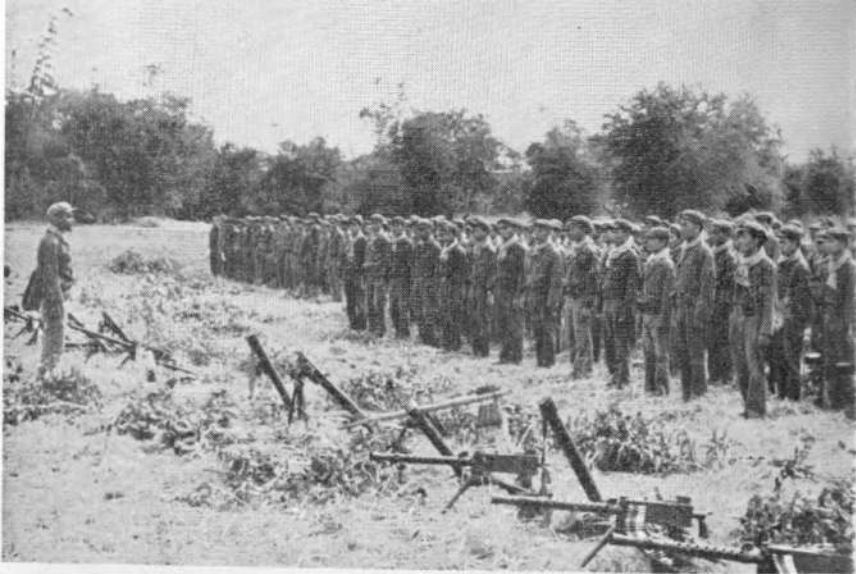
— Reports of the Chinese Journalists
Delegation to Cambodia

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Commanders of the Cambodian people's armed forces study the battle situation at a Phnom Penh front headquarters.

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Political mobilization before a battle.



Armoured-vehicle unit at the Phnom Penh front.



A women's team carries ammunition to the front.



Artillerymen bombard enemy positions in Phnom Penh.



A mobile guard post on the Mekong River.



On guard at Angkor.

Enemy vessel sunk on the Mekong.

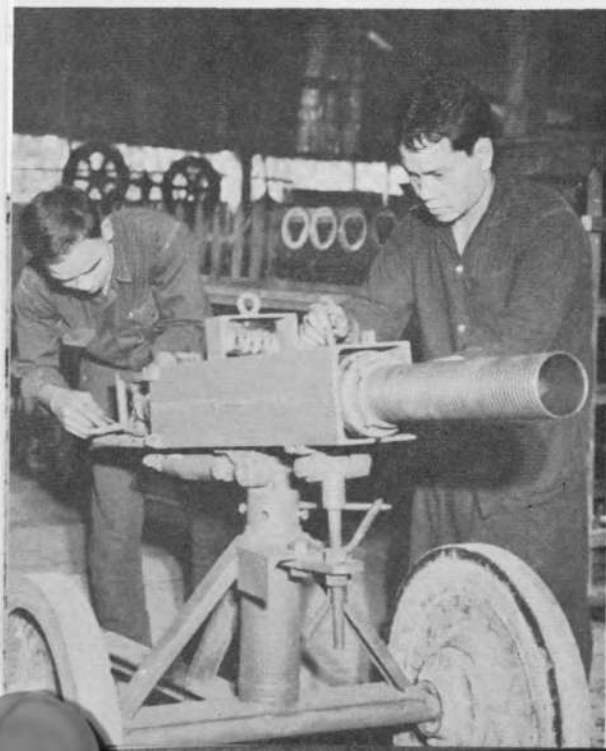


Women fighters at the Angkor front.





Workers of a farm to
plant made this bello
out of a captured weap



Workers of a fire-arm
repair plant mount
field-piece with a cap
tured gun barrel.



The people of Cambodia farm better to support the front.

Cambodian peasants build a reservoir dam.





Operating on a wounded fighter in a field hospital at the Phnom Penh front.

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FOREWORD

To win the independence and liberation of their motherland, the Cambodian people courageously took up arms and waged a protracted war against U.S. imperialism and its lackey, the Lon Nol traitorous clique. In five years and one month of arduous fighting, they totally annihilated the enemy forces, scoring a historic victory. An independent, peaceful, neutral and flourishing new Cambodia has arisen.

The Chinese Journalists Delegation feels it a great honour to have been able to visit Cambodia's liberated areas in March 1975, shortly before the Cambodian people won the nation-wide victory, and share their triumphant joy. We have a lot to learn from them: the heroism they showed in daring to rise against and defeat a nation much bigger than their own, their lofty spirit of independence and self-reliance, and their defiance of the hardships in daily life. We were deeply moved by the genuine and warm fraternal feelings they showed for the Chinese people. So we took as a glorious task the reporting back on their valiant struggles and brilliant victory. It is regretted that we have done no more than eight articles, falling far short of presenting a full picture of the many heroic events at the front and in the liberated areas. We owe the reader an apology for this incompleteness.

The present collection by the Foreign Languages Press of the articles may serve as the delegation's report on the visit.

The Chinese Journalists
Delegation to Cambodia

May 1975

A NEW CAMBODIA AFTER FIVE YEARS OF PEOPLE'S WAR

When we visited the liberated areas of Cambodia in March 1975, the valiant people had been waging their national liberation war for five years and were swiftly winning the signal victory of liberating the whole country.

Their splendid triumph overturned heaven and earth. The short span of five years has brought tremendous and historic changes to the country. The once scattered liberated zones have been united into a vast whole. Our feelings ran deep and our excitement high as we drove through the length and breadth of the land by highway and over rushing waters to see many well-known battle sites. Everywhere — from the undulating mountains to the picturesque seashore, from the lush forests to the vast rich plain — were reminders of the people's heroism and their magnificent triumph in people's war.

Our visit confirmed that the Cambodian people are a true wall of bronze, a great and courageous people who are making the history of their country. Throughout the war the popularly supported People's Armed Forces of National Liberation of Cambodia valiantly pounded the enemy day and night, in the rainy and dry seasons, defying all difficulties and hardships. With the barrel of

a gun, this brave people and army have opened the way to victory and created a beautiful land of their own.

The Cambodian people have an indomitable spirit and are determined to vanquish all enemies and never to yield. In the early days of the liberation war they dared to take up simple and crude weapons—even bows, arrows and machetes—to fight U.S. imperialism and its lackeys several or even dozens of times their strength and equipped with planes, guns, tanks and other modern weapons. We visited the now famous Highway 6 in Baray, northern Cambodia, which the people's armed forces had made the burial ground for the enemy who launched "Operation Chenla 2" in 1971. This victory exemplifies the triumph of a weak force over a strong, of a small over a big. It was during the rainy season that the Lon Nol clique, bolstered by U.S. planes, mobilized 20,000-strong "crack" troops from Phnom Penh in its attempt to reopen Highway 6 and sever the eastern and southwestern zones of the liberated territory. Facing an enemy force ten times bigger than their own in the northern area, the people did not flinch. With sublime heroism they declared: "We will exterminate the enemy at the very point of his attack." The fury of the people throughout the liberated zone knew no bounds, and its young men and women rushed to join the army. With popular support, the people's armed forces skilfully avoided head-on engagements but used small forces to lure the enemy deep into liberated territory, forcing him to extend his lines and thin out over a long front. The people's armed forces then seized a good opportunity to strike with a numerically superior force in the Taing Kouk region south of Baray, capturing 1,800 troops and

cutting the remaining enemies' retreat route. With the enemy now in complete chaos, the patriotic army and people were able to chop up their lines and encircle and annihilate them piecemeal. In a hundred days of intense fighting they wiped out 15,000 enemy troops, dealing a heavy blow to the U.S. scheme of "war Khmerization."

We saw scores of destroyed enemy tanks, armoured cars and lorries on our visit to this battle site. Out of the ruins of enemy bombing, new sheds and cottages had gone up. In filled bomb craters, rows of newly planted banana and mango trees flourished. A leader of the National United Front of Cambodia in the northern region who accompanied us said: "The war tempered us, and we have won. Our armed forces in this region grew to 11 times their original size and equipped themselves entirely with captured weapons."

The Cambodian people have a noble spirit of self-sacrifice and are eager to take up heavy burdens for the revolution. A song and dance item by Cambodian artists titled "The Cambodian People's Spirit of All-Out Dedication" tells of an old poor peasant who sent his second son to the army on learning that his eldest had died heroically at the front. This old peasant also promoted the cause of liberation by encouraging his fellow villagers. His deeds won the warm acclaim and support of the villagers and cadres. A Cambodian friend who was sitting beside us watching the performance said: "There are many stories of such devotion as this in our liberated areas."

We found this true. In supporting the liberation war the Cambodian working people made tremendous sacri-

fices of lives and property. They did not hesitate to send their dear ones to the front. In a village named Fighting Hamlet in Stung Trang District, Kompong Cham Province, a unite-to-increase-production team of 80 people had among them several older women who sent family members to serve the national-liberation cause. A 57-year-old woman's husband and four sons had all been arrested by the enemy. Now, her husband and her eldest and second sons were away from home, leading production and engaging in civilian war service. Her third son was a regimental commander on the Kompong Thom front. The youngest died a hero's death in battle in 1972. She herself was now organizing the women of her hamlet with the revolutionary vitality of the younger generation. Displaying a keen-edged machete, she said: "My husband and I used this machete to protect our comrades and destroy the enemy. Now I use it both as a farm tool and as a battle weapon."

With their high sense of revolutionary responsibility, the Cambodian people contributed in every way to the cause of liberation. On a scorching hot day, while we were taking a noonday rest in a hamlet at the Takeo front, a dozen girls in a propaganda centre were hard at work spinning. Inquiring whether they were not members of the hamlet spinning team, we were surprised to learn that they were a women's frontline transport group using their rest period after a long haul to contribute still more to the liberation war. In Kampot Province, we talked with the head of the provincial weapon-repair plant. He had lost one hand, permanently injured a foot, and had been wounded twice more while testing home-made arms and explosives. Despite all this,

he persevered in his test and finally managed to turn out gunpowder and weapons badly needed at the front. In reply to our question how the people in the liberated area could keep up this kind of tense activity, he said matter-of-factly: "Because we know we're fighting for the cause of liberation."

The Cambodian people performed many heroic deeds in the course of the war by displaying their revolutionary spirit of hard struggle and self-reliance. We saw many dams, dykes and reservoirs in the liberated areas, which the peasants had built in a united effort to ensure good crops. We also visited scores of small factories, all of which had been started up during the war and had developed self-reliantly under the most difficult conditions. None had an engineer, and the workers were yesterday's peasants. Most had never seen a factory before. "We pooled whatever we knew and learned as we went along," they explained. They made tools unobtainable otherwise, searching out the materials or capturing them from the enemy. They used home-made charcoal for the carbon black in making rubber sandals (which they call "fighter's shoes") and the ash of a certain plant for making soap. They fashioned looms from spare parts of captured tanks and armoured cars, and made shell cases into forge bellows. Their production of tools, consumer goods, processed foods and medicines supplied large areas in the rear and gave effective support to the front. We learned that they also made unexploded enemy bombs and shells into mines, and guano into gunpowder. The "flying bombs," "stick bombs" and "steam bombs" the "peasant experts" made and the "peasant mortar" and "guerrilla bazooka" they assembled were very effective

weapons in battle, and the enemy never knew what weapons they were being hit with.

During our visit to the liberated areas we saw for ourselves very many manifestations of the great unity between the armed forces and the people in the front and rear, and how the whole nation went all out to win the war of resistance. The enemy had killed 35 of the 211 people of the 35 poor-peasant households in a small village in Kanchriech District, Kompong Cham Province. Sixty young and adult villagers went with deep hatred to the fighting front, leaving only the aged and weak, who, however, determinedly carried on production and the war effort. In Phomkong Village of Angkor Chey District, Takeo Province, 38 per cent of the youth joined the army; another 50 per cent carried on guerrilla activities as well as production while serving as reserves for the main forces.

We were told that, in order to smash the enemy's "Operation Chenla 2" in the north, the whole population was organized to cache stores of grain and then evacuate an entire stretch of land with all their draught animals and provisions. When the enemy entered the Highway 6 area, they found it deserted, with no one to act as guide. There was not a grain of rice to replenish their stores. Many villagers voluntarily organized themselves into transport units to send supplies to their own fighters, or hurried to the front to take up arms after seeing the children and old folks to places of safety. Many were the times they used weapons freshly captured from the enemy against that same enemy.

In Stung Trang District we met seven grey-haired men, one 75, enthusiastically weaving split bamboo and

cane articles for the army and the villagers. Teenagers in various liberated areas not only guard communication lines and work in factories or at water conservancy construction sites, but also fight at the front. Four of our drivers in a southeastern former battlefield were youngsters. Two were 14; the oldest 17. One of the 14-year-olds was driver for the division commander and political commissar who accompanied us on our visit. He had been driving for a year already and had transported ammunition to the front all alone.

Brave young women were not only a new force in production in the rear but fought shoulder to shoulder with the young men at the front. Women's units saw active service on every battlefield. In the southwestern theatre a thousand women carried the wounded to safety. A force of 3,000 women worked and protected the salt fields along the seaboard, defending the coast as well. In Tram Khnar, where fierce back-and-forth battles had been waged, we met a detachment of women who had been fighting for months and were only now taking time out for a rest and regrouping. Though they had just withdrawn from the front, they were preparing to plunge at once into the final battle for the liberation of the whole country.

On one of the days of our visit, two Cambodian leaders from the northern area and other comrades-in-arms climbed with us to the top of the scenic Prek Sankey Mountain. As we watched the Mekong River flowing below, our conversation turned to the great victory of the Cambodian people's war. Pointing to the tree-shaded Prek Sankey Town on the bank of the Mekong, one of them recalled that when Lon Nol staged the reactionary

coup five years before, the people's forces in the northern area consisted of exactly two small units. One unit led by the two leaders who accompanied us that day was the first to attack the troops of the U.S.-Lon Nol clique from this area of jungle, river and mountains with only 30 men, 3 rifles and 30 bullets. Such were the conditions then. Five years later, the northern area's armed forces of national liberation, with the people's support, had grown into a strong and victorious force. This region had already been linked up with the rest of the liberated territory, forming a vast and well consolidated base.

We deeply sensed throughout our visit the historical inevitability of such a heroic people and army as those of Cambodia winning nation-wide victory, and that this victory was near.

In mid-April, when we were on our way back to China, we heard the exciting news of the liberation of Phnom Penh and the whole of Cambodia. Hailing the Cambodian people's great victories from afar, we thought of the arduous struggles they had undergone in gaining final victory. How many and how moving were their heroic deeds!

The five years of fighting by the Cambodian people have written a paean of victory of people's war and brought about a people's Cambodia, a country in Asia with a brand-new look. Cambodia is an outstanding example of a small nation defeating a big one, of a weak nation thwarting a strong. The war the Cambodian people waged stands as a model of warfare for national liberation today. It will go down in the annals of the world's revolutionary people as one of the most glorious chapters.

VISIT TO THE PHNOM PENH FRONT

We visited the Phnom Penh front in the stirring days just before its liberation and saw the spectacular scenes of the Cambodian people on the eve of a great victory which became the focus of world attention. We witnessed the birth of a people's new Cambodia amid the flames of war.

Booming guns greeted our arrival on the outskirts of Phnom Penh after we had driven past isolated enemy strongholds in the dusk and crossed the enemy defence line shattered by the People's Armed Forces of National Liberation of Cambodia. Like comrades-in-arms after a long separation, we were received by the commanders of the people's armed forces at the Phnom Penh front with extraordinary warmth.

We were immediately impressed by a sense of certainty in the victory of the war as soon as we arrived at the command post. In a happy mood, the commander of the front, Son Sen, told us: "Comrades, you came at just the right moment. Phnom Penh will be taken soon. You will be the first foreign delegation and also the last ever to come to the Phnom Penh front, for before long we shall be receiving foreign friends in the city of Phnom Penh." Pointing to the Cambodian comrades-in-arms present and several cottages nearby, he continued: "You are welcome! Here is our entire command post!"

A short but cordial briefing by the commander left us a deep sense of admiration for our warm-hearted hosts and this simple command post near Phnom Penh. With the liberation of Phnom Penh in sight, we were overjoyed and honoured to be able to meet the men commanding the greatest decisive battle in the history of the Cambodian people's struggle, to witness the Cambodian people and their armed forces valiantly fighting for the capture of Phnom Penh, and to share the joy of the great victory of the Cambodian people. Commander Son Sen's talk on the battle of Phnom Penh, the red tacks on the map showing the people's armed forces closing in on Phnom Penh, the continual telephone calls at the command post and the panicky shouts of enemy troops over walkie-talkies left us in no doubt that victory was swiftly approaching for the whole of Cambodia.

Everything around us radiated victory. The day following our arrival at the front, Commander Son Sen and Deputy Commander Thouch and other leaders accompanied us on a tour of the battlefield. They also went with us to visit some heroic units which had distinguished themselves in the battle around Phnom Penh and to see some field hospitals. In broad daylight we drove freely to within 20 kilometres of Phnom Penh, literally under the nose of the enemy. This showed that the enemy was completely paralysed by the powerful offensives of the people's armed forces.

The vehicles we rode in were American jeeps painted with the figure "7." They had been captured when the puppet 7th division was wiped out in Baset during the new year offensives by the people's armed forces. On the trip, Deputy Commander Thouch took out a map

printed in the United States and gave us an account of the military situation on the Phnom Penh front, while drawing arrows pointing to Phnom Penh with a red pencil. "After the puppet 7th division and seven reinforcement brigades were wiped out," he said, "we cut the enemy defence line from Baset to Prek Phnou and destroyed 97 per cent of the enemy strongholds on the line. We thus broke open the gate to Phnom Penh and thrust into the heart of the enemy's positions, separating and encircling his small strongholds. Now we're shelling Pochentong Airport, the only passageway to Phnom Penh, from five directions and the next step is to attack the city itself."

Pointing to the map, he said with a broad smile: "Before, we had to bring many big maps with us. They were very inconvenient. Now, this small topographical map of Phnom Penh and its surroundings is enough, because we're fighting in such a small area."

After a pause, he went on: "The enemy in Phnom Penh is running out of ammunition and food. But they are trying to drag on to the rainy season and to sneak supplies in by the Mekong River. They are simply day-dreaming! The only way out for them now is to surrender."

The enemy in Phnom Penh met their doom on April 17 when the people's armed forces overwhelmed them and liberated the city at one stroke. The remaining enemy troops surrendered in compliance with the order of the command of the people's armed forces.

At the Phnom Penh front, we met many of the architects of the victory. It is our strong feeling that

the Cambodian people's victory is no accident. It is a victory for people's war, a victory for the correct military line and correct strategy and tactics, and a victory for the revolutionary heroism of the commanders and fighters.

Since New Year's Day, the patriotic Cambodian armed forces and people, on the basis of victories already won, launched powerful and concerted offensives on three battlefronts — the lower reaches of the Mekong River, the areas around Phnom Penh and a number of provincial capitals temporarily held by the enemy. The Mekong front choked off Phnom Penh's links with Saigon. On the provincial capital front, the enemy was tied down, dispersed and besieged. These two battlefronts provided powerful co-ordination for operations on the Phnom Penh front.

The people's armed forces that had planned to attack and capture in a month's time two enemy strategic strongholds south of Neak Luong, from which the Mekong could easily be blocked, achieved their objective in only four days. Meanwhile, the heroic commanders and fighters of the people's armed forces wiped out all enemy troops on the lower reaches of the Mekong and took control of over 70 kilometres of the river. This was followed by a fierce attack resulting in the liberation of the militarily important towns of Neak Luong and Ba Nam on April 1. The 100-kilometre waterway on the Mekong's lower reaches was thus completely controlled by the people's forces. The cutting of the Mekong left the traitorous Phnom Penh clique entirely dependent on U.S. "emergency" airlifts and airdrops which could hardly meet the enemy's grain, ammunition and fuel needs.

Furthermore, Pochentong Airport had been within artillery range of the people's armed forces for a long time. By the time we reached the Phnom Penh front, the U.S. airlift through Pochentong Airport had been halted seven times within the year.

Since the new year offensives began, the enemy had hastily massed forces on the Phnom Penh front in an attempt to hold its lair. But at this point the people's armed forces, to the surprise of the enemy, made a powerful attack on the Mekong front and won splendid victories. While the enemy turned attention to the Mekong front, the people's armed forces mounted a strong attack on the Phnom Penh front. Launching simultaneous and closely co-ordinated attacks on three fronts while directing their main thrust against important sectors, the people's armed forces sent the enemy reeling in a double squeeze.

The people's armed forces made their heaviest ever shelling on Pochentong Airport on the day of our arrival at the Phnom Penh front. Cutting communication lines and blocking food and ammunition supplies sealed the enemy's doom.

For the over-all victory of the war, commanders and fighters displayed a high sense of discipline and the revolutionary spirit of sacrifice in the new year general offensives. On the Phnom Penh front, when the fighters of a special force which had fired the first shot in the offensives attacked two enemy strategic strongholds in an area of steep hills and deep valleys near Baset Mountain on the night of January 1, their presence was detected in the moonlight. Enemy aircraft, guns and tanks

immediately peppered them with explosive and incendiary bombs. Defying all hardship and danger, the liberation fighters continued to advance heroically, breaking through four mine areas and two rows of barbed-wire entanglements and finally occupying the enemy position in the planned time. At the cost of some casualties, the liberation forces held their position despite frenzied enemy counter-attacks. Political Commissar Pat and Battalion Commander Chhon were seriously wounded. A company commander led the liberation fighters in continuing the heroic fight and capturing the second enemy stronghold. Following this, a third stronghold was taken after dawn. Their bravery contributed to the victory on the entire front. When we visited Political Commissar Pat, he told us about this operation with pride. "With revolutionary spirit, fighting determination and a discipline based on political consciousness, we can overcome the biggest difficulty and accomplish the most arduous task," he said.

A women's detachment, founded October 8, 1972, was active on the Phnom Penh front. This red detachment of women had always done a good job in the war — attacking enemy convoys, storming enemy strongholds, defending their positions, protecting communication lines, transporting food and ammunition, and helping with air defence. We heard many commanding officers praise the heroic deeds of this unit. But the political commissar of the detachment told us modestly: "We have done nothing outstanding. Our heroic deeds belong to the collective and our victory is the result of collective heroism."

We also visited the first armoured unit of the people's armed forces. It had been formed by using arms and tanks captured from the enemy, two of its tanks being captured in a battle near Kompong Luong last year.

The first attack by the unit on the enemy on February 16 resulted in victory. After storming an enemy post and wiping out part of the troops there, it headed for a second. As it neared the post, enemy soldiers were yelling: "What kind of noise is this? Doesn't it sound like the rumbling of tanks?" A snarling puppet troop commander answered them: "No, they're not tanks, but camouflaged ox-carts. Take a look. The ox-carts are covered with tarpaulin. How can they have any tanks!" The enemy could not believe that the people's armed forces already had their own tank unit. So when the tanks were storming the enemy position, a group of applauding puppet troops came out to welcome them. The fighters of the people's tank unit ordered the puppet troops to put up their hands, and this was taken by them as a joke by their own tank drivers and replied to with the password "No. 93." At the moment when the enemy soldiers stridently came round to see what was happening, the fighters of the people's armed forces threw hand-grenades from a tank and killed seven or eight puppet troops, and then with gunfire mowed down many others when they were fleeing in panic.

This armoured unit won another battle on March 15. In an interview with the commander of the unit who directed the battle from the first tank and the driver of the second, we were told that neither had ever seen a tank before, let alone use one in battle. Twenty-year-

old Pat Rang is from a family of poor peasants and did not even know how to ride a bicycle. When he was assigned the task of driving a tank on February 9, he spent two hours learning driving from a truck driver. Then he practised by himself for six days before he took part in the February 16 operation. He told us: "At the beginning, I could hardly control the tank. It just staggered along. But when I thought that I was carrying out a glorious task assigned by the leadership, I gathered courage and was firmly determined to carry it out well."

This shows the people's armed forces are steeled and grow up in the flames of war. Thanks to the armed forces which fight in the interests of the people and enjoy their support, the great victory of the liberation of Phnom Penh and of the whole of Cambodia has been won.

This great historic victory has been won by the heroic Cambodian people after five years of strenuous fighting. The Cambodian people have been mobilized under the slogan "Everything for the front, and everything for victory." We witnessed on the Phnom Penh front many moving scenes of people's war — youngsters standing guard, gun in hand, young women peasants carrying wounded soldiers on stretchers, a noted Cambodian surgeon operating on a wounded fighter in a field hospital, transport teams bringing military supplies to the front and mutual-aid teams in the countryside busy building water conservancy networks for producing more grain to support the front. A commander of the people's armed forces told us: The peasants are digging irrigation canals in the wake of our advancing troops. Dams are being built just over 10 kilometres from Phnom Penh.

The people are the true wall of bronze, the source of victory and the motive force in the making of history. With their successes in battle, the heroic Cambodian people are adding a new chapter to the history of their country.

SONG OF VICTORY ON THE MEKONG RIVER

The key to the liberation of Phnom Penh was to cut its links with Saigon by blocking the lower reaches of the Mekong. It was just when the People's Armed Forces of National Liberation of Cambodia were sweeping the Mekong front with the force of a thunderbolt last March in the historic decisive war to liberate the whole country that we visited the people's armed forces at this front.

The Mekong front field commander Saing An and some other Cambodian leaders accompanied us on a visit to the scenic Mekong River by motorboat. They spoke animatedly about the disastrous defeats of the U.S.-Lon Nol clique and the brilliant victories of the Cambodian patriotic armed forces and people.

We set out in three motorboats early one morning when the gauzy mist on the river was clearing. The east bank was covered with thick forest. The newly liberated Peam Reang Island in the west had become an expanse of barren land after repeated bombings and shellings. Looking to the north, we saw in the distance the outline of another small island still occupied by the enemy, and a huge pillar of jet-black smoke that billowed upward into the sky from a burning enemy oil tanker which had been hit on February 11 and had been burning for over a month. A number of small boats manned by liberation fighters sailed by quickly. Commander Saing An told

us: "These boats are unloading oil from the burning enemy ship. It carried 600,000 litres of gasoline in its eight holds and only one of them has caught fire. In the past month we've shipped off 200,000 litres of gasoline from the other seven holds." Pointing to a place in the river, he went on: "There are other sunken oil tankers there. It's an excellent under-water petrol depot for us. We can get oil from here whenever we need it."

Enemy corpses floated down the river alongside our boats, and the waves splashed over wrecks of enemy ships. We saw twelve badly damaged enemy ships in the river, including oil tankers, cargo boats, barges and escorts. Some listed to one side, others were upended, while several were completely upside down. Pointing to a damaged enemy ship, a Cambodian comrade-in-arms said: "Another enemy ship, seeing this one being hit, tried to escape, but in its hurry it rammed into it and sank." Turning to the ships anchored along the bank, he continued: "Those were abandoned by badly battered enemy troops who tried to flee by land, but they never even made it to the bank."

The lower reaches of the Mekong were virtually a burial ground of the enemy. They had been a vital communication line of strategic importance through which the Lon Nol clique transported U.S.-supplied grain, ammunition and fuel from Saigon to Phnom Penh. It became the enemy's lifeline at the end of 1974, when the people's armed forces cut all highways leading to Phnom Penh.

In the nation-wide general offensives launched at the beginning of 1975, the people's armed forces mounted fierce attacks on the enemy along the lower reaches of

the Mekong south of Phnom Penh and along that section of Highway 1 between Phnom Penh and Neak Luong on the west bank of the river. By the end of February they had wiped out nearly 9,000 enemy troops and sunk or damaged 338 vessels, including the oil tanker we saw burning on the river and the three damaged ships near it. They had also brought under their control more than 70 kilometres of the waterway from Phlaur Trei, north of Neak Luong, to the Cambodia-Viet Nam border. The enemy in Phnom Penh was thus completely isolated. To reopen the route, the panic-stricken Lon Nol clique launched an "amphibious assault" around Neak Luong at the end of January and early February. Five battalions were sent to make a counter-attack on Peam Reang Island, some 20 kilometres from Neak Luong. But the enemy troops were soon surrounded by liberation fighters. In only a few days, more than 250 enemy were killed or wounded and the remainder squeezed into a tiny strip on the island. The enemy scheme to send in reinforcements by ship was also frustrated. In the few days following February 11, scores of enemy ships were sunk or burned by liberation fighters. The people's armed forces, while making powerful military attacks, launched a political offensive against the bottled up enemy on February 16. They shouted to the enemy through a megaphone: "You have nothing to eat and no ammunition to use. Surrender at once!"

"If you give us lenient treatment, we'll surrender — en masse," replied the enemy over their megaphone.

"Lay down your arms first," ordered the people's forces.

"All right," came the enemy's reply.

"Don't contact the planes overhead!"

"All right."

"Officers come out first!"

"O.K."

"Soldiers come out in groups!"

When one group of the enemy had emerged from their tight squeeze, the rest became impatient and over 1,000 of them rushed out with their hands up. The people's fighters discovered later that the enemy had only 20 litres of rice left.

This victory contributed a great deal to the blocking of the Mekong and the liberation of Neak Luong and then Phnom Penh. A commander told us an episode that happened in the course of the action: "At the end, when the enemy had run out of ammunition and food, we were also near the end of ours. But the enemy sent us ammunition and other military supplies, as all the air-dropped material landed in our positions." The commander showed us the "bill of lading" of the enemy air-dropped weapons, ammunition, food, etc. and quipped: "Thanks to Quartermaster Lon Nol all the items on the list have been received."

Our motorboats soon took us near the flaming oil tanker whose reflection, inverted, made a striking picture on the surface of the river.

We were now only two kilometres from a small island on which one enemy battalion was still entrenched. When we asked the Mekong front field commander Saing An why they didn't take it, he laughed and said: "We're leaving it for the time being. It's still of some use to us." Indicating Peam Reang Island, he remarked: "We

surrounded that island for some time before we took it. Enemy planes came for air-drops and we usually got most of them. Now the enemy in Neak Luong, like those on this small island, depend entirely on air-dropped supplies, as we've cut all land and water communication lines. Sometimes the whole lot, sometimes half, but generally about three-fourths of the supplies air-dropped by enemy planes land within our positions. Our practice is to close in on the enemy, keeping a distance of only 50 metres. As the parachutes descend, we take them, and this has been a dependable source of supplies. Another is the enemy flotillas. Since we captured Peam Reang Island, the enemy flotillas have not dared to show up there again, and by leaving this small island in enemy hands we've put them in a dilemma. If enemy planes come, they deliver most of their air-dropped materials to us. If they don't, the enemy troops on the island would shout by walkie-talkie: 'If you don't air-drop us any more supplies, we'll surrender.'"

And so it was that the valiant people's armed forces on the Mekong front armed themselves with U.S.-made equipment seized from the enemy. One of their slogans is: "Strike the enemy with his own weapons!" With the people's forces fighting continuously like this, a steady flow of enemy arms and materials kept them supplied. The fruits of battle of this kind were everywhere evident on the Mekong front. The motorboats and jeeps that we rode in had been captured. The beds, bedding, mosquito nets, dinner- and tea-sets, tables and chairs that we used were all captured equipment. The Mekong front command treated us with captured food, our hosts proudly serving us with food canned in the

U.S.A., biscuits from Boston, California raisins, wine from Chicago, beer from Washington or Saigon, and cigarettes, coffee, cocoa, canned milk and sweets from various countries. We shared their victory and their joy.

The meritorious deeds of the people's fighters have added beauty to the Mekong River. The rapid flow of the surging water seemed to sing a resounding song of victory in praise of the people's fighters who fought so bravely for five years. . . .

We were recalling the heroic battles waged by the people's fighters and their victories on the Mekong River when the sun rose over the horizon and cast its brilliance on the torrential flow of the river as it rolled southward. From the deck of our motorboats we looked in the direction of Phnom Penh, which was so soon to be liberated. Watching the fast-flowing Mekong River, we saw in our mind's eye a heroes' ship with towering mast riding the waves. We saw a new Cambodia taking shape in the forward march of the people of the whole country.

ANGKOR'S SONS AND DAUGHTERS LOVE THEIR HOMELAND

While in Cambodia we visited the pride of Cambodian national culture — the temple of Angkor Wat.

The Angkor Wat is in Siem Reap Province, over 200 kilometres northwest of Phnom Penh; it is situated north of Tonle Sap Lake and about five kilometres from the provincial capital, Siem Reap City. It is a treasure of stone architecture in low relief created by ancient Cambodian labouring people with their sweat and blood. To preserve this national cultural heritage, the heroic sons and daughters of the Cambodian people, the fighters in the people's armed forces, liberated the Angkor region as early as in June 1970.

When we travelled from the Mekong front in central Cambodia to the world-famous ancient temple of Angkor Wat, we met first of all the heroic unit, which included a women's company, that had distinguished itself on the Angkor-Siem Reap front. As soon as we stepped out of the car in front of the east gate of the Angkor Wat, we were surrounded by men and women fighters of the people's armed forces who greeted us like old comrades-in-arms meeting after a long separation. Welcoming us with outstretched hands, they said warmly to us: "How do you do, brothers from Peking. Long life to Chairman Mao Tsetung!" And we greeted them in return: "We

salute you heroes of the Angkor front and wish to learn from you!"

These fighters of the people's armed forces were heroic sons and daughters of Angkor. They cherished the ancient Buddhist temple of Angkor Wat which they were bravely defending day and night. Intrepid fighters, they wore plain black uniforms, green army caps and "fighter's shoes." Each had the indispensable chequered scarf, which is also used as a towel, around his neck, and these fluttered jauntily in the wind. Holding automatic rifles, their green cartridge-belts at their waists, they looked splendid indeed, with faces radiating joy, eyes shining.

Comrade Pao Ke, field commander of the Angkor-Siem Reap front who had accompanied us, began a lively conversation with the men and women fighters too. Officers and rank-and-file of the people's armed forces were in identical uniforms and talked animatedly with each other like brothers and sisters. This stirring demonstration of the close unity between officers and men impressed us deeply, as we had been by similar scenes in other regions.

Pointing to a green sweep of turf, one of the commanders said to us warmly: "This is our reception room. Won't you sit down?" Guests and hosts sat on the grass and talked freely about Sino-Cambodian friendship and the excellent situation of victory. Our delegation of course wanted to hear all we could about the Cambodian fighters and their combat experience. But Commander Pao Ke suggested that we first look around and then get to the stories. We agreed to "obey orders in all actions," and follow the commander's suggestion.

Our cordial hosts accompanied us on our visit to the Angkor Wat, which, on account of the constant vigilant protection, presented a new, flourishing scene.

Setting off the ancient temple of Angkor Wat are towering old trees, bamboos on both sides of the paths, groves of cocoanut palms reaching to lofty heights, and rare tropical flowers vying with one another in a blaze of glory. The Siem Reap River, which flows down Mount Litchi (Phnom Koulén) in the northwest, winds through Angkor Wat, and there fish glide in its limpid waters. The Angkor Wat consists of a cluster of magnificent buildings. Imposing stone towers rise from stone steps, each flanked by a corridor in low relief. The first of these is two metres high and 800 metres in length, its walls embellished with lifelike figures and objects. In another temple ruin, the Angkor Thom, golden sunlight shone on the stately thousand-year-old stone towers, their "four-faced Buddhas" gazing into the distance in four directions. The grand and august Angkor Wat is a treasure house of the Khmer nation's art works, embodying the creative genius of the Cambodian labouring people.

The traitorous Lon Nol clique, the scum of the Cambodian nation, threatened to wreck the entire ancient temple rather than let the people have it. They did all they could to destroy this famous relic.

We saw the damage done to the southern corridor of the Angkor Wat by the Lon Nol clique's aircraft and artillery — an iron-clad proof of the vile crimes committed by the Lon Nol clique against the Cambodian people and nation.

There was anger in the voices of our Cambodian comrades-in-arms as they spoke of the Lon Nol clique's criminal destruction of Cambodian cultural objects, institutions and relics. But then they told us how the people's armed forces had punished the Lon Nol clique and bravely defended the Angkor Wat.

From June 1970, when Angkor was liberated by the People's Armed Forces of National Liberation, the traitorous Lon Nol clique had been vainly trying to retake it. In May 1972 the enemy waged what they called the "Angkor Victory Battle," in which three enemy battalions from the city of Siem Reap attacked Angkor under heavy aircraft and artillery cover. The commanders and soldiers of the people's armed forces determined to wipe out the traitor troops and not allow the enemy to desecrate the Angkor Wat. The poorly-equipped people's forces fought hard for two months and, thanks to the support of the broad masses of the people, smashed the enemy's attack force.

As the enemy had arranged its three battalions in "snake formation," our Cambodian comrades-in-arms said, the people's armed forces could not eat up the "snake" in one mouthful. They made a breakthrough in the middle and cut the enemy forces into several sections. Their militia guerrilla units then harassed the enemy every day and exhausted him. The people in the liberated areas plugged up every channel of information to the enemy so that he was kept "deaf" and "blind" — completely in the dark. When the enemy was thoroughly exhausted, the regular units of the people's armed forces concentrated a superior force and launched a sudden and powerful attack which wiped out at one

stroke a large number of the enemy troops, his remnants retreating helter-skelter back to Siem Reap.

One commander recalled: In the rainy season of 1974 the puppet Eleventh Brigade, 3,000 men, set out from Siem Reap along Highway 6 and attacked Angkor again. Smiling, he said, "This gave us a good chance to wipe out that enemy force! Since we smashed the enemy's last attack in 1972, we had been much better equipped and had greatly expanded our ranks. Now he came out of Siem Reap again and delivered himself to our door. What good service!" The enemy called this attack "Battle 802," the commander told us. Having suffered a big loss using "snake formation" before, this time he tried concentration. In a superior position now, the people's armed forces first cut the enemy's communication lines with Siem Reap with only a small force, at the same time using their main force to encircle the enemy. This encirclement was maintained for a month and three days, after which the people's armed forces annihilated 2,000 of the puppet troops. Beginning New Year's Day of 1975, our forces advanced in triumph to liberate Puok and over 20 other enemy strongholds, then on to the vicinity of the Siem Reap City.

In the dry season of 1975 the situation was quite different, our Cambodian comrades-in-arms told us excitedly. The enemy had lost all his attack capability.

"Now it is not he who is attacking Angkor, but we who are about to liberate Siem Reap!" a woman fighter added. "We've been launching attacks on Siem Reap since last January!"

Pointing to a white spot at the end of the boulevard due west of the Angkor Wat, Commander Pao Ke ex-

plained: "That's Siem Reap Airport. We've occupied half of it and put the enemy in a passive position so he cannot attack!"

While strolling around the ancient temple, we eyewitnessed the high vigilance of the commanders and fighters of the people's armed forces who guarded Angkor Wat, and the heroic spirit with which they overwhelmed the enemy. The artillery of the people's armed forces had been set up at the foot of the stone towers and elsewhere in the temple of Angkor Wat, their muzzles aimed at Siem Reap and the airport only five kilometres away.

"How about fire a couple of shells to show to our Chinese brothers?" a commander said to the artillery men.

"Just give the order. We're only too happy to give the enemy more hits!" came the enthusiastic reply.

"Aim at enemy positions in Siem Reap City. Fire!" the commander ordered.

The artillery boomed, and in a matter of seconds we saw two shells explode in Siem Reap City, followed by tolling heavy smoke. The shells had hit their targets.

At an anti-aircraft position, heroic women fighters handled the machine-guns and vigilantly kept watch on the sky over Angkor. They said that enemy planes sometimes roared in the sky, but they dared not fly over Angkor for fear of being shot down!

The sound of rapid shooting came from the woods. It was a women's militia company at training. They crawled forward, cut barbed wire entanglements, detonated explosives and charged. Under fire cover, every one of them was very exacting in her actions and

placed strict demands on herself. March is in Cambodia's hottest season. To master combat skills, the women fighters were drilling hard, dusty and dripping with sweat in the tropical woods.

When the training session was over, the women fighters surrounded us with welcoming words and handshakes. They had heard about the Chinese people's new achievements in socialist revolution and construction and asked us to tell them more.

Our visit brought us close to the men and women defenders of the Angkor Wat. They are truly heroic sons and daughters of the Cambodian people and were fighting valiantly in close co-ordination with their comrades-in-arms on other battlefronts for the liberation of the whole country.

"Give our best regards to the fraternal Chinese people!" they warmly requested as we shook hands on parting.

"Salute to the heroic sons and daughters of Angkor! Here's to the early liberation of Siem Reap!" we shouted in reply as we waved farewell.

"You'll hear the good news very soon!" the men and women fighters answered confidently, certain of their victory.

SELF-RELIANCE WORKS WONDERS

We were deeply moved while in Cambodia by the people's revolutionary spirit of self-reliance and hard struggle. Every victory of the patriotic Cambodian army-men and people on the battlefield and in production and construction in the rear areas shines with the spirit of self-reliance. Self-reliance is the road which has brought the Cambodian people victory.

One day Cambodian friends took us to a place near the Mekong River where a group of gunners in green uniforms stood by anti-aircraft machine-guns and women fighters held automatic rifles in the woods guarding the river. Eight kilometres from enemy-occupied Kompong Cham City, the area was heavily mined. This stretch with an island in the middle of the river is a bottleneck in the waterway leading to Phnom Penh. Pointing to a string of logs floating on the river, a local National United Front leading member told us they were hung with mines. He then took us to see the weapons for attacking enemy vessels. They included mines, "flying bombs," refitted bombs of various types and locally-made or refitted illuminating instruments — illumination rafts made of banana tree trunks and padded with soft cotton-like material, searchlights and fluorescent lamps captured from the enemy and flare bombs made of shell casings.

All these weapons and instruments constituted a well-arranged fire system known as the "mass mine position."

An armed enemy convoy attempted to sneak into Kompong Cham on the night of November 21, 1974. But the moment it entered the "mass mine position," torch-lights flared up all over the river, flare bombs shot into the sky and flaming illumination rafts drifted to mid-stream. Caught in a blinding glare, the enemy convoy had nowhere to hide. At this juncture, the people's fighters in the woods pulled a wire and there was a deafening blast. "Flying bombs" and shells of various sizes flew at the enemy convoy from the banks; rifle and machine-gun shots rained on the enemy troops. Badly battered, the enemy boats were very soon sunk or knocked out. The convoy never dared to come again. Besieged in Kompong Cham, enemy troops could only rely on airlifts to prolong their feeble existence.

We continued on from the river banks to a nearby hamlet. There a peasant of about 20 took us to a hut and showed us a small arms dump. The young man, a mine-making specialist, took some strange-looking objects from the hut one by one and then squatted down to tell us their names and use, like an artist introducing his works. These included "flying bombs" made from shell casings — the ones used in attacking enemy vessels on the Mekong, "air-wave bombs" that kill by air concussion, and "stick bombs" which are cylinder-shaped like the bangalore torpedo. Simply fantastic! He also showed us a home-made gun barrel 60 mm. in diameter. He said: "It's used pretty much like a mortar, so the people call it the 'peasant mortar.'" These indigenous arms demonstrated their power when they were used

along with modern weapons in engagements with the enemy in the Mekong area.

These facts show the tremendous strength of people's war. When the people in their millions are aroused to fight for the independence of their motherland and the liberation of their nation, their boundless wisdom and initiative bursts forth like a gushing fountain. With lofty aim and confidence, they seek no help from the leadership, but endeavour to overcome every difficulty by bringing their own potentialities into full play, and expand their strength and win victories through self-reliance. Such is the heroic mettle the patriotic Cambodian armymen and people have exhibited.

The experience of the people themselves making arms in a big way was extensively popularized under the leadership of the National United Front organizations at all levels. Small factories repairing and manufacturing arms through self-reliance to meet war needs had developed apace in the vast liberated areas. They had the common characteristic of making arms in any conditions, combining indigenous and modern methods and gradually raising quality and skill.

Arriving at a small courtyard nestling among many fruit trees, we heard machines droning in two thatched peasant houses — an ammunition factory in eastern Cambodia whose equipment consisted of only a small electric generator, eight old small-sized machine tools captured from the enemy and four hand-operated ones. Besides repairing all kinds of mortars and howitzers, the factory also made recoilless guns and rocket-launchers with seamless steel tubes. A local leading member told us that when the factory was established in 1972 the labour

force consisted of peasants and it did not have a single skilled worker. What was to be done in such circumstances? "Learn from each other. Those who knew a little taught those who knew nothing. Finally, all became skilled," he recalled. Trial production began in 1973 and weapons were being turned out the following year. The factory now has made or repaired more than 10,000 weapons of different sizes. Pointing to the big guns refitted or being repaired, a National United Front leading member in eastern Cambodia said with a smile: "Who knew anything about such weapons in the past? But after we began to make revolution we found we could do anything." And this is true. For it is the revolutionary war that has helped build up the talents of the people who have surmounted all difficulties through self-reliance in the course of actual struggle, learned new skills and attained greater ability.

In late March we visited a jungle field hospital when the war was raging on the Phnom Penh front nearby. The head of the hospital was Mr. Thiounn Thioeunn, Minister of Public Health of the Royal Government of National Union of Cambodia and an outstanding doctor commanding the high respect of the Cambodian people. Braving enemy bombings, he and his comrades had courageously and staunchly carried on their work despite an acute shortage of medicines and medical equipment. Lacking gauze, surgical cotton, adhesive plaster and sutures, they used sterilized mosquito netting and towels, kapok, gummed-paper and disinfected fishing-net thread as respective substitutes. To overcome the medicine shortage, they made over 70 kinds themselves, including glucose, anti-malaria drugs, cough

medicines, analgesics and medicines against snake bite. While busy working to save and treat wounded soldiers, the hospital had trained over 50 doctors for other hospitals since 1972. After showing us round the wards, the warm-hearted Mr. Thiounn Thioeunn went into a simple operating room to perform an operation for a wounded soldier. It was with great admiration that we left this self-reliant field hospital.

Developing the spirit of self-reliance not only helped overcome all difficulties on the battlefield, but also promoted production in the rear areas and guaranteed the stability of the people's livelihood.

The chequered scarf which is also used as a towel is indispensable in the Cambodian people's everyday life. These scarfs used to be woven in city factories with cotton imported from abroad. Now, organized women in every district and village of the liberated areas were making them. The people planted cotton and also developed silk-raising to supply more scarf materials. As in producing this cloth, the principle of self-reliance prevails in the production of other articles. Small factories have mushroomed in the last two years, making paper from bamboo, sugar from cane and sugar palm milk, soap from coconuts and sandals from rubber produced in their own country.

We visited a village named Fighting Hamlet in northern Cambodia where people not only made every effort to increase grain, but also set up handicraft industries such as textiles, ironworking, weaving, sugar-refining and medicine manufacture. They organized the staff of a small medicine factory to collect herbs and process

them, and also produce some injections and distilled water.

As for the development of industry, it is U.S. imperialism and "quartermaster" Lon Nol who should be "thanked," for they supplied the people with a great quantity of modern arms and the people in the rear with considerable industrial raw materials. Using materials recovered from captured war equipment to manufacture a whole range of industrial products for civilian and military use is an important innovation by the Cambodian people through self-reliance.

While visiting plants and rural areas in various places, we found that all the blowers of the drying furnaces were made from the big casings of U.S. bombs. Even the main moving parts of machine tools had been fashioned from big shells. Artistic kerosene lamps made from U.S. howitzer shells are both daily-use and handicraft articles welcomed everywhere. Some were given to us as souvenirs by our Cambodian friends. In Cambodia, wherever enemy planes, tanks and armoured cars had been destroyed, the people collected the wreckage and sent it to factories and workshops to be made into spades, hoes, knives, axes, pots, plates and other goods.

The most attractive items were cooking pots made from the metal of enemy planes and tanks. One plant in eastern Cambodia alone produced with such material 1,500 to 1,800 aluminium pots monthly, not only meeting the needs of the local people but some of the requirements at the front. Soon after we entered the Cambodian liberated areas, a Cambodian friend said to us: "Now, instead of fearing intruding enemy planes, the people

think of the planes as coming to present them with metal." When they flew over the rural areas, the peasants would say: "You needn't be so cocky, you'll become our cooking pots someday!" These revolutionary people's words were a scathing rebuff to the imperialists, who relied on modern weapons.

Self-reliance means victory and works wonders. During the harsh war years, the liberated areas made a remarkable achievement — self-sufficiency in food grain. The tremendous efforts devoted to building water conservancy projects and increasing rice production in the liberated areas made a particularly deep impression on us when we were there. Wherever we went, we saw thousands of cheerful people working at water conservancy construction sites. Relying on collective strength, the broad masses of peasants had pitched into the drive to grow rice in the dry season so as to get two crops a year instead of one and thus bring about a year-by-year rise in rice production. During our visit there we saw in many places reservoirs of various sizes and vast fields of dry-season rice, some growing well and some already reaped. Instead of waiting for farm machinery and chemical fertilizer, the people transformed nature through tenacious labour and reaped one bumper harvest after another. Leading cadres of the districts and villages we visited predicted with full confidence that 1975 would witness an even bigger bumper harvest.

The Cambodian people are a heroic people characterized by bravery, diligence, perseverance and tenacity. They dare to fight and conquer the enemy, nature and all difficulties. Self-reliance is a salient manifestation of their heroic character. Since they could score earth-

shaking victories in the war years, they will definitely win still more splendid victories after country-wide liberation in the struggle to build a genuinely independent, peaceful, neutral, non-aligned, sovereign, democratic and prosperous new Cambodia.

NEW LOOK IN CAMBODIA'S COUNTRYSIDE

March is at the height of the dry season in Cambodia and used to be a "slack farming month," but in Cambodia today the term has become obsolete. Our journey took us through mountain areas and plains in more than a dozen provinces and we saw stirring scenes of a busy farming season everywhere. Profound changes were taking place in Cambodia's rural areas, with the people toughened by five years of national-liberation war.

As our Cambodian hosts had arranged, we drove north from the Mekong River front by night to avoid enemy bombing. We arrived by dawn at a large stretch of paddy fields in which many people were hard at work. Getting out of our cars, we went to the edge of the fields and saw peasants, both men and women, working industriously. The men were ploughing or harrowing with oxen, while the women gathered, transported or transplanted rice seedlings, or applied fertilizer. The scene was one of people busy at collective labour, while the sounds—the shouts of the peasants as they drove the cattle, the pedalling of the waterwheels and the laughter and conversation—harmonized into a symphony of splendid production.

We sat by the roadside talking with the local cadres of the National United Front till we suddenly noticed the day was bright. The stately mango and cocoanut

trees and the tree-shaded village became clearly outlined against the sky. The reddish purple clouds on the eastern horizon gradually turned strong pink and the sun appeared, its rays reflected on the water in the paddy fields. There was the striking of an iron bell hanging from a tree. Was it not the signal for the people working in the fields to rest? They paid it no heed, however, and women from a nearby village came rather along the narrow footpaths, bringing them their breakfast.

The vigorous scene of labour performed in this beautiful country was fascinating indeed, particularly so because its setting was the soil of Cambodia during decisive battles in her national-liberation war. And further, it was during the dry season, when the fields usually cracked under the scorching sun, with seldom a drop of rain falling. Our delegation's cameramen, very moved by what they saw, rolled up their trousers and ran to the paddy fields with their motion-picture cameras to record these enchanting scenes in the Cambodian countryside.

This village in Me Sang District was called Ressleramo. Once a drought area, the National United Front cadres told us, the village had undergone a great change since 1973. Under the Front's leadership, the villagers had organized themselves into unite-to-increase-production teams. They dug canals to bring water from a nearby lake for rice-growing in the dry season. In the 1974 dry season the rice-producing area was further increased. This year, 1975, it had reached more than 30 hectares, and a still bigger harvest was expected.

The new look of this village was in fact a view of Cambodia's changing rural liberated areas in miniature,

and we saw many more thriving villages like it on our visit.

Located in the tropical zone, Cambodia has excellent natural conditions. Instead of the usual four seasons there are only two — the dry and the rainy. The climate allows the growing of crops the whole year round. Rainfall is abundant, but 90 per cent of it falls during the rainy season (May-October). Paddy rice could not be planted in the dry season before, and so the fertile farmland lay idle half the time. With water supply the key to rice growing in the dry season, the National United Front raised the clarion call: "Rely on the people, not heaven, in working the land!" and led the peasants in the last three years in a mass campaign to build water conservancy projects. By self-reliance and hard struggle, they built dams and reservoirs and dug many ponds and canals, all with simple tools. Large quantities of water are collected in the reservoirs during the rainy season to irrigate the fields in the dry season. This has changed the food production situation. The annual grain output of the liberated areas has risen by a wide margin, so that the liberated areas as a whole now have enough food and to spare. The increase in grain output means greater support to the war of liberation, the people's livelihood steadily improves, and the liberated areas are more consolidated than ever.

Three years' efforts in water conservancy construction in the liberated areas have resulted in today's large-scale mass movement. Like the fighters at the front, the labouring people endure all hardships and work bravely and perseveringly, giving full play to their revolutionary heroism. We visited many water conservancy worksites

and were deeply impressed by the magnificent scenes of collective labour. On our way back from Angkor we saw a project in Chikreng District where 15,000 people were building a huge dam and a 16-kilometre-long main canal. Their broadcast system carried songs over the entire worksite, and the people were digging, hauling and building energetically, though the sun was beating down hard. In order to complete their projects before the rainy season set in, people at some construction sites continued into the cool of the night, working under electric light or flaming torches. During breaks, they would sleep by a bonfire in the woods. All this showed us the firm will and determination of the Cambodian people to conquer nature, now that they are the masters of their own land.

These water conservancy projects have been vital in increasing rice production and will play a bigger role in the future. The people in Preach Sdach District, a large rice-growing area near the Mekong River front, for example, in three months built a dam eight kilometres long which retains water in the lowlands, forming a large-size man-made lake on the plains. More than 2,000 people were working on the dam every day, making it wider and higher. Using the lake's ample water resources, the people in the district had planted 2,000 hectares to paddy rice in the 1975 dry season.

"The district's dry season rice crop is the largest of any in Prey Veng Province, and even in the whole of eastern Cambodia," said a responsible member of the area with pride. From the top of the dam the vast stretch of paddy fields below resembled a sea of green, and the distant villages were like islets in the sea. The rice was already beautifully ripe in some fields, with

the peasants cutting and threshing it. An atmosphere of joy prevailed both in the rice fields and on the work-sites. When completed, this big lake will water the 20,000 hectares of arable land nearby, and still larger areas will be planted to paddy rice in the next dry season.

The development of water conservancy projects has not only increased grain output in the rice-growing areas, but has also contributed to the realization of self-sufficiency in grain in areas formerly solely under cash crops. Kampot Province completed over 300 large and small water conservancy projects in the past three years, and these have brought beneficial changes in the province's farm production structure. "People used to limit their planting mainly to dry-season crops here," explained our host. "They grew peppers on the outskirts of Kampot City, for instance. Before 1974 the people here were short of food, and supplies for the army were also tight. But the water conservancy works have enabled more paddy rice to be grown in the dry season, and this is done not only by the peasants but by government organizations as well. Even army units grow rice around where they're stationed. This way, both the people and the armed forces have had enough grain for their own consumption since 1974." In Koh Sautin District of Kompong Cham Province, people used to grow dry-season cash crops and fruit, while 90 per cent of their rice was supplied by other districts. But this district, too, has increased its grain output rapidly in recent years with the building of a series of water conservancy projects. In 1973 they produced 35 per cent of the grain they consumed, the figure rising to 70 per cent the fol-

lowing year. They will be entirely self-sufficient in grain in 1975.

During the campaigns to build irrigation works and boost farm production, National United Front cadres at all levels worked together with the people and shared their joys and hardships. Between battles, commanders and fighters of the people's armed forces joined them in building water conservancy projects and cultivating paddy rice. The cadres, armed forces and people were steeled in this great production drive, and the political consciousness of the people was raised. The relationship between cadres and masses, and between army and people grew ever closer. The unite-to-increase-production teams were tested and consolidated in these mass campaigns. In Tbaung Khmum District, Kompong Cham Province, we visited a village of 300 households. The people had been quickly mobilized in 1974, when the teams were set up, to dig ponds so as to make use of springs for irrigating paddy-rice fields. Output increased from 576,000 kilogrammes in 1973 to 960,000 kilogrammes.

"Under the leadership of the National United Front, the people have made remarkable progress since the start of the war. They are happy to see their irrigation works yielding tangible results and paddy rice growing in the dry season. It gives them greater confidence in the leadership of the National United Front," the village leader said.

At an evening performance we saw depicted on stage the building of irrigation works and the great production drive. A team of peasants danced as they sang:

*We no longer rely on heaven in farming,
But on collective strength.
And be it the dry or the rainy season,
The rice grows fragrant throughout the year!*

*We dig and we hoe,
To clear out stones and brush.
The wilderness of yesterday
Gives way to fertile fields today!*

*With shoulder-pole and baskets,
We do battle against nature;
Defeat the stubborn U.S. imperialist foe and its lackeys,
Win a good harvest and a better life.*

*The rice is ripe in the fields;
It ripples gracefully in the breeze.
The sun of revolution lights the land,
Shedding its golden, happy rays everywhere.*

This simple, meaningful song reflected for us the prosperity of the flourishing Cambodian countryside. It also expressed the joy and pride of a liberated people and their lofty aspirations of building a new Cambodia.

The great Cambodian people's heroic and arduous struggle has resulted in a historic victory for the cause of national liberation and they have become the masters of their land. Certain to create a picture on the brocade of the rich Cambodian soil that will be the newest and most beautiful yet, the Cambodian people will shape a bright future for themselves with their wisdom and their own hands.

OPENING A NEW CHAPTER IN HISTORY

We climbed to the top storey of one of the temple halls in the world-renowned ancient Angkor Wat at glorious sunrise. Over the horizon of the surrounding vast woodland the sun drenched the cluster of tall towers behind the temple halls in its crimson brilliance.

Several stalwart gunners of the people's armed forces, cheeks rosy in the sun, stood sentry duty beside two guns on top of the east gate-tower. In the courtyard below a team of agile and vigorous women fighters were manipulating a rotating anti-aircraft machine-gun, camouflaged with leaves, searching the sky. Suddenly two thunderbolts of artillery punctured the silence of the woods — the people's armed forces had resumed shelling the enemy bottled up in the city of Siem Reap, and the enemy answered the firing. In the midst of the smoke of gunpowder, Angkor Wat stood foursquare in her unperturbed serenity. She had become a well embattled fastness fighting in earnest.

As we walked along the long corridor of the hall, we came upon a young sentry standing beside a huge stone pillar, the automatic rifle in his hand flashing in the sunlight. He was gazing alertly into the distance where enemy forces were entrenched only two kilometres away. Behind him were masonry walls carved with sacred

figures of brave men fighting against enemies as well as beasts.

"How do you do, comrade? Have you been in the army long?"

"I enlisted in 1974," he said quietly.

"Where are you from? What did you do before joining the army?"

"I come from a district not far away. I'm from a peasant family."

So, like thousands of other Cambodian youths, the one before us had put down his hoe and taken up a gun to "fight Lon Nol," as he expressed it. Now he had been assigned the glorious task of defending Angkor Wat. To him, and in fact to every Cambodian patriot, the Angkor Wat temple is a treasure and pride of the people of all nationalities of the country. Defending Angkor Wat signified defending their homes, defending Cambodia's honour, sovereignty and dignity.

For centuries the Cambodian people have cherished Angkor Wat, and this profound feeling has grown out of genuine and lofty patriotism. All through the devastating war the people's fighters and other patriotic people felt the temple precious. A high-ranking commander of the people's armed forces had remarked at the Phnom Penh battle-front: "We'll defend our Angkor Wat as we would our own eyes."

Such national sentiment had its origin in the history of the nation, and it grew in the protracted struggles for national liberation. It embodied the indomitable will

and resolve of the Cambodian people in opposing foreign aggression and defending national independence.

The sky over Angkor had been heavily overcast on March 18, 1970, when a new grave national disaster struck Cambodia. The ensuing dark days saw the traitorous Lon Nol clique brandishing its butcher knife, snarling and baring its fangs, trampling the Angkor temple grounds along with the U.S. aggressors and their south Vietnamese puppet troops. They burned, slaughtered and plundered savagely, but the people were neither subdued nor disheartened. Rallying round the banner of the National United Front of Cambodia with Samdech Norodom Sihanouk as Chairman and the Royal Government of National Union of Cambodia, armed with only rifles, bows and arrows and swords, they plunged into battle. The flames of their people's war quickly spread over the entire country, and that very first year the patriotic armed forces and people liberated the greater part of the territory and population. It was then that Angkor was recovered from the enemy.

In this great national-liberation war, the sons and daughters of Angkor distinguished themselves for their dauntless defiance of the brutal and powerful enemies, for their daring to fight. We visited a village in eastern Cambodia where we saw this spirit embodied. It had only 35 farm households, but they made a great contribution to the revolution by sending many of their young people to join the armed forces. Sixty were still at the front at the time of our visit. The grey-haired village head told us that a few years ago a band of south Vietnamese puppets had been stationed near this revolutionary village. Hating and fearing it, they shelled it,

seized the people, beat women to try to get them to betray their husbands who had joined the revolution. They forced an old monk to climb a coconut tree and pick the fruit for them to eat. But not a single person of the 200 villagers ever yielded. Rather, they assaulted the enemy by night, three in their ranks giving their lives in combat. They kept up the fight relentlessly until they drove away the enemy force. Such initiative and courage in taking up arms against the country's enemy was just one example among the hundreds of villages throughout Cambodia.

The Cambodian people's patriotism rose to unprecedented heights during the bitter and hard struggle against the foes of the nation. Heroes and heroines stepped forth in large numbers. The heroic story of a young woman fighter in the battle against the enemy's "Operation Chenla 2" circulated widely among the people. It happened during an encounter on Highway 6, where this young fighter charged the enemy at the forefront with a bazooka-type launcher on her shoulder. After seven or eight rockets she still refused to be substituted, her anger at the enemy mounting with each shot until 18 rockets had been fired continuously. She killed as many of the enemy as she could and then collapsed, fatally injured by the heavy concussions. This daughter of poor peasants gave her life to her motherland. In the army for only a year, she was one of the thousands of shining examples of people's heroes and heroines. At the Phnom Penh front we heard the story of two famous young fighters who had never touched an armoured vehicle before. After a short but rigorous period of training, they drove two freshly captured tracked armoured cars

against a hail of bullets, shells and hand-mines straight into the heavily defended enemy line. Together with several men of their armoured car crew, they destroyed two enemy pillboxes and killed more than 230 enemy troops without suffering a single casualty. Such acts of heroism became a tremendous force propelling the Cambodian people forward in their struggle for national liberation.

In this great war, not only the worker-peasant masses arose and fought valiantly, but the patriotic intellectuals joined in the tense struggle, making valuable contributions to the liberation cause. We met a number of such intellectuals during our visit. Among them were some older professional men who had given up comfortable jobs and fine living including sea-side villas, to serve the war with their knowledge. Many students also found ways to free themselves from the yoke of the Lon Nol clique, leave classrooms and join the ranks of the liberation fighters.

Such was the high sense of patriotism, fearlessness of sacrifice, and unity as one in the struggle of the heroic sons and daughters of Angkor as they advanced from victory to victory.

In March 1975, while Angkor was being defended, an all-out general offensive on Phnom Penh was launched, a life-and-death battle for Cambodia. The contrast between the moribund reactionaries and the emerging revolutionary forces grew ever sharper. From the start of the campaign on January 1, 1975, all the enemy's transport lines by land and water to and from the city of Phnom Penh were cut, and their airlift was paralyzed.

The enemy forces in the city were like a turtle caught in a jar. The traitors were at their last gasp. Intercepted enemy radio transmissions were all laments and pleas for food and reinforcements, while on the side of the patriotic forces and people, morale rose as the fight went on, every combat fighter displaying unsurpassed valour. The U.S.-made artillery in the hands of the people's forces roared unceasingly, while the newly captured tanks and armoured cars swept across the battlefield, thrusting out in powerful assaults and striking fatal blows at the enemy. In the rear areas, hundreds and thousands of people were working enthusiastically on water conservancy projects, or growing rice. By land and water, convoys of boats and vehicles of all descriptions loaded with grain, vegetables, fruit, hogs and chickens were headed for the front. It was a magnificent demonstration of people's war, heralding the historic victory of the splendid march of the thousands of heroic sons and daughters of Cambodia.

A high-ranking commander opened an operations map at command headquarters and said with assurance:

"A small nation can defeat a big one. Our own experience proves this. The enemy has nothing to eat and hardly any territory. They have no people, for the people are with us. We have a correct political line and vast expanses of land. We're economically self-sufficient. We could go on fighting for another hundred years!"

The traitorous clique at Phnom Penh utterly collapsed after the most intense 3 months and 17 days of fighting of the war. Once the banner of victory fluttered over the rooftops of the capital, the defenders of Angkor

thrust from their stronghold and took the city of Siem Reap, where they hoisted the red flag as did their comrades-in-arms in the entire country. The brilliant victory rid Angkor Wat of the humiliation and defacement the monument had suffered in the past. Laved in the sunlight of triumph, Angkor Wat was experiencing the most glorious moment of her history. The Cambodian people had stood up, fearless and erect! The new era of national liberation and reconstruction of Cambodia had begun, a new chapter written in Cambodia's history!

The Cambodian people who had in early times built Angkor Wat have in the 1970s worked another wonder of history. This latter, the liberation of the whole country, equals and even surpasses by far, the former. The future of a people who win such victories is infinitely bright.

THE CHINESE AND CAMBODIAN PEOPLES ARE LIKE BROTHERS

Our visit to Cambodia was an unforgettable, exciting experience; every day we witnessed many impressive events. Wherever we went, we felt keenly the deep bonds of brotherhood between the Cambodian and Chinese peoples. Everyone we met received us as comrades-in-arms and brothers.

"Welcome, brothers! You are heartily welcome!" — these were the simple, sincere, stirring words the Chinese Journalists Delegation heard throughout the liberated areas of Cambodia during our visit in March 1975. Leading members of local administrative organs, cadres and fighters of the people's armed forces and civilians hurried to embrace us and shake our hands, saying, "We wish Chairman Mao Tsetung a long life! The great Chinese people are our brothers!"

Sino-Cambodian friendship has deep roots. It has grown firmer through the protracted revolutionary struggles against imperialism, and our two peoples have become close comrades-in-arms.

We were the first Chinese delegation to visit Cambodia after the Cambodian people took up nation-wide armed struggle against the U.S. aggressive forces and the traitor Lon Nol in March 1970. We went carrying the profound

friendship of the Chinese people. Our meeting with the Cambodian people was one with brothers, joyful beyond description. The Cambodian workers, peasants and fighters expressed in various ways their profound friendship for the Chinese people. They said: "Chairman Mao Tsetung has sent you to visit us!"

After recalling their struggle against the paper tiger, U.S. imperialism, and reviewing their victorious situation, the commanders and fighters who were performing valiant deeds around Phnom Penh, along the Mekong River, along the Angkor-Siem Reap front, and at General Headquarters of the People's Armed Forces of National Liberation of Cambodia always concluded: "We want to present Chairman Mao Tsetung and the Chinese people with the most valuable gifts." By this they meant the U.S. arms they had seized from the puppet troops of Lon Nol, "chief of transportation corps," in battle. We were deeply moved as we accepted U.S. automatic rifles, submachine guns and other light arms taken from the enemy on many fronts. These treasured gifts symbolize great victories.

There was an interesting interchange when we talked with a commander on the Phnom Penh front. Pointing to a newly captured U.S. 105-mm. howitzer mounted in artillery position, he remarked with a smile, "You can have this gun as a token gift for the Chinese people, that is if you can carry it away with you!"

Sharing the joy of victory with our Cambodian comrades-in-arms, we replied: "We can't carry that kind of thing around with us. Better leave it here to rain shells on Lon Nol."

The Cambodian workers and peasants presented us with many token gifts for the Chinese people, things they had made themselves, and which showed good craftsmanship. They included articles of daily use made from the spoils of war. A gift we much admired was a fine kerosene lamp made of a shell casing, on which the word "friendship" was etched in Cambodian and Chinese. Other gifts included cooking pots, lunch boxes, water flasks, lighters, combs and other useful things made from the wreckage of enemy aircraft. These had been paid for in blood, and we expressed our sincere thanks.

The people in the liberated areas have shown great ingenuity in making various items under extremely difficult conditions for use on the battle-front. These articles testify to the Cambodian people's lofty revolutionary spirit of independence, initiative and self-reliance. Our Cambodian brothers often said: "Please take these things back and let the Chinese people see what we have made." The gifts they gave us — paper, soap, scarfs, rubber sandals and medicinal herbs — embody the Cambodian people's spirit of self-reliance, their fraternal feelings towards the Chinese people and their militant solidarity with them.

In Stung Trang District, Kompong Cham Province, our hosts specially made a number of fine soft straw mats for us. On them were woven in Cambodian and Chinese the words "Long live the friendship between Cambodia and China!" Interwoven in these straw mats were their profound feelings towards their Chinese brothers.

We were cordially welcomed and entertained by local people wherever our delegation went. One mid-March night, during our short rest after ferrying across a small river on the border of Peam Reang District, hundreds of local people surrounded us. One by one we were offered cocoanut milk and the Cambodian speciality, sugar palm juice.

"Drink, brothers from Peking! You've had a long and tiring journey!"

"This is pleasant to the taste and beneficial to digestion!"

"The weather is very warm, but our hearts are warmer still with friendship. Drink your fill!"

It was late at night when we sat beside the river about 20 kilometres from the enemy in Neak Luong. Our Cambodian friends asked many questions about the health of Chairman Mao and about the people of China — about their standard of living and the construction they are carrying on. We conveyed to our hosts the fraternal sentiments of the Chinese people, their militant greetings and their warm regards. We then proceeded southward, travelling by moonlight to escape enemy planes. Here and there, men and women, old and young, lined both sides of the road, applauding and shouting as we drove off: "Long live the friendship between Cambodia and China! A long life to Chairman Mao!" We could not help stopping many times to acknowledge their good wishes. It took us four hours to pass through these lines of waving people.

A Cambodian comrade-in-arms told us: "We have not announced your visit for security reasons, but many

people came spontaneously to welcome you when the news spread by word of mouth. If we had announced your coming, you wouldn't be able to get to the Mekong River front even by tomorrow, for many more people would surround, embrace and delay you."

One noon, the delegation went to visit a village in Kompong Speu Province. Before arriving there, we stopped on the way to film the beautiful scenery. We asked an old man working by the roadside the names of certain flowers and trees. Learning that we were from China, he whispered to a youngster beside him. By the time we finished taking the film, we found the youngster had climbed a cocoanut tree and picked a dozen coconuts. The old man presented them to us, saying: "Drink! You must be very hot. Brothers, quench your thirst!" We were moved beyond words.

At the site of a water conservancy project in Chik Reng District, over 15,000 people were building a big reservoir. When we arrived, crowds surrounded and embraced us. Thousands shouted: "Salute the Chinese people! We wish Chairman Mao Tsetung a long life!"

Greatly stirred by their reception, we took up shoulder-poles and baskets and carried earth together with our Cambodian brothers. The construction site rang with the slogans "Long live the friendship between Cambodia and China!" and "May the friendship between Cambodia and China be ever green!"

When it was time for us to leave, our hosts embraced us, exclaiming: "The sweat of the Cambodian and Chinese peoples has mingled!"

One day towards the end of March we visited the Phnom Penh Front Headquarters. We were warmly received, and guests and hosts chatted about friendship and discussed the victorious situation of the impending liberation of Phnom Penh. The hosts accompanied us on a visit to the armoured and artillery units of the liberation armed forces. When we parted, we were presented with captured U.S. weapons. We had no other gifts to give in return, so presented our cigarettes to the Cambodian comrades-in-arms. Commander Son Sen said significantly: "These are cigarettes brought to us by our dear brothers from Peking. We will give them to the liberation fighters on the Phnom Penh front. I'm sure your gift will promote their fighting courage!"

Deputy Commander Thouch said: "Though our two countries are separated, our hearts are linked and beat as one!"

At an art performance in honour of our delegation, the young Cambodian artists performed many items praising the fraternal friendship between the Cambodian and Chinese peoples. The dance "Long Live the Militant Solidarity Between the Cambodian and Chinese Peoples" drew warm applause from all spectators. The artists also sang in Chinese the songs "Sailing the Seas Depends on the Helmsman," "From Peking's Golden Hill" and "Long Live Chairman Mao." All the items carried to the spectators the message of profound friendship between Cambodia and China.

During our visit we were received at one forward position by Khieu Samphan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence of the Royal Government

of National Union of Cambodia and Commander-in-Chief of the People's Armed Forces of National Liberation of Cambodia. We enjoyed a very cordial and friendly conversation with him.

Hou Youn, Minister of the Interior, Co-operatives and Communal Reforms, and Hu Nim, Minister of Information and Propaganda, also received the delegation and honoured it at a banquet in the name of the National United Front of Cambodia and the cabinet.

At the farewell banquet given by Minister of Information and Propaganda Hu Nim, our host spoke most warmly of the indestructible revolutionary friendship and fraternal solidarity between the Cambodian and Chinese peoples. He emphasized the importance of the statement issued by the Chinese people's great leader Chairman Mao Tsetung on May 20, 1970, saying it had been a powerful encouragement and support to the Cambodian people. He said that the great victories scored by the Cambodian army and people were common victories for the peoples of Cambodia and China.

The events during our short stay in brotherly Cambodia have added a new chapter to the annals of friendship between China and Cambodia and are unforgettable. The close fraternal friendship between the peoples of China and Cambodia, forged in the anti-imperialist revolutionary struggle, is unbreakable. It has taken root and blossomed in the hearts of the peoples of the two countries and flourishes ever fresh.

The Chinese Journalists Delegation reluctantly left the heroic Cambodian people and the beautiful land of Cambodia as the good news came pouring in that the people's

armed forces had liberated Neak Luong and taken Pochentong Airport. We all felt that the liberation of Phnom Penh was imminent. But as the monsoons were setting in and would make travel difficult, we felt we must return home. On our way we heard the good news of Phnom Penh's liberation on April 17. We jubilantly raised our arms in salute to the historic great victory of the fraternal Cambodian people.

战斗的柬埔寨
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