

A Textile Mill Economizes

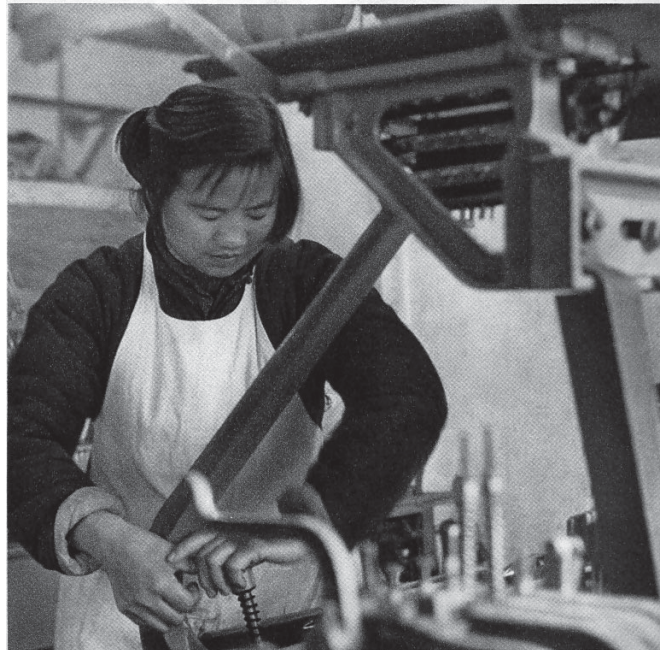
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Veteran worker Feng Pao-chu constructs a mechanical device to draw in the heald. It raises efficiency and cuts waste.

New installations. Hsiangfan Cotton Textile Mill is still growing.

Through hard study and training Kung Chu-ying is now able to tend 48 looms.



THE Hsiangfan Cotton Textile Mill is one of Hupeh Province's modernized enterprises. Twelve years ago, it was a handicraft workshop of only a dozen or so ramshackle brick rooms housing 17 hand-operated looms. In the early days after liberation, following the teachings of Chairman Mao, the workers and staff members

embarked upon a policy of hard work and self-reliance. They determined to overcome whatever difficulties they came across and proceeded to wipe out poverty and backwardness with their own hands.

On rainy days when the water dripped through the broken tiles, they went on with their work under umbrellas. They gathered up all the waste

yarn, using the long pieces to weave coarse cloth and the short ones for cleaning. Later on they themselves built more than 30 small workrooms out of brick and wood with a saving to the state of 13,000 yuan. They made machines for re-winding, pirn winding and warping, and equipped the looms with electric power.



In the bleaching and dyeing shop, Juan Yi-sheng (centre), director of the textile mill, studies with the workers how to improve the quality of sizing. The leading cadres of the Hsiangfan mill have been taking part in manual labour regularly for the past dozen years.

Eight old looms have been kept to help younger workers understand the glorious tradition of thrift according to which the mill was built up.



In addition to other difficulties which cropped up, a strong gale in 1961 swept down all the new workshops, and the installations were damaged. Still, they did not ask the state for help but started to re-build the mill with their own resources.

Under the leadership of the Party branch, the workers were divided into three groups: one for repairing installations, another for reconstructing workshops, and the third for producing straw sandals and straw braid in order to increase the income of the mill. In a short time, production was restored and in the very same month they produced several thousand metres of cloth. A 10,000-yuan state grant for repairs was returned untouched.

In 1964, the state allocated over 100 new looms to them. Was it necessary any longer to persist in hard work and thrift? This was the question facing the workers, staff members and especially the Party branch.

The Party branch was always in the forefront of the struggle. For a dozen years, the members

of its committee had been working and living the same as ordinary workers, and had stood first in the face of difficulties. Liang Yen-ping, secretary of the Party branch, set an example for the others. Whenever she travelled by train on business, she refused to have a berth or accept subsidiary fees which she was entitled to. When the factory schedule was changed from one to three shifts a day, she and the head of the mill themselves joined the night shift since many workers had difficulty in adjusting.

Before the new looms came, the Party branch held a general factory meeting. Veteran workers were invited to tell about how the factory had been built up, and the subject was discussed in groups. The Party branch guaranteed to persist in hard work and thrift no matter what their conditions were.

"In poverty, keep our great prospects in mind; when well off, never give up the struggle for communism." This was their conclusion. The practice of "saving every inch of waste yarn"

was greatly developed. Ordinarily production stops when new machines are being installed. But the workers thought of an alternative. They moved the old looms into the canteen and dormitories and set up temporary workshops so that they could continue production.

According to the design, it would cost 50,000 yuan to build a new drying room. "That's too expensive," the workers said. Assisted by other factories, they built one using their own native skills and methods with a saving of more than 20,000 yuan for the state.

Modern looms brought new problems. The weavers could not handle them properly, and the amount of waste yarn and second-grade cloth increased. As they put it, "To produce inferior cloth out of good yarn is a great loss to the state. If we really want to save, we should emphasize quality."

And this they went in for at full speed. A movement was launched for rigorous training, with mutual help as the core.

The Party branch organized the whole factory to study again Chairman Mao's *Serve the People* and *The Foolish Old Man Who Removed the Mountains*. All agreed, "When times are difficult, we must pluck up our spirits. We have managed to overcome all kinds of difficulties. The new looms seem like fierce tigers, but still we have to tame them."

Maintenance worker Feng Pao-chu worked hard in the daytime, and studied theory until late at night in an effort to learn the new techniques. After two months, he knew all the 900 parts of the loom. Kung Chu-ying, a girl weaver, went to another mill for training. Within a short time through sheer diligence, she became outstanding for both quality and output.

Such was the revolutionary spirit with which they met obstacles and learned new operations. Seven months after the re-equipped mill was commissioned, it was putting out eight varieties of cloth with 110 designs. The proportion of first-class products exceeded 97 per cent.

Checking the product inch by inch. The workers say, "To produce second-grade cloth is a great waste!"

