SHIFTING WINDS Quotes from China's Past

Remember that big movement for making iron and steel? We made a lot of steel. That was when we cut down all the trees on the hills. As for the steel we made, well of course there was no use for it. Later on the family sent me a message: they were all well nigh starved to death. That was during the Famine. So I forgot about the steelmaking and got home as fast as I could to feed all those mouths. The first people who starved to death in those days were buried in thin coffins, then bodies were put in a couple of vats joined rim to rim. Later on, when everyone was so weak with hunger they couldn't move, whole families died and were just left where they lay."

GREAT LEAP FORWARD

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Protests at Tiananmen Square

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Cultural Revolution

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Communist Revolution

"We don't beat people. We ate a different army, we are one family with the poor. We will divide the landlords' fields and give land to everyone." We had meetings about the Soviet Union, and at these, ganbus (communist officials) came and told us that we had learned from its experience how to make a revolution. The Soviet Government had also begun with only a few rifles. We had meetings at which we talked of how all humanity was to be freed of all oppression and all misfortune and need, and how all peoples were to become brothers and live a equals all over the world.

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Economic Reforms

From now on there will be more talk about economics and less about politics. ■ The landlords, of course, had thousands of goats, donkeys, and oxen, and they just gathered in their rent. They bought and sold grain and they always made money on everything. In autumn, when we had to sell grain to get the cash to pay our taxes, the price of corn was low; and in the spring, when we had to borrow or buy corn, the price of corn was high. We starved and toiled, but they lived in luxury and profusion and never worked. They ate pork every day; they had steamed wheaten bread and noodles.

Dynastic China

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My neighbor to the east was raided. He liked paintings and calligraphy, and his shop was full of them. Nearly all of his stuff was fake,...but he had one Ming Dynasty painting by Qiu Ying that was the real thing...The old woman from the street committee brought a whole mob of Red Guards in to raid his place, and they burned all his pictures, including the Qiu Ying. It was torture for him. He kept saying, "Don't burn it, don't burn it, I'll give it up to the state." But the Red guards paid not a blind bit of notice. They just beat him up. "what would the state want with that four old of yours?" the old women from the street committee asked.

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Communist Revolution

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Deng's reforms

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