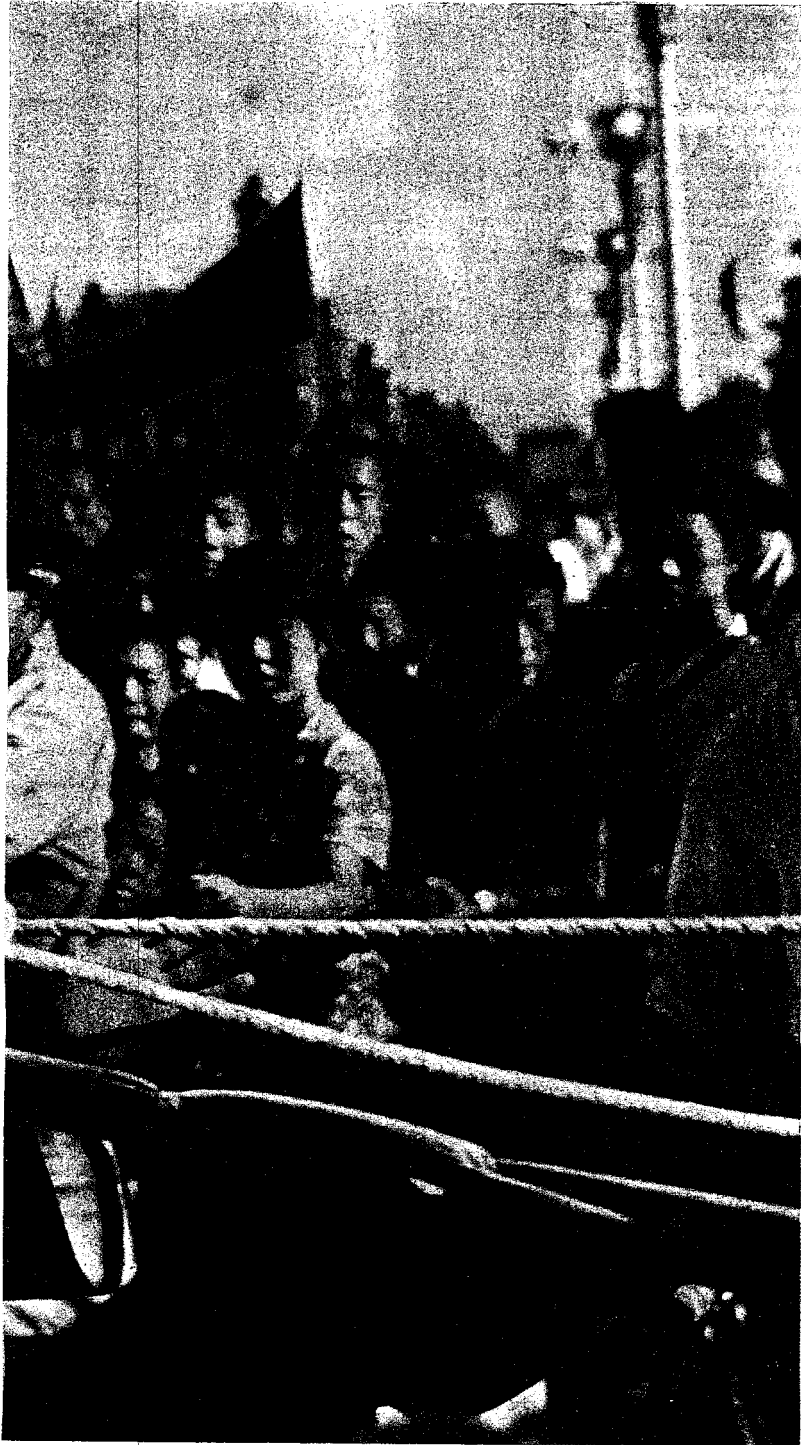


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# PAGEANT IN PEKING



by NADINE LIBER

PEKING  
It is Aug. 7, beginning of what is often called in China "Tiger Month." A gray, suffocating day, well over 90°. At lunch, our group of French tourists is surrounded by one young couple from Ghana, a delegation from Mali, six men from Guinea. One of them is saying that a massive anti-U.S. demonstration may start this afternoon.

Photographer Pierre Boulat and I do not have any way of knowing that U.S. fleet aircraft, in response to a Communist torpedo attack in the Gulf of Tonkin, four days earlier had bombed North Vietnamese bases. We announce to all within earshot that we will rest this afternoon. Then, as soon as everybody has gone, we grab two cameras and 10 rolls of film and are off to T'ien An Men Square. If anything is going to happen, it undoubtedly will happen here.

The square is empty, except for a little girl pushing a bamboo baby carriage in which three babies are eating watermelon. It is 1 p.m., and not a square foot of shadow on these 180 acres.

Then, like thunder, the Communist *Internationale* bursts from loudspeakers, and an ocean of men and women comes pouring onto the square in rows of eight. An immense, disciplined army in cloth slippers, they march noiselessly straight at us, carrying huge red flags and mauve, green and yellow pennants. A big white banner shows a map of Vietnam and U.S. rockets falling on what seems to be Hanoi. Pierre is wondering, "And what if it is war. . . . We don't know. . . ."

The people move out of the square and down Changan Boulevard, screaming anti-American slogans and followed now by soldiers carrying rifles. Then, around 5 p.m., two open army trucks advance on the square. As they pass us, we see that the men and women in them, their rifles shining and their helmets covered with leafy camouflage, are done up in theatrical versions of military costumes. Bringing up the rear is another truck filled with Chinese cameramen.

The crowd now forms into big, thick circles. In one circle two actors from the

CONTINUED

Photographed for LIFE  
by PIERRE BOULAT

PEKING, AUG. 7. A flashily dressed actor, playing the U.S. ambassador to South Vietnam, waits for soldier-actors to yank the rope around his neck and pull him to the pavement where he will then beg for mercy.

# Peking soap opera: big joke on the U.S.

## RED CHINA CONTINUED

Peking Opera, their faces covered with dust-gray make-up and wearing false noses, enact the roles of "ugly Americans." They are then pushed around by actors playing North Vietnam's "brave soldiers"; they fall on their knees, try to get up, fall again and are dragged across the ground. The audience roars with laughter, backed up by canned applause echoing from the loudspeakers.

In another circle a dark-haired man is dressed in striped morning trousers, a 19th Century ambassador's coat embroidered with gold braid, and top hat with "U.S." painted on it in white. Humiliated, dragged in the dust, the ambassador falls and pleads again and again with his captors while the loudspeakers pour it on with triumphant military marches.

A third circle is even more popular with the crowd. But by smiling and shouting "*Fa-Kuo, Fa-Kuo*" (French, French) we are able to push up to the first row. On one side is a large map of Vietnam, with "U.S. Zones of Aggression" drawn in color. In the center six men are dressed in black from head

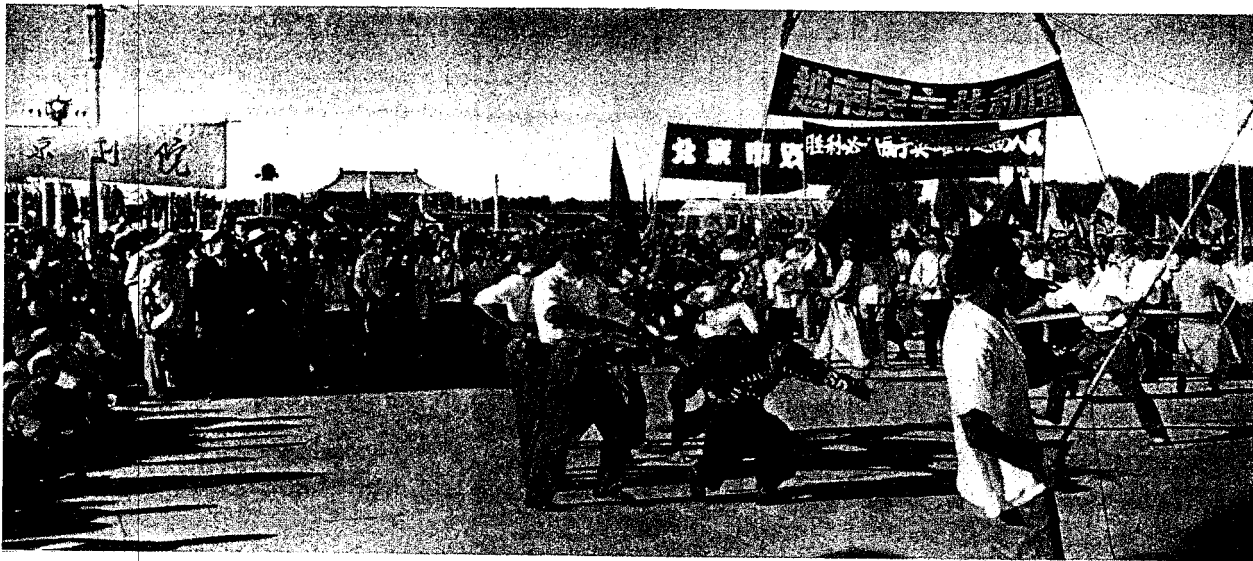
to toe, arms outstretched, pretending to fly like birds. On their faces are black masks, topped by U.S. pilot helmets and goggles. Drawn on their backs in white paint is a U.S. plane cockpit; on their stomachs, rockets labeled "U.S."

The music stops. The six men "fly" around the circle, waving their "wings." Then, pantomiming the unloading of rockets, they fall to the ground, black birds stretched on the gray pavement, to be arrested by North Vietnamese soldiers and by girls wearing gay dresses and carrying rifles.

At 7 p.m. the demonstration is finally over, and a violent monsoon rain pours down. In an instant the people scatter for shelter. As Pierre and I run across the square unprotected, an old woman, with two little girls following her, pushes forward and forces us to accept their tiny green and pink transparent plastic capes. The little girls smile. The old woman smiles. "Americanski—Americanski?"

My heart stops. After all that display of hatred against America, now such a gentle, paradoxical gesture! I say, "No." She smiles again. "Russki?" We shout, "*Fa-Kuo, Fa-Kuo*"—and quickly run away.

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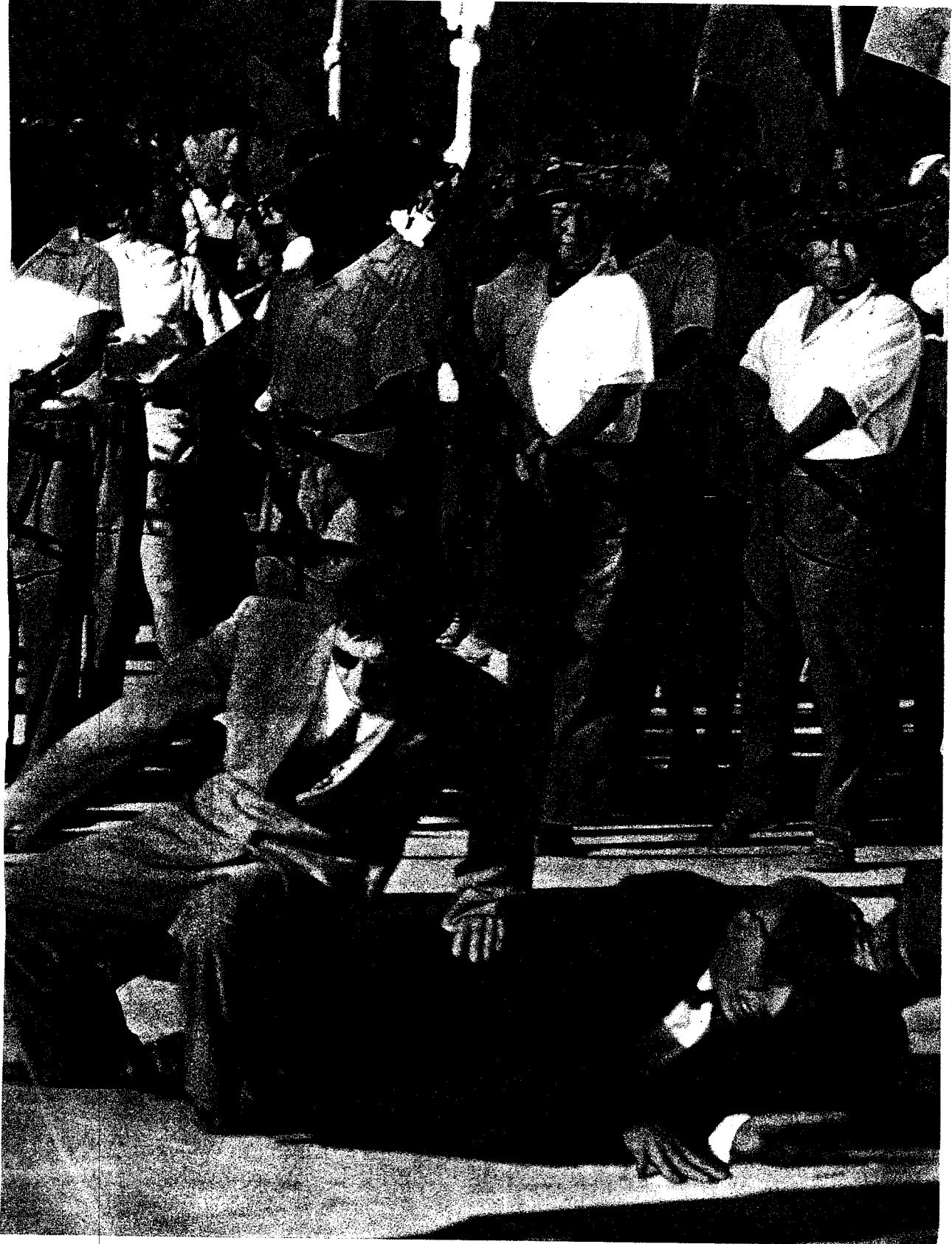


**ANTI-U.S. SKITS.** In T'ien An Men Square soldiers gun down an actor in black costume (*above*) who gallops in a wild circle simulating a U.S. pilot and a rocket-carrying plane.

Spectators (*top picture*) stand on their most precious possessions, bicycles, to watch the show. At right, soldier-actors shoot "imperialists" dressed in business suits and wearing Western

wigs, dust-gray make-up, garish sunglasses and false noses. The big noses symbolize the centuries-old Chinese nickname for Westerners—Ta Pi-Tze—colloquially, "Big Nose." Corre-

spondent Liber was told that this was the 303rd big anti-American demonstration in Peking since 1949 and was thought to be the most "significant" since the one after the Bay of Pigs.



**'Suggested' exercises, and a photo  
of a forbidden subject—a train**



**PARTY CALISTHENICS.** Each day at 5 a.m. workers in Shanghai come to the Bund, once one of the world's

grandest avenues, to do their government "suggested" exercises. They resemble shadowboxing and ballet.

**PARTY MILITIA.** Gun-carrying students were caught by Photographer Boulat in a picture forbidden by law.



**MODERN TRAIN.** Pictures of trains are illegal, but Boullet took one from compartment window. New stainless-steel cars are Chinese. Engine is an old coal burner, possibly of U.S. make.

**RED CHINA** CONTINUED

The anti-U.S. demonstration in Peking was a chilling climax to my three weeks in Red China as a tourist—but at least it was one thing not on the "program." This was a *very* guided tour, as shown by these notes in my diary:

**CANTON**  
At the Canton station two girls with white caps, white blouses, white masks over their mouths sell big green bananas, small overripe pineapples, lichee nuts, steamed duck necks, fried chicken livers. The loudspeakers pour forth a 1925 Argentine tango. In five old cars—Hillman Minx and Austins with the Luxensche China Travel Bureau insignia on them—we cross the immense fat colorless city. We never see another car, and we seldom see policemen; they are only for the nonexistent traffic. "Would the honorable hen cross the avenue so as to let the bicycles go by?" Such is the urbanity of the first Canton policeman I meet.

My hotel room—No. 342—has no key. I ask for one. Impassive Chin. "There are no keys because there are no thieves in China." It's true. You can leave money, jewels, possessions on a table in your room and no one will ever touch them.

In the evening we are invited to a lavish, 14-course, three-hour dinner by the head of the Canton branch of Luxensche. The food is superbly refined, the young waiters skillful. After each course small scented towels are passed around to refresh our fingers. There is no air conditioning.

I ask Mr. Chu if it is impolite to inquire the cost of a dinner like ours. Mr. Chu translates to his boss, who can't answer directly as he speaks no French or English. Screamed and thought out, the answer comes at last: "I cannot tell you exactly, but this meal should come to about 50 *yuan* (\$20) for the 13 of us. Not expensive, is it?"

Our dinner includes haquered sucking pig—the specialty of the house—and Mr. Chu plunges his

chopsticks into it many times. Queer as to its preparation, he says, "It's the first time I taste it."

Back to the hotel where water, electricity, everything is shut off as soon as the management thinks the French tourists are asleep. Up at 5:30. One hundred degrees, saturated with dampness; but the "program" doesn't allow us to linger. The usual small salon, the usual speech. "Before the liberation, hell. After the liberation, paradise. Before the liberation, no dams, no electricity had crops. Now 23 small dams built by us to irrigate and control floods, 90% of our peasants enjoy electricity."

**HANGCHOW**

Clean, quiet, a piece of Switzerland in China, with tile-gray lake and numerous resthouses for deserting workers. City of birdless gardens, large empty avenues resounding lightly with bicycle bells.

CONTINUED



# When 55,000 Russians left in one day, 'Our bridge stopped'

## RED CHINA CONTINUED

City of leisure and rest. A day in one of the ancient imperial gardens converted to public parks, walking, boating, climbing pagodas for 25 fen (10¢). An afternoon at the movies for some 20 fen with exclusively Chinese, Albanian, Romanian or Cuban films. A long walk in a state-owned department store, where already there is so much more to buy than in Moscow 10 years ago.

Again a guided tour of temples and pagodas. Barely five minutes of walking and we have behind us perhaps 200 silent children. Their eyes are glued to the pavement; they are entranced with my high heels. How can a woman walk on chopsticks? At times a very bold baby bends and touches my shoes, then silently flees.

Tonight the lake has a turtledove color. Pale willow trees bend over small islands in its middle. On the water, pink and white lotus blossoms, wide open in the evening heat; flat brown boats with white canopies, like those painted on the silk screen in my hotel room. Students—the only people in China who have a six-week summer vacation—talk quietly on a bench by the lake. In the most romantic places at the most romantic hours I have never yet seen a single young couple holding hands, not a single public gesture of affection. Still, sooner or later comes a new crop of babies.

Do only vegetables and babies manage to stay beautiful and non-political?

### SHANGHAI

This is the first city we have seen which isn't horizontal, one story high. Its middle-size skyscrapers are far uglier than the typical Chinese houses. It is impossible to visualize the exotic Shanghai we all have heard about when, 30 years ago, 60,000 white people among four million Chinese were having a ball.

Now 35 Europeans live among 12 million Chinese in Shanghai.

**W**e visit Le Grand Monde, the famous fun house of the old days. I ask a guide, "What has become of all those gamblers and prostitutes?" He looks as though he had never heard of them. "Come," I say, "you must be about 40—surely you must remember what this place was before 1949?" My guide says, "The entrance was forbidden to Chinese."

With one of our French tourists, Dr. Fernand Carcassonne, a specialist and teacher in hand surgery, Pierre and I visit the main Shanghai hospital to meet 33-year-old Dr. Chen Ciu-wei who, in January 1963, successfully grafted a worker's totally amputated right hand.

**D**r. Chen tells us that he used a Japanese technique for his operation and that the film showing it was shot in a studio months after the event. He has barely finished these sentences when he is firmly asked by the director of the hospital to sit in an opposite corner of the room and not to communicate with us in English. Through an interpreter, the hospital director informs us that Dr. Chen did not operate on the worker thanks to a foreign method, but thanks to his Chinese training and the help of The Party. Then we see the film, in excellent color. It showed the worker using his restored right hand three months after the operation. (I am told later that this is impossible.)

When it is over, Dr. Chen no longer dares to look at Dr. Carcassonne. But at the door of Hospital No. 6 Dr. Carcassonne congratulates Dr. Chen: "A very fine operation, sir." "I couldn't have done it without The Party," comes Chen's scarcely audible answer, sifted through both the director and our interpreter.

### NANKING

The city is flat and ugly, but I have three strong memories of it:

1. A few hundred boys and girls in civilian clothes walking in perfect order, rifle in one hand, black paper fan in the other. I ask who they are. "Students on their weekly militia training day," I am told.

2. A superb, quiet boat ride on the majestic Yangtze Kiang. It means "Blue River" but it is no more blue than the Danube. Going down the river, we see rusty scaffolding like spider webs encircling 10 erect, unfinished, enormous cement pillars. Mr. Chu says, "It is indeed a huge bridge and things go slowly." Later another interpreter tells me, "The Russians started building this bridge and they left it unfinished when they left us." "When did they go?" The interpreter blushes and smiles. "It was a hot day in July of 1960.

In one day 55,000 Russian experts and their families packed and left. Our factories stopped. Scientific research stopped. Our Yangtze bridge stopped." Then, next morn-

ing, the interpreter comes to me and asks me to forget all she had told me on the boat.

3. My last and, I guess, favorite image of Nanking is the enigmatic, walled-in smile of General Li (opposite page). By General Li's side lie farming tools, exact replicas of those used in the 14th Century. But on the horizon I see the smoke of a giant fertilizer factory (17,000 workers).

### SIAN

We are among the first tourists to enter Sian since China became Communist. Thank heaven for the ancient monuments of Sian! They take us away from prearranged "programs," let us ride for hours on sandy red roads, cross Confucius-time villages. On the road are statues of the T'ang dynasty (Seventh to Tenth Century), and a bare-breasted old woman in the

middle, an image of exhaustion.

### GOING HOME

We visit Peking's Forbidden City and return to our hotel dazzled and elated by the richness of the art and architecture—Ming and Ching treasures, full-size trees and flowers of gold, coral, turquoise and pearls. We drive to the Great Wall, stretching like a drunken serpent 20 miles north of Peking, a monument to 300,000 Chinese who died in its building. We spend a hilarious evening at the Peking Opera where we see a Sino-Marxist *Red Side Story*.

But now I am afraid. Someone might walk into my room and snatch away Pierre's film. I want to leave early. I ask for an earlier plane. The China Travel Bureau does not answer the request.

The week ends and we are at Peking Airport at 6 a.m. I am asked to open my suitcase, but not my big pocketbook. Pierre is not asked to show his camera bag. So much for my fears. We take off: Irkutsk, Omsk, Moscow, Paris—the happiest jet flight of my life.



**TWINS IN CITY OF FUCHAN.** Sunglasses worn by these tiny 3-year-olds are an uncommon sight in China, although their bright red plastic shoes are usual footwear for all youngsters.

**GENERAL IN CORN.** Farm land is so precious throughout the country that a general's statue, guarding a 14th Century emperor's tomb near Nanking, is surrounded by growing corn.

