
The following speeches by **Mao Zedong (1893-1976)** highlight two important themes both in Mao's thinking and in the goals of the communist revolution:

GOAL:

1. Try to find which two?
2. Compare with Report on the Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan (March 1927)

In Memory of Norman Bethune (December 21, 1939)

The distinguished surgeon Norman Bethune was a member of the Canadian Communist Party. In 1936 when the German and Italian fascist bandits invaded Spain, he went to the front and worked for the antifascist Spanish people. In order to help the Chinese people in their War of Resistance Against Japan, he came to China at the head of a medical team and arrived in Yen-an in the spring of 1938. Soon after he went to the Shansi-Chahar-Hobei border area. Imbued with ardent internationalism and the great communist spirit, he served the army and the people of the Liberated Areas for nearly two years. He contracted blood poisoning while operating on wounded soldiers and died in Tanghsien, Hopei, on November 12, 1939.

"Comrade Norman Bethune, a member of the Communist Party of Canada, was around fifty when he was sent by the Communist Parties of Canada and the United States to China; he made light of travelling thousands of miles to help us in our War of Resistance Against Japan. He arrived in Yen-an in the spring of last year, went to work in the Wutai Mountains, and to our great sorrow died a martyr at his post. What kind of spirit is this that makes a foreigner selflessly adopt the cause of the Chinese people's liberation as his own? It is the spirit of internationalism, the spirit of communism, from which every Chinese Communist must learn ...

Comrade Bethune's spirit, his utter devotion to others without any thought of self, was shown in his boundless sense of responsibility in his work, and his boundless warmheartedness towards all comrades and the people. Every Communist must learn from him. There are not a few people who are irresponsible in their work, preferring the light to the heavy, shoving the heavy loads on to others and choosing the easy ones for themselves. At every turn they think of themselves before others. When they make some small contribution, they swell with pride and brag about it for fear that others will not know. They feel no warmth toward comrades and the people but are cold, indifferent and apathetic. In fact such people are not Communists or at least cannot be counted as true Communists ...

We must learn the spirit of absolute selflessness from him. With this spirit everyone can be very useful to the people. A man's ability may be great or small, but if he has this spirit, he is already noble-minded and pure, a man of moral integrity and above vulgar interests, a man who is of value to the people."

Serve the People (September 8, 1944)

"Our Communist Party and the Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies led by our Party are battalions of the revolution. These battalions of ours are wholly dedicated to the liberation of the people and work entirely in the people's interests. Comrade Chang Szu-teh was in the ranks of these battalions.

All men must die, but death can vary in its significance. The ancient Chinese writer Sima Qian said, "Though death befalls all men alike, it may be weightier than Mount Tai or lighter than a feather." [1] To die for the people is weightier than Mount Tai, but to work for the fascists and die for the exploiters and oppressors is lighter than a feather. Comrade Chang Szu-teh died for the people, and his death is indeed weightier than Mount Tai.

If we have shortcomings, we are not afraid to have them pointed out and criticized, because we serve the people. Anyone, no matter who, may point out our shortcomings. If he is right, we will correct them. If what he proposes will benefit the people, we will act upon it. The idea of "better troops and simpler administration" was put forward by Mr. Li Tingming, [2] who is not a Communist. He made a good suggestion which is of benefit to the people, and we have adopted it. If, in the interests of the people, we persist in doing what is right and correct what is wrong, our ranks will surely thrive.

We hail from all corners of the country and have joined together for a common revolutionary objective. And we need the vast majority of the people with us on the road to this objective. Today, we already lead base areas with a population of 91 million [3] but this is not enough; to liberate the whole nation more are needed. In times of difficulty we must not lose sight of our achievements, must see the bright future and must pluck up our courage. The Chinese people are suffering; it is our duty to save them and we must exert ourselves in struggle. Wherever there is struggle there is sacrifice, and death is a common occurrence. But we have the interests of the people and the sufferings of the great majority at heart, and when we die for the people it is a worthy death. Nevertheless, we should do our best to avoid unnecessary sacrifices. Our cadres must show concern for every soldier, and all people in the revolutionary ranks must care for each other, must love and help each other.

From now on, when anyone in our ranks who has done some useful work dies, be he soldier or cook, we should have a funeral ceremony and a memorial meeting in his honor. This should become the rule. And it should be introduced among the people as well. When someone dies in a village, let a memorial meeting be held. In this way we express our mourning for the dead and unite all the people."

[1] Sima Qian, the famous Chinese historian of the 2nd century BCE, was the author of the *Historical Records*. The quotation comes from his "Reply to Ren Shaoqing's Letter."

[2] Li Ting-ming, an enlightened landlord of northern Shensi Province, was at one time elected Vice-Chairman of the Shensi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region Government.

[3] This was the total population of the Shensi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region and all other Liberated Areas in northern, central and southern China.

The Foolish Old Man Who Removed the Mountains (June 11, 1945)

"We have had a very successful congress. We have done three things. First, we have decided on the line of our Party, which is boldly to mobilize the masses and expand the people's forces so that, under the leadership of our Party, they will defeat the Japanese aggressors, liberate the whole people and build a new democratic China.

Our aim in propagating the line of the congress is to build up the confidence of the whole Party and the entire people in the certain triumph of the revolution.

...We must also arouse the political consciousness of the entire people so that they may willingly and gladly fight together with us for victory. We should fire the whole people with the conviction that China belongs not to the reactionaries but to the Chinese people. There is an ancient Chinese fable called "The Foolish Old Man who Removed the Mountains." It tells of an old man who lived in northern China long, long ago and was known as the Foolish Old Man

of North Mountain. His house faced south and beyond his doorway stood the two great peaks, Taihang and Wangwu, obstructing the way. With great determination, he led his sons in digging up these mountains hoe in hand. Another greybeard, known as the Wise Old Man, saw them and said derisively, "How silly of you to do this! It is quite impossible for you to dig up these two huge mountains." The Foolish Old Man replied, "When I die my sons will carry on; when they die, there will be my grandsons and then their sons and grandsons, and so on to infinity. High as they are, the mountains cannot grow any higher and with every bit we dig, they will be that much lower. Why can't we clear them anyway?" Having refuted the Wise Old Man's wrong view, he went on digging every day, unshaken in his conviction. God was moved by this, and he sent down two angels, who carried the mountains away on their backs. Today, two big mountains lie like a dead weight on the Chinese people. One is imperialism, the other is feudalism. The Chinese Communist Party has long made up its mind to dig them up. We must persevere and work unceasingly, and we too, will touch God's heart. Our God is none other than the masses of the Chinese people. If they stand up and dig together with us, why can't these mountains be cleared away?"
