

## **Chinese Historical Figures: 1966 - 1976**

### **Chen Yonggui (1914-1986)**

Born in Xiao'nanshan Village, Xiyang County in Shanxi Province in 1914, Chen Yonggui joined the Communist Party of China in 1948.

In 1952, Chen became the Party Branch Secretary of Dazhai production brigade. Chen led the village and carried out farmland reform by creating stable, productive and high-yield terraced fields on the mountains that enabled self-sustainability of the commune. Chen was afterwards awarded as model labor of Shanxi Province.

In February of 1960, the Shanxi Province Party Committee chose Chen as a model worker and promoted his successful management experience in agricultural production to the rest of the province.

In the summer of 1963, Dazhai Village was seriously flooded. Chen advocated the principles of self-reliance and refused outside aids. He promoted a slogan of "Three Noes and Three Sames" -- "No relief food from the state, no relief funds from the state, no relief supplies from the state ; Same food ration to the commune members, Same salary to the commune members, Same required amount of grain supply to the central government."

In November of 1963, in an announcement issued by the Shanxi Province Party Committee, Dazhai and Chen were held up as a model for the rest of the provinces to follow. The fame of Dazhai reached its new height in the early 60's.

In March of 1964, while Chairman Mao inspected the progress of socialist education in countryside, he instructed Zhou Enlai to investigate Dazhai. At the end, both Shanxi Party Secretary, Tao Lujia and the Agriculture Minister, Liao Luyan produced positive reports about Dazhai and Chen.

In December, Zhou Enlai affirmed the achievements of Dazhai in his report in the First Session of the Third National People's Congress, where Chen was invited to attend. On December 26, Chen was also invited to Chairman Mao's birthday banquet.

At the end of 1964, Chairman Mao summoned the rest of the nation to “learn from Dazhai”.

In January, 1965, Chairman Mao presided over the compilation of ‘Issues raised from the Socialist Education Movement in the countryside’ (“23 Articles” in short). This was the first time that “Learn from Dazhai” was held up nationally in a written document from central government. “Learn from Dazhai”, as a national campaign, reached its height. In the following some ten years, as many as 7,100,000 visitors from 21 provinces, cities and autonomous regions in China including party and country leaders came to this famous village in Shanxi Province to “learn from Dazhai”. Zhou Enlai climbed up to Hutou Mountain in Dazhai three times while Guo Moruo considered Hutou Mountain as his final destination in life. To many counties, especially the third-world countries, Dazhai was nearly deemed as “Mecca” in the agriculture industry.

In January of 1967, Chen participated in the Rebellion Faction of the Cultural Revolution and took over the political power from Shanxi Party Committee and the provincial government. In February, as commander in chief, Chen seized power over the Provincial Party Committee. In March, Chairman Mao appointed him as Vice Chairman of Shanxi Revolutionary Committee.

In 1969, nominated by Chairman Mao, Chen was elected as Member of the Central Committee at the Ninth National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party.

In August, 1970, Chen further introduced his experience in purging the “Five Bad Elements”. This started another wave of “Learning from Dazhai” movement nationally.

In 1971, Nominated by Chairman Mao, Chen was elected as the province’s Vice Party Secretary at the First Session of the Third Party Conference of Shanxi Province.

In 1973, Chen was elected as Member of the Central Committee of the Tenth National Congress. He was also elected, through Chairman Mao’s nominated, as Member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee. At the end of 1973, Chen resigned from his post as the Dazhai Party Branch Secretary. In the same

year, Xiyang County, where Dazhai is located, was found to have falsely reported up to 89.79 million catty (equals to 44,900 tons) in harvest.

In 1975, nomination by both Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai, Chen was appointed Vice Premier of the State Council to be in charge of agriculture. Since then, he had traveled across China applying the Dazhai spirits. He was later described as the “White-towel-head Vice Premier”, “Commoner Vice Premier” and “Illiterate Vice Premier”.

In December of 1976, Chen made a report entitled ‘Thoroughly Condemn the Gang of Four, Arouse New Passion in the Popularization of the Dazhai Spirits’ at the second conference on “Learn from Dazhai”.

In 1977, for the third time, Chen was re-elected as Member of the Central Committee of the Eleventh National Congress and Member of the Political Bureau.

In February of 1978, Chen was re-appointed as Vice Premier of the State Council at First Session of the Fifth National People’s Congress.

In 1979, He was dismissed from the position of Party Secretary of Xiyang County Committee.

In September of 1980, Chen resigned from the positions of Member of the Political Bureau and Vice-Premier of the State Council.

In 1982, Chen failed to be re-elected as Representative of the Twelfth National People’s Congress. In September of the same year, Chen failed to be re-elected as Member of the Political Bureau at the Twelfth National People’s Congress.

In 1983, the central government approved Chen’s request to be an advisor at Dongjiao Farm in Beijing.

Chen died in Beijing in March of 1986.