

## "FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT"

A panoramic montage elaborately worked out by artist Kuo Ming-chiao of the Republic of China, is a giant painting 123 feet in length and portraying 123 animate figures. The number 123 is symbolic of the "Freedom Day" observed by the Chinese people on the twentythird day of the first month, each year, marking the memorable day of January 23, 1954 when the first group of 14,209 former Chinese Communist POW's in Korea arrived in Taiwan in quest of freedom after the Korean armistice.

The painting depicts in chronological sequence how people on the Chinese mainland, suffering an ideological vacuum, lost their freedom overnight; how they struggled for a superior ideology against Communism and eventually found the answer. This epic composition is both retrospective and prophetic. It is a combination of realistic portrayal and symbolic representation. The flow of events is natural, yet illustrating a sharp, vivid contrast between the two extremes of faith versus confusion, hope and despair, truth and falsehood, slavery and freedom, violence and justice, beauty and ugliness and love against bitterness.

Let us follow our artist through the five consecutive parts of his composition:

Part 1. Protasis to nightfall: Disconcerting rumors are spreading. Old people in village listened to the ominous message with a heavy heart. Young people appeared frustrated. Women and children shivered in alarm. Some were getting ready to escape; some could not make up their minds; and others assumed an indifferent attitude. While hoodlums could hardly conceal their satisfaction over the prospect of exploiting the oncoming disorder, there were those who were determined to fight against the evil force, come what may.

Part 2. Hell on Earth: Innocent people were thrown out of their own houses, young men forced to join the army, masses tortured beyond description in labor-reform camps and women and children perishing under an unprecedented plight. Many preferred quick death to enslaved life. Others, drooping, crippled, half-starved, all with one foot in the grave, groaned in despair. Like a gleam of light in pitch darkness, guerilla forces started action. People came from all directions to join in their struggle for freedom and faith, while in the far horizon a raging flood foretold the downfall of the totalitarian regime.

Part 3. Run for Freedom: Mainland Chinese, young and old, carrying the statue of Kuan-ti, the incarnation of righteousness and loyalty, followed the lead of the 14,209 torch bearers from Korea, and marched steadily toward freedom.

Part 4. Under Bright Sunshine: An overwhelming welcome greeted the newcomers to the land of freedom and faith, with children setting off firecrackers and young girls offering flowers and fruits. The land is prosperity itself. There one finds bumper harvest, economic stability, booming industry and universal education. Children playing at rope-hopping have this song to sing:

*"One two three, we've come to Taiwan  
Where stands high a mountain called Alishan,  
On which large trees grow there and here;  
But we're going back to the mainland this year."*

Part 5. Prayers and the Prophet: People are praying for salvation of all those who still remain agonizing in the dark. The tall and erect figure of the Prophet, representing a new type of man, sets his eyes on remaking the country and the world. Hopes for a better world would be answered when common efforts of the many honest souls and pure hearts will bring faith, unity and the ideological truth to the 600 million Chinese.