

1947

Speeches/Documents

Title: On the reissue of the three main rules of discipline and the eight points for attention
— instruction of the general headquarters of the Chinese People's Liberation Army

Author: Mao Zedong

Date: October 10,
1947

Source: SW IV

Description:

1 . Our Army's Three Main Rules of Discipline and Eight Points for Attention¹ have been practised for many years, but their contents vary slightly in army units in different areas. They have now been unified and are hereby reissued. It is expected that you will take this version as the standard one for thorough education and strict enforcement. As to other matters needing attention, the high command of the armed forces in different areas may lay down additional points in accordance with specific conditions and order their enforcement.

2 . The Three Main Rules of Discipline are as follows:

- (1) Obey orders in all your actions.
- (2) Don't take a single needle or piece of thread from the masses.
- (3) Turn in everything captured.

3 . The Eight Points for Attention are as follows:

- (1) Speak politely.
- (2) Pay fairly for what you buy.
- (3) Return everything you borrow.
- (4) Pay for anything you damage.
- (5) Don't hit or swear at people.
- (6) Don't damage crops.
- (7) Don't take liberties with women.
- (8) Don't ill-treat captives.

NOTES

1 The Three Main Rules of Discipline and the Eight Points for Attention were the rules of discipline laid down by Comrade Mao Tse-tung for the Chinese Workers' and Peasants' Red Army during the Second Revolutionary Civil War. They formed an important part of the political work of the Red Army and played a great role in building the people's armed forces, handling relations within the army correctly, forging unity with the masses of the people and laying down the correct policy of the

people's army towards captives. From the earliest days of the Red Army, Comrade Mao Tse-tung required the soldiers to speak politely to the masses, pay fairly for all purchases and never impress people into forced labour or hit or swear at people. In the spring of 1928, when the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army was in the Chingkang Mountains, Comrade Mao Tse-tung set down Three Rules of Discipline: (1) Obey orders in your actions; (2) Don't take anything from the workers and peasants; and (3) Turn in all things taken from local bullies. In the summer of 1928 he set forth Six Points for Attention: (1) Put back the doors you have taken down for bed-boards; (2) Put back the straw you have used for bedding; (3) Speak politely; (4) Pay fairly for what you buy; (5) Return everything you borrow; and (6) Pay for anything you damage. After 1929 Comrade Mao Tse-tung made the following changes: Rule 2 became "Don't take a single needle or piece of thread from the masses", and Rule 3 was changed first to "Turn in all money raised" and then to "Turn in everything captured". To the Six Points for Attention he added two more: "Don't bathe within sight of women" and "Don't search the pockets of captives". This was the origin of the Three Main Rules of Discipline and the Eight Points for Attention.