Wartime Chungking’s population had swelled by a factor of 4 to a million due to the influx of refugees from all over eastern China. ZhiQiang thought he could find out the whereabouts of his uncle by contacting the fraternal organization for his home province. He was able to locate the office of the fraternal organization without much problem, in a building that housed dozens of such offices for people from Anhui, Suzhou, etc.. He was one of thousands who were able to jostle their way in with the hope of finding the whereabouts of a lost husband or wife or father or mother. When he finally made his way to the clerk’s desk, strangers still pressed on him from both sides. The clerk, by now immune to the chaos and rush of people around him, calmly asked him to write down his and his uncle’s full names , which he did. Then he passed it to a colleague who went into the back part of the room where there were files of registered people. ZhiQiang waited anxiously for about fifteen minutes before another clerk called him forward. They were not able to locate his uncle’s name, but did he want to register his name and place of birth?   
 The only thing that ZhiQiang could do now was to go around various central squares and bus stations, and river side piers where various walls had been appropriated for posting notes. By the end of the second day, he had traipsed through most of Chungking’s central area. Foot weary, and tired from only getting sleep by the river, ZhiQiang came to the realization that he was not going to find his uncle any time soon even if his uncle was here and he had no more money left.  
 During his search, he had seen many posters advertising for strong young men for paid work organized by ChungKing city defence forces, as part of their effort to support the national government in their fight against Japanese oppressors. ZhiQiang reported to a recruiting station, and was soon directed to show up for work at 8 am in the morning.  
 This is how he ended up in his present work crew.