



Built prior to World War II for the China National Aviation Corporation (CNAC), SanHuPa was located on a 2100 foot island in the Yangtze River just below the City of Chungking, China. Towering mountains, rising right from the rivers edge, meant the Chungking residents had to descend 767 steps from their mountain city to the river level and SanHuPa—but that was a convenience compared to the four hour ride over rutty mountain roads to the nearest other airport, Peishiyi.

CNAC, besides flying throughout China beginning in the 30's, pioneered the world famous "Hump" route over the Himalayas, the highest mountains in the world between India and China. With the fall of Burma, CNAC was for many months the sole source of supplies to the whole country of China.

SanHuPa's lone 1800 foot runway was made

even shorter by the presence of high tension electrical wires running from mountaintop to mountaintop across the Yangtze on the approach end of the runway. These wires connected power for the City of Chungking, which straddled the Yangtze.

Approach procedure, after crossing the homer on the city mountaintop was, after breaking out, to fly down the river until you cleared the wires, slowing to 90mph while making a 90° to the left to the private tennis court situated on a flat spot on the side of the mountain, at which point you had full flaps and with a quick 90° to the right were ready to touch down on the first few feet of the runway. The river, winding between the mountains, prevented any possibility of a go-around. You had just one try.

Take-off was to make a 180°, holding the brakes while you revved up to full throttle and releasing the brakes to start your roll. Lift-off was at mini-

mum flying speed and climb-out at maximum rate of climb until you cleared those same high tension wires again.

But the electrical wires and mountainous terrain were not SanHuPa's only hazards. Each spring the airport disappeared under the raging floodwaters of the Yangtze River. The terminal building and other facilities had to be dismantled and lugged up the mountainside to a safe spot above the floodstage. When the water subsided, they would then be carted back down to the island, again opening SanHuPa.

Today, the road to Peishiyi has been improved and, with a tunnel through the mountains, is now only about an hour from the city. While you can still see signs of the SanHuPa runway, the island now supports a bridge across the river, effectively ending the use of SanHuPa.