

# CHINESE LITERATURE



**Maple Bay (drama).**  
**Poems by Chu Teh and Yeh Chien-ying**

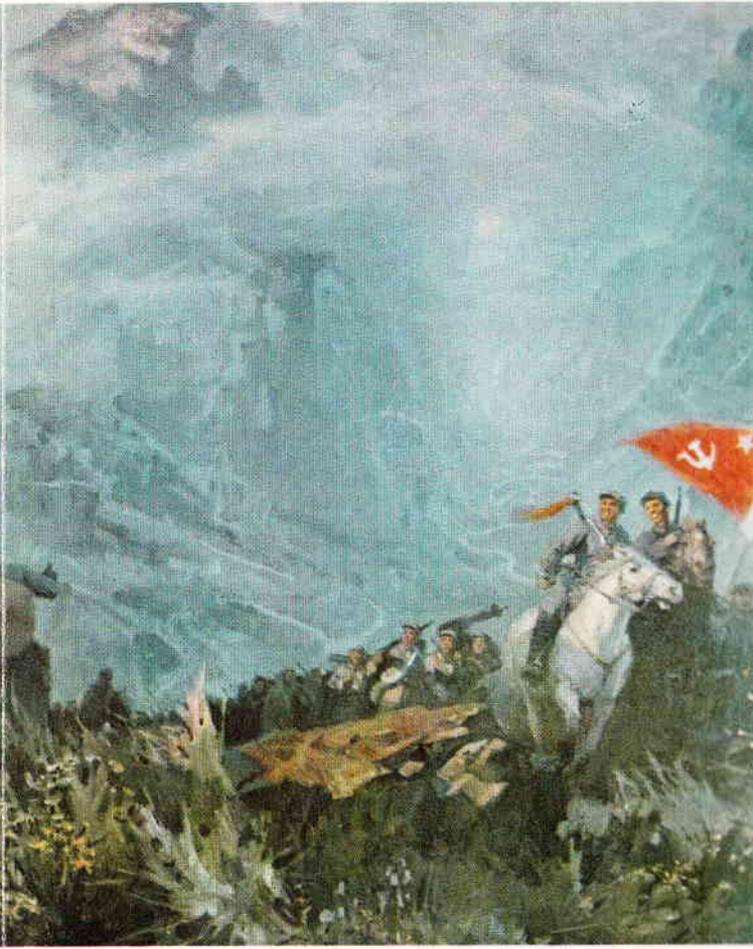
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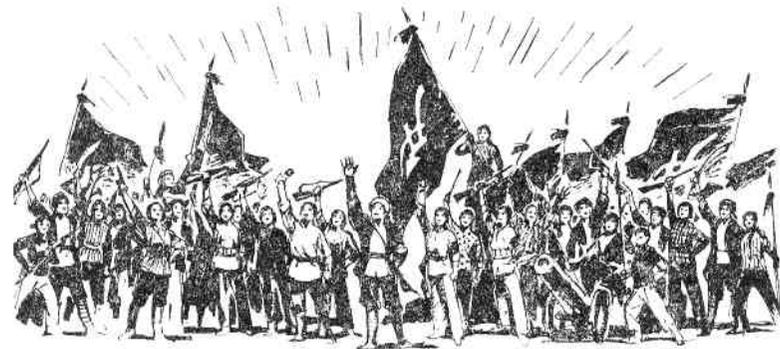
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Loushan Pass (oil painting) by *Shen Yao-yi*





## Maple Bay

### CHARACTERS

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| <b>Chao Hai-shan</b>   | <i>24, chairman of Maple Bay Peasant Association, secretary of the Party branch</i>                                      |
| <b>Cheng San</b>       | <i>62, hired hand in the Tang Family Mansion, member of the Party branch committee and peasant association committee</i> |
| <b>Miao Wang-chun</b>  | <i>32, village teacher, member of the Party branch committee, secretary of the peasant association</i>                   |
| <b>Mother Chao</b>     | <i>58, mother of Chao Hai-shan</i>   |
| <b>Young Ox</b>        | <i>19, poor peasant, an active member of the peasant guards</i>  |
| <b>Sister Lien</b>     | <i>17, maid in the Tang Family Mansion, an active member of the peasant guards</i>                                       |
| <b>Hsia Chang-keng</b> | <i>38, member of the peasant guards</i>  |
| <b>Mrs. Hsia</b>       | <i>35, wife of Hsia Chang-keng, member of the peasant guards</i>   |
| <b>Grandad Ho</b>      | <i>72, poor peasant, member of the peasant association</i>   |
| <b>Granny Wang</b>     | <i>74, Young Ox's grandmother</i>  |

This drama was written and produced by the Hunan Modern Drama Theatre and the script writer is Chen Chien-chiu.

**Old Chang** 28, chairman of Tunghsiang Peasant Association  
**Ku-yu** 20, poor peasant, member of the peasant guards  
**Man the Beard** 33, member of the peasant guards  
**Sister Man** 30, wife of Man  
**Other members of the peasant guards**  
**Other members of the peasant association**  
  
**Hu Szu-yu** 33, a Right opportunist in the Communist Party, head of the Peasant Department of the County Kuomintang Headquarters  
**Tang Chia-chu** 34, a Kuomintang Rightist and former comprador who becomes an adjutant, then deputy battalion commander in the Northern Expeditionary Army  
  
**Tang Han-chih** 59, father of Tang Chia-chu, a despotic landlord and head of the Maple Bay Civil Guards Bureau  
**Sun the Leech** 76, a big landlord of Tunghsiang Village  
**Tseng Pa** 47, steward of the Tang Family Mansion  
**Bailiff** 50, bailiff of Maple Bay  
**Civil guards**  
**Kuomintang soldiers**



## SCENE ONE

An autumn evening in 1926. Maple Bay, a mountain village in the east of Hunan. A spreading maple tree stands before the door of the Chaos' cottage by the highway.

(The curtain rises. The bailiff beats a gong. Enter Mother Chao and a few villagers.)

**Tseng:** Listen! (*Reads a notice.*) It is hereby declared: "Now that the autumn crops have been brought in, rent in kind — not a grain short — must be delivered on time. The civil guards bureau will arrest any who delay, resist or make trouble. By order of Tang Han-chih, head of the Maple Bay Civil Guards Bureau. September of the fifteenth year of the Republic."

**Grandad Ho:** Bah! Another death-warrant, another noose round our necks!

**Woman A:** What can we hand in, after this drought, but rice stalks?

**Mother Chao:** The devils have squeezed us dry.

**Bailiff:** What's that you say?

**Ku-yu:** Why don't you have a look around?

**Young Ox:** The Northern Expeditionary Army has fought past Hunan and is approaching the city of Wuchang in Hupeh. Yet you. . . .

**Tseng:** Well, Maple Bay is still under the Tangs. (*Pointing at the notice in his hand*) An order from the civil guards bureau must be obeyed.

(*The villagers are taken aback. Following the bailiff who beats his gong, Tseng Pa goes off with the notice.*)

**Man:** A mere sheet of paper. . . .

**Hsia:** Weighs more than a thousand catties!

(*Enter Miao Wang-chun with a pile of text-books, followed by two boys in rags.*)

**Boy A:** What can we do, Mr. Miao?

**Miao** (*thinks for a moment*): Play for time and refuse to pay.

**Young Ox:** Right. Fight them the way Uncle Chao did ten years ago.

**Ku-yu:** We can only die once anyway. So why don't we rebel?

**Grandad Ho** (*shaking his head*): That won't do. Ten years ago, Tang Han-chih killed Uncle Chao and Hai-shan had to run away. Mother Chao has been waiting for his return under this maple tree for ten whole years. If we rebel we must be sure of success.

**Young Ox:** Why don't we set up a peasant association like the other villages?

**Miao** (*waving his hand in protest*): The County Kuomintang Headquarters explained long ago that Maple Bay is different, what with Tang Han-chih as head of the civil guards bureau and his son with connections in the Northern Expeditionary Army. It won't do to set up a peasant association here.

**Young Ox:** You mean we should let fate have its way?

**Hsia:** How can we go on like this?

(*They leave.*)

**Miao:** Have you eaten anything today, aunty?

**Mother Chao:** Yes.

**Miao:** I know how things are. I know. (*Exit.*)

(*The sky darkens.*)

(*Enter Tang Chia-chu, followed by Tseng Pa and the bailiff.*)

**Chia-chu:** The maple tree is still here. Why, isn't this old Mrs. Chao?

**Mother Chao:** You have a good memory, young master.

**Chia-chu:** Is this your cottage?

**Mother Chao:** You burnt down our old house. The villagers helped me to build this here.

**Chia-chu:** Close by the maple tree. You have a good memory too.

**Mother Chao:** How can I forget what's imprinted in my heart?

**Chia-chu:** Well, what about your son? Any news from him?

**Mother Chao:** Thanks for your concern. We'll hear from him when the time comes. (*Exit.*)

**Chia-chu** (*to Tseng*): Has he never come back?

**Tseng:** There's been no word from him all these ten years.

**Chia-chu:** On my way here I heard in the county town that a local man named Chao was coming to organize the peasant movement in these parts. If it turns out to be him. . . we'll be put on the spot.

**Tseng:** We didn't kill him last time. Now he's delivering himself into our hands.

**Chia-chu:** Times have changed. The muddy-legs are in power these days.

**Tseng:** You mean that wind is blowing to Maple Bay too?

**Chia-chu:** We must get our tents in before the wind arrives.

(*Chia-chu, Tseng and the bailiff walk off.*)

(*Enter Chao Hai-shan from one side and Miao with a food basket from the other.*)

**Miao:** Aunty! Aunty!

**Chao:** Excuse me. . . . Brother Wang-chun!

**Miao:** You are. . . .

**Chao:** I'm Hai-shan.

**Miao:** Brother Hai-shan! So you're back? Fine! Aunty, aunty!  
Well, Brother Hai-shan, here's where your mother lives.  
(*Moves towards the cottage.*) She was in there a minute ago.

**Chao:** Why did she move here?

**Miao:** We built her this place when Tang Han-chih burnt down your  
old house. Wait here while I find her for you.

**Chao:** Is Uncle Cheng still around, Brother Wang-chun?

**Miao:** Sure. I'll fetch him too. (*Exit.*)

(*Chao turns and walks up to the tree.*)

**Chao:** Maple tree, you're taller now, more massive too.

(*Enter Mother Chao with firewood.*)

**Mother Chao:** Who is this?

**Chao:** Aunty... Mother!

**Mother Chao:** You are....

**Chao:** Mother!

**Mother Chao:** My son, you've come home at last. So you haven't  
forgotten this maple tree?

**Chao:** Not for a single day. How could I forget it?

**Mother Chao:** Good. That's very good.

(*Enter Cheng San and Miao.*)

**Cheng:** Where's Hai-shan?

**Chao:** Uncle Cheng.

**Cheng:** Hai-shan! Why, you were only that high when you left.  
How you've grown — so tall and strong now.

**Chao:** Do you still work for the Tangs, Uncle Cheng?

**Cheng:** They won't pay me and won't let me quit. I'll be a beast  
of burden all my life.

**Chao:** We were beasts of burden before. Now we're going to be  
human beings.

**Cheng:** Well....

**Chao:** Come on in. (*Points to the cottage.*)

**Cheng:** Where have you been the last ten years?

**Chao:** All over Kiangsi and Hupch. First I worked in a mine in  
Anyuan, then I went to school in Kwangchow.

**Cheng:** You are a scholar?

**Chao:** Do I look like one?

**Cheng:** Were you in a foreign-style school?

**Chao:** I went to the only school of its kind in China, the Peasant  
Movement Institute.\*

**Cheng:** The Peasant Movement Institute?

**Miao:** Is that the National Institute of Peasant Movement?

**Chao:** Right.

**Cheng:** What did you learn there?

**Chao:** We had various courses and military training, to teach us  
how to organize peasant movements.

**Cheng:** Does that mean setting up peasant associations?

**Chao:** Yes.

**Miao:** That's fine. This year Tang Han-chih is dunning us for  
rent harder than ever, Hai-shan. We....

**Cheng:** Yes, Tang Chia-chu has just come home, and he says he'll  
bring soldiers to help collect the rent. In a few days, boats will  
be coming from Changsha to ship the grain away.

**Chao:** I heard about this in the county town. They're desperate  
for grain to exchange for rifles from the foreigners.

**Cheng:** To exchange for rifles! What for?

**Chao:** To crush the peasant movements which are gathering strength  
in the countryside, so that they can go on living as parasites.

**Cheng:** I see....

**Miao:** Were you sent here by the county, Hai-shan?

(*Chao smiles and says nothing.*)

**Miao:** We've been wanting to set up a peasant association like  
other villages, but the County Kuomintang Headquarters said  
conditions here are different and it might cause trouble.

**Chao:** I heard that too. I've been sent to make trouble with you!

\*Founded in 1924, the institute trained cadres to organize peasant movements.  
Chairman Mao headed the institute at that time.

**Miao:** Fine. Folk here have been driven desperate. They're like bundles of dry firewood—a single spark will start a big fire.

**Cheng:** It's all up to you now, Hai-shan.

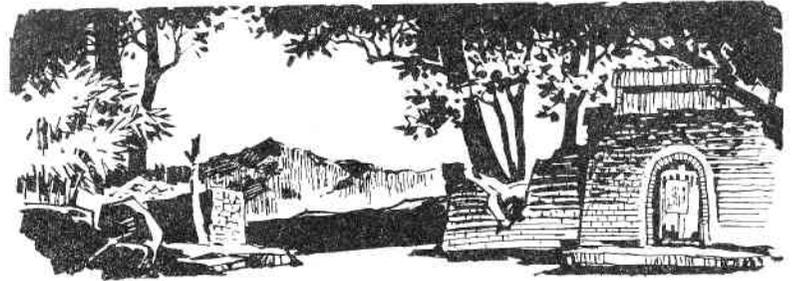
**Chao:** No, Uncle Cheng. It's up to us all to save ourselves from the fate of beasts of burden and to become our own masters.

**Cheng:** Did you say we must save ourselves?

**Chao:** Sure. Let's talk inside.

*(They enter the cottage. Light shines in the window.)*

*(Curtain)*



## SCENE TWO

A few days later. In front of Young Ox's house. Opposite is a dilapidated temple on the door of which a notice is pasted.

*(The curtain rises. Granny Wang is keeping watch. Soon Cheng San enters from a gap in the temple wall, looks around and beckons to those behind the wall. Enter Miao Wang-chun and a few villagers.)*

**Ku-yu** *(pointing to the notice)*: We're going to revolt against them today, Granny Wang.

**Granny Wang**: Quite right.

**Young Ox**: I've no grain to hand in, not even if they put a knife to my throat.

**Miao** *(to Villagers C and D)*: Well, as we agreed just now, whichever household Tang Han-chih goes to we'll all go there too.

*(The villagers leave. Cheng San pulls Miao Wang-chun aside for a discussion. Enter Mother Chao and Women A and B.)*

**Man**: Aunty, I'm a bit...

**Woman A**: What's there to fear with Hai-shan taking the lead?

**Mother Chao**: Didn't Uncle Cheng say just now that so long as we stick together Tang Han-chih can't do a thing to us?

**Man:** Sure. *(To his wife)* Let's go.

**Cheng** *(to Miao)*: I'm going to Santouchung to meet Hai-shan. Will you look after things here? *(Exit.)*

*(Enter Hsia Chang-keng and his wife holding sickles and baskets.)*

**Young Ox:** Why didn't you come to talk things over just now, Brother Chang-keng?

**Hsia** *(picking a handful of herbs out of his basket)*: We went to get something to eat.

**Mrs. Hsia:** Our son is so hungry, he stuffs mud into his mouth. . . .

*(Granny Wang consoles Mrs. Hsia and glances at Young Ox.)*

**Young Ox** *(understanding)*: Oh. *(To Hsia)* Just wait a minute.

*(Young Ox goes indoors and brings out a small bag of rice which he offers to Hsia.)*

**Hsia:** No, no. You've nothing to eat either.

**Young Ox:** If we have salt we'll share it, if not we'll both do without. Go ahead and take it.

*(Enter Tseng Pa, the bailiff, Platoon Leader Li and several civil guards. Woman A goes off.)*

**Tseng:** So you're all here. Time's up. Hand in the rent now.

**Young Ox:** We've no grain.

**Tseng:** No grain? What is this? *(Signs to the bailiff.)* Take it.

*(The bailiff snatches the bag from Hsia.)*

**Young Ox:** Steward Tseng, his child's so hungry he's eating mud. You. . . .

**Tseng:** That's none of my business.

**Young Ox:** You swine!

**Tseng:** Calling us names? Here, take his cauldron and seal up his door.

*(The civil guards rush into Granny Wang's home and come out with her cauldron.)*



**Granny Wang:** You bandits! Give me my cauldron!

**Tseng:** All right, you can have it. There. *(He smashes the cauldron.)*

**Young Ox:** I'll have it out with you!

**Tseng:** Take him away.

*(Enter Woman A.)*

**Woman A:** Help! They are arresting people.

*(Enter villagers.)*

**Miao:** Take us all while you're about it.

**All:** Take us all. *(They step forward to bar the way.)*

**Platoon Leader Li** *(fires his pistol)*: I'll shoot anyone who resists. Ready. . . .

*(Enter Chao.)*

**Chao:** Stop. Are you tyrants still trying to lord it over us?

**Tseng:** Land rent must be handed in, debts must be paid — that's always been the law.

**Chao:** That law should be changed now.

**Tseng:** Ten years ago, remember, someone was beaten to death under this maple for taking the lead in refusing to pay rent.

**Chao:** Times have changed, and so have people. This year, whatever happens, we're not paying rent.

**Tseng:** See that black-and-white notice with the official red chop of the civil guards bureau?

**Chao:** That doesn't mean a thing. *(Tears down the notice.)*

**Tseng:** What? How dare you! All right, just wait. *(Takes the civil guards away.)*

**Hsia:** Hai-shan.

**Chao:** Brother Chang-keng.

**Hsia:** You just tore it up like that?

**Chao:** Sure.

**Hsia:** It doesn't matter?

**Chao:** Not if we all close ranks and stick together.

**Young Ox:** They want to arrest me, don't they? Let them! *(He dashes out from the house.)*

**Cheng:** What are you up to, Young Ox?

**Young Ox:** I'll burn down their barn, turn all their grain to ashes.

**Cheng** *(snatching away the torch in his hand):* Young Ox! . . .

**Granny Wang:** Why don't you listen to Uncle Cheng?

**Young Ox:** I must burn down their barn or I'll burst with rage. . . .

**Chao:** Can you burn everything with that torch of yours, Young Ox?

**Young Ox:** Every little counts. Make them go hungry too.

**Cheng:** Why burn that grain? It was grown by us peasants.

**Chao:** We all need grain now. Why don't we reclaim it?

**Young Ox:** Reclaim it? How?

**Hsia:** That's no easy job, Hai-shan. Can we pull it off?

**Chao:** Tell me, Brother Chang-keng: are there more landlords in our Maple Bay, or more hired hands and tenants?

**Hsia:** The only big landlord in these parts is Tang. All the rest of us are peasants.

**Chao:** Right. Not only in Maple Bay, but everywhere in Hunan and in every part of China, hired hands and tenants outnumber the landlords and the rich. How can this handful of people ride roughshod over all the rest of us?

*(No one answers.)*

**Chao:** Well, Brother Chang-keng?

**Hsia:** They were born on a lucky day.

**Mrs. Hsia:** That's not true! Wasn't I born on the same day, and at the very same hour as young Mrs. Tang?

*(All laugh in spite of themselves.)*

**Hsia:** What is the reason then?

**Mrs. Hsia:** . . . . .

**Chao:** The reason is that they have guns. They've the official seal of the yamen too.

*(All nod in agreement.)*

**Grandad Ho:** You've hit the nail on the head.

**Chao:** But as we're the majority and have greater strength, if we stick together to fight we can topple them. Isn't that so, Brother Chang-keng?

**Hsia:** There's truth in what he says.

*(Enter Villager A with Hu Szu-yu.)*

**Villager A:** Brother Hai-shan, this gentleman wants to see you.

**Chao:** Department Head Hu. *(To everybody)* This is Department Head Hu of the Peasant Department of the County Kuomintang Headquarters.

**Hu:** My name is Hu Szu-yu. Now that you're back, Comrade Hai-shan, I'm sure you'll set the peasant movement in Maple Bay on the right track. What's happening in the Tang Family Mansion?

**Chao:** Boats are coming to ship the grain away this evening. Tang Chia-chu will escort them in person.

**Hu** *(thoughtfully):* Hmm. Peasant friends, the cruel exploitation of the feudal landlords has made you struggle, suffer and groan

on the brink of death all the year round. Now they are collaborating with the imperialists and plotting to exchange grain for rifles to continue to oppose the revolution. This is absolutely intolerable. The people must eat. This problem must be solved through the struggle to borrow grain.

**Chao:** We must show up their plot too and stop them getting rifles.

**Hu:** Sure. But Tang Chia-chu has a complicated background. We must argue with him in a civil way.

*(Enter Sister Lien as they wait for Hu to go on.)*

**Lien:** Uncle Cheng, Tang is bringing soldiers here to make trouble after hearing that the notice was torn down.

*(The villagers are taken aback. Hsia quickly picks up the torn notice and hides it. Young Ox pulls out a chopper from his belt. Man the Beard turns to leave.)*

**Chao:** Don't be afraid, Man.

*(Man answers "I'm not," but keeps at a distance from them.)*

**Cheng:** Hadn't you better go into hiding, Hai-shan?

**Grandad Ho:** Tang Han-chih has been inquiring about you all these years.

**Young Ox:** Yes, keep out of his way. We can cope.

**Ku-yu and others:** Right.

**Chao:** He's come at the right time. We'll wait for him. *(To Cheng San and Sister Lien)* You mustn't let him see you now. You can take Department Head Hu away.

**Hu:** Take care. *(He leaves with Cheng San and Sister Lien.)*

*(The atmosphere becomes tense. Chao takes the wicker crate which a peasant near by is weaving and sets to work on it.)*

*(Enter Tang Han-chih, Tseng Pa, Platoon Leader Li and several civil guards.)*

**Tang:** Who tore down the notice? If you had any complaints you should have brought them to the civil guards bureau.

**Chao:** We've thrown out even the powerful provincial head Chao Heng-ti, so a little notice of yours isn't going to scare us. Don't you know what times we're living in?

**Tang:** Who are you anyway?

**Chao:** I'm the one you wanted to kill ten years ago. I have come back of my own accord today.

**Tang** *(recognizing him with a start):* Ah, Chao Hai-shan.

**Chao:** Yes. Ten years ago you wanted to arrest me. Well, here I am. Want me to go with you?

*(Tseng Pa signals to his men, but the villagers move forward to shield Chao. Tang quickly stops the civil guards.)*

**Tang:** It was a misunderstanding. So you've come back at last after ten years.

**Chao:** I had to come home some day.

**Tang:** Good. Good. Where have you been working all these years?

**Chao:** First I was a miner in Anyuan. I've come back now from Kwangtung.

**Tang:** Kwangtung? Good. Heroes emerge in troubled times. What do you plan to do here?

**Chao:** I'm a peasant.

**Tang:** You want to rent a piece of land or work as a hired hand?

**Chao:** I've had enough of working like a beast. I mean to be my own master from now on.

**Tang:** Ah, so you've come home with some plan of action?

**Chao:** Right. *(Pointing at the door where the notice was posted)* I've made trouble for you as soon as I set foot here.

**Tang** *(awkwardly):* Haha. . .

*(Chao and the others burst out laughing.)*

**Tang:** To keep order here, the civil guards bureau has prohibited meetings of any kind. You had better disperse.

**Chao:** No. The national revolutionary government supports the workers and peasants and has guaranteed them freedom to meet and form associations. We're just going to hold a meeting.

**Tang:** What's your agenda?

**Chao:** Keeping poultry out of the fields.

**Tang:** Poultry?

**Chao:** Right. You see, we sweat and break our backs all the year round to grow grain. How can we let chickens and ducks gorge themselves on it?

**Tang:** How are you going to keep them out?

**Chao:** Any chicken or duck found in the fields. . . .

**Young Ox:** Will be killed.

**Chao:** Sure.

**Tang:** That's strict all right! *(Slinks off.)*

*(The villagers laugh happily. Hsia takes out the notice he has hidden and tears it to shreds.)*

*(Curtain)*



### SCENE THREE

That evening. Outside the back door of the Tang Family Mansion.

*(The curtain rises: Tseng Pa is overseeing civil guards and hired hands transport grain to the boats.)*

**Tseng** *(to Cheng San who is carrying grain with a shoulder-pole):* Quick.

*(Exit Cheng. Enter Platoon Leader Li.)*

**Li:** All the grain is loaded now, Steward Tseng.

**Tseng:** Tell the boatmen to prepare to leave. *(Goes into the mansion.)*

**Li** *(to someone by the river):* Get ready to cast off! *(Exit.)*

*(Sister Lien comes out of the back door and looks around.)*

*(Enter Cheng San.)*

**Cheng:** Sister Lien.

**Lien:** Uncle Cheng, they are coming out. Get Brother Hai-shan quickly.

**Cheng:** Hai-shan is coming later. But Department Head Hu is coming right now.

**Lien:** Department Head Hu?

**Cheng:** He's afraid we might get too tough so he's coming in person to negotiate. *(Exit.)*

*(Enter Tang Han-chih and Tang Chia-chu from the back door.)*

**Tang** *(to Sister Lien):* Go away.

*(Exit Sister Lien.)*

**Chia-chu:** Well, I'm off now, dad. I hope you'll reconsider my suggestion of asking help from Regiment Commander Liu.

**Tang:** Although we're old friends, he is now an officer in the Northern Expeditionary Army. Who knows which side he's on?

**Chia-chu:** Certainly not the Communists'.

**Tang:** I'll wait a bit before making any decision.

*(Enter Tseng Pa.)*

**Tseng:** Master! Master Sun from Tunghsiang Village is here with all his family and luggage. He wants to get a boat.

*(Enter Sun the Leech.)*

**Sun:** Things look bad, Chia-chu! A peasant association has been set up in my village. They want to settle accounts with me.

**Tang:** Are you leaving? Giving up your land and estates to those paupers?

**Sun:** If anyone touches so much as one single grain or one cent of mine, I . . . I won't be able to rest easy in my grave.

**Chia-chu:** There. If we had guns we needn't run away whatever happened.

**Sun:** But I can't wait. "Distant water can't put out a nearby fire" . . .

**Chia-chu:** Well, take your family to the boat then.

*(Enter Cheng San as Tang and his son are leaving.)*

**Cheng:** Someone wants to see you on business, master.

**Tang:** On business? Who is it?

*(Cheng San hands him a card.)*

**Chia-chu** *(takes the card):* Hu Szu-yu.

**Tang:** And who is he?

**Chia-chu:** We were schoolmates in Shanghai. He is head of the Peasant Department of the County Kuomintang Headquarters, and most likely a Communist.

**Tang:** He can't be up to any good. Send him away.

**Chia-chu:** No. Ask him in.

**Cheng:** Yes, I'll ask him in. *(Exit.)*

**Sun:** Why ask them in?

**Chia-chu:** They'll come whether you like it or not. Dad, will you see to things by the riverside?

**Tang:** Steward Tseng, get your men together.

*(Exit Tseng Pa and enter Cheng San.)*

**Cheng:** They are here, master. *(Exit.)*

*(Enter Tseng Pa and several civil guards.)*

**Tseng:** Master. . .

**Tang:** Guard the dock. Don't let anybody go there except my men.

*(The civil guards disperse. Exit Tang. Enter Young Ox and Hu Szu-yu.)*

**Chia-chu:** *Aiya*, Brother Szu-yu. Glad to see you.

*(Tang Chia-chu extends his hand. As Hu Szu-yu only nods he points to the house.)*

**Chia-chu:** Come on in.

*(Young Ox plumps down.)*

**Hu:** No need.

**Chia-chu:** *Aiya*, it's years since we parted in Shanghai. We both studied economics then. Now we're comrades in the national revolution.

**Hu:** You were a rich young gentleman at that time while I was a poor student. And now you work for foreigners and I, the peasants.

**Chia-chu:** Well, I've long been wanting to quit that foreign firm.  
(*Confidentially*) I've joined the Kuomintang.

**Young Ox:** Good. Six of one and half a dozen of the other.  
Will you lend us some grain, "comrade"?

**Chia-chu:** Lend you grain?

**Hu:** Yes. After several years in a stretch of natural disasters the villagers are starving. We need your help.

**Chia-chu:** I heartily sympathize with the villagers. That's why I've overlooked their refusal to pay this year's rent. But what grain have I to lend them?

**Young Ox:** You mean you refuse?

**Chia-chu:** It's not that I refuse, I really have none.

(*Enter Cheng San.*)

**Cheng:** Young master, the boatmen keep asking when you want the grain boats to leave.

**Chia-chu:** I'm busy now.

(*The civil guards push Cheng San out.*)

**Hu:** Hahaha... Brother Chia-chu. How do you explain this? "All men have natural sympathies"....

**Chia-chu:** I would like to help but really it's beyond me. To tell you frankly, these few boatloads of grain are provisions which the Northern Expeditionary Army has entrusted me to buy.

**Hu** (*startled*): Army provisions? You're not lying?

**Chia-chu:** Here's the requisition from the Northern Expeditionary Army. (*He produces an envelope from his pocket and shows Hu the order.*) It's signed by Regiment Commander Liu. This isn't faked.

**Hu** (*his brows knitted, shows the letter to Young Ox*): Look....

**Young Ox** (*not troubling to look, returns it to Chia-chu*): This isn't enough. You need a permit from the county peasant association too.

**Chia-chu:** Never heard of that regulation.

**Young Ox:** Regulations are laid down by men. You had better learn that. (*Raising his voice*) I'll tell you this. You can get the grain out of your Tang Family Mansion, but not out of Maple Bay.

(*Shouts are heard inside the house. Hearing the commotion, Tang Han-chih hurries back from the river.*)

**Tseng** (*running out*): Master! A crowd of old women and children have broken into our courtyard. They say they won't leave unless they're lent some grain.

**Tang:** Chase them away!

**Tseng:** Impossible. And more keep coming. They've even crowded into your bedroom and sat on your bed.

(*The shouting draws near. Chia-chu whispers to his father and they go off towards the river.*)

**Hu:** Things are getting out of hand. I'll go back immediately to the county town and get our superiors to settle this business.

**Young Ox:** No need. We can settle it ourselves when all our people are here.

**Hu:** You don't understand. This involves our relationship with the Kuomintang. I must talk to Comrade Hai-shan. (*Exit.*)

(*The shouting draws near.*)

**Mother Chao** (*entering*): Villagers, the Tangs are here!

(*Women and old people leading children, all carrying containers, rush out of the back door and confront the Tangs in silence.*)

**Mother Chao:** We'll not leave until you lend us grain.

**Tang:** Quick! Cast off and set sail!

(*A civil guard walks forward with a sword.*)

**All:** Don't you dare!

**Tang:** Make way, or I'll shoot.

(*The civil guards raise swords and rifles. A hubbub breaks out.*)

**Miao:** Look.

*(Enter Hsia Chang-keng and other young peasants with torches, carrying-poles and hoes. Chao Hai-shan is among them.)*

**Chia-chu** (*stepping hastily forward*): Steady on! Let's talk things over. (*To the civil guards*) Dismiss! Villagers, I know you need grain badly, otherwise you wouldn't have come here so late at night. We'll open our family barn to help the poor. Everyone will get half a bushel.

**Tang**: I won't have it. Our family's not a charity.

**Chao**: Neither are we beggars. Let me tell you this. Today, the Maple Bay Peasant Association has come to borrow grain from you.

**Chia-chu**: The peasant association?

**Chao**: Exactly. Look.

*(Ku-yu jumps on to the bridge head and unrolls the peasant association's red flag.)*

**Chia-chu**: Fine. Fine. "Toilers are sacred." It's my duty to help. I'll lend you all the grain in our barn. Open the barn, Steward Tseng.

**Grandad Ho**: Hmm. So toughness pays off. Come on, sister-in-law. Let's go and get grain.

*(Several villagers, talking, enter the back door.)*

**Chao**: Wait a minute, villagers. We'll borrow the grain in the barn and the grain on the boats as well.

**All**: Right. The whole lot!

**Chia-chu**: Mr. Chao, this is going too far. . . . Villagers, taking grain from the rich when you're hungry is one thing. But don't let yourselves be swayed by agitators into. . . .

**Chao**: Into what? I know. Into letting ourselves be slaughtered by foreign rifles and guns after we've filled our stomachs.

**Chia-chu**: I'll make it clear then. The grain on the boats is for the Northern Expeditionary Army. No one is to touch it!

**Chao**: If it is really for the Northern Expeditionary Army, we'll not take a single grain. More than that, we'll send an escort to see that it arrives safely. If you're cheating us, sorry, but we'll confiscate the whole lot.

**Chia-chu**: How can you talk of cheating? I've a requisition order from the Northern Expeditionary Army.

**Chao**: And I have a copy of your contract here. (*Produces it.*) Some workers in Changsha found this in a foreign firm. The two parties to the contract are the foreign boss and you, Mr. Tang Chia-chu.

**Grandad Ho**: You vicious scoundrel, Tang Chia-chu!

*(The villagers close in, demanding an explanation. Tang Chia-chu is in a quandary.)*

**Chao** (*mounts a stone and cries*): Villagers! Let's go to the river and get the grain.

*(The villagers shout and rush off.)*

**Tang**: My grain, my grain! I can't have this.

**Chia-chu**: Don't worry, dad. Let me ask Regiment Commander Liu to help and once I've joined the army he'll give us guns.

*(Enter Cheng San, then ducks out of sight.)*

**Tang**: As you like. But what shall I do here?

**Chia-chu**: Get in touch with the local gentry, strengthen the civil guards and bide your time.

**Tang**: Don't be away too long.

**Chia-chu**: I won't.

*(Tang sees his son off. Cheng San follows them. When Tang turns back he meets Cheng.)*

**Tang**: Who's that?

**Cheng**: Me.

**Tang**: Cheng San! Where are you going?

**Cheng**: To the river to have a look.

**Tang**: To pass on this news?

**Cheng**: Yes. It's a fine thing our young master joining the army. All the villagers will be pleased.

**Tang**: Stop. I've fed you all these years, Cheng San. How can you betray me now?



**Cheng:** You've fed me? Bah. We hired hands and tenants have fed *you*. I've worked like a horse for you half my life, Master Tang. Today, I want to be a human being.

**Tang:** Well, well. Come inside then and I'll pay you your wages.

**Cheng:** I'm through with you. I'll settle accounts with you later.

*(The civil guards grab Cheng San. He pulls loose and knocks one of them down. Hearing voices approaching from the riverside, the civil guards and Tang scuttle through the back door. Enter the villagers carrying grain.)*

**Cheng:** Where's Hai-shan, Chang-keng?

**Hsia:** Down by the river.

*(Exit Cheng San.)*

**Hsia:** Look, what good grain this is, as clean as if it had been washed. And it's come back to us today!

*(Enter Chao and Grandad Ho.)*

**Hsia:** Is this grain really for me, Hai-shan?

**Chao:** Take it home quickly and cook a meal for your old folk and the children.

**Hsia:** Now we can live.

**Lien** *(dashing out from the back door):* Now that the peasant association's set up, Brother Hai-shan, I want to leave this hellish Tang Family Mansion.

**Chao:** Can you stay on for the sake of the peasant association? To help more servant girls escape from hell?

**Lien** *(thinks for a moment, then nods):* I understand.

*(Enter Cheng San.)*

**Cheng:** Tang Han-chih has sent his son to join the army, Hai-shan. Young Tang left a minute ago saying that they will have guns once he's joined the army.

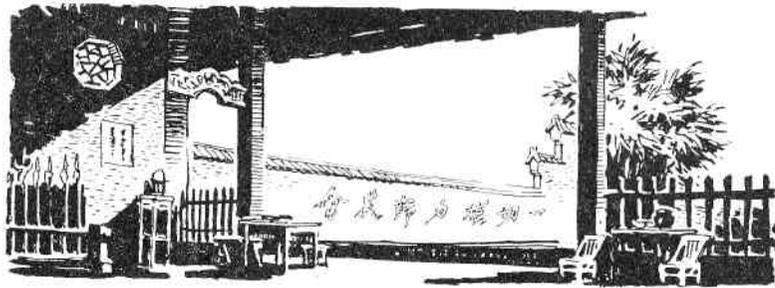
**Young Ox:** Failing to get guns with grain, he has gone to join up.

**Hsia:** They are still after guns.

**Miao:** We mustn't be idle either.

**Chao:** Right. We need weapons to fight them too.

*(Curtain)*



#### SCENE FOUR

Spring 1927. In the temple hall now the office of the peasant association.

(The curtain rises amid the sound of iron-hammering and singing. Mother Chao and Woman C are sewing red armbands. Members of the Children's Corps watch Miao Wang-chun write slogans. Sitting in a corner, Hu Szu-yu is reading a book. People come and go on the stage.)

**Child A:** Shall we paste it on the gate of the Tang Family Mansion?

**Miao:** Certainly. It is written for him to see.

**Children:** Let's go!

*(At this shout Hu looks up from his book.)*

**Miao:** Keep your eyes open. Come back to report if anything crops up.

**Child A:** Yes. *(Exit.)*

*(Enter Young Ox.)*

**Young Ox:** Has Brother Hai-shan come back from the meeting in the county, Brother Wang-chun?

**Miao:** Not yet. Department Head Hu is waiting for him too.

**Hu:** I really admire you for being able to work in such conditions.

**Miao** *(laughs)*: A quiet place to ourselves would be very tame. Take Department Head Hu in to get some rest, Young Ox.

*(Exeunt Young Ox and Hu.)*

*(Enter Granny Wang, helped by Ku-yu, holding her broken cauldron.)*

**Granny Wang:** Wang-chun.

**Miao:** Well, Granny Wang. . . .

**Granny Wang:** I heard you need iron to make guns, so I looked around for scrap-iron. Take this.

**Miao:** Thank you.

*(Enter Hsia Chang-keng and his wife. Young Ox comes back from inside.)*

**Hsia:** Aw, come on home. This is where they transact public business.

**Mrs. Hsia:** And I've come here on business.

**Miao:** What's wrong with you two?

**Hsia:** Nothing. Only she's been answering my mother back.

**Young Ox:** So you come to the peasant association over a quarrel with your mother-in-law?

**Mrs. Hsia:** You think we should go to the civil guards bureau?

**Young Ox:** Of course not.

**Mother Chao:** Well, how did the trouble start?

**Mrs. Hsia:** I wanted to put my name down for the peasant guards.

But how can I carry a spear with my hair in a bun? So I wanted to bob it in the revolutionary style. But my mother-in-law said if I did, I'd look neither like a woman nor a man and she wouldn't have me in the house any more.

**Young Ox:** What? Come to stay at the peasant association then.

I'll cut your hair for you. Wait here while I fetch a pair of scissors.

**Granny Wang:** That's no way to solve the problem, Young Ox.

**Mother Chao:** Chang-keng, why don't you help her win your mother round?

**Mrs. Hsia:** Him? Not likely! He isn't joining the guards himself.

**Mother Chao:** Why not?

**Mrs. Hsia:** He's waiting to be given land, to live in comfort.

**Mother Chao:** Hai-shan has been wanting to talk to you about this, Chang-keng.

**Mrs. Hsia:** He's his mother's son.

**Granny Wang:** Come on, I'll go and talk to your mother-in-law.

*(She leaves with the Hsias. Enter Women A and B with a streamer.)*

**Mother Chao:** Finished?

**Woman A:** Yes. Look!

*(She unfolds the streamer. On it are the words "Inaugural Meeting of the Maple Bay Peasant Guards". Enter Cheng San.)*

**Miao:** Very impressive!

**Cheng:** Here's something still more impressive. *(He produces a big seal.)*

**Woman A:** A chop? Why did you make it round?

**Cheng:** To show that all of us peasants have rallied round.

*(Music is heard offstage. All are surprised. Hu Szu-yu comes out from the inner room. Enter Ku-yu.)*

**Ku-yu:** Uncle Cheng, Tang Han-chih has come to present a wooden tablet. Shall we let him in?

**Cheng** *(looks at Miao and the others):* What's he up to now?

**Hu:** Ask him to come in.

**Ku-yu** *(shouts):* Come on in!

*(Tang Han-chih, who has changed into a cotton gown, comes in with civil guards carrying a tablet and a chest.)*

**Cheng:** What are you up to, Tang Han-chih?

**Tang:** Hearing that your association is setting up the peasant guards, I've come to offer my congratulations.

*(At a sign from Tang, the civil guards remove the yellow silk covering the tablet and reveal the characters in gold: "Fight Together".)*

**Young Ox:** You can skip that.

**Tang:** Although well off, I've been uncharitable and often treated you badly. From now on I mean to support the revolution. I'm determined to mend my ways and help my fellow villagers.

**Hu:** If you mend your ways that will be good, but it's action that counts.

**Tang:** Sure, sure. *(He signs to his men to open the chest and takes out a large tray of silver dollars.)* I'm presenting this to the peasant association and exempting my tenants from paying rent this year. I'm also returning all their mortgages.

*(The villagers who have followed them in start whispering among themselves.)*

**Man** *(softly to Hsia):* Returning the mortgages?

**Tang:** I'm a poor man now.

**Cheng:** What about the civil guards bureau?

**All:** And the rifles? Why don't you hand over the rifles?

**Tang:** I have no say on that. The rifles and men are registered on the county government's books.

**Hu:** We can talk about the civil guards bureau later.

**Tang:** I suggest that the civil guards bureau and the peasant guards join forces to maintain order. What do you think, Department Head Hu?

*(Hu meditates. Cheng San tries to catch his attention. Hu brushes him aside.)*

**Hu:** In the name of the Peasant Department of the County Kuomintang Headquarters I ratify this proposal.

**Tang** *(quickly):* Let both sides announce it at the inaugural meeting of the peasant guards, how about that?

**Hu:** Good. That's settled then.

**Tang:** The meeting place?

**Hu:** That's a minor point.

**Tang:** What about the square in front of the civil guards bureau in the centre of the village?

**Hu:** All right.

**Tang:** I and my men will wait for you there. Now I must beg leave of you, fellow villagers.

*(He bows and withdraws. The villagers burst out laughing when he nearly trips over the door-sill.)*

**Young Ox:** That old dog is calling us fellow villagers left and right today.

**Ku-yu:** He is scared of our spear squad.

**Young Ox:** Fierce dogs cringe before big sticks.

**Ku-yu:** This fierce dog doesn't dare bark any more.

**Cheng:** Maybe, but a dog that doesn't bark has a more vicious bite. Hai-shan is not back, Department Head Hu. I think we should talk over this business of joint action. I have a feeling that Tang is up to some trick.

**Hu:** What trick? We mustn't be too suspicious. *(Goes back inside again.)*

*(Enter Children A and B.)*

**Child A:** Mr. Miao, something's happened in the Tang Family Mansion.

**Child B:** Sister Lien sent us to tell you.

**Miao:** Steady on. Take your time.

**Child A:** Last night Tang Chia-chu's men brought a long wooden chest from the city.

**Cheng:** A long wooden chest?

**Child B:** Early this morning Sun the Leech, the wealthy landlord of Tunghsiang, came to the Tang Family Mansion.

**Child A:** He and Tang Han-chih had a secret talk in the study.

**Miao:** Has Sun the Leech gone?

**Child A:** No. Sister Lien is keeping an eye on him. She'll come to report if anything more happens.

**Miao:** All right, run along now. Keep your eyes open.

*(Exeunt Children A and B.)*

**Cheng:** Didn't I say he's up to some trick?

**Young Ox** *(throws Tang's tablet out):* We don't want this damn thing dirtying our place.

*(Miao signs to villagers to carry the chest out.)*

**Miao:** We must keep quiet about this for the time being. Summon the peasant guards, Uncle Cheng, and put a cordon round the village. Post sentries around the Tang Family Mansion too.

**Cheng:** Right. We'll muster our forces. Ku-yu, you take charge of the peasant association business.

*(Exeunt Cheng, Miao and Young Ox. After a while Sister Lien brings in Sun the Leech.)*

**Ku-yu:** What is it, Sister Lien?

**Lien:** Don't ask questions yet. Go and fetch Chairman Chao here first.

**Ku-yu:** He isn't back yet.

**Lien:** Get Uncle Cheng or Brother Wang-chun then.

**Ku-yu:** Take this! *(Hands his sword to Sister Lien, then leaves.)*

**Lien:** Open your eyes, Leech. This isn't the Tang Family Mansion but our peasant association.

**Sun:** I know. I know. Let me go, sister. There's never been any bad blood between us. Why should you treat me this way?

**Lien:** What? Haven't you sucked the blood of the poor all your life? I want to avenge the Tunghsiang people today. *(Strikes him.)* This is for the serving maids. *(Kicks him to the ground.)* This for the hired hands and tenants.

**Sun:** Help!

**Lien** *(one foot on Sun):* Shut up. I'll kill you if you don't come clean when members of the peasant association come.

**Sun:** I'll tell everything I know.

*(Enter Cheng San, Miao, Young Ox and several peasant guards.)*

**Cheng:** How did you catch him, Sister Lien?

**Lien:** I followed him when Tang Han-chih told him to go home by the mountain path. When we reached the back door of the peasant association, I pounced on him.

**Cheng:** Did anyone see you?

**Lien:** No.



**Miao:** Tell us, Leech, what did Tang Chia-chu bring to the Tang Family Mansion last night?

**Sun:** I don't know. I only came here this morning.

**Miao:** What were you and Tang Han-chih talking about in the study?

**Sun:** We said the peasant association's coming into power is the will of heaven. Tang Han-chih urged me to co-operate with the peasant association in Tunghsiang.

**Cheng:** Come here — what's that up your sleeve?

*(Sun the Leech dodges. Cheng San grabs him, pulls out a sheet of paper from his sleeve and hands it to Miao who reads it and gives an exclamation of dismay.)*

**All:** What is it?

**Miao:** They want to kill Hai-shan!

**All:** What?

**Cheng:** What does it say?

**Miao:** It's an order issued in the name of the Maple Bay Civil Guards Bureau and the county garrison army. It reads, "Chao Hai-shan, ringleader of the village riff-raff, has led rebels to intercept grain being shipped to the Northern Expeditionary Army. He has also made weapons in secret and persecuted the families of officers of the Northern Expeditionary Army. He is to be arrested and executed as a warning to others."

**Young Ox:** Tell us, where is Brother Hai-shan? Where is he?

**Sun:** I don't know.

**Young Ox:** If you touch so much as a hair of his head I'll kill you, you swine. Speak out!

**All:** Speak out.

**Sun:** Yes. Yes. Well, it was all Tang Han-chih's idea. Knowing that Chairman Chao has gone to the county on business he's sent men to catch him near Paimapu on his way back. Then, on the spot...

**All:** What?

**Sun:** He'll post up this notice.

**Cheng:** Have his thugs left?

**Sun:** A long time ago...

**Young Ox:** Uncle Cheng, Brother Hai-shan...

**Cheng:** Take him away first.

*(Sister Lien and two men take Sun away.)*

**Cheng:** Comrades, get your weapons.

*(All take weapons.)*

**Cheng:** You go to Tunghsiang quickly, Wang-chun. I'll make straight for Paimapu. Let's go.

*(Enter Chao.)*

**Chao:** What has happened here?

**Young Ox:** Brother Chao! You....  
**Chao:** Well?  
**Cheng:** Where have you come from? How did you get here?  
**Chao:** I'd only just left the county town when the Party found out Tang's plot and sent someone to warn me. I was afraid there might be trouble here, so I came back by footpaths.  
**Cheng:** What a narrow shave!  
**Miao:** Look at this, Hai-shan. (*Points to the order.*)  
**Chao:** Fine.  
**Cheng:** Why?  
**Chao:** They're scared by our setting up the peasant guards. That's why they tried to kill me.  
**Young Ox:** But, Brother Hai-shan, Tang Han-chih came just now to give us a tablet and say he'd take part in our meeting tomorrow....  
**Chao:** Take part in our meeting?  
**Miao:** And he's going to join forces with us.  
**Chao:** When one of his schemes fails, he thinks up another.  
**Cheng:** But Department Head Hu has agreed.

(*Enter Sister Lien.*)

**Lien:** The Leech has admitted something else, Uncle Cheng. He says....  
**Chao:** Sun the Leech?  
**Lien:** You're back, Chairman Chao. Sun the Leech says that if they failed to kill you at Paimapu today they'd have another try at the meeting tomorrow, when Tang Chia-chu is bringing soldiers here. They're planning to disarm the peasant guards too.  
**Young Ox:** Brother Hai-shan, I'll gather all the peasant guards, capture Tang Han-chih and kill him!  
**Chao:** No. From what we've just heard, he's bound to be prepared. We'd suffer losses.  
**Miao:** I think we'd better postpone the meeting.  
**Cheng:** Right. Postpone it.  
**Chao:** No. We'll follow our original plan.  
**Cheng:** But the enemy's trying to trap us.

**Chao:** Sure. We'll spring a trap on him.  
**Cheng:** How...?  
**Miao:** If we capture his rifles we can cope with Tang Chia-chu easily.  
**Cheng:** Ah, take him unawares by attacking the civil guards bureau and capturing his rifles. Is that it?  
**Chao:** Right, we move first and upset his arrangements. What do you think?  
**Cheng and Miao:** Agreed.  
**Chao:** Notify Tang Han-chih that the meeting is starting at eight tomorrow morning. We're going to have an impressive and lively meeting. Did you write the notice, Brother Wang-chun?  
**Miao:** I did.  
**Chao:** Will you read it out to us?  
**Miao (reads):** "The aims of the peasant association are open and above-board. It's the sole juridical and administrative authority. To ensure its authority, the peasant guards have been set up. All the local gentry must obey our orders. Anyone who resists them will be dealt with severely. Order of the Maple Bay Peasant Association."  
**All:** Excellent.  
**Chao:** Have you made the seal, Uncle Cheng?  
**Cheng:** Yes. (*Gives it to Chao.*)  
**Chao:** You'll be in charge of this seal, Uncle Cheng.  
**Cheng:** Me? I can't read or write.  
**Chao:** We have become our own masters now, Uncle Cheng, after being beasts of burden for generations. Why shouldn't you take charge of the seal? Don't you agree, everybody?  
**All:** Agreed. We have faith in you, Uncle Cheng.  
**Cheng:** All right. (*Accepts the seal.*) I'll guard the seal with my life.  
**Chao:** Set the seal to this notice.

(*Cheng does so.*)

**Chao:** Tang Han-chih, tomorrow you'll know the power of our seal!  
**Young Ox:** Once this chop comes down, I'll raise my sword....

(Enter Hu Szu-yu.)

**Hu:** Back, Comrade Hai-shan? I've been waiting for you all day.

**Chao:** I went to the county Party committee to get permission to attack the civil guards.

**Hu:** That's exactly what I want to talk to you about. . . . (He hesitates.)

**Chao:** We must make preparations. Notify all Party members, Young Ox, to come here for a meeting this evening.

(Exit Sister Lien and Young Ox.)

**Hu:** There's no need now to attack the civil guards.

**Cheng:** No. We have to attack.

**Miao** (showing him Tang's note): Look at this.

**Hu** (reads it): "Chao Hai-shan, ringleader of the village riff-raff . . . is to be executed. . . ."

**Miao:** They fired the first shot.

**Hu** (indignantly): It's outrageous. How vicious! The correct procedure is for us to report this at once to the county government in the name of the Maple Bay Peasant Association.

**Chao:** What's correct for others may not be correct for us. Lawless landlords should be dealt with by the peasant association.

**Hu:** Peasant associations are mass organizations. They can't take over the functions of the government.

**Chao:** "All power to the peasant associations" is an empty slogan then? You mean we should let the civil guards bureau administer power?

**Hu:** The Kuomintang can reform it by replacing bad landlords with good ones.

**Chao:** We have a saying that "all landlords are despots and all the gentry are bad". Department Head Hu, can you give us an example of a civil guards bureau which has changed for the better?

(Hu laughs.)

**Chao:** If we do everything the Kuomintang wants, what do we need the Communist Party for?



**Cheng:** Our Party branch has made the decision to attack the civil guards.

**Chao:** And the county Party committee firmly supports us.

**Hu:** That isn't what our top leadership wants. (He flourishes a book.)

It says clearly here: Peasant armed forces must restrict themselves to self-defence. They must not have any standing organization, nor any class colour.

**Chao** (getting worked up too): "A revolution is an insurrection, an act of violence by which one class overthrows another."

If we can't do this and mustn't do that, it means we're not allowed to make revolution.

**Hu:** Comrade Chao, you must keep yourself under control. If you act in this arbitrary way, the Peasant Department will order the Maple Bay Peasant Association to be reorganized. Goodbye.

(Exit.)

(Silence.)

**Cheng:** He doesn't talk like a Communist.

**Miao:** Aren't we going to attack the civil guards then?

**Cheng:** It seems that a blow at Tang gives him a pain too.

**Chao:** Comrades, come! *(He takes out from a bundle a copy of the magazine "Fighter".)* Look!

**Miao:** *Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan* by Mao Tsetung.

**Chao:** To refute the slanders of the Rightists, Commissioner Mao wrote this article early this year after making investigations in several counties. The county Party committee wants us to go by what Commissioner Mao says.

**Miao:** Commissioner Mao says that our action is "fine" and that we are "vanguards of the revolution".

**Chao:** Look here.

**Miao:** "... that every peasant, whether young or in his prime, possesses a spear, and that no restrictions are imposed as though a spear were something dreadful. Anyone who is scared at the sight of the spear corps is indeed a weakling!"

**Cheng:** Right. Only the landlords and the rich are scared. Not our Communist Party.

**Miao:** How do you know that, Uncle Cheng?

**Cheng:** Me?

**Miao:** Listen, "Only the local tyrants and evil gentry are frightened of them but no revolutionaries should take fright."

These are the exact words of Commissioner Mao.

**Cheng:** Really?

**Chao:** Yes. Commissioner Mao has said what is in our hearts.

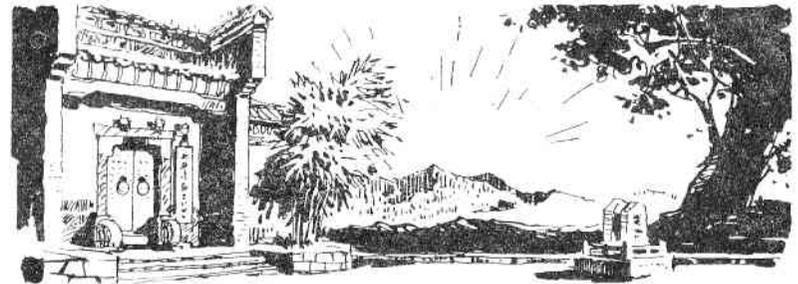
**Miao:** With his backing we've nothing to fear.

**Cheng:** Does it say anything about attacking the civil guards?

**Chao:** Sure. "Overthrow the armed forces of the landlords and establish those of the peasants."

*(The three of them read the report under a lamp.)*

*(Curtain)*



## SCENE FIVE

Early morning the day after the previous scene. At the front gate of the Tang Family Mansion.

*(As the curtain rises, Tang Han-chih, Tseng Pa, Platoon Leader Li and several civil guards are listening at the front gate to songs sung by the peasant guards in the distance. Enter the bailiff.)*

**Bailiff:** Master, master! Chao Hai-shan is leading his peasant troops this way.

**Tang:** Really? *(Consults his watch.)* It's not seven yet. Why are they coming so early?

**Tseng:** Has anyone let the cat out of the bag?

**Tang:** Even if word has got out, would Chao Hai-shan dare enter the tiger's den? Still, I suspect he has something up his sleeve.

**Tseng:** Right, we'd better be on our guard....

**Tang:** Platoon Leader Li, send someone at once by a shortcut to the young master. He's to come back as fast as he can.

*(Exit Platoon Leader Li.)*

**Tang:** We must do our best to keep him here till Chia-chu arrives. Then....

**Bailiff:** They're nearly here.

**Tang:** You stay here to deal with them, Steward Tseng.

*(Sister Lien enters with some clothes followed by Platoon Leader Li.)*

**Tseng:** Me?

**Tang:** Yes, you. Platoon Leader Li, tell your men to go inside and wait for a signal from me. Is the back gate locked?

**Tseng:** Li Erh-kou!

**Civil Guard A:** Here. It's locked.

**Tseng:** Put another lock on it.

*(He throws a bunch of keys on to the ground. Sister Lien picks them up and hands them to Civil Guard A.)*

**Lien** *(handing the clothes to Tang):* The mistress told me to bring you these. *(Exit.)*

**Tang** *(to Tseng):* Remember, play for time! *(He enters the gate with his civil guards.)*

*(The song sung by the peasant guards is heard approaching. Enter the civil guards on sentry duty.)*

*(Chao Hai-shan enters at the head of the peasant guards.)*

**Tseng:** You're early, Chairman Chao!

**Chao:** Where is your chief, Steward Tseng?

**Tseng:** He isn't up yet. Will you have a cigarette?

**Chao:** I don't smoke. Is it right for him to keep so many of us waiting here, Steward Tseng?

**Tseng:** Please excuse him, Chairman Chao.

**Chao:** Won't you ask him to come out?

**Tseng:** Yes. Just wait a few minutes, please. *(He enters the gate.)*

**Chao:** Young Pine, go to the back gate and see if Sister Lien's got everything ready.

*(The boy Young Pine leaves.)*

**Chao:** Young Ox, have you cordoned off the village?

**Young Ox:** Don't worry. Not even a dog can get in now.

**Miao:** Hai-shan, he seems to be using delaying tactics.

**Chao:** Most likely. But he's afraid we won't hold the meeting here. Well, we'll force Tang Han-chih to come out. Once we get hold of him, all the rest is easy.

*(Tseng Pa enters.)*

**Tseng:** Chairman Chao, Chief Tang has got up and is getting dressed.

**Chao:** So he wants to look smart, eh?

**Tseng:** He wants to show his respect. Chairman Chao, Chief Tang wants me to discuss with you the agenda for the meeting.

**Chao** *(his face clouding, bears down on him):* You discuss it with us? Who are you? So Tang Han-chih as the bureau head is giving himself airs. Do you really want to attend this meeting of ours or not?

**All:** Don't try to bully us!

The meeting's off. We won't hold it here!

Let's go back and meet on our own!

**Chao:** All right, we'll take our guards back and hold the meeting ourselves.

**Young Ox:** Fall in!

**Tang** *(rushing out of the gate):* Wait! I'm really sorry, Chairman Chao, if my subordinates have bungled things. This is a misunderstanding, a misunderstanding.

**Chao:** I hope so. Dismiss!

**Tang:** It's time for the meeting. Why dismiss your men?

**Chao:** To prepare the meeting place.

**Tang:** Platoon Leader Li, get your men together to help.

*(Platoon Leader Li enters with some civil guards.)*

*(The peasant guards on their own initiative step between the civil guards and Tang Han-chih. The two sides keep a close watch on each other. Silence.)*

**Chao:** Well, let's start our meeting.

**Tang:** Take action, Platoon Leader Li! *(He intends to leave.)*

**Chao** *(fires his gun):* We'll take action together!

*(The peasant guards charge the civil guards and after a fierce struggle disarm them all.)*

*(Shots ring out from inside the gate.)*

**Chao:** Take them away! Get ready to fight!

*(Some peasant guards take the prisoners away. Others remain on guard there, watching the gate.)*

**Tang:** Did you hear that shooting? I still have people and guns. You can neither go in nor get away.

**Chao:** If you dare to wound a single man of ours we'll kill you first!

**Tang:** My son is on his way here with troops. He'll wipe you out.

**Chao:** He'll only be in time to collect your corpse!

*(The gunfire stops. Sister Lien and two peasant fighters walk out of the gate.)*

**Lien:** We've got all the guns of the civil guards bureau, Chairman Chao. *(To Tang)* Master, here are the keys to the back gate. We're through with them.

**Chao:** Take him away to stand trial!

*(Two fighters march Tang off.)*

**Chao:** Sister Man, ask Uncle Cheng to assemble the villagers at once for the meeting. Let's go in and have a look. *(He enters the gate with Sister Lien, Young Ox and others.)*

*(Sister Man and Woman B summon the villagers to the meeting place. Children march on holding the streamer.)*

*(Mother Chao, Granny Wang and other villagers enter. Presently, Chao emerges from the gate with peasant guards.)*

**Fighter A:** Look, Brother Chang-keng. We're not holding ploughs now but guns. Would you like to have one?

**Hsia:** . . . . .

**Mrs. Hsia:** Give it to me. *(Takes the gun.)*

*(Enter Cheng San carrying a board inscribed "The Peasant Guards".)*

**Cheng** *(pointing to the board):* Look, Hai-shan.

*(Chao Hai-shan smashes the board of the "Civil Guards Bureau".)*

**Chao:** Hang it up!

*(Cheng San hangs up the board of the peasant guards. All cheer.)*

**Chao:** Neighbours, our peasant guards are set up formally today. The reason why we are able to struggle against Tang Han-chih today is because we have listened to Commissioner Mao and taken up guns. Remember: as long as exploiting classes remain anywhere in the world we must never lay down our arms.

**All:** Right!

*(Miao Wang-chun and Grandad Ho enter.)*

**Miao:** Tang Chia-chu is back, Hai-shan.

**Chao:** Too bad he didn't get here earlier. How big a force has he brought?

**Miao:** One platoon. We stopped them at the entrance to the village.

**Chao:** Grandad, let Tang Chia-chu come over here.

*(Exit Grandad Ho.)*

**Chao:** Neighbours, Tang Chia-chu has arrived with troops. What shall we do?

**All:** Put him on trial too!

**Chao:** Good. We'll give him tit for tat. Bring Tang Han-chih to public trial today in front of him. Uncle Cheng, you take charge of the meeting while I go there to have a look. Come on, Young Ox. *(He goes off with Young Ox.)*

**Cheng:** Neighbours, the meeting to sentence the despotic landlord Tang Han-chih is about to start.

*(Woman A runs on.)*

**Woman A:** Uncle Cheng, Tang Chia-chu is here!

*(Tang Chia-chu enters with a bodyguard. Miao Wang-chun leads the villagers to shout slogans.)*

**Chia-chu:** Who's in charge here?

**Cheng:** I am!

**Chia-chu:** Cheng San?

**Cheng:** I'm a member of the peasant association committee. This is our secretary. (*Points at Miao Wang-chun.*)

**Chia-chu:** How can you arrest people?

**Cheng:** A despotic landlord, guilty of many crimes, why shouldn't we arrest him?

**Chia-chu:** You've betrayed us!

**Miao:** No. You're the ones who act one way in public and another in private.

**Chia-chu:** What grounds have you for saying that?

**Miao:** Grounds? Fine! Bring out the evidence.

(*Enter Sister Lien and two fighters carrying a chest of guns on their shoulders.*)

**Lien:** Look! These are the guns they brought back from the county town two nights ago.

**Miao:** Please tell us what they are for?

**Chia-chu:** For upholding public order.

**Cheng:** Upholding public order?

**Miao:** Look! (*Showing a note*) You were plotting to murder Chairman Chao. Is that what you mean by upholding public order?

**Hsia:** You devils!

**Chia-chu:** . . . . .

**Miao:** What else have you to say, Adjutant Tang?

**Chia-chu:** . . . . .

**Cheng:** Nothing? Well, distribute the guns to our third platoon.

(*The fighters carry the guns off.*)

**Cheng:** Neighbours, I now declare this meeting open: To sentence the despotic landlord Tang Han-chih.

**Chia-chu:** Wait! What right have you to arrest people?

**Cheng:** What right? The right given us by all the villagers.

**Miao:** And by the 300,000 members of peasant associations throughout the county.

**Cheng:** Is that correct?



**All:** Yes, we've given you the right.

**Chia-chu:** Well! Since my dad—no, the despotic landlord—has committed serious crimes, it's up to me to take him to the county court to have his case investigated.

**Cheng:** No need. We can do it ourselves.

**Chia-chu:** I *must* take him away today.

**Cheng:** I doubt if the villagers will agree to it.

**Chia-chu:** Whether you do or not, I'm taking him away. There!

(*Enter Young Ox.*)

**Young Ox:** Your men can't come now.

(*Enter Chao Hai-shan.*)

**Chao:** Disarm him!

*(Young Ox takes Tang Chia-chu's pistol.)*

**Chia-chu:** You are utterly lawless!

**Chao:** Quite right. Our peasant association doesn't acknowledge the law of feudal landlords or obey the orders of bureaucratic politicians.

**Chia-chu:** Chairman Chao, you must take into consideration the relationship between our two parties.

**Chao:** We have no common ground with Kuomintang Rightists.

**Chia-chu:** Then you will be held responsible for undermining the national revolution!

**Chao:** Those who suppress the peasant movement are counter-revolutionaries. It's *you* who must be held responsible.

**Cheng:** Bring Tang Han-chih up here!

*(Enter two members of the peasant association escorting Tang Han-chih.)*  
*(All shout: "Down with the despotic landlord Tang Han-chih!"*  
*"Blood debts must be repaid in kind!")*

**Chao:** Neighbours, we must make Tang Han-chih repay his blood debts!

**Chia-chu:** You are going too far!

**Chao:** What? Going too far? It's you who've forced us to this. Think, how many people in Maple Bay have been killed by you and your father. Your Tang Family Mansion was built on our blood and bones. For generations you've ridden roughshod over us. If you call this going too far, how can you talk of revolution?

**Mother Chao:** Going too far? Eleven years ago, the poor in Maple Bay were so ground down by you they could only revolt — take up arms and refuse to pay rent and taxes. Then you promised to reduce the rent by half and collect no taxes for three years so long as they laid down their arms. But that same night, you sent for troops from the town to slaughter our men. In one night, all twenty-five who had been most active were killed — not a single one left. *(Shows a jacket stained with blood.)* Hai-shan's father. . . . *(She is too overwhelmed by grief to go on.)*

**Lien:** Tang Han-chih, we'll settle accounts with you today!

*(Angry cries of denunciation rend the air.)*

**Chao:** Pass the verdict, secretary!

**Miao:** "The despotic landlord Tang Han-chih used his power to fleece and murder our people. In the 5th year of the Republic alone, he massacred twenty-seven people. Since the great revolution, this criminal Tang has conspired with imperialists and Kuomintang Rightists to build up his armed forces, kill revolutionaries and undermine the peasant movement. His crimes are too wicked to be pardoned. With the approval of the special county court, Tang is condemned to death to be shot at once."

**Chao:** Uncle Cheng —

*(Cheng San is about to set the seal to the verdict when in comes Grandad Ho.)*

**Grandad Ho** *(to Chao, in a low voice):* Hai-shan, Department Head Hu has come to the office of the peasant association. He wants us to. . . . *(Hands over a note.)*

**Chao** *(reading the note):* Go ahead, Uncle Cheng!

*(Cheng San puts the seal to the verdict. Cheers rise from the masses.)*

**Chao:** Young Ox! *(Loads a gun.)*

**Lien:** Give it to me! *(Takes the gun. She hustles Tang Han-chih out. Shots are heard.)*

**All** *(shouting):* "Down with the despotic landlord!" "All power to the peasant associations!" "Long live the peasant association!"

*(Enter Woman A.)*

**Woman A:** Chairman Chao, Department Head Hu wants to have a talk with Adjutant Tang.

**Chia-chu:** Well, we'll be meeting again.

**Chao:** I must warn you: All who undermine the revolution and suppress the workers and peasants will come to the same end as Tang Han-chih!

*(Tang Chia-chu exits.)*

*(The others gather curiously around Grandad Ho and Chao Hai-shan.)*

**Cheng:** What does that note say?

*(Chao hands it to Miao Wang-chun.)*

**Miao (reads it):** "At present the relationship between the Communist Party and the Kuomintang is extremely tense. Recently Regiment Commander Liu's Kuomintang troops have moved to this county. To avoid exacerbating the situation and provoking the other side, I hope you will release Tang Han-chih at once."

**All:** What?

**Mother Chao:** Make him come to collect his corpse!

**Fighter A:** Let Tang Han-chih go, to come back and oppress us again?

**Hsia:** Hai-shan, I want to join the peasant guards.

**Chao (gravely handing him a gun):** Comrades, we must keep a tight grip on these guns and be ready to fight more arduous battles.

*(Curtain)*



## SCENE SIX

Summer, 1927. On the mountain road leading to Maple Bay.

*(As the curtain rises, dogs bark and voices are heard. Tang Chia-chu, Tseng Pa, the bailiff and others enter.)*

**Chia-chu (to the bailiff):** Blast it! Where are Chao Hai-shan's men? Didn't you say they were here just now?

**Bailiff:** Yes, they were. But they've suddenly gone.

**Chia-chu:** Idiot! *(Boxes the bailiff's ear.)* They've run away with their guns. Pass on my orders! All those connected with the peasant association must be killed. Their houses must be burnt down. Even the stones on the mountains must be smashed up.

**Enemy Soldier A:** Yes, sir. *(Turns back.)* Report! What if we can't identify the members of the peasant association?

**Chia-chu:** Then kill the lot! Better kill three thousand wrongly rather than let a single one escape!

**Enemy Soldier A:** Yes, sir! *(Exit.)*

**Chia-chu:** Maple Bay, I'm back again!

*(Enemy Soldier B enters.)*

**Enemy Soldier B:** Report! We haven't found any peasant guards hereabouts.

(Shots are heard in the distance. Tang Chia-chu raises his binoculars to watch.)

**Chia-chu:** They are running towards Tunghsiang Village. (To Tseng Pa) Give chase!

(Exit Tang Chia-chu with his men. Shortly, Chao Hai-shan enters with peasant guards.)

**Chao:** Keep a watch on the valley.

(Silence. Chirping of cicadas.)

**Young Ox:** The enemy is moving into the valley.

**Chao:** Good!

(Mother Chao and Grandad Ho enter.)

**Grandad Ho:** Hai-shan, why did you let Tang Chia-chu get away?

**Chao:** Grandad, we let them get away so that presently we can shut the dogs up to beat them.

**Grandad Ho:** Shut the dogs up to beat them?

**Chao:** Look, what's that place over there?

**Grandad Ho:** Tunghsiang Village.

**Chao:** To go to Tunghsiang, you have to pass through the valley. There are high cliffs on both sides with only a small path between. We've arranged with the Tunghsiang comrades that once Tang Chia-chu is in the valley we'll attack him from both ends.

**Grandad Ho:** Then at least we'll flay him even if we don't kill him. Fine! Let's go back, aunty. (He leaves with Mother Chao.)

**Chao:** Comrades, on April 12 Chiang Kai-shek betrayed the revolution\* and on May 21 Hsu Keh-hsiang staged a counter-revolutionary coup.\*\* So many workers and peasants were killed, their blood dyed the Huangpu and Hsiang Rivers red. Now the enemy is right in front of us. To avenge our dead comrades and de-

\*This was in 1927, when Chiang Kai-shek conspired with the imperialist and feudal forces to massacre Communists and other progressives.

\*\*In Changsha that same year. Hsu Keh-hsiang was a Kuomintang army commander.

fend the political power of our peasant association, the time has come to wipe out the enemy.

(All cheer.)

**Young Ox:** Brother Hai-shan, Tang Chia-chu and his troops have all entered the valley.

**Lien:** Open fire, Chairman Chao.

**Young Ox:** We can't take action before Tunghsiang opens fire.

(Silence. Chirping of cicadas.)

**Young Ox:** What's happened at Tunghsiang? Why haven't they started firing yet?

**Cheng:** Can something have gone wrong?

**All:** Let's start.

**Chao:** Not until we're clear about the situation.

**Young Ox:** Here comes Brother Wang-chun with a man behind him.

(Enter Miao Wang-chun.)

**Miao:** It's too late. Tang Chia-chu's troops have swaggered through the valley.

**All:** What?

**Chao:** What happened?

**Miao:** The Tunghsiang comrades and I had just deployed our men in readiness when Department Head Hu hurried up from the county town and called the whole thing off. . . .

(Enter Hu Szu-yu.)

**Hu:** That's right, you mustn't fight.

**Chao:** Why not?

**Hu (panting):** Early this morning I received this order from above: "To avoid friction, you must wait quietly for the national government to solve the Hunan question. . . ."

**All:** What?

**Hu:** Listen: "The peasant armed forces are not to come into conflict with the Kuomintang. The peasant guards must be disbanded and their weapons handed over to the Kuomintang."



**Chao:** Handed over to the Kuomintang? Isn't that to surrender?

**Hsia:** If we lose our weapons we'll lose our heads too, won't we?

**Lien:** Department Head Hu, if we hand in our weapons, how can we take revenge?

**Young Ox:** How can we make revolution without guns?

*(Gunfire is heard in the distance.)*

**Hsia:** We can't watch our Tunghsiang comrades being killed. Come on, comrades, to Tunghsiang! Let's fight it out!

*(Old Chang enters.)*

**Old Chang:** Comrade Hai-shan, you can't fight now. This order threw us at Tunghsiang into confusion. Some of our men have been killed. . . . *(Staggering from his wounds, he is helped out by Mrs. Hsia and others.)*

**Chao:** See that, Department Head Hu?

**All:** Have you seen that?

**Hu:** Comrades, Tunghsiang suffered unnecessary losses just because they didn't carry out the order well. The Wuhan workers'

pickets have already handed in their guns. I hope you will understand and carry out this order from the Central Committee.

**Chao:** Who issued this order?

**All:** Yes, who?

**Hu:** Our Party's general secretary Chen Tu-hsiu.\*

*(Silence. Chao Hai-shan consults Cheng San and Miao Wang-chun.)*

**Hu:** You must carry out this order too now. *(Approaches the guards.)* Come on, hand in your guns. *(He snatches a gun from a guard who starts to weep. Then he goes up to Hsia Chang-keng.)* Hand over your gun. This is an order!

**Hsia:** No! With the gun I'm my own master. If I turn it in I'll become a beast of burden again. I can't do it, Hai-shan.

**Chao** *(wipes the dust from the gun and hands it back to Hsia):* Hold it tight!

**Hsia:** Yes, I will.

**Hu:** You're disobeying the orders of General Secretary Chen!

**Chao:** We won't follow any wrong orders.

**Hu:** To whom will you listen then?

**Chao:** To Commissioner Mao.

**All:** Yes, to Commissioner Mao.

**Chao:** Right. It's because we listened to Commissioner Mao, set up the peasant association and took up arms, that we were able to stand up at last. If we follow their instructions today, we'll lose not only our guns but our lives as well. Comrades, to wage revolution, we must be clear whose instructions to follow and what road to take. Do you still remember what Commissioner Mao said?

\*Chen Tu-hsiu (1880-1942), at one time a professor at Peking University, initiated and organized the Chinese Communist Group. In 1921 when the Chinese Communist Party was founded he was elected its general secretary. In the latter stage of the First Revolutionary Civil War, the Rightist thinking in the Party represented by Chen Tu-hsiu developed into capitulationism and abandonment of the proletariat's leadership of the armed forces, thus causing the defeat of the great revolution. Chen Tu-hsiu was dismissed from his post as general secretary in 1927 and expelled from the Party in 1929.

**Miao:** "Overthrow the armed forces of the landlords and establish those of the peasants."

**Cheng:** "Anyone who is scared at the sight of the spear corps is indeed a weakling."

**Chao:** Let those weaklings tremble in their shoes!

**Guard B** (*takes up his gun*): If anyone asks me to hand this over again, (*cocking his gun*) I'll let the gun answer him.

**Chao:** Uncle Cheng, Brother Wang-chun, the present situation is very grave. The Party branch committee must make a decision at once. But first of all we must find the county Party committee to hear what directives have come from Commissioner Mao.

**Hu:** The county Party committee left the county town at midnight yesterday and has gone underground. How are you going to find it?

**Cheng:** Even if each step means treading on swords, I'll find it. Hai-shan, give this task to me.

**Chao:** It's very dangerous. Take good care on the way, uncle.

**Cheng:** Don't worry. (*About to leave.*)

**Chao:** Uncle Cheng. (*Hands Cheng San a hand-grenade.*) We'll lead our guards into the mountains and wait for you on Red Maple Ridge.

(*Cheng San leaves. Gunshots are heard.*)

(*Guard C enters.*)

**Guard C:** Chairman Chao, Tang Chia-chu and his men are coming back from Tunghsiang.

**All:** Let's go and attack them!

**Chao:** No. We aren't up to it without help from Tunghsiang. Get ready to withdraw. Young Ox and Ku-yu, you stay here with some comrades to cover us.

**Young Ox:** Yes.

**Hsia:** I'll stay.

**Chao:** All right. Brother Wang-chun, lead our force up the mountain. Once you reach a safe place, sound your horn.

**Hu:** No, they mustn't leave, I'll go straight to Tang Chia-chu to clear up this misunderstanding. (*As he turns to leave, two bullets flash by him. He panics.*)

**Miao:** Bullets don't have eyes. You'd better leave quickly, Department Head Hu.

(*Hu Szu-yu follows the withdrawing peasant guards.*)

(*Chao Hai-shan, Young Ox, Hsia Chang-keng and others choose the best terrain, ready to fight.*)

(*Gunfire draws near. Chao and the others start firing.*)

(*An enemy soldier shouts: "Chao Hai-shan, you can't escape now." Before his voice dies away, Chao fires at him. Groaning is heard.*)

(*Directed by Tang Chia-chu, enemy soldiers charge at Chao Hai-shan and his comrades who fight hand to hand with them, using bayonets, spears and swords.*)

(*As Hsia Chang-keng raises a large stone to throw it at an enemy soldier charging towards him, another enemy fires at him unnoticed by Chao and the others. Suppressing the pain of his wound, Hsia kills the enemy with the stone, while Chao and the rest beat back the other attackers. Turning round, Chao sees Hsia binding his wound and runs to his side to help him.*)

(*The enemy raise a great shout, preparing to charge again, when a horn blows in the distance.*)

**Chao:** Withdraw!

(*Young Ox carries Hsia Chang-keng on his back and withdraws with the others from the battlefield.*)

(*A moment later, Cheng San and Mother Chao enter from the opposite direction.*)

**Cheng:** It looks as if we're surrounded and can't get out, aunty.

**Mother Chao:** You try skirting around them this way. I'll deal with them.

(*Just as Cheng San is about to leave, Tang Chia-chu and his men rush on from both sides.*)

**Chia-chu:** So it's the mother of Chairman Chao, and committeeman Cheng San! Well, your committee is no longer in power. Where are the members of your peasant association?

**Cheng:** Shut your eyes and there are none to be seen. Open your eyes and they are everywhere.

**Chia-chu:** Where are the guns?

**Cheng:** In the hands of the peasant guards!

**Chia-chu:** Hand over your guns. This is the order of your general secretary.

**Cheng:** I don't know him.

**Chia-chu:** Then, in the name of the national government, I order you to hand over your guns.

**Cheng:** To hell with your government! Don't you understand? If we hand over our guns to you, that big seal of mine becomes useless.

**Chia-chu:** Then, hand over your seal too.

**Cheng:** Never! If I did that, how could I set the seal to your death warrant?

*(Tang Chia-chu draws his pistol. Mother Chao steps forward to protect Cheng San.)*

**Chia-chu:** Want to die? Not so easy. Take them to the Tang Family Mansion.

**Enemy Soldiers:** Get going!

**Mother Chao:** Come on, Uncle Cheng.

**Cheng:** I . . .

**Mother Chao** *(abruptly turns and shouts):* Here, quick, Hai-shan!

*(The enemy soldiers are thrown into a panic.)*

**Chia-chu:** Where is he?

**Cheng:** Here!

*(He pulls out a hand-grenade and throws it at the enemy, killing several soldiers and wounding Tang in the left eye. Mother Chao pushes Cheng away. He jumps over the cliff. Tang Chia-chu wants to give chase but is stopped by Mother Chao. Tang raises his pistol but collapses before he can pull the trigger.)*

*(Mother Chao bursts out laughing.)*

*(Curtain)*



## SCENE SEVEN

Autumn 1927 on Red Maple Ridge. A camp fire burns in a small clearing deep in the forest. To one side is a hastily erected shed.

*(The curtain rises on Hsia Chang-keng, his wound unhealed, cleaning his gun by the shed. Hu Szu-yu reclines against a boulder. Sister Lien calls offstage: "Comrades, come and eat.")*

**Hsia:** Department Head Hu, time for food!

**Hu:** Food? We've all become grass-eaters. How long can we hold out on boiled herbs?

**Hsia:** You think we're done for?

**Hu:** Yes, all hope's gone. So why hold on to our guns and drag us up here where we'll soon be starved out? Whatever for?

**Hsia:** Suppose you tell me what for.

**Hu:** To gain military power!

**Hsia:** Military power? Who wants that?

**Hu:** Chao Hai-shan.

**Hsia:** That's enough. Say another word against Hai-shan and you'll get what's coming to you.

**Hu:** Impossible to talk to you. Impossible!

*(Hu dashes off into the forest. Sister Lien, Miao Wang-chun and Mrs. Hsia come on. Hsia is panting with indignation.)*

**Lien:** Brother Chang-keng, what's come over you? *(Hands him a bowl of boiled herbs.)*

**Hsia** *(still too angry to speak):* . . . . .

**Lien** *(feels his forehead):* Brother Chang-keng, how're you feeling today?

**Hsia:** All right. Better.

*(Miao unbuttons Hsia's tunic and frowns at the sight of his wound. Mrs. Hsia starts weeping.)*

**Hsia:** There's nothing to cry about. Even in ordinary times, who doesn't fall ill or get knocked up sometimes? Now we're making revolution which is a battle to the death. Remember, we revolutionaries shed blood not tears!

**Miao:** Can't we get some salt to clean this wound?

*(Lien shakes her head.)*

**Hsia:** Where's Hai-shan?

**Miao:** Out scouting for a place where we can break through the encirclement.

**Hsia:** Mind you don't tell him; he's worried enough already.

*(Miao turns away to hide his emotion. Sister Lien puts her arms around Mrs. Hsia.)*

**Hsia:** Did you hear? *(Sister Lien nods.)* You're not to tell Hai-shan.

**Mrs. Hsia:** Hai-shan knows everything. He means to find some herbal medicine for you. . . .

**Hsia:** Ah. . . . What a man!

*(From not far away comes the sound of gonging and the bailiff calling: "Where are you, peasant guards?" Some peasant guards and Hu come on. In a few minutes, Ku-yu appears with the bailiff in tow.)*

**Young Ox:** What've you come here for, bailiff?

**Bailiff:** To deliver a letter. *(Produces a letter from his pocket. Hu quickly takes it.)*

*(Miao motions to the others to take the bailiff away.)*

**Hu:** Tang Chia-chu says we must have exhausted our food and ammunition since we came up here. He also says that the Party organization no longer exists down there, so it's quite pointless for us to go on resisting. . . .

**Lien:** Tell him to try coming up here!

**Ku-yu:** Rubbish!

**Man:** What else does he say?

*(Hu scans the letter again and hands it to Miao.)*

**Miao** *(reading):* "If you will lay down your arms, Mr. Chao can be appointed deputy commander of the county security forces and Mr. Hu can take part in the government as a well-known personage. The others too can all be settled in comfortable jobs. . . ."

**Young Ox:** Bah, I'm not having any of this soft soap.

**Lien:** He's barking up the wrong tree.

**Hu:** Comrade Wang-chun, there are a few points we might consider.

**Miao:** No, absolutely none.

**Hu:** Dragging on like this, we're just waiting to be killed.

**Miao:** Hai-shan has sent men down to rouse the masses. Uncle Cheng San is looking for the Party organization. All this is to find a way out.

**Hu:** Down below the White terror reigns everywhere. The Party must have been wiped out. Otherwise, why is there no news of Cheng San since he left? Eh?

*(Man the Beard whispers something to Li Ching-yun.)*

**Hu:** Comrades, we must work for the revolution by starting afresh — by peaceful means. *(Points to Hsia.)* People have given their lives and blood for nothing. All this shows that revolution through violence is a dead-end.

**Hsia** *(stands up in anger):* Hu Szu-yu, it's true I've lost some blood. For the revolution I don't mind shedding my last drop of blood.

But you people have sold out the revolution. We've got to settle this score with you. *(He falls down in a faint.)*

**All:** Brother Hsia. . . .

**Hsia** *(coming to)*: Quick, bring Hai-shan back here.

*(The others help him to sit down. Miao signs to Guard A to go and find Chao.)*

**Hu:** No, I cannot keep silent. I'm responsible for the life of every comrade. Today it may be Hsia, tomorrow who knows whom. See, they say in the letter that if we don't accept their conditions at once they'll close in on the mountain. Then we'll all be finished.

**Man** *(walks up to Miao)*: I want to hand over my gun to our own people. I . . . I'll go back to till the land. . . .

*(Li Ching-yun puts down his spear against a tree trunk.)*

**Ku-yu** *(pointing to Hu and Man)*: Cowards, both of you. Why, if we're to die, we must take a whack at them first. Let's fight, go down and fight!

**Guards C and D:** Right, fight!

**Young Ox:** No, we mustn't.

**Ku-yu:** Why not?

**Young Ox:** Tang Chia-chu has more men and guns than we. We can't fight them head-on.

**Ku-yu:** He may have guns but so have we. Those not afraid to die follow me!

*(Some of the guards respond: "Let's go!" Miao and Young Ox try to stop them, but it is too late. However, after a few steps Ku-yu and the others halt. Guard A comes on with Chao Hai-shan followed by Grandad Ho and two peasants carrying grain.)*

**Chao:** Where're you going? Out to fight to the death?

**Ku-yu** *(mumbling)*: Until we're all dead and done for.

**Chao:** We can't throw away our lives like that. The revolution's not done for. Down on the plains, peasant associations have been set up again underground. In Tunghsiang they've got the

peasant guards going once more. Uncle Cheng San has gone to Nanhsiang to find the Party committee. Li Ching-yun!

**Li** *(quickly takes up his spear and stands at attention)*: Here!

**Chao:** You've laid down your weapon and want to go downhill. Look at them! *(Points to the two peasants.)* They've come up here to take up arms.

**Li:** I've been muddle-headed, Chairman Chao. *(Sobs.)*

**Chao** *(points at the sacks of grain)*: The villagers saved this grain mouthful by mouthful, to send up here to you. And for what?

**Grandad Ho** *(produces a pair of shoes which he gives to Man)*: Listen, Beard, your wife wants me to tell you that though life is bitterly hard down there as long as our peasant guards hold out here they have hope.

**Man** *(accepting the shoes)*: I've been a fool!

*(Hu turns to go.)*

**Chao:** Hu Szu-yu, you and Tang Chia-chu certainly know how to pick the right time.

**Hu:** Why put me on a par with Tang Chia-chu?

**Chao:** Your purpose is the same: to sabotage the peasants' armed forces.

**Hu:** You keep such a tight hold on our men and guns and have such blind faith in arms, I see only one explanation. . . .

**Chao:** Go on, I'm all ears.

**Hu:** All you want is military power.

**All:** What's that you're saying?

**Hu:** This is easy. They've promised you the post of deputy brigade leader of the county security forces. . . .

**Miao:** For shame! Chao Hai-shan has often risked his life and fought bravely on the battlefield. For what reason?

**Young Ox:** My uncle Chao was killed under the maple tree. And for what reason?

**Grandad Ho:** Aunt Chao. . . .

**Chao:** Please, grandad. . . .

**Grandad Ho:** No, I must say it. Aunt Chao has been seized and imprisoned in the Tang Family Mansion all because she tried to

save Uncle Cheng San. We don't know whether she's dead or alive. . . .

**Lien:** Aunt Chao, oh. . . .

**Grandad Ho:** And why was that?

**Lien (to Hu):** You're the coward who wants to be an official and have an easy life. Yet you accuse others of fighting for military power.

**Chao:** Yes, we are fighting for military power, for military power for the proletariat. But they want that power for the bourgeoisie.

**Hu:** That's right. We're now in the phase of the bourgeois democratic revolution so we must recognize the leadership of the bourgeoisie, that naturally includes military power.

**Chao:** I see. So you're not against all violence but want the bourgeoisie alone to have the right to use violence.

**Miao:** That means acknowledging the right of the bourgeoisie to slaughter peasants and workers.

**Chao:** The bourgeoisie's betrayal once again proves that the revolution must be led by the proletariat and the proletariat must fight for military power. Whoever denies this is really selling out and betraying revolutionary principles.

**Hu:** All right, all right. . . . (*Turns and walks away.*)

**Mrs. Hsia:** Hai-shan, Chang-keng's. . . .

(*Chao and the others crowd round Hsia who is dying.*)

**Chao:** Brother Chang-keng, Brother Chang-keng. . . .

**Hsia (comes to):** Hai-shan. . . .

**Chao:** The villagers have brought us grain and salt. Yes, and we have some medicinal herbs here. . . .

**Hsia:** Where's my gun?

(*Mrs. Hsia hands him the gun.*)

**Hsia:** Hai-shan. . . let Ching-yun have my gun when I'm gone. . . .

(*He quietly closes his eyes.*)

**Chao:** Brother Chang-keng!

**Mrs. Hsia:** Chang-keng!

**Li (sobbing):** Brother Chang-keng!

(*There is a sudden downpour. They cover Hsia with a red flag printed with a ploughshare and carry his body off.*)

(*Chao follows the procession for some distance then returns. He gazes at the gun left by Hsia.*)

**Chao:** Brother Chang-keng, though you won't see the victory of the revolution, you've found the road to victory. Yesterday, you were a slave subject to the will of others but today you've become a soldier fighting for the truth. It is Commissioner Mao who has guided you and me and thousands upon thousands of former prisoners of starvation to the road of revolution. (*Sound of wind and rain*) At this critical moment in the revolution, we are like the oarsmen or tow-men of a boat struggling against the tide at the dead of night in a storm. We await the orders of our helmsman. Dear Commissioner Mao, at this moment how we long to return to the pit in Anyuan and once again listen to your brilliant teachings. We long to go back to our classroom in the peasant movement institute to hear your friendly instructions.

(*The wind gradually dies down and the rain stops. People come back one by one. They sit round Chao. Someone relights the camp fire which has gone out.*)

**Young Ox (softly):** Brother Hai-shan, what are you thinking?

**Chao:** I'm thinking of Commissioner Mao.

**Lien:** He must be working hard and racking his brains for us all.

**Chao:** That's true. He thinks of us day and night. I remember in the days of the peasant movement institute I was on sentry duty one night. It was two in the morning when I came off duty, but the light was still on in the eastern wing where Commissioner Mao lived. When I asked the officer on duty why he didn't turn in, the officer told me he was reading the material we'd written. I stood there with my gun under the kapok tree in the yard and watched that light which stayed on all night right up to the reveille.

**Lien:** What material was that he was reading?

**Chao:** Commissioner Mao gave us peasant students from different parts of the country a questionnaire. He wanted us to give him

a detailed account of how the landlords in our parts oppressed and exploited the peasants.

**Lien:** Did you write an account too?

**Chao:** Oh yes! (*To Man*) I described, among other things, how a landlord who wanted to seize a plot of land belonging to a peasant couple lodged an accusation against them in the county yamen which cost the couple their lives. They left a little orphan boy.

**Man:** Ah, so Commissioner Mao knows about that too.

**Chao:** He used these materials in his investigations and wrote articles and textbooks for us. He not only knew all about our privations and sufferings, he showed us the way out too.

**Miao:** That's the way we've been taking this past year in Maple Bay, the road pointed out for us by Commissioner Mao.

**Chao:** That's it. Although White terror still reigns everywhere, so long as we follow this road we will turn the whole of Hunan red, turn the whole of China red!

(*Cheng San comes on.*)

**Cheng:** Comrades!

**All:** Uncle!

**Cheng:** Hai-shan, Wang-chun, Young Ox, Sister Lien. . . . You're all here and all with weapons in your hands. That's fine!

**Chao:** Where've you come from, Uncle Cheng San?

**Cheng:** From the county Party committee. . . . I found them at Nansiang. Here's a letter from them.

**Chao** (*reads the letter*): Good!

**All:** What's good? What does the letter say?

(*Chao raises one hand and Cheng San signs to them not to interrupt him.*)  
(*From offstage comes the sound of quarrelling. Li Ching-yun and Hu Szu-yu come on.*)

**Li:** Chairman Chao, he wants to go down and negotiate with Tang Chia-chu.

**All:** What?

**Hu:** On behalf of the Party, I'm going to implement General Secretary Chen's proposals.

**Chao:** You do not represent the Party. At the August 7 Conference\* convened by the Party Central Committee, Commissioner Mao thoroughly criticized Chen's capitulationist line. Chen Tu-hsiu has been removed from his post.

**Hu:** Impossible, impossible!

**Chao:** The county Party committee want you to go back at once. They will look into your case. Brother Miao, take him to the Party committee after dark.

**Hu:** All right. (*He goes off followed by Li.*)

**All:** What does the Party committee say in the letter?

**Chao:** Comrades, Commissioner Mao has come back to Hunan!

**All:** What does Commissioner Mao say?

**Chao:** Comrades, he says, "**Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun.**"

**All:** "**Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun!**"

**Chao:** Commissioner Mao, the further we go along this road, the clearer things become. The Chinese revolution just cannot do without you!

(*All cheer: "Long live Commissioner Mao!"*)

**Cheng:** Another thing. In accordance with the spirit of the August 7 Conference, the provincial Party committee has decided to organize autumn harvest uprisings along the borders of Hunan and Kiangsi.

**Chao:** Fight the Kuomintang! Fight Chiang Kai-shek!

**Cheng:** Comrades, Commissioner Mao has come back to Hunan this time to lead the autumn harvest uprisings himself.

**Miao:** What is our task, Uncle Cheng?

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\*On August 7, 1927 the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party held an emergency meeting which corrected the capitulationist line of Chen Tu-hsiu, removed him from the leadership and elected a provisional Political Bureau of the Central Committee. It called on the whole Party and the masses to continue the revolutionary struggle.

**Cheng:** The county Party committee consider Maple Bay a very important place. We are asked, before dawn tomorrow, to coordinate with the peasant guards of Tunghsiung to wipe out Tang Chia-chu — kick aside this pile of cow's dung.

**Chao:** What about it, comrades?

**All:** We'll fight.

**Chao:** Let's send the bailiff back with a letter to bring the scoundrel out. Then we can raid and capture the brigands' den.

**All:** Good.

*(Curtain)*



## EPILOGUE

Dawn the next morning, at the entrance to Maple Bay. The same set up as in Scene Six.

*(When the curtain rises, Tang Chia-chu and Tseng Pa are directing their men as they sweep across the stage. The bailiff stands to one side.)*

**Chia-chu:** Pass on my orders to halt!

**Tseng:** Yes, sir. Halt! What's the matter, young master?

**Chia-chu:** Chao Hai-shan is as crafty as a fox. We mustn't charge blindly ahead.

**Bailiff:** Young master, this is Chao's trick to get away.

**Chia-chu:** Suppose he attacks the village now that we've left it?

**Bailiff:** If that was his plan, would he announce it beforehand in his letter?

**Tseng:** If he attacks Maple Bay, he'll be like an egg trying to crush a stone.

**Chia-chu** *(thoughtfully takes out the letter to read it again)*: "When the cock crows at dawn, our peasant guards will come down. We'll fight you to the death to avenge our comrades."

*(Sound of gunfire in the distance.)*

**Tseng:** Listen, our men in front have opened fire.

**Chia-chu:** The whole company is to advance double-quick to Red Maple Ridge.

*(They have barely started when an explosion sounds near by.)*

**Chia-chu:** What's happened?

*(Enemy Soldier A comes on.)*

**Soldier A:** Report! The peasant guards have taken our Tang Family Mansion.

**Chia-chu:** What! Chao Hai-shan's double-crossed me. Hell! This was no trick to get away but a ruse to make us leave our base. Turn back. We must recover our Tang Family Mansion.

*(They have just started back when volleys of shots ring out.)*

**Chia-chu:** This way, this way! Head for Tunghsiang.

*(As Tang Chia-chu turns round, rifles sound again. In the distance torches form a long fiery dragon stretching across the mountain and battle cries are heard. Tang Chia-chu and his men try to escape through a gap in the hills. Chao comes on and shoots. The enemy rush off in the opposite direction.)*

**Chao:** Gunners, fire! Comrades, charge!

*(Guards and villagers race across the stage.)*

*(Young Ox and enemy soldiers grapple. Man grapples with an enemy soldier. Sister Lien marches prisoners across the stage.)*

*(Tang Chia-chu, trying to escape, dashes on. There are shouts of "Catch him! Catch Tang Chia-chu!" He turns and is confronted by Chao Hai-shan.)*

**Chao:** Lay down your arms!

*(Tang Chia-chu turns to escape and is shot by Chao. More guards fire at him and he falls dead.)*

*(Cheng San comes on.)*

**Cheng:** Bah, I haven't had time to use my chop and he's already finished.

*(Mother Chao and Sister Lien come on.)*

**Mother Chao:** Hai-shan!

**Chao:** Mum! We've come out victorious.

*(The villagers and Miao come on.)*

**Miao:** Comrade Hai-shan, the Party committee has ordered us to join the county's insurgent brigade and take part in the autumn harvest uprising. Commissioner Mao is leading.

**Chao:** Comrades, let us follow Commissioner Mao and join in the autumn harvest uprising.

**All:** Long live Commissioner Mao! Long live the Chinese Communist Party! A long, long life to Commissioner Mao!

*(The rosy light of dawn spreads across the sky. Red flags flutter like a turbulent sea.)*

*(Final curtain)*

*Illustrated by Chen Yu-hsien*



*Chu Teh*

## To My Elders in Szechuan\*

We're resting our cavalry horses in the Taihang Mountains  
Where early November snows have whitened the landscape.  
Every night, wearing their summer uniforms,  
Our men swoop down to attack the Japanese invaders.

*1939*

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\*Szechuan was Comrade Chu Teh's home province.



## Leaving the Taihang Mountains

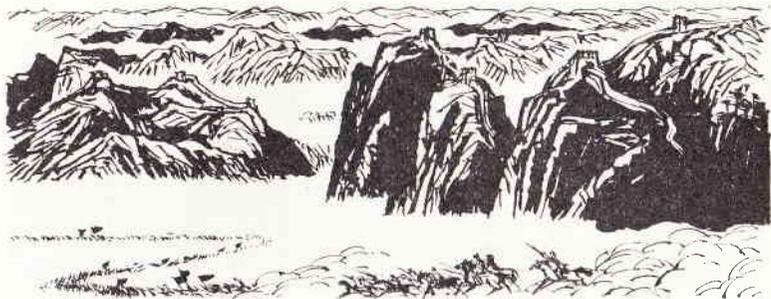
I passed through Loyang in May 1940 on my way to negotiate  
with the Kuomintang in Chungking. Then I had to return  
to Yen-an. The war of resistance had reached a critical point,  
yet the civil war had begun again and people throughout the  
country were worried.\*

Where the mountain range ends, cliffs stand like ramparts;  
Then we see the Yellow River, that formidable barrier,  
Where on both banks the flames of war are raging;  
I hope I'll have good news for our comrades when I return.

*May 1940*

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\*During the War of Resistance Against Japan, between December 1939 and March 1940 Chiang Kai-shek's forces started attacking our Shensi-Kansu-Ning-sia Border Region and our base in the Taihang Mountains. This anti-Communist onslaught was successfully repulsed.



## To a Friend

We shall rely on our gallant men to recover north China,  
Since our brave fighters stream on like wind-driven clouds.  
We're confident we can beat the invaders back with our arms,  
So that all over our land our red flag will fly.

1941

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We Sing of Chairman Hua (wood-  
block print) by Chiang T'ieb-feng

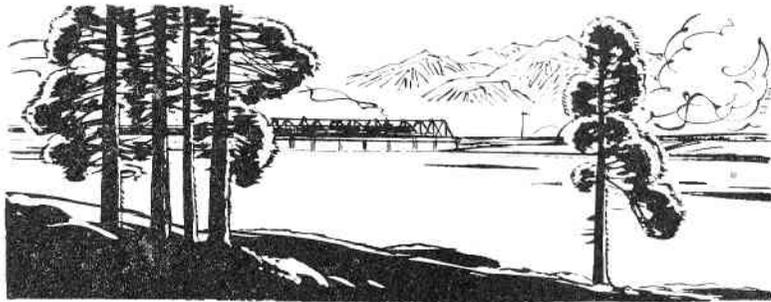




## To Our Generals Fighting in the South

Taking the offensive our generals perform miraculous feats,  
And certain victory lies within our hands.  
While our mighty armies speed on more swiftly than the autumn  
wind,  
Full of fear the Kuomintang bandits scatter like fallen leaves.  
Their despotic rule is fast sinking into darkness,  
While our red banners are unfurled in all liberated areas.  
Soon our whole land will be as fair as a fine tapestry,  
And our millions become masters of their own destiny.

*November 1947*



## Passing Tumen River in a Train

Once more the American imperialists have launched an aggressive war in Asia,  
On the offensive they have already reached the Yalu River;  
So, to uphold justice, we must give aid to Korea;  
Our forces, a million strong, have already recaptured Kaisong.

*September 1952*



## Celebrating Army Day\*

Right after the Nanchang Uprising our new army was born;  
Workers and peasants were happy and proud of their own fighters.  
We hold the banner of revolution in our hands,  
In the end victory will belong to the people.

*July 1957*

\*In April 1927 Chiang Kai-shek started a counter-revolutionary coup. On the first of August of the same year, under the leadership of Chou En-lai, Chu Teh, Liu Po-cheng, Ho Lung and Yeh Ting, there was an armed uprising in Nanchang, Kiangsi Province. The anniversary of this day is now celebrated as Army Day.



## Visiting Huahsi\*

The warm spring breeze brings blossoming flowers  
Beside the small stream as it wanders along,  
Through a new park laid out by the commune,  
To welcome the return of the Long Marchers.

*February 29, 1960*

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\*Huahsi is a scenic spot in the south suburb of Kweiyang in Kweichow Province which Comrade Chu Teh passed through during the Long March.



## Climbing the East Hill

I climb to the bright painted pavilion on the crest of the hill;  
Before me lie all the sights of spring within the city walls.  
On all sides green hills like undulating waves roll on,  
While towards the east the green brook of Huahsi meanders.

*March 2, 1960*



*Yeh Chien-ying*

## Gazing from Afar

Written on Pestle Island off Talien Harbour in the autumn of 1965

Time passes, and the suffering people yearn  
For their old leader\* long since dead;  
Gone now the red flag  
Banished from the land,  
While carrion crows circle  
Lured by the blighted tree,\*\*

---

\*Meaning the people in the Soviet Union are longing for Lenin.

\*\*Meaning the Soviet revisionists are enamoured of the moribund capitalist system of the West.

Like wild geese in hasty flight  
Pursuing the same path.  
But at the Equator, men with bows and arrows  
Dare to fight the fiercest tiger.  
Among the palms, men armed with kris  
Rise to slay the dragon.\*  
Like Liu Piao and his son,  
These two are swine and dogs.\*\*  
How can this be changed?  
Only by revolution!



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\*People in the third world, in Africa and southeast Asia, are rising against the two super-powers.

\*\*The author is comparing Khrushchov and Brezhnev to Liu Piao and his son, warlords of the Three Kingdoms Period (220-280 A.D.) who were ridiculed for their bad rule.



## Revisiting Yen-an

Twelve years ago I left Yen-an,  
How different now from in those days!  
At Wangchiaping and Yangchialing  
I seek for traces of the past.

There in an old cave-home, on an old platform  
Still debris from a Kuomintang raid,\*  
Be proud of our northern Shensi brothers.  
They overcame all difficulties in those hard times.

Peasants welcome me with warmth.  
An old friend, I share their dates and pumpkins.  
Talking of their work this year in the commune,  
How eager they are to make the Great Leap Forward!

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\*Referring to the attack on Yen-an by Hu Tsung-nan's Kuomintang troops in March 1947.



## A Visit to the Seven-Stars Cove\*

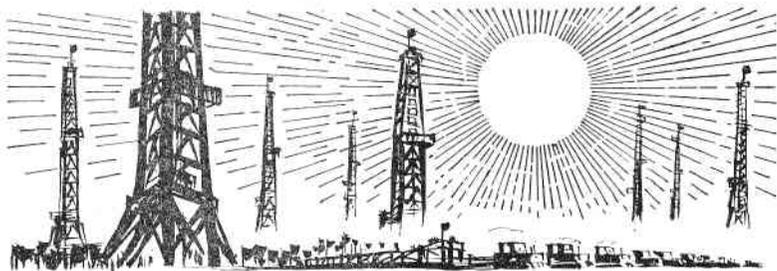
Borrow a pool of water from the West Lake,\*\*  
Then pluck seven hills from Yangshuo,\*\*\*,  
Add weeping willows to adorn a bank;  
Here is a picture that will last for ever.

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\*A scenic spot in Chaoching County, Kwangtung Province.

\*\*A scenic spot in Hangchow.

\*\*\*A scenic spot near Kweilin.



## The Taching Oilfield

This land, for countless years so deep in slumber,  
Is transformed by our people's skill into an oilfield.  
From thirteen directions our workers came to struggle;  
I look forward to their return with songs of triumph.

---

*Gazing from Afar* in Chairman Mao's handwriting

遠望  
在大連捧檣島  
憂患元元憶折翁，  
紅旗飄渺沒遙空。  
青鴉三匝迷枯樹，  
回雁兼程溯舊踪。

赤道雕弓射野鹿  
椰林匕首敵屠龍。  
景升父子皆豚犬，  
旋轉還憑革命功。

十月十六日光明日報

## Rereading “Gazing from Afar” Steels Our Determination

On the occasion of the 72nd birthday of our great leader and teacher Chairman Mao towards the end of December 1965, we went together to see him. To educate us and encourage us to make a careful study of Marxism-Leninism and learn from the anti-revisionist spirit of the older generation of revolutionaries, he exuberantly copied out for us the poem *Gazing from Afar*. We could see how much Chairman Mao loved this poem from the fact that he not only knew it by heart but also remembered the date of its publication and the newspaper in which it had been published.

*Gazing from Afar* was written by Vice-Chairman Yeh Chien-ying. In October 1964 Brezhnev staged the farce of seizing political power from the revisionist ringleader Khrushchov. Inheriting Khrushchov's mantle, Brezhnev betrayed Marxism-Leninism and carried out a com-

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Mao An-ching is Chairman Mao's second son and Shao Hua is his wife.

pletely revisionist line; so in the autumn of 1965, Vice-Chairman Yeh Chien-ying viewing the world's revolutionary situation from the standpoint of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought wrote this impassioned anti-revisionist poem on Pestle Island off Talien. It was published on October 16, 1965 in the *Guangming Ribao*.

Following our father's instructions, we read this inspiring poem repeatedly and learned a great deal from it. And studying it again today gives us more strength to carry out Chairman Mao's behests, rally closely around the Party Central Committee headed by Chairman Hua, expose and criticize the "gang of four" and carry through to the end the great struggle to combat and prevent revisionism.

This magnificent poem is profoundly significant. It tells us that the Soviet people who have fallen on evil days treasure the memory of the great revolutionary teacher Lenin. The Soviet revisionist renegade clique has long ago abandoned the red flag of Marxism-Leninism. Entranced by western capitalism which is as moribund as a "blighted tree", Khrushchov, Brezhnev and their like have turned their country into a social-imperialist power which cruelly exploits and oppresses the Soviet people and carries out frenzied aggression and expansion abroad. They have raced backwards along the road of retrogression and restored capitalism in all fields.

At a time when the modern revisionists were frantically restoring capitalism and whipping up a black adverse current, Yeh Chien-ying had the farsightedness and confidence in victory to see that the struggles of the revolutionary people in Africa, Asia and Latin America against imperialism and colonialism were surging forward irresistibly and the tide of revolution was gathering strength. The chieftains of the Soviet revisionist clique are fools of the same kind as Liu Piao and his son. This poem expresses the conviction that the working people in the Soviet Union who are discontented with the revisionist clique's rule will eventually rise in revolution. For we can be confident that the people are the motive force to turn back the adverse tide and impel history forward.

In the present nationwide exposure and criticism of the Wang-

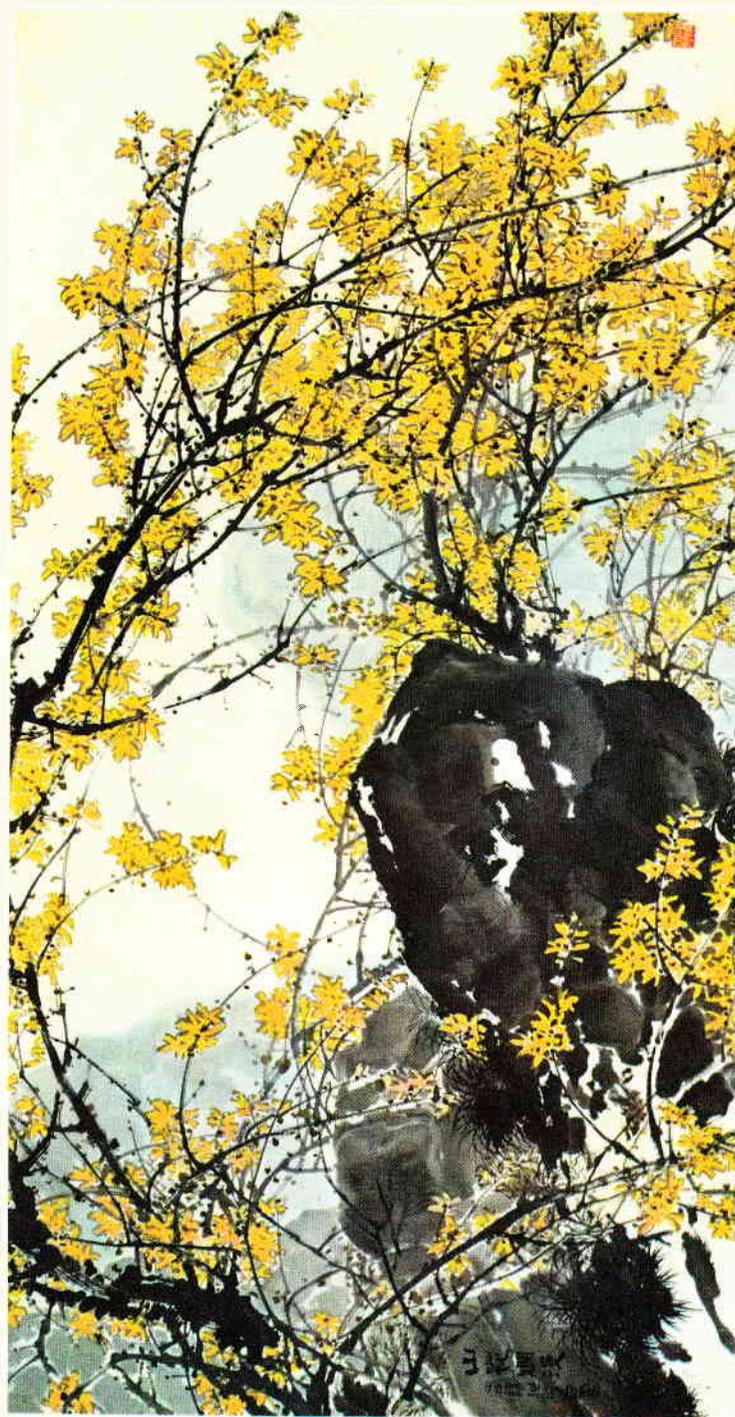
Chang-Chiang-Yao anti-Party clique, studying this poem again will help us to see more clearly the ultra-Right essence of these careerists and conspirators who attempted to usurp Party leadership and state power, push through a counter-revolutionary revisionist line and restore capitalism. During the movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius, the "gang of four" sabotaged Chairman Mao's great strategic plan, extending the targets to make direct attacks on Premier Chou and Vice-Chairman Yeh. In the study of Chairman Mao's theories regarding the dictatorship of the proletariat, they misrepresented Chairman Mao's instruction that revisionism is the main danger and claimed that "the key link is to oppose empiricism", in order to slander as "democrats" and "capitalist-roaders" a large number of proletarian revolutionaries of the older generation who had long followed Chairman Mao in the revolution. They blustered that as "pawns who had crossed over the line", they would "capture the king", rabidly attacking leading comrades who had upheld Chairman Mao's revolutionary line. At the same time they tried to fool young people into forgetting revolutionary history, making out that they were the ones who had led the Chinese revolution. The "gang of four" were counter-revolutionary revisionist agitators. However, the dialectics of history are inexorable. Under the wise leadership of Chairman Hua, the "gang of four" was summarily smashed. They were swept into the garbage heap of history and came to a most ignominious end.

This magnificent anti-revisionist poem shows the thoroughgoing revolutionary spirit of the proletarian revolutionaries of the older generation who are loyal to Chairman Mao. It is a militant poem to oppose Soviet revisionism and a powerful weapon to criticize the "gang of four". As we restudy the poem today, we seem to hear again Chairman Mao's fatherly teachings and see the brilliance of the thoroughgoing revolutionary spirit of those proletarian revolutionaries of the older generation who are holding high Chairman Mao's great banner in combatting and preventing revisionism. We must take them as our example, hold high the great banner of Chairman Mao,

make a serious study of Marxism-Leninism and Mao Tsetung Thought, unite closely around the Party Central Committee headed by Chairman Hua, and thoroughly expose and criticize the "gang of four". Only so can we combat and prevent revisionism and carry through to the end the proletarian revolutionary cause pioneered by Chairman Mao.

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Mountain Flowers in Full Bloom  
(traditional Chinese painting) by Ho  
*Chun-yang* and *Sun Chi-feng*



*Chi Ko*

### About the Play "Maple Bay"

Produced and written by the Hunan Modern Drama Theatre, *Maple Bay* is one of our more successful plays in recent years. Its theme is the ebullient revolutionary movement of Hunan peasants led by the Chinese Communist Party during the First Revolutionary Civil War period (1924-1927).

China was a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society in those unforgettable years of fiery struggle. Imperialist aggression and constant fighting among warlords plunged the Chinese people into dire misery. The founding of the Chinese Communist Party in 1921 brought about tremendous political changes in China. In 1924, influenced by the Chinese Communist Party, Dr. Sun Yat-sen reorganized the Kuomintang under his leadership and established a revolutionary government in Kwangtung on the basis of a united front between the Kuomintang and the Communist Party. In the summer of 1926, the Northern Expeditionary Army, well-known in modern Chinese history, set out to attack the feudal warlords. Influenced by the fine revolutionary situation, the workers and peasants launched vigorous revolution-

ary movements in all parts of the country, one of the most powerful being the peasant movement in the southern provinces with Hunan as its centre. However, the betrayal by the Kuomintang Right wing represented by Chiang Kai-shek and the capitulationist line of the Right opportunists in the Communist Party represented by Chen Tu-hsiu led to the defeat of the great revolution. The Right opportunists in the Communist Party gave up the leadership of the peasant movement and the revolutionary armed forces and surrendered their weapons to the Kuomintang when its Right wing launched a coup.

At this critical juncture our great leader Chairman Mao waged resolute struggles against Chen Tu-hsiu's erroneous line and personally led the famous Autumn Harvest Uprising. The revolutionary base he then established in the Chinggang Mountains started a new phase in the Chinese revolution. It was against this background that the play *Maple Bay* was written.

Describing the course of the peasants' armed struggle led by the Communist Party in Maple Bay, a mountain village in Hunan, the play dramatizes the Chinese people's great anti-imperialist and anti-feudal struggle at that time. It portrays the character of Chao Hai-shan, a rural Party worker and bears out the great truth of Chairman Mao's dictum: **"Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun."**

The drama displays the sharp class struggles in Maple Bay from the beginning. Though appalled by the peasant movement sweeping the province, the reactionary landlord Tang Han-chih tightens up his exploitation and insists on the peasants paying their land rent. He and his son Chia-chu also secretly contact the Right wing of the Kuomintang in order to get hold of guns with which to maintain their reactionary rule. The poor peasants of Maple Bay long to get organized to resist the landlord's cruel oppression and exploitation. But Hu Szu-yu, a Party worker in the county government pushing Chen Tu-hsiu's opportunist line, is so frightened by the peasants' revolt that he forbids them to set up a peasant association on the grounds that Maple Bay is different from other places. It is at this crucial moment of growing class contradictions that Chao

Hai-shan is sent back to Maple Bay, his old home, by the Party after an absence of ten years to take up the leadership of the peasant movement.

The play starts by presenting this specific historical setting, and Chao Hai-shan's experience in life is typical of his time. Ten years before this, Chao was forced to leave home when his father who led the peasants' fight against paying rent was brutally beaten to death under the old maple at the entrance of the village. In search of a revolutionary way out, he joined in the workers' movement at the Anyuan Coal Mine and attended lectures given by Chairman Mao in the Peasant Movement Institute. These experiences helped to shape his revolutionary character. His return sparks off revolt among the Maple Bay peasants. Skilful at teaching and organizing the masses, he quickly makes them understand that they must depend on themselves to change their status and live like human beings instead of beasts of burden. Following Chairman Mao's instructions: **"Overthrow the armed forces of the landlords and establish those of the peasants"**, he leads the villagers in setting up a peasant association and founding the peasant guards. They wage an armed struggle against the landlord class, hold meetings against them and share out their grain.

However, these struggles are cruel and complex owing to the specific conditions of the First Revolutionary Civil War period. Chao has to deal with the vicious die-hard feudal landlord Tang Han-chih as well as his cunning son Chia-chu, a Kuomintang Right-winger who manages to join the Northern Expeditionary Army. Meanwhile, Hu Szu-yu, head of the peasant movement department of the Kuomintang county headquarters who represents Chen Tu-hsiu's erroneous line, constantly tries to sabotage the peasant revolution. The complexity of the class struggle and the struggle between two lines unfolds in dramatic scenes as the conflict grows more acute. And Chao's character develops in the course of the struggle.

The first few scenes present trials of strength between Chao Hai-shan and the Tangs. With political acumen, Chao promptly sees through the enemy's attempt to suppress the peasant forces with counter-revolutionary armed forces. Pretending to go along with them,

he gets rid of the reactionary civil guards bureau. Step by step the drama reveals his high political consciousness in implementing Chairman Mao's revolutionary line, bringing out his ingenuity and courage in his confrontations with the enemy. In his clashes with Hu, the drama shows Chao's adherence to principles and daring to go against the tide in defence of Chairman Mao's revolutionary line.

When the great revolution meets with defeat, Hu is terrified by the Kuomintang White terror. Citing the orders of Chen Tu-hsiu, he urges Chao and the peasant guards to lay down their arms. Chao stands firm in his belief that **"Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun"** and fights against the wrong line. He leads the peasant guards to Red Maple Ridge where they hold out against the landlords. The Communist Party convenes a conference on August 7, 1927 which brings to an end the erroneous leadership of Chen Tu-hsiu. Then the peasant guards at Red Maple Ridge wipe out the reactionary troops of Tang Chia-chu and raising high the banner of armed struggle go to join the Autumn Harvest Uprising led by Chairman Mao. Chao Hai-shan, a typical proletarian hero, gains in stature after tempering in stormy battles.

The play also depicts other peasant characters like Cheng San and Hsia Chang-keng, showing their mental development in the turbulent peasant movement. These characters epitomize the thousands upon thousands of poor peasants in China's countryside during the great revolution of 1927.

Cheng San, a hired hand who has slaved for the landlords all his life has no family of his own. He is kind-hearted, honest and taciturn. His loyalty to the revolution and his steadfastness arise from his class status. When Chao Hai-shan teaches him that the poor must win freedom for themselves, he identifies himself with the revolutionary movement. Revolution gives him joy in living. The playwrights bring out the increasing political consciousness of this hired hand in the scenes showing him accepting, using and protecting the seal of the peasant association. The seal is a token of the peasants' revolutionary power. When he first accepts it, he is not fully prepared to exercise this power, but at Tang Han-chih's trial he uses it fearlessly to pass sentence of death on the despot. Later, on his way to look

for the county Party committee, he is seized by the landlord's son Chia-chu who orders him to hand over his gun. Cheng San's reply is: "If we hand over our guns to you, that big seal of mine becomes useless." Then Chia-chu orders him to hand over his seal too. To this Cheng San retorts, "If I did that, how could I set the seal to your death warrant?" These few lines convey Cheng San's typical character: his hatred for the enemy, his scorn for the despicable landlord class and his firm belief in the revolution which makes him optimistic. All this makes him an unforgettable character.

The portrayal of Hsia Chang-keng is also painstaking and touching, depicting the tortuous course of his development. Cruelly exploited and oppressed by the feudal landlords, he attributes his sufferings to fate and is therefore timid and humble. This is why he hesitates so long before he accepts revolutionary ideas. However, when he hears that some people mean to let the overthrown landlord Tang come back to ride roughshod again over the poor, rather than lose the freedom won through struggle, Hsia resolutely takes up arms. Thus a fatalistic prisoner of starvation finally becomes a revolutionary fighter. The depiction of his death is pregnant with meaning for he holds on to his gun until he breathes his last.

Other peasants such as sharp-witted Sister Lien and indomitable Young Ox, although minor characters, are so well delineated that they are vivid and lifelike.

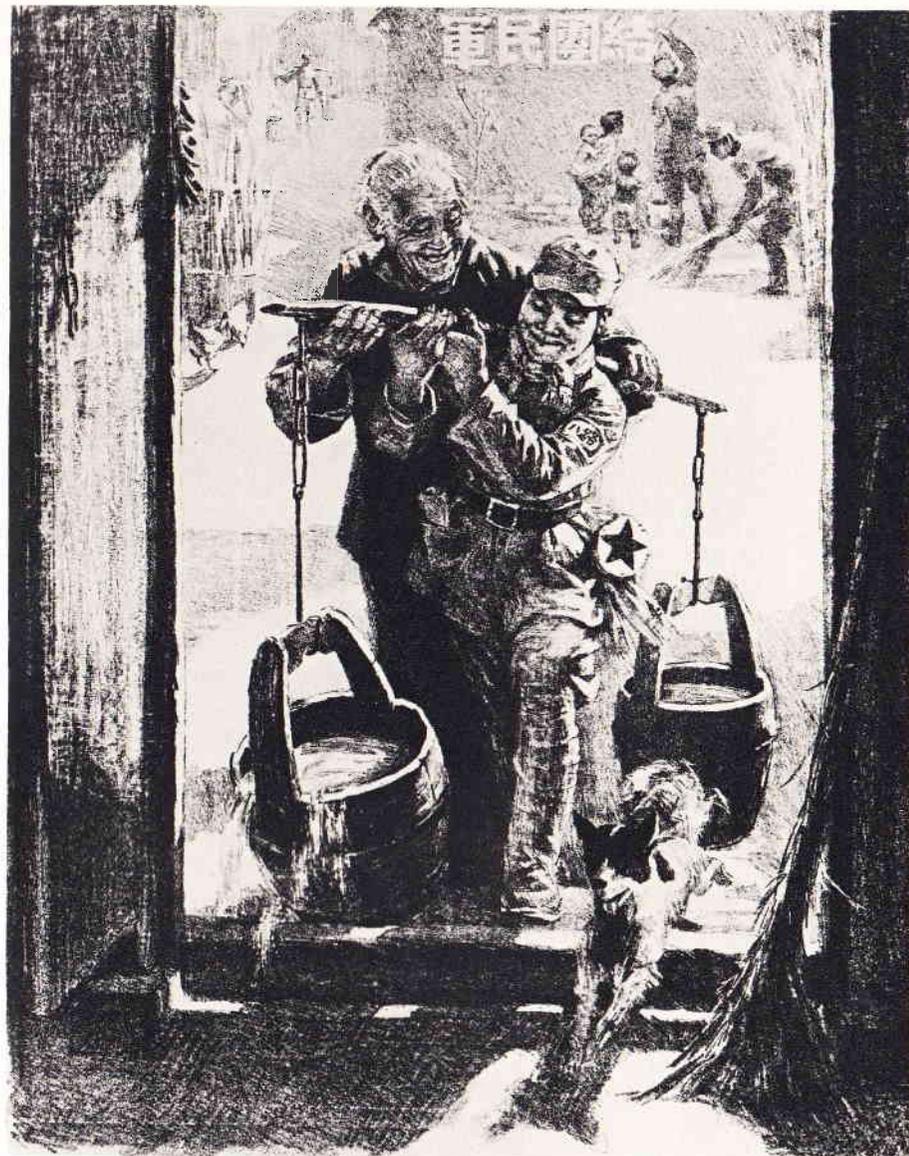
There are many original touches in the staging of *Maple Bay*. By means of telling detail and local atmosphere it brings to life the turbulent peasant revolution which swept through China during the period of the First Revolutionary Civil War. In Scene Four, for instance, the way the landlord's bondsmaid Sister Lien kicks Sun the Leech to vent her hatred for his class, and the way Mrs. Hsia appeals to the peasant association to solve her family problem, both recall the conditions of that specific period.

Scene Seven brings the drama to a climax. Chiang Kai-shek's betrayal causes a severe set-back to the revolution. But Chao Hai-shan who heads the peasant guards continues to hold out on Red Maple Ridge. They have no food, no medicine for the wounded, and have lost contact with the higher Party organization. Hu Szu-

yu, who believes the revolution is doomed, wants to capitulate and accept the enemy's offer. A few of the peasant guards begin to waver. On top of this, Hsia Chang-keng dies for lack of treatment. All these blows one after the other make the fighters cry out in anguish. At this moment a storm sets in, there is a downpour. In this severely oppressive atmosphere, Chao takes up the gun left by Hsia and delivers his impassioned speech which grips the audience and makes them identify themselves with the fate of the peasant guards so leading to the climax of the drama.

**The red flag roused the serf, halberd in hand,  
While the despot's black talons held his whip aloft.**

These words used by Chairman Mao Tsetung to praise the Chinese peasant movement are graphically illustrated in *Maple Bay*. This play has been made into a film and shown throughout the country.



A Little Eighth Route Army Soldier (lithograph) by Sun Tzu-hsi

## On Reading Comrade Chu Teh's Poems

All who visit the magnificent Chingkang Mountains hear many moving tales there about Chairman Mao and Comrade Chu Teh. Chu Teh after taking part in leading the Nanchang Uprising in 1927 led his troops the following year to join forces with Chairman Mao in the Chingkang Mountains, and for the rest of his glorious life fought side by side with him. This fine strategist who commanded millions of fighters was also a poet. In one of his poems *The Red Armies Join Forces in the Chingkang Mountains*, he praised the first revolutionary base built by Chairman Mao and wrote, "Strong leadership withstands a hundred tests." On New Year's Day 1976, shortly before Chu Teh's death, when Chairman Mao published two poems Chu Teh read them repeatedly and "could not sleep for joy". His thoughts flew back to the Chingkang Mountains where they had battled together, and he wrote with deep feeling:

Invincible the proletariat,  
Firm as a rock in the rushing stream our leader;  
When all seemed lost, relying upon him

We won through every danger,  
The sparks scattered far and wide,  
Set north, south, east and west ablaze;  
Now that the flames are leaping ever higher,  
Should we not think back again to those old days?

Another of Chu Teh's poems is about the Tsunyi Conference in 1935 which established Chairman Mao's leadership in the Party and marked a turning-point in the history of the Chinese Communist Party. In this he wrote:

When dragons have their leader they soar high;  
The right course chosen they advance as one;  
All divergencies corrected now,  
Untrammelled we fly through the sky.

These lines show Chu Teh's trust in Chairman Mao's leadership and his joy over the Tsunyi Conference. *Congratulating Comrade Tung Pi-wu on His Sixty-third Birthday* expresses the same idea:

Our ship of state has a miraculous helmsman,  
Able to unite our people to prop up the sky.

Chu Teh's best poems were dedicated to his comrade-in-arms Chairman Mao. And these poems best reveal his noble character as a great proletarian revolutionary.

*Thinking of My Elders in Szechuan* which we publish in this issue was written during the difficult years of the War of Resistance Against Japan. It depicts the hardships in the Taihang Mountains and sings of the bravery of the resistance fighters there, for Chu Teh so loved the people and was so devoted to their interests that his poems invariably pay high tribute to them. *Thoughts in Spring in the Taihang Mountains* voices his loyalty to the people's cause:

Loyal-hearted, I shed no tears for our sufferings  
But with courage undaunted fight on.  
In a hundred battles our new force has made the enemy tremble;  
I have given myself to these three years of fierce fighting.

In another poem in this issue *To a Friend*, he expressed his conviction that with such a heroic people and heroic armed force, the Chinese

revolution was bound to triumph. His pride in each victory of the people's army is evident in the stirring lines:

Our Party produces true heroes in every generation,  
So why worry if my hair is turning white?

All of Chu Teh's poems are political poems. He used them as weapons in the struggle as he consciously carried out Chairman Mao's revolutionary line. At the same time he paid great attention to their lyrical quality and to integrating revolutionary spirit with individual feeling. He was well versed in the old Chinese tradition of using poetry to communicate his ideas to friends and comrades, to encourage them and express his personal feelings. In this way his poems played a fighting role.

A good example of this is his two poems on Mount Lushan. In 1959, the Eighth Plenum of the Eighth Central Committee of the Party was held at Lushan in Kiangsi. During this conference the Right opportunist Peng Teh-huai made a sudden attack on the Party's line. Chairman Mao led the struggle to rebut this then wrote his famous poem *Ascent of Lushan*, and Chu Teh wrote a poem using the same verse form and rhyme as well as one in answer to Tung Pi-wu's *My First Visit to Lushan*. Both these poems served a militant purpose. They link up descriptions of scenery with the poet's personal feelings, using the scenery of Lushan to indicate the political situation. Thus there is topical meaning in such lines as "Clouds and mist swept aside, a clear sky appears" and "When we know the way well we can reach the summit", for these seeming descriptions of the landscape have a double meaning and serve the political struggle. More subtle still are the lines "To avoid blundering into danger, we have signposts marking the way". For while ostensibly they describe the ascent of the mountain they are actually concerned with politics. These two poems help us to understand the complexity of that inner-Party struggle. They are in no way forced but by means of an apt integration of politics and art they give enthusiastic praise to Chairman Mao's revolutionary line.

As Chu Teh wrote the classical form of verse, he had to condense his rich content and express it concisely according to strict metrical

patterns. He showed considerable skill in this, as in these two lines from *To Our Generals Fighting in the South*:

Their despotic rule is fast sinking into darkness,  
While our red banners are unfurled in all liberated areas.

These vivid colour contrasts describe the situation at that time as well as pointing out China's future prospects. Chu Teh often used simple and homely language to express profound ideas, as in his poem to celebrate the thirty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the people's army:

Guns: from none to some.  
Skill: from low to high.  
Generals fit though old,  
New recruits a hundredfold.

These few words sum up concisely the growth and development of our army.

Many of Chu Teh's poems were written during times of war and dashed off without careful polishing, but these are equally militant and evocative. One example is *Leaving the Taihang Mountains* published in this issue which conjures up for us the inspiring picture of the poet standing at the mountain top gazing down at the far-stretching Yellow River, and expresses his broad vision and greatness of mind.

After long years of hard fighting the Chinese people's revolution triumphed. "Domestic foes and invaders quelled, a new day dawned." Chu Teh toured the country after Liberation and shared the people's joy at seeing our motherland under socialism. This gave his later poems a new freshness. The beautiful scenery of Huahsi in Kweichow made him speak of walking

Through a new park laid out by the commune,  
To welcome the return of the Long Marchers.

He also visited the southeast coast and described Kushan, a mountain east of Foochow, as a proud sentry guarding the motherland, expressing his strong patriotic feeling.

When Comrade Chen Yi died, Chu Teh wrote a poem to mourn him and summed up his glorious life in these lines:

A life given to revolution —  
This the judgement passed when you were laid to rest.  
Honouring truth, loving the teacher,  
You kept unswervingly to the right line.

These four lines could also be used to sum up Chu Teh's own life, for his whole revolutionary career focussed on "honouring the truth" and "loving the teacher". The former implies his boundless loyalty to Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought, the latter his love and respect for our great teacher Chairman Mao, which enabled him to keep unswervingly to the correct line. Even in old age Chu Teh continued to make revolution. He devoted his whole life to the people. Because he remained a fighter until the last all his poems have a fighting spirit. He used them to attack the Kuomintang diehards, Japanese aggressors, Soviet revisionists, U.S. imperialists and all reactionaries. Even when he was ninety years old, he was still activated by this fighting spirit. In *My Joy on Reading Chairman Mao's Two Poems* he praised the bold resolve of the mighty roc, a symbol for revolutionaries, and poured contempt on the sparrow in the bush which represented the Soviet revisionists. He hailed the Cultural Revolution and all its new achievements:

The salvoes of the Cultural Revolution  
Appalled the imperialists and revisionists;  
Now the spring wind brings crimson showers,  
Fresh shoots in sturdy profusion.

Right up to the end of his life he remained a militant proletarian revolutionary. To denounce those who practise revisionism instead of Marxism, in this same poem he declared "acting as true Marxist-Leninists, we shall turn the world upside-down"! And this prophecy came true with the great victory over the "gang of four" of our people under the leadership of the Party Central Committee headed by Comrade Hua Kuo-feng.

In *Visiting the Flower Fair at Kwangchow* Chu Teh wrote:

Loveliest of all, the flowers in the heart;  
Thoughts once remoulded will for ever be fragrant.

These lines show his determination to go on remoulding himself to his dying day. Now that we are commemorating the first anniversary of Chu Teh's death and rereading his glorious poems, we are moved by "the flowers" of his heart. The poems reflecting this grand old man's great life will remain for ever as fragrant as flowers and, together with his immortal name, will always be loved and honoured by our people.

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**This Auntie Is Fine** (woodcut)  
by *Huang Hui-yi* and *Mo Ko-chieh*



## MASS CRITICISM

*Liu Ming-chiu*

### The “Gang of Four’s” Reactionary Approach to Our Cultural Heritage

For many years the “gang of four” masquerading as “heroes of the Cultural Revolution” and “standard-bearers of the revolution in literature and art” mouthed “ultra-Left” slogans to confuse people’s minds. In 1970, the counter-revolutionary careerist Yao Wen-yuan got his hack writers to cook up an article entitled *Praising Bourgeois Literature and Art Means Restoring Capitalism* which called for “a thorough repudiation of and break with” all past culture. This certainly sounded most “revolutionary”. They posed as the most thorough-going opponents of all the ideology of the exploiting classes — all feudal, bourgeois and revisionist literature and art — and claimed to be leading a movement to sweep away all traditional culture in order to build up a fine foundation for proletarian culture. It is time to expose and criticize the truth behind these grandiose claims of theirs.

Our great leader and teacher Chairman Mao has pointed out that in dealing with the cultural heritage, whether Chinese or foreign, we should **“make the past serve the present and foreign things serve China”**, and critically assimilate the legacy of the past. So the “gang of four’s” line was directly opposed to this. The principles formulated by Chairman Mao are based on Marxist historical materialism. If we analyse the culture of the past we find works created by the people in class struggle and the struggle for production, as well as feudal and bourgeois works created during the periods when feudalism and capitalism were new rising forces, which played a positive, progressive role in history; we also find reactionary works produced by the exploiting classes when they had become moribund and corrupt. Marxists should discriminate between these, critically assimilating all that was progressive while firmly rejecting all that was reactionary and corrupt.

During the socialist period, it is essential for the proletariat which has seized power and is carrying out socialist revolution and socialist construction to critically assimilate all that is good in the cultural heritage. As Lenin said, **“Unless we clearly understand that only by an exact knowledge of the culture created by the whole development of mankind and that only by reshaping this culture can we build proletarian culture — unless we understand that we shall not be able to solve this problem.”** (*The Tasks of the Youth Leagues*)

Chairman Mao also pointed out, **“We must take over all the fine things in our literary and artistic heritage, critically assimilate whatever is beneficial, and use them as examples when we create works out of the literary and artistic raw materials in the life of the people of our own time and place. . . . We must on no account reject the legacies of the ancients and the foreigners or refuse to learn from them, even though they are the works of the feudal or bourgeois classes.”** (*Talks at the Yen-an Forum on Literature and Art*) This is why Chairman Mao called on us to **“make the past serve the present and foreign things serve China.”** Adopting

this attitude towards culture which played a progressive role in the past shows that the proletariat is the most powerful revolutionary class, politically and ideologically, able to reassess the cultural heritage of mankind from a dialectical and historical materialist stand, discarding the dross which belonged to the exploiting classes and critically assimilating the good things which reflect progressive trends and the laws of historical development. This helps to destroy traditional illusions about the exploiting classes by revealing the injustice of the old order and its inevitable doom, and so serves the interests of proletarian politics. Hence this policy is a component part of the dictatorship of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie in the superstructure.

Of course we must realize that the culture of the exploiting classes could never transcend the limitations imposed by the system of private ownership and thus it conflicts with the economic basis of socialism. Therefore we must criticize Liu Shao-chi’s revisionist proposal to take over past culture in its entirety. Even what is good in it can only be assimilated critically. However, critical assimilation is a very different thing from total rejection, and this Marxist attitude is fundamentally different from that of the “gang of four”. They ignored the dialectics of history, considering the feudal class and the bourgeoisie in their early and later periods as the same. They made no distinction between what had played a progressive historical role and what was reactionary, but negated all past culture from their metaphysical viewpoint and opposed Chairman Mao’s directive to make the past serve the present and foreign things serve China. In this way they exposed their true anti-Marxist features and their opposition to Chairman Mao’s revolutionary line.

After the publication of this anti-Marxist article on Yao Wen-yuan’s instructions, the gang used the mass media under their control to publish whole series of writings praising it as an important article which had dealt a mortal blow to the black revisionist line in literature and art. This was a smoke-screen to cover up their real aim which was

to distort and attack Marxism. Posing as authorities, they fulminated that a failure to denounce all past culture and make a complete break with it would lead to a restoration of capitalism. They deliberately attacked writers, musicians and thinkers commended by the founders of Marxism-Leninism to show that they themselves were "better Marxists"! Below are a few examples:

1. Engels wrote of the Renaissance in Europe, **"It was the greatest progressive revolution that mankind had so far experienced, a time which called for giants and produced giants — giants in power of thought, passion and character, in universality and learning."** (*Introduction to Dialectics of Nature*) But according to the "gang of four" the Renaissance had nothing progressive about it, just reflecting the bourgeoisie's "greed for profit" and "ambition to dominate the world".

2. Engels praised the eighteenth-century French philosophers of the Enlightenment as **"the great men who in France were clearing men's minds for the coming revolution"**. He said they **"acted in an extremely revolutionary way themselves"**. (*Introduction to Anti-Dubring*) But the "gang of four", completely ignoring the fact that at that time the proletariat had not yet appeared, alleged "the so-called Enlightenment was to fool the labouring masses. From the point of view of the proletariat, this was sheer hypocrisy".

3. Marx, Engels and Lenin all praised the critical realist works of such nineteenth-century European writers as Balzac. Engels considered that his great novels supplied a brilliant realistic panorama of French society, especially the Parisian upper class, and foretold the inevitable doom of that society. Marx said that the novels of Dickens, Thackeray, Emily Bronte and Mrs. Gaskell revealed more political and social truths about nineteenth-century England than all those supplied by statesmen, political writers and moralists. Engels called George Sand, Eugene Sue and Charles Dickens the banners of their age. Lenin praised Tolstoy for creating an incomparable picture of Russian life and described Chernyshevsky as a most profound critic of capitalism. However, the article published on Yao Wen-yuan's orders asserted that in those writers' works "historical truths and the natural trends of history were all completely distorted", and their

writings were simply "lies spread by the bourgeoisie". All such novelists were dubbed defenders of the exploiting system and advocates of capitalism. The gang further claimed that to affirm their exposure of capitalism was to cheat people and kowtow to bourgeois masters. So the "gang of four" were arrogant enough to pin labels on Marx, Engels and Lenin!

Marxism is by nature critical and revolutionary. It makes a complete break with the traditional ideas of the exploiting classes and refuses to kowtow to ancient and foreign things. In accordance with the needs and interests of our proletarian revolutionary tasks, it adopts a scientific historical materialist approach to problems. Marx, Engels and Lenin, while criticizing the class character and limitations of those past works of literature, fully affirmed their positive historical role and urged the proletariat to learn from their example. The "gang of four's" nihilistic attitude towards the cultural heritage was counter to the trend of history and Marxism. Their reactionary nature made them dislike all fine classical works of literature and art which to some extent reflected the interests of the people and the dynamism of different classes during the early period of their ascendancy.

**"The victory of Marxism in theory forces its enemy to disguise themselves as Marxists."** (*The Historical Destiny of the Doctrine of Karl Marx*) This was the case with the "gang of four". To deceive the people they used "ultra-Left" arguments and posed as the only true revolutionaries. This is one form the class struggle takes during the socialist period. Their "radical" talk was a camouflage for their truly reactionary views, a device to attack the proletariat. These obscurantists banned all the best culture of the past to make the masses ignorant of history. More than this, they shamelessly fabricated history, claiming that the ten years from 1964 to 1974 witnessed "the beginning of proletarian literature and art", thus negating the whole fine heritage created by the proletariat in the last century and more.

They passed over the revolutionary songs by proletarian poets in the time of Marx and Engels as well as all the literary and art criticism written by early Marxists. The works of Maxim Gorky, praised by Lenin as **"the most outstanding representative of proletarian art"**, were consigned to limbo by them. So too were even Chairman Mao's

magnificent revolutionary poems and the works of Lu Hsun "the chief commander of China's cultural revolution". The gang considered as worthless all the good revolutionary works of literature and art in China since the May 4th Movement and during the anti-Japanese war, and works produced under the guidance of Chairman Mao's *Talks at the Yen-an Forum on Literature and Art*. They dreamed up preposterous charges against them all and threw out the whole lot. In other words, not only did they try to negate all past culture, but even the revolutionary culture of the proletariat, thus disarming the proletariat culturally. Their attempts to sabotage our socialist culture supplied ammunition to the enemies in China and abroad who alleged that the Cultural Revolution "destroyed culture". Such was the reactionary role played by these renegades within our revolutionary camp.

### 3

The "gang of four" were typical double-dealers. They posed as revolutionaries in order to carry out their counter-revolutionary plot. They posed as "ultra-Left" in order to hide their extreme Rightist character. Their call for a thorough repudiation of past culture was also bogus. What they really wanted was to wipe out the good cultural heritage which was still of use to the proletariat, as well as the revolutionary culture which the proletariat could use as a weapon. And like all counter-revolutionaries in history, while opposing progressive culture they showed an avid interest in the most reactionary and decadent literature and art of the exploiting classes. They spent huge sums of money filming some of the worst old Peking operas on the pretext of preserving some old culture which was dying out. They squandered large sums of foreign currency to import from the West several hundred decadent, pornographic and "blue" films for their own enjoyment. For with their dirty minds and depraved taste, in addition to admiring China's feudal emperors and concubines, they also appreciated spivs, gangsters and prostitutes of the West. They expressed strident opposition to Liu Shao-chi's revisionist line in lit-

erature and art, but in many ways they followed the same line — only carrying it much further.

A specific line on culture stems from a specific line in politics. The "gang of four's" decadent cultural taste was determined by their counter-revolutionary revisionist political nature. This is evidenced by two novels which they praised to the skies.

One was the American best-seller of the thirties *Gone with the Wind*. Set against the background of the American Civil War over the issue of the emancipation of slaves, this novel takes the reactionary stand of defending the slave-owners of the south. The author idealizes life on the plantations to depict the vicious slave system as romantic, and slanders that progressive war as the collapse of civilization. This suited the needs of the "gang of four" who were trying to glorify their reactionary line and make it appear revolutionary. To support their revisionist political line they needed some work of fiction which turned black into white. The heroine of *Gone with the Wind* is an utterly self-centred individualist who wants to subjugate all males and will stoop to any means to achieve her aim. Here, again, was just the model the "gang of four" wanted. Their recommendation of such a book as the finest literature reflects their reactionary thinking, their ruthless ambition and their opposition to historical progress.

The other novel they singled out for praise was *The Count of Monte Cristo* by Alexandre Dumas. This story about revenge and the repayment of a debt of gratitude proclaims that all human relationships revolve around personal love and hatred, and the means to settle scores or requite obligations is "omnipotent gold". After the hero of this book comes into a fortune he becomes as all-powerful as a king. This appealed to the "gang of four" with their bourgeois world outlook. This novel also preaches that men are born with a boundless lust for power which renders them ruthless, and their ambition impels them to use the most dastardly or cruel means to overcome obstacles and better themselves. Dumas considered this the logic and philosophy of that society, something ordained by heaven. His whole story about betrayal and revenge is based on this bourgeois world outlook. Naturally then, the "gang of four" who conspired so insidiously to overthrow others regarded this book as a literary justification for

their seizure of power. This is why they lauded this bourgeois adventure story as a great work of literature.

Now the true features of the "gang of four" have been exposed. They posed as radicals in their approach to the cultural heritage, while actually attacking Marxism-Leninism and Mao Tsetung Thought; and they glorified reactionary works of literature and art in an attempt to revive the ideology of the exploiting classes in order to oppose the Party and socialism. This was their truly reactionary approach to our cultural heritage.

## CHRONICLE

### Special Performances Held in Peking, Shanghai and Tientsin

To mark the publication of Volume V of the *Selected Works of Mao Tsetung*, starting from April 15, professional and amateur literary and art workers in Peking, Shanghai and Tientsin gave performances of music, dancing, ballads, dramas and poem recitals. All these items expressed the joy with which the workers, peasants, soldiers, revolutionary cadres and revolutionary intellectuals greeted the publication of Volume V. Some of them also exposed the criminal attempts of the "gang of four" to sabotage its publication.

### Photo Exhibition "Chairman Hua in Tibet" Opens in Lhasa

A photo exhibition "Chairman Hua in Tibet" opened in Lhasa on May 1.

On display were nearly 100 photographs showing Comrade Hua Kuo-feng heading the Central Delegation attending the celebrations of the 10th anniversary of the founding of the Tibet Autonomous Region. They showed Chairman Hua cordially receiving outstanding workers, peasants and soldiers, inspecting factories and rural

people's communes and attending theatrical performances with the emancipated Tibetan serfs.

### May Day Celebrations

Colourful theatrical items were staged in Peking throughout the May Day festival period. Over 800 performances of 123 programmes were put on by 148 professional art troupes and amateur cultural groups. These were supplemented by over 5,000 items performed in factories and rural people's communes by 1,300 amateur art propaganda teams composed of workers, peasants and soldiers.

Some popular items which had been banned by the "gang of four" were restaged. They included the northern Shensi dance-dramas *Brother and Sister Reclaim Wasteland* and *Husband and Wife Learn How to Read and Write*, the Peking opera *The Red Guards of Hungbu*, the dance-drama *The Dagger Society* and the drama *Blow for Blow*.

In Shanghai, theatrical items in praise of Chairman Mao's revolutionary line and the wise leadership of Chairman Hua were shown. New items included *A Chapter of Struggle*, a drama reflecting the struggle of the working class against the "gang of four", while *Silver Spindles Whir*, a Shanghai opera, *Letters from Taching*, a *kunchu* opera, and *Cloth Pours from the Looms*, a Shaohsing opera, reflected the new upsurge in industry.

### New Films for May Day

New documentaries, feature films and scientific and educational films were released for May 1st, International Labour Day.

The colour documentaries were *Hail the Publication and Distribution of Volume V of the "Selected Works of Mao Tsetung"*, *The Hearts of the People of Shanghai Turn to Chairman Hua*, *People of Taching*, *The Fine Struggle of Tachai's Heroic People* and *Victory of October*.

The colour feature film *Our Motherland* tells how cadres of the Mongolian and Han nationalities come to the vast Inner Mongolian grassland and settle down to work there, relying on the Party organization and the poor herdsmen. It illustrates Chairman Mao's policy on nationalities. Another colour feature film *A Long Journey of Ten Thousand "Li"* is the story of how a transportation detachment struggles against the class enemy in the movement to learn from Tachai in agriculture.



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