

CHINESE LITERATURE

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Chairman Mao Tse-tung's Talk with the Japanese Writers' Delegation

On June 21, in Shanghai, Chairman Mao Tse-tung and Premier Chou En-lai received the visiting Japanese Writers' Delegation headed by Hiroshi Noma and, in a friendly atmosphere, had a cordial talk with them.

Chairman Mao Tse-tung pointed out that **the victorious struggle of the Japanese people against U.S. imperialism and its agents in Japan and for national independence and democratic freedoms is a very great support to the struggle of the Chinese people and people all over the world in opposing U.S. imperialist aggression and safeguarding world peace.**

Chairman Mao said that the Japanese people are much more awakened than they were a few years ago, now that their broad masses have realized that U.S. imperialism is the common enemy of the Chinese and Japanese peoples and all those people throughout the world who love peace and uphold justice. It would have been difficult in the past to conceive of so large, so broad and so protracted a struggle. It looked like **the Japanese people have discovered a good method in the present situation of opposing the new "Japan-U.S. Security Treaty" and U.S. military bases and driving out the U.S. imperialist aggressive forces, that is, to unite**

the broadest possible forces, with the exception of U.S. imperialism and its agents, to carry out a nation-wide mass struggle against U.S. imperialism and its agents.

Hiroshi Noma, head of the delegation, said that the nation-wide June 4th general strike in which millions of Japanese people participated, with the workers as the core, signified that the Japanese people's struggle for independence and democracy has entered a new stage. The forces of the Japanese people opposing U.S. imperialism and its agents in Japan have united, and the struggle will definitely not cease, it will continue to forge ahead and grow.

Chairman Mao added that he did not believe that such a great nation as Japan would be subject to foreigners' rule for long. He was of the opinion that **there are high hopes for Japan's independence and freedom, that with the abolishment of the "Japan-U.S. Security Treaty" and U.S. military bases, the independence and peace of Japan would be ensured.**

He pointed out that victory is won step by step and the level of consciousness of the masses is also raised step by step. **He wished the Japanese people still greater successes in their patriotic and just struggle against the United States. Chairman Mao paid tribute to the heroic death of Michiko Kanba. He said that she had become a Japanese national heroine known throughout the world.**

Finally the head of the delegation Hiroshi Noma and all members of the delegation expressed heartfelt thanks and joy for the tremendous support given by Chairman Mao and the Chinese people to the Japanese people.

Present on the occasion was Ko Ching-shih, Mayor of Shanghai.

Also present was the Japanese peace partisan Kinkazu Saionji.



Chairman Mao with Hiroshi Noma, head of the Japanese Writers' Delegation

Meeting Chairman Mao

The Japanese Writers' Delegation, headed by the well-known writer Hiroshi Noma, came to China on May 31 and left Peking for home on July 3 after touring the country. This was during the upsurge of the Japanese people's patriotic struggle against U.S. imperialism, and the Japanese Writers' Delegation, coming from the front of this struggle, was received with great warmth by the Chinese people. In *Chinese Literature* No. 8, under the heading "Japanese Writers' Delegation in China" we reported the chief activities of the Delegation in our country prior to June 15. Later, Chou Yang, vice-chairman of the All-China Federation of Literary and Art Circles, upon the request of the Delegation, had a talk with its members on questions concerning China's policies in literature and art. June 21 was the most exciting day for the Delegation when Chairman Mao Tse-tung and Premier Chou En-lai received them in Shanghai. We publish below three impressions of their meeting with Chairman Mao Tse-tung, written specially for *Chinese Literature*.

HIROSHI NOMA

I Have Seen Chairman Mao

As soon as we entered the main gate of a building we were amazed to see Chairman Mao's tall, sturdy figure standing there. I had not expected to see the chairman until we had passed through the long corridor and reached the door of the hall. But there he was at the gate to greet us, smiling cordially as he waited for my approach.

To see Chairman Mao had long been my cherished wish. I am one of the Japanese writers who have always absorbed from Chair-

man Mao's many writings ideas to guide their life and literary work. Though I dreamed vaguely of perhaps meeting Chairman Mao some day, I never imagined that the occasion would arise like this on this very day. Hitherto I had only seen photographs of this great man who is not merely giving leadership to great China but is one of the great leaders of the contemporary world. Now with my own eyes I saw his broad forehead, as he put out his hand and personally invited us inside. I shook hands with Chairman Mao, whose hands were soft with a tenderness that seemed ready to embrace me entirely. I shook hands too with Premier Chou whose grasp was firm and strong, imparting strength. In his strong handclasp there was great encouragement, support and courage.

I shall never forget the gentle hands which Chairman Mao held out as if to embrace me entirely. These were the hands which liberated China's six hundred and fifty million so long oppressed by imperialism. These were the hands of the man who liberated the six hundred and fifty million from their grievous sufferings and filled them with joy. The *Renmin Ribao* gave a faithful account of Chairman Mao's meeting with our Japanese Writers' Delegation. I was inexpressibly moved to hear the words "the great Japanese people" from the lips of the man who led the Chinese people to victory after a protracted struggle against imperialism. Chairman Mao told us that he did not believe such a great nation as Japan would be subject to foreign rule for long. He also stated clearly that the Japanese people have found the way to liberate themselves from subjection. These statements give a high estimate of the Japanese people's struggle against the Japan-U.S. treaty of military alliance. After hearing them my heart brimmed over with joy and I gained added confidence in the Japanese people's struggle.

Chairman Mao in his conversation touched upon the history of the Chinese revolution, the revolutionary history of the last hundred years. I was struck by the frank and natural manner in which he spoke. This was the history of the Chinese revolution, at the same time it was the personal experience of Chairman Mao. Chairman Mao talks with utter sincerity, not compelling others to accept his views or trying to force them on others. This is free and frank conversation carried on in the spirit of learning from the masses and evincing extraordinary modesty. Yet this modesty

did not give the effect of stiffness or undue formality; on the contrary, it impressed one with a pleasant feeling of freedom and spontaneity. Chairman Mao's words have the power to sink into his hearers' minds and there engender buoyant vitality, bringing men strength and confidence to blaze a new trail in life; for these words are supported by this great man's experience in struggles, and live in this great man's heart. The thought crossed my mind that literature too was living with unparalleled strength in this great man's heart.

Not to separate politics, production and literature, but to integrate them as one whole and thereby to discover China's path of development was the work of none other but Chairman Mao. These views of his on literature are truly great. My visit to China has shown me clearly that a broad way for such development has been opened and Chairman Mao himself is the living embodiment of this.

*Chairman Mao Tse-tung with the Peoples of
Asia, Africa and Latin America* →

by Wu Pi-tuan and Chin Shang-yi

This water-colour was finished in ten days by two young teachers of the Central Institute of Fine Arts at a time when the people of the whole country were expressing hearty and resolute support for the struggle of the peoples of the various countries of the world against U.S. imperialist aggression. The artists have adopted features of the traditional style and colouring of Chinese mural paintings and are attempting to create a new national style.

Wu Pi-tuan, now thirty-four, graduated from the College of Literature and Arts of the North China Union University. After teaching in the Central Institute of Fine Arts for some time, he went to the Soviet Union in 1956 to do research work in the Repin Institute of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture in Leningrad. Chin Shang-yi, aged twenty-six, is a graduate of the Central Institute of Fine Arts, where he and Wu Pi-tuan are now teaching.



My Meeting with Chairman Mao

It was quite unexpected that we of the Japanese Writers' Delegation were able to meet Chairman Mao. When, in the evening of June 21 in Shanghai, we were suddenly notified that he would see us, we were all elated and I went there in great excitement. Five years ago, I read Chairman Mao's works. My particular favourites were *On the Protracted War*, which relates the experience of the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression, and *On Contradiction*. Different periodicals had also given me a certain insight into Chairman Mao's life and present work, and I had seen photographs of him. Thus I had a picture of Chairman Mao in my mind.

When still a schoolboy, I studied *The Analects* of Confucius in which occurs the saying: "The firm, the enduring, the simple and the modest come close to supreme virtue." If Confucius were alive today to see what Chairman Mao has done, he would surely use these words to praise him! This was the picture I had in my mind. I had recalled these words, "the firm, the enduring, the simple and the modest," when in Canton we visited the Memorial Hall of the Peasant Movement Institute of which Chairman Mao was in charge in the old days. As we walked through that hall, I kept visualizing his magnificent bearing when he mingled with the peasants and struck root among them in those years, and how steadily he had advanced over this great land. The furnishings of the institute, so simple yet full of strength, showed a genuine

love for the comrades. This was how Chairman Mao led the people and steeled himself. That Hall gave me further insight into his character.

In the evening of June 21, Hiroshi Noma as head of our Delegation conducted us to the appointed place. Chairman Mao and Premier Chou appeared at the gate. After shaking hands warmly we were photographed together to commemorate the occasion. Then we went into a large hall to talk in a completely informal atmosphere. I have already used the phrase "the firm, the enduring, the simple and the modest." At this point, the epithets that occurred to me were "broad-minded and generous" (大らか), the phrase commonly used in Japan to praise men of old, to praise the magnificent natural scenery and people of China — the fount of Japan's classical culture. Chairman Mao spoke in such an easy manner and with such sense of humour, that one was profoundly conscious that here was "a kindly father of the people."

Our conversation centred round the fight against U.S. imperialism and the Japanese people's struggle against the "security treaty" and Kishi. We spoke of how the Japanese people by continuous demonstrations and strikes had finally forced Eisenhower to abandon his proposed visit to Japan. Chairman Mao rated this particularly high. Chairman Mao also emphasized that as long as the Japanese government is controlled and dominated by U.S. imperialism politically, economically and in military matters, Japan is virtually a colony or semi-colony of U.S. imperialism. The Japanese people with their long cultural tradition and rich civilization would never submit to this. The Japanese people would certainly stand up to fight for national independence and genuine democracy. The *Renmin Ribao* has also given great prominence to reports on this aspect.

Chairman Mao also spoke about the history of the Chinese revolution and his reminiscences of the time when he was a primary-school teacher. Chairman Mao's revolutionary experience epitomizes the Chinese people's arduous struggle against the incessant oppression and aggression of foreign imperialism in the century or more since the Opium War.

Since coming to China, I have often been deeply moved by the way in which Chinese statesmen at all times endeavour to reflect the aspirations of the people and dedicate themselves to the service of the people. Also, no matter how high their political position, they, on their own initiative, appear as modest as the ordinary peasants who have worked for dozens of years in the villages. I believe that this consciousness is the life-breath of Chinese statesmen! Every sentence and every word uttered by Chairman Mao breathed this modesty and deep love for the people.

When we spoke on the question of education, Chairman Mao said it would be a good thing if all Chinese could have three years of secondary education. I spoke of the situation in Japan: since 1945 six years of primary education and three of secondary education have been free to all in Japan. Chairman Mao nodded emphatically and said that in this respect China must catch up with Japan. He went on to remark that it would be ideal if all in China could have nine years' education. Of course, it is a question not only of the system of education but also of its content.

After visiting a number of factories and people's communes, one special feature that struck me was the way in which education is always linked with the leap forward in production and both are linked with the current political tasks. These, again, became the foundation of all literary expression. Eighty per cent of China's six hundred and fifty million are peasants, and the country had a fairly large proportion of illiterates. Since liberation great efforts have been made to wipe out illiteracy. Little by little the masses are mastering the written language and becoming able to write about themselves and their work.

Since coming to China I have been much impressed by the great and rapid improvement in the people's power to express themselves. Workers and peasants can all write poems and voice their views. Chairman Mao said modestly that in many respects China is still a backward country. But to my mind, compared with the days before liberation, China now has in truth become the land of the big leap forward, and Chairman Mao stands in the highest position in this land. It was of great interest to me to think that Chairman Mao stands in the highest position in this land not only as political leader but also as a poet.

I watched Chairman Mao with heartfelt admiration as he spoke gently and calmly. His kindly face glowed with health; there was a smile in his compassionate, shining eyes. When I realized that I was sitting in one room with the greatest revolutionary of the twentieth century who has brought about such epoch-making changes in the world, I was amazed to think how unpredictable my life can be. This may well be called the golden hour of my entire life.

Of course, Chairman Mao was speaking not only to each of us as individuals but to the whole Japanese people, to give high praise and encouragement to the Japanese people's recent struggle, to express the Chinese people's greetings to the Japanese people struggling for independence. I determined to remember his words well and pass them on to all my compatriots after my return to my country. Japan in its long-term invasion of China slaughtered millions of Chinese. Not for a single day did I forget this fact during my travels in China. Nothing can atone for Japan's aggression against China and the atrocities committed by Japanese troops. As a Japanese I feel bitterly conscious of my share of the responsibility. Our only course now is to oppose every policy hostile to China and, relying on the people's strength, step by step build up friendship with China. No other way is open to us.

The Chinese people look upon U.S. imperialism as their biggest enemy. U.S. imperialism has occupied China's territory Taiwan, and made it a military base. This has enraged the Chinese people. The liberation of Taiwan is the urgent demand of all the Chinese people who are struggling towards that end.

But the Japanese government has signed a treaty of military alliance with this same United States, and forced it through the Diet. If this treaty is put into effect, Japanese troops can be sent abroad under the command of the U.S. army. This is what gives the Japanese people greatest cause for concern. We must smash all the plots of U.S. imperialism to make Japan and China fight each other again.

Regarding the present situation between our two countries, Chairman Mao said the following words, which I consider of the highest importance: U.S. imperialism and its lackeys are the common enemy of the Japanese and the Chinese peoples; *the struggle*

against them makes it possible for our two peoples to co-operate. To my mind, this marks the dawn of modern Japanese history! I say this in the sense that the first page is being written of a history in which our two nations are closely united.

Our meeting with Chairman Mao lasted for an hour and a half. I have described a part only of it here. At last we warmly shook hands with Chairman Mao, Premier Chou and Mayor Ko of Shanghai and said goodbye. Hiroshi Noma, the head of our Delegation, Mr. Kinkazu Saionji and I went to our car. When we looked round, Chairman Mao was standing by the car and we waved to him in farewell.

My hand still felt the warmth of Chairman Mao's handclasp. All the way back to the hotel my mind was running on this unforgettable meeting.

We were all too moved and excited to go straight to sleep. Gathering in one room, we raised our cups to drink a toast to Chairman Mao, Premier Chou and Mayor Ko.

YOKO MATSUOKA

Meeting Chairman Mao Tse-tung

Chairman Mao Tse-tung was standing there, and beside him Premier Chou En-lai. It was the evening of June 21. The master of a country who by her own exertions won independence after long years of foreign rule was welcoming us warmly at the gate of a high-roofed Western-style building, which stood in what was called not long ago the French Concession.

"All the world's great causes are carried through by the young," said Chairman Mao quietly, who was wearing the light grey uniform familiar to us from pictures, "by young people with no position, fame or money. If we look at the inventions and discoveries of the past three hundred years, more than seventy per cent were made by such people. In Japan, it was young people who besieged Hagerty, it was a young girl who died heroically on June 15." Chairman Mao did not speak at all like an elderly man in high position who to flatter the young gives voice to such words as "Youth must take up the burden of the future." My feeling was that this revealed the path in life of a great man who had given half his days to carrying through the revolution with young people unknown to fame, and had gone on to build up a new country at a speed unprecedented in world history.

Without such a driving force in the country, it would be impossible in a mere ten years to transform Shanghai, once so hopelessly and utterly corrupt, into a city full of hope and vitality. The old Shanghai was a city of opium-smoking, prostitution and violence.

This stinking, filthy metropolis was also the largest consumer city in the world. And its most outstanding feature was surely the fact of its being a sample of extraterritoriality, for although in China it was not a Chinese city. This was what China of that time was like.

In the last ten years a radical change has taken place here, a tremendous change, a change that a phrase like "out of all recognition" cannot fully describe. The workers of the Diesel Engine Factory are working happily with immense enthusiasm. No longer exploited, they can give full play to their initiative in introducing technical innovations. Of course they are happy. And this happiness finds expression not in the fleeting pleasures of consumption but in the new, solid satisfaction of production. Yes, it is these unknown young people who have transformed Shanghai and the whole of China.

The words we heard spoken by Chairman Mao could have been said only by one who released this driving force and advanced hand in hand with these people. His speech was so quiet, frank, penetrating and strongly persuasive, sinking deep into men's minds.

Chairman Mao does not stand above the masses but is a leader among them. This is apparent from another remark he made: "The level of consciousness of the masses is raised step by step, and this of course applies to us too." Chairman Mao said that his level of consciousness had also been raised step by step. He told us that in his case the process of development began in his middle-school days when he knew nothing of Marxism; that at one point he believed in Kant's idealism. If you had listened with closed eyes, in other words, if you had not known that it was Chairman Mao speaking, the unassuming tone of his conversation would lead you to think that you were listening to a favourite uncle rather than the great leader of the nation. We all had this sense of intimacy in Chairman Mao's presence, all felt as if enveloped in the warmth of that great heart.

I have attended several meetings in China. And I have been deeply moved by the thunderous applause which bursts out whenever someone shouts "Long Live Chairman Mao!" Whence comes this mass loyalty and respect? I seemed to find the answer in our one and a half hours with Chairman Mao. He spends little

time in Peking, but pays regular visits to farms and factories, even taking part in physical labour with the people. He is not one to sit in state in a spacious room equipped with air conditioning and central heating, and issue orders from an outsize desk. This, I think, is how he has won the heartfelt trust and love of the masses.

Chairman Mao has a most thoroughgoing understanding of the Japanese situation too. He knows that the girl who died heroically on June 15 was Michiko Kanba; that her father is a professor; that she was an undergraduate of Tokyo University; that the day following her death the president of Tokyo University, Mr. Seiji Kaya, led the students after a meeting to demonstrate; that the National Council for the Prevention of the Revision of the "Security Treaty" has waged eighteen consecutive struggles; and that the Japanese people who several years ago, although they did not support U.S. imperialism, tried to avoid criticizing the United States, since last year have clarified the aim of their struggle. Chairman Mao's understanding of the development of the Japanese people's struggle against the "Security Treaty" was such as to need no further explanation from us. More than that, Chairman Mao spoke of Japan's steel output, of the extent to which education is universal; he had even read an article written by one of us for *Zhongguo Qingnian* (China's Youth).

To my mind, the keen intelligence at the heart of his warm kindness comes from analytical reasoning based on tireless study.

Chairman Mao Tse-tung and Premier Chou En-lai saw us to the gate and stood there till our cars drove off. As I drew deep breaths of Shanghai's misty evening air and recalled each word and sentence of our conversation, my thoughts turned irresistibly to the future of Japan and I fell to thinking deeply.

Stories

LIU PAI-YU

The Pathfinder

A wonderful thing happened during the night attack across the Imjin River — on the 38th Parallel.

Our advance unit had stormed through the darkness to the southern bank and was pushing forward into the enemy positions, with our regimental headquarters command close behind. Enemy rifle and machine-gun fire was intense. American artillery shells reflected red streaks on the surface of the frozen river. Enemy planes, green lights aglow on the tips of their wings, savagely joined the fray.

We knew from our reconnaissance reports that both sides of the river were thickly strewn with land mines. Our regimental commander hesitated. What was the best line of advance? Just then a wounded soldier struggled to raise his head from the ground. He shouted, his voice trembling with pain. Extending his hand, he pointed out a path. In a flash of fire, the commander saw that the man was dripping with blood. Very moved, the commander led his troops along the route the man had indicated. Suddenly, the man's shouts ceased. He fell back into the snow and became motionless. But his extended left hand, like a marker that scouts draw upon the ground, continued to show the way. The thousands of fighters of the Chinese People's Volunteers who followed also took their directions from that hand as they charged against the enemy.

The commander was a veteran of innumerable battles. He had seen many men die bravely. But none had stirred him like this soldier.

With tears in his eyes, he ran to the head of the foremost unit and directed the attack.

After the battle was won, he went personally to the assault company and from there to engineers' detachment to ask the name of the man who had died. From that day on, the exploit of Sapper Tang Ming-chih spread among all the units at the front like a magnificent song.

Tang wasn't a particularly young man. His arms and hands were long and thin like the rest of his body. Though he looked rather clumsy, whether on the march or carrying out a mission, his movements were swift and agile. Two deep lines bracketed his mouth, his eyes were serious. Usually he said very little, but in a crisis, whenever his engineers' detachment ran into trouble, Tang always spoke up. His voice would be mild, and he wouldn't say much, just a few words. Then he would pitch in and work like blazes until the difficulty was solved.

Once they were building a bridge in the heart of winter. Tang had been working in the icy water practically all night. Finally he had to be carried back. He lay in a billet of dry rice straw for a long time before he thawed out. But the artillery men were able to cross the bridge before dawn.

Tang was extremely devoted to his comrades and meticulous about their welfare. While crossing a river, one of the men lost his socks. That day, Tang was observed cutting open his padded vest and removing some of the cotton. Then he found a piece of cloth and began sewing. When the comrade awoke the following morning, he found a pair of cotton-padded socks stuffed into his shoes.

Tang was always like that. He had a pair of skilful hands that could do almost anything. Although not much of a talker, sometimes when the men were sitting around having a chat, Tang would open up a bit.

After a battle one night, the engineers were in an abandoned charcoal-burner's cabin deep in a big pine forest. Tang was feeling happy amid the young men gathered around him. Outside,

snow was falling heavily, blocking out the sky. The men had found some brushwood and managed to light a fire. The damp branches sputtered and popped, but finally the flames rose high, their reflections dancing on the faces of the men, who were huddled close together for warmth.

Several of the soldiers automatically smacked their lips. At a time like this, if they only had a little tobacco, even the cheapest grade! . . . But none of them voiced this thought. For they knew that they had already finished the last shipment from home. You know how it is when you're at the front. Sometimes you're just dying for a bit of a smoke. You can put up with the other privations, but having no tobacco is really hard to take!

Tang seemed to hear the fretting that was going on in the men's minds. He rested his shiny new captured tommy-gun on his knees and pulled from an inner pocket a small black pouch embroidered with coloured threads. Tang smiled, his eyes twinkling. Everyone was watching him. Comically, as if he had some little bird inside that he was afraid would fly off, he slowly opened the pouch. His agile fingers brought out a pinch of dried tobacco. The young soldiers laughed.

"Tang, old man, where did you get hold of that?"

He feigned a scowl. "Swiped it, of course. Whoever smokes it will have to join me in the jug." Then he chuckled, and his voice softened. "Help yourself, boys. I brought this from my home town. It's nearly finished. I was saving it to smoke after victory. . . . Anyhow, we're sure to win, so dig in!"

It was the first time Tang had ever mentioned his home. Someone ripped a sheet from his notebook and handed it to Tang who quickly rolled a big thick cigarette and passed it around, one puff to each man.

The snow lay deep outside; the wind had died. It was absolutely still, as if the whole world had been covered by a thick blanket. Pines, gleaming in the firelight, stood around the cabin like sentinels. Tang started to talk. He told his comrades a story about another smoke of tobacco.

When he was a boy, Tang said, he went to work as an apprentice in a machine shop in Shenyang. After a number of years, he became a technician. This was when China's Northeast was occupied by the Japanese imperialists. His foreign bosses sent him to install

some pumps in a coal mine and he frequently had to go down into the pits. On one of these occasions, a miner approached him and asked if he had any tobacco. To smoke in the pits was against the rules, but when Tang saw what the miner looked like — pale, unkempt, with sunken cheeks, though his eyes were bright — and thought that here was a fellow-countryman whom the Japanese had seized for slave labour, he pulled out his cigarettes and pressed the whole pack into the man's hands.

The miner looked at the cigarettes, looked at him, then put the pack in his pocket without taking a cigarette.

Tang was tightening bolts on a pump in a mine shaft when the man came up to him again. In time they became close friends. Tang learned that the man was a Communist who had been wounded and captured in a battle south of the Great Wall. The Japanese had locked him in a sealed railway freight car and brought him many many miles to work under the ground. As a technician who could come and go freely, Tang took advantage of his job to bring the man tobacco. At times, he smuggled out messages for him, delivering them to other pits.

One rainy night Tang was roused from his sleep by the sound of shots. "Something must be up with the slave workers!" He leaped out of bed and rushed to the window. Lights in the mine area gleamed mistily in the rain. Suddenly he saw his friend, holding wide an opening he had cut in the electrically charged barbed wire — someone must have broken the switch. He was shouting to the other slave labourers, urging them to hurry, as they fled in groups through the gap. Then, the Japanese probably repaired the switch and he was electrocuted. . . .

"I'll always remember him," said Tang. "The way he held out his hand the first time we met and asked if I had any tobacco. . . ."

But those who knew said it was much more than that which remained in Tang's heart. What Tang remembered was a hundred times deeper and more important.

This is the way it happened: Five days after the break at the mine, the old electrician who shared a room with him came back. It was night and Tang was already asleep. The electrician awakened him. He took out two gate passes, giving one to Tang and keeping one for himself.

"Get moving. You can't stay here any longer," said the electrician.

"Why not?"

"The Japanese are investigating. They say a technician has been carrying messages for the slave labourers. . . ."

Tang's heart beat fast, but he pretended not to understand and only shook his head. The electrician sighed and sat down beside him. There were tears in the old man's eyes.

"I've seen them destroy so many young men. You must go!"

Carrying some line and his repair kit, the old man led Tang to the guardhouse at the gate, where they went through the motions of inspecting the wiring. Then the electrician took Tang through the gate and escorted him a long distance down the road.

Brimming with gratitude, Tang grasped both of the electrician's hands. The old man pushed him aside.

"Go! Hurry! Go straight north."

Tang ran. At the top of a wooded hill, he paused to catch his breath. He looked back. The old man was still standing beneath the dim street light, holding his roll of wire, as if he were waiting for something. . . .

After that, Tang wandered for many days, keeping out of sight of the Japanese. Finally, cold and hungry, he gritted his teeth and returned to his home in the Great Northern Wilds. But who could determine his own fate in those days? You went wherever the men with the whips drove you. Less than half a month later, Tang was conscripted into the "Manchukuo" army, a puppet force serving the Japanese.

Tang was assigned to the artillery and learned to operate a thirty-eight-millimetre field gun. His unit moved about a good deal, but Tang was miserable. Doing this kind of a job, how could he be worthy of his friend who had died on the charged wire? Or the old electrician who had seen him off in the middle of the night?

In August of 1945 Tang's artillery unit was stationed outside the city of Chinchou. It was then that the Japanese Kwantung Army, battered by the pounding of the Soviet Red Army, announced its surrender.

The black-whiskered Japanese major who had been second in command of the artillery regiment said he was going into Chinchou for some beer. As he was leaving he issued an order:

"Load your guns on the train and deliver them to Shenyang. Then you can all go home."

Tang was truly happy. He had thought the day would never come when he could get clear of this dirty job. Turn the guns over to the Soviet Red Army in Shenyang — that would be good. He and the others got busy — cleaning the artillery pieces, loading them on the freight cars, changing into fresh uniforms.

But then a soldier of the "Manchukuo" army came hurrying towards them. He said he was stationed near the Taling River. When he heard that they were about to start for Shenyang, he hastily waved his hands.

"You can't do that! The Japs have three thousand troops at Taling, mining the railway!"

The men were enraged. "Those Japanese are fiends!" they said. "Even when they're leaving they want to destroy us. Sons of bitches! Haven't they drunk enough of our blood!"

Quickly, they unloaded the guns and the ammunition cases. Then they hitched up their horses and hauled everything back to camp. "We've got men and we've got arms," they said. "We'll never give our artillery to the Japanese imperialists!"

So the Japanese scheme came to naught. When the beer-drinking black-whiskered major returned, he brought Japanese garrison troops with him, and they attacked the Chinese gunners, who fought tenaciously, united by a common will. By midnight, the Japanese were still advancing, closing in step by step. Then Tang stood forward.

"We're all Chinese," he shouted to his men in a ringing voice. "For fourteen years we've been ground down, but now China is reviving. We must fight. If we live, we'll live together. If we die, we'll die together!"

The men set up a mighty cheer. "That's the talk!"

Six hundred Chinese fixed their gleaming bayonets and fought the enemy hand to hand. The ground was drenched with a river of blood. Of the six hundred Chinese, only half remained.

Tang alone killed nine of the Japanese. His bayonet was so sticky with blood that when he stabbed the tenth, he couldn't ex-

tract the blade. He picked up a sword from a dead enemy and fought on with that.

Six more Japs came at him. Swinging his sword with both hands, he hacked away at the ones in front. A noise behind made him turn. A Japanese bayonet was lunging at his chest. He dodged, but the bayonet pierced his left arm. Tang's hands went numb and the sword dropped from his grasp. Gritting his teeth, he rushed his assailant and flung him to the ground. Then he fainted.

The Chinese hauled their guns up the north mountain. They carried Tang with them on an artillery caisson, his blood dripping into the ruts of the road. They were besieged on the mountain top for three days and three nights. The enemy deluged them with shells. Some men thought the situation was hopeless and began whispering among themselves.

But Tang heard the kind of talk that was going round and dragged himself to his feet. "Do you want your sons and your grandsons to be slaves too?" he demanded. "No one's going to quit. If we die, we'll die free men!"

Just then another shell burst and a gunner was killed. He died in Tang's arms. In spite of his wound, Tang took the man's place. An hour later, Tang's left leg was badly hurt. Soon after, a piece of shrapnel cut into his right leg. Screaming for blood, the Japanese invaders launched a charge.

Tang angrily wiped the sweat from his face with the back of his hand. An idea flitted through his mind like a shadow. He picked up a shell. When the enemy came a bit closer, he would slam it against the gun carriage, demolishing himself and the gun together.

But just at that moment, great confusion developed in the Japanese ranks. A unit of the Chinese people's army had arrived and was carving a path through the enemy to their besieged countrymen.

Though his wounds were agonizing, Tang gripped the gun carriage to stand erect. He wanted to hand the artillery piece over to the Chinese forces personally. But he was so excited when he saw the first comrade running towards him, dressed in a knee-length overcoat, that he lost consciousness.

When he came to, he asked permission to leave. "These hands of mine were meant for machinery, not for weapons," he said. A

few days later, a friend took him in a cart to the railway station, and he went home.

From then on, Tang worked as a technician in a power plant in a small city in Heilungchiang Province. Neither zealous nor lazy, he simply did his job from day to day.

But one afternoon in 1950 as he was leaving the plant, he heard an announcement over the loudspeaker system.

“. . . The American imperialists have recklessly crossed the 38th Parallel in Korea and are advancing in force towards the Yalu and Tumen Rivers. . . .”

The Yalu and Tumen Rivers? No question about it. They were following the old routes of the Japanese invaders.

His wife Su-lan knew that his stubborn streak was coming out again the moment he entered the door. Silently, he took two shirts and tied them into a small bundle, then picked up his infant child and nuzzled its little face with his lips.

He had married after his return from Chinchou. Su-lan was six or seven years younger than he. Now, taking hold of his bundle, she pleaded:

“You might at least say something! What’s wrong?”

“You’re a young woman,” he said, “and we’re living in a new society. Find yourself a job!”

Though Tang spoke simply, he felt quite sad. But then he thought: In the old days he didn’t even have a place to get out of the rain. Now he had a family, a home, a good society, a happy life. They lacked nothing. That was the very reason he had to fight.

But to Su-lan’s ears his words sounded like the speech of a man on his death bed. Her agitation increased. She wiped a tear from the corner of her eye, already guessing what he had in mind.

“You’ve been wounded,” she said. “You can’t do anything too tiring.”

Tang rose angrily and pushed his hat to the back of his head. “I got those wounds from the Japanese imperialists! Am I going to let the American imperialists give me some more!”

That day he put his name down to join the Chinese People’s Volunteers.

When the task of pushing across the Imjin River at the 38th Parallel was given to Tang’s regiment, the men were delighted. Just close your eyes and think back. The eyes of the whole world

were on that line in Korea. Everyone was wondering whether we could crack the enemy’s position. So you can imagine how excited, how serious the troops who accepted that vital assignment were.

The entire river region was mantled with snow. On the southern side, the enemy had built strong defences. They kept up a steady barrage of shells and machine-gun fire to seal off the northern bank. But the first concern of our commanders was the land mines on the northern shore. These had to be cleared away, or our assault unit couldn’t get across.

In a dugout, a platoon leader of the engineers had called together some of his best men. He told them the task they had been given by the higher command. He proposed to take a squad out that night to the river bank and try to dismantle one of the land mines. Before they could clear the mines, they had to learn to remove the detonators. When he asked who would do the actual dismantling, a silence fell. It wasn’t that the young fellows were afraid, but this was something new. They had never seen an American land mine before, they weren’t sure they could handle it.

Through the entrance to the dugout came the thunder of the big guns. There was a long silence. Then Tang coughed and in a slow quiet voice began to speak. He wasn’t like the youngsters who jump up and shout, “Don’t worry, commander. Give me the job. I guarantee to do it.”

No, Tang was still the same careful technician. A new task to him was like a new machine. He would examine it first, tapping this, poking that, and start it up to see how it ran. Only then would he say confidently, “All right.”

That’s how it was now. He had thought the matter over thoroughly. “Let me have a go at the first one,” he said calmly.

The platoon leader, a combat hero who had been assigned to the engineers, was an impetuous fellow. Happy but worried, he pumped Tang’s hand.

“Good for you, Old Tang! This is the 38th Parallel. The whole world is watching us. We’ve got to succeed in this mission no matter what the risk.”

“I think . . . well . . . I’ve taken risks before. . . .”

The moon was exceptionally bright that night. From the heights every line of the snowy terrain was visible. An icy wind blew.

Except for an occasional burst of blood-red tracer bullets from the enemy side, the night was very still. A squad of engineers crept stealthily towards the river with Tang in the lead. The platoon leader was five paces behind him.

Crawling over the snow, Tang muttered a curse at the enemy. "If you bastards can cross the 38th Parallel, so can we!" His movements were quick, graceful. Covered by a white cape, he skimmed rapidly forward soundlessly in the moonlight, without a shadow.

The platoon leader had only to slow down a bit and Tang would slip out of sight. Only by listening carefully and detecting Tang's laboured breathing, could the platoon leader tell where he was. Tang would stop every now and then to blow on his hands — a workman out in the cold had to keep his fingers flexible.

As he neared the shore, Tang could hear the water flowing in the centre of the frozen river. He looked around. This is where the land mines ought to be. He began to examine every shrub and tree rising above the surface of the snow.

But that first night they failed.

Suddenly, a land mine exploded with a roar. As Tang pressed himself close to the snow, the concussion passed over him in a hot wave and shattered earth and ice showered down on his back. At once the enemy machine-guns began to chatter, firing low, their tracer bullets reflecting red on the snowy ground.

Obviously, it was no use. The platoon leader ordered Tang to return. Tang was very annoyed. The following day they learned that the mine had been set off by a member of a scouting team which had gone to the river to test the depth of the water.

This was further proof that the area was full of mines. They had to be removed, or the preparations for the attack could not be properly made. But although Tang lay motionless in the snow near the north bank all day, he was unable to discover the mine field.

Telephone calls kept coming in from the higher commands — battalion, regiment, division — asking for reports. What could the engineers' platoon say?

Another night passed. Still no luck. Tang looked thinner; there were dark circles under his eyes. When he returned to the dugout, covered with snow, he sat morosely smoking, rolling one

cigarette after another (a fresh shipment of tobacco had just arrived). Yet his pouch never seemed to become empty. On the third day he learned the reason for this endless supply. His mates had been skimping on their own rations and slipping tobacco into his pouch. Tang laughed heartily.

When he went out again that night, he discovered how to dismantle the American mines.

As he crawled to the mined area, he was certain, on the basis of his observations of the past several days, that the secret lay in some small trees. But when he crawled to within a few feet of one of them, he could see nothing.

Sporadic bursts of enemy fire whizzed over the ground. Tang didn't stir. His big body was as flexible as a cat's. With one swift movement he rolled directly under the tree, lying face up.

Then he saw it — a fine silver wire glimmering in the moonlight, only a foot and half from his nose. It was a trip-wire, quite invisible against the snowy background. Tang smiled, but he didn't even dare breathe too hard. For the fine silver wire ran from the small tree to something buried beneath the snow.

Slowly rolling over, Tang crawled up to the far end of the wire. It was connected to a thin tube projecting slightly from the snow. "That's it!" he thought, his heart pounding. "That's the land mine!"

He pinched the tube lightly. It was frozen solid in the snow. He knew he had only to touch the wire and the mine would explode. If he died, it wouldn't matter, Tang thought. But the secret of removing the fuses, now at his finger-tips, would remain a mystery.

This was the kind of job that appealed to Tang. Delicately, painstakingly, he started to scrape the ice around the tube with his



finger-nail. At first he made no impression, but blowing the ice with his hot breath and scraping at the same time, he finally managed to expose the entire tube. Tang quickly set the safety catch on. Then he began unscrewing the tube from the land mine. . . .

All this time, the platoon leader, some distance behind him, was mystified by the sound of Tang's heavy breathing. Staring straight ahead, he listened as the minutes dragged by.

The wind was colder than the first night. It cut Tang's face like a knife. But his padded clothes were soaked with sweat, which quickly turned to layers of ice. Each time he moved, Tang's garments crackled, while beads of perspiration dripped off his chin and formed a little icy cavity in the snow.

One hour passed, then another. Now no sound at all came from Tang's direction. "What's wrong?" the platoon leader wondered. "Could a stray bullet have got him?" He decided to crawl up to Tang and see. Just then a crouching grey shadow came dashing across the snow. It was Tang, carrying a square object. He handed the green, defused land mine to the platoon leader. By then light was showing in the east.

The means of removing the detonator was discovered. Regimental command ordered all engineers and scouts to clear the north shore of land mines within the next two nights. Everyone was very happy, and they congratulated Tang on his good work. But Tang still wasn't satisfied. He sat in the dugout with his back against the chill earthen wall, staring at the fire in the brazier, his brows knit in thought.

A reconnaissance staff officer from regimental headquarters came into the dugout with a new assignment. The 38th Parallel was on the south side of the river. But that side was sure to have land mines as well. This presented an even more difficult task for the engineer platoon.

The platoon leader thought for a long time. Then he raised his head, determination shining in his eyes, and said, "We engineers are responsible. I'll go first. Even if I can't defuse all the mines, I won't let our shock troops run into them. If need be, I'll stamp a path through myself!"

Tang was deeply moved, like every other soldier in his unit. All had a high sense of duty. As each of his comrades demanded to

be the first to blast open the mine field with his own body, Tang gazed admiringly at his platoon leader. He respected him as a superior and loved him like a brother. His heart burning with warmth, Tang cleared his throat and murmured:

"Say, what about this. . . ? Ask the division commander to let our platoon cross the river five minutes before the shock detachment and clear the mines."

An hour after the reconnaissance officer had departed, the regiment's political commissar telephoned personally. He praised the engineers for their traditional courage. He concluded with the words, "Forward, comrades, for the sake of communism! . . ."

Tang's face rarely registered emotion, but now two tears ran down his cheeks.

The regimental commander approved the plan they had proposed. He agreed that they should assault the 38th Parallel ahead of the shock detachment.

The hour for the intense, world-shaking battle had arrived.

Our artillery poured out volley after volley, and the southern side of the river burst into flames which were reflected brightly on the ice. Against the glow, a small file of men could be seen advancing across the river as flaming shells screamed overhead.

It was a tense moment. By the time Tang mounted the southern bank, he was almost frozen. But he immediately crawled forward, taking the lead in clearing any mines our artillery shells had not detonated.

As he was removing fuses, one after another, he saw, on the northern side, five green flares rise up in the sky, followed by a string of blood-red tracer bullets. The soft colours formed a handsome tapestry. It was the signal to attack. The shock detachment would be coming at any moment.

"The whole world is watching us!" Tang looked ahead. There were still several more land mines. He crawled towards one of them quickly, snipped the wire, unscrewed the fuse, then hurriedly crawled to another. "The whole world is watching us! . . ."

But the shock detachment had already crossed the river. He could hear them though he was too busy to turn his head. Drenched in sweat, he could hear his comrades' running footsteps. There was no time to remove any more fuses. Tang jumped to his feet. Spreading his arms like an eagle, he flew forward and flung him-

self on the remaining live land mines. Just as the platoon leader had vowed to do, Tang detonated them with his life. The explosions tossed him into the air, then he fell to the ground. Five minutes later, when the regimental commander crossed the river and came running up, he saw Tang lying there.

The regimental commander treasured the memory of this heroic engineer. As the attack rolled forward, he told what he had seen to a press correspondent. Not long afterwards, the army newspaper carried an article with a black border around it, commemorating the brave death of Tang Ming-chih.

But a still more moving event took place a long time after the battle. One spring had gone by, and another spring had come.

The Korean countryside, the highways, were pervaded with the fragrance of chestnuts in blossom. The engineers were holding a meeting in a pine forest. A big soldier entered the grove and walked up to them like a man returning home. As he slipped off his knapsack, his easy manner, the deep lines on his face, his quiet gaze, petrified the engineers. They stared at him, motionless. He nodded at them and seemed about to sit down and join their discussion.

The platoon leader jumped up, his face red with excitement, and threw his arms around the tall thin newcomer, as if to reassure



himself that the man was real. "Comrades, look!" he shouted. "Our hero's come back to life!"

Even the new soldiers guessed whom he meant. The whole unit swarmed around Tang, laughing for joy. Soon the telephone wires were humming. The news that Tang was alive spread to practically every company at the front.

Tang pulled out his tobacco pouch. It wasn't the same one he had used that snowy night but a new one, bright red, embroidered with the words, "To our most beloved." He opened the pouch and passed it around for the men to help themselves, then slowly began his story.

When the stretcher-bearers had picked him up with the other bodies and were carrying him to the rear, someone noticed that his lips were slightly trembling. It was only then that they realized he wasn't dead and placed him among the wounded. He revived for a moment but was unable to speak. He couldn't open his eyes and didn't know where he was. A few minutes later, he passed out again.

The next time Tang awakened, he was in a hospital in Heilung-chiang, far from the front. A nurse was sitting by his bedside. When she saw him open his eyes, she was delighted. Nearly every inch of his body had been lacerated and torn by the explosions; no one had really expected him to live. But his stubborn will had pulled him through. As he himself put it: "It was like being born again."

He lay in the hospital bed for months, slowly improving. One day the door opened and his wife Su-lan hurried in, carrying the baby. The nurse had helped him write a letter, and Su-lan had rushed from home to see him. . . .

At this point Tang's auditors chuckled. They detected something new in him. A smile seemed to be hovering constantly about his deeply lined face. There was a sparkle in his solemn eyes. He spoke more than before too, and his voice was brighter.

A young soldier said banteringly, "That red tobacco pouch — of course your wife gave it to you?"

Tang looked at him, but ignored the question. He took a puff then removed the cigarette from his mouth.

"I didn't recognize the baby, he'd grown so rosy and fat," Tang said after a pause. "He was dressed up like a little doll. I scolded

my wife for putting on such a show. Why had she borrowed new clothes for the kid just to bring him to the hospital? When I asked her that, comrades, she only smiled. She said those were the baby's own clothes, that all the children at home dressed like that. But how could that be? I stared at her and said: You mean to say I was wrong to criticize you? Living at the front day and night, have I become backward? . . . She burst out laughing. Do you know what she's doing at home? You'll never guess in a million years."

He paused and looked around. The men were tickled. A few in the back stood up eagerly, as if Tang were about to tell them some new way of removing land-mine fuses. His eyes swept his audience and he grinned.

"She's become a tractor driver! . . ."

Periods of silence and shouts of laughter alternated in the pine forest. During the silences, Tang's voice could be heard. When the laughter roared forth, magpies, flicking their tails on the pines, were startled into flight.

But then Tang happened to look up and his expression became serious. Like the veteran he was, he rose respectfully to his feet. The men turned to see what he was gazing at. The regimental commander was standing behind them. When he had received the news about Tang's return, he had hastened over from regimental headquarters. He had stood quietly in the rear, listening with the men to this story of death and rebirth, joining in their pleased laughter.

Golden sunbeams filtering through the trees shone on the regimental commander's face. But the glory of his expression was more shining than anything mere sunlight could produce.

*Translated by Sidney Shapiro
Illustrations by Shu Lan*

LU CHU-KUO

The Battle of Sangkumryung

Below we publish an excerpt from Lu Chu-kuo's short novel *The Battle of Sangkumryung* written in 1953. The world famous Battle of Sangkumryung in the Korean war is the background of the story. Sangkumryung was a commanding height in the central front of the war. By holding this position, the Korean People's Army and Chinese People's Volunteers could control the east and the west fronts; therefore a fierce fight developed in this locality. The book deals with the activities of a heroic company of the Chinese People's Volunteers at Sangkumryung. It shows the great courage, ingenuity, steadfast fighting spirit and optimism of the fighters under incredibly difficult conditions, and describes how they overcame all difficulties and held their positions till the final victory. The section published here tells how this company, after inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy, defended the tunnels and held out against tremendous odds.

Every second of the day the men in A Tunnel had to contend with well-nigh unbearable hardships. Yet not for a second did the singing and laughter stop.

Lu Chu-kuo was born in Yiyang County, Honan, in 1928. He joined the Chinese People's Liberation Army in 1948 and was for some time an army correspondent. In 1950 he went to Korea during the movement to resist U.S. aggression and aid Korea. On his return, he wrote the short novel *The Battle of Sangkumryung*. He is also the author of the novel, *Wind and Storm on the Eastern Front* and the screen play *Heroic Island*. As he has spent many years with the troops, most of his writing takes army life as its theme.

Chang Wen-kuei, the company commander, had a mouth-organ given him some months previously by one of the girls in a concert group at army headquarters. In three days she had taught him how to play it and he had promised to practise faithfully. On her return later to sing for them, when he managed to play a simple accompaniment for her, she had praised his "musical aptitude" and encouraged him to become "company musician." Chang kept this treasured mouth-organ wrapped in a square of white nylon from an American parachute. The fierce fighting of the last ten days or so had made him forget it. Now he took it out of his haversack and played *The East Is Red*. His tongue was so stiff and numb that he realized he was giving a thoroughly bad performance. The girl, had she been there, would have scolded him for back-sliding. He tried again with the *Dance of Youth*, wishing that the concert group were there to dance, but broke off abruptly at the thought of the enemy outside. Clenching the mouth-organ tightly on his knees, he sat silent for some minutes. Then, with a glance at the men around, he started again on an unrecognizable tune.

For five days they had been without a drop of water. Blood from his cracked lips stained the mouth-organ red; yet he played on. He was nearly too weak to speak; yet he played on. Let the sound carry to the folk at home, let it scare the guts out of the cowardly gangsters outside. The fighters in the tunnel had won through an ordeal of blood and fire to battle on victoriously.

Water! They had finished the water days ago. Even the water in their bodies seemed to have dried up under the scorching fire of enemy flame-throwers. The few tubes of tooth-paste left were being carefully kept for casualties to suck. Racked with thirst, the men were reduced to licking the drops of water and mud on the tunnel walls.

Without water, unable to chew or swallow their hardtack, they were forced to fast.

His eyes closed, Chang Wen-kuei played his mouth-organ while Liu Tsai-hsueh and Lin Mao-tien sat near by at a game of cards. Liu had given up talking about tobacco — all he wanted now was a drink.

"I tell you what, Old Lin! Just let me out of this tunnel, and I could drink two great vats of water, easy. There's an ace of clubs — beat that!"

"I've stopped thinking about water — what good does it do?" retorted Lin Mao-tien, trumping the ace of clubs with his three of hearts.

"They ought to make shells filled with water! Then regimental headquarters could fix everything by firing a few rounds at us."

"Stop harping on it, will you! If you say 'water' again, I'll throw in my cards." Lin was really angry. Talk of this sort made him suffer torments of thirst.

"All right, all right! No need to flare up! Going dry for a few days certainly hasn't improved your temper."

Though the word "water" was now taboo, Liu Tsai-hsueh could think of nothing else. After two more games he stood up, saying: "Old Lin, I'm going to see what can be done." He came running back before long with two fistfuls of uncooked rice. "Try this!" he said, holding some out to Lin. "It's just what we need, cool, filling and thirst-quenching!"

Lin avidly ate three mouthfuls. "Just the thing!" he agreed. In his turn he offered some to Chang Wen-kuei, who after a trial bite started eating too.

"If you're thirsty, comrades, try eating rice! It tastes good and is easy to get down!" Leaving the cards, Liu Tsai-hsueh walked along the tunnel to announce his discovery.

This caused quite a stir. Nearly all the men ran for rice. In vain did the medico warn them that uncooked rice would make them ill — his voice went unheeded. He marched indignantly to the battalion political instructor, Lu An-kuo. "They won't listen to me, instructor! Men have died from eating uncooked rice."

It was hardly in Lu An-kuo's power to stop the men either. All he could answer was: "No one is to eat more than one handful — that's an order. Tell the officers to see it's carried out."

Water, water! This problem filled Lu's mind to the exclusion of everything else. In fact, he was worse off than the rank and file. Attending meetings, giving talks and reports all day long

had numbed his parched lips completely. The men could lick the clammy walls or eat one handful of raw rice, but even this comfort was denied to him. Dozens of pairs of eyes were watching him. He must set a good example to the troops. So he held out doggedly.

Of course, mud and uncooked rice could not quench the men's thirst: it simply gave them a momentary relief.

"We've got to find a way out," muttered Lu to himself. He called Chang Wen-kuei over.

"Our one big problem is water," he told him. "You know this district. Is there any water in the gullies here? If there is, we must fetch some, no matter what the risk."

"There's no water round here, instructor. I thought you knew that. There was a water-hole —"

"A water-hole!" cut in Lu eagerly. "Where?"

"It's not really a water-hole. When we started digging trenches down in the valley, we dug over a metre before we realized the place wouldn't do because it was too low. We left a small pit, and in the rainy season water collected in it. The men used to wash their clothes there. I dare say it's dried up by now."

"It's worth trying. Even slush would be better than nothing. We'll send two men who know the way. You handle this. If there isn't even any slush left, we'll have to ask the higher command to send us something. But that means running the gauntlet of enemy fire for over half a mile. They might lose several men without being able to reach us."

"I agree. Each extra day we can hold out means fewer casualties for the transport corps. But if the worst comes to the worst, we must ask for help."

"Don't broadcast this, or the men will be disappointed if it doesn't come off."

Chang Wen-kuei rummaged round till he found an empty petrol tin. The petrol, used for their lamps, was finished now. He handed the tin to his messenger, Wang Chi-pao, asking: "Remember that little water-hole where we used to wash clothes?"

"Can't say I do," answered Wang after some thought.

"That trench we left half finished."

"Oh, that! Yes, I remember."

"I want you to take this tin and fetch us some water. Even muddy water will do."

"Last time I was washing, there wasn't much water left. It's probably all dried up. I'll have a try. With any luck, I'll bring you some."

Chang strapped the tin firmly on Wang's back and gave him a bowl to serve as ladle. After some consideration, he told Liu Tsai-hsueh to take his tommy-gun and cover Wang.

At the entrance to the tunnel, he impressed on them: "If there's water, bring it back at all costs! The whole tunnel is waiting for this tin of water. Make sure the stopper's in firmly!"

"Very good." Half way out, Wang Chi-pao turned back. "Company commander!" he said rather gruffly. "I've two packets of tobacco in my haversack. Go ahead and smoke it. I don't smoke anyway. Or let Liu Tsai-hsueh have it." There was obviously more he wanted to say, but he turned away abruptly.

"Me?" Liu shook his head. In this sortie under enemy fire he would be running the same risks as Wang. But thinking better of it, he went on: "All right. I can't smoke now, but after this battle's won I can start a tobacco shop!"

When the enemy flares died away outside, the two men slipped out of the tunnel and were swallowed up in the darkness.

The stale air in the tunnel reeked of carbon-dioxide and powder fumes. Wang Chi-pao found the cold wind outside inexpressibly refreshing. With Liu at his heels, he crawled towards the deserted trench.

Enemy flares went up again. Even a needle would have been clearly visible on that bright hill-top. Wang hugged the ground, keeping absolutely still.

The enemy machine-guns began to stutter. Cold air hissed past the back of his neck, the earth in front was ripped up by bullets. Not far ahead was a shell hole, and he longed to take shelter in it. Still he lay motionless, hoping that the enemy would take him for a corpse. The least movement would end their chances of reaching the trench.

Next time the enemy machine-guns rattled, Wang's right leg suddenly went dead. This was his first wound since joining the Volunteers. He could hardly believe he had been hit. As he recalled other casualties he had seen, his leg started to burn and

throb painfully. At this point, how he missed the tunnel! There he could have got good treatment for worse wounds than this; but here under enemy fire he couldn't budge.

His trousers, soaked with blood, stuck to his flesh. Panic seized him. Would he ever get back alive? He might never see the company commander again, or deliver water to his comrades tortured with thirst. They were waiting for him now in the tunnel, eating uncooked rice, licking the clammy stones. . . . Biting the sleeve of his wadded coat in his pain, he hugged the ground yet more closely.

The flares flickered out, the firing stopped, Wang crawled forward. But pain and exhaustion slowed him down. Liu Tsai-hsueh just behind him kept prodding his foot and urging him to speed up. Unwilling to disclose that he was wounded, he gritted his teeth and crawled on. . . .

When at last they were in the abandoned trench, Wang plunged both hands in the muddy puddle at the bottom. Then a fit of dizziness made him slump to the ground.

"What's wrong, Young Wang? Hurry up and fill the tin!" Liu shook him desperately in the dark.

"It's nothing." With an effort Wang sat up, extracted the bowl from his pocket and handed it over: "Here. You fill it. Mind you don't spill any water down my neck."

Slinging his gun over his shoulder, with one hand Liu groped for the tin's small opening, with the other he scooped up water. The puddle was so shallow that the aluminium bowl grated on the rock bottom and only half a bowl could be got each time. Meanwhile Wang stealthily opened his first-aid kit, then started tearing his trouser leg to reach the wound.

"Hey, Wang! What are you doing?" demanded Liu.

"Nothing," was the answer through clenched teeth.

"Nothing? What are you tearing up?" Sensing that something was wrong, Liu put down the bowl and reached out. When he felt the first-aid kit and the blood on Wang's hands, he started with dismay. Anxious and indignant, he asked:

"Where are you hit, lad? Why on earth couldn't you tell me earlier?"

"It's nothing. A wound on my thigh. Will you tie it up for me?"

Having passed the first-aid kit to Liu, Wang ripped his trouser leg over the still bleeding wound. Liu started to bandage it.

"Tighter! This is from a machine-gun shot. These confounded bullets burst inside you. Make the bandage as tight as you can!"

"Don't you worry, Young Wang. We'll have filled this tin in no time. Once we're back, the medico will fix you up. Just take it easy!" When the bandage was in place, he said: "Give me that tin, lad. I'll carry it back."

"No, I can manage it."

"None of that, comrade! You're wounded. I can crawl faster than you. We want to get the water back as soon as we can, don't we?"

Wang Chi-pao unstrapped the tin.

Liu quickly filled it and strapped it on his back. Then he scooped up another half bowl of water and drank it greedily.

"Give me some, Old Liu! I'm dying of thirst!"

"Not for you, young fellow. You can drink boiled water when we get back. Just do as I say. Get going now. Quick." Liu, who would gladly have drunk more himself, pulled Wang out of the trench.

The return journey was even more difficult, for this time their way lay uphill.

The two men crawled side by side. The tin of water on his back and the tommy-gun in one hand, Liu nevertheless contrived to help Wang along.

When the enemy set up another wild barrage, they rolled into a bomb crater. When the shooting stopped, they crawled forward. In fearful pain, soaked in sweat, Wang could barely move. Liu had virtually to drag him every inch of the way.

More flares lit up the sky. The machine-guns started again. Ping! A bullet pierced the tin and icy water started trickling down Liu's neck. He swore beneath his breath! "After all the trouble we've taken to get this water, you bastards are trying to rob us of it again!"

When the flares died down and Liu tried to drag Wang on, he found he could not move him. He put his lips to the other's ear and whispered: "Come on, lad! Stick it out! We're nearly home!"

There was no answer. Liu tugged at his arm. "Young Wang! Is the pain very bad?"

"Go on without me. I've been hit again — my head and back." Wang's voice was barely audible. "Go on. They need water in the tunnel."

"Come on! I'll pull you."

"I can't move, Old Liu. I haven't carried out my mission. Tell the company commander I'm sorry — I've let the comrades down —"

Wang's voice faded away. His hand grew cold and stiff. Using every ounce of his strength, Liu pulled him forward for twenty yards or so. But he could not keep this up. Laying the body in a bomb crater, he crawled on alone.

Enemy flares were going up every few minutes. With his eyes on his watch, Chang Wen-kuei estimated the time it should take the two soldiers to bring back the water.

The rattle of machine-guns made him hold his breath. And more shooting followed later.

It was time they were back, but there was no sign of them. Lu An-kuo came over twice for news, still the men did not return. Chang began to fear that both of them had fallen.

At last! A solitary figure crawled into the tunnel with the tin of water on his back.

"Where's Liu Tsai-hsueh, Young Wang?" demanded Chang.

"It's not Wang. I'm Liu Tsai-hsueh. Young Wang was killed on the way back." He paused for a minute. "Take my gun, commander."

As Chang took the gun, he said: "Get up! You don't have to stay on all fours here. Are you wounded too?"

"No. But a bullet made a hole in the tin. If I stand up, all the water will run out. It was dribbling down my neck all the way, worse luck!"

Two soldiers unstrapped the tin and took it in, holding it horizontally. They walked as gingerly as if it were some treasure that would break at a touch.

Liu, rising to his feet, reported to the company commander how Wang Chi-pao had died. In conclusion he said: "When Young Wang was dying he asked me to tell you he was sorry not to have carried out his mission. He said he'd let the comrades down."

"He gave his life to get us water — what more could he have done? If we don't hold this tunnel, Liu Tsai-hsueh, we'll be the ones letting him down! . . . Where is his body?"

"In a bomb crater. I couldn't bring him in just now. Company commander, let me go and fetch him. Give me the tommy-gun. I'll go right away."

For some minutes, Chang said nothing. Every man in that tunnel was irreplaceable. If Liu ventured out again alone, he might never come back alive. But could he tell Liu not to go? They couldn't leave Wang Chi-pao's body out there on the hillside.

"All right. Go!" he said decisively after reflection. "Take my pistol — it's handier. Be as quick as you can."

Taking the pistol, Liu Tsai-hsueh turned and left.

"There's water! Water!"

"Ah! Water! . . ."

All the men crowded round. The dark muddy water brought back in a petrol tin pierced by an enemy bullet was slowly poured out. It filled one iron cartridge box and half a wash-basin.

The soldiers gazed at it avidly. But though their lips moved, not one went up to pour out a drink.

The charcoal brazier, long out of use, was requisitioned again. The singing of the water as it came to the boil was music to their ears. Someone put on the gramophone too, and new life filled the tunnel.

Before the water had boiled, Liu came back with Wang's body. Chang Wen-kuei was waiting at the entrance of the tunnel. He took the corpse in both arms and carried it slowly, as if it were a child sound asleep, into the tunnel.

The men stood up, took off their caps and stared in silence at Wang Chi-pao's face on which the blood was still fresh. The gramophone stopped. The only sound in the tunnel was the bubbling of water. With the dead lad in his arms, Chang Wen-kuei walked stiffly up to the instructor.

Lu An-kuo stepped out from behind his "desk." Bending forward, with his handkerchief he gently wiped the blood from Wang Chi-pao's face. In hoarse, forceful tones, he said:

"Comrades, don't grieve! The enemy has done his damndest to choke us to death up here, but we mean to live on! For the sake of all of us in this tunnel, for the victory of the Battle of

Sangkumryung, Comrade Wang Chi-pao has given his life. We shall always remember him. We must strike even harder at the enemy to avenge Comrade Wang Chi-pao! Not a single drop of our blood is shed in vain. The harder things are for us, the higher the price we pay, the closer we are to the final victory!"

Lu An-kuo wrapped Wang Chi-pao's body tightly in his own overcoat. Chang Wen-kuei carried his dead comrade-in-arms who had always kept so close to his side into the deepest recesses of the tunnel.

When the water had boiled, each section came for its share. Three mouthfuls for each casualty, one for each healthy man. As political instructor and company commander, Lu An-kuo and Chang Wen-kuei were given half a rice bowl between them. They were parched enough to have knocked this back in one gulp, but Lu took one mouthful and passed the rest to Chang. The company commander drank one mouthful too. The water was brackish and foul, and yet how welcome!

Lu An-kuo offered what was left to the radio operator beside him. The man shook his head. "I've had my share. I'm not thirsty."

"Not thirsty? Well, you'll drink it anyway. You've been talking all day till your lips are a mass of blood. Drink up!"

On Chang Wen-kuei's return to his post near the entrance, Liu Tsai-hsueh quietly passed him his own ration of water. "Here, company commander, take this! I drank my fill down at the trench there."

Chang Wen-kuei passed it on to the radio operator who kept in touch with the artillery. But he also refused to touch it.

"I order you to drink it!"

The man grinned and took the bowl, declaring: "I can keep going for a whole day on a mouthful of water, commander."

"And what if you don't have even one mouthful of water?"

"I'll keep going just the same!"

And keep going they did. Doggedly, with all their strength, the men in the tunnel held out.

During these interminable days of incredible hardship, second by second the men in the tunnels at the front suffered and endured. No one knew whether he would live to see the victory, but all

who still drew breath fought resolutely and stubbornly on to hasten the coming of that glorious day.

While they were shedding blood for a mouthful of water, while flame-throwers were scorching the entrances to the tunnels, while sulphurous fumes were poisoning the air and choking them, from the banks of the Yalu River to the front, the entire Chinese Volunteer Army and the whole Korean nation were doing all that was humanly possible to support this hill-top position less than four square kilometres in extent.

Every day at the appointed time, the conditions in each tunnel were reported to the high command. And instructions from the headquarters went down regularly to division and regiment command posts. Day and night the commanders remained by their field telephones, till their voices were hoarse, their eyes bloodshot, the lids swollen for lack of sleep.

At night, along the highways of northern Korea the Supply Department of the Volunteers sent an unending stream of trucks loaded with munitions. Seen from the heights, the headlights of countless transport vehicles gave the illusion of bright city lights.

The mobile artillery, hitherto held in reserve by the high command, was now sent to the front. Forces near by did their best to provide gunners, sappers, stretcher-bearers. As if drawn by a lodestone, these reinforcements converged on the centre of the conflict.

Day after day, night after night, up the winding mountain paths near the front filed transport teams made up of office workers from the rear. With never a pause they ran the blockade of enemy gunfire and bombing to transport tons of much-needed ammunition to the troops.

Korean women and white-bearded old men trod paths pitted and scarred from continuous bombardment, carrying back to the rear the dead and wounded Volunteers who had shed their blood to defend the soil of Korea.

"All for the front! All for the tunnels!" Old and young alike had thrown themselves into this fierce, relentless struggle.

It was more than ten days since Regimental Commander Chang Kai had had a proper sleep. The receiver was seldom out of his hands. Recently, the daily additions to his artillery and transport corps had meant a great increase in his responsibilities.

His main concern was that the tunnels at the front should hold out. Each damage inflicted by the enemy, each casualty in the tunnels disturbed him deeply. It was not that he didn't have implicit confidence in each fighter. So long as one volunteer was left alive, the tunnels would not be taken. But they were hemmed in by the enemy and menaced by hunger and thirst — it was several days now since any food or water had passed most of the fighters' lips. Some tunnels could still get water from outside at great risk, but others could not even find mud to lick! Under these conditions it was hard to hold out — there are limits, after all, to human endurance.

To lessen these hardships so that the men could resist even better, for the last two nights he had tried dispatching transport teams through enemy-held territory to deliver supplies to a certain tunnel. On both occasions heavy losses had been sustained. Nevertheless, they had succeeded in getting some of the most urgently needed supplies to that particular tunnel.

This morning, division headquarters had sent over a citation from the high command to his regiment, and a letter of encouragement to those fighting in the tunnels. Shortly before this, the division commander had telephoned:

"Comrade Chang Kai, have you found a way to send supplies to the tunnels?"

"Judging by the last two nights, the cost is too great."

"So long as it is humanly possible, go all out to transport supplies to them. Send them the citation and letter too! The high command of the Volunteers and our commanders are concerned about this problem. Never mind if the cost is great. By sending in supplies, you'll increase the strength of those in the tunnels enormously and show every fighter there that the whole Volunteer Army is supporting them and thinking of them."

"Right. This evening we'll send out supplies on a large scale! I mean to start with a consignment of turnips. They satisfy both hunger and thirst."

"Good, I shan't be able to come over and speak to the transport men myself. Please tell them I'm counting on them, and thank them in my name!"

The regimental commander lost no time in asking the assistant chief-of-staff in charge of supplies to summon the best transport

workers to his headquarters. He would draw up this plan of action himself.

One of the transport workers was Wang Yung-fu, head of the cooks' section in Chang Wen-kuei's company. When the rest of the front-line troops went over to tunnel warfare, his section was drafted to the rear to help with transport. Wang was not a strong man and had chronic indigestion; but on each trip the last couple of days he had carried six cases of shells over the hills. This load, weighing a hundred and eighty pounds, would normally have had to be lugged by a strong horse. His superiors had advised him to take less, but Wang's answer was:

"However tough it is for us, it's much worse for our men in the tunnels. They're sucking mud and eating uncooked rice, but still fighting on. Each extra round of ammunition we send up means more security for the tunnels. If we can cut down a day on our preparations, that means a day's less hardships for our comrades. The Battle of Sangkumryung isn't an ordinary battle." But these fearful exertions had so exhausted him that now he was spitting blood. He kept this to himself, however, and spat unobserved or into his handkerchief.

Now Wang Yung-fu sat down in his usual place in the darkest corner of the command post. This was his accustomed seat in company meetings, for though he worked with a will he disliked speaking. And now that he was constantly spitting blood, it would have been even more awkward sitting in front.

While the regimental commander told the transport men their task, a soldier next to Wang nudged him and whispered: "How fast the regimental commander is ageing! He's not quite thirty yet, but he looks over forty."

The light from the open door, falling on the regimental commander's face, emphasized the deep lines graven there. Instinctively, Wang put his hands to his own face. Two weeks of this campaign had taken more out of them than a normal year. In that case, what must his company commander and the other men be going through during this time!

The regimental commander in person handed them the citation from the high command as well as a pile of letters. In conclusion he told them: "Your task is extremely important. You must take the congratulations of the high command and the whole army to

the tunnels. No matter how tight the enemy blockade, you must get through! The division commander is counting on you to carry out this mission successfully. In the name of the division commander and our whole regiment, I wish you success!"

Wang Yung-fu took the citation and the letters, and answered from his heart: "Don't worry, commander. However fierce the enemy barrage, it won't stop us!"

"Good. Go and get ready then."

That night, Wang Yung-fu received instructions to take supplies to A Tunnel. He put the army orders and letters in his breast pocket, and shouldered a sack of turnips. Two other men were going with him. He was the group leader. Before setting out, they rolled in the mud to camouflage themselves. When each had provided himself with a few hand-grenades, they set off for the front.

Enemy flares were rising one after the other. Machine-guns and mortars kept up an incessant barrage. For a moment Wang Yung-fu wondered: "Will we make it?" Then, pulling himself together, he fingered the papers in his pocket and went calmly ahead.

The regiment and battalion command posts had originally been connected by a deep communication trench, in which Wang had always felt safe and secure. But now hardly a trace of that trench was left — enemy shells had pounded in its sides and flattened it out till it looked like a shallow, dried-up river bed.

Wang and the two others followed this open track. Sand and gravel filled their shoes so that the mere act of walking was difficult.

"How many shells have the bastards fired!" Wang swore to himself. "But even if they've smashed this trench, they can't cut communications between our front and the rear."

Having passed the battalion headquarters and gone downhill, they reached the area covered by enemy machine-guns. Our defence line lay on this slope which the enemy was deluging with shells. To avoid them, Wang and his men were constantly having to fall flat on the ground.

"Who goes there?" called a sentry softly, peering out of a foxhole.

"Wang Yung-fu. We're taking stuff to the front." Wang answered in the same low voice.

"Are you off now, Old Wang?" The sentry and Wang were old friends.

"It's time. Must be after eight. The sooner we get there the better!"

"Which tunnel are you going to?"

"A Tunnel. Mind you don't fire on us when we come back!"

"That's all right. I'm going off duty soon, but I'll tell the next fellow. Keep your eyes skinned — the enemy has sewn things up pretty tight. At night they stay up on the heights, afraid to come down, just firing at random!" The sentry knew that more than half of the transport men the last two nights had not returned.

"Let them come down if they like — we've brought hand grenades."

Wang had not gone many steps when the roar of heavy artillery pulled him up in surprise.

"Our brother units down the line are hitting back again!" exulted the sentry. "Every night now they attack, to tie up the enemy troops and guns so as to help our men in the tunnels."

Wang Yung-fu said nothing. He was listening intently. The heavy guns were followed by distant machine-guns and hand-grenades. He turned to remark: "The whole front is supporting us! For this reason alone the enemy's bound to lose!" Then he called: "Get going!" and led the way down the slope.

The low ground at the foot of the hill was exposed to the heaviest enemy fire. Every few minutes shells exploded around them. Each time Wang rose to his feet after dropping to the ground, he called back to the other two: "Are you both all right?" Not till they answered: "Yes. Go on!" would he creep forward.

It was no joke groping through the dark night under enemy fire and weighed down by such heavy sacks. Wang tripped and fell into a shell crater, painfully cutting and bruising his knees and hands; but clenching his teeth he patted his breast pocket, struggled to his feet and hobbled forward on numbed legs. He fell four times, till his sweat-stained uniform was in shreds and his knees were bleeding. Worst of all, there was an agonizing constriction in his chest and he was longing to cough; but here under the eyes of the enemy that would have been inviting destruction. With a supreme effort he refrained.

As they were passing under a height held by the enemy, another flare whizzed up. Wang threw himself down. Under that powerful glare, he flattened himself against the ground as if trying to burrow into the loose soil.

Enemy mortars raked the valley. The deafening noise set up a buzzing in Wang's ears. Clods of earth and pebbles rained down on his back till soon he was nearly covered with soil. Then something like a stone plopped down in front and he saw with astonishment that it was half a turnip. The next instant he realized with a sinking heart that one of the others must have been killed or wounded.

After the flares flickered out and the shelling stopped, he crawled frantically back.

One of his men, still on the ground, clutched at Wang and whispered: "Chief, where are you going?"

Wang stopped to answer painfully: "How goes it, Liu Tien-teh? All right?"

"I'm all right."

"Chang Huai-yi?"

"He's behind."

Without another word, Wang crawled further back. After a dozen yards or so, he found the other man and said: "Come on!" He waited desperately for an answer but there was none. He felt the sack on Chang's back. It had been ripped to pieces, its turnips scattered. The torn sacking was sticky with blood. He put a finger in front of Chang Huai-yi's nostrils — there was no breath.

Lying for some seconds beside his fallen comrade, Wang could not bear the thought of leaving him there. But there was no alternative. The men in the front-line tunnels must come first.

Enemy firing broke out again as Wang crawled back to Liu.

"Is Chang Huai-yi coming, chief?"

"He's had it."

Both men were silent for a while.

Then Wang said: "Let's go on, quick, while the fire is not too heavy."

But when Liu stood up and started forward, he staggered and fell. Wang helped him up and said encouragingly: "Steady on! After this next gully the going gets better."

"I've been hit in the foot, chief."

Wang Yung-fu was aghast. Before they had gone half way, two out of three of his group were out of action.

"Start crawling back slowly then. I'll go on alone."

"I'd rather die than turn back, chief. The tunnel matters more than I do."

This was no time for argument. Putting an arm round Liu Tien-teh, Wang said: "All right. Let's go. I'll give you a hand. We'll get there even if we have to crawl the whole way!"

Under enemy fire, the two of them pressed on. Every second might mean death. They had no means of knowing whether they could reach the tunnel safely or not. But they had no thought for themselves. Their one concern was for the tunnels, for the sacred task assigned to them. They must do their bit in the Battle of Sangkumryung.

Through violent explosions, through the smoke of enemy shell-fire, the two men pressed resolutely forward. On the scorched earth Liu Tien-teh left a trail of blood.

But they delivered the turnips to the men in the tunnel.

Translated by Gladys Yang

Modern Drama

TUAN CHENG-PIN
and TU SHIH-TSUN

Taming the Dragon and the Tiger

A Play in Six Scenes

CHARACTERS

- HSING, Secretary Hsing, 36, deputy secretary of the county Party committee
HO, Ho Kuo-chang, 23, county prospecting technician
YIN, Yin Che-fu, 30, bridge engineer sent by the provincial Party committee
MENG, Meng Tan-bua, 24, bridge-building technician, Yin Che-fu's fiancée
JIN, Jin Teb-lung, 32, head of a production brigade and commander of the Water Conservancy Engineering Battalion of Lungmen Commune
CHAO, Chao Ta-kang, 28, head of a production team in Tiger Hill Commune
LI, Li Yu-tao, 26, head of a women's production team and commander of the Women's Company of Tiger Hill Commune, Chao Ta-kang's wife
CHIN, Uncle Chin, 60, orchard man in Tiger Hill Commune
DAD, Dad Chao, 58, boatman, Chao Ta-kang's father

Tuan Cheng-pin and Tu Shih-tsun are both young men in their thirties. The former is a script writer and the latter an actor of the China Youth Art Theatre.

- CHEN, Chen Chang-shou, 35, director of the iron foundry in Huapi-kou Commune
KAO, Kao Shou-tien, 29, commander of the transport company in Kaoshan Commune
LIU, Liu Pao-shan, 32, cadre in the steel mill in Liushuwan Commune
FEI, Fei-mao-tui (Fast Running Legs), 20, member of a production team in Tiger Hill Commune
CHANG, Chang Lao-erb, 53, member of a production team in Tiger Hill Commune
TSAO, Tsao Lao-szu, 50, member of a production team in Tiger Hill Commune
PEASANTS and MEMBERS, of the hunting team
TIME, Autumn, 1958
PLACE, Tiger Hill Area

SCENE I

Glad Tidings in the Hills

Forest area skirting the Dragon River; the waves in the river can be seen, rolling eastwards.

When the curtain rises a large tiger with a white mark on its forehead is sitting on a crag overgrown with tangled undergrowth. From the forest comes the sound of hunters' drums and horns, reverberating across hill and valley. The tiger shrinks back in alarm and leaps out of sight.

A short pause, then a yellow flag leads on CHAO TA-KANG and a team of powerfully-built hunters; on the flag is the inscription in red: "Tiger Mountain Youth Tiger-hunting Team." The team looks round for the tiger's spoor.

CHAO (discovering the tiger's spoor): Tieh-chu, you block the east side! Shih-tou, you block the west side! Erh-shun, you go round and head him off; Fei-mao-tui, you come with me!

(All go off following the spoor.)

(CHEN CHANG-SHOU, LIU PAO-SHAN and KAO SHOU-TIEN come on together. They are just going to move forward when they are halted by a shout from the forest.)

VOICE OFF: Stop! There's a pitfall in the forest, with a noose in it!

LIU: It wouldn't stop us if there were swords in it!

KAO: We're on urgent business, neighbour.

CHEN: Hey, neighbour, how do we get to Lu Pan's Rock?

VOICE OFF: What's your business?

CHEN: I'm Chen Chang-shou, director of the iron foundry in the Huapikou Commune.

LIU: I'm Liu Pao-shan, technician in the steel mill in the Liu-shuwan Commune.

KAO: And I'm Kao Shou-tien, commander of the transport company in the Kaoshan Commune.

VOICE OFF: Fei-mao-tui, go and have a look.

(FEI-MAO-TUI, a member of the hunting team, appears on the top of a rock.)

FEI: Hello there, up here looking for ore, I suppose, are you? If I'm wrong you can do this to me! (Makes motion of chopping off his head.)

CHEN: You've got it.

FEI: Let me tell you something. The furnace in our commune foundry here has long since been going hungry and we're looking for something to keep it alive with at this moment.

CHEN (to KAO and LIU): Huh, they're certainly keen on looking after themselves!

LIU: Whatever you say you people ought to be well-fed here.

KAO: We heard some time back that ore had been found on Tiger Mountain; don't hoard it all for yourselves.

CHEN: Come on, be honest. We're here to arrange for shifting the ore.

FEI: Shifting it?

KAO

LIU } (together): Yes, shifting it.

CHEN

FEI: All right, just a minute while I report to the team leader. (Turning and addressing his remarks to the forest) Team leader, there are some people here who've come into the hills to transport ore.

(Enter CHAO carrying a hunting rifle.)

CHAO: Transporting ore? Who's this coming to transport our ore for us?

CHEN: We've come to get some ore from you. You people are world-famous, you know!

KAO: We'll have carts laid on at the drop of a hat.

CHAO (bursting out laughing): Ha-ha-ha. . . You're not wrong there's ore on Tiger Mountain — the only trouble is it's stuck on the other side of the river and won't stir its stumps!

LIU (to CHEN and KAO): Hear that? This one's even more set on looking after his own local interests!

CHAO: Who are you accusing of looking after their own interests? We're only out hunting and clearing the hills so that we can build a bridge and get the ore for all of us.

KAO: Tch, we could go on like this all day. Let's get back and think up some other way.

CHEN (holding KAO back): Wait a minute. (To CHAO) We want to see the county Party secretary.

KAO: Which one?

CHEN: Secretary Hsing, the man who was sent down from the county to work in your commune.

CHAO: Oh, you mean Hsing. He's staying with the commune Party committee, you've taken the wrong turning.

KAO: We've been there. They told us he'd come over to Lu Pan's Rock.

CHAO: Over here to the hunting area again? Is that true?

CHEN: Can't be any doubt about it: it was Yang, the head of the commune, who told us.

CHAO (loudly): Attention, hunting team! Secretary Hsing is at Lu Pan's Rock, mind you look after him. . . .



(Sounds of the message being passed on come from the forest.)

CHEN: Anyway, Secretary Hsing can't let our iron furnaces go hungry.

LIU: And the little converter in our steel mill is starving, too, when you are hungry.

CHAO: From what you say it seems you're really concerned with making iron and steel in a big way.

KAO }
LIU } *(together)*: It is essential that iron and steel come first.
CHEN }

CHAO: Fei-mao-tui!

FEI: Here!

CHAO: Take them through the hunting area. I'll hold you responsible for their safety.

FEI: Right.

(Roar of tiger from nearby. CHAO turns and exits running.)

CHEN: Who's he?

FEI: Ah, he's a man, as they say, who "when he goes into the mountains can kill a tiger and when he goes into the sea can shackle a dragon," a brave lad whose names is known far and wide round our Tiger Mountain. . . .

KAO }
LIU } *(together)*: Chao-Ta-kang!
CHEN }

FEI: Come on, then. *(Like a gust of wind he springs in behind the rocks.)*

KAO }
LIU } : Hey, wait a minute, can't
CHEN } you! *(They run off after him.)*

(The stage is empty for a short while. Music.)

(Enter MENG TAN-HUA with a rucksack on her back and a bunch of wild flowers in her hands.)

MENG *(excitedly)*: Oh, wonderful! *(Shouting to someone off)* Che-fu! Che-fu! *(Short pause, then YIN CHE-FU clambers on stage along the foot of the rocks.)*

MENG: Look, I've discovered a new continent!

YIN *(looking around with admiration)*: This is exactly what the poet meant when he said: "At the end of the hills and the end of the streams I thought there was no way through, when, shaded by willows and lit by flowers, a village came into view." Beautiful, isn't it!

MENG *(pointing to a clump of red flowers on the top of the rocks)*: Look! A beautiful patch of red, all those flowers, and so pretty! *(She goes to climb up.)*

YIN *(stopping her)*: You'll tire yourself out if you're not careful, Tan-hua.

MENG: I want to pick one of those red ones.

YIN: Well - I'll get one for you. *(He climbs vigorously up the rocks.)*

MENG: Be careful, Che-fu!

YIN *(standing on the rocks and looking out over the wild scenery)*: Wonderful!

How vast is our motherland,

How many hills and streams have yet to be opened up. . . .

MENG *(continuing the recitation)*:

The slumbering earth must awake,

Its grassland days are done.

(Breaking into a peal of laughter) Hurry on down, comrade poet!

(YIN clambers down with difficulty and hands the flowers to MENG TAN-HUA.)

MENG: What's this flower called?

YIN: Why, that's red-blaze-on-the-hills.



MENG: Red-blaze-on-the-hills! What perfect symbolism! In the sense that we turn red in body and mind the moment we set foot in the hills.

YIN: Well put. But just being red's not enough: we must be red through and through. Whatever we do we must build this bridge over the Dragon River and not betray the hopes that the comrades leading the provincial committee have pinned on us. (*Sitting down and pouring out water*) Have a drink of water.

MENG: What's this, resting? We must be moving on, it's getting late.

YIN: No need to be in such a hurry, it doesn't look as if we've much farther to go.

MENG: How can you tell?

YIN: Why, you can see for yourself. (*Pointing*) See how like a tiger's head that peak is over there?

MENG (*looking into the distance*): Too much like one for comfort. With that great gaping mouth it looks terrifying.

YIN: That *must* be the Tiger Mountain that Secretary Chang at the provincial committee mentioned.

MENG: He's quite a humorist, Secretary Chang: he said the authorities had cancelled our leave and were sending us up into the hills to kill a tiger. . . . I was quite alarmed at the time and it wasn't till afterwards that I realized we were being sent down here to master this Tiger Mountain. . . .

YIN (*pointing*): We've been sent to master that glittering silver Dragon River and build a bridge across it so that the hill people can open up a "hill of a hundred treasures" and exploit its rich mineral resources. We've a heavy burden on our shoulders, Tan-hua!

MENG: And one to be proud of. You must give all your knowledge and skill to these hills, Che-fu.

YIN: Don't worry about that. If I hadn't the determination of a Wu Sung* killing a tiger I'd never have dared take on the task of building a bridge across the Dragon River.

* A well-known brave man in the popular novel *Outlaws of the Marshes* who killed a tiger all alone.

MENG: All right, then, when the day comes to hold the opening ceremony for the great bridge you have designed, we'll do as we did at that party in the city and stage that act *Brother and Sister Reclaim the Waste Lands* for the people here.

YIN: No, I suggest a change of programme: *Husband and Wife Learn to Read!* (*He goes up to her and is about to take her in his arms.*)

(*A hunting horn is heard.*)

MENG (*pushing him away*): Listen.

YIN: Sounds like somebody out hunting.

(*They go over towards the foot of the slope and look.*)

(*The roar of a tiger from the foot of the slope.*)

MENG: *Aiya*, a tiger!

YIN: Quick, come here!

(*He takes her to hide in a deep gully.*)

(*A snarling tiger appears on the slope. At this critical moment a loud shout comes from the forest: "Don't you dare harm anyone, you brute!" At the same moment CHAO rushes on with lightning steps, forcing the tiger off the rocks, and quickly pursues it with his rifle in his hands. From behind the hill comes the sound of a struggle between man and beast.*)

FIRST HUNTER (*raising his rifle and taking aim*): Team Leader Chao! Keep away from him! (*He fires.*)

SECOND HUNTER: Damn, missed him!—He's got away.

FIRST HUNTER: Team Leader Chao, don't go after him!

SECOND HUNTER: He has, though. (*Starting off in pursuit*) Come on, let's get after them.

FIRST HUNTER: Wait a minute. There are two comrades from outside sheltering here.

(*The two men come over and greet YIN CHE-FU and MENG TAN-HUA.*)

FIRST HUNTER: The tiger's gone, comrades.

(*They help YIN and MENG up.*)

YIN: It's all right, Tan-hua, the tiger's gone.

MENG: Whew, I was terrified. . . .

SECOND HUNTER: Now, comrades, you'll be. . . .

YIN: We've been sent by the provincial committee to build a bridge. *(The two hunters shake hands with them.)*

(Stage lights out.)

(The next scene follows at once; we are still on the bank of the Dragon River. "Lu Pan's Rock" is just that: a large rock of a curious shape.)

(On the left by the river the corner of a newly-built house of white pine is visible, a house built according to UNCLE CHIN's wishes.)

(When the lights come on again, UNCLE CHIN is sitting on the sloping river bank, gazing out across the river at Tiger Hill and singing softly, accompanying himself on a three-stringed lute.)

CHIN *(singing)*:

For water you must go to the Dragon River,
For treasure you must dig on Tiger Hill,
In the hill there's a treasure bowl,

Plant trees in the bowl and money
grows.

Untold rare gems and wondrous
treasures

Have never left the hill all down
the ages;

We spend our days in hope and
longing,

But there's only the churning of
the great river's waves. *(He
walks down the bank with the
lute in his arms.)*

*(FEI-MAO-TUI comes running on
like a gust of wind.)*

FEI *(turning and calling to someone
coming along behind him)*: Hey,

get a move on there! Hurry . . . hurry . . . *(mischievously)*
there's a tiger behind you!

*(CHEN CHANG-SHOU and his companions come running
on, out of breath.)*

KAO *(gasping for breath)*: Mother of mine, you've worn me out!

CHEN *(still panting)*: We're not at a county sports meeting,
you know!

FEI: I can't help it, it's my legs, they won't stop!

KAO *(taking off a cloth shoe with the sole coming off)*: Tcha,
that's one pair of new shoes as good as finished!

LIU: Are we there yet?

FEI *(pointing to Lu Pan's Rock)*: Can't you see?

CHEN: Where's Secretary Hsing, then?

FEI: I'll inquire. *(Shouting down the slope)* Uncle Chin, there
are three commune cadres here looking for Secretary Hsing.

CHIN *(pointing to the wooden house)*: Old Hsing did spend
the night here. . . .

THE OTHERS *(running towards the house)*: Secretary Hsing!

CHIN: But he flew off as soon as it got light, over the river
to Tiger Hill.

FEI *(startled)*: Over the river! Mother of mine, Old Hsing
gone over the river!

CHEN *(looking at the river)*: How could he have got across
through waves of that size?

CHIN: Old Chao took him over in his boat! I watched the
little boat spin round three or four times myself, but they
got across in the end!

KAO *(staring across the river)*: He ought to be back by now,
considering how late it is.

LIU *(also staring across)*: Not a sign of the boat, either.

CHEN: There's a saying that it's easier to climb the sky than
Tiger Hill. Could anything. . . .

CHIN: If he can get across he can get back. If it had been
anybody else Old Chao wouldn't have agreed to take him
over in his boat.

LIU *(to CHEN)*: Well, are we just going to stand about here
looking at each other?

CHEN: Let's hear what you think we should do, then.



KAO: Let's call the whole thing off. Even supposing there was anything worth having in this bare hill it would be years before we were able to shift the stuff across. I can only repeat I think we should find some other solution.

CHIN (*flying into a rage*): Just because you've no intention of building a bridge there's no need for you to go calling Tiger Hill a bare hill! You watch your language doesn't rot your tongue off!

KAO (*sticking out his tongue with shock*): No need to snap my head off!

FEI (*drawing KAO to one side*): You don't have to go running down Tiger Hill. The old fellow's touchy about it.

CHIN: Pah, if there were no treasure in Tiger Hill do you think we'd be in such a hurry to build a bridge over the Dragon River? If there's anybody so blind that he can't see the good of Tiger Hill I'll keep him here till the middle of the night and let the whole hill shining with jewels open his blind eyes for him!

FEI: He's a stranger to these parts, you can't expect him to know that.

CHIN: Oh . . . you're a stranger. That explains it, then. (*To CHEN with a smile*) You mustn't take any notice of me when I let fly like that, it's only for a moment. In future when you see me going red in the face just ignore me, I soon get over it. And now let's go indoors and have a cup of tea.

KAO: We'd better wait here where we are, dad.

CHIN (*glaring again*): If I tell you to come indoors you come indoors! Come and look at this pine-wood house that the commune's built me, white pine throughout, from the roof to the furniture inside. . . .

FEI: Uncle Chin looks after the orchards on the hill here for the commune.

CHIN: Come inside.

(They all go inside the wooden house, leaving FEI-MAO-TUI watching by the river.)

(The sound of hunting drums and horns approaches from the distance. CHAO TA-KANG hurries up at the head

of his team, followed by CHANG LAO-ERH and TSAO LAO-SZU.)

CHAO: Fei-mao-tui, did the tiger come this way?

FEI: Havn't seen him.

CHAO (*dispiritedly*): Huh, so the brute's given us the slip, after me tearing after him all this way. Did you see Old Hsing?

FEI: Uncle Chin says he's gone over the river and up Tiger Hill.

CHAO (*startled*): What! Gone across the river! Again?

CHIN: Yes, that superstitious father of yours took him across in his boat! He'll be even more anxious to build a bridge after a couple more trips to hunt down the treasures of Tiger Hill.

CHAO: In that case, Ho Kuo-chang must have gone across with him.

CHIN: Ho Kuo-chang?

CHAO: Yes, Ho Kuo-chang, the technician that was sent down by the county committee.

CHIN: Oh, you mean Young Ho that's been across the river three times in search of Tiger Hill's treasures! Hah, must be getting old, can't even remember people's proper names any longer. . . . Yes, he went over, too.

CHANG: Ah, it's very dangerous up on that hill, with the forest so thick that a wild-goose couldn't fly through it.

CHAO (*taking off his jacket*): Across with me, those who can swim!

(Several members of the team take off their jackets.)

CHIN: You want to get yourselves drowned, going into great waves like these, where even the wild ducks don't dare so much as get their wings wet?

FIRST HUNTER: If Secretary Hsing can get across so can we!

CHIN: Easy does it! You can't go setting yourselves up beside Old Hsing: he's been a guerrilla, and a battalion commander in the People's Liberation Army, he's crossed the Yellow River and the Yangtse, he's been through the roughest water there is!



CHAO: Don't worry, we'll be across all right after we've been swirled round a few times in midstream.

CHIN: You think they'd be up to that?

CHAO: I'll go across on my own. . . .

(He goes to plunge into the river.)

CHIN *(seizing him by the arm)*: What's the point?

CHAO: To fetch Secretary Hsing, uncle, to fetch Secretary Hsing!

(FEI-MAO-TUI catches sight of DAD CHAO.)

FEI: Uncle, here's Dad Chao back!

(At this moment a voice comes from downstream: "Brother Chin, Brother Chin!" The voice comes nearer.)

(DAD CHAO runs up, panting and shaken.)

CHIN: Why's there only you come back?

DAD *(still gasping for breath)*: You're lucky to see me still alive, brother.

CHAO } *(together, alarmed)*: An accident?

CHIN }
THE OTHERS: What about Secretary Hsing?

DAD: Master Lu Pan* protected us! *(He points across.)*

(They all crowd across towards where DAD CHAO has pointed.)

(Uncle CHIN goes into the wooden house.)

(DAD CHAO kneels before Lu Pan's Rock and kowtows.)

(A short pause, then the others return, crowding round SECRETARY HSING.)

HSING *(seeing DAD CHAO kowtowing)*: Dad Chao, I asked you what you were running so fast for, and now I see: you

* A master craftsman and legendary figure, considered the father of carpentry in China.

were in a hurry to see Master Lu Pan and thank him for answering your prayers!

THE OTHERS *(laughing)*: Dear, oh dear! So you got back after all, Secretary Hsing.

CHAO: Come on, get up, dad.

HSING: One of you go and meet Ho Kuo-chang. He's got too much stuff to carry to manage on his own.

FEI: I'll go. *(He runs off.)*

(UNCLE CHIN comes out of the house carrying a small jar of wine.)

CHIN *(handing Hsing a cup of wine)*: You had us frightened out of our wits, Old Hsing!

HSING: The waves were a bit too big for our little boat and we got swept away by a fast current. It was lucky Dad Chao's got a strong pair of arms on him, or else we'd all have been swept down to the sea and as likely as not we'd be reporting to the Dragon King by now.

DAD: We were swept down several miles as it was. All that saved us was that Secretary Hsing was fated to live on, and we shared in his good fortune.

HSING: I may be fated to live many years but I wasn't endowed with a very big stomach, if . . . *(making a gesture indicating the overturning of the boat)* then three swallows of river water and there would be no room for any more!

KAO }
LIU } *(together)*: Secretary Hsing!
CHEN }

HSING: Ah, you're the people here to help with building the bridge, I take it?

CHEN: Our smelting-furnace is going hungry.

LIU: And that's involved our steel mill.

KAO: And so the two of them turn round and start putting the pressure on me and my transport company.

HSING: How much do you want?

CHEN: Three hundred tons.

HSING: Could you do with a bit more than that?

CHEN: You mean iron ore?

FEI: Here we are!

HSING: Excuse me a minute.

(FEI-MAO-TUI leads HO KUO-CHANG on.)

HO: Secretary Hsing, (tipping out a sackful of ore on the ground)
it's all here, not a lump missing.

HSING: Have a look at our samples.

(They all look at the ore.)

CHEN: Good iron content!

LIU: Is this all from Tiger Hill?

CHIN: Now who says Tiger Hill's not a treasure hill!

HSING: Uncle, fifteen years ago when I was in the guerrillas
you took me to Tiger Hill and I saw these treasures then.
But who was able to pay any attention to them then? But
the time has now come to bring these treasures down the hill
in the service of socialism.

CHIN: Old Hsing, please hurry up with the bridge, so that
Old Chin can go treasure-hunting, too!

HO: Uncle Chin, we're not going to build a bridge over the
Dragon River just so that we can go treasure-hunting. There's
coal and iron up there and also there's the Dragon River
down here giving us an inexhaustible supply of water. I
think we can construct an integrated iron and steel base
here.

CHEN: Which would mean our county could be industrialized in
a few years.

THIRD PEASANT: Then we'll have tractors ploughing the hill-
sides, no more messing about with mattocks and ploughs.

FOURTH PEASANT: That should put a new face on the whole
area!

FEI: Hah,

Factory chimneys smoking high,
Trains and lorries racing by,
Shifting the treasures off the hill,
A happy life for ever and aye!

CHAO: Hurry up and give the word, Old Hsing. Let the
Tiger Hill Commune get to work on the bridge.

HSING: Your commune single-handed? (Calculating) There's
the harvest nearly upon us, so there won't be enough man-

power available; you're not well-off at the moment, so you
wouldn't be able to find the money; and none of you are
technically qualified enough. Have you taken these three
drawbacks into account?

(For a while no one speaks.)

HSING (to CHEN and his companions): And you needn't think
you'd just hold out your hands and do nothing else.

(CHEN and his two companions exchange views in an under-
tone.)

CHEN: Secretary Hsing, if we just leave it to Tiger Hill Com-
mune to build the bridge and mine the ore it'll be a bit. . . .

HSING: A bit what? Eh?

LIU: Do you think our four communes together could take on
this hill of treasures?

HSING: That's the idea. Go on.

KAO: Our three communes. . . .

CHEN: Let's be frank, if you're short of anything. . . .

LIU } : We'll make it up!

LIU: If there's anything you want. . . .

KAO } : We'll give it to you!

LIU } : We'll give it to you!

CHAO (slapping his thigh): Well! I'll have the bridge built
even if it costs me my life.

DAD: You have to have a finger in every pie, you're always
wanting to tackle jobs that are too big for you.

(A general discussion ensues.)

HSING: Let's first hear what the older generation have to say.

DAD (to CHIN): You first, brother.

CHIN: It's not worth turning the pages of an old almanac like
me. You speak, Brother Chao.

DAD: Well, if you insist that I say something about building
a bridge over the Dragon River, I must tell you the story
of Lu Pan's Rock here. Many years ago Master Lu Pan came
into the hills with his gear on his back to build a bridge for
the folk hereabouts, (pointing to Lu Pan's Rock) and this is

the very spot where he began digging to sink his piles. Little did he know that this spot was a dragon's eye, and at the first stroke of his pick he stirred up a great calamity; the flood that gushed up from the dragon's eye swallowed up Tiger Hill, even. The minute he saw his mistake Master Lu Pan quickly chopped the peak of a rock off the hill with his axe and stopped up the dragon's eye with it, then after that Master Lu Pan —

CHIN (*finishing the story for him*): Master Lu Pan sat on the rock and shook his head and sighed and said: "It'll never be possible to build a bridge over the Dragon River to the end of time." Is that it?

CHAO: The more you tell us about this Lu Pan of yours, dad, the more spineless he sounds!

DAD: You're talking nonsense again! Do you think building a bridge over the Dragon River is like reaching up to one of your Uncle Chin's trees and plucking a fruit? If it was possible to build a bridge do you think we old 'uns were all such fools that we didn't try. I'll like more than anybody to see a bridge built after battling with the Dragon River all these years with my boat-pole in my hands. The only trouble is, this river was never made to be bridged.

HSING: There's no denying Lu Pan's skill and it's a pity he was a bit too early to see socialism. Though the story Dad Chao's just told us does make it clear that building a bridge over the Dragon River will bring us up against certain difficulties.

CHANG: Secretary Hsing is right. In the floods we had back in 1916, the fifth year of the old Republic, there were great rocks the size of a peck measure churning and crashing about in the water. Build a bridge, you say? That's going to be some engineering job!

CHIN: Old Hsing, didn't you say the province was sending down an expert?

HO: That's right; they're sending down an engineer to give assistance.

CHANG: Don't talk to me about engineers. We had some here in 'twenty-three. They just stood there on the river-bank flourishing their walking-sticks for a minute, and then

they left and, like the meat-pudding thrown at a dog, they never came back.

TSAO: When the Japs were here they were going to mine gold on the hill; all the machinery for building a bridge turned up on big lorries, but as soon as they saw how strong the current was, it was "toot-toot" and back they went before you could say knife.

CHANG: There's no need to talk about what happened so long ago. Last year a prospecting team was sent down from the province and spent a fortnight or three weeks trailing up and down the river. In the end they at least drilled a few rocks in the middle of the river. But I don't know why we haven't heard another word about them to this day.

CHAO: From what you say, we ought to drop the idea of building a bridge, then?

KAO: Hum, so it looks as if I've worn out this new pair of shoes for nothing. Brother Chen, we'd better be getting back and thinking of another way.

HSING: Go back and find another way? What for? (*Pointing to the top of Lu Pan's Rock*) Here's your way. Let's all get up on Lu Pan's Rock and have a look at the lie of the land. (*To DAD CHAO and his contemporaries*) If you older people will lead the way?

(*They all climb up on to Lu Pan's Rock one after the other. Only HO and CHAO remain below, gathering up the ore.*)
(*Two of the hunters now enter in great haste.*)

FIRST HUNTER: Beg to report, team leader! There's an engineer come down from the province.

CHAO (*delighted*): Where?

SECOND HUNTER: Here they come now!

(*YIN CHE-FU and MENG TAN-HUA come up together. When they see HO KUO-CHANG they look at one another.*)

HO: Teacher Yin!

YIN: Why, if it isn't —

HO: I'm from the third batch of graduates at the technical school —

MENG: Kuo-chang! What are you doing here!

(The three of them shake hands warmly.)

CHAO *(shouting)*: Secretary Hsing, here's our bridge!

(HSING appears on top of the rocks.)

HSING: Engineer Yin and Technician Meng, we've been expecting you.

ALL *(cheering)*: We're going to have our bridge!

(They all come swarming down the slope.)

Curtain

SCENE II

Before the Rock

Early morning five days after Scene I. The melodious notes of a shepherd's pipe and the dawn chorus of the birds sound in the valleys.

Scene as before.

Models of bridges of various shapes are scattered about in front of Lu Pan's Rock.

Chao Ta-kang is deeply engrossed in a model of a wooden arched bridge rather more finely made than the others.

Background music and no action on the stage for a short while, then LI YU-TAO comes up quietly from one end of the river-bank.

LI *(taking him unawares, yet affectionately)*: Wild bull!

CHAO *(in delighted surprise)*: Yu-tao! *(He pulls her to him.)*

LI: What, is the competition over?

CHAO: We've been at it all day and all night. *(Pointing to a large model)* And the winning bridge has been selected!

LI *(regretfully)*: Oh dear, we rushed to get through our job in time, but we've missed it after all.

CHAO: Your Women's Company ought to be getting home, you don't want to overdo it!

LI *(bursts out laughing)*: Ha. . . .

CHAO: Sh, quiet! *(He motions with his lips towards the house.)*

LI: I've just rushed back from finishing the job on the reservoir site, for the express purpose of taking part in the bridge-building competition. The Women's Company aren't a lot of comfort-loving old ladies, you know!

CHAO: Even so you need a breather now and then. You needn't be afraid that there won't be a job for the Women's Company once work starts on the bridge. *(Sitting her down beside him)* So you've become an outstanding labour-model on the reservoir, have you?

LI: Nothing to compare with you, though. I hear you and Kuo-chang have been sitting up all night working on plans for the bridge. *(Looking closely at him)* You're getting a lot thinner.

CHAO *(looking closely at her in turn)*: What else do you expect from a man suffering from lovesickness?

LI: To tell the truth, I've been thinking a lot about you. . . . *(She snuggles up to him.)*

CHAO: Don't worry, as soon as the bridge is finished I'll start putting on weight again.

LI *(abruptly standing up and moving away from him)*: It's not me you're getting thin thinking about, then, it's the bridge —

CHAO *(quickly going across and standing close to her)*: I have been thinking about you.

(At this moment CHANG LAO-ERH and TSAO LAO-SZU come along together. They cough, unnaturally.)

CHAO: Uncle Chang and Uncle Tsao, what's been keeping you?

TSAO *(to CHANG)*: Didn't I tell you we were late?

CHANG: And so we are!

CHAO: Though we can't be too particular about punctual delivery when we're being given valuable advice.



CHANG: We won't be much use to you, we're not founts of wisdom.

TSAO (*in a conciliatory tone*): I hear the winning bridge has been selected?

CHAO (*pointing to the large model*): Yes, there it is. As soon as Secretary Hsing and the engineer get back we'll be setting to work on it.

TSAO: And is it right what I hear, that you're determined to start the digging just here at Lu Pan's Rock?

CHAO: Yes, we've already decided that this is to be the spot.

CHANG: Building a bridge is all very well, but long ago Master Lu Pan broke the ground here to sink his piles and broke open a dragon's eye with the first stroke of his pick, and straight away a flood spread over the countryside and waves enveloped the hills —

CHAO: I've heard that old story often enough already from my dad; now you've taken it up as well, have you?

CHANG: We're ready to listen to anybody who's really got to know what the Dragon River's like.

CHAO (*raising his voice*): Why must you always fall back on my dad? You've just got no confidence that we can build a bridge.

(At this moment HO KUO-CHANG, MENG TAN-HUA and CHEN CHANG-SHOU, hearing voices, come out of the house.)

LI: Ta-kang!

CHAO: Humph, superstitious, backward, fence-sitters!

CHANG (*annoyed*): What! . . . Humph, if it wasn't that you're a youngster of Chao Lao-ta's I'd have. . . . (*He raises the stem of his pipe.*)

HO (*to CHAO*): You can't deny people the right to have doubts about building the bridge. (*To CHANG and TSAO*) We'll be wanting everybody to give their opinion when Secretary Hsing and Engineer Yin get back.

CHANG: Now that's a bit of democracy.

CHAO: Who are you calling undemocratic?

CHANG: It strikes me you're only good at forcing people to take orders!

LI (*restrainingly*): Ta-kang! (*Turning to CHANG and TSAO, pleasantly*) Uncle Chang. . . .

CHANG (*somewhat mollified*): We'd best go and see his dad.

TSAO: Come on, then. (*The two of them go out together.*)

CHAO: I never thought we'd get half way and then run up against all this opposition.

MENG (*showing him the classified results of the mass opinion poll*): Look, there's still a majority in favour of building the bridge here.

HO: And the people also pointed out defects in the design of this winning bridge.

MENG: Once Old Yin gets back from the county the problem's as good as solved. Then there'll be a bridge built over the Dragon River.

LI: Well said. (*Going across and taking MENG by the hand*) You're the girl technician that everyone speaks so highly of, aren't you?

MENG: I'm Meng Tan-hua —

LI (*looking her carefully up and down and clicking her tongue with admiration*): My, you are pretty. I expect you're finding it hard to get used to being up here in the hills with us, aren't you?

MENG: No, it's all right living in the hills; you hill-folk are good company, I like you very much.

LI: You're one of the best. I'm afraid you don't know who I am yet.

MENG: Aren't you . . . Mrs. Chao!

LI (*to CHAO and the others*): When people come up into the hills from the big cities to work their fingers to the bone for us, we must treat them decently whatever we do.

(A golden pheasant calls continuously.)

HO: Mrs. Chao, Comrade Tan-hua's worn herself to a frazzle these last few days; what about you getting her a bit extra to eat, something tasty? (*He gets a hunting rifle from indoors and hands it to her.*)

LI (*she takes the rifle and fires a shot into the air; a golden pheasant at once drops to the ground*): There's your meal.

MENG: You must take me on as a pupil.

LI: All right, but you must teach me reading and writing. We two must stick together like sisters, eh?

(The Women's Company is heard wrangling noisily off. Enter FIRST WOMAN.)

FIRST WOMAN *(to LI)*: Beg to report, commander: the girls are getting worked up and insisting on seeing the officers of the Bridge Preparations Committee.

CHAO: That's all right. *(Pointing to HO)* Here's Comrade Ho right beside you, the chairman of the Bridge Preparations Committee.

(Loud women's voices off.)

HO: I don't feel up to facing an army of women. It would be better if you led this sortie, being second in command.

(The noise grows louder.)

CHAO: Right, watch me. *(To the women off)* Hey, there! Stop the cackling!

LI *(giving CHAO a shove)*: Get out of it. *(To MENG)* Come along, sister, have a look at our troops.

MENG: All right.

(MENG follows LI, CHAO and HO down the slope.)

(The stage is quiet for a moment, then YIN CHE-FU comes in from the other end of the river-bank. He goes over to the model of the wooden arched bridge and examines it carefully.)

(The sound of applause and laughter comes from the women round the slope.)

(Enter CHAO TA-KANG.)

CHAO: Engineer Yin! *(With great enthusiasm)* Back at last! *(Going on without pausing for breath)* Kuo-chang and I have been holding a competition for the best bridge here and we've already selected the winning model.

YIN: No wonder the villagers began congratulating me and Secretary Hsing the moment we set foot in the village. *(He continues examining the model.)*

CHAO: What do you think of it?

YIN: Very accurate, a fine piece of workmanship; a good basis and some good new ideas; a champion bridge indeed.

CHAO: Kuo-chang said you'd like it the moment you saw it. So he was right.

YIN:

CHAO: Kuo-chang also said: "One nod from Teacher Yin and the bridge will be as good as finished." Engineer Yin, if you'll just work out the measurements for the bridge we guarantee to get the job of building it finished in a month!

YIN: What?

CHAO: We'll have the bridge built in a month.

YIN: A month?

CHAO: Yes, a month. The sooner we start getting the ore from Tiger Hill over the river, the sooner we can change the face of our hills.

YIN: Wait a minute. Comrade Ta-kang, have you ever done anything anywhere else? Ever worked on building a bridge, for instance?

CHAO: Me? Born and bred in the hills, never moved a step from the Dragon River.

YIN: Ah. But you must have built bridges before!

CHAO: No, I've never built a bridge.

YIN: I suppose you've heard about how bridges have been built over the Yangtse and the Yellow Rivers, though.

CHAO: No, I haven't.

YIN *(meaningfully)*: I see. . . . *(He twiddles with the model.)*

(CHAO TA-KANG stands by silently. The noise of excited conversation and singing comes once more from the women round the slope.)

(MENG TAN-HUA and HO KUO-CHANG return.)

MENG: Che-fu!

HO: - Teacher Yin! So you're back already.

YIN: Secretary Hsing was waylaid by some old people from the Old People's Home and they started asking him all sorts of questions. He'll be along later.

HO: - Teacher Yin, everybody's waiting for a directive from the county committee. . . .

YIN: The county committee feels very determined about this.

MENG (*pointing to the models*): So are the masses here. They started holding the bridge competition just after you'd gone to town.

YIN: So I hear.

HO: Come and have a look at these models.

YIN: I have done that.

MENG: The villagers' ideas carry them along with the force of the Dragon River itself. In a day and a night they've completed over a hundred models of bridges. I'd never have thought it possible.

HO: Won't you give us an expert opinion on them?

YIN: Is your idea to get to work building this winning bridge at once?

CHAO: Why else would we have been spending all this effort on it?

YIN: What I'd like to know is how you're proposing to put it over the Dragon River.

CHAO: We're just waiting for you to work out the measurements.

YIN: You can't have got everything else already prepared, surely?

CHAO (*pointing to the model*): We've got all the materials and labour force we'll need.

YIN: Comrade Ta-kang, making a model and building a bridge over the Dragon River are two different matters.

CHAO: Well, aren't they one and the same thing now that you're back? You don't know us hill people yet!

YIN: The county committee requires that the job be finished within three months.

CHAO: We've still got to get moving and get the job under way even if we have got three months.

YIN: Yes but, Comrade Ta-kang, we can't just rush at it like a bull at a gate, you know.

CHAO: Comrade Engineer, you must realize the furnaces are starving for want of ore.

HO: Ta-kang, of course Teacher Yin will guarantee to have the bridge finished within three months.

YIN: We should first give thorough consideration to certain concrete technical measures to be taken in accordance with actual local conditions.

CHAO (*unable to contain himself*): Conditions or not, we've got to get this bridge built whether we like it or not. (*Exit.*)

HO (*shouting*): Ta-kang! (*When he sees that TA-KANG really has gone he has no choice but to turn back himself.*) Teacher Yin, you can't blame Ta-kang for getting so worked up when everybody all round here is waiting to fetch ore out of the hill.

YIN: What I can't get over is why a trained bridge technician doesn't understand what conditions determine the speed with which a bridge can be built! Is it our job to promise the masses results without having any solid foundation at all to go on?

HO: Teacher Yin, do you think we shouldn't have organized this bridge competition?

YIN: Have as many competitions as you like, so long as you don't whip up a hot-headed state of mind in the masses. Kuo-chang, if three months from now we haven't been able to put this wooden arched bridge across the Dragon River we shall have to answer to the masses for it.

HO: Teacher Yin —

(*Enter KAO SHOU-TIEN in great haste.*)

KAO: So you're back at last, Comrade Engineer! There's a big patch of good stone on the hillside to the south; come and see if it's what we need.

HO (*seeing that YIN CHE-FU makes no reply*): I'll come with you and have a look at it.

(*HO and KAO go out together.*)

MENG: Why are you keeping quiet about your own ideas? Like the steel cable suspension bridge you mentioned to me.

YIN: That was originally what I had in mind, but the county committee was all for using what materials are available on the spot, so I abandoned the idea.

MENG: But shouldn't you have put your own idea forward just the same?

YIN: No, we should comply with the Party's policy for bridge-building!

MENG: I'm sure the county committee would have given your idea serious consideration.

YIN: I'd never intended from the start to put the idea forward for discussion.

MENG: Why not?

YIN: Would *you* like to be labelled a conservative?

MENG: In that case you should admit that this wooden arched bridge is in accordance with the policy of "using what materials are available on the spot."

YIN: I do admit it now. But the central problem is still speed.

(CHANG LAO-ERH and TSAO LAO-SZU enter unobserved.)

YIN: You did your practical training on the Great Yangtse Bridge at Wuhan so you're in a position to judge whether we can overcome the raging torrent of the Dragon River in the absence of the necessary equipment, sufficient materials, highly-trained labour and the most reliable hydrographic data!

MENG: Che-fu, you mustn't try to carry all these difficulties on your own shoulders alone.

YIN: The leadership are very determined and the masses are just ready to go, which means that all eyes, above and below and all round, are now on the engineer. I'd like someone to tell me, if they dare, just what actual measures will give us a wooden arched bridge inside three months under such conditions.

MENG: You mean the bridge can't be built in three months?

YIN: If we just rush at it like a bull at a gate the way you people want to, it definitely can't be done in three months. And on top of that there'll be serious trouble.

(CHANG and TSAO look meaningfully at one another when they hear this, then go out together.)

MENG: I don't agree with your view that the masses' burning enthusiasm in wanting to get started on the job is mere hot-headedness.

YIN: Do you mean I'm the only person who lacks enthusiasm?

MENG: What's the matter with you, Che-fu? Are you finding the job difficult?

YIN: Yes, I am, but I'm not letting that upset my state of mind.

MENG: You are, though: you seem to have become obstinate and cynical, quite the opposite of what you were like when we first came into the hills—you were as cheerful as anything then. Don't forget, Che-fu, that Secretary Chang of the provincial committee impressed on us again and again the necessity to throw ourselves whole-heartedly into helping the people in the hills to realize their desire for a bridge over the Dragon River.

YIN: I can't just rely on enthusiasm and the desire to get the job done: the real situation I'm faced with here around Tiger Hill and the Dragon River is something I've no alternative but to give long and careful thought to.

MENG: Aren't the hopes and demands of the provincial committee within reason and practicable?

YIN: I only wish Secretary Chang could come down here and get a taste of what it's like to fight the Dragon River empty-handed. Tan-hua, I find everybody, high and low, thinking too far ahead and going too fast!

MENG: Everybody should be an accelerating influence.

YIN *(annoyed)*: Are you trying to call me, Yin Che-fu, a braking influence in the big leap forward? *(He goes into the wooden house.)*

(MENG TAN-HUA sits on the steps sunk in thought.)

(The stage is quiet for a short while, then FEI-MAO-TUI comes running up.)

FEI: Comrade Meng! Secretary Hsing's come to see the bridge.

(CHAO TA-KANG, HO KUO-CHANG, CHEN CHANG-SHOU, LIU PAO-SHAN and KAO SHOU-TIEN enter from one end of the shelving river-bank, clustering round SECRETARY HSING.)

HSING: Comrade Meng, I hear you've been demonstrating your ability in the bridge competition?

MENG: No, no, all the ideas came from the masses.

HSING *(going over to the large model bridge)*: Is this the winning bridge?

CHAO: We'd welcome your criticisms.

HSING: Much as I admire your courage, (*concealing his delight*) unfortunately it's going to be another thing to put it across the Dragon River.

CHAO (*to HO KUO-CHANG, glumly*): Humph, I never expected that Old Hsing would come out with the same thing the next minute.

HSING: Eh? If you take reliable measures then the model will amount to an actual bridge.

CHEN: Kuo-chang's already initiated eight discussions to get everybody's ideas about how to build it.

CHAO: Secretary Hsing, are you trying to say that we haven't a clue about how to set about it? Huh! I don't think three months is going forward fast enough.

HSING: Right you are, young fellows, I'm going to start blasting away at your winning bridge!

(*YIN CHE-FU appears in the doorway of the wooden house.*)

CHAO (*smiling*): Please do.

HSING: Though I'll warn you I've commanded an artillery battalion in the People's Liberation Army!

FEI: We've got a section leader in the sappers here who'll undertake to repair the damage!

(*General laughter.*)

HSING: You'll need several hundred skilled craftsmen; have you got such a force at your disposal?

KAO:

In Kaoshan Commune your masons in plenty you'll find;
They'll tear the rock from the hills as swift as the wind.
A thousand hammers will crack open Tiger Hill
And provide enough stone the Dragon King's Palace to fill.

HSING (*delighted*): Have you any carpenters?

LIU:

We've promised to do all the carpenters' work already.
From Liushuwan the cunning craftsman comes,
With skill at working wood bred into his bones;
He'll carve you a dragon so real it'll mount the sky,
And put to shame Lu Pan of days gone by.

YIN: But why hasn't a word been said about mechanical equipment? Are you proposing to set the piers of the bridge in the rushing torrent of the Dragon River with your bare hands?

HSING: That was a telling shot, Comrade Engineer; what other shells have you got to fire?

YIN: We can only do the job on the principle of achieving greater, faster, better and more economical results if we get the most reliable hydrographic data in the shortest possible time. How's that problem going to be solved?

HSING: That was an even more telling shot! You know, young fellows, the provincial government has already issued a flood warning, and the building of our bridge is going to come just at the time when the river's in flood. We must find the hydrographic data, and we must also find out what changes there have been in the volume and water-level of the Dragon River during the seasonal floods down the years. This is a very serious problem.

(*For a moment no one speaks.*)

CHAO: We'll never get it built in a hundred years, it seems.

HSING: It seems to be all or nothing with you. Either a month or a hundred years. You're really a subscriber to the Lu Pan legend at heart after all. So, "It's never possible to build a bridge over the Dragon River to the end of time!"

KAO (*to CHEN CHANG-SHOU*): Our commune's transport team can't afford to waste their time here.

HSING: Hah, dazed out of your wits by a couple of shells, eh? (*To CHEN CHANG-SHOU*) Has our section leader in the sappers had his head turned, too?

(*For a moment no one speaks.*)

HSING: Old Yin, although I don't know the first thing about building bridges I must get clear about the technical processes involved.

YIN: Well, actually I've got a whole series of technical problems that I was wanting to report to you on.

HSING: Good, we'll begin our first lesson in the science of bridge-building right away.



YIN: Right away?
HSING: Yes.
YIN: Let's go and talk in my tent.
HSING: I'd like Little Meng to come along too. (*To HO KUO-CHANG*) I don't expect somebody who's studied bridge-building technique's going to be frightened out of his wits, eh? (*To everybody*) There's a lot of things you're better at than me, you know! (*Pointing to his own head*) We'll be all right if we keep this on the move!
(*HSING, YIN and MENG go off together towards the embankment.*)

CHAO: So it's the Dragon River that's tamed us!
(*A pause.*)

CHEN (*slapping his thigh*): We'll organize an underwater shock-brigade to work in deep water building bridge-piers inside a watertight wall built of filled sacks.

CHAO: What if it leaks?

CHEN: Stuff the cracks with clay and flax.

CHAO: Sure it'll work?

CHEN: We sappers have used it in the Yellow River.

CHAO: Why can't it be done just as well in the Dragon River? Old Chen, why didn't you mention it earlier?

CHEN: If I'd thought of it earlier I wouldn't have been knocked so silly by those two shots from the engineer.

CHAO: And you call yourself a real veteran section leader of the sappers.

KAO: Even if this method would work here, where are you going to find your underwater shock-brigade?

CHAO: You can count on me, Chao Ta-kang!

LIU: You think you're going to manage it tumbling about in the waves single-handed?

HO:
From mountains which a mighty river cleaves,
You'll get plenty of heroes who'll battle with the waves.
We can find a way of doing it.

CHEN: Secretary Hsing and Engineer Yin must be informed at once.

CHAO: I'll go.

(*DAD CHAO comes on with TSAO LAO-SZU and CHANG LAO-ERH.*)

DAD: Come on, Ta-kang, you'd better clear off home!

CHAO: I'm busy just now, dad.

DAD: No need for you to go fishing for the moon along with the rest of them.

FEI: We've got Old Hsing here giving us a lead, we've got all the labour and materials we need, and also an engineer from the province: you still think the bridge can't be built? We're only waiting for Engineer Yin to work out the measurements for the bridge so that we can set to work, don't you realize?

DAD: Engineer? The minute he set foot in the hills he got me to take him to see the river and as soon as he got to the river-bank he shook his head and sighed. Did you know *that*?

FEI: How is it I didn't see him, then?

CHANG: What sort of eyes have you got?

FEI: Not fence-sitter's eyes! (*Breaking into kuaipan*)*

When a man gets old his eyes get dim
And he can't see what he's looking at;
He gets very free with his insults then,
And starts talking nonsense through his hat!

DAD: What! You think I go round making up tales at my time of life? (*Turning to CHANG and TSAO, loudly*) What was it you two were telling me just now?

(*CHANG and TSAO shrink back, reluctant to speak.*)

DAD: Eh?

(*UNCLE CHIN appears on the embankment with a large jug of hot water to drink.*)

FEI (*breaking into kuaipan again*):
Bashful and shy, they preserve their silence,
Keeping in the background like shrinking violets.

* A kind of quick-patter ballad.

DAD (*indignantly*): Come on, out with it, what was it that Engineer Yin was saying here a short while ago?

CHANG: When he was here a short while ago we both heard him as clear as could be. Engineer Yin told Technician Meng that it was absolutely impossible to build a bridge over the Dragon River.

DAD: And what else did he say?

TSAO: He said there'd be serious trouble.

DAD (*to everybody*): You hear that?

HO: The engineer was concerned about a couple of practical problems: the need for equipment to build the piers and for the most reliable hydrographic data for designing the bridge. He didn't mean that it was impossible to build a bridge over the river.

FEI: You hear that?

CHEN: The piers can be installed by surrounding them with watertight walls.

HO: Now we've got to find people who're thoroughly acquainted with the behaviour of the Dragon River to help the engineer get his hydrographic data.

CHIN: Brother Chao, now's the time for us old 'uns to do our bit for socialism and the generations to come.

DAD (*to UNCLE CHIN*): The Chaos have never hesitated to do their bit for their fellow villagers, brother. But I must first ask a question: are you insisting on starting work on the bridge here on this firm ground at Lu Pan's Rock?

CHIN: For fifty miles up and down the river from here the river-bed is quicksand throughout, and the only firm ground is this stretch of granite around Lu Pan's Rock. You know that better than anybody.

HO: The piers would stand firm here, there's only a short distance between the banks, and also it's close to the main road.

CHIN: Brother Chao, now that everybody's racing to build socialism, we older people can't lie on top of Lu Pan's Rock and block the road for our sons and grandsons.

DAD (*loudly*): I'm considering this for the people living all round here, I'm not blocking anybody's road!

CHAO: Look, dad, won't you please sacrifice Lu Pan's Rock here? It'll all be in the cause of making iron and steel.

DAD: I'd like to see anybody dare lay a finger on Lu Pan's Rock!

CHAO: Isn't that being a bit unreasonable?

DAD: You young puppy! (*He gives CHAO TA-KANG a box on the ear.*)

CHIN: Chao Lao-ta, that's as good as hitting me, your elder brother!

(*CHAO TA-KANG picks up an axe and leaps swiftly up onto the rock.*)

CHAO: Dad, whether you hit me or call me names, I've made up my mind to strike Lu Pan's Rock here. You can't open your mouth without mentioning your River-god, but even if he really existed he'd still have to do his share for us. Is there a single one of us who doesn't want to see as much steel and iron as possible being produced? Or who doesn't want to see the Second Five-Year Plan completed as soon as possible? If the River-god's going to bring down a disaster on our heads let him bring it all down on *my* head! Come on, you River-god, you! Let's see what you're really made of!

CHIN: Ta-kang!

(*CHAO TA-KANG raises the axe and chips off a piece of Lu Pan's Rock.*)

DAD: You're deliberately courting disaster, son!

Curtain

SCENE III

Advertising for Talent

Noon the next day.

A forest clearing on the bank of the Dragon River. To the sound of percussion music four commune members carrying brass gongs and tambourines lead on CHEN

CHANG-SHOU followed by FEI-MAO-TUI. CHEN CHANG-SHOU is carrying a vividly coloured "appeal for talent" inscribed in gold lettering on a red ground with the words: "If any commune possesses a hero with outstanding abilities as a swimmer, who is willing to undertake the task of building bridge-piers under water, let him accept the challenge by taking down this red placard."
The gongs sound.

CHEN (*shouting*): Appeal for talent! Appeal for talent!
(*The gongs sound again.*)

CHEN: If any commune possesses a hero with outstanding abilities as a swimmer, who is willing to undertake the task of building bridge-piers under water, let him accept the challenge by taking down this red placard!

(*YIN CHE-FU comes on in haste.*)

FEI: Engineer Yin!

YIN: What are you doing now?

CHEN: An appeal for talent. We're looking for a hero good at swimming who'll undertake to build the piers of the bridge.

YIN: I see you're in the lead again.

FEI: Comrade Engineer, how are you getting along with your gathering of hydrographic data?

YIN: I'm just trying to find people who can give me information. I hear there's a sand-bank called Devil's Gate where the floods down the years have left the marks of their highest levels.

FEI: Devil's Gate Sand-bank is a very dangerous one, you'd never get across to it.

YIN: We'll find a way, shall we?

CHEN: Right, we'll make a competition of it: we'll find our expert to build the piers while you find yours to give you your hydrographic data, and we'll see who completes his task first! (*To the others with him*) Come on! (*Shouting*) Appeal for talent. . . .

(*CHEN and the others file out.*)

(*YIN CHE-FU turns to go, but finds himself face to face with DAD CHAO, who comes in with a bundle of firewood on his back.*)

YIN: Dad Chao! (*Overjoyed.*)

DAD: You here moping on your own again, Comrade Engineer?

YIN (*with a smile*): I'm not moping any more now that I've run into you. Here, come and sit down for a minute. . . .

DAD: I've got to be getting home with this wood. (*Is about to go.*)

YIN (*restraining him*): Wait a minute and I'll help you with it.

DAD: You will? (*He smiles and has no alternative but to put the wood down.*) That would be imposing on you. Tell me, then, what's on your mind?

YIN: I hear there's a sand-bank hereabouts called Devil's Gate; is that so?

DAD (*giving YIN CHE-FU a look*): That's right. You thinking of a pleasure trip over there? Hah! (*Intoning*)

The Devil's Gate Sand-bank is no pleasure-ground,
A thousand waves pound it and whirlpools abound;
A feather would sink and a fish be spun round,
And nine men that crossed it in ten would be drowned.
(*He is about to go.*)

YIN: Dad Chao, I hear you're a first-class swimmer and boatman?

DAD (*shaking his head*): That was a long time ago. I don't talk about it.

YIN: I'd like you to take me over in your boat to the Devil's Gate Sand-bank to find my hydrographic data.

DAD: You still want to build a bridge?

YIN: What else do you think I came up into the hills for?

DAD: Didn't you say it would be difficult to build a bridge?

YIN (*looking at DAD CHAO*): Yes, it will be difficult to build a bridge over the Dragon River. But the villagers here have plenty of energy and they've thought out a lot of clever dodges. If we weren't still going to build the bridge, would Chen Chang-shou and the others be going around appealing for talent, trying to find a good swimmer who'll take on the job of setting the bridge-piers in place?

DAD: Do you think they'll be able to build the piers in the river with this watertight wall they're talking about?

YIN: The county committee's approved the idea, so the least we can do is to try it out. Look, dad, the leadership have only given me a few days to solve the problem of the hydrographic data and I'd heard you knew more about the Dragon River than anybody, so I was hoping —

DAD (*cutting him short*): Let me ask you one question, Comrade Engineer. Can't you with all your knowledge think of some way of building your bridge without touching Lu Pan's Rock? There's a dragon's eye underneath it that mustn't be disturbed.

YIN (*taking a splinter of rock out of his pocket*): Look at this, dad.

DAD: What is it?

YIN: It's a specimen taken from near Lu Pan's Rock last year by the provincial prospecting team. If we're going to build a bridge on piers the only place we can start our digging is at Lu Pan's Rock.

DAD: That's to say Lu Pan's Rock is going to be torn up by the roots, I take it?

YIN: What else can we do?

DAD (*nodding*): That's that, then. I've come to see the wrong man. (*He goes out in great indignation.*)

YIN: Well, what do you make of that! (*After a moment's thought he turns to follow him.*) Dad, dad. . . . (*He goes out after him.*)

(The sound of tree-felling is heard in the forest.)

(Amid a babel of women's shouts a green banner is carried out of the forest, with the inscription Women's Company of Tiger Hill Commune. Carrying a large axe, LI YU-TAO springs into view beneath the banner, followed by MENG TAN-HUA.)

LI (*turning and shouting into the forest*): Sisters, time to knock off!

(The women come running out of the forest carrying axes.)

LI: I expect you're worn out, aren't you, Sister Tan-hua?

MENG: No, no, I'm not a bit tired.

FIRST WOMAN: She's a good 'un, she'll soon be up to second-class labour power.

LI (*as an order*): Hold out your hands!

(MENG TAN-HUA hesitantly holds out her hands.)

LI: You're an obstinate one! Blisters all over your hands!

MENG: That's all right, Sister Yu-tao, a few more days' training and I'll be all right.

LI: But you've got an important job to do, too. You can't spend all your time in physical labour.

MENG: I'll go and see Secretary Hsing and ask him —

LI: No, don't go, we've overfulfilled our task.

THE WOMEN (*crowding round excitedly*): Have we passed the target, Comrade Commander?

LI: This morning alone we've fulfilled our tree-felling task two hundred per cent, we've doubled it.

(The women are delighted and filled with enthusiasm.)

(SECOND WOMAN comes running up.)

SECOND WOMAN: Comrade Commander, they're advertising for talent at the bridge site. I hear they're looking for a hero-swimmer.

LI: Looking for a hero-swimmer?

FIRST WOMAN: Sister Yu-tao, I think this challenge should be taken up by your Ta-kang. He's the most famous swimmer in our commune.

THIRD WOMAN: Yes, you should fetch Ta-kang straight away, Comrade Commander!

LI: Ta-kang's over there clearing the site with his Tiger-taming Brigade.

FIRST WOMAN: Let's go now and take down the challenge for him, otherwise we'll be too late!

LI: Come on, then!

(The women run out.)

(To the stirring sound of a percussion band JIN TEH-LUNG and a group of commune members enter, led by a man carrying a red banner inscribed in golden letters with the words "Water Conservancy Engineering Battalion of the Lungmen Commune.")

JIN: What are all these drums and gongs for?

FIRST COMMUNE MEMBER: Comrade Commander! I hear they're appealing for talent at the Dragon River bridge site, looking for a hero-swimmer.

JIN: Looking for a hero-swimmer? Come on, let's go and have a look.

(They run around the stage and exeunt.)

(Stage lights go down for scene-change.)

(End of road on bank of Dragon River.)

(A red "appeal for talent" hangs on a large tree, decorated with fir-branches. A wine-jug and wine-cups are set out beside it. CHEN CHANG-SHOU is beating a drum and FEI-MAO-TUI is sounding a gong.)

CHEN *(between the strokes on drum and gong):*

If anyone thinks he is man enough,

Let him take down the challenge and test his skill

By building the bridge-piers in Dragon River,

To bring all the treasures down from the hill.

(Raising a wine-cup) The county secretary will drink the health of whoever has the courage to take down the challenge!

(Several commune members walk over to the "appeal for talent" and begin discussing among themselves.)

FIRST YOUNG MAN *(to SECOND YOUNG MAN):* Come on, take it down. No good just standing there staring at it.

SECOND: What, just because I can swim a couple of strokes? Not for me, thank you. Come up with a couple of fish for dinner's the most I could do.

THIRD: Neither of you dare take it down? Here, watch me, then! *(He is about to take down the challenge.)*

FIRST *(restraining him):* Easy does it. So you think you're good enough to take down this challenge?

FEI: Whoever takes down the challenge guarantees to do the job. We're calling for a "general." A little shrimp like you wouldn't be big enough for a private, let alone a general!

THIRD: If you don't take it down and I don't, who's going to take it down?

FOURTH: I'll tell you somebody. We should elect him to take it down and be our leader for building the piers under water.

ALL: Who's that?

SECOND: Tumble-in-the-waves — Chao Ta-kang, you mean?

ALL: Yes, he's the man. Let's leave the challenge for him to take down.

CHEN: He's gone to take charge of clearing the site. If you all think he is the best we'd better wait.

(UNCLE CHIN comes up with a jar of wine in his arms.)

CHIN: Come on, you young fellows, put out your hand and take it down, whichever of you's got the courage. Don't just stand there staring at it!

FEI: Without a head a snake can't go, Uncle Chin, and without a head a bird can't fly. We're waiting here for the general.

CHIN: The general? Who's that?

SECOND: General Chao Ta-kang. He's gone to clear the site.

CHIN: Well, you certainly all seem to be of one mind! But the way I see it, this challenge won't necessarily fall into Ta-kang's hands. . . .

SECOND: Who else out of us but him would be up to it?

FEI: Who do you mean, Uncle Chin? Come on, tell us!

(UNCLE CHIN goes up to CHEN CHANG-SHOU, pours a cup of wine and drains it at a draught.)

CHIN: This man, you could rightly say he was born and bred in the river, a man of great skill.

(The young men come clustering round.)

FEI: Don't keep us in suspense, uncle. Is he a three-headed demon or a six-armed one?

CHIN: Patience. Let me first tell you a story of an "appeal for talent." Forty years back there was a man by the name of Jin Lao-hou who lived in Lungmen Town beyond the hill. He was such a good swimmer that he earned himself a nick-name — Ocean Dragon. It was just after harvest time one year and the devil got into Wry-mouth Sun's brat and he threw a string of pearls belonging to his father in the

river. Wry-mouth Sun who was a big landlord and had all the money in Lungmen Town rushed out to the edge of the village and posted up a notice saying he'd pay a reward of one silver dollar in cash to whoever fished up the string of pearls for him. But that notice stayed there all of five days without anybody paying any heed to his troubles. Then Wry-mouth Sun lost patience and came along with several of his henchmen and forced Jin Lao-hou to take to the water. He had his men stationed on the bank keeping Jin Lao-hou covered with their rifles and if he failed to bring up the pearls Wry-mouth Sun was going to do him in on the spot.

FEI: Blast 'em, these landlords and moneyed people were just that sort of swine, whether they lived this side of the hill or the other.

SECOND: Go on, Uncle Chin.

CHIN: And a real ocean dragon he was, too: a swirl of white along the bottom of the river, and in a trice there he was breaking the surface with the string of pearls in his hand. But not so much as a word of thanks from Wry-mouth Sun when he got his pearls; far from it, he would have it that Jin Lao-hou had lost a couple of the pearls in the river and insisted that he should make them good.

FEI: Wouldn't I just like to tear this Wry-mouth Sun into eight pieces!

SECOND: Go on, what happened next?

CHIN: Jin Lao-hou said not a word but in a flash he dived into the river and grabbed hold of a turtle, then slipped in along the bottom to the bank and before anybody knew what was happening he'd flung it in Wry-mouth Sun's face, and there was Wry-mouth Sun kissing the turtle! By the time his henchmen got round to blazing away at the river with their guns, Jin Lao-hou had long since vanished.

FEI: And you think this Ocean Dragon might come and take down the challenge?

CHIN: The Ocean Dragon's been dead this many a year. No, I mean his son.

ALL: Who's that?

CHIN: Jin Teh-lung of the Lungmen Commune.

FIRST: But Lungmen Commune's over a hundred *li* from here. There's no chance of him coming.

FEI: I hear there's a battalion from Lungmen Commune building a reservoir to the east of us and the leader's name is Jin — they all call him the Big Gold Dragon or some such name.

CHIN: Yes, that's right, that would be him. That's his nickname, Big Gold Dragon. And he's no worse a swimmer than his father was, that young fellow.

SECOND: But however good a swimmer this man Jin may be, he surely can't be as good as our Tumble-in-the-waves Chao Ta-kang?

CHIN: Don't you be too sure. If this Big Gold Dragon comes to take down the challenge our Ta-kang will have to step down and let him.

(Percussion music strikes up and a red banner leads on JIN TEH-LUNG and members of his team.)

JIN: Let me read what it says. *(Going up to the appeal)* "If any commune possesses a hero with outstanding abilities as a swimmer, who is willing to undertake the task of building bridge-piers under water, let him accept the challenge by taking down this red placard." Right, let's have it down!

(He is just going to reach out and take it down when the young men stop him with a shout.)

YOUNG MEN *(together)*: Hold it!



FIRST: Which commune are you from? You dare reach out and take down our appeal without even announcing your name?

JIN: Commander of the Water Conservancy Engineering Battalion of Lungmen Commune, Jin Teh-lung!

ALL (*together*): The Big Gold Dragon!

CHIN: It's him! It's him! It is him!

(One of the members of Lungmen Commune draws JIN TEH-LUNG away.)

FIRST COMMUNE MEMBER: Commander Jin, I think you'd better call it a day. We're doing enough for them as it is, building this reservoir; you don't want to go letting yourself in for something else. We can't even get our own commune's work done.

JIN: As they're making an appeal it shows they're in need of swimmers here for their bridge-building project. It's a shock-task that we should take on.

FIRST C.M.: They get the ore and we build the bridge, what sort of a proposition do you call that?

SECOND C.M.: You can't talk in terms of "they" and "we." The mining of the ore and the smelting of the iron and steel are for the whole country.

JIN: That's the point. Just you tell me, the 10,700,000 tons of steel that we're planning to produce this year, whose will it be? Will it belong to them, the Tiger Hill Commune, or to us, the Lungmen Commune?

COMMUNE MEMBERS: Jin's right, we agree to him taking it down. Down it comes!

JIN: And another thing, when we lost more than half our grain in the hail-storms in '54 Tiger Hill Commune came to our rescue by donating food for us. How can we stand by with folded hands watching them struggle with difficulties now?

COMMUNE MEMBERS (*together*): Take it down! Take it down!

(JIN TEH-LUNG is just going to reach out and take down the challenge when a shout comes from LI YU-TAO off-stage: "Hold it a minute!")

(LI YU-TAO and the women run on in great haste.)

LI: Who are you that you dare stroll in here as you please and take down challenges?

CHIN (*telling her quietly*): He's the famous Big Gold Dragon!

LI: I don't care whether he's a big gold dragon or a little one, he's clearly insulting us by supposing that we've nobody in our commune who can do the job! Let me tell you this challenge is already booked!

JIN: Taking down a challenge doesn't call for queuing up and having your application registered. First come first served.

CHIN: Yu-tao, you should let him take it down, he's a capable man.

LI: That's no reason. There's no man so capable that he can't be bettered, and our Ta-kang's more capable than he is. Don't think I'm talking for the fun of it: I'll take it down for Ta-kang!

JIN (*restraining her hand*): Wait a minute, what's Ta-kang got to do with you?

LI: I'm - I'm his wife!

JIN: He's not here in person. Whoever heard of a wife taking down a challenge for her husband? You see if I don't take it down! (*He is just going to reach out for it when he in turn is restrained by LI YU-TAO.*)

LI (*shouting*): Sisters, cordon off the appeal. Until Ta-kang comes nobody's to be allowed to take it down!

(The women form a human wall in front of the appeal, axes raised.)

CHIN (*laughing*): There! Mu Kuei-ying* marshalling her halberdiers for battle. That would make a good play.

FIRST C.M. (*drawing JIN TEH-LUNG away*): There you are, see? Try to lend a hand and they don't want you.

JIN: Let's wait and see, I'd very much like to meet this Chao Ta-kang character. I'm not leaving till I've taken down the challenge!

(At this moment TA-KANG is heard shouting off-stage: "Leave the challenge there! Leave it there!")

* Sung dynasty woman general known for her bravery and her skill in fighting.

ALL: Here's Ta-kang back.

LI: Hurry, Ta-kang! I'm guarding the challenge for you.

(CHAO TA-KANG runs on.)

(The women move aside.)

(JIN TEH-LUNG and CHAO TA-KANG rush at the appeal together, each trying to push the other's hand away.)

JIN: So you're Chao Ta-kang, are you?

CHAO: Who are you?

JIN: Jin Teh-lung from the Lungmen Commune.

CHAO: On what grounds do you dare to snatch down this challenge?

JIN:

My shoulders are broad

And my arms are thick;

I can tear hill-top rocks apart with my hands,

And knock a great river aside with one kick!

CHAO:

When I point at the hills they turn into gold,

And the streams turn to silver at my touch;

When dragons see me they slink from my path,

When fierce tigers see me they tremble with dread!

JIN:

Wherever you turn across river or hill,

There's none does not know of the Big Gold Dragon.

CHAO:

Wherever you go over mountain or stream,

You'll hear of 'Tumble-in-the-waves' fame!

JIN: If I undertake to do the bridge-piers I'll guarantee to have them finished in a fortnight.

CHAO: If the whole of the work on the piers is given to us to do, we'll guarantee to have it finished in ten days.

JIN: If it's a question of first come first served, the challenge should be mine by now!

CHAO: No matter what you way, I'm determined to take down the challenge.

(They both snatch the appeal down together, and at the same time they burst out laughing.)

JIN: So which of us are we going to say took it down after all?

CHAO: I think we'd better settle it once and for all by both of us diving into the river and having a competition.

JIN: Right you are.

(They both begin stripping off.)

FEI: Stand back, comrades! They're going into the river!

(Off-stage SECRETARY HSING shouts: "Hold it a minute! Hold it!")

CHIN: Here's Secretary Hsing.

(SECRETARY HSING, HO KUO-CHANG and MENG TAN-HUA enter together.)

HSING: What's going on here?

CHIN: The two of them took the challenge down together, so they're just going to go into the river and have a competition.

HSING *(laughing)*: Dear, oh dear. Now that really would be difficult to judge, between those two! No, don't go into the river for a competition, save your energy for work.

CHIN: Perhaps you could decide between them, then.

HSING: If you want my opinion, you're both such good swimmers that there's not much to choose between you. Now that we've got this gathering of all the talents here we can organize two shock-brigades, the "Dragon-tamers" and the "Tiger-tamers" to undertake the task of building the piers. I suggest the two teams be led by Jin Teh-lung and Chao Ta-kang, everyone agreed?

ALL *(cheering)*: Agreed.

HSING: Your two teams will come under the leadership of the site supervisor.

CHIN: That's right, when you've got two generals you also need to have a field-marshal. Who's to be the site supervisor?

HSING: Headquarters would like to appoint Comrade Li Yu-tao to the post of site supervisor. Everyone agreed?

ALL: Agreed.

LI: Secretary Hsing, I — er — but I'm not up to it. . . .

HSING: You're up to it all right.
CHAO: But won't that mean I'll have to do as she says from now on?
HSING: What do you mean, you won't submit to that?
CHAO: All right, I'll submit to it.

(Everybody laughs.)

HSING: Right, then, uncle, let's have the wine here.

(YIN CHE-FU comes hurrying up.)

HSING: Old Yin, you've come just right. We're just about to try out the method of building a watertight wall, and now we've got our hero-swimmers as well. Come on, have a drink.

YIN: I'm afraid it wouldn't be right for me to join you now.

HSING: Why, your hydrographic data are more or less complete by now, aren't they?

YIN: All except for going to Devil's Gate Sand-bank to find the highest flood-level. I've just been to ask Dad Chao to take me across in his boat but because Ta-kang hit Lu Pan's Rock that time he absolutely refuses to take me.

CHIN: Old Yin, drink this cup of wine down and leave it to me to get Chao Lao-ta to take you.

ALL: That's right. Drink up, Comrade Engineer. You can't go wrong when things are in Uncle Chin's hands.

YIN: All right, Uncle Chin, so long as you can get Dad Chao to take me across to Devil's Gate Sand-bank in his boat *(turning to SECRETARY HSING)* I guarantee to collect the necessary data the same day, and the designing of the bridge can start ahead of schedule!

(Everybody cheers.)

HSING *(raising his cup)*: Here's to the bridge!

ALL: The bridge!

Curtain

SCENE IV

Forcing a Crossing at the Devil's Gate

The third day after the appeal.

Situated on the upper reaches of the Dragon River, the Devil's Gate Sand-bank is a place where the swift current is churned into whirlpools by a tangle of shoals and jutting rocks and where the boiling waves roar like thunder. A tent has been erected on a slope overlooking it.

UNCLE CHIN is trying to talk DAD CHAO round. YIN CHE-FU is standing to one side listening in. MENG TAN-HUA is cooking at a stone stove.

CHIN: Well, Brother Chao, now we're what they call "all set to go and lacking only an east wind." All we're waiting for now is for you to take the engineer across in your boat. You realize? Once the engineer has found his hydrographic data and drawn his sketches the work on the bridge can begin ahead of schedule! Now's the time, brother, for us older people to do our bit for the bridge.

DAD: But Ta-kang. . . .

CHIN: Doing what you tell him less and less, is he? But the lad did right in tearing down the challenge and taking on the job, you know. To repeat what I was saying before, all the treasures of Tiger Hill in exchange for Lu Pan's Rock, why, that's a bargain we'd be making for our children and grandchildren for generations to come!

(DAD CHAO says nothing, and UNCLE CHIN glances at YIN CHE-FU and MENG TAN-HUA.)

CHIN *(losing patience)*: Here I've been talking long enough to smoke a couple of pipes, but still I can't get a straight answer out of you!

(DAD CHAO still says nothing.)

CHIN: Don't you understand, brother, that I've boasted in front of everybody and guaranteed on your behalf that you would undertake the task of taking the engineer across in your boat. And I also drank to it for you with Secretary Hsing.

DAD: But you shouldn't have made such a guarantee, brother!

CHIN (*not understanding*): Why not?

DAD: Because, brother, you're forcing me into a difficult position by doing that.

CHIN: But nobody knows the sand-banks and reefs of the Devil's Gate so well as you, nor is anybody so experienced as you are at the job of poling a boat. Remember how you refused to take Big-stick Sun in your boat in the old days and our neighbours all said you are a man of strong determination. But if you now refuse to take the engineer in your boat you'll never hear the last of it from them!

MENG: Dad Chao, after being liberated all these years you shouldn't still be worrying about your River-gods and Master Lu Pans!

YIN: Tan-hua!

DAD: Even if I am superstitious and backward, (*pointing to YIN CHE-FU*) there's a man of learning here. Engineer Yin, is it or is it not possible to build a bridge across the Dragon River?

YIN: How d'you mean?

DAD: Here's what you said with your own lips: "It's impossible to build a bridge across the Dragon River, and there'll be serious trouble."

CHIN: If you don't want to go to the Devil's Gate just say so straight out. No point in standing here blethering.

DAD (*glancing at YIN, MENG and CHIN*): You're pushing me too hard, brother!

CHIN: Is it me that's pushing you, or is it you that's pushing our neighbours and the youngsters?

DAD: What do you mean I'm —?

CHIN: All right, then, give me three refusals here and now.

DAD: I won't go . . . I can't go . . . I'm certainly not going!

CHIN (*exploding*): Now listen to me, Chao Lao-ta, I gave you a good name in front of everybody and now here you are turning round and making me look a fool. All right, then, from now on we're — (*He suddenly snaps the stem of his pipe and throws it down in front of DAD CHAO.*)

(*DAD CHAO looks down with a hurt expression at the pipe, looks up again at UNCLE CHIN, then stamps his foot and goes off.*)

MENG: Dad Chao! Dad! (*Unable to catch him up, she has no alternative but to come back.*)

YIN (*looking at his retreating figure*): I just can't make him out.

(*UNCLE CHIN paces up and down.*)

MENG: Don't fret, uncle. If Dad Chao won't take us across we'll think of another way.

YIN: If we had known it was going to turn out like this we wouldn't have wasted two days and nights here.

MENG: You can't say these two days have been wasted. Kuo-chang has had Ta-kang and Commander Jin and the others trying out the watertight wall and they'll soon have succeeded.

YIN (*impatiently*): But what about the maximum flood-level? What I want is the maximum flood-level! If I haven't got that how can I guarantee that the wooden arched bridge is going to be able to stand up to a very heavy flood?

MENG: It's no use fretting. Secretary Hsing has already taken your suggestion with him to a meeting of the provincial committee, so perhaps we'll have a hydrographic survey team down from provincial headquarters to help us.

YIN: And what if no survey team comes? Are we to go on waiting like this? What sort of a big leap forward do you call that?

CHIN: Chao Lao-ta, Chao Lao-ta, you've put me in a spot and no mistake! Huh! My fault for being so blind. I shouldn't have stood surety for him like that and put the engineer in this difficult position.

MENG: Don't say such silly things, uncle. Come along, have something to eat before you do anything else. Che-fu, have a taste of these leeks I've fried.

YIN: No thanks, I don't feel like eating anything.

(*HO KUO-CHANG comes running up in high spirits.*)

HO: Teacher Yin, Tan-hua — ah, uncle, didn't know you were here. I've come to tell you some good news!

YIN (*without enthusiasm*): Good news?
MENG: Was the experiment with the watertight wall a success?
HO: Yes! We're only waiting for the engineer to come and check it. Ta-kang and Commander Jin's two underwater shock-brigades have really shown us what they can do. As the saying goes, they can "catch the fierce tigers in the mountains and shackle the dragons in the sea." They swim like fish, each one better than the last.
MENG: So does that mean there'll be no difficulty about putting the piers in position?
HO: No difficulty at all. The watertight wall method works, and masons and bricklayers are available to start work whenever we like.
MENG (*excited*): Let's go and have a look, shall we, Che-fu?
YIN: The watertight wall may be a success, but what about the hydrographic data?
HO: Why? Wouldn't Dad Chao agree?
YIN: Humph!
MENG: We reached a deadlock and Dad Chao went off in a huff. We can't get across to the Devil's Gate and Old Yin's very worried about it.
HO: Damn, that's what comes of my neglecting to give Teacher Yin any assistance the past couple of days.
YIN: I don't see what more we could have done even if we had had you looking after us.
HO: I mean we could have found some other way of getting the information.
YIN: Where else are you going to get such a reliable record as at the Devil's Gate?
HO: I can't believe the Devil's Gate is the only sand-bank that's kept the traces of past flood-levels. We could go among the masses and make inquiries of the older people who might know of another place.
YIN: You don't consider there's any longer any possibility of overcoming the difficulties involved in reaching the Devil's Gate, then?
HO: I don't think there's any point in staying here fighting a long drawn out battle when we haven't yet found a dependable method of conquering them.

YIN: Then it will mean abandoning a known quantity and starting a search all over again for an unknown quantity. And if the unknown quantity when we find it lands us in a greater mess than the known one already has, what chance have we got of getting the foundation work finished before the floods get here? Does it mean we can't get across just because Dad Chao won't pole us across?
CHIN: Old Yin, you'll find it the most difficult thing in the world to force a crossing to the Devil's Gate if Chao Lao-ta won't agree to take you. I think you'd best leave it for a day or so. Old Hsing's giving the lead here and he's sure to have a brilliant idea.
YIN: But we've given our word to the people here!
HO: Teacher Yin, I ran into Uncle Chang a moment ago cutting firewood and he mumbled something about "If you want to know the river's flow, the Eagle's Beak's the place to go; if you want to know the river's height, the Eagle's Beak will put you right."
CHIN: The Eagle's Beak?
HO: Do you know the place, uncle?
CHIN: I seem to have heard it spoken of, but I don't know where it is.
HO: I was going to ask him for more details but he put his firewood on his back and made off.
MENG: Then we'd better go and see him about it quickly.
HO: Yes, that's why I just proposed that —
YIN: You're not telling me people actually believe all these riddles and mumbo-jumbo! Uncle Chang strikes me as being even more backward than Dad Chao. Why should we go and run our heads into an even harder brick wall? We've already had as much as we can stomach from Dad Chao.
MENG: What harm is there in at least making an inquiry?
YIN: Time! Any minute now the flood waters will be down on us. Our design should have been ready before anything else, but up till now. . . . I refuse to believe that during the big leap forward a little difficulty like this really can't be overcome.
HO: But the last thing we want to do is take risks.

YIN: Then I suppose we should put our scientific instruments on our backs and go along behind Uncle Chang and Dad Chao to burn incense and prostrate ourselves in front of their gods and immortals? (*Going over to the tent*) I'm dead against this method of swallowing the first bottle of medicine that comes to hand to try and cure an illness! (*He goes into the tent.*)

(*For a while nobody speaks.*)

HO: What's the matter with the engineer today?

CHIN (*dejectedly*): He's got a heavy burden to bear.

MENG: He's never been like this before.

CHIN: I suppose he hasn't run up against difficulties of this kind in his work before.

MENG: Naturally, he's always meeting difficulties in his work. But they've all seemed easier to deal with. The way things are here. . . .

CHIN: I know, it must be difficult up in the hills here where we're so poor and have to start everything from scratch with our bare hands.

MENG: But I think it's great fun to do things that way.

HO: You're certainly very confident.

(*LI YU-TAO and CHEN CHANG-SHOU come hurrying up.*)

LI: Kuo-chang, Engineer Yin, there's a telegram from provincial headquarters.

(*YIN CHE-FU appears in the doorway.*)

YIN: Are they sending down a hydrographic survey team?

LI: They didn't mention that. They just said the rains were coming early this year in the upper reaches of the river and that there's a possibility of unusually heavy storms. The provincial committee has directed us not to waste a single second but to take effective measures to beat the extra-heavy floods this year.

MENG: Then our bridge —

LI: The telegram says the foundation work on the bridge must be completed a fortnight ahead of schedule.

YIN: They want us to bring it forward again?

CHEN: If we don't bring it forward and get it done before the floods come all our work will be wasted.

MENG: But our work here. . . .

LI: I don't know where dad's got to.

CHIN: He's been here already. (*Handing her the broken pipe*) Look.

LI: What, you mean dad and you have. . . .

(*Silence.*)

HO: It's a test. A stringent test for every one of us.

LI: This is a barrier that we've got to face. Whether or not we can surmount it depends on whether we can solve the problem of the hydrographic data in time.

YIN: I've just thought of another scheme for solving the data problem.

LI: Good, let's hear it.

YIN: There are plenty of first-class swimmers here in the hills; we can force a crossing to the Devil's Gate.

ALL: Force a crossing?

HO: We can't force a crossing without safety precautions.

LI: Whatever you say about it it's still a risky business that shouldn't be undertaken except in the last resort.

YIN: What other way is there at the moment?

LI: We must give more thought to it.

HO: Let's make the most of our time by holding an older-generation forum, shall we?

YIN (*after a moment's thought*): And what if the discussion produces no result? A bird in the hand's worth two in the bush. Just think, all the local people say that the traces of the flood-levels all down the years will be visible on that rock face jutting out of the water.

CHEN: But how can we get to it? I agree with Kuo-chang. Since our frontal attack has failed there's no reason why we shouldn't try to get round it some other way. What do you think, Comrade Supervisor?

LI: I also agree with Kuo-chang.

MENG: What about you, Old Yin?

YIN: If you're all agreed on holding this forum there's no necessity to ask my opinion.

LI: If we're going to hold it we'd better get a move on. Would you go round telling people, uncle? An older-generation forum is to be held at headquarters in an hour's time. We want all commune members and cadres over the age of fifty to attend.

CHIN: I'll go and tell them now.

MENG: And don't forget to tell Dad Chao.

CHIN: All right, I'll let him know.

(UNCLE CHIN goes out and LI YU-TAO and HO KUO-CHANG have a few words' discussion in an undertone.)

LI: Let's go and get ready for it now, Kuo-chang. *(Seeing that YIN is still looking worried)* Comrade Meng, why don't you take the engineer down to the river for a walk? Once the work on the bridge is under way I'll take you out duck-shooting when we have a moment to spare. See them? Just over there, flocks of them. *(To HO KUO-CHANG)* Let's go, then.

(LI YU-TAO and HO KUO-CHANG go off together.)

MENG: Che-fu, let's go and have a look at the waterproof wall. We're sure to learn a lot from it.

YIN: I'm not denying it's a good idea. Our experiences in using the wall can be popularized afterwards.

MENG: Come on, then.

YIN *(still gazing towards the river as if reluctant to go)*:
But. . . .

MENG: Don't be silly, Che-fu. You've never seen Sister Yutao going around looking as gloomy as you do.

YIN: In this piece of socialist emulation they've won and I've lost.

MENG: You shouldn't try to make such a watertight distinction between "they" and "I." *(YIN CHE-FU gives MENG TAN-HUA a look but says nothing.)* Your old trouble back again? Just look at these people up here in the hills. Every success and every victory is a matter for universal rejoicing with them, and every time a difficulty crops up everybody

feels concerned about it and they set to work together to solve it. Look at Kuo-chang: he spends several days and nights getting soaked in the water and then as soon as they've managed to get the wall finished after a great rush he comes straight away to help you with this task.

YIN: I could have done without his help.

MENG: What do you mean?

YIN: He only came to persuade me to back out!

MENG: You think his suggestion was unreasonable?

YIN: It can only lower our morale!

MENG: You shouldn't go making such wild accusations.

YIN: You're one of the waverers yourself!

MENG: Che-fu, *(seeing that he is too worked up for her to do anything with him)* let's drop the subject. *(Glancing at her watch)* We should be going to see the wall.

YIN: Come on, then. *(He stands up abruptly but is overcome by an attack of dizziness and cannot stand steady.)*

MENG: What's the matter? *(She supports him and feels his forehead.)* A touch of fever. You haven't been getting enough sleep. You stay here and get some rest while you can. I'll go on my own.

YIN: All right.

MENG: You'd better go inside.

YIN: It's cooler out here.

MENG *(pouring him a drink of water)*: Have a drink of water. *(Taking a couple of sweets out of her pocket)* There are still two of these ginseng sweets left that the villagers gave us. *(Stripping off the paper)* Here you are, Che-fu, and don't go making yourself ill with silly notions again.

YIN *(grasping her hand)*: Tan-hua!

MENG: I'll be back straight away.

YIN *(nodding)*: Off you go, then.

(MENG TAN-HUA goes off, leaving YIN CHE-FU wrestling with his thoughts.)
(A voice off-stage calls: "Ho Kuo-chang! Ho Kuo-chang!" and CHAO TA-KANG and JIN TEH-LUNG come running up together.)

CHAO: Engineer Yin, where's Kuo-chang?

YIN: Just gone off with Yu-tao to headquarters.

CHAO: Our shock-brigade has successfully tried out the waterproof wall ahead of schedule and we're just waiting for the news of your success.

JIN: We're really going to show you something this time, Comrade Engineer! We've organized six spearhead companies and as soon as we get the order from headquarters we're going in there to smash the River-god's home to smithereens!

(YIN CHE-FU, who has been deep in thought until now, suddenly grasps the pair of them by the hand.)

YIN: Comrade Ta-kang, Commander Jin, you've come just right. *(Taking them onto the slope of the bank)* Do you see the Devil's Gate over there, misted with spray and with the white waves surging round it?

CHAO: Yes, that's Devil's Gate, the famous danger-spot. Many years ago my dad took me across in his boat to explore but the boat was overturned in a whirlpool and it was nearly the end of both of us.

JIN: As bad as that, is it?

CHAO: I'm not trying to taunt you, Brother Jin, but even a first-rate swimmer like you would find it extremely difficult to swim across to the Devil's Gate Sand-bank.

JIN: Brother, if it wasn't that Secretary Hsing had given us orders as he was leaving not to lark about, I'd insist on taking a trip across to the Devil's Gate today.

CHAO: Wait till we've finished the job of building the bridge and I'll bring you here for a match.

JIN: That's a date. Engineer Yin is our witness to it. If I can't swim across to this Devil's Gate I'll stand you a jar of good wine.

YIN: Comrade Ta-kang, Commander Jin, you're both great swimmers famous near and far and I want you to help me out.

CHAO: Let's hear what's on your mind, Comrade Engineer.

JIN: We hill-folk are particular about sticking by those who stick by us. You and Technician Meng are for us heart and soul and if you run into any difficulties you've only to tell me and I'll shift a mountain or drain the sea for you!

YIN: Good. I want you two to take me across to the Devil's Gate.

(They are both taken aback.)

JIN: You — you want to go to the Devil's Gate?

CHAO: Didn't dad agree to take you, then?

YIN: He fell out with Uncle Chin.

JIN: Before Secretary Hsing left he gave us orders not to take any risks during the preparatory period or let any accidents happen. Besides which we're both in charge of teams. . . .

YIN: The site supervisor is basically in agreement with forcing a crossing. All we want is heroes who are not afraid of going into the river here.

CHAO: What? Yu-tao agreed to it?

YIN: Comrade Ta-kang, Commander Jin, the provincial committee has sent us an emergency flood warning saying that the main floods will be coming down earlier than expected. The situation is now a crucial one and every second counts. If we can force a crossing I'll take a complete set of instruments across and the job of surveying can be completed the same day. Then we can bring forward the start on the bridge and get the foundations finished before the floods arrive.

JIN: Can the surveying be finished the same day if we can get across?

CHAO: And the work on the bridge can be started earlier?

YIN: I guarantee that.

CHAO: I'll take you across!

JIN *(restraining him)*: Easy does it, Secretary Hsing's not back yet and we'd be taking a risk if we did it.

CHAO: It doesn't matter, my wife's the site supervisor and if she agrees to it, it's all right.

YIN: I've thought out a safe method. All we need is a long stout piece of rope and a small boat, fix one end of the rope to the bank, then one of you swims across with the other end of it so that the other two can row across holding on to the rope. When we get to the first sand-bank we do the same thing again and get to the second and so on until we get right across to the Devil's Gate. Can't go wrong.

CHAO: Good idea. Dad's boat's moored just down there below us. And there's a stout rope stowed in the bottom of it. I'll haul it up and we can set to work at once!

JIN: Comrade Engineer, if we take you across are you sure you can get the job done the same day?

YIN: Quite sure. We'll be relying entirely on scientific instruments.

JIN: Can you swim?

YIN: I—er—no, I can't. But I'll have nothing to fear with you two looking after me.

CHAO: Come on, no time for chattering, let's get over and back again quick. Come on, Brother Jin, let's fetch the boat.

(CHAO and JIN go out.)

(YIN hurriedly gets his instruments together.)

(MENG TAN-HUA comes hurrying in.)

YIN: Haven't you gone yet?

MENG: I forgot to put on my gumboots.

YIN: Why, is the watertight wall leaking?

MENG *(changing into gumboots)*: Of course not, I'd just like to go into the water to have a look.

YIN *(checking his instruments)*: What sort of a job have they made of it?

MENG: First rate. I never expected it would turn out so well.

YIN: If it's usable it's already a brilliant invention.

MENG: Relatively speaking, of course. Don't forget what sort of an area this is, right away up in the hills! *(Now changed into her gumboots and about to go)* What's this, fiddling about with your instruments again? Go inside, go on.

YIN: I'm—*(Dissimulating)* I'm just checking them. So that they'll be ready for use in an emergency.

MENG: I checked them for you only this morning. Che-fu! You—come on, inside and have a rest. As soon as the meeting starts I'll come and call you.

(MENG goes out.)

(TA-KANG's voice comes from down the bank: "Here's the boat!" He comes hurrying up carrying a coil of rope. JIN follows behind hauling on the tracking line.)

CHAO: Here's your small boat and your long rope, all present and correct. *(He ties one end of the rope round a tree.)*

JIN: See what it's like, Comrade Engineer? Whirlpools everywhere. You sure the little boat's going to be safe in that lot?

CHAO: Don't worry. Watch me have a go first. I'll take the rope across on the first lap. *(He takes off his clothes.)*

JIN: Wait a minute! Think I'm a coward? *(Taking off his clothes)* This job's lined up for me. You can row, so you stay behind and see the engineer safely across. *(He picks up the end of the rope and dives into the water.)*

YIN *(watching)*: Whew! Not even great waves like that can stop him. Dragon's certainly the word for him!

CHAO: For all my tough talk I'm not his match when it comes to comparing us as swimmers.

YIN: He's reached the first sand-bank.

CHAO: He's waving to us. Give me the instruments while you hold on to the rope and get into the boat.

(CHAO and YIN both get into the boat, steadying themselves on the rope.)

(After a short interval MENG comes running in excitedly with SECRETARY HSING.)

MENG *(calling into the tent)*: Che-fu, here's Secretary Hsing back! Why! Where's he gone?

HSING: What's he up to now? Gone down to the river to mope again because he can't get his maximum flood-level?

(HO KUO-CHANG, LI YU-TAO and CHEN CHANG-SHOU come in.)

HO: Secretary Hsing, has the provincial committee agreed to send a hydrographic survey team down?

HSING: They had agreed originally, but since they got this warning of early floods this morning their job is to ensure the safety of the more important projects, so they can't come after all. Secretary Chang didn't want to keep you on ten-

terhooks so he sent me back before the meeting was over. He's already directed the neighbouring counties to give us all the support they can in the way of manpower and technical assistance in building the bridge.

MENG: When difficulties crop up everyone supports you: there's real communist co-operation for you! (*She goes into the tent.*)

LI: I was just getting worried in case we hadn't enough workers for a shock attack on building the bridge, and now the problem's solved just like that.

MENG (*coming out of the tent*): The instruments have disappeared, too. I don't understand it.

HSING: What instruments?

MENG: He was here a minute ago fiddling about with his hydrographic surveying instruments.

HSING (*on the alert*): What was he doing fiddling about with his instruments when Dad Chao hasn't agreed to take him across in his boat?

LI: *Aiya!* He was suggesting forcing a crossing to the Devil's Gate a moment ago. He must have. . . .

(They all run on to the river bank.)

HO (*shouting*): There's a boat in the river!

MENG (*running on to the bank*): Is it Che-fu? *Aiya!* It is him!

HO: Ta-kang!

MENG: It's dangerous!

HSING: Kuo-chang, tell everybody to stand by for a rescue operation.

(HO runs out.)

MENG: *Aiya!* The boat's overturned!

LI: Save the engineer! Save the engineer!

Curtain

SCENE V

Together in a Swift Boat

The next evening, a moonlight night with glittering stars. A tent with the flap closed has been erected at the right end of the stage, with the sick YIN CHE-FU lying inside. MENG TAN-HUA is tending him. A distraught UNCLE CHIN is poking the camp-fire with a twig and the sounds of stone being dressed and timber being hewn are carried through the night. For a while the stage is quiet, then suddenly shouts are heard from LIU PAO-SHAN and KAO SHOU-TIEN: "Secretary Hsing, Secretary Hsing. . . ."

KAO } (*running on shouting*): Secretary Hsing! . . .
LIU }

CHIN: Don't make such a din! The engineer's ill.

KAO: Ill?

LIU: How's that?

CHIN: He nearly lost his life at the Devil's Gate trying to get his hydrographic data. He got a nasty shaking up in the water. At the moment he's running a high fever—he's so bad he's delirious with it.

KAO (*keeping his voice down*): Uncle, our masons' team from Kaoshan Commune will soon have finished the quarrying job they've undertaken.

LIU: And our carpenters' team from Liushuwan Commune will soon have got through all the timber, too.

CHIN: You don't need to go bothering Old Hsing with things like that. He hasn't had a wink of sleep since yesterday and at the moment he's still at the older-generation forum.

KAO: Has the meeting been going on ever since last night, then?

CHIN: The problem wasn't solved last night. Old Hsing said there weren't enough people present. But it's been better today, even people like Chang Lao-erh and Tsao Lao-szu have been brought into it.

LIU: Then we. . . .

CHIN: You'd better go and see the site supervisor.

KAO: We can't find Supervisor Li, anyway she's run off her feet as it is.

CHIN: She's in tent No. 3 working out what manpower and materials will be needed.

KAO: Let's go, comrade.

LIU (*keeping his voice down*): Uncle, now that the engineer's ill, shall we be able to get the bridge started on time?

CHIN: I think Old Hsing will be able to manage all right.

KAO: Everything is arranged and planned. . . .

LIU: We're only waiting for the word of command.

(*They both go off. MENG TAN-HUA comes out of the tent.*)

MENG: Uncle . . . his fever's getting worse. . . . (*She puts her head on UNCLE CHIN's shoulder and bursts into tears.*)

CHIN: Don't fret. You know Kuo-chang's gone to the city on a fast horse to get him some medicine; he's sure to be back first thing in the morning.

MENG: I'm not just worried about his condition, uncle, there's the bridge, too. What are we going to do about the bridge with the floods coming down any moment?

CHIN: Don't worry. Old Hsing's deploying the troops and the field is set for the battle.

MENG: It's all my fault, I didn't expect that things could go wrong like this. It wouldn't have happened if I hadn't left him alone. (*She brushes away a tear.*)

CHIN: How can you say it was your fault? Don't upset yourself. If we can't get across to the Devil's Gate we can always find somewhere where we can get across. But it's not like us hill-folk to cry, you know. Look at me for instance, I sing when I'm happy and I also sing when I'm sad. . . . (*Hurling firewood on the fire when he sees that MENG TAN-HUA is still weeping*) Chao Lao-ta, for all that you've been drinking from the Dragon River all these years and living off the hills, it hasn't done you any good. You're not the least bit like a man from Tiger Hill! . . .

MENG (*drying her eyes*): Old Yin should be held responsible for what happened at the Devil's Gate, uncle, you shouldn't go blaming Dad Chao for it.

CHIN: I can't help blaming him. If he'd agreed straight out to take Old Yin across in his boat Old Yin wouldn't have been driven to having an accident at the Devil's Gate.

(*Taking out the two pieces of the snapped pipe stem from inside his jacket*) I'd been keeping these two pieces of pipe stem in the hope that we two old friends would bury the hatchet one day, but now that things have gone as far as this I'm giving up all idea of it. (*He is about to throw the broken pipe into the fire but is restrained by MENG TAN-HUA.*)

MENG: Keep it, Uncle Chin; you and Dad Chao are sure to make it up.

CHIN: We two are like a millstone meeting a stone roller — it's difficult.

(*SECRETARY HSING arrives.*)

HSING: Difficult? What is? (*To MENG TAN-HUA*) How's Old Yin? (*Going into the tent to have a look and coming out again*) When did Kuo-chang go to the city?

CHIN: He grabbed a horse and went as soon as the doctor had made out the prescription. When do you think he'd be back?

HSING: Seven or eight in the morning at the earliest. (*To MENG TAN-HUA*) Worried? Well, don't be. The doctor says this is some old trouble of his brought on again by the cold water. Get him to drink plenty of hot water. Uncle, why did you slip away before the meeting was over?

CHIN: I was worried about Engineer Yin's condition.

HSING (*jokingly*): And worried about this broken pipe, too, eh? It makes you angry to think about Dad Chao, doesn't it?

MENG: Tell me how things went at the forum.

HSING: A very good meeting. Plenty of experience of all kinds of things these older men have had. Everybody says that the floods of 1916 were the biggest. And Uncle Chang says that eight *li* downstream from Lu Pan's Rock there's a place called the Eagle's Beak with the highest flood-level of that year marked on the cliff face.

MENG: That's right, Kuo-chang was telling us yesterday about a rhyme that Uncle Chang had told him. . . .

CHIN:

If you want to know the river's flow,
The Eagle's Beak's the place to go. . . .

HSING: That's it, that's what Uncle Chang told us. He says that although this place is not so dangerous as the Devil's Gate it's still full of hidden reefs and difficult to cross to by boat.

MENG: What can we do about it, then?

HSING: It'll be all right, they also elected an expert to pole a boat across through the reefs.

MENG: Who?

CHIN: What a question: Dad Chao, of course.

HSING: That's right.

CHIN: Old Hsing, you should put the idea out of your mind.

HSING: Why, it's not as if he hasn't given us any help. Wasn't it he who took me over to Tiger Hill several times?

CHIN: That was then; things are different now.

HSING: Why shouldn't he do it now?

CHIN: Because his head's full of superstition, because he's so attached to his boat and his Lu Pan's Rock.

HSING: It's not just that, he thinks he's been wronged.

CHIN: Wronged?

HSING: Go and have a chat with him and you'll find out about it.

CHIN: That's asking me to go to him on bended knees and admit I was in the wrong, Old Hsing! I can't do that. You must give an order, Old Hsing: although I work on dry land and am not so good at poling a boat as he is, I'll willingly risk my old life to take you across by boat and show him whether we can manage without him or not.

HSING: You want to give me a touch of fever like Old Yin and have me lying there with an attack of malaria keeping him company?

CHIN: In other words we can't manage without him, is that what you mean?

HSING: Of course I don't. I'm not thinking of Dad Chao's skill as a boatman, nor am I thinking of this broken pipe of yours. These are small matters that only carry a couple of ounces of weight.

CHIN: Then let's hear about one of the weightier things.

HSING: The work's about to begin on the bridge, but at the moment it's mostly the activists who're in action. That's

something that rates a ton in weight. (*Drawing on the ground with a twig*) As I see it, there are some people who've got the energy but no opportunity to put it to use, there are some who've got the energy but don't want to put it to use, and some older people who're watching Dad Chao and taking their cue from him. . . . Just think about it, Dad Chao has a valuable contribution he could make and was at one time prepared to make it, and if we've hurt his feelings, either intentionally or unintentionally, certain people will have to sound the retreat.

CHIN:

HSING: Uncle, if we're going to build a socialist bridge we must get more people united behind the idea.

CHIN: You certainly see farther than other people, Old Hsing. But Chao Lao-ta's mind is tied in a firm knot and he won't agree to go.

HSING: Then we'll have to help him untie the knot.

CHIN: How? And who's going to untie it for him?

HSING: The forum elected somebody for that job, too, somebody capable, the only person who could do it.

CHIN: Who's that?

HSING: You.

CHIN: It's all right for you, Old Hsing, you don't know what I'm going through.

HSING: That's no concern of mine. You told me to give an order, didn't you? I'm handing the key over to you. (*Hearing the sound of someone chopping wood*) What are they doing?

CHIN: Kuo-chang and the others have got Chen Chang-shou to work through the night to build Chao Lao-ta a boat to make up for the one that was lost.

HSING: Making him a new boat? Don't you know Dad Chao better than that, uncle? He'll be very annoyed indeed if you try to replace his boat.

CHIN: That was my idea, to annoy him.

HSING: That's you all over, uncle. You'd better hand this boat over to me to deal with. Come on, let's go and have a look at it.

MENG: I'd like to come, too.

HSING: You?

MENG: How are we going to do our work after losing all the instruments at the Devil's Gate yesterday? Old Yin keeps muttering about the instruments in his delirium. I want Chen Chang-shou and the others to make us a rule before they do anything else.

HSING: What about Old Yin?

MENG: He's just fallen asleep. I'll be straight back.

HSING: Let's go together, then.

CHIN:

HSING: Come along, uncle. Don't look so miserable. How does that hill-song of yours go?

CHIN (*singing*):

The armies of the sky have come down to earth. . . .

HSING: That's it. (*He joins in the singing.*)

(*UNCLE CHIN's hill-song echoes through the night.*)

(*The three of them go off.*)

(*After a short interval JIN TEH-LUNG arrives with something wrapped up in a piece of cloth. He lifts aside the tent-flap and looks inside, then goes across to dry off his dripping-wet clothes at the fire.*)

(*Someone calls in the darkness: "Brother Jin!"*)

JIN (*with joy and surprise*): Brother Ta-kang!

(*CHAO TA-KANG comes across carrying an earthenware jug.*)

CHAO: Hullo, brother.

JIN: What are you doing out? I thought your dad was determined to keep you in?

CHAO: He went out on business but he locked the door on me. Guess what happened? I stayed in and had a good tuck-in. (*Holding up the earthenware jug*) Look, here's a jug of rice porridge I cooked for you and Old Yin.

JIN (*Sitting down on a stone beside the fire*): Come, sit here, it'll be matier sitting together. I'm so glad you've come. I feel a lot better now that you are here.

CHAO: How's Old Yin?

JIN (*pointing to the tent*): Running a high fever, pretty ill.

CHAO: I'll never forgive myself.

(*Hearing voices, YIN CHE-FU struggles out of the tent.*)

JIN: I feel I've let the Lungmen Commune down badly, brother. After all these years I've spent soaking in the river I never thought I'd be swept away like that at the Devil's Gate.

CHAO: No, it was all my fault, Brother Jin. I was a local, a swimmer who knew all about the Devil's Gate, yet I let my enthusiasm carry me away for a moment and dragged you into the dangers of the Devil's Gate.

JIN: I hear you came in for a good dose of criticism from Secretary Hsing.

CHAO: And no wonder.

JIN: Though I don't think it's altogether right that one person should be criticized for something done by three people.

CHAO: Oh, I wouldn't object to serious punishment for it, let alone a few words of criticism.

YIN: Ta-kang, Commander Jin, it's I that should take responsibility for what happened at the Devil's Gate.

JIN } : What are you doing up, Comrade Engineer? (*Quickly*

CHAO } *going forward and supporting him*) Come on, back to bed.

YIN: Let me get a breath of fresh air, I'm suffocating in there.

JIN (*sitting YIN CHE-FU down*): You're running a fever.

YIN: I'll soon be over it. I don't know how we're going to manage, though. I've really made a mess of things. How are we going to do our work with all our instruments at the bottom of the river?

CHAO: Now Comrade Engineer, you mustn't worry about it whatever you do, you'll only go make yourself worse.

JIN: Don't worry. I've got some medicine here that's specially designed to cure you.

CHAO: What medicine?

JIN (*undoing the piece of cloth to reveal an instrument box*): Have a look.

YIN (*scarcely able to believe his eyes*): The instruments!

JIN: All intact still.

CHAO: Brother, you've — been into the river again?

JIN: That's right. I heard the engineer was muttering about them even in his sleep, so I —

CHAO: Where did you fish them up from?

JIN: They're pretty heavy, and when I got to the place where the boat overturned I estimated where yesterday's current would have taken them and dived under — (*He makes a gesture.*)

CHAO (*giving JIN TEH-LUNG a punch*): You'll do!

JIN (*laughing*): The Dragon King didn't like having them stuck in his teeth and I said: "But our engineer does want them, give them to me" and grabbed them straight up.

YIN (*almost embracing JIN TEH-LUNG*): How can I ever thank you both!

JIN: We did it for the sake of the bridge, Comrade Engineer. I'd willingly give my head, if need be, to get this bridge built!

CHAO: That's the way we hill-folk are made, Comrade Engineer: once we make a start on something we must carry it through to the end. And Brother Jin's made a vow never to return home again if we can't build this bridge over the Dragon River.

YIN: I must say you're. . . .

JIN (*to TA-KANG*): And especially after the engineer coming all that way from the provincial capital to help us. . . .

YIN: That's nothing. (*He droops his head.*)

CHAO: What's the matter, Comrade Engineer, not feeling very well?

YIN: It's not that, but when I look at you people I feel . . . I've suddenly got a lot of things I want to say, but — I don't know how to express them. . . .

(*The sound of a horse's hooves comes from the distance.*)

JIN: Who's this riding this way?

CHAO: I can't think who'd dare ride on a pitch-black night like this.

(*UNCLE CHIN and MENG TAN-HUA come running up.*)

CHIN: Here's Kuo-chang back again!

(*HO KUO-CHANG comes burrying up carrying a rucksack.*)

CHIN: Have you brought the medicine back with you, Kuo-chang?

MENG: We never thought you'd be back tonight!

HO: How are you feeling now, Teacher Yin?

YIN (*grasping HO KUO-CHANG by the hand*): You've been to —

HO (*banding a package of medicine to MENG TAN-HUA*): Here's the special medicine Doctor Liu prescribed, hurry up and get Teacher Yin to take it.

CHIN: A pitch-dark night like this, Kuo-chang, and you've ridden a hundred and seventy *li* through the hills!

MENG (*noticing something as she takes the medicine*): *Aiya*, what have you done to your head? It's bleeding.

HO: Oh, that's where I scraped it on a branch, I expect —

CHIN: *Aiya*, you want to be more careful!

HO (*taking out a parcel and banding it to MENG TAN-HUA*): And here's the hibiscus cake Teacher Yin was asking for.

MENG: You think of everything, Kuo-chang!

HO (*taking out a bottle of spirits from the rucksack*): Brother Jin, Ta-kang, look at this.

JIN } (*delighted*): Real *Erbkuotou*! What a treat!
CHAO }

YIN (*raising his hand*): Kuo-chang.

HO (*going close to YIN CHE-FU*): Teacher Yin!

YIN (*putting his hand to the cut on HO KUO-CHANG's head*): You were taking a great risk riding through the hills in the middle of the night.

HO: There was a moon.

CHIN: Ah, there's affection between teacher and pupil for you! Look at the friendship they have for each other! Tan-hua, you'd better give the engineer his medicine.

MENG: Come on, in the tent you go.

YIN: What's wrong with out here?

CHIN: Your fever hasn't gone down yet.

YIN: I want to see Secretary Hsing —

CHIN: You just relax and look after yourself. Old Hsing will come and see you when you're better. In you go.

(*CHIN and HO shepherd YIN into the tent.*)

CHAO (*going after them and giving MENG the porridge jug*):
Comrade Meng, here's some gruel for the engineer.
MENG: Thank you. (*She takes the porridge into the tent.*)
CHAO: Brother Jin, it looks as if the engineer will have to
stay in bed another two or three days. What's going to
happen if we go on putting the job off like this?
JIN: Secretary Hsing will find a way.
CHAO: It's as much as I can stand, just waiting about like this.
JIN: I'm even more impatient than you are. Ah, well, it's all
training. We must learn to be patient.
CHAO: Listen, brother, what about us having an experimental
plot?
JIN: An experimental plot?
CHAO: Now that our watertight wall has proved a success, what
do you say to just going ahead and putting down a bridge-
pier, just to see?
JIN (*cutting him short*): Not so fast, we've already committed
one breach of organizational discipline at the Devil's Gate;
we don't want any more of your crackpot schemes. I
wouldn't dare go rushing irresponsibly into such a thing again
without orders from above.

(UNCLE CHIN comes out of the tent, followed by
MENG TAN-HUA and HO KUO-CHANG.)
CHIN: What are you whispering about now? Ta-kang!

(CHAO winks at JIN. DAD CHAO's voice is heard, off:
"Ta-kang, Ta-kang!")
CHAO: Damn, here's dad after me.

(DAD CHAO comes in.)
DAD: What are you doing here, Ta-kang? Get back home!
CHAO: I'm busy here.
DAD: What else are you thinking of getting up to, now that
you've lost my boat for me? Have a rebellion, eh?
JIN: Dad Chao, you can't blame Ta-kang for what happened at
the Devil's Gate, it was all my fault.
DAD: You're from outside, Teh-lung, it has nothing to do with
you.

HO: The business at the Devil's Gate was my idea. Don't
worry, we'll replace your boat with a new one.
DAD: Replace it?
CHIN: You clear off, Kuo-chang!
DAD: Replace it? As if you ever could! (*He turns to go.*)
CHIN: Bring your dad a seat over, Ta-kang. Teh-lung, you
pour two full bowls of wine.
JIN (*servicing the wine*): Dad Chao.
CHIN: Now all of you go.

(HO, MENG, CHAO and JIN go out.)
CHIN: Now open your eyes and look about you. This is
Engineer Yin's tent, not Big-stick Sun's front gate. The
engineer's come all this way up into the hills to build us a
bridge, often marching by day and working till midnight.
You've seen that with your own eyes. Now there's been an
accident, and it's all the fault of us older generation for not
doing our utmost to show the youngsters the way. And yet
you come here hollering and shouting and kicking up a row
in front of the engineer's tent! Don't worry, you won't go
short of a boat. But what I can't make out is what's hap-
pened to the humanity you showed thirty years ago when
you brewed me medicine and looked after me?
DAD: You think all I came here about was a rickety old boat?
(*He gets up to go.*)
CHIN: Wait a minute. Our fifty years' friendship has come to
its end and I'm not going to try and revive it. (*Taking the
two pieces of the broken pipe from his belt and giving one of
them to DAD CHAO*) Take it. We've been brothers for a
while and this can be a keepsake. (*DAD CHAO takes it.*)
Never once in my life have I gone to anybody on bended
knees to ask for something, but today, for the sake of the
bridge, for the sake of the treasures that will be brought
down from the hill, for the sake of our children and grand-
children and the generations to come, I'm going to swallow
my pride and beg you to take them over to the Eagle's Beak
in your boat.
DAD: The Eagle's Beak? Who suggested that?
CHIN: Chang Lao-erh.

DAD: Has Chang Lao-erh been taking part in the forum, too?

CHIN: He has that! Farther ahead than you, brother! The price I'm paying today to get you to take them across in your boat is our fifty years of friendship. If only you'll say yes, you can go your easy way and I'll go my hard one. Though I hope you won't forget there was such a man as Chin Erh.

DAD: You mean you want to make a complete break of it, brother! I've been tormented enough in my mind these past few days, but I never thought you'd stab me through the heart with a snapped pipe stem. (*Picking up the wine-cup and draining it at one draught*) Now that you've said what you had to say you must let me get what I've got to say off my chest!

CHIN (*refilling his cup*): Go on, I'm listening.

DAD: You know the saying, brother: one kind word warms you in the bitterest winter, but a cutting remark that wounds leaves your heart cold even in midsummer. After the way we two brothers have worked hard and fought in the front line all these years for our poor people, I never expected that when it came to the pinch you'd be the same as all the rest and regard your brother as a stumbling-block in the way of building the bridge. I won't stand for it!

CHIN: You've only got to say so, there's no need to flare up like that about it.

DAD (*drinking*): I've never been against building a bridge and I've realized all along that it's for the sake of our children in the generations to come. You blamed me for always being concerned for Lu Pan's Rock; but I've spent my life on the river poling a boat ferrying people across and I can't help believing that Lu Pan's Rock has magical powers, as our ancestors have believed for generations. You shouldn't forget what happened in '36 when I was seriously ill and burnt incense and made a vow before Lu Pan's Rock. The landlord at that time, Big-stick Sun, tried to force me to take him across the river in my boat to gather ginseng, but Ta-kang's brother Ta-shou snatched up an axe that had been in the family for generations and struggled with them and accidentally damaged Lu Pan's Rock. But the landlord's lackeys were too many for him and all Ta-shou could do was

try and get away on a boat, but when he got in midstream the boat overturned and he was drowned. Then you and I went to the big front gate of Big-stick Sun's house and asked him to compensate me for the loss of the boat and my son. And then you, brother, as well as me, tasted the landlord's riding-switch until you spat blood and spent half a year laid up at my place recovering. You've never forgotten how I brewed medicine for you then, but nor have I ever forgotten what you were involved in for the sake of me and my son! With your own eyes, brother, you've seen the miracles performed by Lu Pan's Rock. But I never expected that my own son would lead the way in destroying Lu Pan's Rock, insulting his parents and grandparents.

CHIN: Whatever you say, you're still superstitious. Just cast your mind back to when the Japanese devils were here and set up their cook-house in front of Lu Pan's Rock and their horses and cattle made the place a filthy mess: why did your Lu Pan's Rock lose its magical powers then? And where had your River-god run off to?

DAD: But even granting that I'm superstitious, it's not myself that I'm worried about. Don't you see? If anything should happen it wouldn't matter so much if an old man of fifty or sixty like myself went to the bottom of the river, but how could I ever bear the responsibility if these youngsters like Kuo-chang and the engineer from provincial headquarters should come to such an end? You won't see things from my point of view; it's always me that's in the wrong. The minute you set eyes on me just now you thought I'd come to demand my boat back. Though, of course, that boat had a history. You know yourself that it was a rescue boat that had been passed down from one generation to the next in our family. For the past three or four years I haven't charged a penny for ferrying people across the river. That was to ensure our neighbours were safe on the water. I never thought it would end up at the bottom of the river in the hands of some youngsters who'd taken it behind my back. A man gets attached to things he's had a long time, you know, brother! I'm upset at the loss of the boat, of course, but you were right in saying that Engineer Yin's tent isn't Big-stick Sun's front gate. Even

if I wanted my boat back I wouldn't come running down here for it. What I can't bear to lose is our friendship of fifty years' standing, a friendship watered with our blood and sweat. By breaking this pipe stem you broke my heart. . . . And now I've said all I have to say, brother. This half a pipe stem I shall put on the ancestors' shelf so that my children down the generations will remember you, and I myself shall never forget you. (*He gets up to go.*)

CHIN: Wait. (*Giving DAD CHAO the other half of the broken pipe*) Take it home and fix it together, because if we should part tomorrow you can't leave your descendants a story of half a pipe.

DAD: Part tomorrow? Why, where are you going?

CHIN: I'm going to take the engineer on a visit to the Eagle's Beak by boat.

DAD: You're going to the Eagle's Beak! You want to lose your life?

CHIN: It would be nothing to grieve over if my old bones found a resting-place at the Eagle's Beak in exchange for the treasures that could be brought down the hill for our children.

DAD: You can't do it!

CHIN: If we can't get across to the Devil's Gate or to the Eagle's Beak what are we going to do? Just stand aside and let the bridge not be built?

DAD: Brother. . . .

(*FEI-MAO-TUI comes running up.*)

FEI: Dad Chao, Secretary Hsing is bringing everybody with a boat for you!

DAD: A boat for me!

(*SECRETARY HSING and the others come in.*)

(*MENG TAN-HUA appears in the doorway of the tent supporting YIN CHE-FU.*)

HSING: This boat of yours wasn't made specially for you, though, Dad Chao; look at this pole, what do you think of it?

CHIN: Old Hsing, I'm the one who should use this pole!

DAD (*grabbing hold of the pole*): Hands off, brother. Ta-kang, go and get the boat ready. (*Taking out a new pipe stem from his belt*) I've still got yours here, brother.

CHIN: Brother! (*He grasps the pipe stem firmly.*)

MENG (*holding the instruments in front of her*): As soon as it gets light, Dad Chao, Kuo-chang and I are coming with you!

JIN: And I'll be your escort!

(*Stage lights go down for a short interval.*)

(*Early next morning.*)

(*SECRETARY HSING is brewing medicine over the camp-fire. YIN CHE-FU is pacing up and down the river-bank with a coat round his shoulders, looking anxiously at the flow of the river from time to time.*)

HSING: What's the matter, Old Yin? Still can't relax?

YIN: It's already light. They should be back just about now if they've completed the task.

HSING (*glancing up at the sky*): It's only just getting light.

YIN: I'm torn between hoping they'll start back soon and hoping that they won't.

HSING: The sooner they start back the sooner we'll see them, the later they start back the safer it will be.

YIN: But that's a contradiction, isn't it? I'm not sure how it should be resolved.

HSING: It'll be resolved by their arrival back here. What is there to worry about, Old Yin? The water's a lot calmer at the Eagle's Beak than at the Devil's Gate, and they've got Dad Chao poling the boat and Jin Teh-lung escorting them; they're keeping in close touch with the people on the bank, and the two underwater shock-brigades are standing by for any emergency. . . .

YIN: Yes, I realize nothing can go wrong, but I still can't help feeling rather. . . .

HSING: But you weren't afraid when you plunged in at the Devil's Gate.

YIN: No, I regarded myself as a most courageous fellow at the time.

HSING: The selfless spirit with which you went into that was very commendable. But in actual fact it was a manifestation of great cowardice.

YIN: What do you mean?

HSING: A truly courageous man surrounded by difficulties on a battle-field is able to pick out the short cuts to victory and pass through them safely to defeat the enemy.

YIN: But I was enthusiastic enough, wasn't I?

HSING: Yes, your enthusiasm is commendable, and it's your most valuable possession. But this risk that you took was not motivated purely by enthusiasm. Wasn't there perhaps some element of dissatisfaction with the decision of the county committee at the back of your mind? If you behave like that you'll only be throwing a spanner in the works and wrecking what we're trying to do. Just think, what would have been the result if all of you had gone under together at the Devil's Gate?

YIN: It doesn't bear thinking about. Whatever induced me to set out on such a dangerous course, Secretary Hsing? I've always tried to carry out the policy of the Party.

HSING: Now listen, Old Yin. You were never in agreement with the county committee's policy and requirements. You didn't begin to grasp the spirit behind them. You were opposed to trying to build a bridge in three months.

YIN: No, you've got it all wrong, I was in agreement at the county committee meeting.

HSING: Not at all, you weren't in agreement. What you saw first and foremost was the difficulties that one is up against in the hills. You were thinking to yourself that after three months, there would have to be a further extension. To put it simply, you had no faith in the intelligence and inventiveness of the masses. You were underestimating the boundless capacity of the broad masses of the people to think big, act boldly and use their imagination to invent new ideas in the big leap forward. You even went so far as to ignore it completely. The success of the experiment with the water-tight wall gave you quite a jolt. But it did nothing to change your view of the masses. Quite the contrary, you supposed that you were being outstripped in competition and you

wanted to reassert yourself. So you made a 180-degree turn away from your former indifference and your attitude of watching from the side — round to one of nervous haste and taking risks that developed so far that you threw yourself at the Devil's Gate!

YIN: Yes, that's the way it happened.

HSING: Old Yin, the medicine's ready, you'd better have it. (*Pouring the medicine into a bowl*) It's also interesting to look at it from the point of view of your relations with various people. In the very beginning you were disgusted with Ta-kang's impatience and willingness to take risks, even to the extent of having a lot in common with Dad Chao in your way of thinking.

YIN: Me have a lot in common with Dad Chao? You know yourself, Secretary Hsing, that science and superstition are as incompatible as fire and water!

HSING (*with a smile*): But as I see it Dad Chao is preoccupied with Providence the same as you're preoccupied with material objects; but neither of you takes the force of human will into account! I'll leave it to you to find the underlying connection between these two outlooks.

YIN: But afterwards it was Dad Chao that I felt the strongest resentment towards. . . .

HSING: No. I suggest that the person you felt the strongest resentment towards was Kuo-chang, wasn't it?

YIN (*roused*): What do you mean! You. . . . (*Heavily*) You're right, I misunderstood him completely. (*Becoming agitated again*) Secretary Hsing, when my mind was at its most confused I was even critical of you.

HSING: At first you thought I was allowing them to go at it like a bull at a gate and later I was compromising with backwardness. Am I right? Comrade, you don't understand the masses, you don't understand people; these people are our capital for building socialism!

(*YIN CHE-FU is deep in thought and remains silent.*)

HSING: Your medicine's ready, Old Yin. Come on, you'd better take it.

YIN: It needs cooling down a bit more. *(After a moment's pause)* I'm only now beginning to grasp the spirit behind the policy of the provincial committee and the county committee.

HSING: Thanks to the lesson you learned at the Devil's Gate?

YIN: I've learned a lot of things this last day or two, Secretary Hsing, that I shall never forget.

HSING: Good. That's what's called becoming wiser with every hazardous experience you have. *(Looking at his watch)* Aiya, we've spent too long talking. Hurry up and finish your medicine, I've still got to go and see Yu-tao and find out how they're getting on with the technical training. You get some rest in because when they get back you'll have to do a quick job on the drawings for the bridge.

YIN: All right. *(He takes the medicine.)*

HSING *(going on to the bank and pointing to the rose-tinted sky above the woods)*: Look, Old Yin. The hills and the streams and the woods, think of the rich treasures they conceal! Summon up every ounce of energy, Old Yin, for the sake of our great motherland and for socialism! *(He goes off.)*

YIN *(looking all round him with emotion at the beautiful natural scenery)*: Life, the hills, motherland, for you I must give my all! *(Reciting first in an undertone and then aloud)*
How vast is our motherland,
How many hills and streams have yet to be opened up. . . .
(Suddenly MENG TAN-HUA's clear voice is heard.)

MENG *(burrying up with the instruments and other things on her back)*:

The slumbering earth must awake,
Its grassland days are done.

(She laughs, and her laughter echoes through the valley.)

YIN: You're back, then, Tan-hua?

MENG: A poet inspired! All alone here enjoying the sunrise.
Are you better?

YIN: Nothing went wrong this time, I suppose?

MENG *(stretching out her arms)*: Does it look like it?

YIN: What about the data? . . .

(HO KUO-CHANG, DAD CHAO and JIN TEH-LUNG come in.)

HO: It's all here! *(He hands YIN CHE-FU a record book.)*

DAD: That was a good turn of speed, Comrade Meng. The engineer should be happy now.

YIN *(looking through the data)*: Good, good, excellent! With this information I'll be able to guarantee that the bridge will be able to stand up to the heaviest floods. You've been an immense help to us, Dad Chao!

DAD: You shouldn't say that, Comrade Engineer. You can't say that it's we who are helping you when you've come here to build us a bridge. Besides, if I hadn't had Teh-lung steadying us with his pole in the swift current in midstream I'd never have got back.

JIN: Dad Chao, I've seen today what a skilful boatman you are. My eyes have been opened. I'd like you to be my teacher.

DAD: All right, I accept you as my apprentice.

(UNCLE CHIN comes hurrying in.)

CHIN: So you're back, brother. How did it go? No display of his powers by the River-god, I suppose?

JIN: We've done for the River-god along with Lu Pan's Rock.

(They all laugh.)

CHIN: Come along, brother, you haven't seen the new house I've built yet. Come with me and have a look at it.

DAD: Let's go together, my apprentice.

JIN: All right.

(The two old men and JIN TEH-LUNG go off together.)

(MENG TAN-HUA goes into the tent.)

HO: You'd better look at the data inside, Teacher Yin, it's not very warm out here.

YIN: That's all right, I've got over my fever now. *(Pointing to his head)* And I'm clearer up here, too! Kuo-chang, are you easy in your mind about our co-operation in this our first job together?

HO: How could I feel otherwise?

YIN: Haven't you been conscious of being misunderstood by someone?

HO: Yes, I have.

YIN: Who?

HO: You, my teacher.

YIN: Why didn't you say so straight out and get it cleared up? Why didn't you give me a good dose of criticism?

HO: Teacher Yin. . . .

MENG (*coming out of the tent carrying a wash-bowl*): I brought back one or two things that I thought you'd like, Che-fu. (*Getting some pebbles and shells out of her rucksack and putting them in the bowl*) Look at the colours of these pebbles, aren't they beautiful? And this shell is an exquisite shape.

HO: If you like this sort of thing, Teacher Yin, I'll go upriver and find you some more tomorrow. They get washed down in the floods, these things.

MENG: Che-fu, when the bridge is finished we must be sure to go up the river for a few days.

HO: Comrade Tan-hua has certainly benefited from the training she's getting up here in the hills. When we'd finished measuring the flood-level she would go climbing up higher. Though if she hadn't done we'd never have found so many treasures.

YIN (*his attention suddenly aroused*): Where did you find these pebbles and shells, Tan-hua? Were they above the 1916 flood-level?

MENG: That's right, higher up.

YIN: And were the pebbles and shells located in a straight line?

MENG: Yes, it so happened they were. Why?

YIN: Kuo-chang, are you absolutely certain that these were carried down from farther upstream?

HO: I was born and bred here and I know the composition of the stones up and down the river like the back of my hand. There's no doubt about it.

YIN: Kuo-chang, Tan-hua, I think there's a possibility that the maximum flood-level of the Dragon River has at some time been even higher than the 1916 level.

HO: You're making this new assessment on the basis of these pebbles and shells?

YIN: Yes. How else could these pebbles and shells have found their way into clefts so high up the cliff face? And what's more, they formed a straight line. They *must* have been washed down and left there by the floods. So I suggest we go back to the Eagle's Beak and make a fresh survey.

HO: It's a good job you spotted it, Teacher Yin. It was my fault for being so ignorant.

MENG: No, it's my responsibility. We'd better go back to the Eagle's Beak for a fresh survey while there's no wind and the water's still calm.

YIN: Kuo-chang, hurry off and see Secretary Hsing and ask him whether it's necessary.

HO: Right away.

(*HO KUO-CHANG is just going off when he runs into CHAO TA-KANG and CHEN CHANG-SHOU and the others who are just coming along.*)

CHAO: Find the Eagle's Beak all right, Kuo-chang?

HO: Yes.

CHAO: And now we must get the measurements for the bridge worked out. Comrade Yin, you must get the drawings done today so that we can make a start first thing in the morning.

HO: You'll have to be patient for a while longer. Our measurements of the maximum flood-level at the Eagle's Beak weren't accurate enough so we're going back to make a fresh survey. Brother Chen, where's Secretary Hsing?

CHEN: Tent No. 5.

(*HO KUO-CHANG hurries off.*)

CHAO: Whose idea is it that once is not enough and that you'll have to go a second time?

YIN: A new maximum flood-level at the Eagle's Beak was discovered and a fresh survey will have to be made.

CHAO: Comrade Yin, the date for the bridge is absolutely fixed and every second counts, so you can't keep going round from one sand-bank to another making measurements.

YIN: The more accurate and complete the hydrographic data we possess, the better the position we shall be in to build a bridge across the Dragon River.

CHAO: I'm still of the same mind, Brother Chen, let them get on with their measuring while we get on with our work. Come on, putting down the piers is our next job.

CHEN: If we have no measurements to go by, won't we just be wasting labour and materials?

CHAO: Are you satisfied with just jogging along like this all the time, just eating and sleeping?

MENG: Ta-kang, have you got permission from Sister Yu-tao to put down the piers?

CHAO: That's easily arranged. There's no trouble between us husband and wife!

(LI YU-TAO comes round the corner from behind the tent.)

LI: "Husband and wife" indeed! You'd better watch what you're saying!

CHAO: Well, it's like this, the flood-level Kuo-chang and the others found at the Eagle's Beak. . . .

LI: I heard all about it. What I want to know is how you ever came to be put in charge of the Tiger-taming Brigade.

CHAO *(pointing to the red badge on his sleeve)*: I asked for a job, the leadership issued me with this badge, and from then on I was brigade leader, of course.

LI: Now tell me this: being a cadre in charge of a group of men, what are you doing giving a lead in disobeying your instructions?

CHAO: Keep your voice down, there's quite a wind blowing here and you don't want it blowing down your throat.

LI: I'm asking you, why don't you obey orders?

CHAO: If you mean what happened at the Devil's Gate, I've criticized myself before Secretary Hsing; you can't say I've disobeyed any orders since then!

LI: Headquarters told each brigade to undertake intensive technical training, and your Tiger-taming Brigade was particularly required to get the youngsters learning skills from the fully-qualified men, but what have you had your unit doing?

CHAO: We've been down at the riverside shifting materials.

LI: The materials were stacked up all neat and tidy on both banks, what did you have to go shifting them for?

CHAO: Well, it's like this, it looked as if the measurements for the bridge would never get worked out, so we thought we'd build a pier as an experiment.

LI: You "thought"! All the materials taken down to the river were swept away by the current!

(CHAO TA-KANG is taken aback. He runs hurriedly towards the bank.)

LI: You can come back. They've already been fished out and brought back on to the bank.

(TA-KANG comes back.)

LI: Whose permission did you get? Don't you realize that's an unorganized, undisciplined way of going about things?

CHAO: You're exaggerating the seriousness of what I've done.

LI: So you're going to be awkward about it, eh? As site supervisor I'm shortly going to put you in order.

CHAO: You think I stand in awe of you, my own wife? I don't think you'll find you're big enough to put me in order!

LI *(incensed)*: Very well, you wild bull, I'll take you on now. Messenger!

MESSENGER: Here!

LI: Go to headquarters and tell them I suggest that Chao Ta-kang should be dismissed from his position at once and that Feng Erh-chu should take over as leader of the Tiger-taming Brigade. There's no room for Generalissimo Chao on this work-site.

CHAO: What, you dare suggest that I be dismissed?

LI: What difference would it make if you were dismissed? The bridge would get built just the same.

(Everybody crowds round trying to smooth things out.)

CHEN: Ta-kang, I think you'd better apologize to her. Once the order's given it'll be too late.

CHAO *(forcing himself to go across to her)*: I admit—I admit I'm beaten. Comrade Supervisor, I admit I'm beaten.

LI: What do you mean, you admit you're beaten? This is the organizational discipline given to us by Secretary Hsing: no actions should be taken without instructions.

CHAO: I—um. . . . *(He thinks seriously about it.)*

LI: What's there to hum and haw about? I knew you wouldn't admit your mistake, all right, see whether you can go against your superiors. Chao Ta-kang, there's no more work for you on this site, so off you go home!

CHAO: Yu-tao!

LI: Don't "Yu-tao" me! Get off home!

(FEI-MAO-TUI comes running in shouting.)

FEI: Comrade Supervisor! A tiger! A tiger's down the hillside to the south right in among the transport section. The bullocks have taken fright and bolted.

CHEN: The tiger-hunting team had better be sent out after it.

CHAO: Give me the job, Yu-tao. I guarantee I can do it.

(SECRETARY HSING, UNCLE CHIN and HO KUO-CHANG come in.)

LI: It's no business of yours. *(To FEI-MAO-TUI)* Run and tell Feng Erh-chu to take the Tiger-taming Brigade and hunt down the tiger.

FEI: Feng Erh-chu?

LI: And hurry. He can do the job.

HSING: Comrade Supervisor, I suggest that you give him a chance to redeem himself.

(CHAO TA-KANG hesitates.)

CHIN: Go on, Ta-kang, don't wait about.

*(CHAO TA-KANG glares at LI YU-TAO and hurries off.)
(YIN CHE-FU and MENG TAN-HUA come out of the tent.)*

YIN: Secretary Hsing, has Kuo-chang? . . .

HSING: He's told me all about it. And Uncle Chin says that there were heavy floods in 1894. Uncle, tell Old Yin about it.

CHIN: It's something I've heard my dad tell about years ago. And the floods of 1894 were a lot bigger than the floods of 1916.

HSING: So I agree with your suggestion that a fresh survey should be made at the Eagle's Beak.

YIN: Tan-hua! Get the instruments ready.

HSING: Your present task, Old Yin, is to get over your illness.

YIN: I'm already recovered, Secretary Hsing, and we mustn't waste a single second.

Curtain

SCENE VI

Sunshine After the Storm

*In front of UNCLE CHIN's new house. It is built of deal and is much more elegant and spacious than the old one. It stands on an open space on the bank of the river not far away. In front of the door is a pole with a lantern hanging on it. The time is a fortnight after the previous scene, at dusk. Dark clouds billow across the sky. Voices ring out from the river and the sound of work-songs echoes across the countryside. When the lights come up FEI-MAO-TUI is standing alone on the bank looking out over the river.
After a few moments LI YU-TAO comes hurrying up.*

LI: Fei-mao-tui!

FEI: Here!

LI: Run and tell each brigade to get the torches ready. And then tell Uncle Chin to bring some more oil along.

FEI: Right. But why are we having a night campaign?

LI: They've had heavy storms in some counties upriver and the main floods will be coming down at any moment now.

FEI: Let them come.

LI: Did you hear me? Headquarters have given orders that the work on the piers must be finished before midday tomorrow.

FEI: That's going to be fun. (*Slapping his legs*) We'll race the floods with these all right! (*He runs off.*)

(*LI YU-TAO walks onto the bank with a preoccupied air. The work-songs become louder and louder.*)

(*CHEN CHANG-SHOU comes hurrying up.*)

CHEN: Comrade Supervisor, you'd better open the merit book!

LI: What is it?

CHEN: Good news!

The Dragon Brigade on a rocket rides,
Its valour proved with giant strides;
They've worked on their pier both day and night,
Now, two days early, they've won their fight.

LI (*surprised and overjoyed*): The work on the south-bank pier's been finished ahead of schedule? (*Looking across to the opposite bank*) As site supervisor I'd be easier in my mind if our tiger could catch up with their dragon. Brother Chen, have you seen Secretary Hsing?

CHEN: Secretary Hsing and the engineer are checking the quality of the work on the south-bank pier.

LI: Go and ask if we can transfer the Dragon-taming Brigade to the north bank to help the Tiger-taming Brigade out.

CHEN: That's just what I'd come to ask you.

(*LI YU-TAO goes into the house. CHEN CHANG-SHOU is about to depart when CHAO TA-KANG comes hurrying up, followed by several members of his brigade. The one in front is carrying a large banner, which he plants in the bank.*)

CHEN: Brother Ta-kang, how can you find time to come across the river when you're up to your eyes in work over there?

CHAO: I came to fetch Secretary Hsing and the engineer across to the north bank in a hurry.

CHEN: Why? Has there been an accident?

CHAO: Yes, a big accident.

CHEN: Then you'd better tell the site supervisor quickly, she's inside.

CHAO: Oh . . . then could I trouble you to pass on a message to her that the Tiger-taming Brigade has finished its work

on the north-bank pier two days ahead of schedule? Then she'll be able to make her arrangements accordingly.

CHEN: You had me worried for a minute! The Dragon-taming Brigade have just reported their success and now you come here right on their heels!

CHAO: Would you believe it! After tearing our way through it like that we find Brother Gold Dragon's beaten us to it. (*He turns to go.*)

(*LI YU-TAO appears in the doorway of the house.*)

LI: Ta-kang!

(*CHAO TA-KANG stops and their eyes meet. CHEN CHANG-SHOU tactfully moves away, taking the brigade members with him.*)

CHAO: Comrade Supervisor, I have to report that the Tiger-taming Brigade —

LI: Oh, you've completed your work on the piers two days ahead of schedule, too, have you?

CHAO: I came to fetch Secretary Hsing and the engineer across the river to check that the work's satisfactory. (*He turns to go.*)

LI: Ta-kang! Ta-kang! (*Going across to him*) Why must you insist on holding things against people like this?

CHAO:

LI: You pay lip-service but underneath you're still resentful. Was I wrong to deal with the situation you created the other week in the way I did?

CHAO: You acted according to the rules.

LI: Then why must you keep trying to avoid me?

CHAO: I've been busy fighting the Dragon River, and competing with Brother Gold Dragon.

LI: Humph! You were resentful because you, a great he-man, had been put in your place by a mere woman, wasn't that it?

CHAO:

LI: Don't you realize what I've been up against? I'd neither the education nor the ability needed for this job. If only you realized what a heavy burden I've been carrying since I took on this job of site supervisor!

(Seeing YU-TAO wipe away a tear, CHAO TA-KANG takes a step forward, then stops.)

LI (going up to him): I've been just like a child who's only just started learning to walk. I could never have done the job without the Party and our neighbours to hold my hand. But I never expected that my own husband would be the one to make trouble for me.

CHAO: When have I ever tried to make trouble for you?

LI: So you're still going to remain obstinate even now? Put yourself in my shoes: if you'd been made site supervisor and I'd kept on causing upsets, would you have tried to cover up for your own wife in front of everybody else?

CHAO:

LI (pointing to a wood in the distance): We used to look after the sheep in the pine-woods when we were little. (Looking back into the past) We were sitting on the grass. I was combing a sheep and you were playing with a whip, and I said I was going to jump into the Dragon River in search of my dad who'd been hounded to death by the landlord. You sprang up like a shot. (Imitating TA-KANG's actions at that time) Don't do anything so silly, Yu-tao! My big brother was also sent to the bottom of the Dragon River by the landlord and we must live to avenge them. We two will always stay together. First we'll get the landlords out and afterwards we'll tame the Dragon River. . . .

CHAO: Don't think I've forgotten that. . . .

LI: But now that the time has come to tame the Dragon River, why should you become so narrow-minded and go out of your way to avoid those who are nearest to you? You. . . . (She sits down with her back to Ta-kang and her eyes filled with tears.)

CHAO (going across): Yu-tao, Yu-tao. . . .

(LI YU-TAO wipes her eyes but says nothing.)

CHAO (moving close to her): Yu-tao, you can have me carried off by an eagle if I ever go making trouble again.

LI (coolly): Wild bull!

(They smuggle up close to one another.)
(FEI-MAO-TUI comes racing up like a gust of wind.)

FEI (shouting): Report . . . oh. . . . (Quietly) There were two quails hiding in the pine-woods, a cock and a hen. But I startled them and they both flew away!

LI: Be serious.

FEI: Brigade leader Gold Dragon is coming with his unit.

(A sound of distant drums and gongs comes nearer.)

CHAO: I was just wondering how he was getting on.

(JIN TEH-LUNG comes in to the sound of drums and gongs, preceded by a large "dragon-taming" banner.)
(JIN TEH-LUNG and CHAO TA-KANG shake hands warmly.)

CHAO: You were quick about it, brother!

JIN: And you weren't so slow yourselves, brother!

(They both burst out laughing.)

LI: Brother Gold Dragon, now that we've got the work on the piers finished before the floods come, the bridge is as good as built!

CHAO: That was some real hard work, eh, brother? Come along home and have a drink.

JIN: Sorry, brother, I can't. I came here to say goodbye.

LI: To say goodbye!

CHAO: Where are you going?

JIN: I'm taking the unit back to Lungmen.

CHAO: You can't go before the bridge is finished.

JIN: We've urgent business on hand, brother.

CHAO: There's nothing so urgent that it can't wait while we two brothers have a little while longer together.

JIN: There's imminent danger of flooding in Lungmen and they want us back home as soon as we can get there to strengthen the dikes to keep back the floods.

CHAO: Let's go and see Secretary Hsing.

JIN: Secretary Hsing has approved of it in person.

CHAO: That means we really are saying goodbye, then, does it?
(Clutching him as if unwilling to let him go) All right, brother,

as soon as the framework of the bridge is up I'll bring my unit to give you a hand.

JIN: Brother Ta-kang, our friendship cannot be crushed by mountains or washed away by floods. Lungmen and Tiger Hill are not far apart and we shall see a lot of each other in future. Here's our Dragon-taming Brigade's banner for the Tiger-taming Brigade to remember us by.

CHAO (*taking it and pulling the Tiger-taming Brigade's banner out of the ground*): And here's ours for you, brother!

JIN (*taking the banner*): Well, goodbye. Comrade Supervisor, could I trouble you to tell the engineer and Comrade Meng that on their way back they must be sure to drop in at our commune for a few days. We must be off now.

CHAO: Let me see you and our comrades off.

(*JIN TEH-LUNG turns and shakes hands all round, then JIN TEH-LUNG and CHAO TA-KANG go off, preceded by the banners.*)

FEI (*giving the thumbs-up sign*): There's hill-folk for you!

(*At this moment LIU PAO-SHAN and KAO SHOU-TIEN come along arguing.*)

LIU: I think they should stay here for the time being.

KAO: And I say they should all go back.

LI: What's all this about staying here and going back?

LIU: There's been so much talk, they're saying in our commune that the bridge is built.

KAO: And they've turned up complete with carts to fetch the ore away.

LIU: The place is packed with horses and carts, worse than a race-track.

KAO: The first breath of wind and they think the rain's here; it's ridiculous when we haven't even got the piers built yet.

LI: That's where you're wrong, the work on the piers has been finished.

LIU } (*in amazement*): The work on the piers has been finished!
KAO }

LI: What's the matter now?

LIU: We know that the one on this side of the river has been finished already by the Dragon-taming Brigade. (*Pointing*)
But the one on the opposite side. . . .

KAO: Hardly started yet!

LI (*firmlly*): The one on the opposite side has also been finished.

LIU } (*taken aback*): Finished!
KAO }

(*SECRETARY HSING's voice is heard: "Is Fei-mao-tui there?"*)

FEI: Here!

(*SECRETARY HSING appears, bringing CHEN CHANG-SHOU with him.*)

HSING: Fei-mao-tui, I have an emergency task for you. Run to headquarters and stay by the phone. Report to me at once if there's any news of a change in the state of the river upstream.

FEI: Right. (*He races off.*)

HSING (*to YU-TAO*): We're pushed for time; there's been a change in the situation.

LI: What situation?

HSING: I'd just decided to go across to the north bank with the engineer and so on to inspect Ta-kang's work when I was stopped by an urgent phone call to say that there's been a great change in the state of the river and that it's estimated that the main floods will be here tonight!

ALL (*alarmed*): Tonight?

LI: Let them come; we've got the work on the piers finished in time, anyway.

HSING: You're taking a very optimistic view, Comrade Supervisor. (*To KAO SHOU-TIEN and the others*) What about the rest of you?

(*No one replies. A brief silence.*)

HSING (*listening attentively*): Who's that beating a drum?

ALL (*asking each other*): Beating a drum? Who's beating a drum?

HSING (*looking round at them all*): All of you are . . . (*pointing to his heart*) palpitating in here. Scared, eh? I can hear it quite clearly. Tell me honestly, Kao Shou-tien.

LIU (*jumping in first*): Let me speak. I'm worried the piers won't be able to stand up to the force of the floods.

HSING (*asking KAO SHOU-TIEN again*): You?

KAO: The work on the piers was finished so quickly that I was thinking they might be a bit — er — you know?

LI: Why don't you say outright what you mean? A bit what?

LIU: Ta-kang still had about (*indicating the size*) this much left to do yesterday, quite a big bit, and he's finished it by today.

. . .

KAO: Which really is a bit — you know?

LI: All of which means that you have no faith in Ta-kang, is that it?

LIU: In the matter of enthusiasm and drive Ta-kang's a great leader.

KAO: But in the matter of quality, everybody's saying —

LI: You're judging him without knowing a thing about him, hardly!

LIU: As if I'd dare underestimate Generalissimo Chao!

KAO: But can you give an assurance, Comrade Supervisor, that their work is really good, solid stuff?

LIU: Some say that when a wild horse goes galloping off he's bound to be a bit erratic.

LI: Are you calling Ta-kang a wild horse?

LIU: Aren't you always calling him a wild bull yourself?

LI: That doesn't give outsiders the right to go calling him names as they think they will.

CHEN: Secretary Hsing, can't you settle it for them and get it over with?

HSING: We'll know all about it as soon as the engineer and Kuo-chang and Comrade Meng get back from the north bank.

LI: Has Sister Tan-hua gone across with them, then?

HSING: They're all right, your father-in-law's got them in his boat.

CHEN: The engineer and Comrade Meng have been getting pretty tough while they've been working on the river!

(*A shout is heard from FEI-MAO-TUI: "Report. . . ."*)

FEI (*racing up*): The floods have broken up in the hills and the main floodwater may be here sooner than expected!

HSING: That makes a difference. Hurry back to the phone and keep in touch.

FEI: Right. (*He runs off.*)

LI (*somewhat flustered*): Secretary Hsing, what do you think we should do?

HSING: Put up the red lamp as a warning signal straight away. Withdraw all units from both banks.

LI: Right. (*She goes to the pole and hoists the red lamp.*)

(*UNCLE CHIN arrives with a can of paraffin.*)

CHIN (*gravely*): Look as if we're in for a storm, Old Hsing.

HSING: Are the lamps all in readiness, Mr. Lamplighter?

CHIN: The torches and hurricane-lamps are all complete, and paraffin's been issued for all of them. There's this best part of a can left for Yu-tao's office. (*Pushing LIU PAO-SHAN off the door-sill where he is standing*) You go over there, you're making a mess of my new door-sill, trampling all over it like that.

KAO: You'd better watch your step! What a thing to do, to go touching uncle's most treasured possession!

(*A shout is heard from FEI-MAO-TUI: "Report. . . ."*)

FEI (*running in*): Report! The floods are coming! The river's rising!

LI: Damn, the engineer and the others are stranded on the pier over on the other side!

HSING: Fei-mao-tui, light the torches and hurricane-lamps ready for a rescue operation!

FEI: Right. (*He runs off.*)

LI (*pointing into the distance, to SECRETARY HSING*): There's a boat bobbing about in the waves, it must be dad bringing Old Yin and Comrade Meng back!

HSING: Light some more torches to give them light.

(*They all light torches.*)

HO: Dad Chao! Dad Chao!

ALL (*shouting*): Dad Chao, steady the boat!

LI: Damn, the boat keeps spinning round! Dad! Dad!

(CHAO TA-KANG comes racing up.)

CHAO: Yu-tao. . . .

LI: That's the engineer and Comrade Meng in the boat there.

CHAO: I've had enough of your insults, Dragon River! *(He dives into the river.)*

LI: Ta-kang! Ta-kang!

ALL: Ta-kang! Ta-kang!

(A sudden gust of wind blows out the torches in their hands and the illumination equipment along the bank.)

(Voices, bells, the roaring of the river and the whistling of the wind all mingle in the darkness.)

(A shaft of light falls on UNCLE CHIN, who is listening intently to the shouting in the darkness. . . .)

VOICES: The torches and lanterns are all out! Chao Lao-ta's boat will never make it. . . .

(UNCLE CHIN comes to a decision. He stamps his foot hard and goes into the house carrying the paraffin-can. After a moment a red glow bursts from the top of the wooden building.)

CHEN: Uncle's house is on fire!

LI: Uncle Chin's house is on fire! Everybody help put the fire out!

(UNCLE CHIN runs out holding aloft a burning deal window-frame. He springs up on to a rock.)

CHIN *(shouting)*: Neighbours! I've got a lamp alight for you! Save Chao Lao-ta's boat, save the engineer! . . .

(JIN TEH-LUNG comes in to the sound of drums and gongs, preceded by the "Tiger-taming" banner.)

JIN: What's happened, uncle? Secretary Hsing, we saw the red warning-light in the distance. . . .

HSING: You're back just right! *(Pointing to the river)* Look!

JIN *(springing onto the bank)*: I'm coming!

(Everybody is staring at the river in the red glow.)

LIU: Ta-kang's got hold of the gunwale!

KAO: And the Gold Dragon's steadying the stern!

ALL: They're coming across! They've made it! They've made it. . . .

HSING: Keep calm, comrades.

CHEN *(in a low voice)*: They've got to the bank now.

(They all crowd down the bank calling the names of those in the boat.)

(In a few moments DAD CHAO, YIN CHE-FU and MENG TAN-HUA are being shepherded up the bank by the crowd, who are all commiserating with them at once.)

YIN *(in a loud voice)*: Secretary Hsing, neighbours, first of all I'd like to report to you that we've seen the work done on the piers with our own eyes, and that they'll stand up to the force of the heaviest floods!

(Everybody cheers.)

HSING: Comrades! Neighbours! We can now say that the Dragon River's been tamed by us. When the treasures of Tiger Hill cross the river they will support the key industries throughout the country. Now let us make all the necessary preparations for the assault on Tiger Hill!

A SONG STRIKES UP:

The armies of the sky have come down to earth,
The great waves of the Dragon River no longer dare to rage!
The hundred treasures of Tiger Hill will soon be in our hands,
Red peonies have blossomed in our villagers' hearts!

Final Curtain

*Translated by A. C. Barnes
Illustrations by Yeh Cbien-yu*

YEN CHEN-FEN

On "Taming the Dragon and the Tiger"

The spring wind blows amid ten thousand willow
branches,
Six hundred million in this Sacred Land all equal
Yao and Shun.*
Flowers falling like crimson rain swirl in waves at
will.
Green mountains turn to bridges at our wish;
Gleaming mattocks fall on heaven-high peaks;
Mighty arms move rivers, rock the earth.

These lines from *Farewell to the God of Plague*, written in 1958 by Chairman Mao Tse-tung, great leader of the Chinese people, describe concisely, profoundly and vividly the tremendous revolutionary enthusiasm and heroism of the Chinese people during the big leap forward of 1958. This great age and the revolutionary spirit of a great people have inspired Chinese writers and stirred them to their depths. Thus since 1958 new writing of every kind has been appearing continuously to reflect the big leap forward. *Taming the Dragon and the Tiger*, published in this number, is an outstanding play on this theme.

The story takes place in the big leap forward of 1958. Peasants in a remote mountain region want to mine the rich mineral re-

Yen Chen-fen, a young literary critic, is an editor of the monthly *Juben* (Drama), Peking.

* Two ancient sage kings.

sources in Tiger Hill on the other bank of the Dragon River, but they must bridge the river before they can bring the ores over for their new iron works. This is a densely forested countryside infested by wild beasts. The Dragon River has dangerous rapids and a swift current, with no place firm enough for the bridge's foundation, and it is nearly the high water season; so it will not be easy to finish the bridge before the flood comes. This struggle against nature is the central theme. The plot is dramatic and introduces characters with very different viewpoints who come into sharp conflict with each other. As the action unfolds we see how the heroic hill people, led by the Party, with their courage and wisdom finally overcome both natural hazards and backward, conservative ideas. So the iron ore hidden underground for millions of years is mined and the whole district is transformed.

This play pays heartfelt tribute to the enthusiasm with which the people throw themselves into their work during the big leap forward, an absolutely phenomenal enthusiasm growing out of the formation of the people's communes. Though this play deals with the changes in a single mountain village, these reflect the big leap forward throughout the Chinese countryside and the heroic spirit of the Chinese people which has made high mountains bow their heads and rivers give way. Chao Ta-kang, Jin Teh-lung, Li Yu-tao and Uncle Chin are peasant heroes who can "tear hill-top rocks apart and knock a great river aside with one kick." To bridge the Dragon River they work with no thought of self, for nurtured and educated by the Party they have high class consciousness. Through them we can see the growth of the new character and new outlook of China's peasants today.

Chao Ta-kang is a peasant of the new type with an infinite zest for his work and boundless courage. He never complains that any task assigned him is too difficult. He personifies our peasants' daring in conquering nature during the big leap forward. The fact that there are countless Chao Ta-kangs in China today accounts for our many miracles in socialist construction. In the first scene his fearlessness is vividly brought out when, as leader of a hunting team, he and his men pursue a tiger in the woods; this lays the foundation for the further development of his character. In the second scene there is a sharp clash of personalities between him and his father. When his superstitious and stubborn

father slaps him, Chao leaps on to the rock with his big axe and shouts: "Dad, whether you hit me or call me names, I've made up my mind to strike Lu Pan's Rock. You can't open your mouth without mentioning your River-god, but even if he really existed he'd still have to do his share for us. Is there a single one of us who doesn't want to see as much steel and iron as possible being produced? Or who doesn't want to see the Second Five-Year Plan completed as soon as possible? If the River-god's going to bring down a disaster on our heads let him bring it all down on *my* head. Come on, you River-god, you! Let's see what you're really made of!" With this he swings his axe to smash the rock. In this scene Chao Ta-kang's spirit and character, already revealed earlier on, take on new depth. In the third scene, "Advertising for Talent," Chao Ta-kang insists on being given the first most difficult task in the bridge construction — building bridge-piers under water. He will not yield this place to Jin Teh-lung. These actions, one after another denoting his personality, endear this heroic character to the audience.

The presentation of Jin Teh-lung's character is strikingly done. Uncle Chin, standing in front of the "appeal for talent," launches into the tale of how Jin's father, Jin Lao-hou, in the dangerous waters near Devil's Gate Sand-bank where even a feather would sink and wild ducks dare not alight, recovered a precious pearl necklace for the landlord Wry-mouth Sun. Then he introduces Jin's son Jin Teh-lung, known as the Big Gold Dragon. This colourful, almost legendary account makes the audience eager to see Jin Teh-lung, and at this point he bursts in like a whirlwind at the head of his men carrying a red banner. Jin is the commander of the water conservancy engineering battalion of Lungmen Commune in the neighbourhood, and not responsible for the bridge here. But displaying the spirit of communist co-operation, he competes with Chao Ta-kang to take down the appeal and get the job. Finally both together undertake the difficult task of building the bridge-piers.

Chao's wife Li Yu-tao is a new type of Chinese woman. Brought up in the forest, she is straightforward and a good shot. She is also a steady worker as well as a bold one. Under the Party's education her political consciousness and ability are raised so that she is able to act as site supervisor of the complex bridge-building

project. She shows that the women of New China have not only improved their political status and changed their fate, but shoulder to shoulder with the men are building socialism.

Then there is Uncle Chin, who is over sixty yet no less enthusiastic than the youngsters when it comes to building up their village and transforming the mountain region to bring happiness to future generations. He is so angry when Old Chao refuses to pole his boat across the treacherous river that he breaks his pipe stem, breaking with Old Chao after fifty years of friendship. Later, to light up the river in the storm and save Engineer Yin, he resolutely sets fire to his pine-wood house, shouting: "Neighbours! I've got a lamp alight for you. Save Chao Lao-ta's boat! Save the engineer!"

Hsing, the county Party secretary, is an outstanding character in this play. He not only lives among the people and becomes one with them, able to understand their deepest aspirations and wishes, but, more important, at critical moments when the villagers do not know what to do he gives timely guidance based on Marxist principles, enabling them to continue their advance forward. During the construction of the bridge, he goes wherever there are difficulties and seemingly insuperable obstacles, and then all difficulties and problems are satisfactorily solved. He is at the same time a leader and an ordinary labourer like the others.

The drama in this play arises from the conflict between two types of people who have different views about the construction of the bridge over Dragon River. Dad Chao, for instance, is not against the building of a bridge. The ablest boatman, familiar with all the river's rapids and currents, and a man who runs great risks to pole the Party secretary to Tiger Hill to get specimens of iron ore, he objects only when he hears that they want to lay the bridge's foundation on Lu Pan's Rock. He has a superstitious fear that the destruction of that rock will offend the River-god, who will take his revenge and bring disaster on the people's heads. So he adopts a negative attitude towards the building of the bridge and unconsciously becomes an obstacle in the people's advance. Though the engineer Yin Che-fu has great ideals and is resolved to build the bridge, he underestimates the masses' wisdom and enthusiasm and lays undue stress on the difficulties involved. Because he does not link himself with the villagers at first or

support their enthusiasm, he is unable to make full use of his technical skill. But though both these characters lack confidence to begin with and are not sufficiently active, carried away by the general enthusiasm and impelled forward by the masses, they show marked improvement in their way of thinking. Both the advanced and conservative characters drawn by the playwrights are fairly typical. The contradictions between them disclose the struggle between advanced and backward ideas, and through them the playwrights extol the victory of the proletarian ideology against all non-proletarian ways of thinking.

Another noteworthy feature of the play is the effort spent in its writing and staging to make modern drama more national in form and closer to the people. Much useful experience was gained in this respect. The modern drama as a literary form was introduced to China little more than half a century ago from abroad. During the last five decades, since it has reflected the revolutionary struggle and life of the Chinese people it has already to some extent assumed a national style; but further development is needed before the modern drama comes to be what Chairman Mao advocated: ". . . the fresh and lively things of Chinese style and Chinese flavour which the common folk of China love to see and hear." In this play the dramatists have used fresh, lively folk language to reflect the heroic reality of the big leap forward, the heroic spirit of Chinese peasants; they have also adopted certain of the methods of characterization and expression of the traditional Chinese theatre and folk art. While adopting from the traditional drama the delineation of characters by means of broad outlines combined with detailed observation of their thoughts and feelings, the playwrights have not taken over stereotyped conventions in a formalistic or mechanical manner, imitating merely outward forms; instead they have integrated these conventions with their characters' inmost feelings. In developing the plot, they have also chosen detailed descriptions with specific national characteristics to increase the drama and effectiveness on the stage. The relationship between Chao Ta-kang and his wife Li Yu-tao is handled in this way. So are the scenes in which Uncle Chin and Dad Chao break off their friendship by the breaking of a pipe stem and make up by drinking a large bowl of wine. These actions accord with the Chinese mode of expressing feelings.

The language of this play is richly Chinese. The authors have used the strong, colourful language of folk songs with which the people express their proud aspirations in the big leap forward to depict their heroic characters. For instance, when Jin Teh-lung and Chao Ta-kang are answering the appeal for talents, Jin says: "My shoulders are broad and my arms are thick. I can tear hill-top rocks apart with my hands, and knock a great river aside with one kick." Chao Ta-kang exclaims: "When I point at the hills, they turn into gold. And the streams turn into silver at my touch. When dragons see me they slink from my path. When fierce tigers see me they tremble with dread." This is the lively language of folk songs, concise, vivid, evocative and possessed of a fine rhythm. Indeed, the authors have deliberately introduced some story-telling, rhymed dialogue and folk ballad forms to increase the national colour. Thus Uncle Chin tells the story about how Old Jin recovered the pearls from the river and cunningly hit Wry-mouth Sun with a turtle, and Dad Chao relates the legend of Lu Pan the Master Craftsman. These stories themselves have a legendary quality, and the popular story-telling form adds to the national flavour. The playwrights have been most successful in the adaptation of traditional forms and folk language.

The production of this play was highly original too. Both the director and actors used a number of new, original techniques effectively adopted from the traditional theatre. The director grasped the main theme of the play and by means of bold exaggeration and forceful colouring gave full rein to the revolutionary romanticism in life and men's characters, so that the performance is able to impress by its strong rhythm and clarity. The stagecraft owed much to the traditional drama also. The powerful spirit of the age and strong tang of real life in this production have educated and stirred the audience. And the play has been widely welcomed because the text, direction and staging all have drawn creatively upon the methods of the traditional theatre, because they show a fresh, original approach and are thoroughly Chinese in style and spirit.

Another reason for the success of this play is that the authors have lived with the peasants and learned to understand them. Early in 1958 they went to a village in the Changpai Mountains in Northeast China to live and work with the peasants there for

some time. Because they went through the big leap forward in agricultural production with the peasants, they understood the masses' heroic determination to do away with poverty and want. This enabled them to write a play reflecting the big leap forward of the people in the mountainous region. Again, in writing and revising this play and staging it, they carried out the mass line, co-operating closely with the directors and actors of the China Youth Art Theatre and adopting suggestions from the audience to make continuous revisions in the script. By this means the quality of the play was improved. The production of *Taming the Dragon and the Tiger* is a successful example of modern Chinese play-writing, and this success marks the victory in resolutely carrying out Chairman Mao Tse-tung's line on literature and art.

A Scene of Plenty

→
by Shih Lu

Shih Lu was born in Szechuan in 1919. He went to the revolutionary base Yen-an in 1939 where he began to study art. Since then he has taught art and done original work and is known particularly for his woodcuts and traditional Chinese painting. He is now the vice-chairman for the Sian branch of the Chinese Artists' Union.



Selected Poems

The Szechuan Road

What heights!
It is easier to climb to Heaven
Than take the Szechuan Road.
Long ago Tsan Tsung and Yu Fu founded the king-
dom of Shu;
Forty-eight thousand years went by,
Yet no road linked it with the land of Chin.*
Westward from Taipo Mountain** a bird track
Wandered to the summit of Mount Omei;***
But not until brave men had perished in the great land-
slide****

This translation of Li Po's poems was done collectively by several translators. We have also consulted some past translations and enlisted the help of a number of Chinese scholars.

* Shu, the old name for Western Szechuan, was conquered by the kingdom of Chin in 316 B.C.

** A mountain west of the capital, Changan.

*** A mountain in Western Szechuan.

**** There is a legend that King Hui of Chin promised his five daughters to the prince of Shu. Five brave men were sent to fetch them. On the way back they met a huge serpent which fled into a cave. When they tried to pull it out, the mountain crumbled and the men and princesses perished. Since then a rocky path linked the two kingdoms.

Were bridges hooked together in the air
And a path hacked through the rocks.
Above, high peaks turn back the sun's chariot drawn
by six dragons;
Below, the charging waves are caught in whirlpools;
Not even yellow cranes dare fly this way,
Monkeys cannot leap those gorges.
At Green Mud Ridge the path winds back and forth,
With nine twists for every hundred steps.
Touching the stars, the traveller looks up and gasps,
Then sinks down, clutching his heart, to groan aloud.
Friend, when will you return from this westward journey?
This is a fearful way. You cannot cross these cliffs.
The only living things are birds crying in ancient trees,
Male wooing female up and down the woods,
And the cuckoo, weary of empty hills,
Singing to the moon.
It is easier to climb to heaven
Than take the Szechuan Road.
The mere telling of its perils blanches youthful cheeks.
Peak follows peak, each but a hand's breadth from
the sky;
Dead pine trees hang head down into the chasms,
Torrents and waterfalls out roar each other,
Pounding the cliffs and boiling over rocks,
Booming like thunder through a thousand caverns.
What takes you, traveller, this long, weary way
So filled with danger?

Sword Pass* is steep and narrow,
One man could hold this pass against ten thousand;
And sometimes its defenders
Are not mortal men but wolves and jackals.
By day we dread the savage tiger, by night the serpent,
Sharp-fanged sucker of blood
Who chops men down like stalks of hemp.
The City of Brocade** may be a pleasant place,
But it is best to seek your home.
For it is easier to climb to heaven
Than take the Szechuan Road.

I gaze into the west, and sigh.

Watching the Waterfall at Lushan

In sunshine Censer Peak breathes purple vapour,
Far off hangs the cataract, a stream upended;
Down it cascades a sheer three thousand feet —
As if the Silver River*** were falling from Heaven!

* In Northern Szechuan, on the route to Shensi where the kingdom of Chin was.

** A name for Chengtu, the capital of Shu.

*** The Chinese name for the Milky Way.

Seeing Meng Hao-jan* Off to Yangchow
from Yellow Crane Tower**

At Yellow Crane Tower in the west
My old friend says farewell;
In the mist and flowers of spring
He goes down to Yangchow;
Lonely sail, distant shadow,
Vanish in blue emptiness;
All I see is the great river
Flowing into the far horizon.

Thoughts in the Silent Night

Beside my bed a pool of light —
Is it hoarfrost on the ground?
I lift my eyes and see the moon,
I bend my head and think of home.

* A contemporary poet and good friend of Li Po.

** On the bank of the Yangtze in present-day Wuhan.

The Song of Green Water

Green water, bright autumn sun,
On South Lake they're gathering duckweed.
The lotus, so lovely they seem about to speak,
Fill the rowers with despair.

Thoughts in Spring

The grass of Yen is green silk,
Dark hang the mulberry boughs of Chin.
While you, my lord, are longing to return,
Your handmaiden is breaking her heart at home.
Ah, why does the spring wind, a stranger,
Part the curtains of my bed?

Fighting South of the City

Last year we fought at the source of the Sangkan,
This year, along river-beds in the Pamirs;
We have washed our swords in the foam of Parthian
seas,

And grazed our horses among the snows of Tienshan.
 After campaigning ten thousand *li*,
 Our men are weary and old.
 Battle and carnage are to the Huns like ploughing,
 White bones are the only crop in these yellow sands.
 Where the House of Chin built the Great Wall against
 the tribesmen,
 The House of Han kept the beacon fires ablaze —
 And still they blaze;
 There seems no end to the fighting.
 In the wilderness men hack one another to pieces,
 Riderless horses neigh madly to the sky;
 Kites and crows tear out human entrails,
 And fly with them and hang them
 In branches of dead trees;
 The blood of soldiers smears grass and brambles;
 What use is a commander without his troops?
 War is a fearful thing —
 And the wise prince resorts to it only if he must.

Verses in the Old Style — 24

Great carriages raise swirls of dust,
 Darkening the fields at noon;
 What golden plenty have these mighty eunuchs,
 Whose mansions reach the clouds!

See them on their way to a cock-fight —
 What magnificent headgear, what canopies!
 The breath of their nostrils makes a double rainbow,
 Folk by the roadside shake with fear.
 Since the time of the wise old man who washed his ears,*
 There is none to distinguish between Yao and Chih.**

Song of Inspector Ting***

Yunyang**** sends conscript labour to the Yangtse,
 Both river banks are alive with men and trade;
 When the buffaloes of Wu pant beneath the moon,*****
 It's weary work hauling boats!
 The river water's too muddy to drink,
 Thick silt fills half the pot;

* Tradition has it that in the time of the sage king Yao, a hermit named Hsu Yu was offered a share in the government but considered the invitation so demeaning that he at once washed his ears.

** According to legend, Yao was a paragon of virtue and Chih a notorious brigand.

*** A song with a doleful tune believed to date from the fifth century. Each line ends with the words "Inspector Ting."

**** Present-day Tanyang in the province of Kiangsu. Conscript labour was used to carry stone from the quarries to the river and to tow the boats upstream.

***** I.e. in the worst heat of summer. The old kingdom of Wu was situated in the lower Yangtse•Valley. The buffaloes there, sensitive to the heat, were said to mistake the moon for the sun.

When workmen chant the Inspector's Song,
Hearts break, tears fall like rain.
Ten thousand slave in the quarries,
But who will haul the stone to the river bank?
Look yonder at rocky Mang and Tang — *
What tears have fallen here since ancient times!

A Visit to Sky-Mother Mountain in a Dream, a Song of Farewell

Sea-farers tell of fairy isles;
Lost among mist and waves.
But the men of Yueh** speak of Sky-Mother Mountain
Showing herself through rifts in shimmering clouds.
Sky-Mother soars to heaven, spans the horizon,
Towers over the Five Peaks*** and the Scarlet Fortress;
While Sky-Terrace, four hundred and eighty thousand
feet high,
Staggers southeastward before it.
So, longing in my dreams for Wu and Yuch,
One night I flew over Mirror Lake under the moon;

* Two hills in Kiangsu noted for their fine stone.

** The land of Yueh lay in what is now the province of Chekiang, the home of the famous mountains: Sky-Mother, Scarlet Fortress and Sky-Terrace.

*** Five high mountains in China: Mount Tai, Mount Hua, Mount Huo, Mount Heng and Mount Sung.

The moon cast my shadow on the water
And travelled with me all the way to Yenhsi.
The lodge of Lord Hsieh* still remained
Where green waters swirled and the cry of apes was
shrill;
Donning the shoes of Hsieh,
I climbed the dark ladder of clouds.
Midway, I saw the sun rise from the sea,
Heard the Cock of Heaven crow.**
And my path twisted through a thousand crags,
Enchanted by flowers I leaned against a rock,
And suddenly all was dark.
Growling of bears and snarls of dragons echoed
Among the rocks and streams;
The deep forest appalled me, I shrank from the lowering
cliffs;
Dark were the clouds, heavy with rain;
Waters boiled into misty spray;
Lightning flashed; thunder roared;
Peaks tottered, boulders crashed;
And the stone gate of a great cavern
Yawned open.
Below me, a bottomless void of blue,
Sun and moon gleaming on terraces of silver and gold;
With rainbows for garments, and winds for horses,

* Hsieh Ling-yun, a Tsin dynasty poet who was fond of mountaineering and made himself special hobnailed shoes for climbing.

** According to Chinese mythology, this cock roosted on a great tree in the southeast. When the sun rose it crowed, and all the cocks in the world followed suit.

The lords of the clouds descended, a mighty host.
Phoenixes circled the chariots, tigers played cithers,
As the immortals went by, rank upon rank.
My heart was seized by fear and wonder,
And waking with a start I cried out,
For nothing was there except my mat and pillow —
Gone was the world of mists and clouds.
And so with the pleasures of this life;
All pass, as water flows eastward.
I leave you, friend — when shall I return?
I shall pasture white stags among green peaks
And ride to visit mountains famed in legend.
Would you have me bow my head before mighty princes,
Forgetting all the joy of my heart?

Drinking Alone by Moonlight

Among the flowers a pot of wine,
I drink alone; no friend is by.
I raise my cup, invite the moon,
And my shadow; now we are three.
But the moon knows nothing of drinking,
And my shadow only apes my doings;
Yet moon and shadow shall be my company.
Spring is the time to have fun.

I sing, the moon lingers,
I dance, my shadow tangles,
While I'm still sober, we are gay together,
When I get drunk, we go our different ways.
We pledge a friendship no mortals know,
And swear to meet on heaven's Silver River.

With Mother Hsun at Five-pine Hill*

At the foot of Five-pine Hill
I stay alone, with small comfort.
Farm folk toil hard in the autumn,
My neighbour husks her grain in the chill night.
Kneeling, she offers me a dish of *tiao-bu***
Moonlight makes the white plate sparkle.
With a pang I remember the washerwoman of old;***
I thank her again and again.
But I cannot take of her food.

* Near Tungling in the province of Anhwei.

** The seed of *zizania aquatica*, which the poor used as a substitute for rice.

*** At the beginning of the Han dynasty when Han Hsin, later Marquis of Huaiyin, was still poor and unknown, a washerwoman took pity on him and fed him.

To Wang Lun*

I'm on board; we're about to sail,
When there's stamping and singing on shore;
Peach Blossom Pool is a thousand feet deep,
Yet not so deep, Wang Lun, as your love for me.

* When Li Po was staying in Chingsien in present-day Anhwei, Wang Lun often brought him good wine to drink and came to see him off when he left.

WANG SHIH-CHING

Li Po and His Poetry

Chinese classical poetry reached its pinnacle in the Tang dynasty with the appearance of a host of outstanding poets who made this the golden age of Chinese poetry. Li Po (701-762) was one of the greatest of these. He and his contemporary Tu Fu, the great realist poet, were the two brightest stars in the galaxy of Tang poets. Together they stand at the summit of that age's achievement.

The most active period of Li Po's life was the forty-odd years of the reign of Emperor Hsuan Tsung. By then the imperial house of Tang, set up after the great peasant uprisings at the end of the Sui dynasty, had ruled for nearly a century. Because it had made certain concessions to the peasants, the political power was comparatively stable, and a considerable development in the productive forces had resulted in a gradual flourishing of handicraft industry and commerce. Li Po, who grew up during these decades of a prosperity seldom matched in feudal China, was eager to help the people and preserve peace in the land. To his mind, a successful political career would be the best means of making a contribution to his country. But he failed to realize these ambitions. Instead, he became a great poet in the tradition of positive romanticism.

Li Po's early years were spent in Szechuan. His actual birthplace is unknown, but we have evidence that at the age of five

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he moved with his father to the Chinlien District in Changming County, Mienchow in present-day Mienyang. He fell in love with Szechuan and always looked upon it as his home. When he was twenty-five he left Szechuan and began to travel up and down the country, but in many of his short lyrics with their flavour of folk songs he recalls the enchanting scenery of Szechuan. One example is his poem *Thoughts in the Silent Night*.

Li Po spent much of his life in travelling, first in Szechuan, then in other parts of China. He did not travel for pleasure but hoped in his wanderings to meet influential men who would recognize his ability, enabling him to realize his political ambitions and ideals. In his youth and during his best years his imagination was kindled by the legendary society of ancient times under the sage kings Yao and Shun, when the talents of good men were used. His heroes were upright ministers of old like the Duke of Chou, who according to legend sometimes forgot food and sleep to work for the state and assist the young king, or gallant men like Mao Sui and Lu Chung-lien of the Warring States. Since Li Po believed that his ideals could be realized only under a wise ruler, from his youth he aspired to help an enlightened monarch administer the affairs of the empire. After leaving Szechuan and going to Anlu in Hupeh, he wrote a number of memoranda to local officials passionately voicing this wish in the hope that they would recommend him to the court. Of course he could not attain his desire, for the petty-minded feudal officials were incapable of understanding a man like Li Po. They ignored his proposals and did not recommend him. Because Li Po's political views were more advanced than those of the feudal ruling class of his day, his idealism had a certain positive significance. But this was also the reason why his political career was doomed to failure.

However, his failure in public life contributed to his success as a poet. Debarred from the feudal ruling clique, he had more opportunities to come into contact with the common people, to familiarize himself with their life, to travel and see China's magnificent mountains and rivers. This broadened his vision, stirred his imagination and enriched the content of his poetry. From the start he wrote with the freshness and vividness of folk songs. Later, impressed by the superb scenery he saw in his travels, by the industry and courage of the common folk and by the suf-

ferings of the people, he was able to write such moving poems as the *Song of Inspector Ting*, *Watching the Waterfall at Lushan* and *A Visit to Sky-Mother Mountain in a Dream*, a *Song of Farewell*. Thanks to the inspiration he drew from the life of the people and because he absorbed the best from folk literature, his works breathe grandeur and originality.

The breadth of his vision is evident in *Watching the Waterfall at Lushan*:

In sunshine Censer Peak breathes purple vapour,
Far off hangs the cataract, a stream upended;
Down it cascades, a sheer three thousand feet,
As if the Silver River were falling from Heaven!

The views behind poems like the *Song of Inspector Ting* are specially worth noting. This poem, written in middle life, shows that the poet has seen more deeply than in his early period what feudal oppression means in terms of suffering to the people. Here, in addition to a sharp exposure of the gruelling conditions of the conscripted peasants, forced to toil like cattle in the heat of summer, the poet expresses his deep sympathy for the labouring people. This sympathy and his indignation against the feudal rulers find vent in the exclamation:

Look yonder at rocky Mang and Tang —
What tears have fallen here since ancient times!

The *Song of Inspector Ting* follows the tune of a *yueh-fu* song (Han dynasty ballad). Thus Li Po has taken a traditional theme and an old form to express a new content and write something original.

Of course, the whole body of Li Po's writing, like his general development, is extremely complex. There are positive as well as negative features in his poetry. When he cut himself off from the life of the people and their literary tradition, the negative aspect of his poems was revealed. In 742, when he was already famous throughout the empire, he was summoned by the emperor to Changan and lived like a noble at court. The poems composed during this period in praise of the royal house and the nobility are the dregs and dross of his poetry. However, the decadent court life went against the grain for this freedom-loving poet who

refused to bow before any authority. He despised the nobles and high ministers who spent their time watching ball games or cock fights, and did not want to remain among their ranks. And they for their part were outraged by Li Po's pride. After a short time he incurred their displeasure and had to ask for leave; then "laughing and singing aloud" he left the capital.

Again, when he met with disappointment in political life he became interested for a while in escapist Taoist philosophy. Some of his poems show the influence of such passive ideas.

Ten years after Li Po left Changan, a great upheaval took place. The Tang empire had passed its prime; decline had set in. The rulers of the feudal empire — the emperor, nobles and eunuchs — lived an extravagant, dissipated life. To supply themselves with luxuries and wage military campaigns against neighbouring peoples, they levied such heavy taxes and ground down the peasants so ruthlessly that the economy broke down and the country was fatally weakened. Thus in 755 An Lu-shan, a Tartar who was military governor at the northern frontier, rebelled and quickly captured Changan, while the emperor fled to Szechuan. Civil war increased the wretchedness of the people. That Li Po was deeply concerned over the fate of his country and his compatriots can be seen from his poems of this time.

Li Po was opposed to war, but not to all wars indiscriminately. He opposed unjust, aggressive wars, not wars which were just and against aggression. For example, *Fighting South of the City* shows that he was against the futile campaigns of the Tang rulers and the generals who gloried in their might and were eager to win military renown. He attacked such wars and acts of plunder because they could not bring the people independence and freedom, only slavery and desolation. In *Verses in the Old Style — 19* he shows the consequences of the fighting following An Lu-shan's rebellion:

Men's blood smears the wild grass,
Wolves and jackals wear official headgear.

His opposition to unjust wars is also powerfully expressed in certain poems written from the point of view of women longing for their husbands, poems like *The North Wind*, *Washing Clothes* and *Thoughts in Spring*. In *The North Wind* the poet describes

the feelings of the widow of a soldier killed in battle when she picks up two arrows which he has left behind:

The arrows alone remain;
The man was killed in battle and will never return.
I cannot bear the sight of them.
I will burn them into ashes.
Even the Yellow River can be stopped with handfuls of
earth
But my grief cannot be dammed up
In snow and sleet and north wind.

Such descriptions of war and its consequence have the power to stir men to fight against oppression. In fine lyrics like these the poet shows the people's love of peace, their hatred for plunder and aggression, their determination and their fighting spirit.

Because Li Po loved the people and wanted them to have a peaceful life, he was for just wars to resist aggression and tyranny. When An Lu-shan's army ravaged the countryside and finally captured the capital, putting its citizens to flight, Li Po joined the forces of Prince Yung, sixteenth son of Emperor Hsuan Tsung. He acclaimed the prince and his army in the *Song of the Eastward March of Prince Yung* and other poems, sternly condemning those generals who were too cowardly to take effective action in face of national disaster. Unfortunately Prince Yung did not prove a good leader; he was unable to restore peace and in the fighting among different princes for the throne he was defeated. Li Po was accused of joining the pretender's forces, but thanks to the intervention of famous generals like Kuo Tzu-yi his life was spared. He was condemned to banishment to distant Yehlang in present-day Kweichow. On his way there, however, an amnesty was declared; he was free to wander from place to place as a beggar. Even during these trials, Li Po's first concern was for his war-torn country and for his people. Thus in a poem written to Governor Wei of Chianghsia during his exile he says:

In the dark of the night I sigh,
Grieving for our great land.

The last years of Li Po were clouded by this grief and anxiety.

The tradition of positive romanticism in the long history of Chinese literature, especially in classical poetry, found brilliant and striking expression in the works of Li Po. The chief characteristics of his positive romanticism — idealism, revolt against evil, and heroism — show a comprehensive development and a high degree of mastery of his craft.

Li Po created an imaginary world by the use of artistic exaggeration, vividly conveying his thoughts and aspirations through poetry. *A Visit to Sky-Mother Mountain in a Dream, a Song of Farewell* is one of the best examples of this style. Here myths and legends give vivid life to his poetry, while there are passages of weird beauty like this:

Growling of bears and snarls of dragons echoed
Among the rocks and streams;
The deep forest appalled me, I shrank from the lowering
cliffs;
Dark were the clouds, heavy with rain;
Waters boiled into misty spray.

Elsewhere the scenes are reminiscent of fairyland:

With rainbows for garments, winds for horses,
The lords of the clouds descended, a mighty host.
Phoenixes circled the chariots, tigers played cithers,
As the immortals went by, rank upon rank.

In this way for a space the poet shook off the cares and sorrows of real life, while in his heart burned a proud flame of rebellion against the vulgar world.

I leave you, friend — when shall I return?
I will pasture white stags among green peaks
And ride to visit mountains famed in legend.
Would you have me bow my head before mighty princes,
Forgetting all the joy of my heart?

Another feature of Li Po's romanticism is bold personification. He bestows life on all things he loves, as for example the moon. The moon can move with men: "The mountain moon follows man home." Or the poet has a conversation with it: "How long has the moon been up there in the blue? I set down my cup to ask." In *Drinking Alone by Moonlight*, he raises his cup to invite

the moon to drink with him, and the moon listens to his singing and watches his dancing, bringing out the poet's intense gloom. To Li Po the moon stood for purity as opposed to darkness. The evil he saw around him made him take the moon as a symbol of his ideal which could not be realized under existing conditions, a symbol which he admired and praised.

Li Po's powerful and splendid passages dealing with landscapes are another striking triumph of his romantic method. By strange, compelling similes, apt flights of fancy and well-nigh magic skill, he conjures up a vast panorama for us. Thus the Sung dynasty poet Ouyang Hsiu (1007-1072) said of him:

Under Li Po's pen clouds and mist arise,
With a thousand strange and perilous heights which none can
scale.

The Szechuan Road presents just such a sublime and perilous landscape. Round the central theme, expressed in the words "It is easier to climb to heaven than take the Szechuan Road," vivid and evocative images cluster to form a perfect landscape.

What heights!
It is easier to climb to heaven
Than take the Szechuan Road.
Long ago Tsan Tsung and Yu Fu founded the kingdom of Shu;
Forty-eight thousand years went by,
Yet no road linked it with the land of Chin.
Westward from Taipo Mountain a bird track
Wandered to the summit of Mount Omei;
But not until brave men had perished in the great landslide
Were bridges hooked together in the air
And a path hacked through the rocks.

Here a colourful popular legend* superbly presented in artistic imagery pays tribute to the aspirations of the working people of old in their struggle to conquer nature. The poem voices admiration for these ancient heroes, intense love for China's incomparable mountains and rivers, and the wish that this land may not fall a prey to jackals and wolves. Though the poet himself does not appear, the grandeur and exuberance of the imagery

* See the last footnote on p. 153.

and the powerful atmosphere evoked match his proud, indomitable nature and positive romanticist spirit. Thus both the content and the form of this poem are regarded as typical of Li Po at his best.

Li Po made an outstanding contribution to the development of Chinese classical poetry. In the first place, he revived the fine folk tradition of Chinese poetry. The insipid and effeminate court poetry in vogue from the fourth to the sixth century had for a time, introduced a decadent trend in Chinese poetry. While still little more than a boy, Li Po made use of the best of folk songs and legends in his writing and with his descriptions of the people's feelings opposed the existing fashion and dealt a heavy blow to court poetry. Later in his life he carried his progressive literary views further, evolving a distinctive style and blazing a trail for poets after him. Thus Li Po brought about something of a revolution in Chinese classical literature, particularly in poetry, and his positive romanticism and methods of expression had a profound influence on contemporary and later writing. Even now his poetry is widely read. The fine tradition in Li Po's poetry is being adequately inherited and carried forward today. Undoubtedly the best of his poetry will make a positive contribution to the building up of our new socialist culture.

Art Activities in the Anti-U.S. Imperialism Propaganda Week

During the angry tide of the Chinese people's unanimous and resolute opposition to U.S. imperialist aggression and their wrathful condemnation of the tour of the Far East and Taiwan made by warmonger No. 1, the "god of plague" Eisenhower, our capital Peking and other big cities including Shanghai, Tientsin, Shenyang, Wuhan, Canton, Chungking and Sian, observed June 21 to June 27 as a "Propaganda Week to Oppose U.S. Imperialist Aggression, for Resolute Liberation of Taiwan and Safeguarding of World Peace."

The U.S. imperialists, who have committed countless crimes against the peoples of the world, are now meeting with severe condemnation and resolute resistance from all the peoples of the world; and in Asia, Africa and Latin America there have arisen tremendous struggles involving millions of people. We in China have always considered it our sacred duty to support the struggles of the peoples of different lands in the world against U.S. imperialism. In order to lay bare the aggressive nature of U.S. imperialism, to oppose gangster Eisenhower's tour in the West Pacific, to reaffirm our people's resolution to liberate Taiwan, to carry forward the struggle against the aggressive war plots of U.S. imperialism, and to defend world peace together with all the peoples of the world, we have launched a nation-wide, large-scale propaganda campaign to oppose U.S. imperialist aggression, resolutely liberate Taiwan and defend world peace.

China's revolutionary art has always been a powerful weapon against imperialism. During the last ten years, in such past struggles as the movement to resist U.S. aggression and aid Korea and the campaign to oppose the occupation of Taiwan by U.S. imperialism, Chinese writers and artists have written and produced innumerable works in various art forms to oppose U.S. imperialism. They have effectively aroused and educated the masses and dealt powerful blows against the enemy.

In this large-scale propaganda week we showed films, gave stage performances, held art exhibitions and used other mediums to show the struggle against U.S. imperialism. The Hall of the War to Resist U.S. Aggression and Aid Korea in the Military Museum of the Chinese People's Revolution was formally opened in Peking during this period. In this propaganda week, Chinese cultural workers, actors and artists fully demonstrated the strength of art as a weapon and made a forceful attack on the enemy. The following three articles report some of the activities in the film world, the theatre and Chinese art circles during this campaign.

CHOU WEI-CHIH

Smash the U.S. Paper Tiger!

*Actors and artistes in Peking
launch powerful propaganda against U.S. imperialism*

At the end of June, Peking actors and artistes, together with all the citizens of the capital, all the people of China, and the peoples of the whole world, carried out a campaign to deal heavy blows at U.S. imperialism and to submit the "god of plague" to heavy fire from all sides. The weapon used in this case was theatrical art. During the "Propaganda Week to Oppose U.S. Imperialist Aggression, for Resolute Liberation of Taiwan and Safeguarding of World Peace," held throughout China theatre workers were very active, putting on many performances at different places and doing a splendid job of agitation and propaganda.

Nearly fifty groups with several thousand members in Peking took part in the performances against U.S. imperialism. From June 21 to June 27 all Peking theatres put on shows opposing U.S. imperialism, while performances were also given in the streets, squares and parks of Peking. Government offices, schools, factories and communes also organized propaganda teams to give performances in the streets.

Of the several hundred items shown, a few plays, songs, variety shows and dances were old favourites; but the great

Chou Wei-chih, well-known composer of *March of the Chinese People's Volunteers*, is a member of the Secretariat of the Chinese Musicians' Union.



A scene from *On the 38th Parallel* Performed by the Theatre Group of the Political Department of the Chinese People's Liberation Army

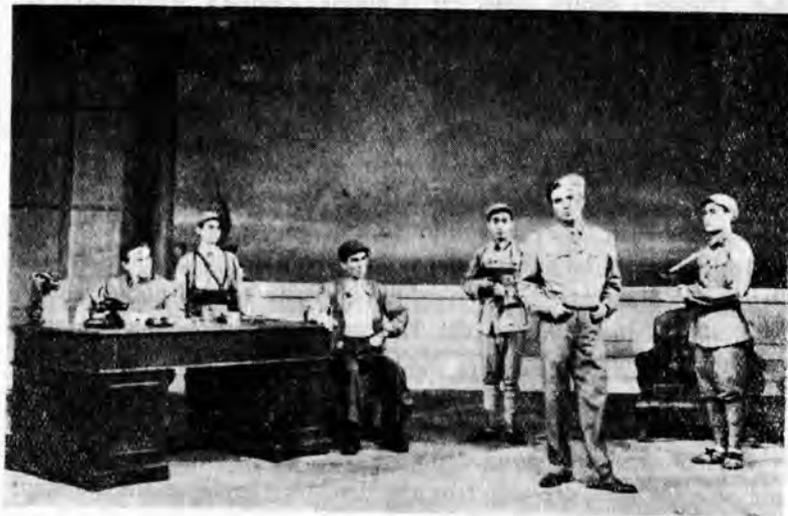
majority were specially written and staged for the occasion within 2-5 days. These items opposing U.S. imperialism made use of a great variety of themes. From different angles, the artistes forcefully exposed the crimes committed by the U.S. imperialists at different times against the peoples of the world. The forms used embraced a great variety too: modern plays and operas, topical dramatic sketches, traditional operas, variety shows, chorus singing, dancing and acrobatics.

One of the past favourites re-edited and staged again was *Long Live Our Heroes!* This play, put on by the Peking People's Art Theatre, shows how the Chinese People's Volunteers in Korea defended their tunnels against the U.S. imperialist aggressors and finally won a great victory. *The Iron and Steel Transport Troops*, staged by the China Youth Art Theatre, reflected the stirring deeds in the autumn of 1951 when the Korean and Chinese peoples' forces smashed Van Fleet's "autumn offensive." *Friendship*, produced by the Comrades-in-Arms Theatre Group, is the story of the Korean heroine Kim Sun Ok who went behind the enemy lines to save platoon leader Ho Ming of the Chinese People's Volunteers. This play pays tribute to the noble friendship, sealed in blood, of the Korean and Chinese peoples who fought in a common cause. Both in their ideological content and stage technique these plays reached a fairly high level. They had run continuously for months in the past, always to full houses.

One of the most noteworthy of the new productions was *On the 38th Parallel*, presented by the Theatre Group of the Political

Department of the People's Liberation Army. This is in some way a sequel to *Long Live Our Heroes!* which showed how courageously the Korean and Chinese people smashed the enemy's so-called "biggest offensive" and forced the aggressors to sign an armistice agreement. *On the 38th Parallel* further exposes U.S. imperialism as the most vicious of aggressors, unwilling to accept defeat. This play reveals how, just after signing the armistice agreement, while negotiations were still going on to fix the military demarcation line, the U.S. imperialists were already plotting a "new offensive." It discloses vividly how, to attain their criminal objective, the U.S. imperialists again and again sent agents across the line to carry out espionage and various acts of military provocation. But the high degree of vigilance of the Korean and Chinese peoples' forces and the Korean people brought about the thorough exposure of the enemy's plots, so that the representatives of U.S. imperialism were strongly condemned by the people and finally had to stand trial before the Military Armistice Commission as defendants. These penetrating sketches make very evident the gangster nature of U.S. imperialism which makes aggression its "state policy" and will resort to all means to attain its ends. Faking

A scene from *Fresh in Our Memory* Performed by the China Youth Art Theatre



peace while actually preparing for war, talk of easing tension while actually intensifying aggression, have been the trickery used by the U.S. imperialists all along.

Similar in theme is the new play of the China Youth Art Theatre, *Fresh in Our Memory*. It portrays how between 1945 and 1949 the U.S. imperialists instigated the Kuomintang reactionaries to launch a civil war and carry out frenzied attacks on the liberated areas, and how they were thoroughly defeated in the end. Here the U.S. imperialists are clearly exposed as the most vicious, most cunning enemy of the Chinese people. Their so-called "Executive Headquarters" for military mediation was a shameful tool intended to deceive the people by negotiations while pinning down the People's Liberation Army and enabling the Kuomintang troops with American assistance to acquire sufficient strength to attack the liberated areas. This play also shows the use made of U.N.R.R.A. for spying. The reactionaries tried to take advantage of the distribution of relief materials to collect information in the liberated areas. In short, they attempted to use both the "Executive Headquarters" for military mediation and U.N.R.R.A. to attack the Chinese Communist Party from two sides, hoping the Chinese people would be fooled and fall into their trap. Their trick was seen through, however, by Chairman Mao Tse-tung and the Chinese Communist Party. The people showed a high sense of vigilance and a strong fighting spirit. While still negotiating for peace in the country, we strengthened our military defences, ready to deal mortal blows to the reactionaries if they dared to attack. Finally Chiang Kai-shek's regime was thoroughly overthrown and the aggressive forces of U.S. imperialism were driven out of the mainland of China. The strong contempt and hatred for U.S. imperialism in these two plays are like two powerful missiles which accurately hit their mark. These plays have completely exposed to their audiences the gangster face of U.S. imperialism, its blatant lies and shameless behaviour.

Another new play was the political satire *The "God of Plague,"* written and staged by the Experimental Drama Theatre of the Central Drama College. The staging was rather unusual. The play opened with weird music, to the accompaniment of which a group of revolting and ludicrous warmongers crossed the stage



A scene from *Angry Waves* Performed by the Peking People's Art Theatre

making disgusting gestures. These were the U.S. gangster chief Eisenhower, his colleagues Herter, Allen Dulles and the chairman of the U.S. joint chief-of-staff Twining, as well as the lackeys of U.S. vassal states supported by U.S. imperialism. A description of the deliberate sabotage of the Four-power Conference of Government Heads by U.S. imperialism and of Eisenhower's tour of the Far East pulls the mask off U.S. imperialism and directs biting satire at the comical figure cut by the enemy. The whole play breathes contempt for the enemy, and the negative characters are successfully drawn: arrogant, cold-blooded Herter; wily, venomous Allen Dulles; and, most outstanding of all, Eisenhower, who appears like a chameleon, now pretending to be "kind" and "gentle," now revealing his true ferocity; sometimes making gestures of "peace," sometimes clamouring for war. The portrayal of such a figure clearly reveals the true nature of the U.S. imperialists.

An outstanding feature of these performances to oppose U.S. imperialism was the use of full-length plays to extol the courageous struggle of the Japanese and south Korean peoples against U.S. imperialism and its lackeys. For instance *Angry Waves*, staged by the Peking People's Art Theatre, describes the mass struggle of workers, peasants, fishermen, students and other circles in south Korea, who united to oppose the establishment of U.S. military bases, to oppose the war plots of the U.S. imperialists in collusion with Syngman Rhee; it depicts the heinous

rule of the reactionaries and their oppression and persecution of the south Korean people, who finally succeeded in overthrowing Syngman Rhee. Again *Advance, Brave People of Japan!* produced by the Children's Theatre, deals with the determined mass struggle of the Japanese people led by the Japanese Communist Party and other anti-imperialist, patriotic, democratic forces to oppose the signing of the aggressive new Japan-U.S. "Security Treaty" and to overthrow the traitorous Kishi government. Both these plays depict the leading role of the working class in this struggle, and the strong resolution with which the working people and youth are opposing U.S. imperialism and its lackeys. Even when the latter have been overthrown or announced their resignation, the people will not slacken their vigilance or give up the struggle. They resolutely oppose the formation of another government like that of Kishi; they refuse to be deceived by another traitor like Huh Chung. The people of Japan and south Korea announce to the whole world: The struggle will not stop till U.S. imperialism is driven out of Japan, driven out of south Korea, till the traitorous governments are overthrown, till the people have gained a complete victory.

In addition to these plays, there were modern operas like *Smash the Invaders!* song and dance shows like *Song of the Volunteers* and *The Chinese and Korean Peoples Fight Shoulder to Shoulder*, traditional operas like *Eisenhower's Sorrow* and *Storm in the Pacific*, as well as topical dramatic sketches, choruses, solo-singing, dances, ballads, acrobatics and puppet-plays. From different angles all these lively performances paid tribute to the anti-U.S. struggle of the peoples of the world, the friendship of the Korean and Chinese peoples and that among peoples of different lands in a common fight; they dealt blows to the aggressive war policy of U.S. imperialism, exposing its plots, its faking peace while actually preparing for war, talk of easing tension while actually intensifying aggression; they once more laid bare the true nature of the paper tiger and the despicable character of its lackeys Kishi and Syngman Rhee and others; they also proved that U.S. imperialism has been, still is and will continue to be the deadly enemy of the people of China, the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America, and all the people of the world, thus forcefully

refuting the fallacies of the modern revisionists in Yugoslavia who argue that the aggressive nature of imperialism has changed.

Chinese actors and artistes are playing their part in the struggle against U.S. imperialism. Let us, together with all the peoples of the world, carry to a new, victorious stage the struggle to oppose the aggressive U.S. war policy and to defend world peace. May the storm of revolution rise in every corner of the globe and go from strength to strength, until the aggressive war policy of U.S. imperialism is completely smashed, until the heinous colonialist rule of the U.S. imperialists is completely overthrown, until the peoples' world-wide struggle against U.S. imperialism has gained a total victory and true, lasting peace in the world has been realized!



Peking actors and artistes give a performance at Tien An Men Square
Sketch by Shao Yu

YUAN WEN-SHU

The Storm of Opposition to U.S. Imperialism

“A hurricane is lashing the shores of the West Pacific. But fiercer than the raging forces of nature is the rising storm of the Asian peoples' struggle against U.S. imperialism.” These are the opening words of the documentary film *Storm in Asia* shown in June during the large-scale film exhibition of the “Propaganda Week to Oppose U.S. Imperialist Aggression, for Resolute Liberation of Taiwan and Safeguarding of World Peace,” held in various cities in China. The screen showed angry waves pounding the coast with such violence that the hardest rocks must be ground into sand in the end. And this has a profound symbolic significance. For in the mounting tide of opposition to U.S. imperialist aggression and for the defence of world peace by the peoples of the world, U.S. imperialism and its lackeys in various lands face certain destruction at the hands of the people.

More than twenty documentary and feature films were shown, all truthfully and forcefully exposing the vicious nature of the U.S. aggressors. *Storm in Asia* is a fine documentary which gives a general view of the indomitable struggle of the Asian peoples against U.S. imperialism and its lackeys. Using actual shots of the most recent events it re-enacts the mounting wrath of the Asian peoples against the American imperialists, exposing their

Yuan Wen-shu, film critic, is director of the China Institute of Film Art.



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talk of peace while preparing for war, their claim to be easing tension when in fact they are intensifying their aggression. The documentary evidence in this film is used concisely and forcefully to present scene after scene of the patriotic and just struggles of the people against U.S. imperialism in Japan, south Korea and Turkey, bringing home the anger of the peoples of Asia and their determination to resist U.S. imperialism and its lackeys. This film shows the U.S. imperialist army trampling over Japanese land while its owners, homeless, are forced to wander from place to place;

1. In Japan, the wrathful crowds surge like angry billows — A scene from *Storm in Asia*
2. To force through the Japan-U.S. treaty of military alliance, Kishi's gendarmes drag out members of the opposition parties from the Japanese Lower House — A scene from *Storm in Asia*
3. In Japan, so many people are becoming homeless — A scene from *Storm in Asia*
4. A scene from *The Battle of Sangkumryung*
5. A scene from *Eagles of the Sea*

it shows American guided missiles fired over Japan, the aggressors' flag flying arrogantly over Japanese soil, the aggressors' troops molesting women, looting and killing. . . . It shows the lackeys of U.S. imperialism, Kishi and Syngman Rhee, using tanks, armoured cars, bayonets, clubs and water hoses to attack unarmed patriots. Though Eisenhower, the "god of plague," is working hand in glove with his henchmen, the foundations of U.S. imperialism are crumbling. Before the gate of the Diet building in Tokyo, outside the president's residence in Seoul, on the streets of Istanbul, the wrathful crowds surge like angry billows, like a hurricane or an erupting volcano rushing at and destroying U.S. imperialism and its agents. The film also presents unforgettable, historic shots of the defeat of U.S. imperialism by the Chinese and Korean peoples on the battlefields of Korea, disclosing the real face of the American paper tiger and strengthening the people's confidence in the victory of their struggle.

Another documentary, *Exposure of the "God of Plague,"* marshals many convincing facts to lay bare the aggressive designs of U.S. imperialism under its peaceful guise. The chief representative of U.S. imperialism, the "god of plague" Eisenhower, with sinister intent assumes a smiling face, disguising himself as a "peace envoy," and tries to deceive the world. But fire cannot be contained in a paper wrapper. This film goes on to show how the world's people recognize the true nature of the "god of plague" through their own historical experience and through actual struggles. When this "god of plague" goes on his wretched gangster tour to the Western Pacific, the people "welcome" him not with cheers or flowers but with angry fists opposing U.S. imperialist aggression. Wherever the "god of plague" goes, he is like "a rat running across the street with everyone saying: Hit him." In Japan, in south Korea, in the Philippines, throughout the whole of Asia, the seeds of hatred sown by U.S. imperialists have grown and ripened, and the "god of plague" deserves to enjoy his own fruit. In a brief space of time, the reactionary lackeys fostered by U.S. imperialism are overthrown one by one — Syngman Rhee, Menderes, Kishi. This further proves that the people's strength is invincible. As Chairman Mao has said: The days of imperialism are numbered. The imperialists have done every kind of evil and all the oppressed peoples of the whole world will never

forgive them. There are also shots in this film of the tremendous barrage of shells fired from the Fukien front to "greet" and "farewell" the "god of plague" when he came to China's territory Taiwan, now occupied by U.S. imperialism, telling him of the inevitable failure of his plot to carry out aggression against China.

The U.S. imperialists constantly boast about their science and their "civilization." All seeing the documentaries *News from the Korean Front* and *Oppose U.S. Germ Warfare* must realize what fearful crimes are perpetrated when modern science is controlled by the imperialists. The "science" of U.S. imperialism has produced weapons of mass destruction; it has razed innumerable cities and villages in Korea to the ground, and murdered hundreds of thousands of innocent people. U.S. "science" equipped rats and insects with germs to spread fatal diseases to men and even to the cattle and crops in the fields. It is obvious that to achieve their aim of aggression and plunder, the U.S. imperialists will resort to any crime. These two documentaries make it clear that U.S. imperialism is the most vicious force for evil in the world, and that all the peoples of the world are wrathfully condemning the U.S. imperialist aggressors.

The crime of the U.S. imperialists who sent U-2 planes to invade the Soviet Union and thus sabotaging the Four-power Conference of Government Heads has appeared on the screen. Of course the gangsterism of U.S. imperialism in carrying out espionage is nothing new. The documentaries *The Criminal U.S. Military Reconnaissance Balloons* and *Exhibition of the Criminal Evidence of U.S. Air-dropped Agents* testify to a long record of such criminal acts. Eisenhower himself sometimes discloses the "truth." Just as a thief caught red-handed claims that he was earning an "honest living," Eisenhower has openly admitted: "Since the beginning of my administration I have issued directives to gather, in every feasible way," what the U.S. deemed to be "information required. . . ." These two documentaries, the criminal act of the U-2 plane and Eisenhower's shameless confession point to one conclusion: the aggressive nature of imperialism has not changed. In China we have a proverb: "It is easier to change rivers and mountains than it is to change a man's nature." This applies perfectly to U.S. imperialism today.

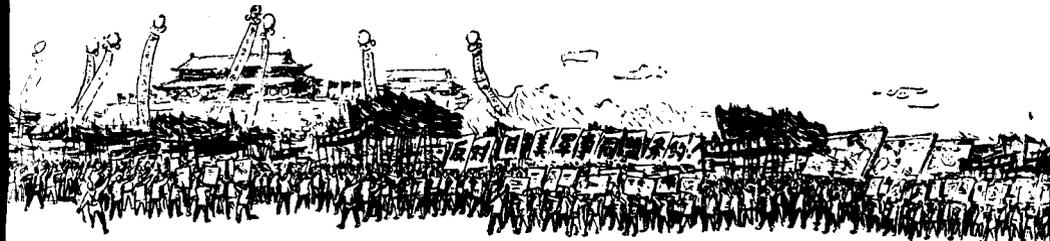
The Battle of Sangkumryung and the new productions *Heroic Island* and *Eagles of the Sea* were among the good feature films shown during this film exhibition. *The Battle of Sangkumryung* deals with the fiercest, and most difficult battle of the Korean war, the world-famed battle which struck terror into the U.S. aggressors. *Eagles of the Sea* and *Heroic Island* present the Chinese People's Liberation Army's fight against U.S. imperialism along the southeast coast of China. These films introducing fights at different times and in different localities have one feature in common — they thoroughly expose the aggressive nature of U.S. imperialism and glorify the heroes fighting it, affirming our people's confidence in the ultimate victory against the enemy and recording the great successes already won.

U.S. imperialism is utterly vicious. Sangkumryung is a hill less than four square kilometres in area, yet the U.S. aggressors pounded it with a daily average of more than three hundred thousand shells. The film shows not only the braggadocio of the enemy, but the true nature of this seemingly powerful paper tiger. Strategically we should despise this enemy but tactically take him seriously. It reveals vividly that weapons are not the decisive factor in determining victory or defeat in war; the decisive factor is the man holding the gun and the nature of the war he is engaged in. Although the aggressors were equipped with modern weapons, could wipe out whole sectors of the hillside and sometimes cut our tunnel fighters off from supplies and all other contact, our heroic troops held out for twenty-four days with scarcely any food or water till they won the final victory. Their tremendous strength stemmed from the consciousness that they were fighting for a just cause. The bombardment of the U.S. imperialists could not shake the resolve of these men armed with patriotism and internationalism. This is why, after the aggressors suffered one heavy blow after another at Sangkumryung, they were forced to sit down to negotiate and sign a cease-fire. And this points out another important lesson: the best way to treat an aggressor is to strike back fiercely. Our films graphically illustrate this truth pointed out by Chairman Mao: "Imperialism and all reactionaries are paper tigers."

The heroic feats done in this just war were too many to count, and countless heroes appeared. In *The Battle of Sangkumryung*, Company Commander Chang Chung-fa, Political Instructor Meng Teh-kuei and the scout Yang Teh-tsai display boundless loyalty to their country, the people and the peace cause, and the indomitable heroism of proletarian, internationalist fighters. Meng Teh-kuei is blinded in the battle, yet he leads the few men left to defend the position, repelling many frenzied enemy attacks. The last thing he considers is his own safety or comfort; his one thought is how best to defend the position. Similarly, at the crucial moment when we are launching a big counter-attack, the young scout Yang Teh-tsai sees that enemy fire is holding up his comrades' advance. Without hesitation he rushes up and with his own body block the enemy machine-gun to silence its fire, giving his young life for victory in the battle. The noble qualities of men like these illustrate the just nature of the war fought by the Chinese People's Volunteers to resist U.S. aggression and aid Korea. Only proletarian fighters guided by Marxism-Leninism and Mao Tse-tung's thought, inspired by the great spirit of patriotism and internationalism, and dedicated heart and soul to the cause of justice, can develop such heroism and fine moral qualities.

In accordance with a good tradition in Chinese literature and art, our films do not portray the cruelty of war in a naturalistic manner, neither do they show the sufferings of individuals in a sentimental way, nor use tear-provoking, pessimistic, gloomy scenes. Of course, the basic question is the nature of the war. A just war against aggression helps to safeguard world peace. If some men die or are wounded in the war it is for the happiness of millions. *The Battle of Sangkumryung* makes use of the heroism of the Volunteers to inspire others and strengthen their will to fight. In the cruel battle of Sangkumryung, though there was no food or water in the tunnels, the men sang of their homeland, of peace and the justice of their cause. Surrounded by the enemy, they could still cheerfully catch squirrels and crack jokes. In the same way in *Heroic Island*, however fierce the enemy bombardment, the men and women in the underground city on Lotus Island lived and worked as usual, discussing the people's commune and young people's marriages. In *Eagles of the Sea*, though the gunboat sank and the men were floating beyond sight of land,

they were not easily dismayed by difficulties and felt no despair. In fact they spoke confidently of finding a new ship and going out to fresh battles. This revolutionary optimism is common in China today; and to express this noble spirit through the medium of films is the great and glorious task of those of us in the film industry.



A million Peking citizens gather in a demonstration in support of the Japanese people's just struggle
Sketch by Fei Sheng-fu

HUA CHUN-WU

A Powerful Blow

— A review of the art exhibition in the
“Propaganda Week to Oppose U.S. Imperialist Aggression,
for Resolute Liberation of Taiwan and
Safeguarding of World Peace”

On June 17 and June 19, while the Chinese People's Liberation Army at the Fukien front was using thousands of guns to bombard Quemoy, still occupied by Chiang Kai-shek and the U.S. imperialists, to “greet” and “farewell” the “god of plague” Eisenhower who came to our territory Taiwan to spread disaster and trouble, Chinese artists were busy using thousands of brushes to support the struggle of the peoples of the world against U.S. imperialism. Many cities in China held exhibitions, and the Chinese Artists' Union in Peking also held an art exhibition of the “Propaganda Week to Oppose U.S. Imperialist Aggression, for Resolute Liberation of Taiwan and Safeguarding of World Peace.” This exhibition displayed political cartoons, posters, oil paintings and traditional paintings, done recently.

The exhibition received keen support from Chinese cartoonists, poster artists, painters in ink and water-colours and in oils, woodcut artists and the staff and students of art schools in the capital.

Hua Chun-wu, well-known cartoonist, is the secretary-general of the Chinese Artists' Union. His article, *The New Cartoon Films*, was published in *Chinese Literature* No. 6, 1960.

Noted cartoonists like Mi Ku and Fang Cheng, the popular woodcut artists Ku Yuan, Li Hua and Wu Pi-tuan, and Wang Shu-hui a painter in the traditional style, were among those who contributed exhibits. Many of them worked day and night to produce good works extolling the people's victories and dealing blows at the warmongers' plots.

The gouache *Chairman Mao Tse-tung with the Peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America* by the woodcut artists Wu Pi-tuan and Chin Shang-yi has marked clarity and strength, and conveys comprehensively and profoundly the Chinese people's sympathy and support for all oppressed peoples. The same theme was the subject of the large traditional-style painting *The Just Voice of the Chinese People*, a collective work by the second-year students of the Department of Traditional Painting of the Central Institute of Fine Arts. This presents a great ocean of men at the big demonstration held in Tien An Men Square in support of the Japanese people's struggle. Though the artists have made use of the symmetry and balance of traditional Chinese art this painting suggests great forces mobilized and unleashed. The use of red as the main colour further strengthens the militant atmosphere. Several artists chose as their theme our bombardment of Quemoy to “greet” the “god of plague” Eisenhower. Some used oils to

Get Out Eisenhower, Fire!

A collective work of the Central Institute of Fine Arts





A Most Profitable Trip
by Tsao Chen-feng

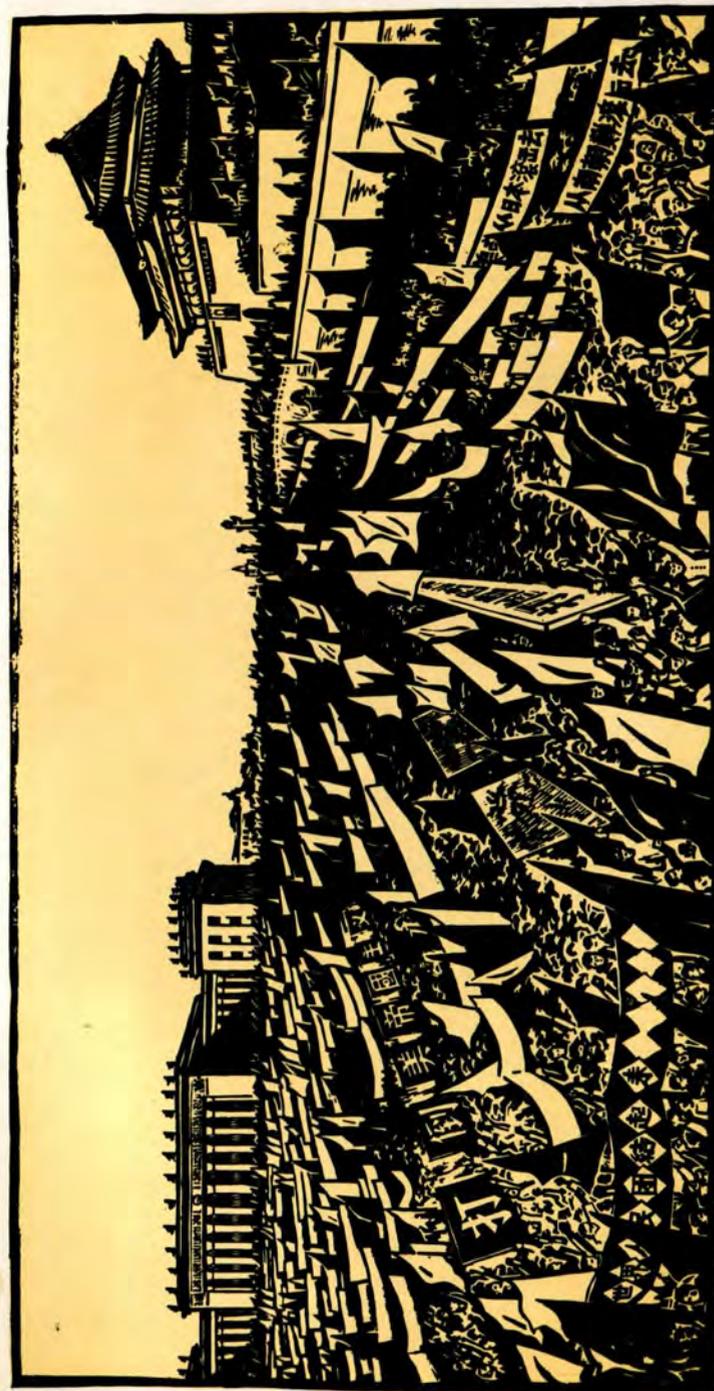
depict the heroic People's Liberation Army, some used cartoons and posters to portray the panicky plight of Eisenhower. All expressed the Chinese people's determination to liberate Taiwan.

The ludicrous and pitiful position of the U.S. imperialists in this anti-imperialist storm of the Asian peoples was another theme chosen by many artists. Many cartoons evoked laughter by stripping the masks from the ugly faces of Eisenhower, his press secretary Hagerty and Kishi confronted with the aroused Japanese people. Tsao Chen-feng's *A Most Profitable Trip*, which shows Eisenhower with both cheeks slapped by the Asian people, is a fine cartoon, sharply sarcastic and humorous. Chiang Fan's cartoon *Chain Reaction*

portrays the broken bits from the statue of Syngman Rhee, pulled down by the people of south Korea, flying out and hitting the U.S. imperialists.

The Chinese artists did not confine themselves only to the struggles of the peoples in Asia; many paid equal attention to the struggles of the African and Latin American peoples. The third-year students of the Department of Graphic Art of the Central Institute of Fine Arts produced a woodcut series entitled: *Peoples of the World Unite! Down with U.S. Imperialism!* This forcefully presents the awakened people of

650 Million Chinese Resolutely Support the Just Struggle of the Peoples of the World →
One of the woodcuts done collectively by third-year students of the Department of Graphic Art of the Central Institute of Fine Arts



Africa, the armed struggle of the Algerians, the wrath with which the people of Latin America drove out the U.S. invaders, and China's six hundred and fifty million resolutely supporting the just struggle of the people of other lands.

Considerable interest was aroused by posters in this exhibition showing how heroically Chinese and Koreans fought side by side against U.S. imperialism and expressing support for the Vietnamese people's struggle. A number of these posters, produced during the War to Resist U.S. Aggression and Aid Korea, recalled those days and strengthened our people's determination in the struggle against U.S. imperialism.

The cartoonists, with pens trenchant as scalpels, did not spare the modern revisionists who try to whitewash U.S. imperialism. Mi Ku's cartoon *Gilding the Exterior* and Fang Cheng's *Good Service* are scathing exposures of modern revisionism and won high praise. The fawning, sycophantic subservience of modern revisionism to its imperialist masters was clearly depicted here by these cartoonists.

Once again the fighting tradition of Chinese artists and their determination to safeguard world peace have been strongly demonstrated by this exhibition. Chinese artists made their contribution in the long period of anti-imperialist struggles in the past, and now that a broad united front on a world scale has been formed against imperialism, Chinese artists are throwing themselves with even greater enthusiasm into this struggle. As Chairman Mao has said, the days of imperialism are numbered. Before the coffin of U.S. imperialists is finally nailed down, when the noose is tightening around their necks we shall continue ceaselessly to deal blows at them, and this exhibition is one of these powerful blows.

YEH CHIEN-YU

Exhibition of Modern Japanese Painting in Peking

In recent months the Japanese people have risen heroically to oppose the new Japan-U.S. "security treaty," to oppose Kishi, to oppose Eisenhower's visit to Japan, so that this warmongering U.S. "god of plague" dared not set foot on Japanese soil. It was during the course of this struggle that the exhibition of modern Japanese painting was held in Peking. The delegation of Japanese artists then visiting China attended the opening ceremony on June 18, and the general joy at the victory gained added significance to the rich and varied collection of paintings. Though the content of these works did not directly reflect the current struggle in Japan, their striking and vivid national characteristics testify to the Japanese artists' determination to defend and carry forward their fine tradition of national painting. In this way they were linked with the struggle of the Japanese people today.

We know that, in addition to political and economic oppression and exploitation, one of the most vicious tricks of the imperialists is to destroy a people's national culture, so that the oppressed nation is enslaved by the imperialist culture. After the end of the Second World War, in the wake of American bayonets and capital,

Yeh Chien-yu, well-known painter, is vice-chairman of the Chinese Artists' Union and head of the Department of Traditional Painting in the Central Institute of Fine Arts.

the decadent American way of life was also imported into Japan with disastrous consequences. Since a degenerate culture is part of the American imperialist way of life, it is only natural that in the field of painting the corrupting influence of decadent and abstract art should make itself felt. We were very heartened, therefore, to see how successfully Japanese artists have striven to preserve and further develop their national art.

There are old, historical ties between Chinese and Japanese art. From the Tang dynasty to the end of the Ching dynasty, Chinese painting exercised a considerable influence on the development of Japanese painting. This was most strikingly so in the case of the Tang dynasty Buddhist paintings, the landscapes and "flowers and birds" of the Sung and Yuan dynasties, and the "scholars' paintings" of the Ming and Ching dynasties. Sesshu, commemorated as a world cultural figure in 1956, was an outstanding representative of the blending of Chinese and Japanese art; he adapted many features of the landscape school of Ma Yuan and Hsia Kuei in the Southern Sung dynasty to create a unique style of his own, and his influence continued till the time of the Nanga School. The advent of capitalism to Japan introduced Japanese artists to the art of Western Europe; thus new schools of Japanese painting came into being after the Meiji Period (1868-1912). During the period of the democratic revolution in China, there appeared the Lingnan School of Chinese painting represented by the Kao brothers, Kao Chi-feng and Kao Chien-fu, who found inspiration in Japanese art. Mutual influence of this sort has benefited the cultural development of both countries.

The tools and materials used by Japanese artists are basically the same as those of their Chinese confreres. The paper, silk, brushes and ink are virtually the same; so are the methods of mixing colours, the use of water and glue; and there are other similarities in themes and techniques. For example, Chinese artists in their passionate search for natural beauty developed landscape and "flower and bird" painting. The Japanese artists did the same. The main techniques of Chinese painting, such as outline drawing, the use of washes, or heavy opaque water colours, colours with dark ink outlines and pure washes without lines are also the basic methods of Japanese artists. The use of colophons and seals as an integral part of the composition in traditional Chinese

painting is common also to the traditional art of Japan. But these many similarities have not hampered the development of intrinsically Japanese national styles of painting with their own special attributes. The eighty-odd paintings in this exhibition afforded good proof of this.

Among the veteran artists represented in this exhibition were members of the Nihon Bijutsuin School like Taikan Yokoyama, Kokei Kobayashi, Yukihiko Yasuda and Seison Maeda; exponents of the Nihon Bijutsutenrankai School like Kiyokata Kaburagi and Keigetsu Matsubayashi; Ryushi Kawabata of the Seiryusha School; and such individual artists as Gyokudo Kawai and Hoan Kosugi. The work of these older men shows clear traditional features and traces of various earlier schools. Their pronounced romanticism is a valuable part of Japan's traditional painting. On the other hand, the new generation and many younger artists of the Shinseisaku Association reveal fewer traditional characteristics but show the influence of the modernist schools of Western Europe from the Post-Impressionists onward. This is most apparent in technique, but only in a few cases in content.

Despite the many similarities between Chinese and Japanese painting mentioned above, anyone looking at specific works in this exhibition must be struck by the distinctive qualities of the themes, techniques, style and mood of modern Japanese painting. Taikan Yokoyama's *Wandering Clouds* with its use of bold yet delicate brush-work is reminiscent of the landscapes of our Sung master Mi Fei and his son; but the composition and vision evoked are essentially Japanese. Taikan Yokoyama is undoubtedly a master artist, whose paintings have great vigour and breadth. Kyujin Yamamoto and Hideo Nishiyama of the new school love to paint mountains — another traditional feature of Eastern art — but their composition and arrangement is based mainly on the laws of Western painting. In Chinese art we often find subjects like withered trees, bamboos and rocks; but while the Japanese also appreciate compositions of "one grass, one flower, one tree, one rock," their special delight in the poetry of apparently commonplace objects, as in *Rain Wets Green Tiles* or *Snow on the Cobblestones* shows a delicacy of feeling characteristic of Japanese artists. Heihachiro Fukuda has worked meticulously and with exquisite lightness of touch to reveal this poetry in *Rain* and *Early Snow*.



Bulls

by Iri Maruki

Whereas Japanese "flower and bird" paintings have adopted such Chinese techniques as "the pure wash-drawing" (*mo-ku*), "the detailed drawing" (*kung-pi*) and "the quick sketch" (*hsieb-yi*) but they have their own angle of approach and modes of expression. Thus Yukihiko Yasuda's *Poppy*, Kokei Kobayashi's *Peacock*, Seison Maeda's *Red and White Plum* and Kenji Yoshioka's *Young Pheasant* are unmistakably Japanese in conception and execution.

An outstanding figure painting in this exhibition is Seison Maeda's *Before the Performance*. This presents an actor in the Noh Theatre who has put on his costume and is ready to go on the stage. Since he is wearing a mask, his face is hidden; but the artist graphically conveys the veteran actor's personality and mood through his hands. The actor is in the right corner of the picture with a good deal of empty space behind him and very little in front — which runs counter to the general rules of composition. But this original treatment well illustrates the principle that the form must be subservient to the content; for the specific situation the artist had in mind demanded such an arrangement. This painting not only fulfills the demands of realism, but achieves a most decorative effect, another important aspect of Japanese painting. Seison Maeda, one of the senior members of the Nihon Bijutsuin School, is seventy-five this year. It was he who headed the Japanese Artists' Delegation to China. We not only admire his distinguished attainments as an artist but also have a profound respect for his contribution towards cultural interchange between China and Japan.

Nampu Katayama's *Portrait of O* is a highly successful sketch. With forceful, simple strokes the artist has conveyed the essential character of the subject, deep in thought. The repose, the dis-

tion and the depth of this portrait bear witness to the vitality of line-drawing in Eastern art. Paintings of women form another important category in traditional Japanese painting, and considerable space was devoted to these in this exhibition. Kiyokata Kaburagi's *Summer in the Parlour* and Shimei Terajima's *Twilight* present Japanese women of totally different types and ages.

The exhibition had two paintings depicting the labouring folk of Japan: Setsu Asakura's *The Carrier* and Manabu Watanabe's *Fish and Men*. In style both are close to modern Western painting; and to my mind undue attention was paid to the formal composition at the expense of conveying the spirit of the people. Even so, the artists' sympathy for the working people is so manifest that Chinese visitors took a considerable interest in both these paintings.

One of the painters of the *Hiroshima Panels* well-known and admired in China, is Iri Maruki. This time his large ink painting *Bull* was exhibited. This was the most outstanding work in the whole exhibition. Its militant spirit emerged with extraordinary power appearing as it did in the midst of paintings of birds and flowers and other poetic themes. Iri Maruki has filled his painting with a herd of angry bulls vigorously and powerfully depicted in rough strokes. Obviously the artist's aim was not simply to paint bulls, but through them to express his own militant spirit. To us, this is a strongly evocative work.

This exhibition has left us with a great respect for the outstanding achievements of Japanese artists in defending and developing their national traditions. We firmly believe that in their struggle against U.S. imperialism and in their defence of the national culture Japan's artists will win even greater victories. We call upon the artists of Japan to advance with us, shoulder to shoulder! Let us direct our weapons against the reactionaries, against U.S. imperialism, and do our utmost to establish a state of peace and friendship in Asia, in order to create a yet greater and more beautiful culture and art of the East!

MA CHENG-YUNG

The Designs of Dress Decoration in Kweichow Folk Art

An exhibition of the folk art of Kweichow was held in Peking recently, bringing to us the handicrafts of our fraternal nationalities in this southwestern province. In Kweichow live Hans, Miaos, Puyis, Tungs, Shuis, Yaos and Yis, and these different nationalities have through the ages created many beautiful works of art which testify to their superb craftsmanship. Each nationality's folk art has a distinctive style, all its own.

The six hundred and more exhibits included embroidery, wax prints, cross-stitch, hand-woven fabrics, pottery, lacquerware, bambooware, silver ornaments and scissor-cuts. The designs were quite outstanding, and the women of the minority nationalities in Kweichow have their traditional costumes decorated with a variety of patterns and designs. The most popular handicrafts are embroidery, cross-stitch, weaving and wax prints. The four types of embroidery most common are embossed work, laid work, the flat stitch and the knotted stitch. In the laid work or couching, coloured silk is looped into braids and stitched on to sashes or sleeves in pretty patterns. The embossed stitches stand out in relief. Both these types of embroidery are durable, able to stand wear and tear, and this makes them popular with the Miao girls. The cross-stitching and tent stitch (*petit-point*) done on bodices, handkerchiefs or pillow-cases may be in black cotton on white cloth or in coloured cotton on black cloth. Both are most effective. The women of Kweichow weave silk, wools and cotton. The silk

weaving is fine and elaborate, the cotton much simpler, while the wool weaving is usually made into capes and rugs.

Wax prints are perhaps Kweichow's most characteristic folk art. Beeswax is melted, and with a specially made knife dipped in the liquid wax different patterns are made on the cloth, which is then dyed several times in indigo. When the wax is removed by boiling, a beautiful blue and white design appears. For coloured prints, the white part is dyed red or yellow.

The themes of these decorative patterns vary enormously, ranging from human beings to dragons and phoenixes, birds and flowers, fish, insects and animals, as well as local customs. Each is closely linked with daily life. The Miao people who live near the Ching-shui River in southeast Kweichow often use fish, shrimps, crabs and dragons as motifs, while those in the hills prefer flowers,

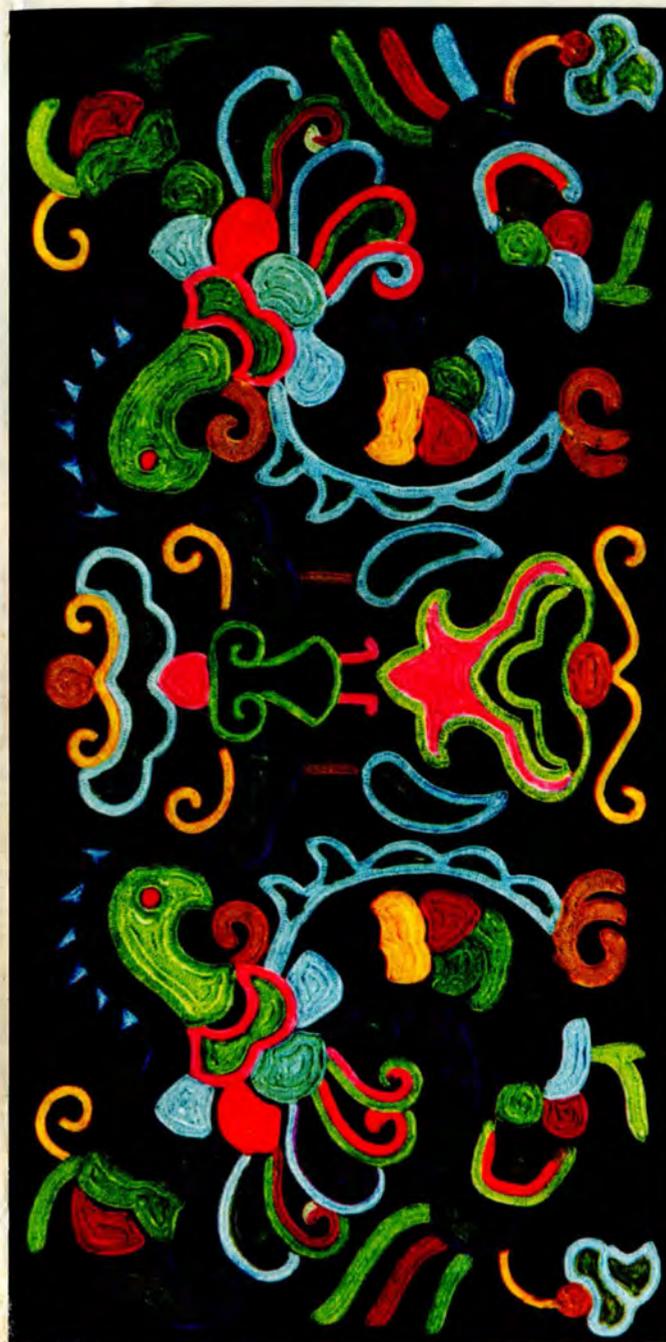
Girl's Shirt (wax print)

Design by Lo Mei-yung (Miao)

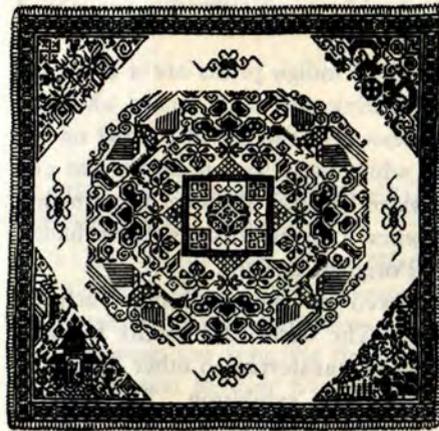


butterflies, chickens, buffaloes, horses and people. Scenes from daily life like a buffalo boy out with his buffalo or horse-riding are also popular themes. Local customs like the Dragon-boat Festival are favourites too. For the Miao people, the Dragon-boat Festival held during the fifth lunar month is one of the major occasions of the year. Hence the girls often embroider a dragon-boat packed with people to show the fun they had during this festival.

The Miaos of Kaili and Chienho in



Embroidery for a Sleeve Ku Shu-ying (Miao)



Handkerchief

Cross-stitch by Yang Kuang-chih (Tung)

southeast Kweichow are also fond of the dragon motif. The reason is that they live on a high plateau and cultivate terraced fields with a poor water supply. Their harvest used to depend solely on the rainfall. Before the liberation, they used to call these fields "Heaven-watered land," and this is why the girls have always liked to decorate their sleeves or sashes with a dragon, symbol

of rainfall and good harvests. This is just one example of the close relation between the designs of folk art and the people's daily life.

The use of colour is also highly distinctive. The girls of our minority nationalities love strong contrasting colours. Embroidering pink patterns on a crimson fabric or rose, purple, bright green, red and gold on black, they produce vivid, exuberant designs that are a joy to behold. Costume decorations also show a distinctive style. Flowers and birds are conveyed in bold outline, with considerable exaggeration of their salient features. The tail of a bird may resemble a bouquet of flowers, while its wings are unlike any living model. Yet by giving free rein to their imagination, the folk artists invariably produce dynamic images which are vivid and charming. For instance, a golden carp embroidered on a sleeve may consist of a few simple lines with an artistic exaggeration of head, tail and fins. This frisking fish has glittering coloured scales and three subtle arcs embroidered under it convey an effect of rippling water, while bright sequins scattered round the carp seem like bubbles coming out of its mouth.

The creators of these magnificent designs are the ordinary hard-working women of our minority nationalities. Miao girls generally learn to embroider at seven or eight and become proficient needlewomen by the age of seventeen. Thereafter, in their spare time

after work in the fields, they embroider most attractive tunics and skirts for holiday wear or weddings.

The girls making patterns for their indigo prints are a charming sight. They gather at dusk or during the slack season and sing as they go about their task. Beeswax is melted in a bowl on the brazier. The girls spread their white hand-woven cotton flat and with a knife apply the liquid wax to execute whatever pattern they have in mind. The knife becomes a paint-brush in their hands, for with it they create fresh and original designs.

Other new handicrafts displayed at the exhibition included carpets, screens and table-cloths. The decorative motifs formerly used on clothing only are now being transferred to other articles of daily use. This was a most significant exhibition. The folk art created by China's different nationalities throughout the centuries used to be little known outside its immediate locality, but exhibitions like this are bringing it to the attention of people throughout the country.

Chronicle

The Hall of the War to Resist U.S. Aggression and Aid Korea Opened

On June 21 the Hall of the War to Resist U.S. Aggression and Aid Korea of the Military Museum of the Chinese People's Revolution opened. On view here were historical relics of the whole period of the Korean war from the time when the U.S. imperialists planned their aggression to their final defeat by the Korean People's Army and Chinese People's Volunteers which forced them to agree to a cease-fire, and the triumphant return of the Chinese People's Volunteers. More than two thousand exhibits are on display, providing ample evidence of the crimes of U.S. imperialism ten years ago when it launched its dastardly attack on the Korean Democratic People's Republic, occupied China's territory Taiwan by force, and, ignoring the Chinese people's repeated warnings, crossed the 38th Parallel to carry the war to the bank of the Yalu River, bombing Chinese territory and murdering our people. The exhibition shows the stirring moment in the Korean war when the Chinese people started the heroic movement to resist U.S. aggression and aid Korea, sending their finest sons, the Chinese People's Volunteers, across the Yalu River to fight shoulder to shoulder with the Korean people. In more than three years of hard fighting large numbers of enemy troops were wiped out, till the Korean and Chinese people won a great victory and the U.S. imperialists suffered an ignominious defeat. Here are the wise instructions on the war of our great leader Chairman Mao Tse-tung; exhibits showing the hard conditions under which the Volunteers fought at the start. Here, in addition to news clippings, photographs and models are the chief trophies captured in the five campaigns and the famous battles of Sangkumryung and Kumsung, with relics and records of such heroes as Yang Ken-ssu, Huang Chikuang and Chiu Shao-yun. Here too are evidence of the crime of germ warfare perpetrated by U.S. imperialism, exhibits and photographs of the armistice talks, exposing the double-faced tactics of the vicious U.S. imperialists. Here are various mementos of the noble friendship between the Chinese and the Korean peoples and their

forces, who together won the great victory. This exhibition demonstrates convincingly that seemingly powerful U.S. imperialism is nothing but a paper tiger, apparently strong but actually weak.

A Poetry Recital to Oppose U.S. Imperialism

On June 18, more than three thousand people, including many poets and musicians, gathered in the Music Hall of Chungshan Park in Peking to hear poems and songs against U.S. imperialism and in support of the struggle of the Asian, African and Latin American peoples for national independence and democracy.

Emi Siao began with his poem *Breaking Through the Waves, Riding on the East Wind*. This was followed by other recitations and songs. Spirited renderings were given of the well-known poet Kuo Mo-jo's *Eisenhower's Confession* and *Welcome the Dawn of Victory* by the poetess Ping-hsin. There was a stage performance of Yuan Shui-po's dramatic poem *The Ugly Faces*, which exposes the brigandage of Eisenhower and his lackeys and the true nature of the "envoy of peace." All these poems met with an enthusiastic welcome.

At this recital, feelings ran high and angry voices were raised to denounce U.S. imperialism. It was with strong emotion that the poets mounted the stage. Yuan Chang-chin recited his new poem *Fire Guns at the "God of Plague"*. Ku Kung recited his *Carry the Struggle to New Heights*. Hanan-Chou, the Tai singer of Hsishuangpanna in Yunnan, gave a fervent rendering of his poem *The Giant Hands of Hundreds of Millions Will Smash the Blood-sucking Leech — U.S. Imperialism*. Other poets also recited their new poems against U.S. imperialism and there were also solo singing, duets and choral singing. Impassioned performers sang *Yanks, Get Out! Let Me Ask You, Eisenhower! Down with the American Bandits* and the grand chorus *The Storm of Opposition to U.S. Imperialism*.

Joint Performance by Chinese and Peruvian Musicians

The Peruvian composer and violinist Armando Guevara Ochoa came to China on the invitation of the China-Latin America Friendship Association. On May 30, at the request of this association, he gave a

concert with the orchestra of the Central Experimental Opera Theatre. This recital, symbolizing the friendship between China and Latin America, was most successful.

Some Chinese works were performed at this recital, including the violin concerto *Liang Shan-po and Chu Ying-tai* based on a Chinese folk story, as well as symphonic music composed or adopted from Peruvian folk music by Mr. Ochoa.

Mr. Ochoa not only conducted the orchestra but played his violin songs *Lamento Andino* and *Acomayo*, which through his masterly technique and the fine tonal quality of his performance fully expressed the spirit of the Peruvian people's love for their motherland. His playing and his compositions were warmly welcomed by the Peking audience.

The performance was attended by Chu Tu-nan, president of the China-Latin America Friendship Association, who during the interval received the Peruvian musician.

Peruvian Cultural and Art Exhibition in Peking

The Peruvian Cultural Delegation came to China in May. An exhibition of Peruvian culture and art marking the friendship between the Chinese and Peruvian peoples opened in June in Peking. The display of books, handicrafts, pictures, lantern slides, gramophone records, maps and other objects of art introduced the general culture of Peru. After the exhibition these exhibits were presented to the Chinese people.

At the opening ceremony Chu Tu-nan, president of the China-Latin America Friendship Association, pointed out that this, the first Peruvian exhibition to be held in China, marked a new development in the friendship between our two countries and would further the Chinese people's understanding of Peruvian culture. Dr. Manuel Beltroy Vera, head of the Peruvian Cultural Delegation, also spoke at the meeting. He said that the gift of this small exhibition to the Chinese people was a mark of the Peruvian people's deep friendship, a sign of their respect for China's great achievements in socialist construction and in defence of world peace. He further emphasized that the exhibition symbolized the fraternal ties between China and Peru in the common struggle to support the oppressed nations

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struggling for liberation and to defeat and eliminate the oppressors.

This exhibition was jointly organized by the University of San Marcos in Lima, Peru and the Peru-China Friendship Association.

A

Schumann Commemoration

On June 8, more than one thousand members of cultural and art circles in Peking met to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the birth of the German musician and great world cultural figure Robert Schumann.

The meeting was addressed by Mao Tun, member of the standing committee of the World Peace Council, member of the standing committee of the Chinese People's Committee for World Peace, and vice-chairman of the All-China Federation of Literary and Art Circles. He said that the works of Robert Schumann, great romantic composer, outstanding musicologist and social activist of Germany, embodied the German people's longing for a happy life, extolled democracy and liberty, and protected and carried forward the progressive musical tradition of Beethoven, thereby contributing greatly to the development of Germany's national music and the music of the world. Mao Tun recalled that Schumann once wrote: "The critic who dares not attack what is bad, is but a half-hearted supporter of what is good." Today, with the support of U.S. imperialism, Adenauer is turning the western part of Schumann's fatherland into a hot-bed for the revival of militarism. In commemorating Schumann, fine son of the German people, we should strike forceful blows at the worst evil in the world, the aggressive plots of the U.S. imperialists and their accomplices, in order to protect the best of all good things — the cause of socialism. Paul Wandel, ambassador of the German Democratic Republic to China and Werner Wenning, counsellor of the German Embassy, attended the commemoration. Werner Wenning also spoke at the meeting.

The meeting was followed by a concert of Schumann's works. *The Piano Concerto in A Minor (Opus 54)* and the piano solo *Carnival* and other compositions were played by Chou Kuang-jen, prize winner of the Schumann international piano contest, the outstanding young pianist, Liu Shih-kun, and others.

PEOPLE'S CHINA

A Monthly Magazine

Japanese, French and Indonesian speaking readers who are interested in China will find PEOPLE'S CHINA, a monthly now published in these three languages, just the magazine they have been looking for. Each issue contains more than 70 pages with articles on political, economic and cultural development in New China and China's views on international events; features describing the Chinese people's life and work in building socialism and popularly presented background material on China's history, geography, cultural heritage and traditions. Its regular columns include "Cultural Life," "Sports," "General News" and a "Miscellany" of Chinese fables, curios, popular art, etc. There is always a 4-page pictorial, and a full-page reproduction of a Chinese painting. Stamp-collectors will appreciate its regular colour illustrated page on postage stamps. Readers interested in literature will find a short story in every issue. Documents relating to major international and domestic events are published as supplements, provide readers with valuable source material for research and a deepened understanding of China.

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A THOUSAND MILES OF LOVELY LAND

BY YANG SHUO

Based on the personal experience of the author in the Korean war, this novel describes how, in the early stage of the war, a detachment of Chinese railway workers who went to Korea as volunteers fight heroically under sub-zero weather together with the Korean people to defend an important communication line which is vital for defeating the enemy. The characters are ordinary men and women, but they show a spirit tougher than the steel poured down on them by the U.S. aggressors in their futile attempt to conquer the world.

19 cm. X 13.5 cm.

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