

# CHINESE LITERATURE



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**Battling with the Pen** (traditional Chinese painting)

**by Ou Yang and Yang Chih-kuang**

In 1925 Comrade Mao Tsetung edited the "Political Weekly" in Kwangchow to denounce the attacks of the Kuomintang rightists.

## QUOTATIONS FROM CHAIRMAN MAO

The army and the people are the foundation of victory.

In the course of this long and cruel war guerrilla warfare will demonstrate its immense power; it is indeed no ordinary undertaking.

## FIGHTING ON THE PLAIN

*(July 1973 script of the China Peking Opera Troupe)*

*Written by Chang Yung-mei and others*

### Characters

**Chao Yung-kang** *platoon leader in the Eighth Route Army*

**Li Hu** *Eighth Route Army soldier*

**Squad Leader**

**Battalion Commander**

**Other soldiers of the Eighth Route Army**

**Li Sheng** *Party secretary of Changchuang Village*

**Aunt Chang** *a poor peasant in her fifties*

**Hsiao-ying** *Aunt Chang's eighteen-year-old daughter*

**Uncle Kao** *a poor peasant in his fifties*

**Waiter** *a liaison man for the Eighth Route Army*

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For more material about this opera see the article on p. 102.

Old Man *a poor peasant*  
Sister Liu  
The masses and militia active in the Resistance  
Customers of the restaurant

Kameta *head of a Japanese army unit*  
Sun Shou-tsai *Chinese traitor, puppet officer of the Japanese secret police*  
Interpreter  
A Japanese Officer  
A Japanese sergeant  
Puppet Corporal  
Japanese soldiers, puppet troops and secret police

## SCENE ONE

### LEAVING THE MOUNTAINS BY STARLIGHT

An early autumn evening during the period of stalemate in the War of Resistance Against Japan. By the railway. The plain stretching into the distance is dotted with enemy blockhouses.

(As the curtain rises, two militiamen with rifles enter to scout round. Militiaman B strikes the back of his hand as a signal. Enter Party Secretary Li Sheng.)

**Li Sheng** (*sings*):

*In the mountains and on the plains loyal hearts are united;  
Day and night the villagers long for their soldiers to come.  
By the railway we wait eagerly for our comrades;  
A storm is brewing in the enemy rear.*

(*Offstage Uncle Kao calls "All clear!" and enters with a lantern bearing the characters "Railway Patrol".*)

**Li Sheng:** Uncle Kao!

**Uncle Kao:** Old Li! An enemy patrol has just marched off, but still no sign of our troops. Which unit is it passing this way today?

**Li Sheng:** The Eighth Route platoon led by Chao.

**Uncle Kao** (*excited*): Yung-kang and his men!

**Li Sheng:** Remember the Japs' "May Day Mopping-up Campaign"?  
The two of us guided them across the line here, then into the Taihang Mountains. . . .

**Uncle Kao:** More than a year ago that was, yet it seems like yesterday.

**Militiaman A** (*sights the enemy*): Old Li, another Jap patrol.

**Li Sheng:** You handle them, Uncle Kao. We'll take cover.

(*Li Sheng and the two militiamen go off.*)

**Uncle Kao:** All clear!

(*Enter Japanese sergeant with two Japanese soldiers.*)

**Sergeant:** Lineman!

**Uncle Kao:** Sir!

**Sergeant:** Anything to report?

**Uncle Kao:** No, sir, nothing wrong. The telegraph poles and the rails are all in place.

**Sergeant:** Good. Report at once if anything comes up. (*Exit with his men.*)

**Uncle Kao** (*with hatred*): Hmm. When it comes, you won't know what's hit you! (*Yells.*) All clear! All clear! . . . (*Goes off.*)

(*Three soldiers — a shock group — speed in with revolvers. After a swift reconnaissance they whirl round three times and strike a pose.*)

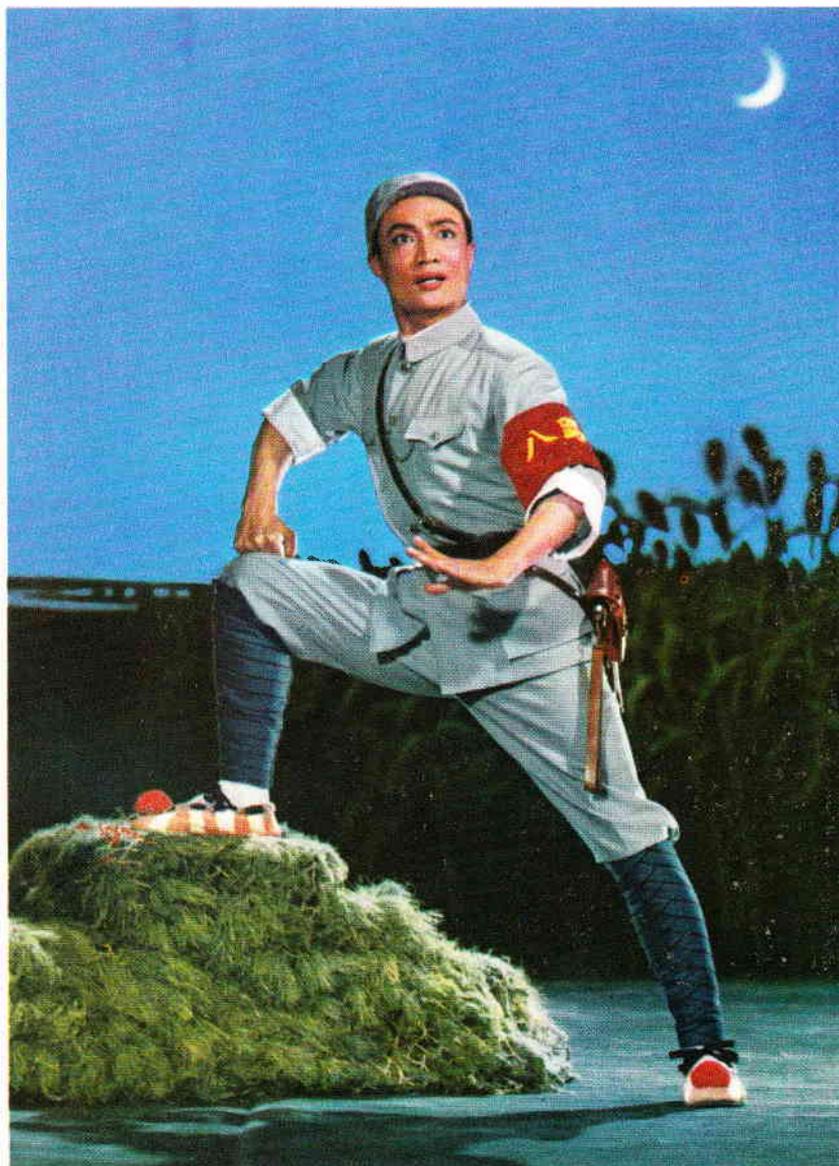
**Chao** (*off, sings*): *By the light of the moon and the stars*

(*Enter Chao in an Eighth Route Army cap and homespun tunic. He strikes a militant pose.*)

**Chao** (*sings*): *We come down from the Taihang Mountains.*

(*The squad leader, Li Hu and other soldiers run in. Two more soldiers somersault in. They strike a pose.*)

**Chao** (*sings*): *Swift as wind or rushing torrent we race to give battle.  
To smash the "mopping up" and ensure victory for our mountain base,*



Chao Yung-kang, platoon leader of the Eighth Route Army

Photographs from **"FIGHTING ON THE PLAIN"**



Li Sheng, Party secretary of Changchuang Village

Aunt Chang, Hsiao-ying and other Changchuang villagers build tunnels, determined to wage tunnel warfare against the Japanese invaders ▶





Chao Yung-kang leads his men from the Taihang Mountains to wage guerrilla warfare in the enemy's rear

◀ An old peasant recalls how Chao Yung-kang has led them in the study of Chairman Mao's brilliant writing *On Protracted War*



To blow up enemy munitions, Chao Yung-kang goes to town in disguise to contact the liaison man in the restaurant

Aunt Chang is shot while covering Li Sheng. Before she dies she entrusts her daughter Hsiao-ying to Chao Yung-kang





The main force, Chao Yung-kang's men and the militia converge in victory

*We must intercept the enemy reinforcements and safeguard our grain supply.*

*In small units the people's troops sweep across the plain,  
Like angry waves flooding over the enemy's rear.*

*(With dancing movements Chao and his men advance.)*

**Chao** (*sights someone approaching*): Down!

*(His men drop to the ground. Chao drops down and strikes a pose.)  
(Uncle Kao calls, off: "All clear!" He enters.)*

**Uncle Kao**: All clear!

**Chao** (*elated*): Uncle Kao!

**Uncle Kao**: Yung-kang! (*Blows out his lantern and grasps Chao's hands. Jubilantly*) Fine, at last you've come back. Look, Old Li has come to meet you too.

**Chao**: Ah!

*(Enter Li Sheng. Soldier A goes out.)*

**Li Sheng**: Yung-kang!

**Chao**: Old Li!

*(They clasp hands.)*

**Li Sheng** (*with feeling*): A whole year it's been. All this time we've been thinking of you.

**Chao**: Up in the mountains we've been thinking of you too.

**Li Sheng**: Now you're back, that'll put fresh heart into our folk. How are things up in your base?

**Chao**: The Japs trying to "mop up" our base are putting their heads into our bag. Our instructions from the battalion Party committee are to pin down Kameta. The key to this is by destroying his grain and ammunition, so that he can't take reinforcements into the mountains.

**Li Sheng**: Good. Right now we're building more tunnels in our village, expanding our militia's guerrilla units and strengthening our regional contingents. Our folks' morale is like sesame flowers — it's shooting up higher and higher. (*Laughs.*)

*(Soldier A returns.)*

**Soldier A**: Some puppet troops are heading this way, platoon leader.

**Li Hu**: Wipe them out!

**Chao** (*stops him. Shrewdly*): Let them pass.

*(The soldiers take cover. Uncle Kao leaves. The puppet corporal enters with three men.)*

**Chao** (*sharply*): Halt! What unit are you?

**Corporal**: The main blockhouse patrol.

**Chao** (*disarmingly*): Oh, I thought you were Eighth Routers.

**Corporal**: So you're one of our lot. You had me scared for a minute.

**Squad Leader** (*grabs his gun and knocks him down*): Don't move!

*(Soldiers surround the other puppet troops and disarm them.)*

**Corporal**: What's the idea? You're making a mistake.

**Chao**: There's no mistake.

**Corporal**: You are....

**Chao** (*resonantly*): The Eighth Route Army!

**Corporal** (*recognizes him*): So it's you, Platoon Leader Chao! (*Scrambles up.*) I've never dared to forget those instructions you gave me.

**Li Sheng**: Aren't you Ho Hsiao-shun from Hochuang Village?

**Corporal**: That's right.

**Li Sheng**: I sent a message to you through your mother.

**Corporal**: Yes, I got it.

**Li Sheng**: Why did you steal chickens the other day from the Kaochuang villagers?

**Corporal**: Those were the orders of the Japanese sergeant.

**Chao**: Let me tell you: The troops and people of the Resistance have your lives in their hands. Anyone who does wrong gets a black mark against his name, and his day of reckoning will come. Anyone who has a change of heart and does good gets a red mark, and for that he'll be rewarded.

**Corporal:** We want to get red marks.

**Chao:** When you go back, tell Kameta we'll be calling on him in person one of these days.

**Corporal:** I dare not.

**Chao** (*imperiously*): Do as I tell you.

**Corporal:** All right.

**Chao** (*to his men*): Give them back their guns.

*(Soldiers remove the cartridges from the rifles then return them.)*

**Corporal:** Thank you, thank you.

*(The puppet troops take their guns and scuttle off, watched by the soldiers.)*

*(Enter Uncle Kao.)*

**Chao:** Uncle Kao, go right away to the main blockhouse and report that the Eighth Route Army has come down from the mountains.

**Uncle Kao:** What's the hurry?

**Chao:** We want to tie Kameta down, stop him from taking reinforcements to the mountains.

**Uncle Kao:** Very well. I'll go at once.

*(Exit Uncle Kao. The soldiers come back.)*

**Chao** (*incisively*): Comrades, advance in groups along both sides of the railway. Destroy the roads and blow up the bridges to harass the enemy. Cut the telegraph wires, so that the Japs can't transmit orders. We must bog them down, not let them move a step.

*(Chao strikes a pose with Li Sheng. The other soldiers strike a collective pose.)*

*(Curtain)*

## SCENE TWO

### KAMETA IS TIED DOWN

Night. Kameta's office near the railway station of a town on the north China plain. On the wall hangs a map; on the desk is a telephone. Outside the office is a corridor. On the water-tower in the distance hangs a Japanese flag.

(The curtain rises to the sound of whipping. Kameta watches sadistically through the window. The Japanese sergeant, another Japanese officer and the interpreter stand at attention.

Outside, Japanese Soldiers C and D drive in members of the Resistance, whipping them savagely. With an oath, Japanese Soldier D hustles them off. Kameta signs to Soldier C to begin the massacre. The soldier assents and leaves.

Offstage, Soldier C yells the order: "Ready!" The members of the Resistance shout: "Down with Japanese imperialism!" A volley of shots.)

**Kameta** (*laughs savagely*): See? This is the way to collect grain.

**Japanese Officer:** Yes, sir.

**Kameta:** H'm. If we can't subdue a few villagers, how are we to carry out the mighty plan of His Majesty the Emperor (*stands to attention*) to "conquer all China and conquer all Asia"? Our commander in the mountains has ordered us to prepare ammunition and grain and send him reinforcements. This mopping up of the mountains affects the security of our base for the sacred war in East Asia, affects the success of the war in the Pacific. The military train No. 105 is due in very soon. Our vanguard must speed up preparations for entering the mountains. As for grain, if your main blockhouse fails to turn in your quota on time, I'll have you all court-martialled.

**Sergeant:** Yes, sir.

*(The sergeant goes out. Japanese Soldier B hurries in.)*

**Japanese Soldier B:** Report. The sentry at the East Gate has been killed.

**Kameta:** The east city? (*Looks at the map.*)

(*The telephone rings.*)

**Interpreter** (*takes the phone*): Hullo... What? Excellency, a call from the main blockhouse. According to the lineman Old Kao, the Eighth Route Army has come down from the mountains.

**Kameta** (*taken aback*): How many of them?

**Interpreter:** Yes, sir. (*Telephones.*) Hullo. How many of them? How many? (*The line goes dead.*) Hullo... We've been cut off.

**Kameta:** Get the line repaired, quick.

**Japanese Soldier B:** Yes, sir.

(*Soldier B goes out. Soldier A comes in.*)

**Japanese Soldier A:** Report. A section of the highway near the village has been destroyed and the telegraph wires along it have been cut.

**Kameta:** Round up the saboteurs!

**Japanese Soldier A:** Yes, sir.

(*Exit Soldier A. Enter Sun Shou-tsai in a panic, followed by the puppet corporal.*)

**Sun:** Excellency, military train No. 105 has been derailed.

**Kameta** (*aghast*): What!

**Sun:** The Eighth Routers wrecked the railway and derailed the train.

**Kameta** (*sings*): *In one night so many alarms and a train derailed—*

*Has the Eighth Route Army slipped through our steel cordon?*

Are you certain the Eighth Routers have come down from the mountains?

**Sun:** Yes, sir. It's the old lot from the mountains led by a local man. His name's Chao Yung-kang.

**Kameta:** Chao Yung-kang?

**Sun:** When he was a boy he worked as a coolie in our family coal-mine. His father got a band of miners to make trouble, so we hanged him for opposing the government. Then this son of his joined the Eighth Route Army. (*Apprehensively*) He's a fire-brand, this fellow.

**Kameta** (*scornfully*): Pah! A dirty coolie, yet he's got you scared stiff.

**Sun:** Excellency, he's a man not to be trifled with. Ho Hsiao-shun ran into them by the railway.

**Kameta:** Ah! How many of them?

**Corporal:** A big force. They're all over the place. They're led by Chao Yung-kang, and he told me to give you a message...

**Kameta:** Go on.

**Corporal:** He'll be coming to call on you in person one of these days.

**Kameta** (*flares up*): Hell!

**Japanese Officer:** Scram!

(*Exit the corporal.*)

(*Kameta thinks hard.*)

**Sun** (*muttering*): Seems a storm is brewing.

**Japanese Officer:** It must be the Eighth Route's main force.

**Kameta** (*arrogantly*): No. According to my analysis, this is not the Eighth Route's main force but just a small detachment.

**Officer and Sun:** A small detachment?

**Kameta:** Sure. These are their usual tactics. This sudden raid by Chao Yung-kang must have a bearing on the operations in the mountains. (*Sings.*)

*We must block all the roads into the mountains,*

*Secure our rear, search every village*

*And wipe out all resistance.*

This is my order: The vanguard is to suspend preparations for entering the mountains.

**Japanese Officer:** Yes, sir.

**Kameta:** Our whole force is to set out at once to mop up village by village, household by household, on both sides of the railway. We must strike before Chao Yung-kang establishes a foothold... (*He clenches both hands in a stranglehold and laughs exultantly.*) Ha...

(*Curtain*)

SCENE THREE

CLOSE AS FISH AND WATER

Night. Three days later. Aunt Chang's courtyard in Changchung Village. Outside the yard is a big persimmon tree; inside it, a well with clumps of hollyhocks and sunflowers behind it. At one side stands Aunt Chang's cottage, flanked by a thatched shed overgrown with morning-glories which climb over the wall. By the door hangs a coir rain-cape; strings of paprika are drying under the eaves.

(The curtain rises as a storm is brewing. Aunt Chang shovels earth into a wicker crate, then props her spade against the well and turns to strike a pose.)

**Aunt Chang** (*sings*): *Seeing light in the darkness of night,  
My knitted brows smooth out.  
Three days ago our troops returned to the plain;  
By the lamp Yung-kang told us of the need for protracted war,  
Pointed out the bright future ahead and broadened our vision.  
Day and night our folk are hard at work building tunnels,  
Our village stands firm as a rock for the Resistance.*

(*Thunder.*)

**Aunt Chang**: It's going to rain. Time they knocked off for a rest. (*Calls down the well.*) Hsiao-ying, it's late. Make Sister Liu and the others go home to sleep. (*Carries the crate of earth to the back wall.*)

(*Hsiao-ying passes her an oil lamp from the well, then climbs out. Aunt Chang puts the lamp on the window-sill.*)

**Hsiao-ying**: Mum. (*Dusts off her clothes and mops her face.*)

**Aunt Chang**: Have Sister Liu and the others gone home, child?

**Hsiao-ying**: Yes, mum. It's true that unity gives folk the strength to move mountains. This stretch of tunnel's been dug to the end of the village!

**Aunt Chang**: That means the main tunnel at the east end of the village will soon be finished too.

**Hsiao-ying**: Sure.

**Aunt Chang**: But if not for Yung-kang and his men who gave us the lead, it could never have been done so fast.

**Hsiao-ying**: That's true. Before he left Platoon Leader Chao said: All the houses in our village must be linked up, above ground and underground. That'll give us a real "communications network".

**Aunt Chang**: That's what we need all right. (*Reflects.*) Remember that big "mopping up" on May Day last year? Because Old Wang's tunnel had only one opening, those cruel devils from the blockhouse buried his whole family alive.

**Hsiao-ying**: Yes, it's the enemy who's forced us to improve on our tunnels.

**Aunt Chang**: And with these tunnels we'll put paid to the Jap devils!

**Hsiao-ying**: That's right.

(*Distant gunfire.*)

**Hsiao-ying**: Hear that gunfire!

**Aunt Chang**: From Machuang Village, isn't it?

**Hsiao-ying**: Kameta must have gone there to "mop up".

**Aunt Chang**: They say the devils have come out from the main blockhouse too. (*Anxiously*) I wonder how things are going with Yung-kang and his men? It's really worrying. (*Sings.*)

*The sound of gunfire sets me worrying;*

*The Jap invaders are running amuck again.*

*For three days Yung-kang has put up a running fight,*

*Short of grain, his way a hard one, beset with danger.*

*We've tried to send them food but failed to find them. . . .*

*Heavy the weight on my mind!*

*The army is like a man's ten fingers,*

*So closely linked to our hearts.*

**Hsiao-ying**: Mum! (*Sings.*) *Neither shot nor shell can sunder us,  
We women must take the lead in supporting our troops.*

*Though I've failed to find them time and again,  
To take them food I'll gladly search the whole plain.  
Tonight I swear to take them dry rations and hot broth  
To express the loving concern of our whole village.  
I'll invite them to come and shelter in our cottage  
So that, brave as lions at the front,  
Tomorrow they can kill more Japs and traitors!*

**Aunt Chang:** That's the spirit, Hsiao-ying. But how will you find them?

**Hsiao-ying:** I'm going to consult Old Li. Whatever happens I must find them tonight.

**Aunt Chang:** Good.

*(Hsiao-ying enters the house.)*

**Aunt Chang** *(calls after her)*: Remember to take those corn-pones and the clothes I just mended for Yung-kang.

*(Hsiao-ying, off: "Right." The wind rises. Aunt Chang takes down the coir-cape from the wall. Hsiao-ying comes out wearing a bamboo hat and carrying a basket. Aunt Chang puts the cape over her shoulders.)*

**Aunt Chang:** Be careful on the way, child.

**Hsiao-ying:** Don't worry. *(Leaves.)*

**Aunt Chang** *(sings)*: May Hsiao-ying come back soon with good tidings;  
Now I'll go in to strengthen our tunnel and wait for our dear ones.  
*(Takes the lamp inside and closes the door.)*

*(Thunder, lightning, gusts of wind and pouring rain. Enter Li Hu and Soldier B. Battling their way against the wind through the mud, they advance cautiously. Chao leads in the rest of his men. Braving the storm, they press forward.)*

**Li Hu:** Platoon leader, we've reached Aunt Chang's cottage.

**Chao:** Post sentries.

**Soldier C:** Right. *(Goes on sentry duty.)*

*(The rain lets up.)*

**Chao:** Comrades, we must resolutely observe the Three Main Rules of Discipline and the Eight Points for Attention, and carry on the glorious tradition of hard work and arduous struggle. *(With feeling)* Aunt Chang's family go all out day and night to support the front. They must be tired out, so let's not disturb them. Our rations are running out but we'll share them between us. Wring out your uniforms.

**Soldiers:** Right. *(They comply.)*

**Chao:** Comrades, *(pointing to the shed)* we'll spend the night there.

**Soldiers** *(catch on)*: Right.

*(Soldiers B and D tiptoe into the shed. As Li Hu and Soldier A approach it, Soldier A knocks down the spade. Chao signs to them not to make a noise. They go quietly into the shed. Chao props up the spade and looks at the shed with feeling. A few stars come out.)*

**Chao** *(sings)*: We've led the Japs a dance all over the plain,  
Now back in our village bastion we're like fish regaining the sea.  
The Japs, Chiang Kai-shek and Wang Ching-wei have ganged up  
To harass our folk and make their life a hell.  
*(Goes to the door and bends down to listen. With feeling)*  
*All quiet. Our dear ones must be sound asleep;  
I long to see them, but won't wake Aunt Chang.  
We should ever have our people's welfare at heart. . . .  
The storm has passed; stars are peeping through the clouds.*

*(Aunt Chang opens the door and comes out.)*

**Aunt Chang** *(glimpses someone)*: Who's that?

**Chao:** Auntie!

**Aunt Chang** *(overjoyed)*: Yung-kang! *(Grasps his hand.)* So at last you're back, child.

**Chao** *(warmly)*: Auntie, how have you been keeping?

**Aunt Chang:** I'm fine. *(Concerned)* But look how wet you are! Why didn't you come in? Isn't this your home? Where are your comrades? Call them all, quick.

**Chao:** They're already here, auntie.

**Aunt Chang:** Already here? Where?

**Chao:** Over there. (*Points to the shed.*)

(*Enter the soldiers.*)

**Li Hu** (*salutes*): Auntie, how are you?

**Soldiers** (*salute*): Auntie, how are you?

**Aunt Chang** (*looks at them all and at the hay stacked in the shed. Very moved*): Why should you sleep there? . . .

**Li Hu** (*cheerfully*): With the sky as our quilt and the earth as our bed, we sleep snug and sound, auntie.

**Aunt Chang:** Yung-kang! (*Clasps Chao's hand.*) These days when we folk took up our rice-bowls, we thought of you boys. When we went to sleep at night, we dreamed of you. When we heard gunfire, our hearts ached for you. All this time we've been longing for you, yet when you reach home, instead of coming in, you sleep in the hay instead. How could you. . . . (*Her voice breaks.*)

**Chao** (*comforts her*): We didn't want to disturb you, auntie.

**Aunt Chang** (*hurt*): How can you talk that way, child? (*Sings.*)

*Since you left, whole nights I've lain awake longing for you;*

*Now that you're back, why didn't you come in?*

*I blame myself for not keeping a better watch,*

*Letting you get drenched in the storm —*

*How my old heart aches!*

**Chao** (*very moved*): Auntie! (*Sings.*)

*Auntie, your love for us is like a mother's.*

*You have given yourself heart and soul to the Resistance;*

*Each grain of maize in our rations was raised with sweat,*

*Our home-spun uniforms were woven with love.*

*That year I came to this village wounded in battle,*

*You tore up your padded coat to dress my wound,*

*You brewed herbal medicine and tasted it carefully.*

*Under the fruit tree you kept constant watch*

*Though the north wind cut like a knife and ice frosted your temples,*

*Day and night you stayed by my side.*

*Never, never shall I forget your deep class feeling,*

*Great as the Taibang Mountains, endless as the Yellow River.*

(*Aunt Chang clasps his arms with emotion. Enter Soldier C.*)

**Soldier C:** Platoon leader, Old Li's here.

(*Enter Li Sheng, the squad leader, Hsiao-ying, the old man and Sister Liu.*)

**Aunt Chang:** Old Li!

**Li Sheng:** Yung-kang, Hsiao-ying and the others were going to search the sorghum fields for you.

**Hsiao-ying:** But you comrades are already here.

**Old Man:** Yung-kang, we've *kang* and food ready for you at home. We've been waiting for you to come.

**Hsiao-ying:** Platoon Leader Chao, here are the corn-pones and mended clothes my mother got ready for you and your comrades.

(*Hands the basket to Chao.*)

**Sister Liu** (*holds up a few pairs of army sandals*): This is just a little gift, but it comes from our hearts. (*Puts the sandals in the basket.*)

**Chao** (*holds the basket, very moved*): Folk, you've kept up the Resistance in the enemy's rear, going short of food and clothing. You risk your lives for each grain of food and each inch of cloth you bring us. How can. . . .

**Aunt Chang:** What a thing to say! When Hsiao-ying's father was alive, he went down the pit with you and your father, sharing the same coarse food, the same tattered quilt. Now that we're fighting the Japs, we've all the more reason to stick together through thick and thin.

**Hsiao-ying:** Mum, ask the comrades in to rest.

**Aunt Chang:** Right. The rest of you can go on chatting here while we (*turns to the soldiers*) go in to boil some water. You must wash your feet and have a meal. Come on!

(*Aunt Chang, Hsiao-ying and the soldiers enter the cottage.*)

*The old man and Sister Liu leave by different sides. A light gleams through the papered window.*)

**Li Sheng:** Yung-kang, the squad leader and his men have done a

fine job east of the county town. They've mobilized the villagers to build more tunnels and guard the public grain.

**Squad Leader:** Kameta's been trying to "mop" us up non-stop, but each time he draws a blank.

**Chao:** Why don't we take another swipe at him? We've reconnoitred the main blockhouse, Old Li, and most of the enemy troops there have gone off with Kameta.

**Li Sheng:** So the post is undermanned.

**Chao:** I think, while it's undermanned, we should concentrate our force and launch a surprise attack. Then, even in broad daylight with our superior strength we can destroy this post.

**Li Sheng:** Right. This blockhouse has a strategic position. It's the key to entering the mountains. If we destroy it, we can communicate with the mountain base more easily and lead Kameta by his ugly nose.

**Squad Leader:** Right.

**Li Sheng:** Yung-kang, the last few days the blockhouse garrison has been trying to move all the grain they've looted to the county town. They're commandeering carts from nearby villages.

**Chao:** Commandeering carts, are they? (*Reflects.*) Well, that gives me an idea. (*Resolutely*) Good. We'll strike while the iron's hot and cut the enemy's throat!

*(Gunfire. The soldiers, Aunt Chang and Hsiao-ying emerge from the cottage.)*

*(Militiaman A calls, off: "Platoon leader!" and dashes in.)*

**Militiaman A:** Platoon leader, Kameta is leading a large force towards this village.

**Chao:** So soon? (*With confidence*) We'll let him fight his way and we'll fight our way. The local militia must combat him with mine warfare and hit-and-run tactics. We'll not let the enemy get away with so much as a single grain.

**Militiaman A:** Right.

**Chao:** Squad leader, cover the villagers' evacuation. Quick!

**Squad Leader:** Right.

**Chao:** I'll enter the tiger's den in disguise and plunge a dagger into the enemy's heart.

**Li Sheng:** Get into the tunnel!

*(Chao and the others run to the well. Li Hu leaps into it. Alertly, the rest strike a pose.)*

*(Curtain)*

#### SCENE FOUR

#### TAKING THE BLOCKHOUSE BY STRATEGY

The next day at noon. The enemy's main blockhouse. In the distance are green bean-fields; nearer by, thick barbed-wire fences. On the blockhouse tower on the right can be seen the back of a Japanese sentry; on the low wall to the left is written "Enforce Order".

*(The curtain rises on a file of Japanese soldiers.)*

**Japanese Soldier C:** Attention!

*(Enter the Japanese sergeant.)*

**Sergeant:** Our commander has surrounded Changchuang Village, and Chao Yung-kang's unit will soon be wiped out. Our orders are to move the grain here quickly to the county town, then go to reinforce our troops in the mountains. All be on the alert!

**Japanese Soldiers:** Yes, sir. *(They run into the blockhouse.)*

**Sergeant** *(calls out):* Come here!

*(Puppet Soldier A runs in carrying a rifle and stands at attention.)*

**Sergeant:** How about the carts?

**Puppet Soldier A:** They haven't come yet.

**Sergeant:** Go and hurry them up.

**Puppet Soldier A:** Yes, sir. *(Turns to leave.)*

*(Whips crack and horses neigh.)*

**Puppet Soldier A:** Here they are. *(Yells.)* Hey! Where are you from?

(Uncle Kao, off: "We've brought carts from Kaochuang Village.")

**Puppet Soldier A:** These are the carts from Kaochuang, sir.

(Enter Uncle Kao.)

**Uncle Kao:** Excellency!

**Sergeant:** Why are you so late, fellow?

**Uncle Kao:** It was hard to get the carts together, and the road is bad.

**Sergeant:** Bah. Fetch the head carter.

**Uncle Kao:** Yes, sir. (Calls.) Hey! The head carter's wanted here.

(Enter Chao with a towel knotted round his head, wearing a red vest and blue jacket. Whip in hand he strikes a pose.)

**Chao (sings):** Red-tasselled whip in hand,  
In my heart the task entrusted to me by the Party,  
As our folk fight tunnel warfare  
I here must swiftly cut the enemy's throat.

**Uncle Kao:** Sir, this is...

**Sergeant (checks him, scrutinizing Chao):** You, where are you from?

**Chao:** From Kaochuang.

**Sergeant (craftily):** I've been to Kaochuang. How is it I've never seen you?

**Chao (unperturbed, smiles):** When you go there, Excellency, you're surrounded by district chiefs and heads of the "Association for the Maintenance of Order". How could you notice a carter like me?

**Sergeant:** You really are a carter?

**Uncle Kao:** One of the best, sir.

**Sergeant:** Oh?

**Chao:** I took up this job just after you arrived here. Rain or shine, in scorching summer and freezing winter, my team makes long journeys with the heaviest loads. When I sit tight on the shaft and crack my whip — giddup! whoa! (*flourishes his whip and strikes a pose*) — then the most skittish, mulish beasts have to knuckle under and behave like lambs.

**Sergeant (still dubious, turns to shout):** Corporal! Hol

(Puppet corporal off calls: "Here, sir!" and comes on.)

**Sergeant:** Have you come across any Eighth Routers before?

**Puppet Corporal:** Yes, sir.

**Sergeant:** Take a look at this man. Who is he?

**Corporal:** Yes, sir.

**Chao (takes the initiative):** Ah, Corporal Ho. How are you?

**Corporal (shocked):** You...

**Chao:** All of us have come.

**Sergeant (to the corporal):** Do you know him, Ho?

**Chao (steps quickly forward):** He knows me all right, we're old friends. I often run errands for his family. (To the corporal) The other day by the railway didn't you ask me to bring you some beans? (Significantly) You wanted "the red sort", didn't you?

**Corporal (catches on):** "The red sort", yes. He's a first-rate carter, sir.

**Uncle Kao:** If he weren't, I wouldn't have brought him here, Excellency.

**Sergeant:** All right. (To Chao) See here, all the grain here has got to be carted away.

**Chao:** Don't worry, Excellency. We'll cart it all away, down to the last grain.

**Sergeant:** Good. Call the others over.

**Chao (shouts):** Here, you fellows!

(Enter Li Hu, the squad leader and other soldiers disguised as carters.)

**Chao:** Load the carts.

**Soldiers:** Right.

(Li Hu, the squad leader and the soldiers leave. The Japanese sergeant goes to supervise them. The puppet corporal follows. Puppet Soldier A withdraws too.)

**Chao:** Uncle Kao, as soon as it's dark, take the grain up the mountain.

**Uncle Kao:** Right. (Leaves.)

*(Offstage the Japanese sergeant calls: "Quick!" and enters. Li Hu and the other soldiers carry sacks across the stage, followed by the puppet corporal.)*

**Sergeant** *(to Chao)*: Get a move on, carter. All the grain has got to be carted away today.

*(Three Eighth Route Army men enter from the side of the blockhouse and cross the stage, followed by the puppet corporal.)*

**Chao** *(reflects)*: There are too few of us, sir, to handle so much grain. We just haven't the time.

**Sergeant**: You must think of a way.

**Chao**: Think of a way? *(Glances at the puppet troops.)* Well, there is a way, Excellency, if these soldiers of yours help us. But they must be tired out after keeping watch all night. You see. . . .

**Sergeant**: Tired out? Bah. *(To the puppet corporal)* Ho! Fatigue duty for the whole garrison: help with the loading.

**Puppet Corporal**: Yes, sir. *(To Puppet Soldier A)* Come on.

*(The two men leave.)*

**Sergeant** *(chortles. To Chao)*: Good, good, you work hard for the Imperial Army.

**Chao**: Just wait. Later on we'll really give you the works.

**Sergeant**: Ha.

*(Puppet Soldier A hurries in.)*

**Puppet Soldier A**: Report. Urgent orders from His Excellency Kameta. *(Hands the sergeant a note.)*

*(The sergeant takes it into the blockhouse, followed by Puppet Soldier A.)*

*(Chao looks at the blockhouse and frowns thoughtfully.)*

**Chao** *(sings)*: Fresh orders from Kameta—what does this mean?  
His failure to find me may have aroused his suspicion.  
I must keep cool and make a prompt decision  
To keep the initiative firmly in my hands.

*Seize the machine-gun, strike first,  
Then, in close combat, wipe out the enemy.*

*(Enter the squad leader carrying a sack. At a sign from Chao he deliberately staggers, and Chao goes forward to hold the sack on his shoulder.)*

*(Enter Li Hu.)*

**Chao** *(whispers to the squad leader)*: Kameta has suddenly sent an urgent order. Watch out! If they try any tricks, we'll put our plan into operation at once.

**Squad Leader**: Right. *(To Li Hu in a low voice)* Get ready to seize the machine-gun.

**Li Hu**: Right. *(Helps the squad leader with the sack.)*

*(Offstage the Japanese sergeant blows a whistle and shouts: "All muster!" He enters, followed by Japanese soldiers and the puppet corporal.)*

*(The squad leader puts down the sack.)*

**Sergeant** *(to puppet corporal)*: Ho, stop loading the grain. Unload the carts.

**Corporal**: Unload the carts? After all the trouble we've had loading them, sir?

**Sergeant**: Do as I say, dammit! Our chief has sent an urgent order from Changchuang. Chao Yung-kang has disappeared, so we must be ready for an attack on this post. Man the machine-gun.

*(The Japanese soldiers surround Chao. The puppet corporal slips away.)*

**Sergeant**: Unload all the carts!

**Chao**: Since the grain is loaded it must be carted away.

*(Chao waves his whip. His men enter and surround the Japanese.)*

**Sergeant**: Hah! Who are you?

**Chao** *(in a ringing voice)*: The Eighth Route Army!

**Sergeant** *(astounded)*: Ah! *(Thrusts with his sword at Chao.)*

**Chao** *(dodges and wards off the sword with his whip, then motions to his men to seize the blockhouse)*: Up!

*(Two soldiers leap up the blockhouse. Others engage the Japanese, then go off, fighting.)*

*(Chao lashes out with his whip. The Japanese sergeant charges him with raised sword; Chao drops the whip and throws an enemy to the ground. The sergeant raises his sword again, but Chao nimbly kicks down a sack to deflect the blow, then picks up the sack and fells another Japanese with it. Taking the enemy by surprise, he kicks up the sword, catches it in mid air and, striking out fiercely, kills both the Japanese soldier and the sergeant.)*

*(Turning with the sword behind him, Chao strikes a militant pose.)*

**Chao:** Comrades, set fire to the blockhouse!

*(Three soldiers run in with torches and enter the blockhouse. Several others enter carrying captured equipment. The blockhouse is enveloped in flames and smoke. Chao and his men together strike a pose.)*

*(Curtain)*

## SCENE FIVE

### UNFLINCHING COURAGE

Evening. The highway between Changchuang Village and the blockhouse.

*(The curtain rises. The Japanese soldiers and Sun Shou-tsai shuffle wearily in. Kameta enters fuming with rage, followed by the Japanese officer.)*

**Kameta:** Call a halt.

**Officer:** Halt!

*(The Japanese soldiers halt.)*

**Sun:** It's not far to the main blockhouse, Excellency. We must hurry to the rescue.

**Kameta:** It's too late.

**Sun:** But think of all the grain there.

**Kameta** *(dejectedly)*: It's already fallen into their hands.

*(Thinks.)* Where do you suppose Chao Yung-kang is now?

**Sun:** The local people all say these Eighth Routers are "heavenly troops with iron legs who can see in the dark". So there's no knowing where he is now.

**Kameta:** Heavenly troops? Bah. I shall find him all right.

**Sun:** Find him?

**Kameta:** Yes. After attacking the blockhouse, he's bound to take the grain to his village stronghold. This is our chance to slip back to the village and *(venomously)* stab them in the back.

**Sun** *(thumb up)*: A masterly scheme!

**Kameta** *(with a wave of his hand)*: Turn back.

**Officer:** Turn back.

*(The Japanese soldiers turn back. The stage darkens.)*

*(At the entrance to Changchuang Village, by an old locust tree. Gunfire is heard above the barking of dogs. In the village flames redden the sky.)*

**Hsiao-ying** *(off, sings)*: All around the village the reek of blood.

*(She runs in.)*

*Our folk are hemmed in, unable to withdraw.*

*Flames rage and my heart is burning.*

*(Three villagers hurry past. Aunt Chang runs in.)*

**Hsiao-ying:** Mum!

**Aunt Chang:** Hsiao-ying! *(Sings.)*

*Slip out to find Yung-kang to rescue us.*

*(Japanese Soldier C comes in and shoves them apart. Another Japanese soldier enters and seizes Aunt Chang.)*

**Aunt Chang:** Hsiao-ying, go quickly!

**Hsiao-ying:** Mum!

*(Enter Villager D. He grabs the enemy's gun and smelds Hsiao-ying. Another Japanese soldier enters and lunges with his bayonet at Villager D.)*

**Villager D** *(parries the stroke with his axe. To Hsiao-ying)*: Go quick!

**Hsiao-ying:** Mum! (*Runs off.*)

*(Villager D kills Japanese Soldier C with his axe, then is killed by an enemy bullet. Another Japanese shoves Aunt Chang so that she staggers and falls. More enemy soldiers pour in, driving villagers before them. Sun Shou-tsai leads in Kameta.)*

**Kameta** (*gloating*): So we meet at last, you Changchuang villagers. You didn't expect me back, did you? (*Laughs.*) Don't be afraid. Where's Chao Yung-kang? Where's your grain hidden? Whoever tells me will get land and houses. (*Signs to Sun to speak.*)

**Sun:** You heard what His Excellency said. Whoever tells where the grain is hidden and where Chao Yung-kang is will be given land and houses. Speak up.

*(The villagers ignore him.)*

**Sun:** Speak up! (*Spots Aunt Chang.*) Old Woman Chang, come here.

*(The villagers crowd round Aunt Chang.)*

**Sun:** Come over here!

*(Aunt Chang calmly steps forward.)*

**Sun:** Speak up, you. Where is the grain hidden? Where is Chao Yung-kang?

*(Aunt Chang, her head high, ignores him.)*

**Sun:** So you won't speak, eh? You had plenty to say when you were clamouring for a reduction in rent. Have you lost your tongue today? Are you a dumb beast?

**Aunt Chang** (*scathingly*): Someone here is a beast in human form — not me!

**Sun** (*furious*): Dammit! I'll have you shot.

**Kameta** (*intervenes, then hypocritically*): Now, now. An old Chinese lady like you, (*gives a thumb up sign*) I really admire you. But you don't understand, old lady. The Imperial Army want to find Chao Yung-kang and the grain so as to help you Chinese build a "happy land of the Kingly Way". That means. . .

**Aunt Chang:** Bahl (*Indignantly*) You brigands keep harping on the "Kingly Way", but you're nothing but a pack of wolves. What have you done on our plain? Covered it with blockhouses; criss-crossed it with trenches and walls; murdered so many people; laid waste so much land. Burning, killing, looting — that's your "Kingly Way". Your "happy land" is an execution ground! (*Sings.*)

*Your fine talk, your show of kindness,*

*What is it? Sugar-coated arsenic!*

*We can tell good from bad and true from false,*

*Can see through a wolf in sheep's clothing.*

*We hold the people's army in our hearts,*

*Fire and sword can never destroy the love between us.*

*Scorning your butcher's knives,*

*I shall be loyal to the end to the Communist Party.*

**Kameta** (*in desperation*): Arrest her.

**Sun:** Yes, sir.

*(Sun catches hold of Aunt Chang, who thrusts him aside.)*

**Aunt Chang:** You traitor! (*She slaps his face hard. Sings.*)

*All you'll get from us is cold steel and flames of rage.*

**Villagers** (*sing*): *The Chinese people can never be wiped out;*

*We will shed our blood but never capitulate.*

**Kameta** (*baring his fangs*): They're Eighth Routers, the whole lot! Bring the machine-gun.

*(A Japanese soldier brings in a machine-gun and crouches down, ready to fire.)*

**Kameta:** If you still won't speak, I'll turn this place into a no-man's land. (*Glares round at the villagers, inwardly dismayed, and waving his sword yells.*) Ready!

*(Offstage Li Sheng calls: "Stop!" The villagers look round. The enemy is at a loss.)*

**Li Sheng** (*sings off*): *Our folk are in danger —*  
*(He enters fearlessly.)*

**Li Sheng (sings):** *My fury flames to the sky!*

*Fired with righteous wrath I'll charge the enemy,  
Rescue our folk and safeguard our public grain!*

**Kameta:** Who the devil are you?

**Li Sheng (sings):** *The man in charge of the whole village's grain,*

*I kill rats and other pests.*

*These folk have done no wrong; let them go free.*

*Whatever the issue at stake, I take sole blame.*

*(With a dignity that overawes the enemy.)*

Kameta, I know where Chao Yung-kang is and where the grain is stored. This has nothing to do with the villagers. Take away the machine-gun!

**Kameta (reflects):** Take it away.

*(Japanese soldiers carry the machine-gun off.)*

**Sun:** Excellency, this man's an officer of this village.

*(Li Sheng greets the villagers and encourages them.)*

**Kameta:** So you know where Chao Yung-kang is?

**Li Sheng:** I do.

**Kameta:** Good. Tell me.

**Li Sheng:** Listen then. *(Sings.)*

*Like the first thunder in spring came Chao Yung-kang,*

*A son of the toilers known to all on the plain;*

*He has fought his way all over the Taibang Mountains,*

*Both sides of the railway are stirred by his daring feats.*

*If you look for him, he has gone without a trace;*

*If he looks for you, he descends on you out of the blue.*

*Free as a fish in the water, a bird in the wood,*

*Wherever the people are, there is Chao Yung-kang!*

**Kameta (savagely):** Burn him alive!

*(Two Japanese soldiers enter with ropes and rush at Li Sheng, but he thrusts them back. The Japanese yell: "Go on!" Li Sheng is bound. He draws himself up proudly under the old locust tree. The villagers surge forward but are kept back by the soldiers.)*

**Kameta (to Li):** Speak!

**Li Sheng (sings):** *A great flood sweeping all before it, the Resistance;*

*Can you with your swords stem the Yangtse?*

*For the revolution, I'll redden the plain with my blood*

*To win liberation — red flags flying far and wide,*

*I face up to death unflinching. . .*

**Kameta:** Light the fire.

*(Japanese soldiers light faggots under Li Sheng's feet. Offstage the Japanese officer cries: "Report!" and rushes in.)*

**Japanese Officer:** Chao Yung-kang is attacking the county town.

Any moment his men may break through the South Gate.

**Kameta (panics):** Ah! Back to town, quick, to wipe them out.

*(Gunfire in the distance.)*

**Kameta:** Where's that firing?

**Japanese Officer:** I don't know.

**Kameta:** Pull out.

**Japanese Officer:** Pull out! Pull out!

*(The Japanese officer and soldiers rush off with Sun. Aunt Chang and the villagers run forward to put out the fire. Kameta aims his revolver at Li Sheng.)*

**Aunt Chang (quickly):** Old Li!

*(She covers him with her body and is shot. Some villagers support her. Kameta runs off. Eighth Route Army men cross the stage pursuing the enemy. Enter Chao with his men, followed by Hsiao-ying. The villagers untie Li Sheng, who is unconscious.)*

**Chao (takes Li in his arms):** First aid, quick!

*(Villagers carry Li Sheng off.)*

**Hsiao-ying (falls on Aunt Chang):** Mum, mum!

**Villagers:** Aunt Chang!

**Chao (shocked):** Auntie! *(Runs anxiously over to her.)* Auntie, we've come back. *(Raises her in his arms.)*

**Hsiao-ying:** Mum!

**Aunt Chang** (*regains consciousness*): Yung-kang, how's Old Li?

**Chao:** He's all right. Don't worry.

**Hsiao-ying:** Mum!

(*Aunt Chang tries to stand up. Chao and Hsiao-ying support her.*)

**Aunt Chang** (*suppressing her pain*): Yung-kang! I entrust Hsiao-ying to you. See that she always follows Chairman Mao, follows the Communist Party. You must fight to the end, carry the revolution through to the end. . . . (*Suddenly closes her eyes.*)

(*Li Hu hastens to support her, but Aunt Chang falls dead.*)

**Hsiao-ying** (*overcome with grief*): Mum!

**Villagers:** Auntie!

**Hsiao-ying** (*kneels before Aunt Chang. In a low, trembling voice*): Mum, mum. . . . (*Cries bitterly.*) Mum! (*Falls on Aunt Chang's body and sobs. Sings.*)

*My mother's blood is shed under the locust tree,*

*My tears fall like rain, my heart seems pierced with a knife.*

Dear mum. . . .

(*Sister Liu slowly helps Hsiao-ying up. Chao takes off his jacket to cover the body. All gather round. Chao, Hsiao-ying and some soldiers and villagers solemnly carry the dead woman off. Others follow. Soldiers bare their heads and stand silently mourning, then leave. The old man and Villager B clasp each other, overcome with sorrow, and weep. Chao re-enters, backwards, carrying a spade. He half turns, suppressing his feelings, and looks at the spade.*)

**Chao** (*sings*): *My grief a rising tide, I shed hot tears;  
The plain has its bounds but my hatred knows no bounds.  
Last night we shared so many confidences together. . . .*

(*The old man takes the spade.*)

**Chao** (*sings*): *Now we are parted for ever,  
Her blood irradiating the morning light.*

(*Enter Hsiao-ying and Sister Liu.*)

**Chao** (*sings*): *Aunt Chang has died fighting the enemy.*

*Her death is weightier than Mount Tai;*

*The fighters and people of the plain will always remember her.*

*Her last militant words spur us on to free our whole land.*

(*Enter soldiers and villagers.*)

**Chao** (*sings*): *Let us advance in the bloodstained steps of our martyrs  
To kill the enemy!*

*When one falls ten thousand others will rise in her place;*

*When old cottages are burned we'll build new homes;*

*Army and people together will wage protracted war,*

*Undaunted though the earth crumbles, though heaven falls.*

*Like a volcano our hatred will erupt;*

*A tooth for a tooth, blood must be paid for with blood!*

Good folk, Chairman Mao tells us: "The fiercer the enemy's attacks on a guerrilla area, the greater the indication that the guerrilla warfare there is successful." Time and again the enemy has tried to wipe out Changchuan. This shows that our village has played a worthy part in the great War of Resistance. Aunt Chang's heroic death is an inspiration for all the rest of us. We must go straight to the county town and smash Kameta's plan to send reinforcements.

**Hsiao-ying:** Never, never forget our deep hatred! Though guns roar and fires blaze, we'll carry the revolution through to the end!

**Militiamen:** Our militia will co-operate with the main force to kill the enemy.

**Women:** We women will work hard to support the front.

**Poor Peasants:** We poor peasants will lead the whole village in building tunnels.

**All:** Together we shall make a great underground wall of iron.

**Chao:** Good! (*Sings.*)

*Our victorious flag is dyed red with blood,*

*Our hatred has turned into blazing flames.*

**All** (*sing*): *Our hatred has turned into blazing flames.*

**Chao** (*sings*): *With unflinching courage we resist the savage enemy.*

**All** (*sing*): *With unflinching courage we resist the savage enemy.*

**Chao** (*sings*): *United we shall fight on —*

**All** (*sing*): *Until the dawn!*

*(Fired with hatred and indomitable courage, together they strike a heroic pose.)*

*(Curtain)*

## SCENE SIX

### SUDDEN ATTACK WITHIN THE COUNTY TOWN

An afternoon several days later. A small restaurant near the railway station in the county town. Inside are tables and benches; on the wooden fence of the street outside is painted the trade sign of some Japanese medicine.

(The curtain rises. A fire-engine's bell is heard. In the street Japanese soldiers and Secret Agents A and B are driving away the peasants selling firewood as well as pedlars and passers-by. Inside the restaurant, the waiter and Customers A and B are watching the scene outside with apprehension. Japanese soldiers and Secret Agent B drive people away. An old woman comes in with a basket on her arm; she is knocked down by Secret Agent A. A child runs to help her up, and both are driven off by the secret agent. Enter the Japanese officer in haste.)

**Japanese Officer:** Quick! Put out the fire. Hurry!

*(Japanese soldiers carrying fire-extinguishers run across the stage.)*

*(The Japanese officer leaves.)*

*(The waiter goes out to look round.)*

**Customer A:** Quite a commotion, eh?

**Customer B:** Haven't you heard? The Japs' granary has been set on fire.

**Customer A:** Ah, a few days ago they *(makes a figure 8 with his fin-*

*gers)* burnt down that blockhouse outside town, moved away all the grain and finished off quite a few Japs.

**Customer B:** Now the fire's spread from outside into the town.

*(The waiter re-enters.)*

**Customer A:** As I see it, the enemy are like grasshoppers in late autumn — they'll soon have hopped it for good.

**Customer B:** That's it. Drink up.

*(Customers C and D enter the restaurant. Eighth Route Armyman B disguised as a cigarette-vendor comes in to scout round.)*

**Waiter** (*to the new arrivals*): Please take these seats. What will you have?

**Customer C:** Four ounces of liquor.

**Customer D:** And one plate of peanuts.

**Waiter:** Very good, sir. *(Calls out.)* Four ounces of liquor and a plate of peanuts. *(Turns to leave.)*

**Soldier B** (*hawking his wares*): Cigarettes!

*(The waiter's face lights up, and he goes into the inner room.)*

*(Chao enters dressed like a merchant wearing a straw hat and long gown with a fan in one hand.)*

**Chao** (*sings*): *The burning of the granary has elated the whole town.*

*We come and go as we please in the tiger's den.*

*Our next task is to blow up the enemy's munitions*

*And by this stratagem tie Kameta down.*

*(The waiter brings in liquor and peanuts which he places before Customers C and D.)*

**Customer A:** Waiter, we've put the money on the table.

**Waiter:** Are you leaving now?

**Customer A:** Yes.

*(Customers A and B leave the restaurant and go off. The waiter clears the table. Chao enters the restaurant. Li Hu comes on dressed as Chao's assistant.)*

**Waiter** (to Chao): Ah, Mr. Wang. We haven't seen you for some time.

**Chao**: That's so.

**Waiter**: How's "business"?

**Chao**: We've just concluded "a deal". Our next move will depend on "market conditions".

**Waiter**: That's no problem. You do good business wherever you go.

**Chao**: Have you anything good today? Anything "new"?

**Waiter**: I know what you "fancy", sir. I've got it all ready.

**Chao** (chuckles): You certainly know your job.

**Waiter**: Please take a seat. (Calls out.) Meat-balls casserole, a dish of fried pork slices and half a catty of old Hengshui liquor. (Goes into the inner room.)

(Li Hu enters the restaurant and sits down with Chao. The squad leader enters in civilian dress, comes into the restaurant and sits at the same table as Customers C and D. He looks carefully round.)

(The waiter returns with the liquor and dishes.)

**Waiter**: Here you are. (Serves Chao.) Your liquor and dishes.

**Chao** (opens his cigarette case): Here, waiter, have a cigarette.

**Waiter**: Thank you, sir. (In a low voice) Here's a sketch of the railway station. The Japs are concentrating their munitions there. (Slips the sketch map into Chao's cigarette case.)

**Chao** (closes his case): This is the capital they want to take to the mountains. We must find a way as quickly as possible to...

(The waiter strikes a match to signify "burning". He and Chao smile at each other. The waiter lights Chao's cigarette.)

**Waiter**: You're eager to clinch "this big deal", aren't you, Mr. Wang?

**Chao**: The bigger the "deal", the more carefully it must be planned. We'll have to go back to work out the details. I'm going to the station today to have a look at this consignment of goods.

**Waiter**: You can't do that. The station's been put out of bounds,

with sentries posted every few yards. No one can get in. (Goes into the inner room.)

**Chao** (sings): *The station's heavily guarded, obstacles are many.*

*While shooting the rapids, we're buffeted by new waves.*

*The Party's instructions point out our direction*

*And hatred for Aunt Chang's murderers fills my heart.*

*These munitions are vital to the enemy,*

*I must turn them into dust.*

*Though hills topple and the earth quakes, my resolve is unshaken:*

*Forward through the storm-tossed sea!*

(The waiter returns from the inner room with liquor and dishes for the squad leader.)

**Chao**: Waiter, is the station out of bounds to Japanese too?

**Waiter**: Well, yesterday men from the Yamato Company did go in to fetch some goods.

**Chao**: The Yamato Company? (To Li Hu) Go there quick to find out what connections they have.

**Waiter** (in a low voice): These days any Chinese wanting to go into a Japanese company must have a pass from the secret service.

**Chao**: So we'll have to deal with the heads of the secret service anyway, eh? All right, we'll go and look for them straight away.

**Soldier B** (spots a secret agent and sings out): Cigarettes! Pirate brand!

**Li Hu**: The secret service!

**Chao**: Just at the right time.

**Waiter**: Here comes your pass to the station.

**Chao**: That's right.

(Customers C and D pay the waiter, who goes into the inner room. Enter Sun Shou-tsai with Secret Agents A and B.)

**Sun** (to the agents): If you see any suspicious-looking characters, arrest them.

**Agents**: Yes, sir.

(Exit Secret Agent A.)

**Sun**: Let's go in and have a look. (Enters the restaurant with Secret Agent B.)

*(Customers C and D get up to leave.)*

**Sun:** Stop. Where are you from?

**Customer C:** We live here.

**Sun:** In this street?

**Customer D:** Yes. *(Produces a residence certificate.)*

**Sun:** If you see Chao Yung-kang of the Eighth Route Army, mind you report at once. Go!

*(Customers C and D leave the restaurant and go off.)*

**Sun** *(goes to Chao's table. To Li Hu):* You. Where are you from?

**Li Hu:** From Liuchia Bridge, west of the town.

**Sun:** What are you doing here?

**Li Hu:** I came to call on someone.

**Sun:** Call on someone? *(Grabs hold of Li Hu.)* Call on whom? Speak up.

**Squad Leader:** If you hear the name, officer, it will scare you stiff.

*(The squad leader draws his revolver and aims at Sun. Li Hu disarms Sun and his agent. The squad leader throws Sun to the ground while Li Hu marches the agent into the inner room.)*

**Chao** *(takes off his hat to confront Sun, and bangs his fist on the table):*  
Sun Shou-tsai!

**Sun** *(pale with fear, mutters):* Ah, Chao Yung-kang! *(With a crafty smile he gets up.)* So it's Mr. Chao. What can I do for you?

**Chao:** You're to come with us.

**Sun:** Where to?

**Chao:** The Yamato Company.

**Sun:** The Yamato Company? *(Laughs.)* Mr. Chao, the Yamato Company belongs to the Japanese. I...

**Chao:** You have a special pass.

**Sun:** Special pass! *(Unconsciously feels his pocket.)*

*(The squad leader gets the pass out of Sun's pocket.)*

**Sun:** All right, Mr. Chao. You can have my pass. The road is wide; we'll each go our different ways.

**Chao:** Think we're going to let you go?

**Sun** *(desperate):* See here, Chao. This county town is under Japanese control; it's not like your Changchuang Village.

**Chao:** This is Chinese territory; we do as we choose here.

**Sun:** There are Japanese soldiers and secret police in every street and alley. You'll never get away.

**Chao** *(grabs him by the collar):* In town and out of town there are members of the Resistance everywhere. It's you who will never escape. *(Throws Sun to the ground and angrily points at him. Sings.)*  
*Escape punishment? What a hope!*

*The time has come to pay your debts of blood.*

*We are going to smash and bury your old world...*

*(Li Hu kills Sun with a dagger. The waiter runs out from the inner room.)*

**Chao:** Withdraw!

*(The waiter opens the window. The squad leader and Li Hu leap through it, and Soldier B also leaves. Chao takes off his long gown and strikes a pose.)*

*(Curtain)*

## SCENE SEVEN

### THE JAPANESE RUSE

Immediately after the last scene. Kameta's office.

*(As the curtain rises the telephone is ringing. A Japanese soldier picks up the receiver.)*

**Japanese Soldier A:** Hullo... Yes, sir. *(Stands at attention.)*

Colonel Inouyi, Major Kameta is searching for this Chao Yung-kang... Yes, sir. I'll report this to Major Kameta as soon as he comes.

*(Enter Kameta and the Japanese officer.)*

**Japanese Soldier A:** Report. Colonel Inouyi of the Yamato Company wants to know whether Chao Yung-kang has been captured or not.

*(Kameta sighs. Enter the interpreter.)*

**Interpreter:** Excellency, Chao Yung-kang has killed Sun Shou-tsai in a restaurant. He left a message for you too.

**Kameta:** Read it out.

**Interpreter:** Yes, sir. *(Reads the message.)* "Mr. Kameta, I've come today specially to call on you. Thanks to the assistance of your subordinates, we have reduced your granary to cinders. In addition to accomplishing this mission, we have executed a Chinese traitor — Sun Shou-tsai. Many thanks. We shall meet again. Wishing you. . . ."

**Kameta:** Well?

**Interpreter:** "Wishing you the same fate as Sun."

*(In a fury Kameta seizes the note and tears it up. The interpreter goes out.)*

**Kameta:** Chao Yung-kang, Chao Yung-kang, wait till I get my hands on you! All ranks, set out at once.

*(The telephone rings.)*

**Japanese Soldier A** *(answers the phone)*: Hullo, hullo? What? Chao Yung-kang has broken out of the East Gate?

**Kameta:** What?

**Japanese Soldier A:** Chao Yung-kang has broken out by the East Gate.

**Kameta** *(gapes in consternation. Sings)*:

*Chao's coming to town gripes my guts;  
I feel bogged down, befuddled.*

*(Tears off his cap and sits down, fuming with frustration.)* The fellow's playing hide-and-peek with me. When I go to Ma-chuang, he goes to Changchuang; when I go to Changchuang, he goes to the main blockhouse. When I try to catch him from the rear, I find he's miles away. Now he's even infiltrated my

county town. The man's slippery as an eel, elusive as a ghost. *(Stands up.)* All these years I've studied strategy and tactics I've never seen this kind of warfare. A full-ranking major of the Imperial Army, why can't I cope with a coolie from a coal mine? *(An idea strikes him. Sings.)*

*It seems we must alter our tactics,  
The only way to destroy them is by cunning.*

*(Enter Japanese Soldier A.)*

**Japanese Soldier A:** Report. An urgent wire from the commander in the mountains. *(Hands over the telegram.)*

*(Kameta takes it. The soldier leaves.)*

**Kameta** *(reads the telegram with dismay)*: Ah!

**Japanese Officer:** What's the situation in the mountains, chief?

**Kameta** *(anxiously)*: Our commander has been surrounded; his ammunition and grain will soon be exhausted. He accuses us of spoiling his plan by delay. We're ordered to deliver the ammunition and grain by tomorrow. If there's any further delay, we shall be court-martialled.

*(Enter the interpreter.)*

**Interpreter:** A report from the secret service, Excellency. Chao Yung-kang has returned to Changchuang. Shall we set out at once to mop them up?

**Kameta:** Set out at once to mop them up? *(Looks at the telegram and thinks of a ruse.)* Right! See this? *(Waves the telegram.)* Our commander wires that their mopping up in the mountains has been completely successful. *(Laughs.)* We must seize this chance to surround Changchuang and wipe out Chao Yung-kang's lot.

**Interpreter:** Fine.

**Kameta** *(to interpreter)*: Go and order the secret service to spread this news through all the villages and towns. Look smart about it.

**Interpreter:** Yes, sir. *(Exit.)*

**Japanese Officer:** If we go to Changchuang, chief, what about the commander's order?

**Kameta:** Use your brain! Chao Yung-kang left their mountain base in order to pin us down here. I've ordered the secret service to spread the news of our "mopping-up" so as to fool him. That way, we'll shake him off and be able to lead reinforcements to the mountains.

**Japanese Officer:** A brilliant ruse, chief.

**Kameta:** Pass on my order: Zero hour put forward. Tonight we'll slip into the mountains.

(*Curtain*)

## SCENE EIGHT

### IN THE SORGHUM FIELDS

Later that day. In the sorghum fields. When the curtain rises the evening sky is red as flame beyond fields luxuriant with green willows, crimson sorghum and golden millet.

**Hsiao-ying** (*sings off*): *I raise my red-tasselled spear amid the sorghum. . . .*

(*Enters carrying a spear and strikes a heroic pose. Sings.*)

*Stretching far across the plain.*

(*She swiftly circles the stage, whirls round with her spear, halts, then steps backwards, lunges with her spear and strikes another pose. Sings.*)

*My sentry duty done, I go to build tunnels, daring to move mountains.*

*My mother's blood has enriched this embattled land;*

*The seeds of our hatred will soon flower and bear fruit.*

*The Communist Party cares for me like my own mother,*

*Revolutionary troops and people support each other.*

*I vow to be a worthy daughter of China,*

*Holding high the banner of Resistance.*

(*Enter the old man, Sister Liu and Villager B with spades and picks.*)

**Sister Liu:** Hsiao-ying, Hsiao-ying!

**Old Man:** Hsiao-ying!

**Hsiao-ying:** What are you all doing here, Sister Liu?

**Sister Liu:** We've finished this section of the tunnel and come through.

**Hsiao-ying:** Already? (*Looks at the entrance of the tunnel.*) Quick work!

(*The old man sits on a mound before a willow tree. Enter Villagers A and C.*)

**Villager A:** Of course our job was done quickly. Even Old Li pitched in.

**Hsiao-ying:** He's just recovering from his wound; you must look after him.

**Old Man:** Look after him? Why, when he wants to work, nine horses can't hold him back. Didn't you hear him say: the victories Chao's platoon are winning in town have redoubled our strength. We in the villages must compete with our men in town.

**Sister Liu** (*enthusiastically*): Platoon Leader Chao and his men are really splendid. They not only fight the enemy but help us build tunnels too.

**Villager B:** Besides helping us in the fields.

**Hsiao-ying:** And they've helped us study *On Protracted War*.

**Old Man:** That's right. The night before Yung-kang went to the county town, he came to see me. Sitting together on my *kang* we discussed protracted warfare. Chairman Mao says it will have three stages: defensive, stalemate. . . .

**Villager B:** And a big counter-offensive!

**Old Man:** That's right. (*Stands up.*)

**Hsiao-ying:** We wage guerrilla warfare in the enemy's rear. If the Japs come in force, we'll move off.

**Villager C:** If they're few, we'll attack.

**Other Villagers:** If they halt we won't let them slack.

**Old Man:** We'll soon push the devils right back.

(*All laugh.*)

**Hsiao-ying** (*sings*): *Glorious protracted warfare will make us invincible,  
Even the spear in my hand seems sharper;  
Flames of the Resistance are spreading across the plain...*

(*Soldier A calls off: "Platoon Leader Chao's back!" Enter Chao  
in Eighth Route Army uniform with Li Hu and Soldiers A and B.*)

**Chao** (*sings*): *In the fight our village stronghold grows yet stronger.*

**Old Man**: Yung-kang, you've been through a tough time.

**Chao**: So have all you folk.

**Hsiao-ying**: Have you won another big victory, platoon leader?

**Soldier A**: We burned the enemy's granary.

**Li Hu**: And killed the traitor Sun Shou-tsai.

**Hsiao-ying**: Fine. You've settled some scores for us!

**Old Man**: The Japs are deaf and blind; they need those traitors  
as their walking-sticks. When we've smashed all those sticks,  
they'll fall into the water and drown!

**All**: That's right.

**Chao**: Uncle, when a wild dog falls into the water it still struggles  
hard. Hsiao-ying, the militia must be on the alert.

**Hsiao-ying**: We've posted sentries by each path to the village.

**Chao**: Good. Keep a close watch on the enemy's movements.

**Hsiao-ying**: We will. We'd better be off now.

(*Hsiao-ying, the old man, Sister Liu and other villagers go out. The  
sky darkens.*)

**Li Hu** (*watches them leave*): Ha, our folk here really go all out.

**Soldier B**: They've extended their tunnels to the sorghum fields.

**Soldier A**: We ought to learn from their spirit.

**Chao**: Right. There are no natural barriers like hills on the plain,  
but the people are a wall of bronze which is indestructible.  
(*Sits on the mound.*) Comrades, let's discuss again our plan to  
blow up the munitions.

**Soldier A**: Judging by our reconnaissance, we can make use of  
the smuggling traffic of the Yamato Company.

**Soldier B**: They often smuggle goods by rail.

**Soldier A**: We can put our dynamite in a case we got from that  
company.

**Chao**: That's it. We'll disguise ourselves as railway workers and  
make use of this smuggling done by the Japanese secret service.  
(*Stands up.*) We'll get into the station in the name of Colonel  
Inouyi, chief manager of the Yamato Company.

**Li Hu**: Fine. Inouyi used to be Kameta's superior officer and now  
he's in charge of the secret service. Although Kameta has a  
grudge against him, he's afraid of him too.

**Chao**: Still, we must anticipate more difficulties. In case of emer-  
gency, we can open fire to explode the dynamite.

**Soldiers**: Right.

**Chao**: Comrades, we're up against a particularly crafty enemy.  
The War of Resistance is beset with difficulties and danger.  
But in order to save our nation, we must be ready to shed the  
last drop of our blood!

**Soldiers**: Platoon leader, never mind how great the cost, we'll  
pin Kameta down.

**Chao**: As soon as the squad leader returns, if there's no change  
in the enemy situation, we'll go ahead with this plan.

**Soldiers**: Right.

(*Hsiao-ying calls off: "Go on!" She enters with Soldier C and Vil-  
lager C escorting Secret Agent A.*)

**Hsiao-ying**: Platoon Leader Chao. We were on duty when we  
spotted this spy on his way to the garrison headquarters at Hsi-  
chungang. So we crept up on him, knocked over his bicycle and  
made him eat dirt.

**Chao**: What were you doing there?

**Secret Agent A**: Kameta sent me with a message to the garrison.

**Chao**: What message?

**Secret Agent A**: Tomorrow morning he's going to Changchungang  
to "buy vegetables at the fair".

**Chao**: "Buy what vegetables at what fair"? Speak up!

**Secret Agent A**: I don't know.

**Chao**: Stop trying to fool us. Think we don't understand your lingo?

**Hsiao-ying:** Out with the truth! (*Levels her spear at him.*) Speak up. Quick!

(*Soldiers cover the spy with their guns.*)

**Secret Agent A:** All right. . . . I'll tell you. "Buy vegetables at the fair" means to mop up, seize the autumn harvest, burn all, kill all. . . .

**Chao:** Hsiao-ying, take him away. Find out what more he knows.

**Hsiao-ying:** Right. Come on.

(*Hsiao-ying and Villager C take the spy away. Offstage Militiaman A calls: "Platoon Leader Chao!" and enters.*)

**Militiaman A:** Platoon leader, we've discovered that all the Japs in the blockhouses have been issued with fresh ammunition and rations and have filled their canteens with water. They're kicking up a shindy, bragging that they'll come and mop up Chang-chuang tomorrow morning and raze our village stronghold to the ground.

**Chao** (*thoughtfully*): So the Japs in the blockhouses are up to something too.

(*Militiawoman calls off: "Platoon leader!" She enters.*)

**Militiawoman:** We've intercepted a telephone call from Kameta to the Hsichuang garrison headquarters. Tomorrow at dawn he plans to mop up Changchuang. He threatens to wipe out our whole village and take all the crops.

**Li Hu:** Platoon leader, this telephone call tallies with the spy's admission. They're coming here to mop up.

**Soldier B:** So it seems Kameta's really coming.

**Militiawoman:** Let him come. We're ready for him.

**Li Hu:** We must prepare our counter-attack at once. We'll catch Kameta here to avenge Aunt Chang.

**Soldier C:** Yes, we mustn't let the enemy enter this village.

**Li Hu:** If they do, our folk will suffer and all the crops we worked so hard to grow will be spoilt too.

**Soldier B:** But then what about our task — blowing up the munitions?

**Soldier A:** Platoon leader, let's handle this the way we did the main blockhouse. Take advantage of their sortie to blow up their munitions. Then they'll have to turn back.

**Soldiers:** Let's strike, platoon leader! Give the order.

**Chao** (*calmly*): Comrades, we'll strike, don't worry. But we mustn't act rashly. The squad leader isn't back yet from his scouting mission. Is Kameta really planning a "mopping-up" or is he setting a trap? Shall we go to blow up the munitions or prepare to counter-attack? This decision affects the whole military situation and the vital interests of the masses. We must report these developments to Old Li and make all necessary preparations while waiting for instructions.

**Soldiers:** Right.

(*Soldiers and militia leave in different directions. A crescent moon appears in the sky.*)

**Chao:** Is Kameta really coming here or is this a blind? What has he got up his sleeve? (*Puts one foot on a stone and looks up at the moon, lost in thought. Sings.*)

*The silver moonlight shines on crimson sorghum;*

*The situation is urgent, the night short, the journey long.*

*We are still unclear, undecided;*

*The arrow is on the string but the bow is not drawn.*

(*Speeds round the stage then pauses to look into the distance.*)

*I gaze towards Yen-an in the northwest, a fount of light,*

*Where Chairman Mao surveys the whole field of action;*

*He sees the flames of battle in our sorghum fields,*

*Is concerned for this small village where the red flag is still flying;*

*Though hills and streams divide us, I hear his instructions.*

*In assessing the enemy situation*

*I must discard what is false and keep what is genuine,*

*Differentiate between the inner essence and the outer appearance,*

*And weigh everything carefully.*

*Why should Kameta publicize his "mopping-up" expedition?*

*Why blazon the news far and wide?  
Why issue the same order twice?  
Why risk sending a spy to Changchung?  
This must be a feint to fool us  
So that he can slip out his munitions and make a dash for the mountains  
Without us pinning him down and reducing his force.  
But however he racks his brains to set up smoke-screens,  
Guided by Chairman Mao's revolutionary line  
We shall never go astray.  
After careful reconnaissance of the station  
We have found loopholes and can get past their guard.  
I must lead my men to demolish their munitions.  
Nothing can withstand the might of people's war;  
We shall win a new China  
Glorious and resplendent.*

*(Enter Soldier D.)*

**Soldier D:** Platoon leader, a message from our mountain base.  
*(Passes it over.)*

**Chao** *(takes and reads the message. Elatedly):* Assemble at once!

**Soldier D:** Right. Assemble at once!

*(Soldiers enter and fall into line.)*

**Chao:** Comrades! The enemy up in the mountains are about to be wiped out. Our main force will very soon strike down to the plain. The war situation up there and down here makes it clear that Kameta's "mopping-up" is a feint, under cover of which he means to go to the mountains. He's throwing dust in our eyes. But to be ready for all eventualities we must make dual preparations: Prepare to frustrate a possible attack here, and go firmly ahead with our plan to blow up their munitions.

**Soldiers:** Right.

**Chao:** Proceed according to our original plan.

*(Soldier C calls off: "Platoon leader!" and runs in.)*

**Soldier C:** Platoon leader, the squad leader has returned from town.

*(The squad leader hurries in.)*

**Squad Leader:** Platoon leader, there's a change in the situation.

**Chao:** What is it?

**Squad Leader:** The enemy's shipping out munitions. The station's in an uproar. Two hours from now Kameta will start for the mountains.

**Chao** *(paces up and down thinking and consults his watch. To squad leader):* When did you leave the county town?

**Squad Leader:** At ten exactly.

**Chao:** So in little more than an hour Kameta will run for it.

**Li Hu:** The old fox!

**Soldier A:** We mustn't let him get away.

**Soldiers:** Platoon leader, let's make a forced march.

**Squad Leader:** Even running we won't make it.

**Soldiers:** What's to be done then?

**Li Hu:** Too bad we haven't got wings.

**Chao:** Wings? *(Thinks.)* Right, we'll take a train.

**Soldiers:** Take a train!

**Chao** *(exuberantly):* Comrades! *(Sings.)*

*The stakes are high, they brook no delay,*

*We must race with the enemy.*

*A train will lend us wings to fly to the station. . . .*

*(The soldiers run around the stage, then leave. Chao whirls round and strikes a pose expressing determination.)*

*(Curtain)*

## SCENE NINE

### DEMOLITION OF THE ENEMY MUNITIONS

The same evening. The railway station. The platforms are piled with cases of ammunition.

*(As the curtain rises, Japanese soldiers carrying cases cross the stage.)*

**Japanese Officer:** Hurry up!

*(Enter Japanese soldiers with rifles. Then in comes Kameta.)*

**Japanese Officer:** Report. We've finished checking the ammunition.

**Kameta:** Any news of Chao Yung-kang's movements?

**Japanese Officer:** He's in Changchuang making arrangements to resist the "mopping-up".

**Kameta (gloating):** Ha! Well, Chao Yung-kang, we'll meet some other day.

*(Sound of approaching locomotive. Enter Japanese Soldier A.)*

**Japanese Soldier A:** Report, sir, a locomotive is coming in.

**Kameta:** No trains are allowed to stop here.

**Japanese Soldier A:** They say they need to fill up with water.

**Kameta:** Water? Fetch the crew here.

*(Japanese Soldier A goes out. The other soldiers raise their rifles and shout.)*

**Chao (sings off):** *Outside the train wolves are bowling, bayonets gleaming. . . .*

*(Chao, disguised as an engine-driver, walks in calmly followed by Li Hu as the stoker, carrying a suitcase.)*

**Chao (sings):** *With a careful of dynamite, we come to cross swords with the enemy.*

**Kameta:** What's your job?

**Chao:** Engine-driver.

**Kameta (points at Li Hu):** Who's he?

**Li Hu:** The stoker.

**Chao:** We run the same locomotive.

**Kameta (looks at the leather suitcase):** Is that case yours?

**Chao:** Not likely! I'm just a poor engine-driver. This was given me by Manager Wang of Hsiangshun Store to take to Colonel Inouyi of the Yamato Company.

**Kameta:** Colonel Inouyi. . . . *(Abruptly)* How come an engine-driver knows Colonel Inouyi?

**Chao (unruffled):** Excellency! *(Sings.)*

*Running my train on time, up north, down south,  
I know some foreign firms have business with the railway.*

**Japanese Officer:** These companies do a lot of smuggling, chief.

**Kameta (stops him):** Have you ever been to the Yamato Company?

**Chao:** Often.

**Kameta:** That's a good spot: A lotus pond on the left, willow trees on the right, and outside the gate a stepping-stone for horsemen.

**Chao (sings):** *I never saw any lotus pond or willows.*

**Kameta:** And the stepping-stone?

**Chao (sings):** *No stone either.*

**Kameta:** Ah?

**Chao (sings):** *There's a hidden pillbox on each side of the gate.*

**Kameta:** Bah, that's not the place, not the way it looks. You must be a bad character.

**Chao:** Excellency! *(Sings.)*

*Even that security area isn't safe.*

**Kameta:** What do you mean?

**Chao (dramatically):** One evening early this month Colonel Inouyi was checking accounts in his office when suddenly the lights went out. Crack! Crack! A gun barked twice and two of his clerks dropped dead. *(Sings.)*

*Guerrillas slip in and out of town as they please!*

*The whole Yamato Company was so scared,*

*Inouyi had to find new premises and move.*

**Kameta (unable to object, looks at the suitcase):** Open that case for inspection.

**Chao:** Sir, this belongs to the Yamato Company.

**Kameta:** Never mind whose it is. Everything must be searched.

**Chao:** That's fine with me. I'd like to know what's inside it.

*(Li Hu puts down the suitcase. The Japanese officer steps forward.)*

**Kameta (nervously stops him):** Watch out. There may be explosives inside. Take it to a safe place and examine it carefully.

**Chao (promptly):** Are you afraid it's risky? We'll open it for you.

(Li Hu opens the case. The Japanese officer peers in and takes out a packet of opium.)

**Japanese Officer** (*smells it*): Chief, it's all opium.

**Kameta** (*to himself*): Suppose it really is Colonel Inouyi's? (*Thinks of another plan. Turns to Chao.*) The Imperial Army strictly forbids smuggling. This case is confiscated.

**Japanese Officer**: Yes, sir. (*Reaches for the case.*)

**Chao**: Stop!

(Chao steps forward, one foot on the case, and undoes his jacket to disclose a revolver. Japanese soldiers with rifles at once surround him.)

**Kameta** (*taken aback*): Ah, an Eighth Router!

**Chao** (*laughs heartily*): I doubt if you'd recognize an Eighth Router if you saw one!

**Kameta**: Then who the hell are you?

**Chao**: In appearance or in fact?

**Kameta**: In appearance. . . .

**Chao**: An engine-driver.

**Kameta**: And in fact?

**Chao**: One of Colonel Inouyi's secret service. (*Shows his pass.*)

(The Japanese officer waves the soldiers away.)

**Kameta** (*takes and reads the pass*): The secret service! (*His suspicions allayed, he laughs.*) With the military situation so critical, we have to take precautions. Please apologize for me to Colonel Inouyi.

**Chao**: Don't worry, sir. As long as we've still got the goods, we'll carry out our errand all right.

**Kameta**: Fine. (*To the Japanese officer*) Let them leave the station at once. We must set out straight away. Come on!

(Kameta leaves with Japanese soldiers.)

**Japanese Officer**: This place is full of munitions, you mustn't stay here. Leave quickly.

**Chao**: Right away. (*Suddenly turns and seizes a bayonet, then kills the Japanese officer.*)

**Chao** (*sings*): With their munitions blown up,  
The enemy will panic.

(Japanese Soldier E runs in.)

**Japanese Soldier E**: Catch him!

(Chao shoots and kills the soldier.)

**Chao**: Light the fuse!

**Li Hu**: Right.

(A train whistles in the distance. Li Hu fixes the fuse and ignites it.)

**Chao** (*sings*): Our train will fly from town.

Come on!

(A locomotive races in. Chao and Li Hu leap aboard it, raise their revolvers and strike a heroic pose.)

(The locomotive swiftly pulls out.)

**Chorus** (*offstage sing*): On to the front!

(A deafening explosion.)

(Curtain)

## SCENE TEN

### THE ENEMY IS WIPED OUT ON THE PLAIN

Daytime. Changchung Village. On the right a manger and date tree; on the left a well and a wall.

(As the curtain rises the militia, under Li Sheng's direction, lay a landmine. This done, the militiamen go out.)

Villagers cross the stage carrying munitions. The old man comes in with a bucket and Sister Liu with a basket.)

**Li Sheng**: So you've come too, uncle.

**Old Man**: I may be too old to go to the front like those youngsters, but I can still fetch our comrades food and water.

**Li Sheng:** Good for you.

**Sister Liu:** We must hurry, uncle.

*(The old man and Sister Liu leave. Militiamen and women and members of the local armed unit with swords and spears enter separately. They fall into line.)*

**Members of the Local Unit:** Our unit has come to take part in the battle.

**Hsiao-ying:** Our village militia is ready for battle too.

**Li Sheng:** Comrades, since Platoon Leader Chao and his men have blown up the enemy's munitions, Kameta will probably be so desperate that he'll pursue them to our village. We must all of us take the initiative in the battle, co-ordinating with the main force when it comes to wipe out Kameta's troops. *(Sings.)*  
*Red our banners in this fortress of Resistance,*  
*Soaring our resolve to smash the enemy.*  
*Our militia must wage mobile tunnel warfare,*  
*Our local unit must charge when the bugle sounds;*  
*Army and civilians will fight shoulder to shoulder*  
*To destroy the enemy's vain dream of conquest.*  
We shall resolutely wipe out the enemy!

**Militiamen:** Platoon Leader Chao's back!

*(Enter Chao, Li Hu and the squad leader.)*

**All:** Platoon Leader Chao!

**Li Sheng:** Yung-kang! Our main force arrives today. Our instructions are to lure Kameta out of the county town and pin him down near our village.

**Chao:** Kameta's already on his way here in pursuit of us.

**Li Sheng:** Fine. Let's first give him a taste of tunnel warfare.

**Chao:** Win a victory to welcome our main force. Into the tunnels!

*(One by one they disappear into the tunnels.)*

*(Enter Japanese soldiers and Kameta.)*

**Kameta** *(thoroughly shaken, gnashing his teeth):* Damn you, Chao

Yung-kang! You stole my grain and blew up my munitions. I'll fight you to the death! *(Waves his sword.)* Kill!

**Japanese Soldiers:** Yes, sir.

*(Kameta goes out with some of his men. A landmine explodes; three Japanese soldiers fall. Militiamen emerging from secret pillboxes and tunnels kill and wound enemy soldiers and then dart off. Militiaman A appears from behind the manger, shoots and kills a Japanese soldier, then vanishes.)*

*Militiawoman A appears from behind a low wall, shoots and kills another Japanese and vanishes.*

*Hsiao-ying emerges from a tunnel below the manger, fights bravely with her red-tasselled spear and pushes a Japanese into the well. Two more Japanese enter with rifles. Hsiao-ying darts behind the wall. Militiawoman B peeps over the wall, shoots one of the Japanese and ducks out of sight.*

*Militiaman B leaps out from behind the manger, fights a Japanese with his pickaxe and having seized the enemy's rifle leaps into the tunnel by the wall and closes its cover.*

*Another Japanese runs on in search of him. Militiawoman C appears from the tunnel behind the manger and fires. The enemy soldier falls dead and she takes cover.*

*Li Hu emerges from the tunnel in the well and engages a Japanese in close combat. Two other Japanese run in. Li Hu deftly seizes their bayonets and kills one, then leaps down the tunnel below the manger.*

*The two Japanese run to the manger to search for him. Li Hu re-emerges from behind the manger.*

*The battalion commander leads in the main force. They kill these two Japanese. Militiamen and women leap out from the well and the manger. Together they strike a heroic pose.)*

**Li Hu:** Battalion commander!

**Battalion Commander:** Comrades, charge!

*(The bugle sounds, red banners are raised high. Gunfire. The battalion commander and the main force charge out. Regular soldiers and the militia charge across the stage. Eighth Route Army men somersault over the high wall in pursuit of the enemy.)*

*Japanese soldiers fly in panic. Two Eighth Route Army men pursue them with swords and after a fight force two of them to surrender. They go out. Eighth Route Army men and militiamen with rifles escort enemy prisoners across the stage.*

*Kameta dashes in fearfully with four of his men, trying to escape. Chao, entering, intercepts them with a rifle and fearlessly takes on all five of them. He kills one Japanese soldier and the other three run away.*

*Chao with invincible strength fights Kameta with a bayonet until Kameta gives ground.*

*Other Japanese soldiers race in to make a last desperate stand. Chao fights bravely against them. The squad leader, Li Hu and two other Eighth Route Army men run in and together annihilate the enemy.*

*Chao knocks Kameta down with the butt of his gun.)*

**Chao:** Kameta, see the strength of the Chinese people!

*(The main force, militia and villagers surge in from all sides.)*

**Chao (to Kameta):** Surrender your sword!

**All:** Lay down your arms!

**Kameta (swings his sword in desperation, shrieking):** Ahh!

*(Chao and others fire and kill Kameta.)*

**All (cheer):** Long live Chairman Mao! Long live Chairman Mao!

*(The main force and Chao and his men hail each other triumphantly. Chao and the battalion commander grip hands firmly. A scene of tremendous rejoicing. Together all strike a triumphant pose.)*

*(Slow curtain. The end)*

Lu Chun-chao

## A Woman Captain

The officers of various ranks from the ships berthing in the harbour gathered in the meeting room of the port office. The chief dispatcher's briefing on the purpose of the meeting brought a grave look to the faces of all present. For some minutes no one spoke, except to exchange whispered comments. Their serious, thoughtful expressions made it clear what a difficult problem had been placed before them.

Fifteen steel girders for a foreign-aid railway bridge must be shipped to Shanghai as soon as possible. It was indeed a tall order, for there were no ships there built to handle freight of this type. These girders were each 120 feet long and weighed 15 tons. They could neither be stowed in the hatches nor could more than a few be laid lengthwise on the deck. How could an ordinary cargo ship do the job in a single voyage?

"Give us the task!" A soprano voice broke the silence.

All eyes turned to the speaker. She was Li Hsiao-mei, captain of the *S.S. Advance* promoted from the crew during the Cultural

Revolution. She stood up, a slender figure, her black eyes under thick, arched eyebrows shimmering with excitement and determination. Though a little over thirty, she had the enthusiasm and frank unassuming smile of a young girl. Confidently, yet as if sounding out the opinions of the others, she proposed, "We can lay the girders athwart the deck. We have five hatches. I've figured it out — we can ship the whole lot in a single voyage."

The room immediately became animated. Admiring glances were cast at Li Hsiao-mei. But amidst the chorus of approval, someone drawled, "Athwart the deck? Why, the girders will stick out 33.2 feet on each side of the bulwarks! That way. . . ." It was Chang Yung-jui, first mate of the *S.S. Advance*. His hesitant tone struck a jarring note after the stirring voice of the woman captain.

Chang, now in his forties, had formerly been an instructor at a mercantile marine institute. After the Cultural Revolution he had stopped talking down to people, but had become timid and punctilious. He had made a rule for himself: Play safe! When called on for his opinion, he would beat about the bush without committing himself. As he expected, his comment elicited a response from the quartermaster of another vessel.

"I've never read of that way of loading in any books," he said dubiously. "Never heard of such a thing either. This is an open port with many foreign vessels coming and going. Let's not make fools of ourselves. Besides, the course of the Huangpu hasn't been widened. How can you pilot your freighter into the Shanghai port?"

At this, Hsu Ah-chiang, the old boatswain and Party secretary of the *S.S. Advance*, took the floor. He said briskly, "If there's no such thing in any books, we'll add it in!" With this, he cast a glance at Hsiao-mei who sat by his side, eager to see her reaction.

More than a decade before when Hsiao-mei first joined the ship, breaking the old tradition of all-men crews, she had met this same glance. In the years that followed, educated by the Party, she had made rapid progress politically and professionally. Then the Party branch sent her to a training class, after which she was promoted to

the post of quartermaster. During the Cultural Revolution, when the old captain retired, the Party branch and the whole crew chose her to take his place. All these years the Party secretary was always the first to encourage her, support her and fight side by side with her.

Master Ah-chiang's reply strengthened Hsiao-mei's confidence. She added calmly, "True, the course of the Huangpu hasn't been widened. That'll make steering more difficult, so we must take steps to cope. But two months ago one of our pilots created a new record. He piloted a 70,000-ton freighter into the Huangpu. And that ship was over 90 feet in width."

"That was a whole ship — all one piece."

"Ships are manned by men," Hsiao-mei said fervently. "Our crew, tempered in the Cultural Revolution, will handle those foreign-aid girders with the same care as if they were a part of the ship. They'd give their lives for them!"

Crystal clear and terse, Hsiao-mei's argument convinced those who had held different views. Even some of the sceptical nodded their consent. Delighted, the chief dispatcher urged, "Captain Li, let's go to the spot to have a look and take action right now."

With a heavy heart Chang Yung-jui followed Hsiao-mei to the quay. Pointing at the huge girders he suggested, "Captain, these aren't ordinary deck cargo. Better make a trunk-call to the bureau and get a formal order."

Hsiao-mei had a look at her watch and thought: The time for communication between the ports and the bureau has passed. It would only waste time to make a call, for far off in Shanghai the bureau chiefs don't know the situation and so could hardly reply immediately. They would have to consult the port office and the ship concerned. Knowing that Chang was afraid of taking the responsibility, she assured him eagerly, "The port authorities can make the decision on behalf of the bureau. After we set out we can send a telegram to the bureau. The need of the revolution and our international duty have given the order. The people will ratify our action, the whole working class will support us."

As Hsiao-mei mounted the gangway a giant floating crane lifting a huge girder was chugging slowly towards the *S.S. Advance*. The crew had long been waiting on deck for their captain. When they saw her they shouted, "Hsiao-mei! So you grabbed the job of shipping these girders, eh?"

It was clear from this greeting how close they felt to their captain. Yes, together they had swarmed up the mainmast on the rough sea, scraped rust off the hull or painted it on a swaying plank suspended from the bulwark; together they had sat on the hatches practising making hitches and other knots at night when the sea was calm. And she had given them a resolute lead in the struggles during the Cultural Revolution.

"Comrades," Hsiao-mei replied, "these are no ordinary girders. They're a bridge of friendship leading to Africa!"

The battle of loading commenced. As the first girder was laid crosswise on the deck, one end reached almost to the track on the quay. The first mate shook his head despondently. This was too unorthodox. Walking up to the chief dispatcher come to supervise operations, he grumbled, "Don't forget, chief, you're dealing with ships and ships with the sea. In future you ought to arrange a task of this sort beforehand."

Too busy to catch his meaning the chief dispatcher replied earnestly, "It's like this: this foreign-aid project has been speeded up, and this batch of girders has been produced ahead of schedule. So as soon as we were notified we got cracking."

Hsiao-mei chimed in excitedly, "Our comrades are so pleased that this is a foreign-aid mission, we're taking it as a relay race and going full-speed ahead."

"Yes, they always go all out on a foreign-aid job," agreed the chief dispatcher. "Is there anything we can do, Captain Li, to help you deliver this cargo safely on time? We're only too glad to help."

"I've read the weather report. Tomorrow a hurricane will be heading north from the East China Sea at about 60 kilometres per

hour. We'll be running into it. So it's not enough to fasten the girders with cable. We must weld them to the deck."

"All right, I'll ring back to the office and have a team of welders sent here right away."

The quay was crowded. Men from other ships, especially those who had attended the meeting, gathered round to watch the loading. Some of them even went aboard to lend Hsiao-mei a hand. The dock and the deck seethed with activity.

Before the loading was finished, Hsiao-mei and Master Ah-chiang made a tour of inspection. Chang Yung-jui, filled with forebodings, followed them. According to the rule, the first mate was responsible for the safety of all deck cargo. Before the Cultural Revolution, it would have been easy to solve this kind of problem. He could simply open the book of regulations and show them the relevant clauses. But today those old regulations were null and void. Chang sighed as if he had lost his life-preserver. Then goaded by desperation he suggested, "Captain, the loading will be finished soon. Why not write a note on the lading bill to the effect that the port authorities asked us to take on this cargo? Then, in case of accident, we won't be held responsible."

Hsiao-mei turned to look at him gravely. Vexed by Chang's habit of playing safe, she burst out, "First mate, our job isn't simply shipping or trade. Why can't you see this the way the rest of us do? You keep talking about 'responsibility', but you fail to see that our duty is to hold ourselves responsible to the people; our duty is to make revolution!"

As if his head had been doused in cold water, Chang stood gaping at the captain's receding back. He fumed to himself, "I was only thinking of her and of the *S.S. Advance*. But that's all the thanks I get." He could have kicked himself for inviting a snub — not for the first time either. One of the worst times had been two years ago when Hsiao-mei returned to the ship from maternity leave. He gazed at her in bewilderment, completely at a loss to understand why this young mother should leave her home for the sea. He even felt sorry for her. In the same tone of voice as just now he had told her, "No young mother in the world goes to sea. There're plenty of jobs on

land, why choose to follow the sea?" Hsiao-mei, on that occasion, had given him an equally stirring answer: "What I choose is the revolution, not a comfortable happy home!"

Hsiao-mei did not want the kind of sympathy that would undermine her fighting spirit. Before Liberation, barefoot all the year round, this eight-year-old daughter of a seaman had plied a sampan with her mother, braving wind and storms on the Huangpu River. Old boatmen still remembered the disaster which had overtaken that small craft. It was a stormy day. The wind was fierce, the waves were high. An imperialist vessel running heedlessly along capsized the sampan in the swift-racing current. When nearby boatmen rescued mother and daughter from drowning, the little girl shook her fist and glared at the vessel. "Pirate! Pirate!" she cried. "Let's go and have it out with them. What way is that to steer? Where do they think they're going?" The boatmen admired the girl's intrepid spirit.

Now the girders were all on board, but Chang Yung-ju was still bogged down in these exasperating recollections. He shook his head glumly and walked up to the bow.

Now the ship had been cleared and dockers were waiting by the bollard to let go the hawser. The *S.S. Advance* was ready to set sail.

Hsiao-mei mounted the bridge. Like a commander on the battlefield, she was bold, cool and resourceful. Without asking help from a tugboat, she steered the ship steadily towards the mouth of the harbour. Her confident helmsmanship was based on meticulous observations and calculations. The ship made rapid headway, but the militant figure of the woman captain on the bridge could still be seen in the distance and her ringing orders still lingered in the ears of those watching the vessel leave the harbour and the bay encircled by hills.

### 3

The wind was now blowing at 70 kilometres an hour on the north Yellow Sea and seemed to be gathering momentum. Its direction was slightly different from that predicted by the weather forecast.

Buffeted from one side by waves, *S.S. Advance* began to toss and roll. Visibility was low. Hsiao-mei stood on the bridge at the windward side, gripping the rail to keep her balance. Spray from the waves crashing against the bulwark fell over her like raindrops. The deck was awash. Hsiao-mei had weathered many a hurricane. At normal times she could go back to her cabin and rest. But this was an exceptional voyage with a special deck cargo of foreign-aid materials: she must keep careful watch. Several times the watch urged her to rest but she refused to leave. Now and then she reached out her hand to feel the force of the wind, aware that they were now heading into the teeth of the gale. She therefore resolved to stick to her post until daybreak, when the wind should begin to abate and it would be easier to discover problems and take preventive action.

Suddenly a dim light flashed on the pitch-dark deck. The light was muffled by one hand in order not to affect the view from the bridge. Hsiao-mei exclaimed to herself: "Master Ah-chiang's coming!" Sure enough, the boatswain was checking up the girders one by one starting from the after deck. The clang of metal and the sound of tightening screws were heard. Some time later Master Ah-chiang reached the bridge. Groping his way to where Hsiao-mei stood, he said, "Hsiao-mei, everything's under control. I'll check up from time to time. You should turn in now."

Hsiao-mei turned to face him. Though unable to see his face clearly in the dark, she sensed his concern for her and drew strength from it.

"Master Ah-chiang," she said, "since we set sail I've been thinking that we're not merely delivering these 15 steel girders but carrying out a grand internationalist mission. The harder it is, the happier I feel. I can't possibly turn in."

The Party secretary gazed at her intently, reflecting: "Here on the bridge she really thinks deep and sees far — this cadet of yesterday and captain of today!" He was familiar with the captain's history. Her grandfather had gone to work at fourteen as a cabin boy on an imperialist vessel. Brutally treated and exploited by the imperialists, he died a wretched death in the Indian Ocean. Her father, who before Liberation worked on a merchant ship owned



by a reactionary, was arrested and killed for getting the crew to refuse to transport troops for the reactionaries. All three generations had undergone cruel oppression. Now looking at the fearless woman captain, the old boatswain murmured to himself: "She's a chip of the old block — still braver and more steadfast..."

"Why not put on some more clothes, Hsiao-mei?" he asked with concern. "It's colder here than ashore."

"I've put on my sweater. Master Ah-chiang, you're not young. It's you who should rest now. I'll stay here." This said, she propelled him towards the companion-ladder.

The quartermasters had changed shifts twice, but Hsiao-mei persevered at her post, braving the storm. The faint chimes from the cabin told her that it was already four o'clock in the morning. Then, above the roar of the waves, she heard a strange clatter. She promptly switched the searchlight on to the deck. Ah! A part of the bulwark was broken, and the girder welded to it had worked loose and begun to swing. If this went on the other end would soon be ripped off from the bulwark too. Then the cable would snap and the girder slip into the sea. The situation was desperate. She rushed into the wheelhouse, gave orders to slow down and took over the helm. In a matter of seconds she turned the ship's head to reduce the battering of the waves which had made the vessel roll wildly and threatened to hurl the girder into the sea. Only then did she feel easy enough in her mind to return the steering wheel to the helmsman.

Almost at the same time Master Ah-chiang came running to the wheelhouse. Instead of going back to his cabin, he had continued making his round of the deck. When he heard that clatter he knew that something was wrong. He immediately raised the alarm and mustered the whole crew to save the girder.

The men, rushing out, saw the light on the bow and discovered their boatswain on deck. Dawn was breaking, shedding a hazy light over the sea.

Ploughing into the teeth of the wind, the ship began pitching and the girder thrashed about wildly. At this juncture Chang Yung-

juí appeared on the scene. In the face of the accident he was pale with fear. All he could do was yell, "Careful! Be careful!"

Master Ah-chiang coolly sized up the situation. While the 15-ton girder was thrashing about, nobody could go near it. First they must stop it from pitching and then tie it up. He turned and made for the bow, leaping each girder in his way like a hurdle-racer. Having fetched a cushion from the storeroom, he chose a higher spot to stand on, then glanced at the wheelhouse. He had no need to open his mouth at this crucial moment. Hsiao-mei knew what he wanted. Once again she replaced the helmsman and steered steadily straight ahead.

Waiting for the second when the girder swung backward, Master Ah-chiang flung the cushion into the gap. His aim and timing were perfect! The crew raised a great shout as the girder stopped pitching. But the boatswain, engrossed in his task, lost his balance and fell backward, ramming his right leg into some broken piping. He had risen to his feet by the time the others reached him and, limping, he led them into battle again.

After two hours' gruelling struggle they left the deck in content, the girder made fast. Hsiao-mei saw a tall seaman carry Master Ah-chiang on his back to the stern and knew from this that the boatswain's injury was serious. She was anxious to go to him, but while the storm still raged she must stay in the wheelhouse.

At dusk the wind dropped. Hsiao-mei went to the fo'c'sle. The men crowded around Master Ah-chiang broke off their discussion as she stepped in, and stood up to let her have the seat by his bunk. The boatswain lying there touched his injured leg. "The first mate's just left," he told her. "He gave me another dressing. My leg's a bit swollen, but nothing to worry about. It can keep until we reach port." Then changing the subject he continued, "He showed me a sea-damage report. Said he'd given you another copy."

That sparked off a fresh discussion. A seaman with the report in his hand said, "Captain, I disagree with this report. Just hear what he's written. He says we didn't give careful consideration to the shipment, our freighter is old, and we shouldn't have loaded the cargo the way we did."

"This fellow Chang always used to stand in our way or just shake his head; now he tries to steer clear of trouble, shifting all responsibility to other people."

Hsiao-mei saw good reason for their resentment and sharp criticism of the first mate. She herself had no common language with him. They had not hit it off well in their work for a long time. Once she had even wanted to have him transferred to another ship. But Master Ah-chiang disagreed. "Hsiao-mei," he said, shaking his head. "You've overcome a great many difficulties. How come you lack confidence in uniting with, educating and remoulding people like Chang? You're from a worker family yourself. You mustn't give this problem a wide berth."

With the help of the Party secretary, Hsiao-mei finally solved her ideological problem. Now, hearing these criticisms, she felt that a fuller discussion of the question was called for. She said, "In my experience, whenever I take on a new job I need to hear different opinions before I can tackle it with confidence. When somebody opposes me I have to think the matter through carefully, and that gives me more confidence and courage in my work. Take this accident for example, we'll become more experienced provided we draw a lesson from it."

There was silence as everybody thought this over. It seemed to the crew that their captain was standing even higher and seeing even further than before.

"Of course," Hsiao-mei went on, "we should help Chang Yung-juí straighten out his thinking. I'll swap ideas with him after his shift." Meanwhile she had spotted a new cadet squatting by the door mending his overalls as he listened thoughtfully to their conversation.

"Give that to me," she said, walking up to him. She took over the needle and thread, then began sewing deftly in the lamplight. At the same time she asked, "What's your opinion, Young Wu?"

The boy had been flustered when the captain grabbed his needle; he was even more taken aback when she wanted to hear his views.

"Captain," he blurted out ingenuously, "this beats all the political study we had at school."

True, life at sea is rich and wonderful: Ideological struggles, storms, fierce battles and the zest of living... Sitting among the crew Hsiao-mei felt at ease. As she went on mending, a smile lit up her face.

#### 4

When Li Hsiao-mei went to the first mate's cabin, Chang Yung-ju was going through some documents. He had heard some of the reactions to his report on sea damage. To his mind, different ratings naturally saw problems very differently. He was the first mate on the *S.S. Advance* and Hsiao-mei a new skipper, so if anything went wrong he would be held partly to blame. His reputation would suffer... Working with the woman captain he had constant premonitions of disaster. So when Hsiao-mei showed up, he assumed that she had come to discuss his report on sea damage.

In fact, when Hsiao-mei read Chang's report, an incident that had happened before the Cultural Revolution came to her mind. That, too, concerned a report. "Do you still remember the report on Chih-hao's case, chief?" was her first question after she was seated.

"Of course." Chang Yung-ju sighed. "I'll never forget that business as long as I live." In his eyes he seemed to see the scene again.

One summer afternoon, as the *S.S. Advance* moored in a small harbour at the foot of some mountains to unload grain, dark clouds suddenly gathered in the sky and a high wind sprang up. A big rainstorm was brewing. To save the grain, the entire crew pitched in to cover the hold. Soon the downpour broke. Any second's delay would expose the grain to a soaking. But the wind was so strong that it blew the heavy tarpaulin about like paper. At this critical moment, Hsiao-mei leapt on to the tarpaulin and half the crew followed her action. Together they pressed it down with their bodies. Despite the torrential rain they stuck it out there until victory. During this battle a hatch, carried off by the wind, struck the seaman Chih-hao in the small of his back. According to the regulations of that time, any accident on board meant a black mark against not only the individual involved but the whole crew. So, Chang Yung-ju as

the officer in charge analysed the reason for the accident as follows: "It was owing to inadequate supervision by the leadership and to his own carelessness."

Hsiao-mei, then steersman, did not agree with this. "That's just not true," she protested. "Chih-hao should be commended for his dauntless communist fighting spirit. Your unfair report can only serve to lower the crew's morale."

"It's clearly laid down in the regulations," was Chang Yung-ju's rejoinder. "No matter what you say, I must write the report and he'll have to be reprimanded."

"I'll protest to the leadership," said Hsiao-mei stoutly. "This is no way to treat our seamen."

Several days later Hsiao-mei went to the bureau and talked the matter over with those in charge there. "We didn't make these rules," she was told. "To change them would involve other departments. But we'll consider it."

But these rules and regulations remained intact until in the spring thunder of the Cultural Revolution Hsiao-mei wrote a big-character poster to criticize them, which rang up the curtain of the struggle between two lines in the navigation field.

This recollection stirred both the captain and her first mate. "I'll never forget that either," Hsiao-mei said. "I learned a lot from it. We often have problems in our work. But how do we analyse them and deal with them? How can we draw the correct conclusion from them?" She handed the report to Chang and went on, "Please read it over. I'm sure you'll spot what's wrong in it. So long as we stand by the masses and think as they think, we can correct our mistakes and see things clearly."

Hsiao-mei's frank, cordial advice struck home to Chang's heart. Without a word, he took the report back.

#### 5

The *S.S. Advance* had planned to enter Shanghai harbour before it was dark, but the rescue of the girder on the way had delayed her.

She did not reach Wusung, entrance to the harbour, till late at night. A wire from the bureau instructed Li Hsiao-mei to wait outside the harbour until the arrival of a captain who was on his way by motor-boat to help pilot the freighter in. When Chang Yung-jui learned of this news he began to speculate: Send another captain to help her? The bureau must have doubts about our captain's skill in navigation. They're being tough on her. It'll make her lose face.

However, the newcomer whom Chang greeted at the gangway turned out to be the old captain of *S.S. Advance*. A seasoned seaman, he had long since retired. "So it's you, Captain Chen! Well, this is a surprise!" exclaimed Hsiao-mei in delight as the first mate ushered the old man into her cabin.

"You weren't expecting me, eh, Hsiao-mei?" The old man beamed. "No. I must call you captain."

"No, Captain Chen," Hsiao-mei protested fondly. "You saw me grow up, you put me through my training. To me, you'll always be my captain, so you must go on calling me Hsiao-mei."

Pointing to Master Ah-chiang with whom he exchanged a cordial handshake, the old captain said, "It's he who really trained you." Then he turned to Master Ah-chiang and said with a smile, "There was no need to worry when I handed over my job to this girl. But after all my years at sea it hurt me to leave my ship. They know how I feel at the bureau, so this morning they rang me up asking me to come aboard to help Hsiao-mei pilot the ship into the harbour. They said that would give me a chance to see how the younger generation in our mercantile marine is shaping up."

"To ensure the safe delivery of this consignment of foreign-aid materials many comrades have helped us out," said Hsiao-mei with feeling. "Captain Chen, before we put in, what precautions should we take?"

"We're moored at the head of the bay. The navigable channel is narrow and they're still dredging it. Besides there's a flood tide today, so the current will be extra swift. And these steel girders have doubled the width of the ship. Hsiao-mei, you must put your best helmsman at the wheel today."

After considering for a while, Hsiao-mei glanced at Master Ah-chiang and then said incisively, "I'll take the wheel today, Captain Chen."

Captain Chen did not answer at once. But Chang Yung-jui was amazed by the girl's earnest attitude. Her way of thinking was so different from his: she even wanted to take the wheel herself! A captain steering the ship into the harbour was surely unprecedented in the history of navigation. He stared wide-eyed at Hsiao-mei as if seeing her for the first time.

Captain Chen's long silence made Hsiao-mei anxious. She said emphatically, "Captain Chen, you know me. I grew up in a sampan on the Huangpu River. I'll be able to do the job all right, don't worry."

"Nobody says you can't do the job." Captain Chen brushed this aside. "But now you're a captain."

"I agree with Hsiao-mei," Master Ah-chiang put in. "A captain must be a jack of all trades. As you know, Captain Chen, Hsiao-mei's the best steersman we have. It's settled then."

The *S.S. Advance* unmoored and nosed her way toward the harbour. The swift current dashing against the ship made leaping waves wash both banks of the Huangpu River. Their splash echoed clearly through the quiet night. The freighter ploughed steadily forward. Standing on the bridge, Captain Chen issued no orders. He only turned from time to time to look at Hsiao-mei with an admiring smile.

The little sampan girl who had suffered so much in the old society had changed completely after Liberation, maturing rapidly. Then the Cultural Revolution had tempered her and made her even stronger. Daring to shoulder heavy loads, to blaze new trails and fight against outworn traditions, she was full of drive and boldness. She was a worthy successor to the revolutionary cause!

When the *S.S. Advance* reached the dock the day was just breaking and the banks of the Huangpu were reddened by morning clouds. A car was waiting on the bank to take Master Ah-chiang to hospital for a check-up and then to take Captain Chen home. Hsiao-mei and her crew saw the two old men ashore. At parting, she grasped

Captain Chen's hands and said with emotion, "On behalf of the whole crew, thank you very much, Captain Chen. You must come back more often to see us."

"I certainly will, Hsiao-mei." The old man nodded. "And I must thank you comrades for letting me share in your happiness." Turning, he gripped Chang Yung-jui's hands and said, "You're younger than I am, Chang. How I envy you, working in a collective like this."

Chang Yung-jui's face suddenly turned red. He mumbled something incoherent. Then, he walked over to Hsiao-mei and said, "Hsiao-mei, this trip has taught me a great deal. I used to be afraid to shoulder heavy loads, afraid to face difficulties. I was thinking of myself all the time, you see..."

"It's good that you've realized it." Hsiao-mei nodded. "Hope you'll be more active in future." She stepped up to the boatswain and said gently to him, "After we finish unloading, we'll come and see you, Master Ah-chiang."

The car started. Master Ah-chiang craned his head out of the window to nod good-bye to Hsiao-mei and the crew. As the car rolled off, his eyes blurred, but he had a mental picture of Li Hsiao-mei like an intrepid petrel boldly and resourcefully battling with great storms.

*Illustrated by Chen Yen-ning*

*Poems*

*Han Tsung-shu*

*Blow Ten Thousand Tunes  
on the Leaves*

Are those peacocks alighting on our hills  
Where the new reservoir shines as clear as a mirror?  
Are those herds of golden deer roaming our hills  
Where the grass is as green as emeralds?

They're not peacocks preening themselves beside the mirror,  
They're our Miao girls happily picking the silver-white cotton;  
They're not golden deer bounding over the jade-green carpet,  
Bunched like coloured clouds, our commune's stock is grazing there.

In the past we could make no wine, wear no embroidered dresses,  
Our Miao songs expressed our endless pain and anger.

Then came Chairman Mao's soldiers, driving away all wolves,  
Now our dew-spangled hills are always bathed in sunlight.

Don't say I'm too old to sing because my hair is hoary,  
My voice is as vigorous and strong as that of any youth.  
Blow ten thousand tunes on the leaves,  
A long, long life to our great leader Chairman Mao!



*Liang Shang-chuan*

### *The New Liangshan Mountains*

The Lesser Liangshan Mountain is bigger,  
The Greater Liangshan Mountain is smaller;  
But, big or small,  
Each is decked out in its best.

Flocks of sheep bleat at banks of wild flowers,  
Clumps of wild flowers smile at the sheep;  
But which are sheep, which flowers,  
Only the shepherd on the mountain knows.

Canals ring the mountain round  
Like girdles of gleaming silver;  
Are these canals or are they silver girdles?  
The rice shoots, questioned, simply nod their heads.

Terraced wheat-fields mount to the sky  
Like golden ladders, higher and yet higher;

Are these wheat-fields or golden ladders?  
Better ask the early cuckoo for the answer!

We cross ninety-nine ridges,  
On each the sun is shining;  
We sing ninety-nine songs,  
And each song is a new one.

For centuries dark clouds loomed over us —  
Slaves, risen up, have swept them away;  
For centuries these peaks were locked in ice —  
Songs of joy melt the ice away!

The Lesser Liangshan Mountain is bigger,  
The Greater Liangshan Mountain is smaller;  
But large or small both are mountains of silver and gold,  
Year by year they shine more splendid!



*Chin Chun-sheng*

## *A Joyful Morning*

In the haze and pearly light of dawn  
Our dairy farm lies blanketed in mist,  
White as our milk are the gossamer strands  
That shroud our fields and homes.

Half-glimpsed through the milk-white vapour,  
Shadows move busily to and fro;  
Wearing bright scarves our milk-maids have come,  
There they are beside our herd.

As the fog lifts and turns into a drizzle  
Fast flows the milk into their pails,  
While merry chatter and cheerful songs  
Ring out across the filmy landscape.

Although our milk-maids work so deftly,  
When milking ends so also does the moist drizzle,  
Bright rays gild our mountains and rivers,  
Our dairy farm lies golden in the morning sun.

Who appreciates this sweet life most?  
An old herdsman tells his tale and says,  
“In the past the landlord seized all that the cows gave,  
But now the pearl-white milk belongs to all our people.”

After listening to the old herdsman’s story  
Our milk-maids dance for happiness,  
While he holds high a cup of milk and toasts,  
“To Chairman Mao, our best, best wishes.”



*Liu Tsu-tzu*

## *Carrying-Bands*

All the peasant women in the hills  
Have bands across their backs,  
Bands running over their shoulders  
Like brooks flowing down a cliff. . . .

Some of these bands are green as trees,  
Some red as roses, others white as clouds. . . .  
It may be that living in the hills  
The women love rainbow colours.

In spring they go to the fields laden with hope,  
In autumn they return with the fruit of their labour;  
Their babies on their backs, they herd cattle at dawn  
And water their cabbage patches after dusk. . . .

In days gone by, in those years of misery,  
They carried rice for landlords, usurers;

Carried their starving children to flee from famine,  
Begging their way from one village to the next. . . .

Then, to win Liberation,  
They carried ammunition through enemy lines;  
On the ruins of the old world, shedding hot tears,  
They waved their bands to greet the rising sun.

These are no ordinary carrying-bands:  
In them the past and future are interwoven.  
What load can they not carry?  
They are strong enough to move mountains. . . .

Now we youngsters have come to make these hills our home,  
We too must weave bands like these;  
We must temper ourselves to carry heavy loads  
And, bearing our people's hope, march into the future!



## *On the Classical Heritage*

Ever since its appearance in the middle of the eighteenth century, Tsao Hsueh-chin's novel *Hung Lou Meng* or *The Dream of the Red Chamber* has made a deep impression at home and abroad.

This novel in 120 chapters totals more than one million words. The first manuscript version of only eighty chapters was known as *The Story of the Stone*; but in the later part of the eighteenth century the 120-chapter version entitled *The Dream of the Red Chamber* was published.

Tsao Hsueh-chin lived between the twenties and the sixties of the eighteenth century. He probably began work on the novel in the forties and had not completed it by the time of his death. Thus the present-day popular edition consists of eighty chapters by Tsao Hsueh-chin and a sequel of forty chapters by Kao Ngo who outlived Tsao Hsueh-chin.

The novel is superbly constructed and tremendously rich in content. Its main theme is the decline and fall of four powerful feudal noble families, the Chias, Wangs, Shihs and Hsuehs; and the plot centres round the activities of the Chia family — hereditary officials of the two houses of Duke Ning and Duke Yung — and their associates. The book gives a thorough exposure of the iniquities of these four families who connive to oppress the people, showing up the man-eating character of feudal society and its spiritual prop, Confucianism. The sympathy expressed for the bondslaves' revolt against feudal oppression, and the fight against feudal orthodoxy put up by Pao-yu and Tai-yu, young rebels of the noble class, foretells the inevitable doom of Chinese feudal society. The novel touches on and criticizes many important aspects of the feudal system: the state power, the bureaucratic system, the clan system, the status of bondslaves, the marriage system and the examination system. It is thus a political historical novel, the story of the decline and fall of feudal society presented in literary form.

During the last two centuries, so many scholars have studied *The Dream of the Red Chamber* that this field of research is known as "Red-ology". And views have differed sharply, from the start, on the problem of how to evaluate the historical content and social significance of this novel.

Soon after its publication, *The Dream of the Red Chamber* was maliciously condemned by certain feudal-minded scholars as likely to lead readers astray and

debauch them. At the same time the work was regarded as a *roman à clef*, and fantastic theories were advanced to link it with specific historical incidents and characters and to explain its "hidden meaning". This was the work of "Red-ologists" of the old school.

After the May 4th Movement of 1919 a new school of "Red-ologists" headed by Hu Shih, a reactionary scholar of the comprador-bourgeois class, made even more serious distortions of this novel. Hu Shih claimed that it was an autobiography written when the author repented bitterly of his mis-spent past, and that it was a "masterpiece of naturalism" based on his early life, thus completely negating the work's social and historical significance. Yu Ping-po subsequently enlarged on Hu Shih's fallacies, alleging that *The Dream of the Red Chamber* expressed the author's remorse over his early love affairs and was a lament for his past. According to him, the tone of the novel was "sad without bitterness" and its main theme was the vanity of worldly existence. For a long time these reactionary views of the Hu Shih school dominated the study of classical Chinese literature and exercised a pernicious influence on readers.

After Liberation in 1949, the revisionist line in literature and art promoted by the renegade and traitor Liu Shao-chi and his agents in the field of literature, such as Lu Ting-yi and Chou Yang, enabled Yu Ping-po to republish his *Reevaluation of "The Dream of the Red Chamber"* written in 1922 under the new title *Studies of "The Dream of the Red Chamber"*. Thus this bourgeois-idealist work of the Hu Shih school which had poisoned the minds of readers of classical literature for more than thirty years continued to circulate.

In October 1954, Chairman Mao read an article by some young people debunking this work by Yu Ping-po. He promptly supported it by writing a *Letter Concerning Studies of "The Dream of the Red Chamber"*, personally initiating and leading a great mass movement to repudiate the bourgeois-idealist views of the Hu Shih school. This movement was highly successful. However, Chou Yang and his clique tried frantically from the start to lead astray this great debate by turning it into a purely academic discussion. Later, in 1961 and 62, they published researches running into millions of words on the date of Tsao Hsueh-chin's death, his ancestry, the site of the Chia family garden and other irrelevant details, staging a big come-back for the idealist theories of Hu Shih's school.

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution smashed this revisionist line in literature and art. Guided by the revolutionary line of Chairman Mao, researches into our classical heritage have broken fresh ground. In recent years many new studies of *The Dream of the Red Chamber* have appeared in newspapers and periodicals. The article we publish here is one of them.

To help our readers to understand this article, we are also presenting a translation of part of Chapter 4 of this novel, "A Monk from Gourd Temple Muddles Up a Case".

— The Editors

## "The Dream of the Red Chamber" Must Be Studied from a Class Standpoint

*The Dream of the Red Chamber* is the novel with the finest integration of form and content in all China's classical literature. As Lu Hsun pointed out: "The appearance of *The Dream of the Red Chamber* smashed the traditional concepts and ways of writing." However, for a very long period the true ideological significance of this masterpiece went unrecognized. So-called "Red-ologists" both old and new, setting out from a landlord or bourgeois viewpoint and taking a thoroughly idealist, metaphysical approach, did their utmost to distort or obscure the historical content and social significance of this novel by means of researches into trivialities and the concoction of fantastic theories.

Our great leader Chairman Mao, who has always paid keen attention to the class struggle in the ideological field, made a penetrating Marxist analysis of this outstanding novel. The light shed by him on this subject has shown us the way to make a scientific study of this classical work. In October 1954, Chairman Mao in his *Letter\**

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\*This is a letter written by Comrade Mao Tsetung to the comrades of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party and other comrades concerned.

*Concerning Studies of "The Dream of the Red Chamber"* trenchantly rebuked those like Liu Shao-chi, Lu Ting-yi and Chou Yang who had formed a united front in idealist theory with bourgeois writers and become willing captives of the bourgeoisie. At the same time he called for the launching of a struggle against the bourgeois idealist fallacies of Hu Shih's school in the realm of classical literature, fallacies which had poisoned the minds of young people for more than thirty years. During this struggle the proletariat, holding high the banner of revolutionary criticism, won great victories in repudiating bourgeois idealism and propagating materialism. However, Liu Shao-chi, Chou Yang and their lackeys frantically opposed this directive of Chairman Mao's and from the start tried to turn the serious political struggle into a "purely academic" debate. When this failed, they continued to fight back. Openly taking over the bourgeois-idealist mantle of Hu Shih's school, they opposed the Marxist class theory, peddled the theory of human nature of the landlord class and bourgeoisie, and claimed that the *Dream* was a novel transcending classes, its main theme being "romantic love". Some wrote articles reiterating emphatically that love is an "eternal theme", putting forward the theory that this was a novel of prototypes transcending historical periods and classes and virtually presenting it as a model exposition in literature of the bourgeois theory of human nature. Anti-Marxist fallacies of this sort completely distorted the novel and the purpose of its author Tsao Hsueh-chin.

Is this novel's main theme romantic love? No. Analysed from the Marxist class viewpoint, its main theme is political and its content is class struggle. The *Dream* is a political historical novel. Tsao Hsueh-chin had the courage to swim against the tide: he opposed Confucianism\* and admired the Legalist school.\*\* Born into a noble

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\*A school started by Confucius (551-479 B.C.) advocating reaction and restoring the ways of the ancients. Confucius attempted to save the old slave society by opposing social changes. In later times, Confucianism was taken over and developed by feudal rulers and became a reactionary ideological weapon in the hands of the feudal ruling class to oppress the people.

\*\*The Legalist school, principally represented by Shang Yang (?-338 B.C.), Hsun Tzu (circa 313-238 B.C.) and Han Fei (circa 280-233 B.C.), was an important

family on the decline, he had first-hand experience of its days of splendour as well as of its downfall, and he saw the unavoidable doom of the feudal ruling class. His depictions of the decline and fall of four powerful feudal clans — the Chias, Wangs, Shihs and Hsuehs — vividly reflected the class relationships and class struggles of eighteenth-century feudal society in China. He boldly attacked that society and Confucianism which was its spiritual mainstay, penetratingly exposing the inevitable collapse of the feudal system. Although Tsao Hsueh-chin had certain reformist illusions and naturally lacked a conscious class viewpoint, his views were democratic for those times and he laid bare many social and political abuses of his day, presenting us with a panorama of class struggle during the last stage of feudalism in China. So we regard this novel as a graphic encyclopaedic chronicle of feudal society. It should be read as history, not as a romance.

At the beginning of the *Dream*, Tsao Hsueh-chin makes clear his intention to "cover up the real facts" and to "use false words and rustic language". By "real facts" he means the political struggle, and his romantic story is the cloak to cover up the political struggles depicted in the novel. He also vehemently denounces past writings about talented scholars and beauties with their stereotyped heroes and heroines, pointing out that all these works were licentious and low. This criticism draws a sharp distinction between the central theme of the *Dream* and that of previous vulgar romances.

In Chapter 4 "A Monk from Gourd Temple Muddles Up a Case", Tsao Hsueh-chin again discloses the purpose of his whole work, presenting its main content yet more explicitly. Here, the yamen runner's explanation of the term "Officials' Life-preserver" is a devastating exposure and denunciation of the whole feudal system. The

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school of thought opposed to the Confucian school during the Warring States Period. It reflected the interests of the rising feudal landlord class and propagated the materialist view that "man's will can conquer Heaven" as opposed to the idealist concept of "abiding by the will of Heaven". It advocated political reform and opposed retrogression. It supported rule by "law" instead of by "the rites", and the dictatorship of the landlord class in place of the dictatorship of the slave-owning class. These men were later known as the Legalists.

“Officials’ Life-preserver” which he hands to the new prefect starts as follows:

The Chinling Chias,  
If truth be told,  
Have halls of jade,  
Stables of gold.  
The O-pang Palace,  
Fit for a king,  
Isn't fine enough  
For the Shihs of Chinling.  
If the Dragon King wants  
A white jade bed,  
He applies to the Wangs  
Of Chinling, it's said.  
And the Hsuehs  
Are so rich and grand,  
Gold is like iron to them  
And pearls like sand.

On the surface this doggerel describes the wealth and power of four feudal families, but actually it shows them up as a moribund, parasitic clique of nobles. Such feudal cliques existed in all provinces. “If unknowingly you offend one of these families, you may lose not only your post but your life as well.” Though this passage depicts one facade only of the class struggle of that age, describing how Hsueh Pan, a son of the Hsueh family of Court Purveyors, beats to death Feng Yuan, son of a minor official, this is the prelude to many such tragedies caused by these four families. We may therefore consider it an epitome of the whole novel, a key to understanding the *Dream's* significance. From this standpoint we can see more clearly the main content of this highly complex novel with its more than four hundred characters, and the deep thought given by the author to expressing his political theme.

*The Dream of the Red Chamber* was written during the “prosperous reign” of Chien-lung in the Ching Dynasty when some early stirrings of capitalism had appeared in what was still a feudal society. On the surface peace reigned, but behind the scenes lurked danger and the people lived in bitter poverty. For China's old feudal society was

on the verge of collapse. Less than eighty years after the author's death came the Opium War,\* and after more than two thousand years of feudalism China began to change into a semi-feudal, semi-colonial country. The year 1851 saw the outbreak of the Taiping Rebellion, the biggest peasant uprising in Chinese history. So the “prosperous reign” of Chien-lung was merely the last refulgence of the setting sun of feudalism. The *Dream* reflects this inevitable historical trend, foretelling the final collapse of feudal society.

Limited by his class and his environment, Tsao Hsueh-chin was not very familiar with life in the countryside. There are few direct descriptions of village life in the novel. It has, however, many references, direct or indirect, to struggles between the peasants and the landlords which affect the development of other social contradictions. The first chapter narrates how a petty official Chen Shih-yin, after his house is burned down, goes to live in the country. But flood, drought and poor harvests result in a series of peasant uprisings, and government troops are sent to suppress them, making life in the villages anything but peaceful and forcing Chen to sell his farm and move in with his father-in-law. This passage shows the acuteness of the class contradictions and struggles at that time, reflecting the landowners' fear of peasant uprisings. The whole fabric of feudalism was tottering. As the curio dealer Leng Tzu-hsing says of the household of Duke Yung of the Chia clan in the second chapter: “Outwardly they may look as grand as ever, but their purses are nearly empty.” This is another vivid summing up of that age.

Against such an historical background, we can see the profound and typical significance of the author's choice of the four powerful feudal families, the Chias, Wangs, Shihs and Hsuehs as his subject-matter; for by making the decline and fall of these four families the central thread, he is able to reveal many different aspects of the class struggles towards the end of feudal society. Chairman Mao has pointed out: **“The patriarchal-feudal class of local tyrants, evil**

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\*In 1840 in order to enforce the import of opium into China, the British government sent troops to attack China and these met with the resistance of the Chinese army.

**gentry and lawless landlords has formed the basis of autocratic government for thousands of years. . . .** The four families in this novel, which connive with other similar noble cliques, represent the basis and main support of feudal autocratic rule in China in the eighteenth century. The Chias are typical of all the others. Influential, well-known and connected by marriage with the Imperial House, they epitomize the close bonds politically and economically and common interests of these four families. In the Yung mansion, the old dowager represents the big official Shih family; the second master Chia Cheng's wife Lady Wang and her nephew's wife Hsi-feng represent the family of the big warlord Wang, Military Inspector of the Nine Provinces; while Lady Wang's sister Aunt Hsueh and her daughter Pao-chai represent the wealthy Hsueh family of Court Purveyors. These four families are all related by marriage. "Injure one and you injure them all, honour one and you honour them all." This aristocratic clique has its tentacles in the court as well as in the provinces, and its fate is closely bound up with that of the whole feudal dynasty. Thus the contradictions which unfold around the Chia family epitomize the class struggle of feudal society at that time.

In this cultured, imposing Chia mansion with its opulence and high living, the class contradictions of feudal society are sharply delineated. This is a paradise for the ruling class, a hell for the bondservants. The feudal masters and mistresses in the Chia mansion number less than thirty, but they rule over more than three hundred servants and slaves. The autocrats of the landlord class represented here by the old dowager, her sons Chia Cheng and Chia Sheh, Lady Wang, Chia Cheng's nephew Chia Chen, Chia Sheh's son Chia Lien and his wife Hsi-feng. . . all appear models of propriety but are in fact dissolute and dead to shame. They cruelly exploit and persecute their servants and ruthlessly suppress young rebels against their own class such as Pao-yu and Tai-yu. The servants and slaves from poor families are condemned to a life of dire misery. Some of them, like Yuan-yang, are the children or grandchildren of bondslaves of this clan, destined to slavery before they are born; others like Ching-wen and the Soochow child actresses are carried off by force or sold into slavery

because of their poverty, or are gifts from other noble families who dispose of them as if they were cattle. Robbed of their freedom they suffer all kinds of oppression and humiliation while their feudal masters live in luxury, spending several dozen taels of silver for a single meal, using more than a dozen chickens for one single dish. As the peasant woman Granny Liu comments: the cost of a crab feast which seems nothing special to the Chias would be enough to keep country folk for a whole year. To receive a short visit from Chia Cheng's eldest daughter Yuan-chun, the Imperial Concubine, they lay out a huge garden complete with pavilions and lodges, rockeries and pools, bamboos and flowers, producing a scene of such splendour that even the Imperial Concubine deploras their extravagance. They squander tens of thousands of taels of silver on slave girls, instructors, musical instruments and costumes to set up a private theatre for their amusement.

The wanton luxury of this ruling élite bankrupted the peasant masses. In Chapter 53, the bailiff of one of their farms pays rent to the Chia family during a famine. The rent in money and kind is quite staggering, yet Chia Chen is not satisfied. "What use is this?" he demands. "If you don't pay up, who will?" They practise usury too. Hsi-feng, who manages the Chia household, keeps back the bondservants' monthly allowance to lend it out at high interest, and in less than a year amasses some thousand taels of silver for her own use. The Hsueh family of Court Purveyors not only get stipends and grain from the government but also open pawnshops. It is evident that countless poor people are bankrupted by their exploitation.

The novel deals with a few years only in the history of decline of these four powerful families. During this short period several dozen people lose their lives, either killed outright or hounded to death by the iniquitous feudal system. Thus the hands of these feudal rulers are stained with the blood of slaves and other innocent people. Many shocking incidents occur in the first eighty chapters written by Tsao Hsueh-chin. Here are a few examples:

Hsueh Pan, the prodigal son of the Hsueh family, is a local despot in Chinling. Relying on his wealth and power, he seizes a girl by

force and kills her lover Feng Yuan. To him, however, taking a life is nothing. Confident that he can hush the matter up by spending a little money, he goes off with his mother and sister. Though the Feng family sues him for a year, the corrupt official Chia Yu-tsun who has become prefect of Yingtien on the strength of his connection with the Chia family twists the law in Hsueh's favour.

Hsi-feng, who is utterly ruthless, to make three thousand taels of silver conspires with some local officials to break up a betrothal, driving a young couple to commit suicide. And the author remarks that this was only one of countless similar plots.

Decadent Chia Sheh poses as cultured. He takes a fancy to twenty antique fans belonging to a poor scholar; and when the latter refuses to part with them, he gangs up with Chia Yu-tsun to arrest the man on a charge of owing money to the public treasury, so that his property is confiscated. Chia Sheh gets the fans, while the scholar dies and his family is ruined.

Lecherous Chia Chen and his son Chia Yung connive with Chia Lien and his wife Hsi-feng to deceive two honest girls Second Sister Yu and Third Sister Yu. After Chia Lien secretly takes the second sister as his concubine, Chia Chen tries to get the third sister for himself. Driven to desperation by their disgrace, both girls commit suicide.

Lady Wang, who poses as so affable and moral, is responsible for the deaths of more of the bondmaids than all their other cruel masters and mistresses. Because Chin-chuan makes a pert remark when Pao-yu teases her, Lady Wang curses her and slaps her face, forcing the girl to drown herself in a well. Then Lady Wang orders an investigation of Grand View Garden,\* drives away the slave girls Ssu-erh, Ssu-chi and Ju-hua, and forces Fang-kuan, Jui-kuan and Ou-kuan to become nuns. She also dismisses Ching-wen who chafes at

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\*The investigation of Grand View Garden was described as an important event in Chapters 73-78 of the book. It started when a young slave girl found a pouch embroidered with pornographic pictures in the garden and this was used as a pretext by Lady Wang for a large-scale persecution of the bondmaids.

her bonds and resists feudal oppression, although the girl is seriously ill. So this courageous bondmaid too dies a wretched death.

All these cases leading to the death of innocent people show that this outwardly cultured, decorous household is a hell where people can be murdered at will. The splendid opulent mansion is full of man-eaters, and the Confucian moral code upheld by its feudal masters and mistresses is nothing but a butcher's knife. Actually their victims are not confined to those mentioned in the story. Grand View Garden built with the toil of the labouring people is everywhere stained with their blood. Where there is oppression, there is bound to be revolt. The slaves in the Chia mansion do not all submit in despair; some of them fight back. Ching-wen is one such example. This orphaned slave-girl who has not even a family name defies feudal authority to the last moment of her life.

The last forty chapters of the *Dream* were written by Kao Ngo after Tsao Hsueh-chin's death. On the whole they accomplish the task of completing the story of the decline and fall of these four families, and this is to Kao Ngo's credit. But there are many passages in the sequel which are counter to Tsao Hsueh-chin's original plan, which stem from certain backward and reactionary views held by Kao Ngo. For example, he makes Pao-yu study the Confucian classics and sit for the official examinations, then revives the fortune of the Chia family. The artistic level of the sequel is also inferior. As Lu Hsun pointed out: "The last forty chapters, which make up one third of the whole novel, contain accounts of many catastrophes: one character after another is ruined and dies. This is consistent with the prophecy: 'When all the food is gone, birds fly to the woods, leaving nothing but bare, naked earth behind.' At the end, however, their fortunes improve a little."

Kao Ngo devotes much attention to describing the death of Tai-yu, heroine of the novel; and this shows that in the man-eating feast of the feudal rulers not only were low-born slaves eaten, but even the dowager's beloved grand-daughter could not escape the same fate. In addition Kao Ngo describes how the four families caused the deaths of the bondmaids Yuan-yang and Ssu-chi, the page Pan Yu-an and the

waiter Chang San, and narrates the sad end of Yuan-chun the Imperial Concubine, her younger sister Ying-chun and other victims of the iniquitous feudal system. These accounts help to bring out further the savagery of that system.

Marx and Engels have pointed out: **“... In times when the class struggle nears the decisive hour, the process of dissolution going on within the ruling class, in fact within the whole range of old society, assumes . . . a violent, glaring character. . . .”**

Tsao Hsueh-chin describes in detail the sharp contradictions among the various members of these four families to reflect the process of dissolution within the feudal ruling class, and to make clear that the feudal system must “collapse like a huge mansion, go out like a lamp”. The members of the Chia family, to all appearances so mutually considerate and polite, actually have hate in their hearts and are constantly scheming and guarding against each other. Tan-chun the third daughter says, “They’re like fighting cocks, every one of them, each trying to kill the other.” The focal point of these contradictions is the struggle for wealth and power within the house. There are two main factions in the Chia family. That headed by Lady Wang includes Hsi-feng, Pao-chai and other representatives of the four families, and has the old dowager’s backing. It tries to consolidate its dominant position to protect the common interests of these four families. The other faction, headed by Chia Shch’s wife Lady Hsing and including Chia Cheng’s concubine Chao and others, represents the interests of families not in the clique, who try to seize power from Lady Wang and Hsi-feng. Many incidents in the *Dream* deal with this struggle. Of course, no matter which side wins, it cannot stave off the Chias’ decline and fall; but these conflicts accelerate the collapse of this powerful feudal family. Hence Tan-chun’s shrewd comment: “You know, if a big clan like ours is attacked from outside, it can’t be killed off at once. As the saying goes: ‘A centipede may die but it won’t topple over.’ Such a clan has to be destroyed from inside before it will collapse completely.” This indicates another important factor in the swift decline of the feudal ruling class.

The struggle for profit and power within the feudal ruling class is **“merely a particularly interesting example of a fight between**

**large and small dogs, between well-fed and ill-fed dogs”**. But in oppressing low-born slaves and persecuting rebels of their own ruling class, the dignified and exalted dowager, the stern disciplinarian Chia Cheng, “kind-hearted and generous” Lady Wang and the clever schemer Hsi-feng all without exception close ranks to form a reactionary Holy Alliance, taking up one common position. The decadence and corruption of their moral character reveals the savagery of the feudal ruling class faced by destruction. This is brought out by the old servant Chiao Ta when he curses: “Who could tell that the Old Master would spawn such filthy beasts? Up to your dirty tricks every day, you are. Father-in-law pokes in the ashes; sisters-in-law sleep with their brothers-in-law. Think I don’t know what you’re up to?” So from different angles this novel reflects the corruption and abuses of feudal society, the sharp class struggles within and without the Grand View Garden. All fallacious attempts to distort the *Dream* into a purely romantic tale cannot change the objective reality of this novel.

The romance and tragic end of Pao-yu and Tai-yu, the hero and heroine, should also be considered from a class viewpoint. Tsao Hsueh-chin devotes much space to describing the love between these two rebels against feudal morality. His purpose is to reveal, through their sharp contradictions with the authorities, the political machinations of the old dowager, Lady Wang and Hsi-feng in connection with Pao-yu’s marriage, so as to present in greater depth the class struggle in late feudal society.

As Engels has pointed out, in feudal society **“for the knight, or baron, just as for the prince himself, marriage is a political act, an opportunity for the accession of power through new alliances; the interests of the House and not individual inclination are the decisive factor”**. It is on this basic issue that the love of Pao-yu and Tai-yu comes into sharp conflict with the feudal powers. Although the two are first cousins, Tai-yu does not belong to any of the four great clans and her own family fortunes have declined; so in their own interests the heads of the Chia family naturally pass over her in favour of Pao-chai who belongs to the Hsueh family of wealthy

Court Purveyors, one of the four leading clans. Pao-chai's mother Aunt Hsueh also approves this match as she wants to get closer to the Chias and the Wangs to consolidate her political position.

Another still more important factor is that the love between these two rebels Pao-yu and Tai-yu has an anti-feudal political content. This is something intolerable to the feudal ruling class. When Pao-yu is still a mere boy, the heads of the Chia family are already worried by his most unfilial character, by the fact that he has "no faith in the state and the family". They hope he will mend his ways and return to the fold, to carry on the family tradition. However, supported by Tai-yu, Pao-yu opposes Confucianism and the feudal moral code, opposes taking the imperial examinations as a stepping-stone to officialdom, and opposes the view that men are superior to women. He goes further and further along the road of resistance to feudal orthodoxy. Inevitably this alarms and disturbs the feudalists, who resort to underhand tricks to marry him to Pao-chai, so exemplary in her conscious, unwavering support for the feudal order. This match is intended to keep Pao-yu's rebellious tendencies in check and to give a fresh lease of life to his noble clan which is going downhill so fast. It is very clear, therefore, that the love tragedy described by Tsao Hsueh-chin is itself a class struggle against feudalism in the ideological field, an organic part of the novel's political theme.

Both Pao-yu and Tai-yu typify rebels from feudal noble families, and are by no means prototypes transcending their age or class. Marx has stated explicitly: **"The human essence is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of the social relations."** Pao-yu lives in the special environment of the Chia mansion, and this enables him to perceive the misery of the oppressed bondservants, the crimes of the feudal masters and their inevitable doom. As Lu Hsun has said: "Pao-yu in my view is one who has seen many deaths. . . ." "Tragedy overshadows the family's splendour, but Pao-yu is the only one conscious of this." Because Pao-yu possesses this rare discernment, he flouts the criminal feudal authority and rebels against his own class. Nevertheless, as a "wealthy, leisured aristocrat" he has strong nihilistic

tendencies, accepts imperial and paternal authority, and has other bad characteristics and tendencies of the feudal landlord class. These are the negative side of his character, features which we should criticize. Yet there are people who appreciate such a character and eulogize him: "In this typical character there are not only qualities produced by that age, but also attributes common to all mankind, which can move the hearts of men of all ages." This idea is ludicrous. Pao-yu is regarded as an outrageous heretic by the heads of the Chia family and his own father Chia Cheng, in particular, finds him so intolerable that he is tempted to kill him. If Pao-yu cannot even move the hearts of his own relatives, how can he move the hearts of all men, of all ages?

Tai-yu does not belong to any of the four great families. She is against feudal morality and the feudal marriage system. An orphan forced to live in her maternal grandmother's home, she is depressed by her surroundings, by the stern discipline and cold taunts she meets with there; yet she has illusions that some elder member of the family may arrange a satisfactory marriage for her. Tai-yu's sensitivity and pride owe something to historical conditions and her environment, but basically they are determined by her class position. As Lu Hsun has said: "The poor are never worried because they lose money on the stock market, and an oil magnate cannot know the trials of an old woman collecting cinders in Peking. Victims of famine will hardly grow orchids like rich old gentlemen, nor will Chiao Ta in the Chia family fall in love with Miss Tai-yu." How succinctly, here, Lu Hsun presents the Marxist class theory!

Yet some past critics have not only described Tai-yu as a character above classes, able to move and appeal to people of all ages, they even claim: "The sensitivity of this young girl, her touchiness and biting tongue, far from antagonizing us, make us feel closer to her." They go so far as to say: "Let us sing the praise of Tai-yu from the bottom of our hearts!" One cannot help wondering what path these critics want to lead the young people of our socialist age along with such fulsome praise of a young lady of feudal times.

More than two centuries have passed since the publication of *The Dream of the Red Chamber*. And the struggle over the interpretation

of this novel has continued throughout this period. "Red-ologists" old and new, together with those who claim that love is the *Dream's* central theme, have all without exception advocated the theory of human nature of the landlord-bourgeois class and concealed the truth about this novel.

Today, on the basis of Chairman Mao's instructions regarding critical assimilation of our cultural heritage, we must hold to the Marxist class theory, debunk the theory of human nature of the landlord-bourgeois class, and make a correct appraisal of this great book. This will enable our young people and our readers to learn more about Chinese history from this encyclopaedia of feudal culture, and will moreover help us in our present class struggle.

*Tsao Hsueh-chin*

## The Dream of the Red Chamber

### CHAPTER FOUR

#### **An Ill-fated Girl Meets an Ill-fated Man A Monk from Gourd Temple Muddles Up a Case**

... But to return to Chia Yu-tsun. No sooner had he taken up his post as prefect of Yingtien than a charge of manslaughter was brought to his court. Two parties claiming to have purchased the same slave girl, neither willing to give way, had come to blows and one of them had been killed. Yu-tsun summoned the plaintiff for questioning.

"The murdered man was my master," the plaintiff testified. "He bought a slave girl not knowing that she'd been kidnapped and paid for her in silver, but said he'd take her home three days later because that would be a lucky day. Then the kidnapper sold her on the sly to the Hsueh family. When we found this out, we went to him to demand the girl. But the Hsuehs lord it in Chinling with their money and powerful backing. A pack of their thugs beat my master to death, after which the murderers, master and men, disappeared without a trace, leaving here only a few people who weren't

involved. I lodged a charge a year ago, but nothing came of it. I beg Your Honour to arrest the criminals and uphold the right. Then both the living and the dead will be everlastingly grateful"

"This is a scandal!" fumed Yu-tsun. "How can men commit a murder and go scot-free?"

He was about to issue warrants for the arrest of the criminals' relatives for interrogation, when a yamen runner standing by his table shot him a warning glance. Then Yu-tsun refrained and left the court in some bewilderment.

Back in his private office he dismissed everyone but the runner, who went down on one knee in salute, then said with a smile: "Your Honour has risen steadily in the official world. After eight or nine years, do you still remember me?"

"Your face looks very familiar, but I can't place you."

The runner smiled. "So you've forgotten the spot you started from and what happened in Gourd Temple?"

At this disconcerting question, the past came back to Yu-tsun in a flash. This runner had been a novice in Gourd Temple. When the fire left him stranded he decided that work in a yamen would be easier and, having had enough of monastic austerity, he had taken advantage of his youth to grow his hair again and get this post. No wonder Yu-tsun had failed to recognize him.

Now, taking his hand, the prefect observed with a smile: "So we are old acquaintances." He invited him to take a seat, but the runner declined the honour.

"We were friends in the days when I was hard up," said Yu-tsun. "Besides, this is my private office, so why not sit down?"

Then, deferentially, the runner perched sideways on the edge of a chair. And Yu-tsun asked why he had stopped him from issuing the warrants.

"Now that Your Honour's come to this post," said the runner, "surely you've copied out the Officials' Life-preserver for this province?"

"Officials' Life-preserver? What do you mean?"

"All local officials nowadays keep a secret list of the most powerful, wealthy and high-ranking families in their province. Each

province has such a list. Because if unknowingly you offend one of these families, you may lose not only your post but your life as well. That's why it's called a life-preserver. This Hsueh family mentioned just now is one Your Honour can't afford to offend. There's nothing difficult about this case, but out of deference to them it was never settled by your predecessor."

With that he took an Officials' Life-preserver from his pocket and handed it to Yu-tsun. It was a doggerel catalogue of the most notable families in that district. It started off:

The Chinling Chias,  
If truth be told,  
Have halls of jade,  
Stables of gold.  
The O-pang Palace,  
Fit for a king,  
Isn't fine enough  
For the Shihs of Chinling.  
If the Dragon King wants  
A white jade bed,  
He applies to the Wangs  
Of Chinling, it's said.  
And the Hsuehs  
Are so rich and grand,  
Gold is like iron to them  
And pearls like sand.

This was all Yu-tsun had read when a chime sounded at the gate and a certain Mr. Wang was announced. Putting on his official robes and hat again, he went to receive the caller, coming back in the time it takes for a meal to ask for more information.

"These four families are all closely connected," said the runner. "Injure one and you injure them all, honour one and you honour them all. This Hsueh charged with manslaughter is one of the Hsuehs on that list. Not only can he count on the support of those three other families, he has plenty of influential clansmen and friends both at the capital and in the provinces. So how can Your Honour arrest him?"

"If that's so, how are we to settle the case?" asked Yu-tsun. "I take it you know the murderer's hiding-place?"

"I won't deceive Your Honour." The runner grinned. "I know where the murderer has gone, I know the kidnapper who sold the girl, and I knew the poor devil who bought her. Let me put all the facts before you.

"The man who was killed, Feng Yuan, was the son of one of the minor local gentry. Both his parents were dead and he had no brothers; he lived as best he could on his small property. Up to the age of eighteen or nineteen he was a confirmed queer and took no interest in women. But then, no doubt as retribution for entanglements in a former life, he no sooner set eyes on this girl than he fell for her and made up his mind to buy her, swearing to have no more to do with men and to take no other wife. That was why, to show that he was really in earnest, he insisted on her coming to him three days later. Who was to know that the kidnapper would sell her on the sly to the Hsuehs, meaning to abscond with the payment from both parties? Before he could get away with this, they nabbed him and beat him within an inch of his life. Both refused to take back their money — both wanted the girl. Then young Hsueh ordered his men to beat Feng Yuan into a pulp. Three days after being carried home he died.

"Young Hsueh had already fixed on a day to set off for the capital. So having killed a man and carried off a girl, he set off with his household as if nothing had happened — he wasn't running away. Such minor matters as taking a man's life he left his clansmen and servants here to settle. So much for him. But do you know who the girl is?"

"How could I know?"

"She's by way of being Your Honour's benefactress." The runner sniggered. "She's Ying-lien, the daughter of Mr. Chen who lived next to Gourd Temple."

"Well!" exclaimed Yu-tsun in astonishment. "I heard that she was kidnapped when she was five. Why didn't they sell her before?"

"Kidnappers of this type make a point of stealing small girls. They keep them till they're twelve or thirteen, then take them to another

district to sell. We used to play with Ying-lien every day, so I knew her very well; and although seven or eight years have passed since then, as soon as I saw her I could tell it was her. She's grown better-looking but her features haven't changed. Besides, she had a red birthmark the size of a grain of rice between her eyebrows, which makes me quite sure it's her.

"As the kidnapper happened to rent rooms from me, one day when he was away I asked her outright. She'd been beaten so much she was afraid to talk; she just insisted that he was her father, selling her to clear his debts. When I still tried to wheedle it out of her, she burst into tears and said she didn't remember a thing about her childhood. But there's no doubt in my mind. It's her, all right.

"The day that young Feng met her and paid down his silver, the kidnapper got drunk. Then Ying-lien sighed, 'At last my trials are over!' She started worrying again, though, when she heard Feng wouldn't be fetching her for three days. I was so sorry for her that as soon as the kidnapper went out I sent my wife to cheer her up.

"My wife told her: 'Mr. Feng's insistence on waiting for a lucky day is proof that he won't be treating you like a servant. Besides, he's a very fine gentleman, quite well-to-do, who never could abide women, yet now he's paid a fancy price for you. That all goes to show you're quite safe. Just be patient for two or three days. You've no reason to worry.'

"She perked up a bit then, believing that she'd soon have a place where she belonged. But this world is full of disappointments: the very next day she was sold to the Hsuehs. Any other family wouldn't have been so bad; but this young Hsueh, otherwise known as the Stupid Tyrant, is the most vicious ruffian alive, who throws money about like dirt. He started a big fight and then dragged her off by force more dead than alive. What's become of her since, I don't know.

"Feng Yuan dreamed of happiness, but instead of finding it he lost both his money and his life. Wretched luck, wasn't it?"

"This was retribution, no accident," replied Yu-tsun with a sigh. "Otherwise, why should Feng Yuan have taken a fancy to Ying-lien and no one else? As for her, after being knocked about all

those years by the kidnapper she at last saw a way out with a man who loved her, and if she'd married him all would have been well; but then this had to happen! Of course, Hsueh's family is richer and nobler than Feng's, but a profligate like Hsueh Pan is sure to have troops of maids and concubines and to be thoroughly debauched — he could never be as true to one girl as Feng Yuan. So this romance was an empty dream, a chance encounter between an ill-fated young couple. Well, enough of that. What's the best way to settle this case?"

"Your Honour used to be shrewd enough in the past," said the runner with a smile. "What's made you so short of ideas today? I heard that your appointment was due to the good offices of the Chias and Wangs, and this Hsueh is related to the Chias by marriage. So why not sail with the stream and do them a good turn, settling this case in such a way that you can face them in future?"

"There's much in what you say. But a man's life is involved. I've been re-instated by the Emperor's favour and should be doing my utmost to show my gratitude, not flouting the law for private considerations. How can I do such a thing?"

The runner snorted. "Your Honour is right, of course. But that won't get you anywhere in the world today. Remember the old sayings: 'A gentleman adapts himself to circumstances' and 'The superior man is one who pursues good fortune and avoids disaster.' If you do as you just said, not only will you be unable to repay the Emperor's trust, you may endanger your own life into the bargain. Better think it over carefully."

Yu-tsun lowered his head. After a long silence he asked: "What do *you* suggest?"

"I've thought of a very good plan," said the runner. "It's this. When Your Honour tries the case tomorrow, make a great show of sending out writs and issuing warrants. Of course the murderer won't be forthcoming and the plaintiff will press his case; then you can arrest some of Hsueh's clansmen and servants for interrogation. Behind the scenes I'll fix things so that they report Hsueh Pan's 'death by sudden illness', and we'll get his clan and the local authorities to testify to this.

"Then Your Honour can claim to be able to consult spirits through the planchette. Have one set up in the court and invite both military and civilians to come and watch. You can say: The spirit declares that Hsueh Pan and Feng Yuan were enemies in a former existence who were fated to clash in order to settle scores; that, hounded by Feng Yuan's ghost, Hsueh Pan has perished of some mysterious disease; that since this trouble was caused by the kidnapper, he must be dealt with according to the law, but no one else is involved . . . and so on and so forth.

"I'll see to it that the kidnapper makes a full confession, and when the spirit's message confirms this, people will be convinced.

"The Hsuehs are rolling in money. You can make them pay a thousand or five hundred taels for Feng Yuan's funeral expenses. His relatives are insignificant people, and all they're out for is money. So the silver will shut their mouths.

"What does Your Honour think of this scheme of mine?"

"Too risky." Yu-tsun laughed. "I shall have to think this over carefully. The main thing is to find a way to shut people's mouths."

Tacitly, in fact, they were both agreed on this plan.

The next day a number of those involved were brought to the court and Yu-tsun interrogated them carefully. He found that the Feng family was indeed a small one and just out for damages; but the case had been turned upside-down and left unsettled because of the Hsuehs' recalcitrance and powerful connections.

Thereupon Yu-tsun twisted the law to suit his own purpose, passing arbitrary judgement. And the Fengs, receiving sizable damages for funeral expenses, made no further objection.

Then Yu-tsun lost no time in writing to Chia Cheng and Wang Tzu-teng, Commander of the Metropolitan Garrison, intimating that they could set their minds at rest because their worthy nephew's case had been settled.

All this was due to the runner who had been a novice in Gourd Temple. The fear that this man might tell others about the days when he was obscure and hard up preyed on Yu-tsun's mind; so later he found a pretext to have him drafted to a distant outpost. And that was the end of that. . . .

Chang Yung-mei

## Create More Typical Proletarian Heroes

The revolutionary Peking opera *Fighting on the Plain* is another new proletarian drama with a modern theme produced under the guidance of Chairman Mao's revolutionary line and the personal supervision of Comrade Chiang Ching. It was written collectively by the China Peking Opera Troupe, which earlier on produced *The Red Lantern* and other model operas.

### The Theme and Background

This is a drama about people's war. Chairman Mao, great leader of the Chinese people, teaches us: **"The army and the people are the foundation of victory."** This glorious maxim gives the opera its theme. The truth that the people form an indestructible wall of iron is affirmed by our depiction of the chief hero Chao Yung-kang, a platoon leader of the Eighth Route Army, by his close class relationship with the village Party secretary Li Sheng, the peasant woman Aunt Chang and other characters, as well as by his brave strug-

gle against the Japanese fascist aggressors. As long as they fight for the right and oppose aggression, the revolutionary army and people will always win in the end; the weak will conquer the strong, and small forces will prevail over larger ones.

The historical background of this drama is the period of stalemate during the War of Resistance Against Japan (1937-1945). Chairman Mao in his glorious treatise *On Protracted War* pointed out: **"This second stage will be the transitional stage of the entire war; it will be the most trying period but also the pivotal one. Whether China becomes an independent country or is reduced to a colony will be determined not by the retention or loss of the big cities in the first stage but by the extent to which the whole nation exerts itself in the second."** Chairman Mao also stated: **"In this stage, our form of fighting will be primarily guerrilla warfare, supplemented by mobile warfare."** On the basis of these instructions and an analysis of the history of that period of the revolutionary war, in this opera we created typical heroes and heroines of the Chinese proletariat set in typical circumstances.

### The Typical Hero Chao Yung-kang

Creating heroic images of the proletariat is the basic task of our socialist literature and art. The splendid characters of this type — Li Yu-ho in *The Red Lantern*, Yang Tzu-jung in *Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy* and many others — serve as models for the masses, impelling them forward to carry the revolution through to the end; whereas the heroes and heroines of feudal, bourgeois and revisionist literature and art are reactionary, decadent characters, renegades and debauchees who poison the minds of the people and serve the interests of imperialism, revisionism and reaction.

The integration of revolutionary realism and revolutionary romanticism is the basic creative method of our socialist literature and art. Chairman Mao has said: **"Life as reflected in works of literature and art can and ought to be on a higher plane, more intense, more concentrated, more typical, nearer the ideal, and therefore more universal than actual everyday life."** He has

also urged us to concentrate the everyday phenomena of class struggle to **“typify the contradictions and struggles within them”**.

This method of integrating revolutionary realism with revolutionary romanticism is the best way to portray the spirit of splendid proletarian heroes by revealing their noble revolutionary ideas, their strong proletarian feelings, and their fiery revolutionary struggle. The typical image of Chao Yung-kang was depicted by means of this creative method. At the same time we have strictly adhered to the principle used in creating the revolutionary model operas, that is, among the various characters, emphasis should be placed on positive characters; among the positive characters, emphasis should be placed on heroic characters; and among the heroic characters, emphasis should be placed on the chief heroic character.

This opera presents the close ties between Chao and the masses. Scenes 3 and 5 emphasize this relationship between the army and the people. In Scene 3, before Chao appears, the arias sung by Aunt Chang and Hsiao-ying show the villagers' admiration for this hero and the love between our army and our people. When Chao and his men come to the village in wind and rain, they prefer to sleep in a shed rather than to disturb the villagers; and Chao sings of his concern for the people's welfare. When the villagers see these soldiers, Aunt Chang both in her dialogue and singing further brings out the close ties binding them. Then Chao sings of his deep class love for the old woman. Other episodes in which the villagers give the soldiers shoes and offer them beds reveal how widespread is the people's support for the army; while reminiscences about the past when Chao's father and Aunt Chang's husband worked together as miners give the historical origin of their relationship and help to explain its profundity.

Scene 5 is a further development of Scene 3. The heroism of Li Sheng and Aunt Chang in the face of death shows their readiness to give their lives to protect their own forces, while their tributes to Chao help to depict his character. This scene reveals another aspect of Chao's love for the masses. Chao's vow to avenge the villagers at the same time expresses his bitter grief for Aunt Chang and encourages the others to persist in the struggle. The revolu-

tionary ties between our army and people can stand up to fire and sword; thus Chao's answer to the aggressors' massacre is: We shall unite and fight on!

Chao Yung-kang, apart from being a courageous fighter, is a good strategist and tactician. The latter part of Scene 3 and Scene 8 lay emphasis on his sound judgment. Scenes 4, 6, 9 and 10 show him confronting the Japanese aggressors and traitors to their face. He analyses the situation by discarding the dross and selecting the essential, proceeding from a perceptual to a rational stage of understanding. His plans to go in disguise to burn the main blockhouse and to enter the station in a locomotive reveal his deep understanding and masterly tactics, while in close combat and bayonet duels with the enemy he proves his fighting ability.

Water has its source, trees have their roots. The most striking feature of Chao's proletarian character is his deep love for Chairman Mao's revolutionary line. Scene 8 is the most important in the whole opera. The action takes place at night in the sorghum fields, disclosing the stirring panorama of guerrilla war behind the enemy rear. In this scene, climax follows climax. The Japanese feint puts Chao to a severe test: the military situation is critical, the night is short and the journey long. This is a crucial moment affecting the outcome of the whole campaign. So here special arias were written for Chao to show how, guided by Chairman Mao's revolutionary line, he cannot lose his bearings; though separated by mountains and streams he can hear Chairman Mao's instructions, which enable him to see through the enemy's ruse and devise a plan to win victory. This passage projects his lofty proletarian ideal. He dares death not for personal fame or profit, but in order to help create a glorious new China. This aria marks the highest point in his thinking and constitutes the climax of the whole opera. It is a paean in praise of Chairman Mao's revolutionary line.

Another feature of Chao's character is that all his actions conjure up guerrilla warfare. Daring, optimistic, mobile and resourceful, he is a platoon leader, not a high commander; and he wages guerrilla warfare in the enemy's rear, near the railway line and the village where he was born. The complexity of the struggle demands dramatic

stage effects. Chao's typical character is delineated in sharp, complex class contradictions. Hence the many encounters and fights between him, his fellow villagers and the guerrillas against Kameta's forces and the Chinese traitors. We resolutely oppose the theory of no conflict which tries to smooth over class contradictions; we believe in depicting heroic characters in the midst of acute class struggle.

The only way to get across the main revolutionary theme of an opera and to accomplish the basic task of socialist art is by giving a good portrayal of a typical hero of the proletariat. We therefore abided by the principle: The main emphasis must be laid on depicting the proletarian hero.

### **A Collective Task for the Revolution**

"When many hands gather fuel the flames leap high." This opera script was produced collectively. Leading cadres, professional writers and the rank and file of our company all took part.

Peking opera is an art combining literary writing, singing, instrumental music, stage management, acting, dancing and other techniques. It is an art form loved by the Chinese people. And such a composite art cannot be created by a single script writer or a single director; it requires the co-ordinated efforts of many people. *Fighting on the Plain* was written collectively under Party leadership. Many of its ideas and episodes, as well as much of the language, were created collectively during rehearsals.

Party leadership was the key factor. Before we started on this opera, Comrade Chiang Ching made deep investigations and did careful research, then gave us systematic and frequent instructions on various aspects of the opera including the main theme, the historical background and the heroic characters. She also sent us to villages in the north China plain and other old Resistance bases, where we lived and worked with former partisans and poor and lower-middle peasants. There, to remould our world outlook, we studied Chairman Mao's writings, notably *On Protracted War* and *Problems of Strategy in Guerrilla War Against Japan*, as well as other Marxist-Leninist

works. And while we were writing this script, Comrade Chiang Ching led us fighters for revolutionary art to battle against the counter-revolutionary revisionist line of Liu Shao-chi and Lin Piao. In the course of frustrating attempts at sabotage and obstruction by the class enemy, we painstakingly improved various parts of the script.

I, who did the actual writing of the script, was just one small cog in this collective machine. Taking part in the creation of this opera was an unforgettable experience for me. It convinced me that collective writing for the revolution, far from hampering individual talent, actually enriches and stimulates it, enabling a writer to serve the people better. The facts make it abundantly plain that collective writing is necessary for our work of serving the workers, peasants and soldiers, training revolutionary writers and artists, improving the quality of our socialist art and literature, and depicting heroic images of the proletariat.

## The North China Theatrical Festival

A theatrical festival of the North China area which opened in Peking on January 23 this year lasted twenty-seven days. The participants were representative troupes from Peking, Tientsin, the provinces of Hopei and Shansi and the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. They presented nearly thirty different programmes, some short, some longer, and gave more than a hundred and seventy performances. The fifteen varieties of dramas included Peking opera, modern drama, *pingchu* and *pangtzu* (both local operas) and marionette shows. Other items were singing, dancing and *chuyi* (balladry, story-telling and cross-talk).

This Festival, one of the fruits of the revolution in art and literature symbolized by the model revolutionary theatrical works, shows that the China stage is flourishing with a hundred flowers in bloom. Nearly all the items performed were produced in recent years in North China. And the majority of them were the outcome of conscientious study of the experience in the creation of the model revolutionary theatrical works. They conjured up the heroic images

of workers, peasants and soldiers, especially of those advanced workers who have come to the fore tempered in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. Portraying the animated, militant life in our socialist revolution and construction, they gave whole-hearted praise to the Cultural Revolution and newly-emerging socialist phenomena. Among the most noteworthy were the songs and dances of the Ulanmuchi (a mobile Mongolian troupe), the modern dramas *On the Banks of Wild Horse River* and *In the Bloom of Youth*, the *pingchu* opera *The Store Facing the Sun*, the *yingtiao* opera *Swallows Brave the Storm*, the *pangtzu* opera *A Spring Swallow on Cloudy Ridge* and a short two-character Honan opera *Marking a New Boundary*.

*On the Banks of Wild Horse River*, a play written and performed by the Weichang County Cultural Troupe of Hopei Province, depicts the peasants' eagerness to learn from Tachai, the national Red Banner in agriculture. This troupe, founded at the end of 1969, is composed of over fifty young people with the average age of twenty-five, most of whom are workers, poor and lower-middle peasants, school students who have settled in the countryside and demobbed soldiers. In the past few years they have plunged into the life of the masses to gather materials for their work and produced more than three hundred stage items which they have performed in forty people's communes and two hundred or so production brigades.

Weichang County lies off the beaten track in the mountains. Spurred on by the Cultural Revolution to change their poor natural conditions, the people of the whole county went into action, following the example of Tachai, to cut through mountains and dig canals. Many heroic figures emerged in this movement, inspiring the members of the troupe to write a drama about the people's arduous struggle against nature. "The drive of the masses is so stupendous," they said, "if we don't portray it, we'll be letting down the poor and lower-middle peasants." So, learning from the experience of drama troupes which collectively created the model revolutionary operas, they set about depicting the strong fighting spirit of the working people. Although handicapped by their own limited knowledge and lack of experience in writing, they overcame these difficulties and, after repeated revision and polishing, finally completed the script.



*On the Banks of Wild Horse River* by Tung Chen-sheng

The scene of *On the Banks of Wild Horse River* is a hilly region in northern Hopei after a heavy downpour in 1968. Wild Horse River has breached the dam, inundating big stretches of fields. A young girl Kao Yen-hung, Party secretary of the Riverside Production Brigade, taking Tachai as an example, puts forward a plan to "cut through Tiger Mountain and tame Wild Horse River" so that this turbulent river can be made to serve the people. For if they have a good irrigation system they can grow more grain and contribute

more to national construction. Her proposal wins the support of the poor and lower-middle peasants but is opposed by Tien Kuang-fa, vice-chairman of the brigade's revolutionary committee, who is conservative and afraid to take risks. He says complacently: "Our brigade contributes something, even if it's not much, every year. Our pace may be slow, but we're moving anyway." His idea is to strengthen the dam "bit by bit, section by section". At the same time he is totally unaware of the class enemy lying low within his brigade who is spreading all sorts of rumours to stir up trouble. The decision to tame the river sparks off a struggle between two lines: one for greater, quicker, better and more economical results, and the other for quite the opposite. As the plot unfolds more conflicts arise. When they reach the stretch of hard rock at Tiger's Mouth, some people suggest calling the whole project off; and when the flood season is imminent some want to stop work while others want to speed up. Then the class enemy causes a cave-in to sabotage the project, and the struggle intensifies further. But Kao Yen-hung, by relying closely on the masses, smashes the enemy's plots. This gives Tien Kuang-fa a good lesson. And by overcoming all sorts of difficulties, Kao brings the project to a victorious completion. The play presents the heroic woman Party secretary as a fighter determined to carry out Chairman Mao's revolutionary line.

The actress playing the heroine is Chao Shu-chun, a commune member with a sound political outlook and good attitude in farm labour, who started working in the collective when she was thirteen. In order to do justice to the part, she went to live and work with the deputy Party secretary of a production brigade so that she could learn from her advanced thinking and model her acting on real life. She plays her role realistically and has succeeded in depicting the sterling qualities of China's peasant women. After seeing *On the Banks of Wild Horse River*, the worker-peasant-soldier audiences commended the Weichang Cultural Troupe for steadfastly carrying out Chairman Mao's revolutionary line in art.

*In the Bloom of Youth*, written and staged by the Tientsin Modern Drama Troupe, is a play about the early sixties prior to the Cultural



*In the Bloom of Youth* by Chen Yu-hsien

Revolution. Party member Chang Hung, fresh from college, goes to teach at Beachside Middle School in the outskirts of a county town. Her sole ambition is to bring up a younger generation of worthy successors to the cause of proletarian revolution. But the school principal, Ho Hsiang, pursuing the revisionist line in education, urges his students to immerse themselves in study behind closed doors, cut off from reality. He wants them to memorize their lessons like bookworms, concentrate on getting full marks and take the road to personal fame and wealth. With the help and support of the Party organization, the worker and peasant masses, and revolutionary teachers and students, Chang Hung wages a struggle against Ho Hsiang's wrong line in education. This sets the whole school astir. The development of conflicts and contradictions in the plot centres round the different attitudes towards two students with different outlooks. The play re-enacts the fierce struggle between the two lines on the educational front before the Cultural Revolution when bourgeois intellectuals were in control of the schools, and Chang Hung is presented as a heroine who dares to fight the revisionist line in education and go against the tide. In step with the current revolution in education, this play has great topical significance.

*The Store Facing the Sun*, produced by the Peking "Pingchu" Opera Troupe, takes its material from the life and struggles on the commercial front. Its plot is based on an incident taking place in 1963. It starts with a Communist Youth League member Liu Chun-hsiu coming to join the store, which is situated in a factory area in Peking's suburbs, as a shop assistant. A retired worker comes to make purchases on behalf of other residents in the newly-built workers' housing estate. Knowing that the workers there are busily engaged on an important project, Liu urges the store to deliver goods to its customers to save them trouble and as a sign of support. Her offer to cart the goods there herself touches off a sharp conflict between two classes and two lines. While her proposal wins the approval of the store's Party secretary and other shop assistants, the manager Liu Pao-chung, her father, turns it down on the grounds that this is beyond the scope of their business. And a few young shop assistants who look down upon sales work also disapprove, thinking this would



*The Store Facing the Sun* by Chen Yu-hsien

lower the tone of the store. A reactionary capitalist now on the staff does all he can to dissuade the manager from accepting the proposal, for fear that his illegal business activities at the workers' housing estate may be exposed. When finally the proposal is put into action, this fellow upsets young Liu's cart on the way, in an attempt to sabotage this new socialist-style service to the customers.

But new socialist developments cannot be undermined because they conform with the main trend of social progress and the interests of the proletariat, enjoying the support of the masses. Liu Chun-hsiu fights against her father's conservatism as well as the enemy sabotage. The main theme of the play is that a new generation is growing up healthily in the storms of class struggle and the struggle between the socialist and capitalist lines.

*The Store Facing the Sun* was first staged in 1963. Since 1969, it has been revised many times. The present script is the sixth one. In the course of improving it, the Peking "Ping-chu" Opera Troupe visited nearly forty stores to experience life there. Together with the shop assistants, they wrapped up purchases, attended to the needs of customers, delivered goods and studied the works of Marx, Lenin and Chairman Mao. By going deep into life they gathered abundant raw materials for the play, and by synthesizing these materials they produced a much improved script. The process of revision involved a conscientious study of the principle that works of art should be based on real life and should be on a higher plane than real life — a principle that was employed in creating the model revolutionary theatrical works. *The Store Facing the Sun* is a welcome sign that the *pingchu* opera is being revolutionized too by learning

from these model works.

The songs and dances presented by the Ulanmuchi of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region are highly militant, spirited and fresh. They formed a unique part of the Festival repertoire. Since its birth in 1957, this mobile cultural team has held fast to the line of serving the workers, peasants and soldiers and has put on performances

year in and year out under difficult conditions in the wide pasturelands and remote villages. This has won it the title of "the red cavalry of culture of the grasslands". By going deep among the masses all these years, the Ulanmuchi has become a first-rate troupe of marked distinction whose members have the advantage of being "expert in one line and versatile in many". Their little items show rich variety, their performing techniques are lively and flexible. These features were fully displayed in the repertoire they took to the Festival. Thus in less than two hours they put on fourteen items including choral singing, solos and songs accompanied with actions, instrumental solos and dances. Every one of their fifteen-member team is a versatile performer: singer, dancer and musician combined. They switch at a moment's notice from dancing to singing, or from playing the accordion to fiddling the Mongolian *szubu* fiddle. Some of them appear before the audience six or seven times in one evening. When not on stage, they sing accompaniments behind the backdrop.

The performances of the Ulanmuchi are full of political verve. *The People on the Grasslands Sing Praises to Chairman Mao*, a song and dance item, expresses the Inner Mongolian people's heartfelt love for Chairman Mao. Another dance entitled *Taking Over the Pole and Noose* depicts young school-leavers from Peking who join a production brigade in the borderland. Under the patient instruction of an old herdsman they learn how to break in horses and gladly take over the heavy pole and noose which symbolizes the revolutionary load they are to shoulder, encouraged by the herdsmen's high hopes for them. This is a significant, thought-provoking item.

The Ulanmuchi's performances are full of life. The old herdsman Batur who sings *A Visit to Our Frontier Troops* accompanies the song with movements showing him whipping his horse across the wide prairie as he gallops along with presents for the soldiers. In the same way *Our Brigade's Party Secretary* gains added zest from the movements, expressions and humorous dialogue of the singers. And the striking thing about this item is that the Party secretary himself never appears on the stage, yet the audience has a vivid mental picture of his close ties with the commune members whom he leads in their stirring fight against nature. The dance *Offer the Fruits*

*of a Rich Harvest to Chairman Mao* mirrors the herdsmen's jubilation and selfless labour during the harvest season. The mimed feeding of lambskins and shearing are beautiful and lifelike.

Faithfully carrying out Chairman Mao's directive to "let the past serve the present" and "weed through the old to bring forth the new" in art and literature, the Ulanmuchi have critically taken over the finest things in our old heritage and boldly created something new. In accordance with the requirements of the content, they have improved on the traditional folk "horse dance", which consisted originally of a few simple steps, and have now evolved a variety of steps evoking all the movements of horse-riding. In *A Visit to Our Frontier Troops*, each of the three players dances in a different style; while *Taking Over the Pole and Noose* has assimilated such traditional movements as gallopades, glissades and leaps with upraised whip, conjuring up the herdsmen's courage, optimism and skill. The singing voices are fresh, the melodies simple and unsophisticated, while the apt admixture of natural and falsetto singing gives the performance a Mongolian flavour. The players have paid special attention to the employment and development of traditional performing techniques popular with the herdsmen, and the stage effects are pleasing.

Participants in the Festival attended several model revolutionary theatrical works and listened to reports on how these had been produced, after which they held lively discussions on what they had learned from this experience and how they were applying it in their own creative work. These activities further convinced them that the model revolutionary theatrical works are the best examples of the implementation of Chairman Mao's revolutionary line in art and literature and that the experience gained in creating them is of general significance and instructive value to all branches of art. They determined to continue taking this valuable experience as their guide so as to produce more and better works of socialist art and literature.

Another prominent feature of the Festival can be seen from its watchword: "Perform for the workers, peasants and soldiers and invite the workers, peasants and soldiers to give comments". Of the two hundred and thirty thousand spectators of the Festival in Peking



*A Visit to Our Frontier Troops* by Miao Ti



*Offer the Fruits of a Rich Harvest to Chairman Mao* by Li Ke-yu



*Our Brigade's Party Secretary* by Tung Chen-sheng

more than sixty per cent were workers, peasants and soldiers. After seeing the performances they wrote many articles in the local press voicing their comments. Quite a number of the participating troupes made special trips to factories, villages around Peking and army units to give performances, at the end of which they solicited the audiences' opinions in more than forty group discussions. Workers, peasants and soldiers in various parts of the country who enjoyed the items through radio and TV programmes wrote over a thousand letters to the troupes, expressing their warm approval of the performances and suggesting certain improvements. Their interest and concern made it very clear to the artistes that the workers, peasants and soldiers are the foremost champions of revolutionary art and literature and that without their support it is impossible for the revolution in this field to make any headway.

The North China Theatrical Festival marks a new advance on our art and literary front as a result of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and the current movement to repudiate Lin Biao and Confucius. Today, cultural workers are whole-heartedly serving the workers, peasants and soldiers and the workers, peasants and soldiers are the main force in our literary criticism.

The North China Theatrical Festival reviewed the outcome of the revolution in literature and art in North China. It has also played a significant part in the further implementation of Chairman Mao's revolutionary line, the revolutionization of the stage and the enrichment of China's socialist art and literature.

## Introducing Some New Feature Films

Several new Chinese feature films in colour were shown this spring, the most popular and highly acclaimed of them being *The Fiery Years*, *Bright Sunny Skies* and *Green Pine Ridge*. At about the same time the North China Theatrical Festival held in Peking presented some excellent new plays and operas. These events show the healthy development of China's film and stage art.

These three new films are based on typical incidents on the industrial and agricultural fronts in our socialist time. Dealing with the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, between the socialist road and the capitalist road, between Chairman Mao's revolutionary line and Liu Shao-chi's counter-revolutionary revisionist line during China's socialist revolution and socialist construction, they breathe the spirit of our age — an intense revolutionary enthusiasm.

*The Fiery Years* takes us back to the year 1962 when the struggle between the two lines was very fierce. At that time the imperialists, revisionists and other counter-revolutionaries seized on our temporary



difficulties caused by three years of natural calamities to raise a chorus of denunciation of China, communism and the working people. Within our Party, the revisionist line of Liu Shao-chi seriously obstructed and sabotaged the implementation of Chairman Mao's revolutionary line. The film opens with three men chatting on a southward-bound train. These three men — a naval officer, Pai Hsien-chou the director of the Shanghai Steel Works, and the skilled steel worker Chao Ssu-hai — are discussing the social-imperialists' betrayal of

China and how they tore up the contracts they had signed and refused to supply the steel needed to build up our navy. In view of this sabotage, the Shanghai Steel Works has been assigned the task of producing a high-quality alloy steel of a kind never previously produced in China. Chao's proposal to use Chinese materials to produce this steel is opposed by Pai, who believes it necessary to import alloys from abroad. So from the start we see a serious clash between two different approaches, a clash involving the problem of whether or not to stick to the principle of self-reliance laid down by Chairman Mao. This first clash between the worker Chao and the manager Pai is the start of a struggle between two lines.

Chao relies on his fellow workers and goes to a neighbouring commune to enlist the help of an old retired worker Tien. Together they experiment day and night to produce this special steel. Pai, on the other hand, goes to a lakeside sanatorium to consult the chief engineer who is convalescing there, and the latter rejects Chao's plan. Later on, when experiments on this new steel are making headway, the work is sabotaged by a hidden counter-revolutionary Ying who is in charge of production. And the director, deceived by Ying's insinuations, takes Chao off his job and orders him to make a self-criticism. Undaunted by this, Chao answers firmly: "You can dismiss me, but you can't stop the trial-production of this steel. We've made up our minds to take the road of self-reliance." This is the second clash between Chao and Pai.

Though dismissed from his job, Chao will not leave his post. He gets the other workers to help him investigate the cause of the accident. Inevitably, this exacerbates the conflict between him and the director who depends on foreign aid and blindly trusts specialists; so finally Pai orders the trial-production of this new steel to stop. This heavy pressure from above fails to damp Chao's revolutionary fervour. He recalls how Chairman Mao inspected their steel works four years ago, produces the poster describing Chairman Mao's visit which he has kept as a treasure, and ponders the instructions which Chairman Mao gave the steel workers at that time. He earnestly tells the director: "Ever since Liberation, whenever we relied on our own efforts we succeeded; whenever we went against the Chair-

man's instructions, put blind faith in specialists and tried to boost production by depending on foreign ways, we failed. Have you forgotten this lesson?" Pai is shaken by this heartfelt warning.

This film highlights the proletarian heroism of the steel worker Chao, who has the revolutionary daring to go against the tide. In the struggle led by the Party committee and with the help of his mates, Chao succeeds in bringing the director back to the right path, in discovering the hidden enemy, and in producing the new steel. This boosts the morale of the working class and takes the social-imperialists down a peg.

The film *Bright Sunny Skies* is based on Hao Jan's novel of the same name. In 1956 Tungshanwu Agricultural Co-operative in north China is hard hit by a flood. Hsiao Chang-chun, a Communist and the platoon leader of the local militia, persuades the other poor and lower-middle peasants to plant fresh crops to overcome their difficulties. However, Ma, co-op head and secretary of the Party branch, orders a man to cart away the seed grain supplied them by the state to sell it on the black market. Hsiao prevents this and brings back the grain to sow their fields.

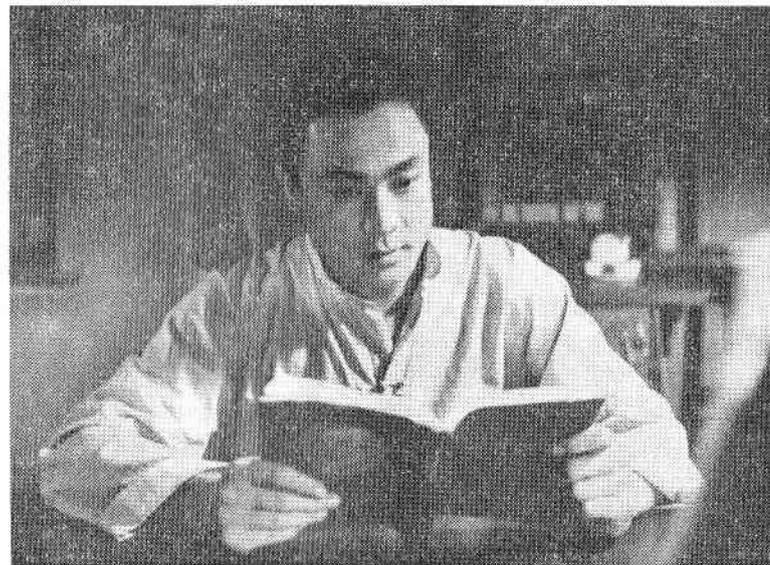
The following year, when there is a rectification movement in the Party and in the commune, Hsiao becomes the head of the co-op and Party secretary while Ma is demoted to be his deputy. An excited debate takes place on the question of how dividends should be allotted; later, certain peasants complain that they are short of grain; later still, there is a tussle over the wheat harvest. These three incidents unfold the sharp struggle between the poor peasants, represented by Hsiao, and the landlord and rich peasants represented by Ma. For each time Hsiao and Ma take different sides.

Before the wheat harvest when all is going well and a good crop is expected, Ma gets the brigade leader Lien-fu to demand that the co-op members should receive dividends according to their share of land, contrary to the socialist principle of "to each according to his work". The poor peasants refute Lien-fu's arguments, but fail to convince him. After a heated discussion Hsiao reminds Lien-fu of their cruel treatment by landlords when they were boys to arouse his class consciousness, and warns him that he is being

used as a tool. Then Lien-fu realizes his mistake. This is the first clash between Hsiao and his deputy Ma.

The second comes when Ma spreads rumours that Hsiao means to investigate the amount of grain stored in each family. Ma gets the well-to-do middle peasant Tung-li to cart off his grain secretly by night to sell, then to complain to Hsiao that his family is short of grain, so as to confuse the peasants. However, when Tung-li sees that Hsiao's family is eating wild herbs and Hsiao has given their half bagful of millet to the co-op stockman for the brigade's new-born colt, he feels remorseful. Then Hsiao explains the Party policy to him and finally wins him away from Ma's clutches.

The third incident takes place during the wheat harvest. After being worsted twice by Hsiao, Ma in desperation incites the former landlord to murder Hsiao's only son Pebble. After the little boy has been pushed over a precipice, Ma urges the peasants to stop work on the grain stacks and go to look for the lost child, hoping in this way to spoil the good harvest. Hsiao grasps imme-



diately that this is a serious class struggle. Suppressing his own grief he tells his father: "Bear up. Let's show those scoundrels that all of us working for socialism have guts." He leads the other peasants to thresh grain and safeguards their bumper harvest. Finally Ma is exposed and arrested, while Pebble who has been rescued comes home again.

These three incidents are three contests between different class forces over the issue whether the Tungshanwu co-op is to continue along the socialist road or go backward to the capitalist road. The film from start to finish deals with this struggle between progress and retrogression. And as the plot develops step by step it elucidates the objective law of class struggle during China's socialist period, illustrating the theme: "No dark clouds can cover up the bright sunny skies."

This film shows the struggle between two lines over the problem of distribution in the agricultural co-operatives in 1957 when the class enemy tried to sabotage the agricultural co-operation advocated by the Party. The former poor and lower-middle peasants were convinced that "**socialism is the only way out for China**", and were therefore keen to take the socialist road and to fight against such class enemies as Ma or muddle-headed people like Tung-li who represented the spontaneous trend of individual peasants towards capitalism. The poor and lower-middle peasants finally consolidated their collective economy and successfully defended socialist co-operation. So the struggle depicted in this film represents in miniature the class struggle in our society as a whole. It shows that after socialist transformation has gained the basic victory in the ownership of the means of production, there will still be long-term struggles on the political and ideological fronts.

This film gives a successful portrayal of the hero Hsiao. Confronted by all the reactionary trends in the co-op, he keeps the initiative in class struggle firmly in his hands, viewing every new development from a class standpoint and paying careful attention to seeming trifles. From apparently small incidents such as the grain being carted away and the argument over dividends, he quickly

grasps the trend in the class struggle. The film lays stress on the tenacity with which he leads the villagers along the socialist road through all the complexities of the class struggle and struggle between two lines.

*Green Pine Ridge* is a film about a production brigade in a mountain in north China in the autumn of 1962. A reactionary rich peasant Chien, taking advantage of the transfer of the old Party secretary and the fact that the brigade leader Chou fails to keep class struggle in mind, makes himself the cart driver in the brigade. Once in this position, he uses his trips to town to carry out an illegal trade in local products with a counter-revolutionary there. He also sells local products at a high price in the free market for the well-off middle peasant Sun Fu and other brigade members who put selfish interests first. In this way he encourages the peasants to develop a capitalist economy and tries to sabotage the collective socialist economy.

Old Chang, a poor peasant and Communist, supported by the newly arrived Party secretary, starts a training class to train poor peasant youngsters like Hsiu-mei and Ta-hu to drive carts for socialism. The rich peasant Chien is dead against this. One day, after Hsiu-mei has fed the horses, he stealthily waters the chestnut horse which is still sweating from a trip, so that it falls ill. Brigade Leader Chou at once puts the blame on his own sister Hsiu-mei. Though the situation is thoroughly confused, Old Chang realizes that Chien is trying to get Hsiu-mei into trouble in order to discredit the training class. He deduces this from Chien's jubilation after the incident and his unusual gift of tobacco to him.

Autumn comes. A fine crop of ripe fruit is waiting to be taken to town, but Chien loads his cart with local products supplied by Sun and others for sale in the free market. Hsiu-mei indignantly climbs on to the cart and tosses these goods down, but Chou supports Chien. Then Old Chang arrives and resolutely backs up Hsiu-mei. The peasants demand to have Chien dismissed from his job, and in desperation the rich peasant resigns. This worries the brigade leader. "If Chien quits, who'll drive the cart?" he asks. "I will!" cries Old Chang. Although plagued by rheumatism, he takes over the whip and cracks it proudly in the air.



As Chang drives the cart out of the village, Chien hisses: "Green Pine Ridge's whip belongs to me. Like it or not, you'll have to return it to me." In fact Chien has trained the horses to stampede at sight of a gnarled old elm at a turn in the road; and only by whipping them hard can he restrain them. He imagines that old Chang, not knowing this trick, will certainly lose control and break his neck. However, when the horses stampede Chang keeps calm and, at great personal risk, brings them home safely. Later he drives back to that spot to find out what exactly has frightened the horses. After repeated attempt he hits on Chien's trick and once more thwarts the rich peasant's plot. This teaches Brigade Leader Chou and the well-to-do peasant Sun a lesson too. People then make investigations outside and discover that Chien was a reactionary rich peasant who murdered his hired hand during land reform. So the class enemy is caught at last.

The central issue of *Green Pine Ridge* is: who is to have the whip hand in the brigade? And the moral is: even under the dictatorship

of the proletariat, class enemies will continue to make trouble and the people must heighten their vigilance. This film depicts the heroic spirit of the old peasant Chang Wan-shan who boldly combats vicious capitalist trends. He keeps firmly in mind the basic line of the Party and is quick to spot the class enemy's attempts to sabotage the collective economy by injuring the chestnut horse and putting the blame on others, trying to win Chang over by a bribe, discrediting the training class and so forth.

This film not only reflects the struggle between antagonistic classes but also that between two lines within the ranks of the people, as in the case of the disagreement between Old Chang and Brigade Leader Chou. Chang adheres firmly to Chairman Mao's revolutionary line while Chou, concentrating on production, forgets the class struggle and unconsciously shields the class enemy. The struggles between two classes and two lines are so skilfully interwoven and the conflicts in the plot so dramatically worked out that Old Chang's fine qualities are thrown into sharp relief.

These three films, *The Fiery Years*, *Bright Sunny Skies* and *Green Pine Ridge*, all reflect events and struggles before the time of the Cultural Revolution; but they view these from the vantage point of today, disclosing the laws of class struggle in these complex contradictions so as to give their themes a deep educational significance. In a word, these films give an accurate picture of the past imbued with the spirit of the present day.

The ideological significance of a film finds its fullest expression through heroic images of the working people. And the most outstanding achievement of these films is the spirited and lifelike portrayal of Chao the steel worker, Hsiao the Party secretary of the co-op, and Chang the old carter. These men show a high degree of class consciousness in class struggles and the struggles between two lines, but this takes a different form in each. The salient feature of the steel worker Chao is his strong revolutionary spirit and courage to go against the tide; that of Party Secretary Hsiao, his determination to lead the villagers along the socialist road; that of Old Chang, his tireless resolution to fight against trends towards capitalism in spite of his old age and infirmity.

The basic task of socialist literature and art is to create typical heroic images of the proletariat. In real life all such characters emerge from the storms of class struggle. And these three films have created heroes of this type in the thick of class struggles and struggles between the two lines.

The films project their main heroes by means of various cinematographic techniques and, compared with previous Chinese films, they show an advance in the choice of scenery, the use of colour, lighting and direction.

These new revolutionary feature films owe much to the revolutionary model operas. In recent years, by screening model operas, film makers have learned a good deal about the creation of heroic images of the working people, and these new feature films are the outcome of the experience thus acquired.

## *Chronicle*

### **Cultural Workers in Shanghai Criticize Confucius and Mencius**

Revolutionary cultural workers in Shanghai are now eagerly taking part in the movement to repudiate Lin Piao and Confucius. Using their art as a weapon and by means of writings and speeches, they have denounced Lin Piao's vicious plot to utilize the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius to usurp Party leadership, seize state power and restore capitalism. In the past two thousand years and more of Chinese history, all reactionary rulers used Confucianism as an ideological weapon to maintain their repressive rule and as spiritual fetters to keep the people in bondage. Confucianism has also served as a tool for the reactionaries at home and abroad and for opportunist careerists within the Party.

Shanghai's Peking Opera Troupe, Dancing Academy, People's Art Theatre and Philharmonic Society have composed and performed a number of militant songs, skits and other stage items. The Shanghai Academy of Art, in addition to producing topical posters and cartoons, has sent artists to Shanghai's No. 1 Steel Mill to join with the workers in criticizing Lin Piao and Confucius and emulate the revolutionary spirit of the proletariat in this struggle. Many other artists are also producing new works to debunk Lin Piao and Confucius.

### **Songs of Shanghai Dockers**

Recently a concert was put on in Shanghai in honour of the city's dockers. The singers, two thousand in number, came from various

wharves, harbour construction sites and navigation and conservancy jobs. With revolutionary verve they sang old favourites like *The East Is Red* and *Three Rules of Discipline and Eight Points for Attention* as well as new songs of their own composition. Their voices, ringing with proletarian feeling for the Party and Chairman Mao, expressed their broad vision and determination to build new socialist harbours.

This concert was held at the height of a movement to learn from the dockers of Yangshupu Wharf, an advanced unit whose keen and selfless work for the revolution has long set an example to all Shanghai dockers. Among the new songs on the programme were *We Are Masters of the Wharves*, *Learn from Yangshupu* and *Catch Up with Yangshupu* and *Barge Men Emulate Yangshupu*, all of which reflect the revolutionary enthusiasm generated by learning from that pace-setting unit.

During the performance the worker audience joined in the choruses, making the concert hall a scene of heart-stirring solidarity.

#### Peasant Paintings Exhibited in Tientsin

In the past few years the amateur artists among the peasants in the suburbs and outlying counties of Tientsin have been increasingly active, with more and more commune members painting in their spare time. The works on display at a recent exhibition sponsored by the Tientsin People's Art Gallery, the first exhibition of its kind in the city, were selections from the paintings of these peasants.

The more than ninety works shown were rich in content and varied in form. They included paintings in the Chinese traditional style, posters, water-colours, gouaches, genre paintings, woodcuts and scissor-cuts, all depicting from different angles the heroic struggles against nature — the movement to learn from Tachai, a national red banner in farming, and the taming of the unruly Haiho River. They also lauded the excellent situation on the nation's agricultural front and the new socialist developments since the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

#### Worker Artists Active in Yangchuan

Since the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, more and more workers in Yangchuan in Shansi Province have come to the fore as amateur artists. Their number has recently grown from a dozen or so to over one hundred and fifty. In step with the three great revolutionary movements of class struggle, the struggle for production and scientific experiment, they have produced more than two thousand paintings to praise Chairman Mao's revolutionary line and reflect the new ideas and new outlook of the working class. Most of these works first appeared on the revolutionary mass criticism bulletins, blackboards and wall-newspapers of various collieries, work-sites and street corners. Fifteen public exhibitions have since been held and many of the works have also been published in Shansi papers and periodicals. *A New Song of the Sea of Coal*, a joint production by two workers, was displayed in the National Exhibition of Serial Pictures and Traditional Chinese Paintings held in Peking last year.

Many new works have been produced during the movement to denounce Lin Piao and rectify the style of work. *Great Fury*, a painting in the traditional style, expresses the passionate indignation of revolutionary workers at the criminal attempt of Lin Piao's anti-Party clique to restore capitalism. *Two Miner's Lamps*, a set of serial pictures, contrasts the miners' love for the new society with their hatred for the old. Some other posters and paintings in the traditional style portray the miners' militancy in carrying out the mass movement to learn from Taching, the national pace-setter in industry, as well as in emulating Taching's heroic oil worker Wang Chin-hsi known as the Iron Man. They are aptly entitled *Learn from Taching and Be a Miner of the Iron Man Type*, *Chang Chi-lin — Iron Man in Mining* and *Undeterred by Wind and Snowstorms*.

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Store Grain Everywhere (scissor-cut)

by Pan Pao-chi



# 中国文学

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