

CHINESE LITERATURE



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RAID ON THE WHITE TIGER REGIMENT

(September 1972 Script)

By the Shantung Provincial Peking Opera Troupe

CAST

Yen Wei-tsai	<i>leader of a scouts platoon of the Chinese People's Volunteers (CPV)</i>
Commander Wang	<i>a regimental commander of the CPV</i>
Commissar Kuan	<i>a regimental political commissar of the CPV</i>
Chang Shun-ho	<i>a squad leader of the scouts platoon</i>
Lu Pei-lu	<i>soldier of the scouts platoon</i>
Pao Yu-lu	<i>soldier of the scouts platoon</i>
Hu Shu-pin	<i>soldier of the scouts platoon</i>
Staff Officer Kao	<i>regimental combat staff officer</i>
Section Chief Chang	<i>head of the scouts section at regimental headquarters</i>
Battalion and Company Cadres A, B, C and D of the CPV	
Soldiers A, B, C and D of the scouts platoon	
Other CPV commanders and soldiers	
Aunt Choe	<i>Korean villager, member of the Korean Workers' Party</i>
Sister Choe	<i>her daughter-in-law</i>
Han Dae Nyon	<i>deputy leader of a scouts platoon of the Korean People's Army (KPA)</i>

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Kim Dae Yong *soldier of the scouts platoon of the KP.A*
Sun Hui *a Korean girl*
Korean Villager A *an old man from Anpyongri*
Other Korean villagers

American Adviser
American Staff Officer
Two American soldiers
Commander of the White Tiger Regiment of the south Korean puppet division
garrisoning the capital
Commander of an Armoured Regiment of the south Korean puppet army
Chief of Staff of the White Tiger Regiment
Captain of the guards company of the White Tiger Regiment
Platoon Leader of the guards company
Soldiers of the White Tiger Regiment

PROLOGUE

ADVANCING TOGETHER

The strains of *The Internationale* and the beat of battle drums can be heard. Flames are spreading.

(A Chinese and a Korean fighter, carrying the national flags of the People's Republic of China and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, enter separately and dance.

The drums beat faster. Yen Wei-tsai and Han Dae Nyon enter gallantly with rifles at the ready. They dance, strike a pose, then turn and wave their hands. Fully armed Chinese and Korean soldiers enter from opposite sides. Under their national flags, Yen and Han mount a slope. All dance, then strike a pose expressing the invincible heroism of comrades-in-arms advancing together.

The Internationale wells up again. Red flags appear at both sides of the stage. Led by Yen and Han, the Chinese and Korean soldiers march off together into battle.)

(Curtain)

SCENE ONE

MILITANT FRIENDSHIP

Time: A morning in July 1953.

Place: The township of Anpyongri, near the Kumsong front, DPRK.

The corner of a village. Behind towers Anpyong Mountain, a red flag fluttering at its summit. The landscape is lovely after rain, with fresh green paddy fields and gnarled old pines. Signs of battle are apparent in the shell craters, trenches and shattered hulks of trees.

(Music sounds as the curtain rises. Aunt Choe and other villagers are waving and calling goodbye to departing troops of the Korean People's Army.)

Villager A (to Aunt Choe): Your son was a fine guerrilla, and now he's joined the People's Army. Good for him! *(Laughs.)*

Villager B: Why isn't your daughter-in-law here to see him off?

Aunt Choe: She's delivering grain to the army.

(Sister Choe, offstage, calls "Ma!" then enters with Villagers C and D.)

Villagers: Sister Choe.

Villager B: Sister Choe.

Aunt Choe: Have you finished delivering the grain to our soldiers, child?

Sister Choe: Pretty nearly. We're taking advantage of a break to bring you a message. Guess whom we met at the township committee office.

Aunt Choe: Who?

Sister Choe: A CPV platoon leader. He was wounded on Anpyong Mountain, but he went on fighting, and he and his platoon wiped out a whole company of Americans there.

Villager C: He recuperated in your house.

Aunt Choe and Villagers: You mean Platoon Leader Yen?

Sister Choe and Villager C: Right. The scout hero, Yen Wei-tsai.

Aunt Choe (*happily*): Why, that's fine. I haven't seen those boys in over a year. I've really been thinking of them. (*Sings.*)
*Sharp and fresh are the mountains after the rain,
Rosy the clouds as we welcome our dear ones.
They've come to fight the U.S. imperialists,
Boldly they battle the Yankee-Rhee forces.
They've won three fights in Anpyongri,
News of their exploits has spread far and wide...*

Aunt Choe and Villagers (*sing*): *Over all the land.*

Sister Choe: Comrade Yen is talking with the township committee chief right now. He says he's coming to see you soon.

Aunt Choe: That's wonderful.

Villagers (*happily*): Wonderful!

Sister Choe: Well, we've got to finish delivering that grain.

Villagers C and D: Right.

Sister Choe: We'll be back soon, ma. (*To Villagers C and D*) Let's go. (*They go off.*)

Villager E (*enters running*): Good news, neighbours. Some CPV comrades are coming.

Aunt Choe: Let's hurry home to boil some drinking water and prepare to welcome them.

Villagers: Let's go. (*They leave.*)

Sun Hui: I'll wait for them here, Grandma Choe.

Aunt Choe: All right. Let us know as soon as they come.

Sun Hui: I will.

(*Aunt Choe goes out.*)

Sun Hui (*climbs a slope and looks*): They're here. (*Shouts.*) CPV uncles! (*Runs off.*)

(*Sun Hui returns with Chang Shun-bo, Pao Yu-lu and several other scouts.*)

Sun Hui: Where's Uncle Yen?

Chang: He'll be here soon.

Sun Hui: I've got to let Grandma Choe know.

Pao: May I go on ahead and take a look around in the village, squad leader?

Chang: Do that.

(*Sun Hui and Pao go out.*)

Soldier C: Here comes our platoon leader.

Soldiers (*shout*): Platoon leader...

Chang: This is Anpyongri.

(*Yen enters, strikes a pose and gazes towards Anpyongri.*)

Yen (*sings*): *All night we marched through the rain and wind,
(Comes down the slope.)*

(*Enter Lu Pei-lu and Hu Shu-pin, the latter with a walkie-talkie on his back.*)

Yen (*sings*): *Trailing the White Tiger Regiment.*

Our men begged for permission to fight,

We know the Yanks' truce talks are bogus.

Hu Shu-pin!

Hu: Here!

Yen: Hurry up and report to regimental headquarters what we've just observed.

(*Hu assents and goes out.*)

(*Lu Pei-lu removes his crown of camouflage branches and throws it irritably to the ground.*)

Soldier C: What's wrong? Blisters on your feet?

Lu: No.

Soldier B: Then they must be on your brain.

(*Everyone laughs. Yen signs to them not to tease Lu.*)

Lu: There's something I just can't see, platoon leader. (*Sings.*)

The enemy keep pushing in,

Their peace talks are plainly a fraud.

Since we know the Yanks are not sincere,

Why waste our time in talk?

Soldier D: We gave the Yanks such a trouncing, they just have to negotiate.

Chang: We saw it very clearly on our scouting mission today. The enemy are building fortifications as fast as they can. Besides they've moved up their White Tiger Regiment, one of Syngman Rhee's so-called crack units, which keeps trying to provoke us. In my opinion they are taking advantage of the negotiations to have a respite and get ready to make more trouble.

Yen: You're right. That's an old trick of the American imperialists. They want to fool the people of the world by talking peace while actually waging war. Here they're negotiating while moving up troops to attack us. We must give them tit for tat, expose their schemes at the conference table and smash their assaults on the battlefield.

Lu: If they don't behave, we'll slug them.

Yen: Right. As Chairman Mao says: **"So long as U.S. imperialism refuses to give up its arrogant and unreasonable demands and its scheme to extend aggression, the only course for the Chinese people is to remain determined to go on fighting side by side with the Korean people."** Comrades, the enemy will never lay down their arms of their own accord. We've got to use revolutionary dual tactics to deal with their two-faced counter-revolutionary game. That means we must now talk and now fight.

Soldiers: That's it — now fight and now talk.

Yen (sings): *Minds keen, eyes bright,
You've seen through the enemy's schemes.
The American imperialists are mad,
They want to conquer the world.
When they're losing they talk peace,
Smiling, knives behind their backs;
After they've had a breathing spell,
Snarling, they run amuck again.
But no matter how they juggle false talks and real war,
They remain wolves in sheep's clothing.
We've no illusions about the enemy,
Vigilant, guns in hand, we'll beat the Yanks.*

Soldiers: Right. (*Sing.*)

*We've no illusions about the enemy;
Vigilant, we'll keep our guns in hand.*

Pao (enters): Platoon leader, the villagers are coming.

Lu: Look, they've all turned out.

Soldiers: How are you, villagers?

(Korean villagers enter joyfully and exchange greetings with the Chinese soldiers.)

Sun Hui (runs in calling): Uncle Yen!

Yen: Sun Hui!

Sun Hui: Uncle!

Yen: Sun Hui, how tall you've grown.

Sun Hui: Grandma Choe has come too. You see?

(Aunt Choe enters.)

Yen and Soldiers (overjoyed): Mama Choe!

Aunt Choe (clasps Yen's arms. Sings):

*Though I haven't seen you for a year,
I remember clearly the days past.
Badly wounded, you lived with us for weeks,
As dear to us as our own flesh and blood.
But before your wounds were fully healed
You returned to the front, and I worried —*

Yen: Look, mama! (*Slaps his arm.*) I'm completely recovered.

(With deep feeling, sings.)

*You tended me day and night,
Fed me carefully, gave me drinks,
Your class devotion
Weightier than Mount Tai.
We Chinese People's Volunteers are far from home,
You have been like a mother to us.*

Soldiers: Mama Choe!

Soldiers and Villagers (sing): *Blood cements the friendship of
The Korean and Chinese people.*

Aunt Choe (sings): *On Anyong Mountain a bright rainbow appears.*

Aunt Choe and Villagers (*sing*):

Two happy events come one after the other.

Aunt Choe (*sings*): *We have just seen off our people's troops,*

And now you Volunteers have come to our village;

Young and old, we're delighted, all.

Soldiers and Villagers (*sing*): *Young and old, we're delighted, all.*

(Music starts up. They shout and dance a Korean folk dance. Suddenly the drone of a plane is heard.)

Lu: An enemy plane.

(All glare up in anger.)

Yen: Get down, everyone.

(Yen protects Aunt Choe with his body. All throw themselves flat. Soldiers aim at the enemy plane as it sweeps over. Some way off, the plane drops bombs.)

Aunt Choe (*sings*): *Once more enemy planes come to rain havoc.*

(Offstage Hu Shu-pin calls: "Platoon leader." He runs in.)

Hu: The regimental commander has ordered us to return to regimental headquarters immediately and wait for orders.

Yen: What's up?

Hu: The American imperialists and the Syngman Rhee gang have broken the truce talks. They've...

Yen: Well?

Hu: They've launched another attack.

Soldiers (*angrily*): Oh.

(Offstage a villager cries: "Mama Choe!" Enter Villager.)

Villager: The township committee chief wants us to destroy the road immediately. He says you should come for a Party meeting.

Aunt Choe: Very well.

Yen: I've just been telling the committee chief about some new developments. In order to destroy the enemy troops we may have to be moving off. Where can we get in touch with you in an emergency?

Aunt Choe: If you can't find me here, I'll be at the home of my daughter-in-law's parents.

Yen: In Chongsokri?

Aunt Choe: That's right. In Chongsokri.

Yen: Comrades, the American imperialists have broken the cease-fire talks, just as our leaders thought they would. Chairman Mao teaches us: **"Make trouble, fail, make trouble again, fail again... till their doom"**; that is the logic of the imperialists and all reactionaries the world over in dealing with the people's cause. We must teach them a good lesson.

Lu: If we don't hit the enemy, he won't fall.

Soldiers: We definitely will wipe them out. (*Sing.*)

Our flames of hatred reach the sky,

We won't leave the field till we've finished the enemy.

Yen: Get ready to set off.

(The soldiers assent.)

Aunt Choe (*sings*): *Dear ones, we hate to part with you.*

Yen (*sings*): *Yalu River, Paekdusan Mountains,*

How closely our countries are linked.

We drink the water of the same river,

Our green mountains are of the same range.

This lovely land belongs to the people;

We shall never permit American imperialists to invade it.

Goodbye, villagers, we're off to the front.

(Soldiers form ranks.)

When we get our orders we'll crush the enemy.

(Yen shakes hands with Aunt Choe.)

(Soldiers, eager to fight, wave farewell to villagers and hurry off. Yen and Lu mount a slope, look back and wave goodbye.)

(Curtain falls quickly)

SCENE TWO

KEEP ON WITH THE FIGHT

Time: Dusk, three days later.

Place: Anpyongri, in enemy occupied territory. Enemy bombardments have scorched the earth, which is pitted with shell craters, littered with broken branches. In the distance, on Anpyong Mountain are trees burnt by napalm.

(Puppet Korean Captain and Platoon Leader enter with soldiers.)

Platoon Leader: Attention.

Captain: Brothers, we've occupied Anpyongri for three days already.

The American adviser and our commander have ordered us to conscript civilians to repair the road. Why are you clods so slow?

Platoon Leader: These people here are hard to handle.

Captain: What's so hard about it, idiot? This morning we spotted a suspicious-looking old woman on the south mountain, and you fellows let her get away, right from under your nose. The commander will be coming with the American adviser soon to make a check. Don't you want your heads? What are you hanging around for? Post guards along the road, quick.

Soldiers (*apathetically*): Yes, sir.

Platoon Leader: Get moving!

(*All exit. Aunt Choe and Sister Choe enter, carrying brushwood on their backs. They look vigilantly around.*)

Aunt Choe (*in a low voice*): The information we've just discovered is very important, child. The Party organization and the township committee. . . .

(*Sister Choe spots something suspicious. They look round alertly.*)

Aunt Choe: . . . Want us to continue observing the enemy's movements.

Sister Choe: Right.

Aunt Choe: The enemy is trying to force us to repair the road. We've got to stall, resist them.

Sister Choe: Right.

(*A car is heard approaching. Aunt Choe signals to Sister Choe. They separate and go out.*)

(*Captain and Platoon Leader enter quickly with soldiers.*)

Captain: Hurry, hurry. Guards, take your posts.

(*American Adviser, Staff Officer and soldiers enter with commanders of the White Tiger Regiment and the Armoured Regiment, and puppet Korean chief of staff.*)

Captain: Attention! Captain of the guards company of the White Tiger Regiment of the Capital Division reports: We are rounding up civilians to repair the road as the adviser and the commander have ordered.

WTR Commander: Please make your inspection, Mr. Adviser.

Adviser: Well, friends, we're winning time through the Panmunjom truce talks. The hundred thousand crack troops we're gathering in the Kumsong sector will shortly be able to make a lightning attack. As soon as we receive the order, we shall drive straight for Pyongyang. (*To WTR Commander*) Your chance to distinguish yourself is at hand.

WTR Commander (*respectfully*): We are eager to serve the free world.

Adviser: Okay. (*American staff officer points out terrain to him. Adviser peers through his field-glasses. Suddenly his face darkens.*) Why are the fortifications so weak on the open country between Heights 386 and 419?

WTR Commander: That's your sector, commander, the Armoured Regiment's.

AR Commander: It's this way, Mr. Adviser. The road between the Yongjin Bridge and those front positions hasn't been repaired yet. It's holding up the work on our fortifications.

Adviser: The Communists' tactics are unpredictable. Haven't you learned that lesson often enough?

AR Commander: Yes, sir.

Adviser: Strengthen those fortifications immediately. Add more barbed wire and lay landmines all over the place.

AR Commander: Yes, sir.

Chief of Staff: Right.

(AR Commander and Chief of Staff go out.)

Adviser *(to Commander of White Tiger Regiment):* Why hasn't that road been repaired?

WTR Commander *(to Captain):* Why hasn't that road been repaired?

Captain: The people in this sector refuse to work.

Adviser: What! Let me remind you: Military men should know how to deal with such people.

WTR Commander *(to Captain):* You fool. Burn their houses and round them all up. Make them repair that road.

Captain: Right. *(Signs to Platoon Leader.)* Burn them out.

Platoon Leader *(to soldiers):* Burn them out. *(Leaves with the soldiers.)*

(Platoon Leader and soldiers go across the stage bearing torches. The village is set afire. The soldiers return driving villagers before them.)

Soldiers: Get a move on.

Villager A *(sings):* *The American-Rbee bandits set our village on fire, We burn with rage.*

(Platoon Leader enters, running.)

Platoon Leader: Reporting. Some of the villagers refuse to go. One of them is very much like that suspicious-looking old woman we saw on the south mountain.

WTR Commander: Have her shot.

Platoon Leader: Yes, sir. *(Turns to leave.)*

Adviser: Wait. Those villagers have been brainwashed by the communist army. Such people. . . *(He makes a grabbing motion.)*

WTR Commander: Very good. *(To Captain)* Bring her here.

Captain: Yes, sir. *(To Platoon Leader)* Bring her here.

Platoon Leader *(to soldiers):* Look sharp!

Soldiers: Right.

(Four soldiers hurry off. Presently they return with Aunt Choe, under guard.)

Villagers *(with concern):* Aunt Choe.

Soldiers: Keep moving.

Platoon Leader: Hurry.

WTR Commander *(fiercely to the villagers):* Out with it. Who told you not to repair the road?

(The villagers glare at him in silence.)

WTR Commander: You've disobeyed the orders of the allied army.

Adviser: No, no. Repairing the road will help the Republic of Korea. *(To Aunt Choe)* Do you understand, old woman?

Aunt Choe: We understand your "kindness" very well.

WTR Commander: Why don't you get to work then?

Aunt Choe: I'm too old.

Captain: What were you doing on the mountain?

Aunt Choe: All our grain and fuel have been taken away, so I went to cut brushwood.

Adviser: Why did you have to go to the south mountain to do it?

Aunt Choe *(stoutly):* The mountain is ours and so are the trees. Why shouldn't we go there?

(The adviser, finding this irrefutable, looks very put out.)

WTR Commander: That's an allied position, it's off limits.

Aunt Choe: What?

Captain: Off limits.

Aunt Choe *(laughs scornfully):* We villagers don't know anything about that. All we know is that we've cut fuel there for generations.

Captain: How dare you act dumb? *(To WTR Commander)* This is the spy we saw on the south mountain, commander.

WTR Commander: Take her away.

Soldiers: Right.

Villagers: Aunt Choe!

Aunt Choe *(stares at the soldiers angrily):* Wait. Don't forget you're Koreans.

WTR Commander: First you snoopied round an allied position. Now you're trying to shake their loyalty, eh? Inciting insurrection.

Aunt Choe: Traitor. You adopt a gangster for a father, lead a wolf into the house. You burn and pillage, stop at nothing. . . .

WTR Commander: Beat her up.

Captain: Yes, sir. (*Goes forward to seize Aunt Choe.*)

Aunt Choe: Bootlicker! (*Slaps his face. Sings.*)
Savagery cannot frighten a heroic people.

WTR Commander (*yelling*): I'll have you shot.

(The villagers step forward to glare at the enemy.)

Adviser: Wait. (*Puts on a show of affability.*) Citizens, don't let yourselves be fooled by Red propaganda. We Americans have come to Korea to help you unify your country. We bring you peace, democracy, freedom and happiness.

Aunt Choe: Rot. (*Rounds on the adviser, who retreats step by step.*) Peace? Happiness? Democracy? Freedom? (*Loudly*) Neighbours! (*Mounts slope.*) Look! (*Points at flaming village.*) There's the peace and happiness they bring us. There's the democracy and freedom they bring us. (*To Adviser*) Robbers. Who believes your lies? We want you to get out of Korea.

Captain: Arrest her.

Villagers: Get out of Korea! Get out of Korea!

Adviser (*startled*): What!

Captain: Arrest her.

Aunt Choe (*to Adviser*): Filthy robber. You talk so sweet but you kill without batting an eye. (*Sings.*)
*You invade Korea and spread the flames of war,
Camouflaged beneath high-sounding words.
How many Korean people have you killed?
How many Korean homes have you burned?
Our hatred, so intense, so fierce,
Whips the Han River into a raging torrent.
Terrible crimes you commit without end,
Cruel, savage, wicked wolves.
When our army liberates us,
We'll see what happens to you butchers.*

*Gangsters, you won't escape
The people's justice.*

(At a sign from the American adviser, the WTR Commander shoots her.)

Villagers: Aunt Choe!

(Aunt Choe, suppressing her pain, keeps on her feet.)

Adviser (*hypocritically*): Citizens, I'm extremely distressed at this unfortunate incident.

Villagers: Bah!

Aunt Choe (*glares at the enemy*): Beast! (*Sings.*)
*We shall bury you all
In the sea of people's warfare!*

Adviser (*trembles*): This is . . . frightful. (*Shoots Aunt Choe and leaves with his men.*)

(Villagers run forward and raise Aunt Choe up.)

Villagers: Aunt Choe. (*Sing.*)

*Our dear one has been killed,
Anger flames in our hearts.*

Villager A: Sister Choe!

Villagers: Sister Choe!

Sister Choe (*enters quickly. Shocked at sight of Aunt Choe, she rushes forward*): Mama, mama!

Aunt Choe (*rallying momentarily*): Keep on with the fight, child.

Sister Choe: I will.

Aunt Choe: Go to Chongsokri and wait for Platoon Leader Yen.

Sister Choe: Yes, Chongsokri.

(Aunt Choe dies.)

Villagers: Aunt Choe.

Sister Choe: Oh, mama! (*Sings.*)

*I'm torn to see you so cruelly murdered.
Courageous, you never gave in to the enemy.
A longing for vengeance seethes in my breast.*

Neighbours!

In this magnificent land of ours,

Our people are brave with unshakable wills.

Let us die fighting

But never submit.

Villagers (sing): *Never submit.*

Sister Choe and Villagers (sing): *We will not be slaves!*

Sister Choe (sings): *These bloody debts we'll never forget*

Drive through the darkness into the light,

Fight unflinchingly and conquer the storm.

Sister Choe and Villagers (sing): *Conquer the storm.*

(Captain returns with soldiers.)

Captain: What's this? Why aren't you repairing the road?

(Villagers close in on him angrily.)

Captain (retreating in fright): You won't go, eh? *(Points at body of Aunt Choe.)* You'll end up like her if you're not careful.

Villager A: We refuse, don't we, neighbours?

Villagers: We refuse.

Captain: If you don't go, I'll shoot.

Villager A (steps forward and slaps his chest): Go ahead and shoot.

Villagers: Shoot!

Captain (in alarm): This is rebellion. Here!

Soldiers: Yes, sir.

Captain: Drive these people off and make them repair the road.

Platoon Leader: Quick.

Soldiers: Get moving. Quick.

Sister Choe (approaching Aunt Choe's body): Mama!

Soldiers: Get going.

Captain: Go on.

(Soldiers close in on villagers, who resist. Bearing the body of Aunt Choe, the villagers and Sister Choe march in a proud procession up the slope, then stand and look defiantly at Captain.)

(Curtain)



Aunt Choe is delighted to see CPV platoon leader Yen Wei-tsai again.

Raid on the White Tiger Regiment

Aunt Choe and her daughter-in-law carry out reconnaissance in the mountains.



Bearing the body of Aunt Choe, the Korean villagers, forced by the enemy to repair the road, look defiantly at the puppet captain.



Yen Wei-tsai and his men scouting behind enemy lines.



The dagger squad in action behind the enemy lines.



Yen Wei-tsai and Han Dae Nyon make a pledge before they start out for battle.

Yen and his dagger squad capture the leader of the guards platoon of the White Tiger Regiment.



The Chinese and Korean forces cheer their victory after the destruction of White Tiger Regiment's command post.



SCENE THREE

RECONNAISSANCE

Time: Before dawn the next day.

Place: On Anyong Mountain, in front of the White Tiger Regiment position. A clutter of enemy fortifications can be seen in the moonlight.

(An enemy patrol walks across the stage and goes off. Chang Shun-ho and Pao Yu-lu remove camouflage, jump out from behind trees and do a scouts' dance. They wave to someone in the distance, then leave. Yen Wei-tsai enters, stands on a slope and looks around. He leaps down and does a scouts' dance.)

Yen (sings): *We're scouting the mountain by moonlight.*

(Chang Shun-ho, Pao Yu-lu and Soldier A enter.)

Chang: It's obvious from what we've seen on this mission that the command post of the White Tiger Regiment is in Ichong-dong.

Yen: Yes. It confirms what our regimental commander thought. Now we've got to find out the enemy troop disposition and fortifications between Heights 386 and 419. Let's move fast.

Soldiers: Right. *(They do a scouts' dance.)*

Chang: Look, platoon leader.

Yen: Barbed wire!

Soldiers: Line after line of it.

Yen: Artillery emplacements.

Chang: Hidden in the groves.

Yen: Make a note of it. Look. Machine-gun nests for cross-fire. And there, along the road —

Soldiers: A forest of sentry posts.

Chang: The fortifications in this sector are so mixed up, this must be where the White Tiger Regiment and the Armoured Regiment overlap.

Yen: It would be a good place for us to make our break-through.

(Sings.)

Dawn's approaching; we check with Aunt Choe.

(Chang and Pao go out.)

Soldier A: Platoon leader, look. The enemy's set fire to Anpyongri.

Yen: What! *(He bounds up the slope and gazes into the distance. Sings.)*

Anpyongri engulfed in smoke and flames,

(He comes down the slope.)

It's as if my own home were on fire.

I worry over the villagers' safety.

What has become of Mama Choe?

Soldier A: Someone's coming.

Yen: Take cover.

(They hide. Pao and Chang return.)

Yen: What's happening in the village?

Chang: Platoon leader, all the young and able-bodied villagers have been dragged away. What's become of Sister Choe we don't know.

Pao: The enemy have occupied Anpyong Mountain; they're burning and killing wantonly. The people are putting up a valiant resistance. Mama Choe ... has given her life for her country.

Yen: Mama Choe. *(Sings.)*

Piercing grief shoots through me,

Hatred brims in my heart.

Comrades, turn sorrow into strength,

Debts of blood must be paid with blood.

Soldiers (sing): *Debts of blood must be paid with blood.*

Yen (sings): *Robbers!*

We are making ready fires to cremate you;

Wherever you attack you will meet your doom.

Chang: Let's request a battle assignment from our regimental leaders.

Yen: Right.

Pao: We'll definitely wipe out the White Tiger Regiment.

Yen: Come on.

Soldier A: Enemy soldiers, platoon leader.

Yen: Take cover.

(They hide. Yen does a taking-cover dance. Enemy patrol passes. Yen and his men strike a pose.)

(Lights fade. Curtain)

SCENE FOUR

REQUESTING A BATTLE ASSIGNMENT

Time: Afternoon of the same day.

Place: Outside the bunker of a CPV scouts platoon. On one side of the bunker is written: "Resist U.S. Aggression and Aid Korea." Communication trenches stretch across the rough terrain. Mountains loom majestic in the background.

(Artillery can be heard in the distance. Hu Shu-pin carrying a rifle stands on the slope. Chang Shun-ho comes out of the bunker.)

Chang: Hu Shu-pin.

Hu: Here.

Chang: Is our platoon leader back from asking for a battle assignment at regimental headquarters?

Hu: Not yet.

(Pao and two soldiers come rapidly out of bunker.)

Pao: Our comrades have heard how the enemy killed our Korean class brothers and Mama Choe, squad leader. They're ready to burst. They can't hold themselves in any longer.

(Inside the bunker several voices shout: "Lu Pei-lu!" Lu comes charging out. Chang Shun-ho stops him as other soldiers emerge in pursuit.)

Chang: Where are you going, Lu?

Lu: To regimental headquarters to find our platoon leader.

Chang: Steady on, comrade.

Lu: Squad leader, we must avenge the villagers and Mama Choe.

Pao: We've got to pull out that tough nail — the White Tiger Regiment.

Lu: Tough nail? We'll smash it even if it's a solid chunk of iron.

Soldiers: Yes, we've got to destroy it.

Lu: Right!

(Artillery sounds in the distance.)

Pao: Third Battalion drove back over a dozen assaults in a single day and killed and wounded so many enemy troops. Comrades, we mustn't forget we're the heroic platoon that held Height 587 on Sanggamryong Ridge....

Lu: That's right, comrades. Let's go and find our platoon leader.

Soldiers: Right. Let's go. *(They start off.)*

Chang: Cool down, comrades. Our platoon leader is even more anxious to fight than we are. When he came back from the scouting mission today he didn't rest for a minute but rushed to regimental headquarters to report and request a battle assignment. Don't worry. The whole army knows about him. He's a scout hero who's been through many battles and who's been decorated many times. He always picks the hardest job for himself. The regimental commander is sure to give us the most difficult mission.

Hu: Here comes our platoon leader, comrades.

(Soldiers move eagerly forward.)

Soldiers: Platoon leader.

(Yen enters.)

Lu: You're back, at last.

Yen: Yes.

Soldiers: Did you get a mission for us?

Pao: Are we going after the White Tiger Regiment?

Lu: When do we go into action?

Soldiers: When do we start?

Yen: The regimental commander and the commissar have both gone up to division for a meeting, comrades.

Soldiers *(disappointed):* Oh!

Yen: Be patient, comrades, you'll have plenty of fighting. When our regimental commanders come back, they're sure to give us an assignment. Have a good rest now, so as to be ready for battle.

Soldiers: Right. *(One by one they go back into the bunker.)*

Lu *(turns back after a few steps):* Both of us have known hardships, and we came to Korea together to fight. You know what's in my heart, platoon leader. *(Agitatedly)* How can I stand by and watch while the enemy slaughter the Korean people?

Yen: We all feel the same way, comrade. The American imperialists owe the people a debt of blood. We'll make them pay. Don't worry. Headquarters is preparing now for battle. Go and rest till the order comes.

Lu: Yes. *(Lu goes into the bunker. Artillery booms.)*

Yen *(sings):* *My mind is troubled, old and new*

Crimes cry out for vengeance.

Dark clouds hang over Anpyong Mountain,

I see Mama Choe who heroically gave her life,

And remember my own mother, killed by

The U.S.-Chiang Kai-shek gang on Mount Laoshan.

Although the two mountains are separated by sea,

Both homes are linked by cruel oppression.

The Chinese and Korean people have suffered together,

Their class and national hatred knows no bounds.

The Party leads our revolution, we vow

To give our all for mankind's liberation.

The U.S.-Rhee bandits have launched a desperate provocation,

Can we let them slaughter at will and overrun the land?

Our comrades are eager to get into action,

They're determined to wipe the enemy out.

On behalf of the platoon I'm requesting an assignment,

We'll take on the hardest, most difficult task.

Hu: Here's the political commissar, platoon leader.

(Commissar Kuan and a soldier enter.)

Yen (*salutes*): Commissar.

Kuan: I hear you were just at regimental headquarters, Comrade

Yen. Asking for a battle assignment?

Yen: Yes, commissar.

Kuan: How do your comrades feel about it?

Yen: They're very anxious to fight. Can hardly hold back.

Kuan: Good. And you, eh? (*Laughs.*)

(Yen lowers his head and smiles.)

Soldier A (*emerges from bunker*): The commissar! Hey, comrades, the commissar is here. (*To Kuan*) Commissar.

Soldiers (*crowd out of the bunker*): Commissar.

Lu: You're back at last, commissar.

Kuan: Yes, and I have good news. The information your platoon leader and comrades brought back from their scouting mission last night has been very useful to the leadership in making a plan for battle. The division commanders say you should be commended.

(A buzz of excitement.)

Lu: That's all very well. But there's a battle to be fought and we're still not in it. We're burning for a chance.

Kuan: Hold your horses, young fellow. (*He laughs.*) Come over here, comrades. Sit down, sit down.

(Kuan, Yen and some of the soldiers sit down.)

Kuan (*to Lu*): In fighting you mustn't be impatient, comrade. What does Chairman Mao teach us?

Chang: "Fight no battle unprepared."

Soldiers: "Fight no battle you are not sure of winning."

Kuan: Right. And we must carry out his instructions. Comrades, a hard job awaits us.

Yen (*stands up*): Beat the White Tiger Regiment?

Kuan: Right. (*Kuan and the soldiers stand up.*) The enemy pretends to talk peace while in fact waging war. To shatter this scheme and force them to admit their defeat and sign the truce at Pan-

munjom, our commanders have ordered us to give them a good drubbing if they don't behave.

Soldiers: Fine.

Kuan: We want to prove beyond a doubt to the people of the whole world that what the enemy can't get at the conference table they won't get on the battlefield.

Lu: That's what we want to hear, commissar. Tell us, quick, how are we going to fight them?

Soldiers: Yes. What tactics will we use?

Kuan: Our regiment's task is to make a thrust assault. We're going to organize a deep-thrust battalion with a dagger squad up front, and this dagger is going to plunge right into the enemy's heart. (*Sings.*)

To pierce their heart and carve up their entrails,

First we'll smash the command post of the White Tiger Regiment.

Time is short, the task heavy, fighting behind the enemy lines

Needs a dagger squad that is clever and bold.

Yen: Let us be the dagger, commissar.

Soldiers: Give the job to us.

Yen: Our scouts platoon has experience in fighting behind the enemy lines. We hit accurately and hard, we can slip into places and get out again. And we're familiar with the enemy set-up in this sector. Even more important, every member of our platoon knows bitter class hatred and, educated by Chairman Mao, is determined to fight to the death to defeat U.S. imperialism. We guarantee to carry out the glorious task the Party gives us.

Soldiers: We guarantee to fulfil our mission.

Kuan: That's fine, comrades. This is what I've come for. The regimental Party committee has already decided to entrust you with serving as the dagger squad.

Soldiers: Wonderful.

Yen (*sings*): *We're thrilled to have this important task,*

The Party's order gives us limitless strength.

Neither mountains of knives nor seas of flames can daunt us,

We will gladly give our lives for the revolution.

Kuan: Comrade Yen.

Yen: Here.

Kuan: The regimental commander is organizing the deep-thrust battalion now. Get ready for battle right away and go up to regiment to receive your assignment.

Yen: Right.

(Kuan and a soldier go out.)

Soldiers (excitedly): Platoon leader, we've got it.

(Curtain)

SCENE FIVE

THE PLEDGE BEFORE BATTLE

Time: Immediately following the previous scene.

Place: Headquarters of a regiment of the Chinese People's Volunteers. Pines grow lofty and vigorous on the mountainside. In the headquarters below them are field telephones and a model of the terrain. A map hangs on the central wall.

(Rumbles of cannon fire. Staff Officer Kao and Section Chief Chang are telephoning. Regimental Commander Wang and several company and battalion cadres are standing around the terrain model, discussing the battle plan.)

Kao: Hello....

Section Chief: Hello....

Kao: Hello, Position Five? Right. We'll send you more ammunition immediately.

Section Chief: What? The enemy are laying down a barrage of smoke shells?

Wang: What position is that?

Section Chief: Number six.

Wang: Keep the observers on the alert.

Section Chief: Right, observers on the alert.

Wang: They're up to something. *(To Kao)* Get me the artillery command post.

Kao: Right. *(Cranking the field telephone)* Artillery command post? Are you Director Chang? *(Hands telephone to Wang.)*

Wang (taking the phone): Hello, Chang. Yes. Concentrate your fire on the enemy on both sides of Anpyong Mountain. Put eyes on those shells. Hit them hard.

(Heavy artillery bombardment is heard.)

Wang: Comrades, according to the information Comrade Yen collected on his scouting mission, your deep-thrust battalion should follow a line from here *(points to the model)* directly to Ihchongdong, across Sangsok Mountain.

Cadres: Right.

Wang: The deep-thrust battalion, at the agreed time, must conceal itself near the enemy's forward positions. When the dagger squad slips in through the rear, you follow and attract the enemy. Engage them in close fighting, make a night assault, upset their deployment. This will create conditions for the squad to raid the enemy's regimental headquarters. In this way we can coordinate with our division's main force in wiping out the enemy's crack White Tiger Regiment.

Cadres: Right.

Wang (sings): *Tonight our raiders will pierce the enemy defences,
Slash in, zigzag, divide, surround and annihilate.
From the rear we'll enter and cut their retreat, no relief
Will be possible from one end or the other.
Tonight is the time for a crushing blow,
Not a man of the U.S.-Rhee gang will get away.*

Cadres: We guarantee to complete our mission.

Wang: Good. Do you have any changes or additions to suggest for the battle plan?

Cadre A: The key to success is the dagger squad. It has the hardest job, so it needs a determined leader. Who are you sending, commander?

Wang: We've decided on Yen Wei-tsai. Commissar Kuan has gone to the scouts platoon. What's your opinion?

Cadres A and B: Excellent.

Cadres C and D: He's sure to be able to do it.

Wang: All right then, comrades. Let's get ready to carry out the decisions of the meeting.

All: Right.

(Section Chief Chang goes out with the cadres.)

(Commissar Kuan enters.)

Kuan: Old Wang.

Wang: How is the dagger squad shaping up, Old Kuan?

Kuan: The young fellows are raring to go. Yen Wei-tsai will be here in a moment.

Wang: Good.

Kuan: Has the deep-thrust battalion been organized?

Wang: Yes. Our whole regiment is in high fighting spirits, Old Kuan. *(Sings.)*

From top to bottom our men have been mobilized,

They're waiting eagerly for the order to strike.

Like arrows in bows that are stretched to the full

They'll shoot forth together in overwhelming force.

(Section Chief Chang enters.)

Section Chief: Regiment commander. *(Hands him a letter.)*

Wang *(reads the letter, excited):* Fine. Because of the importance of this mission, the Korean People's Army has sent liaison officer Comrade Han Dae Nyon and Comrade Kim Dae Yong to go into action with us.

Kuan: Excellent. Section Chief Chang.

Section Chief: Here.

Kuan: Ask them to come in.

Section Chief: Right.

(Han Dae Nyon and Kim Dae Yong enter.)

Han: Regiment Commander Wang.

Wang *(shakes hands):* Welcome, Comrade Han Dae Nyon. Your co-operation will help us carry out our assignment.

Kuan: Yes. Section Chief Chang.

Section Chief: Here.

Kuan: Take the comrades to have a rest.

Section Chief: Right. *(Leads the Koreans out. Yen enters.)*

Yen *(sings):* *Bullets in the chambers, swords sharpened,*

The whole camp is ready to slay the foe.

As soon as the bugle sounds the charge

The dagger will drive into the enemy's breast.

Reporting.

Kuan: Come in. *(Signs to Staff Officer Kao, who goes out.)*

(Yen comes in and salutes.)

Wang *(shakes hands with Yen):* How are you doing with your preparations, Comrade Yen?

Yen: Everything's ready. We're just waiting for orders.

Wang: Good. Our superiors have decided to launch a general counter-offensive along the entire front tomorrow at dawn and severely punish the enemy. We want to surround all the enemy in the Kumsong sector and...

Yen: Give them a good thrashing.

Wang: Right. Come over here. *(Points at terrain model.)* Here is the Korean People's Army and here are our Volunteer forces: we shall co-operate closely. You and your men are to disguise yourselves as American and puppet soldiers and destroy the command post of the White Tiger Regiment.

Yen: Right.

Wang: Here's the White Tiger Regiment command post. Where do you think would be the best place for you to slip in?

Yen *(thinks, then decides):* On the basis of our reconnaissance, we intend to go in here where the enemy fortifications are strongest and their guard tightest.

Kuan *(pretending not to understand):* Oh? Why?

Yen: Because it's where they think they are strongest that we feel they are weakest. Chairman Mao tells us that we must

be good at discovering the enemy's weak spots. They have various arms there with different designations. It's the best spot for our disguises to get us by.

Wang (*approvingly*): Right. Chairman Mao teaches us that we must be good at finding the enemy's weaknesses in warfare. We should do what they don't expect, and strike when they're unprepared. That's the way to win victories.

Kuan: Your ideas and those of the regimental Party committee are exactly the same on this, young fellow. It's a very difficult mission. The success of the whole battle depends upon it. You must be fully prepared.

Yen: Right. (*Sings.*)

*A vital task sends us in among the wolves,
A task of rare glory and difficulty,
Though the U.S.-Rhee gang is a very large force,
They're paper tigers, hollow inside.
What if their defence lines are many deep?
No hardship can stop a Communist.*

Kuan (*sings*): *A revolutionary should dare to storm heaven,
Bearing Chairman Mao's teachings always in mind,
Strike paper tigers as if they were real,
Treat one ton as a load of ten.
On the success of your mission our victory hinges;
Dare to fight, dare to win, break through the barriers.*

Wang: Comrade Yen Wei-tsai. (*Sings.*)

*Be nimble in movement, decisive in lead,
Don't let the enemy tie you down.
You won't be alone in your stab through their rear,
I'll follow closely with the deep-thrust battalion,
Keep alert, move swiftly, and destroy
Their command post at the appointed time.*

Yen: Right. (*Sings.*)

*Our army is spreading a huge net
To catch thousands of enemy troops;
Mao Tsetung Thought illumines my mind,
I'm filled with courage and determination.*

*We'll surprise the enemy as if we dropped from the sky,
And completely topple the White Tiger Regiment.*

(*Han enters.*)

Wang: Know him, Comrade Yen?

Yen (*pleased and excited*): Deputy Platoon Leader Han.

Han: Platoon Leader Yen.

Yen and Han: So we meet again. (*They embrace.*)

Wang: The Korean People's Army has sent them to help us. You will work together.

Yen and Han: Right. (*They shake hands warmly.*)

Wang: The enemy has set a tight guard in the Yongjin Bridge sector. They're constantly changing their passwords. This is a problem you'll have to solve yourselves.

Han: Comrade Yen and I have fought in that sector, commander. We're quite familiar with it. We guarantee to complete our mission.

Kuan: Whatever you do, Comrade Yen, talk it over with Comrade Han.

Wang: Now go and prepare.

Yen and Han: Right.

(*They go out. Staff Officer Kao comes in with Cadre A and two soldiers.*)

Cadre A (*salutes*): The deep-thrust battalion is here as ordered.

Wang: Have the comrades wait in the dugout.

Cadre A: Right. (*He goes out with the two soldiers.*)

Section Chief (*enters*): Reporting. The dagger squad is ready.

Wang: Ask them in.

Section Chief: Right. Come in, comrades.

(*Soldiers disguised as puppet Korean troops enter. They line up, holding their weapons.*)

Wang: Are you all ready?

Soldiers: Ready and waiting for orders.

Wang (*inspects their outfits*): Comrades, wasn't it your unit that held Height 587 on Sanggamryong Ridge?

Soldiers: Yes.

Wang: Two enemy battalions took turns attacking you under the cover of hundreds of artillery pieces. How were you able to defeat them and not yield an inch of ground? On what did you rely?

Soldiers: On the great force of Mao Tsetung Thought. On our determination to defend the eastern outpost of socialism and to defeat U.S. imperialism.

Wang: Good. This raid on the White Tiger Regiment is a tough assignment. Do you think you can do it?

Soldiers: We certainly can.

Wang: Staff Officer Kao.

Kao: Here.

Wang: Notify the artillery to prepare for battle.

Kao: Right.

Wang: Comrade Yen, Comrade Han. (*The two men and Kim Dae Yong enter in American and puppet disguises.*) You are to set out tonight from Position 7. We will clear the minefield ahead with an artillery barrage first. While the deep-thrust battalion is drawing the enemy, you slip in. Every second counts. Show the daring, speed, tenacity and fearlessness of hardship and death for which our army is famous. Demolish the enemy regimental headquarters before dawn.

Yen and Others: Right.

Wang (sings): *Take the enemy unawares; go in and win.*

Soldiers (sing): *Our commander's instructions are engraved on our hearts.*

Yen (sings): *Loyal to our homeland and Korea.*

Kuan (sings): *Volunteers and Korean people are linked as one.*

Wang: Comrades, the people at home are concerned about us every minute, the Korean people support us night and day. Chairman Mao and Premier Kim Il Sung are waiting for news of our victory.

(*Music strikes up. Yen Wei-tsai, Han Dae Nyon and the soldiers raise clenched fists.*)

Yen: Chairman Mao, Premier Kim, we pledge ourselves to fight to

Han: Premier Kim, Chairman Mao, the finish to defend the eastern outpost of socialism, for the victory of the Chinese and Korean people. We shall win glory for the motherland!

Soldiers: We shall win glory for the motherland.

Kao: It's time.

Wang: Artillery, fire.

Kao: Fire.

Yen: Let's go, comrades.

Soldiers: Right.

(*Soldiers salute the commanders and quickly file out. Yen and Han salute the commanders and shake hands, then run out arm in arm. Wang and Kuan wave to them.*)

(*Curtain*)

SCENE SIX

THRUSTING BEHIND ENEMY LINES

Time: That same night.

Place: In the enemy's rear. A peak soars to the sky. The ground is littered with barbed wire and enemy fortifications.

(*Thunder rumbles. Rain and gale.*)

Yen (offstage, sings): *Cleverly disguised, we've slipped in
To smash the gangsters' nest.*

(*Three scouts enter and dance, followed by Yen, Han and soldiers. They strike a pose.*)

Yen (sings): *Our men are in high spirits, fearless of the storm,
In the dark of night we hasten through the mud.*

Han: Barbed wire.

Yen: Down, everyone.

(All drop to the ground. From behind the barbed wire barricade, a searchlight beam sweeps. The men quickly press themselves flat.)

Soldier A: Shall we clip the wire?

Yen *(peers beyond the barricade)*: No. We'll jump it.

Han: I'll go. *(Leaps over the barbed wire. Signs to Yen.)*

Yen: Leap over!

(Soldiers and Yen leap over the barbed wire.)

(Lights fade. Enemy signal flares and searchlight beams rise in the sky.)

(Lights go on again. Two soldiers on the edge of a bluff drop a stone to gauge the height. Then, one by one, all jump down.)

Yen: Down! *(Sings.)*

Crossing man-made and natural barriers,

Our men are coolly determined.

Han: We're already over Heights 386 and 419, comrades. The highway lies ahead.

Lu: We still don't know the enemy's password for tonight, platoon leader. How can we travel on the road without it?

Yen *(sings)*: *The commander told us before we left
That the enemy change their password often.*

We have to capture an enemy soldier,

And find out the situation.

(All advance.)

Yen *(suddenly halts)*: Down.

(The others drop to the ground.)

Yen *(calmly)*: I'm standing on a landmine, comrades.

Soldiers: Platoon leader. *(They start forward to remove the mine.)*

Yen *(bastily)*: Don't move. *(Soldiers stop advancing.)* If it goes off, the enemy will hear, and it will affect our mission.

Soldiers: Platoon leader. *(They crawl forward again.)*

Yen: Listen to orders. Get back, quick.

Chang: Platoon leader.

Yen: Back. *(Signs to Chang to move back.)*

Lu: Platoon leader.

Chang: Back.

(All fall back.)

Yen: Chang Shun-ho.

Chang: Here.

Yen: I'm going to defuse it. If I'm killed, you take over. Be sure to co-operate well with Comrade Han.

Chang: I will.

Yen: Comrades, no matter what the difficulties and hardships, we must carry out the glorious task entrusted to us by the Party.

Soldiers: We swear to carry out our assignment.

Yen: Take cover.

Lu: Platoon leader!

Chang: Take cover!

(Yen begins extracting the fuse. The others watch intently.)

Yen: Watch out. *(He finishes his task, leaps out of the danger zone and throws himself down.)*

(Presently all get up and crowd round Yen.)

Soldiers: Did you get it?

Yen: Yes.

Lu: You had me worried stiff, platoon leader.

Soldier B: Lucky it didn't go off.

Yen: It's an American mine with a delayed action fuse. As long as I didn't remove the pressure of my foot, it couldn't go off.

Pao: How is it there were no landmines when we scouted through here the last time?

Yen: It looks as if the enemy have tightened their defences. There are probably other types of mines around, too.

Lu: We'd better push on fast.

Han: That won't do. If a mine goes off and alerts the enemy, that will jeopardize our mission.

Lu: But every second counts, platoon leader. What shall we do?

Yen: We'll have to send two men ahead to locate mines, while the rest of us follow.

Han: Right. I'll go.

Lu: Send me.

Soldiers: Send me.

Pao: Send me. I'm a Communist. Let me go.

Kim: I'm a member of the Korean Workers' Party. Send me.

Chang: I'm a Communist.

Soldier A: I'm a Communist.

Soldier C: I'm a Youth Leaguer....

Lu: Give the order quickly, platoon leader.

Soldiers: Right. Quick.

(Han signs to Yen to send Kim.)

Yen: Comrade Pao.

Pao: Here.

Yen: Comrade Kim.

Kim: Here.

Yen: I order you two to lead the way. Locate any landmines and indicate them with markers. But be careful.

Pao and Kim: Right.

(Pao and Kim take out mine detectors.)

Yen (sings): Use care and caution, don't be reckless.

(Pao and Kim do mine detectors' dance. They discover a mine.)

Kim and Pao: Landmine.

Yen: Careful.

(Soldiers make a detour.)

Kim and Pao: Right. *(They go on dancing and discover another mine.)*
Landmine.

(Yen dashes forward to protect soldiers with his body.)

Soldier C: Platoon leader. *(He puts himself in front of Yen. They make a detour.)*

Kim and Pao: Landmine.

(Soldiers with dancing motions shield Yen.)

(Artillery is heard in the distance.)

Lu: Our big guns are speaking up, platoon leader. The regimental commander must be leading the deep-thrust battalion in a skirmish to draw the attention of the enemy. We must hurry through this minefield.

(Yen thinks. They hear the sound of running water.)

Yen: A stream.... *(Decisively)* The enemy won't have planted any mines in the middle of a stream.

Soldiers: That's right.

Yen: We can't delay. We'll wade upstream in the light of our artillery fire. Once on the highway, we'll be able to march quickly. *(Sings.)*

In the light of our artillery fire, wade up the stream.

(Led by Yen and holding their rifles high, the soldiers wade forward hand in hand. They leave the minefield and reach the highway. Puppet Korean Soldier A runs on and trails them in a hangdog manner.)

Yen (sings): Where did we get this extra man?

(He whispers to Han. When the puppet Korean soldier draws near, Han grabs his rifle and kicks him over.)

Yen: Post guards along the road.

Puppet Soldier (gets up angrily): What's the idea?

Chang: Why are you trailing us?

Puppet Soldier: This is a public highway. If you can run back along it, so can I. Give me my gun.

Han (points pistol at him): Don't move.

Puppet Soldier (changes his tone): But officer, we're all brothers. Why should you act like this?

Yen: You're no brother of ours. *(Sternly)* We're the Chinese People's Volunteers.

Puppet Soldier: *Aiya*, mother of mine! *(Falls down paralysed.)*

Chang: Get up.

Yen: Now listen, we've always been lenient to prisoners. Just answer our questions honestly and we'll guarantee your life.

Puppet Soldier: Yes, sir.

Han: Why were you trailing us?

Puppet Soldier: I was on guard duty, but I went to sleep with my rifle in my arms, when — boom — your artillery woke me up. It broke my squad leader's leg and snapped his assistant's back. I was lucky, I just took off and ran. Then I remembered our three rules of discipline. If I went back to camp I was a dead man. I saw you fellows running too. I thought we were on the same side, so I tagged along. When that officer grabbed my rifle, he nearly scared me out of my wits. I can speak quite a lot of Chinese. I know all about your prisoner policy. I only hope you officers will spare my life.

Han: Tell me, what's the password for tonight?

Puppet Soldier: Kulunmuoba.

Lu: Say it clearly.

Puppet Soldier: Ku-lun-mu-o-ba.

Yen: Where is your regimental headquarters?

Puppet Soldier: In a ravine near Ihchongdong.

Yen: Any landmark?

Puppet Soldier: After you cross the Yongjin Bridge, you'll see two old pines at the mouth of the ravine.

(Yen signs to Lu to check up.)

Lu (*seizes the soldier by the collar*): You'd better not be lying.

Puppet Soldier: Every word is true, officer.

Yen (*quickly*): Your headquarters?

Puppet Soldier: In a ravine not far from Ihchongdong.

Yen: Landmark?

Puppet Soldier: Two old pines at the mouth of the ravine.

Yen: Password?

Puppet Soldier: Kulunmuoba.

Yen: What are those three rules of discipline of yours?

Puppet Soldier: If you advance you're rewarded, if you retreat you're killed, if you're taken prisoner and escape you're also executed. Those are the rules made by the American adviser.

(Yen signs to Lu.)

Lu: All right. Get moving. Quick. (*Lu goes off with the prisoner.*)

Yen: Even though we know the password, comrades, we're not sure whether it's the real one. If the enemy questions us, let Comrades Han and Kim do the talking.

Lu (*enters running*): Platoon leader, I tied him up and gagged him and put him in a cave. We can free him when the fighting is over.

Chang (*spotting someone*): An enemy patrol, platoon leader.

Han: We'll try out the password.

Kim: Right.

Yen: Quick.

(Puppet Korean Soldier B leads in other soldiers.)

Kim: Password.

Puppet Soldier B: Kulunmu —

Kim: — o-ba.

Puppet Soldier B: Ah, our own outfit.

Han: Nearly mistook you in the dark.

Puppet Soldier B (*to other puppet soldiers*): Well, we've got to be hurrying along.

(Puppet soldiers depart.)

Yen: The password is genuine, comrades. The central enemy guard post is right ahead. Their security is very tight. We must keep alert and be prepared for any sudden change.

Soldiers: Right.

(Yen points forward. Soldiers surround him and strike a fearless pose.)

(Lights out. Curtain)

SCENE SEVEN

TAKING THE GUARD POST BY STRATAGEM

Time: Immediately following the previous scene.

Place: The central guard post of the White Tiger Regiment.

(A puppet Korean soldier stands on sentry duty, another is directing traffic. The captain and the platoon leader come in with Puppet Soldiers C and D.)

Captain: Anything stirring?

Puppet Soldiers C and D (*come to attention*): No, sir.

Captain: At ease. (*Indicates armbands in his hands.*) These armbands are the temporary passes for tonight, brothers. Nobody is allowed through without one. (*Gives armbands to Platoon Leader, who gives one each to Puppet Soldiers C and D.*)

Captain: If anything happens, telephone me.

Platoon Leader: Right.

(*Captain goes out with two soldiers.*)

Platoon Leader (*to Puppet Soldiers C and D*): Keep awake.

Puppet Soldier D: Right.

Platoon Leader: Report immediately if anything happens.

Puppet Soldier C: Yes, sir.

Platoon Leader: But don't get all stirred up over nothing.

Puppet Soldiers C and D: Yes, sir.

(*Platoon Leader goes out.*)

Puppet Soldier D: This is something new. The captain himself comes to check the guard and the platoon leader takes personal command of the shift.

Puppet Soldier C: We're going to drive north very soon. This road is vital. It leads directly to regimental headquarters. What's so strange about their checking the guard and commanding the shifts?

Puppet Soldier D: Drive north, drive north. That means we'll be fighting again soon.

Puppet Soldier C: How can we earn our keep if we don't fight? What's the matter? Scared?

Puppet Soldier D: Who, me? There hasn't been a battle against the Reds in which my old Ninth Division hasn't led the way. See this? (*Rolls up his sleeve.*) I got this wound on Sanggamryong Ridge. The moment it was healed, they transferred me here. Let me tell you, neither the Korean people's forces nor the Chinese Volunteers are to be trifled with.

Puppet Soldier C: That kind of talk may be all right for your Ninth Division, but not for us White Tiger Regiment men.

Puppet Soldier D (*mutters*): Bah.

Puppet Soldier C (*shouts to figure in the distance*): Who goes there?

(*Enter Puppet Soldier E with other soldiers.*)

Puppet Soldier E: Roving sentries.

Puppet Soldier C: Password.

Puppet Soldier E: Kulunmu —

Puppet Soldier C: -- oba (*Turns his flashlight on their armbands.*)

Puppet Soldier E: You know us. What are you looking at?

Puppet Soldier C: Sorry. These armbands are the pass for tonight. Our orders are to check everyone. Nobody gets by without one, whether we know him or not.

Puppet Soldier E: Well, don't be so slow about it. (*Leads his men off.*)

Puppet Soldier C (*to Puppet Soldier D*): You stay here. Let me know if anything happens.

Puppet Soldier D (*to himself*): How many actions have you fought in? Bah.

(*Puppet Soldier C strikes a light for a smoke.*)

Puppet Soldier D (*startled*): Who's there?

(*Kim and Chang slip in.*)

Puppet Soldier C: What are you yelling about?

Puppet Soldier D: Oh, that was you, lighting up. You scared me.

Puppet Soldier C: And you nearly made me jump out of my skin.

Puppet Soldier D: Smoking's forbidden on duty.

Puppet Soldier C: Get back to your sentry duty and mind your own business.

(Kim and Chang approach.)

Puppet Soldier D: What's that?

Puppet Soldier C: Password.

Kim: Kulunmu —

Puppet Soldier C: — oba. Who are you? What are you up to? Are you deaf? Why don't you speak?

Kim (*sharply*): Are you blind? Can't you see what I'm doing?

Puppet Soldier C (*assumes a milder tone*): What unit are you?

Kim: Inspection detachment, division headquarters.

Puppet Soldier C (*sneers*): Inspection detachment — the outfit that always vanishes the moment the fighting starts. What are you doing here?

(Han enters quietly with two scouts.)

Kim: We're escorting the American adviser back to regimental headquarters.

Puppet Soldier C: And where is regimental headquarters?

Kim: Ihchongdong.

Puppet Soldier C (*testing him*): You should have taken the other fork on the road. Why are you travelling this way?

Han: Quit gabbing. We're wasting time.

Kim and Chang: Yes, detachment leader.

Han (*to Puppet Soldier C*): You're out of your mind. Everyone knows this road leads to Yongjin Bridge, and that when you cross the bridge you see the two old pines at the mouth of the ravine outside Ihchongdong. Don't you know where your own regimental headquarters is? Sneaky wretch. (*Slaps Puppet Soldier C's face.*) Don't try that stuff with me.

Puppet Soldier D (*apologizing*): It's not that we don't want to let you through, sir, but you don't have the armbands.

(Yen and the other scouts enter and listen intently.)

Puppet Soldier D (*pointing at his armband*): Our orders are to stop anyone who doesn't have one of these. They're the pass for tonight.

Han (*scathingly*): Nonsense. We set out for the front positions with the American adviser yesterday. How could we have armbands that were issued today? (*Thumps Puppet Soldier D's helmet.*)

Puppet Soldier D: I see.

Puppet Soldier C: The American adviser? (*To Puppet Soldier D*) Keep an eye on them. (*To the scouts*) All right. I'll phone regimental headquarters and tell them to send a car down for you.

(At Yen's signal, the scouts kill the puppet soldiers, take their armbands, and place their guns and caps beside the sentry box. Then they drag the bodies out of sight. Yen obliterates the bloodstains.)

Yen: Comrades, the enemy wouldn't have added this business of the armbands if they weren't hatching something. It looks like we'll have trouble getting across that bridge. We must have an alternative ready. Kim Dae Yong.

Kim: Here.

Yen: That's Chongsokri up ahead. Go there immediately and try to get hold of our underground contact. Pao Yu-lu.

Pao: Here.

Yen: You go down to the bridge. Find out how many men are guarding it and measure the speed of the water's flow. Each of you wear an armband. We'll meet . . . (*thinking*) in that small grove of pines ahead.

Kim and Pao: Right. (*They go off.*)

Yen: We mustn't hang around here. Let's go.

Soldiers: Right.

Chang: Here comes an enemy officer.

Lu: Knock him off.

Yen: No. We can use him. (*Softly*) Here.

(Yen confers in whispers with the scouts, who swiftly line up.)

Han (*loudly*): Go quickly.

Soldiers: Yes. (*They turn to leave.*)

Platoon Leader (*enters*): Halt. What's going on here?

Han: Inspection detachment, division headquarters.

(*Yen signs to Chang and Soldier A to disarm the puppet platoon leader.*)

Platoon Leader: Why haven't you any armbands? (*Starts to pull out his pistol but is knocked down and disarmed by Chang and Soldier A.*)

Yen: Post guards along the road.

Platoon Leader (*pretending to be calm*): What do you think you're doing? I'm warning you — this is the defence sector of the White Tiger Regiment.

Yen: Shut your mouth. We'd turn it upside-down even if it were the headquarters of the U.S. invaders, to say nothing of your little regiment. (*Grabs the platoon leader and holds him face down.*)

Platoon Leader: Who are you?

Yen (*emphatically*): The Chinese People's Volunteers.

(*Platoon Leader is shocked.*)

Yen: Wise up. Surrender and live, or resist and die. Don't forget your regiment's three rules of discipline. (*Steps forward, forcing Platoon Leader to retreat.*) If you advance you're rewarded, if you retreat you're executed. And if you return after being taken prisoner, like you, you're a dead man anyhow. The choice between life and death is yours.

(*Artillery booms.*)

Yen: You hear that? Our offensive has begun. If you atone for your crimes by a good deed, we'll guarantee your life and safety.

(*Platoon Leader advancing on his knees tries to grab Yen's pistol. Yen dodges nimbly and glares at him.*)

Platoon Leader (*in panic*): I'd like to earn clemency, sir.

Yen: Good. Now tell me, how many men have you at headquarters?

Platoon Leader: Only one platoon of guards.

Lu (*grabs him*): If you're lying...

Platoon Leader: It's the truth. Because of your artillery barrage, all troops have been sent to the front.

Yen (*notices something and signals to Han. Then to Platoon Leader*): Telephone the guard post at the bridge and all along the way to let us through.

Platoon Leader: But...

Han: Hurry up.

Platoon Leader: Immediately, immediately...

Han: Go on.

Yen (*to Soldier A*): Get Pao and Kim back here at once.

(*Soldier A assents and runs off.*)

(*Soldiers draw daggers and force the platoon leader to telephone.*)

Platoon Leader (*nervously*): Hello... Notify Posts 3, 4 and 5... this is the platoon leader speaking... an inspection detachment from division is heading for regimental headquarters. Let them through. Give the same instructions to the guards at the bridge... What? What's that? (*Flurried.*)

(*Yen signs to Chang Shun-ho to take the receiver.*)

Han: What's the matter?

Platoon Leader: They say that the American 35th Howitzer Battalion has moved in here this evening. Their position is south of Yongjin Bridge. The bridge is being guarded by the U.S. Supervisory Group.

Yen: What else do you know about the situation?

Platoon Leader: Well...

Soldiers: Speak up.

Platoon Leader: Just before I left Ichongdong, the American military adviser called an emergency conference. They decided to advance the time for the attack.

Yen: When will it be?

Platoon Leader: Before dawn.

Yen (*to Soldier B*): Tie him up and put him in a cave.

Soldier B: Right. *(Leads Platoon Leader off, then returns.)*

Soldier A *(enters)*: They're coming, platoon leader.

(Pao and Kim enter.)

Pao and Kim: Platoon leader.

Yen: What did you discover?

Kim: I couldn't find any of the villagers in Chongsokri.

Pao: There are roving American sentries all over the bridge. Armbands are checked carefully. The water is deep and the current fast. Barbed wire is strung on posts beneath the surface. Getting across won't be easy.

(Yen thinks. A signal flare rises in the sky.)

Han: That's our signal.

Lu: The deep-thrust battalion has fought its way in. We've got to take action, fast.

Chang: We can swim across lower down, platoon leader.

Yen: Good. That's the answer.

Soldiers: Right.

Soldier A: A dozen trucks are heading towards us from the mountain, platoon leader.

Lu: Shall we fight?

Yen *(thinks)*: No. We don't want to get tied down. Route them over to Road 4 and let our artillery finish them off. You see to it, Kim.

Kim: Right. *(Takes signal flags to direct traffic.)* Hey, the bridge ahead has been washed out. Take Road 4.

(The trucks' headlights flash past and they are heard driving away.)

Yen: Time is victory, comrades. We've got to move first and wipe out the enemy's regimental headquarters before they begin their dawn offensive.

Soldiers: Right.

Yen *(sings)*: *This change by the enemy makes things tight,
Everything hangs on a hair tonight.*

*We must swiftly revise our plan,
We'll swim the river and wipe them out.*

(Yen waves and strikes a pose. They hurry off.)

(Curtain)

SCENE EIGHT

CROSSING NATURAL BARRIERS

Time: Immediately following the previous scene.

Place: Near a pine grove not far from Yongjin Bridge.

Sister Choe *(offstage, sings)*: *When guns boomed to the north,
(Enters and strikes a pose.)*

I escaped from the enemy,

Skirting the bridge along mountain paths.

They were forcing us to repair the road,

I burned with rage and remembered mama's words.

*Chongsokri is our secret contact place, I must reach
Comrade Yen so that we can destroy the enemy.*

Like rolling thunder our big guns rumble,

Our counter-offensive must be starting today.

No matter what the danger, I shall push on

And contact our dear ones, if it means my life.

*(The sound of small arms fire draws nearer. Sister Choe is about to leave when Yen and his scouts enter. They screen her behind them.
Puppet Korean soldiers enter.)*

Han *(points in another direction)*: Hurry, hurry!

(The puppet soldiers depart.)

Yen: Post guards along the road.

(Sister Choe is puzzled. She starts to walk away, then stops.)

Sister Choe: Who are you?

Yen: Aren't you Sister Choe?

Sister Choe: And you?

Yen: I'm Yen Wei-tsai.

Sister Choe: Platoon Leader Yen!

Yen: Sister Choe.

Han: We're all on the same side.

Soldiers: Sister Choe.

Sister Choe (*surprised and delighted, takes Yen and Han by the hand.*

Sings:

Hearing that you're our own people

Is like spring thunder heralding rain.

How wonderful that you've appeared

At this critical moment.

Soldiers: What are you doing here, Sister Choe?

Sister Choe: The enemy was making us repair the road near Yongjin Bridge. I ran away, shielded by our neighbours. I was on my way to Chongsoktri to wait for you.

Yen: We've got to cross the river immediately to smash the command post of the White Tiger Regiment. Is anything new happening up ahead?

Sister Choe (*sings*): *This side of Ichongdong is heavily guarded*

By a forest of American sentries.

Climb the cliff and cross the plank bridge,

You'll see the enemy camp down below.

Yen: How do we get there?

Sister Choe: Go east from here till you reach shallows where you can wade the river. Then climb the cliff and cross the top of the gorge by the single-plank bridge. This will bring you to the rear of the enemy headquarters.

Yen: There's a plank across the top of the gorge?

Sister Choe: Yes. I'll lead you there.

Yen: Thank you, Sister Choe. Let's go.

(Sister Choe leads the way to the river's edge.)

Yen: Over!

(They do a "crossing the river" dance, get to the bank and climb a cliff.)

Sister Choe (*startled*): The enemy has wrecked the bridge.

Soldiers: Oh.

Yen (*sings*): *A broken bridge and a deep gorge to cross.*

Chang: There are lights at the foot of the mountain.

Sister Choe: That's the enemy's regimental headquarters.

Yen (*sings*): *Seeing the lights of the enemy camp,*

So near and yet so far, we burn with fury.

But then we laugh at these stupid fools;

Do they think by wrecking the bridge

That they can stop us?

No danger on earth deters a hero,

Hardship never daunted the CPV.

Decisively we waste not a moment,

But fly across the gorge so deep.

Soldiers: Right. Over we go.

(Artillery fire sounds closer.)

Yen: Chang Shun-ho.

Chang: Here.

Yen: Ready with the rope.

Chang: Right. *(Makes the movement of flinging a rope.)*

(Yen inspects the rope. Soldiers dance to show they are climbing over the gorge along the rope.)

Yen: Lu Pei-lu.

Lu: Here.

Yen: Take the machine-gunners and blast out the enemy guards platoon.

Lu: Right.

Yen: Pao Yu-lu and Kim Dae Yong.

Pao and Kim: Here.

Yen: Cut their communications.

Pao and Kim: Right.

Yen: Comrades.

Soldiers: Here.

Yen: Put on your identification markers. Now, on to the regimental headquarters.

(All put on red silk markers and strike a militant pose.)

(Lights out. Curtain)

SCENE NINE

RAID ON WHITE TIGER REGIMENT HEADQUARTERS

Time: Immediately following the previous scene.

Place: Headquarters of the White Tiger Regiment. At the foot of high mountains a gully of grotesque boulders is surrounded by barbed wire and fortifications. The headquarters is dimly lit. On one wall hangs the banner of the White Tiger Regiment. The desk is cluttered with maps and telephones. The atmosphere is eerie and chaotic.

(A puppet operator is busily working. The chief of staff stands by the radio transmitter. The commander of the White Tiger Regiment is leaning over a map. The American adviser is uneasily pacing the floor.)

WTR Commander *(looks at his watch):* Any word from our allies, chief of staff?

Chief of Staff: Not yet.

WTR Commander: What is the time set for our attack?

Adviser *(to American staff officer):* Send a message immediately. I want to know to what hour we've advanced the attack.

Staff Officer: Yes, sir.

Chief of Staff: The enemy is laying down a fierce artillery barrage on our front lines. A Communist detachment, about a battalion in strength, has suddenly appeared near Songunryong Ridge. They're pushing straight towards our headquarters.

Adviser *(to Chief of Staff):* Order the Armoured Regiment to wipe them out at once.

Chief of Staff: Yes, sir.

(An orderly comes in with a tray of drinks.)

Adviser: Friends, a hundred thousand of our troops are pushing north in the Kumsong sector. We are about to create a miracle which will astound the world. Let us drink to our coming victory.

WTR Commander: To our coming victory.

(They raise their glasses. Heavy artillery fire sounds. The lights go out. A jeep is heard driving up. Armoured Regiment Commander rushes in, wounded.)

AR Commander *(furious, to WTR Commander):* My regiment has been routed by the Communists. You are responsible for this.

WTR Commander: Shut up. It wouldn't have come to this if your troops had advanced half an hour earlier.

(AR Commander opens his mouth to protest.)

Chief of Staff *(to WTR Commander):* Our telephone lines have been cut. *(Whispers.)* A message from general headquarters says the situation is tight along the entire front. You'd better be prepared, commander.

Adviser *(in a panic whispers to his staff officer):* Tell our Howitzer Battalion to pull out. Have headquarters send a helicopter to pick me up. Quick, quick.

Staff Officer: Yes, sir. *(Exit with American soldiers.)*

AR Commander *(to Adviser):* You must send us support right away. Otherwise, we'll retreat.

Adviser: Retreat? *(Tries to hide his dismay.)* Calm yourselves, gentlemen. If you can stand firm against their spearhead, the situation will change, rest assured. The terrain is difficult, your fortifications are strong, and the 35th U.S. Howitzer Battalion — which fought in World War II — is covering you at Yongjin Bridge. No communist troops can get through there.

(Yen, Han and other scouts suddenly leap in through the window.)

Yen (*pistol in hand*): Don't move.

(The AR commander draws his gun, but is shot down by Yen.)

(The headquarters becomes a scene of chaos. The wounded American adviser escapes. The puppet chief of staff hides under the desk. Han Dae Nyon rushes out in pursuit of a puppet soldier.)

(Yen fires at the WTR commander, who dodges so that the captain is hit. The WTR commander escapes.)

(A puppet soldier grapples with Yen. A scout and Kim Dae Yong rush on in pursuit of enemy soldiers. Together with Yen they kill them, then strike a pose. Yen signs to the scout and Kim to pursue other enemy soldiers, and dashes off himself in pursuit of the WTR commander.)

(The puppet chief of staff crawls out from under the desk just as Pao Yu-lu runs in after a puppet soldier and kills him. The chief of staff grabs Pao's gun, Pao fires but he has exhausted his bullets, the chief of staff draws his dagger and grapples with him. Two more puppet soldiers come in and join in the fight. Pao kills the chief of staff and the soldiers with a hand-grenade.)

(An American soldier enters and takes aim at Pao, but Lu Pei-lu hot on his heels knocks down his gun and wrestles with him. A puppet soldier comes in. Lu fells them both and throws them out of the window.)

(Yen enters in pursuit of the WTR commander. The latter fires at him, but Yen leaps high into the air so that the shot kills the puppet soldier behind him. More puppet soldiers pour in. One of them grabs at the regimental banner, but Yen kills him, then dispatches the rest. He kicks the gun out of the WTR commander's hand; the latter draws his sword. An American soldier and puppet soldier come in and charge Yen. The WTR commander jumps out of the window. Yen bayonets the American and puppet soldiers.)

(CPV soldiers come in. Chang Shun-ho seizes the White Tiger Regiment's banner. Yen and his men jump out of the window and chase after the remaining enemy.)

(Black out)

EPILOGUE

FORWARD IN VICTORY

Time: Immediately following the previous scene.

Place: Open country not far from the headquarters of the White Tiger Regiment. The sky is flushed with dawn. Smoke still rises from the nearby highways destroyed by our artillery.

(A puppet soldier hurries in, supporting the panic-stricken American adviser. The soldier pushes him over and makes off, but the American shoots him. The adviser puts on the puppet helmet and runs off.)

Three puppet soldiers dash across the stage.

Chang Shun-ho, Kim Dae Yong and Han Dae Nyon chase after puppet soldiers, and engage them with bayonets killing one and capturing the two others.

A scout escorts several puppet prisoners off.

The commander of the White Tiger Regiment, the American staff officer and two puppet soldiers come on, running for their lives. They are intercepted by Yen Wei-tsai, bayonet in hand. With a fierce cry, he takes them on single-handed. He kills the soldiers and staff officer and captures the WTR commander.

Han Dae Nyon, Sister Choe and the scouts bring in the American adviser under escort. Yen strikes a triumphant pose.

The bugle sounds. Shouts of victory are heard in the distance.

Two scouts march off the American adviser and the commander of the White Tiger Regiment, then return.

Regimental Commander Wang and Commissar Kuan lead in the deep-thrust battalion.)

All (*shout*): Victory!

(Yen presents the enemy's regimental banner to Wang, who throws it to the ground.)

Wang: Comrades, you have successfully completed the glorious task of destroying the command post of the White Tiger Regi-

ment. This is a victory for the Chinese and Korean people, fighting shoulder to shoulder. This is a victory for the military thinking of Chairman Mao. The enemy in the Kumsong sector have been encircled and are being annihilated by our army. We mustn't let the enemy rest. After them, to complete our victory!

All: After them to complete our victory!

Yen: Forward, march.

All: Right.

(To the strains of *The Internationale*, the men of the CPV and the Korean people march forward triumphantly over the banner of the White Tiger Regiment.)

(*Final curtain*)

Stories

Shih Min

The Breathing of the Sea

Last autumn I graduated from the School of Maritime Transport. My hope was to become a navigator on the high seas; but instead I was assigned to a navigation survey team as a hydrographer to measure the tides. My job was to fix up tide-gauges along the coast and record the high and low-water. It seemed to me that anybody able to write a few figures could do this job. Wasn't this a waste of my "talent"?

The next day I went to the hydrography section. The man in charge told me that I would be working under an experienced hydrographer called Hao Peng-fei, who had been on this job for more than thirty years. I found him in a shed by the shore. About fifty years old, swarthy, with deep-set eyes, Hao was rather incongruously dressed in a thin cotton jacket but thick padded trousers. A tobacco pouch hung from his broad leather belt. He was painting a board for the tide-gauge.

Before I had time to introduce myself, he put down his brush and grasped my hand. "You must be Comrade Hung Yang," he boomed. "It's good to have you with us."

"How did you know who I am?" I asked.

"Our team leader told me you were coming. We need youngsters like you to take over our work." He laughed loud and heartily.

"But, just watching the tide-gauge. . . ." I said dubiously.

"It's not as simple as it sounds, young fellow." Old Hao had apparently guessed what was on my mind. "We're measuring the breathing of the sea."

"The breathing of the sea?"

"That's right." Pointing out to sea he continued: "Our fathers said: 'The seas are the earth's blood, the tides the oceans' breathing. True enough. Look how the sea heaves and falls as tides ebb and flow. Doesn't it seem to be breathing?'"

Viewing the surging sea with fresh eyes, I did fancy it seemed like a giant drawing deep breaths.

"Knowledge of the tides is very important both for economic construction and national defence," declared Hao. He illustrated this statement with some stories. First he harked back to the seventeenth century when Admiral Cheng Cheng-kung made use of the tides to lead a hundred warships against the Dutch colonialists and recover Taiwan from them. Then he described how the captains and pilots of our ten-thousand-ton merchant ships in Shanghai used data supplied by hydrographers to ensure their vessels' safe passage through shallow sounds. I listened, fascinated.

Hao continued: "From now on, we'll be sharing thick and thin together. You'll learn. Let me tell you the job our team has just assigned us. Our people have recently opened a new line for navigation. The two of us are to go to a small island near by called Button Reef to study the water-level there and collect data about the tides for their reference. We've been given two months for the job."

Well! So the two of us were to stay on a desert island for two months. There was no knowing what it would be like there. When I made no reply Hao said:

"We shall start first thing tomorrow. Go and get ready. I must hurry to finish painting these two boards."

We set off the next morning and sailed a whole day and night before reaching our destination. Button Reef lived up to its name. No-

where higher than ten metres above sea-level, it measured no more than eighty square metres all told. From a distance it looked like a dot of ink on a big sheet of blue paper. The island was covered with guano, the cliffs were a mass of laver and rock-oysters, through which crawled countless hermit-crabs.

"It's certainly bleak," I commented. "I don't suppose anybody ever set foot here before."

Old Hao laughed. "It won't be bleak any more now."

We fixed up our tide-gauge and put up our tent. Then Hao fastened a red flag to a bamboo pole and set it up on the highest point on the island. Mopping his face he boomed cheerfully: "How's that, young fellow? It doesn't look so bleak now, eh?"

The bright red flag high in the blue sky above the waves certainly changed the appearance of Button Reef.

2

This was the start of a new life for me. We took turns to make observations, jotting down the water-level every half hour. At first I was thrilled by the novelty of my surroundings. Every day at dawn I watched the sun rise above the eastern horizon to irradiate the morning clouds and gild the whole sea with gold. At noon, under a vast cloudless sky, the boundless sea turned a translucent blue with foam-crested waves chasing each other like clusters of white magnolia tossed by the wind. As evening closed in, the surging billows subsided like a child tired out after romping all day long, and the ocean lay quiet in the gathering dusk. . . . However, after three days I began to feel bored. I opened my eyes each morning to see nothing but water, water everywhere. One night as I lay on my camp bed, my head pillowed on my hands, staring at the small lantern hanging above and listening to the crash of breakers, my mind flew back to Shanghai, the Yangtse River and the brightly-lit ocean-going liners. . . . I heaved a deep sigh.

Old Hao raised his head from the book he was reading to ask: "What's worrying you?"

"Oh . . . nothing."

"Thinking of your big liners again, eh?" He chuckled.

"I wasn't. . ."

Hao came over to my bed and nudged me. "Don't just lie there dreaming, lad. Let's go for a walk."

Ever since we came to the island, Hao had been too considerate to let me take night shifts. I felt it was high time to put a stop to this. So after we left the tent I snatched the electric torch and log-book from him and hurried to my post.

I sat on a boulder which seemed icy cold not far from where we had installed the tide-gauge. The roar of the wind and waves was the only sound to break the stillness of the night. It was eerie out there and time dragged till ten o'clock, when I entered the water-level in the log-book. As the night advanced it grew colder. How could I while away the long hours till dawn? An idea occurred to me. Draping my overcoat over my head like a small tent, I took from my kit-bag a novel, laid it on my knees and started reading by the light of my torch. At first I still reminded myself to keep an eye on the time, but presently I forgot the world around me. . . .

"Hey, lost in your book?" Hao's voice boomed out beside me. "Just see what time it is," he added sternly.

I looked at my watch. Heavens! Quarter to eleven. I'd not measured the water-level at half past ten.

I didn't know what to say.

"This is a breach of duty," said Hao.

Time lost is gone for good. What amends could I make? Then I rationalized: since tides follow a regular pattern, if I deducted a few centimetres from the present height that should be more or less the half-past-ten level. At least this approximation would be better than a gap in our entries. I suggested this to Hao. But he simply stared and asked: "What do you mean?"

"It wouldn't be far out," I argued.

"It would be cheating!" he exploded. With an effort to keep calm he went on gravely: "In our job we work on our own, away from the leadership. Our motherland and people trust us. . . ."

I hung my head, wishing I could sink into the ground.

"Give me the log-book. Hold the torch for me." I did as he ordered and watched him write: "10.45 water-level: 5.1 metres." He then added a note: "Owing to negligence, I was fifteen minutes late in recording the water-level." He signed this: Hao Peng-fei.

I grabbed his arm exclaiming: "No, it's my fault."

"Never mind. We'll leave it at that." He closed the log-book and said half to himself: "Some people think our job is just jotting down figures. Hell, no! A revolutionary doing this work must have the sea's own range and openness."

3

Twenty days passed. Life there was pretty grim. One difficulty cropped up after another, the most serious being the lack of drinking-water. We had brought three barrels with us, and two were already used up. We planned to make the third last till the end of the month when a supply-boat was due; but owing to my carelessness when cooking, half the water in this barrel was spilt. I expected another dressing-down from Hao. To my surprise he said cheerfully: "Never mind. If it's spilt, it's spilt. No use getting all worked up."

"But how are we to manage?"

"We'll manage somehow." He smiled. "We won't die of thirst."

We decided that, apart from the water needed for cooking, we should ration ourselves to half a canteen each per day. I was to fill our canteens every other day. But I exhausted my canteen of water that very afternoon. I had no idea how I got through the next day. The dawning of the third day found me eagerly filling my canteen. Then I took Hao's down from a peg close by. It was surprisingly heavy. When I unscrewed the cap, I found it was still full. No wonder his lips looked so cracked! I rushed out to the shore yelling: "Old Hao!" Too moved to speak, I thrust the canteen at him.

He grinned. "What's so strange about hydrographers not drinking any water for a couple of days?" Then abruptly he winced and started pounding his knee.

"What's up?" I asked anxiously.

Instead of answering outright he cracked a joke. "Well, we shall soon get plenty of drinking-water." In reply to my look of bewilderment, he pointed at his leg and explained: "This small weather station here forecasts rain very soon."

At that I realized why he wore such thick padded trousers before it turned cold — he had a bad case of arthritis. I now learned that the trouble had started before Liberation when he measured the tides for the customs authorities.

"I should have thought the leadership would show you special consideration," I said.

"And so they do," he answered. "The Party branch has urged me five times to transfer to a lighter job. Now they say this is to be my last job out in the sea." Gazing at the ocean he sighed: "But for thirty years the sea has been my whole life: we've drawn breath together."

True to his prediction, a storm broke at noon. I set out all our basins and pots to collect the pelting rain, relieved of my worry about drinking-water. What worried me now was how we could get through the night with all our clothes soaked, our tent in danger of collapsing. Old Hao remained his usual exuberant self, however. Since the storm made any cooking impossible, we were reduced to eating dry rations. As he chewed his food, Hao grinned at me and asked: "Well, Young Hung, find this life tough?"

"No, not at all."

"Honestly speaking, it's tough; but we can take it. Isn't that right?" He continued with pride: "We're like the pebbles used in making roads: small but indispensable."

I nodded and thought this over.

Old Hao looked at his watch. It was time to call up Headquarters. He switched on the radio-telephone and presently we heard our team leader's voice: "Comrade Hao and Comrade Hung, according to the weather report you're having a big storm out there. Any trouble?"

"Don't worry, team leader," replied Old Hao cheerfully. "Everything's under control. We guarantee the figures for the tide-level. Button Reef is an unsinkable battleship."

The team leader responded: "Fine. You're setting a splendid example for all of us here." He then assigned us a task. At midnight a big freighter loaded with aid materials for another country was due to pass through the No. 2 shallows near us. But would the tide here at midnight be high enough for the vessel's draught? If the water-level was less than 5.2 metres, the boat would have to wait for the next spring tide. The navigation department wanted us to supply them with the accurate data needed. They would contact us again in an hour's time.

Old Hao told me: "If they wait till the next spring tide, that means waiting a whole fortnight. Well, this is an important job. We must calculate carefully."

I looked through the records of the past few days and on the basis of what I now knew about tides I made a calculation. The result set me shaking my head with dismay. "Old Hao, it isn't a spring tide this evening," I said. "At most the water-level will be five metres."

In thoughtful silence Old Hao smoked his pipe, watching the raging storm outside our tent. Suddenly he brightened up. "No, it will reach 5.2 metres all right," he told me. "Your figure's based on normal conditions, leaving today's new factor out of account. It's like the case of breathing. Ordinarily we breathe eighteen times a minute; but vigorous exercise speeds up our breathing. The same applies to the sea. It runs higher during a storm than in calm weather. Then we have special local features too. . . ."

He explained to me in detail the submarine topography of Button Reef and the No. 2 shallows, as well as the direction and velocity of the wind that night, demonstrating convincingly that the height of the midnight tide would not be less than 5.2 metres. This brought home to me the fact that Old Hao was not only whole-heartedly for the revolution but that he also had at his finger-tips an extensive working knowledge of meteorology and oceanography.

We reported our findings to Headquarters and guaranteed to furnish accurate information to ensure the safe passage of the ocean-going freighter.

Night was approaching. We battled our way through the storm to examine our tide-gauge, only to find that it had been swept away. I hastily fetched the spare one, but the gale was still so fierce that the waves knocked it over twice when I tried to install it. I was at my wit's end. But Old Hao, without turning a hair, stripped off his raincoat and his padded trousers.

"Come on," he boomed. "I'll prop it up for you." Picking up the tide-gauge he started wading into the sea.

I grabbed him protesting: "No, Old Hao. The water's too cold. Think of your leg..."

"What's that to men doing a job of work?"

"Let me go then." I tried to take the tide-gauge from him.

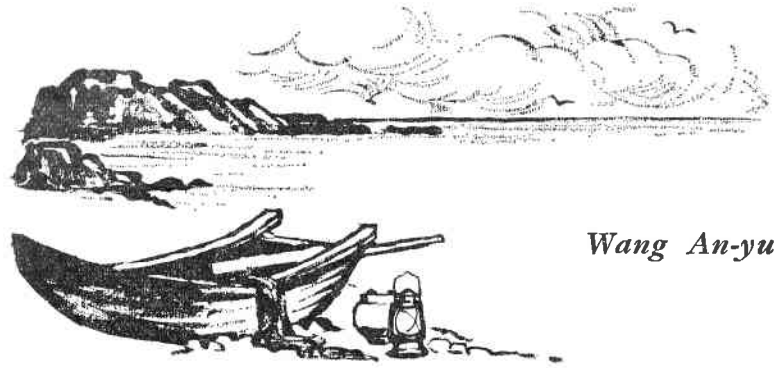
"No, you're not very strong. You couldn't stand up to the waves."

With that he waded in up to his waist and planted his feet wide apart. Wave after wave pounded and battered him, but like a man of iron he did not budge. Keeping a firm grip on the tide-gauge, he yelled: "Steady on, Young Hung. Mind you get the figure right."

My eyes misted over — was it with tears or with rain? But blinking the drops away, I measured the water-level. And as I did so there thundered in my ears the deep, powerful, stirring breathing of the sea.

A Chingpo Girl Goes to College (oil-painting)
by Cheng Li ▶





Wang An-yu

Three Young Comrades

While Chiu-shan was having his nap someone gave him a poke. He opened his eyes and saw his good friend Ta-ming standing beside his bed.

"It's afternoon already. Why are you still asleep?" asked Ta-ming, smiling.

"What's up?" Chiu-shan sat up still muddle-headed.

Ta-ming bent over and whispered complacently, "I've some good news."

"What?"

"Big Brother Mao-tsai just told me that some PLA men are coming to have a party with us tomorrow. The whole village is preparing for it. If that's a fib I'm a worm." He thrust his little finger in front of Chiu-shan's face and wiggled it.

Chiu-shan grinned. "Good," he said. "But what shall we do while the grown-ups are making preparations?"

"I've a good idea," Ta-ming answered. "Let's go and talk it over with Stone."

Chiu-shan agreed and the two young scamps ran off.

Both Ta-ming and Chiu-shan were about fourteen and sons of former poor fishermen. The previous year, they had organized a spare-time Junior Practice Group to learn how to row and punt. Ta-ming took the lead. After class, they often helped the fish-hatchery by catching young prawns. The old people in the village were very pleased and agreed that the boys were shaping well.

It was a summer afternoon in 1970. The sky was cloudy and a few raindrops sprinkled the boys' faces as they walked along the street. They stopped before a big house. Seeing the door was tightly closed, Chiu-shan cupped his hands around his mouth and hooted, "Hoo . . . hoo . . ." The door opened a crack and out slipped Stone. His father Li Hung-ching, a motorized fishing-boat mechanic, was a good worker but did not know how to handle children. When pleased he would hug his son, but when annoyed he would glare at the boy and curse him. So Stone was afraid of his father losing his temper. Since he did not dare to invite his two pals into the house they devised a secret signal. When they hooted, Stone would steal out to them.

Seeing them outside now, Stone asked in a low voice, "What's up?"

Ta-ming told him the good news about the PLA men coming to their village the next day and added, "My ma has some eggs ready to offer the soldiers. Since Chairman Mao calls on us to support our army, why don't we go and catch some crabs this afternoon, eh? They'll be a treat for the PLA. What'd you say?"

Stone was all in favour of this, but then looking up at the sky he hesitated. "What about the weather? Will it be all right?"

"We'll hug the shore and come back if a storm breaks," Chiu-shan suggested. "And what's more, we'll ask Big Brother Mao-tsai's permission. I'm sure he'll back us up."

"Of course, he will," Ta-ming agreed. "But it's not early. Let's get cracking!" With that they dragged Stone off with them to the dock where they found the Party Secretary Chang Mao-tsai, and Ta-ming told him what they had in mind. The idea was all right, Mao-tsai thought, but the weather was not too good. He appeared a little hesitant.

"Don't worry, big brother!" Ta-ming urged. "We promise not to go too far."

Understanding the boys' warm feelings for the army and knowing they could handle a boat, Chang gave his permission. However, he warned, "You mustn't go too far. If the weather changes, come back at once."

"All right!" Ta-ming replied and the three boys darted away to the east end of the dock where a little boat belonging to the brigade's fish-hatchery was moored. In the spring the fishermen used it to catch young prawns. Since the season was over, the boat was left there now for the boys to use, to learn how to handle oars and poles.

Ta-ming jumping into the boat to look it over shouted back to the other two, "It's all right. Let's hurry back and get the things we need."

Within half an hour Ta-ming and Stone were back, but Chiu-shan kept them waiting. When he finally emerged from the village he was carrying an earthenware jar on his back, some hooks in one hand and a lantern in the other. Stone, who was the least experienced of the three, grumbled, "What a slow-coach you are! It'll soon be dark."

"I'm just as eager to be off as you are. But I couldn't find the lantern."

"What d'you want that for? We're not staying out all night, are we?" Stone asked.

"You've forgotten what the old fishermen taught us," Chiu-shan replied. Jumping into the boat he continued, "Once out at sea there's always some danger. Even if you're only going a little distance and plan to return right away, you should take with you a lantern, some kindling and fresh water."

"Chiu-shan's right," Ta-ming agreed. "There's nothing to fear if you're prepared, not even if a storm springs up suddenly." Noticing that Chiu-shan had weighed anchor, he started rowing.

This fishing village Changchiawan was not a big place and lay less than a hundred yards from the sea coast. Beyond that there were several reefs and small rocky isles. Since children could not reach these without a boat, they teemed with oysters and plump red-legged crabs.

They rowed eastward skirting the coast till they reached high cliffs which stretched south. There were so many rocks and reefs to the west that fishermen had to be careful when they passed through this channel. In order to prevent boats from being wrecked, a beacon had been erected on the southern mountain slope. All boats, whether going in or out of Changchiawan Bay, had to skirt the cliffs before they reached the channel.

When the boys neared the beacon they set course for a small desert island to the southwest. Ta-ming jumped out with his pole to moor the boat while Chiu-shan dropped the anchor. One by one they climbed ashore. The island was covered with rocks, the cracks in which were full of clams. It was less than half a mile to the cliffs but about one mile to the docks at Changchiawan.

The boys started to search around the rocks with their iron hooks. What huge crabs! Their scarlet pincers were as big as thumbs. Chiu-shan stripped off his jacket and tucked it in his belt, then set to work in earnest with his hook. Soon he hauled up a crab as big as a rice bowl. Within two hours they had nearly filled the earthenware jars.

Looking at the crabs, Chiu-shan said with a grin, "We'll boil them this evening. Tomorrow we'll present them to the PLA and say, 'Help yourselves, uncles! You can eat such crabs only in our village.'"

"And these we caught with our own hands," cut in Ta-ming. "They are of course better than those you buy at the market."

So intent were the three boys on finding crabs for the PLA that they forgot to keep an eye on the weather. Suddenly there was a clap of thunder. Stone looked up with a start and saw that the entire sky was overspread with dark clouds like an inverted cauldron. Thunder continued to rumble while from time to time lurid lightning split the darkness.

"It's going to be a bad storm!" Without waiting to say more, Stone took to his heels running towards the boat. Chiu-shan eyed Ta-ming. The latter looked perfectly calm. Putting down his jar as if nothing were wrong he climbed to the top of a small hill.

There was a reason for Ta-ming's apparent calm. His father was a veteran fisherman who had weathered storms for more than thirty

years. Once before Liberation, he and two other boatmen had killed five of the enemy who were trying to land on their coast. Another time, shortly after Liberation, they had been caught in a typhoon when fishing far out at sea. After being swept away for more than three hundred miles and struggling for three days and nights, they had returned home safely with a catch weighing more than five tons. From his childhood Ta-ming had listened fascinated to the old fishermen's yarns about the sea. They had taught him a great deal. The previous spring when he and some other boys were out catching young prawns, a northerly gale blew their small craft about three miles from shore. However, Ta-ming managed to row back safely. Naturally he was considered a leader among the youngsters. Seeing that Ta-ming had not followed him Stone stopped clambering into the boat. To the north the mountains were shrouded in rain and mist. A wind from the sea sent high waves rolling in. Chiu-shan turned to Ta-ming, who was walking back quite unconcerned. "Now what?" he asked. "Shall we go back?"

"No!" said Ta-ming decidedly. "Don't you know what the old men say: Don't put out to sea in a storm, don't try to go ashore when the waves are high? This is not the time to leave."

It was raining cats and dogs by this time. The three boys exposed to the angry elements crouched down beside a rock. Ta-ming looked at Chiu-shan. A lock of hair was stuck to his temple while rain ran down his face and off his chin as if from the spout of a teapot. Chiu-shan also looked at Ta-ming. Ta-ming's jacket, soaked right through, clung to his body, except when the wind made it bulge here and there as though a rat was crawling about inside. Determined to be as dauntless as the PLA men, they stuck it out. The rain gradually lessened and around eight o'clock in the evening it finally stopped. There was a heavy mist over the sea. Near as they were, it was impossible to see the lights in the village. Only flashes of lightning appeared intermittently to the north.

"Looks like it may rain again," said Chiu-shan.

Ascertaining the direction of the wind, Ta-ming ordered, "Let's go now! There's time to row back before it starts again."

The boys scrambled down to the beach and jumped into the boat. Stone lit the lantern. Chiu-shan set down the three earthenware jars and weighed anchor. The boat glided away from the small island, turning east and then north. Although the wind had dropped a little the waves were still high. Their small craft was tossed about like a cockle-shell. Ta-ming and Chiu-shan pulled on the oars for all they were worth while Stone helped by holding the lantern. But the boys' strength was limited. Also, they had missed their supper. Rowing in the teeth of the wind was no easy job. Chiu-shan, panting, sweat pouring down his face, was almost fagged out. Noticing this, Ta-ming said, "You stop and rest. Let Stone take a turn." Stone passed the lantern to Chiu-shan and took over his oar, while Ta-ming rowed on, using every ounce of his strength. Then Chiu-shan passed the lantern to him and relieved him. Thus the three boys rowed in turn for about an hour but made little headway — no more than half a mile.

As the youngsters battled with the wind and waves, out at sea they heard several sharp blasts from a ship's siren. They took little notice until they also heard the faint throbbing of an engine. Only then did Ta-ming realize that the beacon light was out and it was pitch-black. Perhaps the lamp had been broken by the violent wind earlier on. Looking towards the east, and holding his lantern high, Ta-ming saw something like a mighty buffalo in the heaving water.

"Ah, that's Long Neck. We've covered two thirds of the way," he said, wiping the sweat from his face.

Long Neck was a narrow reef not more than a few hundred yards from the northern shore. If they put on a spurt they could reach land in less than half an hour. The boys' spirits rose at sight of those rocks which seemed like the doorstep of home.

The siren sounded again and the engine throbbed louder. Judging by the sound, the ship was nearing the cliffs.

"That's bad!" exclaimed Ta-ming anxiously. "Listen, Chiu-shan! That boat will founder on the rocks."

"What can we do?" Chiu-shan was worried too.

Ta-ming reached a decision. "Quick, we'll go east! We must row to the foot of the cliff, then climb up and signal to the ship."

Chiu-shan agreed and steered the boat eastward. However, the closer they came to the cliff, the stronger the wind and the waves dashing against the rocks. The boys tried three times to get ashore but failed.

"Suppose the ship enters the channel before we can climb up and signal?" Stone fretted.

Ta-ming listened intently as the throbbing of the engine sounded louder. The ship was coming closer, yet they were unable to reach the shore. Ta-ming waved the lantern towards the southeast, but his signal went unnoticed.

"Why doesn't it stop?" asked Chiu-shan.

"The cliffs are between us. They can't see our light," answered Ta-ming.

"What can we do then?" Chiu-shan asked.

Ta-ming did not reply immediately. He realized that the light from the lantern could only be seen by the boat if they went back to the southern end where they had caught crabs.

Thinking of Chaitman Mao's instruction that one should consider the interests of the revolution as his very life, Ta-ming remembered the countless stories he had heard about revolutionaries who dauntlessly laid down their lives for the people. Encouraged by thoughts of these heroes, he determined that not even a mountain of knives should prevent them from rowing back.

Getting no reply, Chiu-shan prompted, "You give the order, Ta-ming. We'll act like PLA men and overcome all difficulties no matter how great they may be."

Ta-ming looked to the south and ordered loudly, "We'll go back!"

With several quick strokes of the oars, Chiu-shan and Stone promptly turned the boat towards the south.

With the wind behind, the boys rowed as fast as they could till they reached the island where they had caught their crabs. Stone held up the lantern, Ta-ming hooked his pole onto a rock and Chiu-shan flung the anchor on shore. Then, panting, they climbed to the hill top. From there they could see a red flickering ship's light in the east. It was moving towards the northwest, straight to the cliffs. Ta-ming grabbed the lantern from Stone's hand and began to wave



it. At the same time Chiu-shan shouted, "Stop! There are reefs here. Stop!"

The sound of the engine stopped, perhaps someone had noticed the lantern on the island. But a little while later they heard it again. As Ta-ming continued to signal with his lantern the ship's light slowly moved southwards. The boys watched with bated breath till it turned northwest towards the village. Then laughing and jumping

for joy they forgot their cold and fatigue. But when they ran down hill, they were dismayed to find their boat had gone.

"Goodness! Where's our boat?" exclaimed Stone.

In their hurry they had not fastened it securely; the wind had swept it away. By the light of the lantern they could see the mark of the anchor where it had been dragged away by the boat.

At sea, even in summer, you need a warm jacket at night. The boys' clothes were thin and they had not eaten for hours. Now, soaked to the skin, they broke out into goose-flesh all over.

Chiu-shan, an optimist, could stand up to hardships. Though shivering, he did not complain. But Stone who had never had such an experience before was somewhat demoralized. Ta-ming, made of tougher fibre, said stoutly, "We should act like our veteran Red Army men: never mind how hard it is, we'll win through this night."

"Right!" Chiu-shan responded quickly. "Do as the PLA do. The bigger the difficulties, the more bravely we'll soldier on."

Both Ta-ming and Chiu-shan looked at Stone, who was holding his head in his hands.

Chiu-shan jumped to his feet, beat his chest and cried, "Let's sing some songs?"

"Good," agreed Ta-ming. All three stood up. Before they had finished one song, they caught the sound of an engine again. Ta-ming guessed it was another ship. A searchlight swept from the direction of Changchiawan Bay. Stone's eyes were sharp. He shouted, "Look, Chiu-shan. That's a boat from home. They've come to find us."

"Here! Here! We're on the island." The boys began to wave as the beam of the searchlight reached them.

When the boys remained away so long, the villagers had begun to search the coast for them. They never thought the youngsters would sail so far out to sea nor that they would turn back to the island to warn off the other vessel. Some people saw a light on Long Neck; but when they rowed there hurriedly, they found nothing. This worried them considerably. Later, a boat loaded with goods for the local communes arrived at the dock. As soon as its captain heard

about the three boys who were still out at sea, he remembered the light that had guided his boat and told Party Secretary Chang Mao-tsai how they had been helped to enter the bay.

"What a lucky escapel!" Chang said.

He guessed from the location of the light that the boys must be still on the island. And the naval patrol confirmed this. Then Chang Mao-tsai, the captain and a few PLA men of the naval patrol put out to sea on a motorized fishing-boat.

When its light approached, Chiu-shan lit his lantern once again and waved it.

As soon as he saw the lantern, Chang said with a sigh of relief, "That's our boys for sure."

"This is our first trip here," said the captain. "We're not familiar with the channel. To make it worse, there was a fog. If not for those boys, we would have been in trouble."

"That's our fault. We had no idea the beacon light had gone out during the storm," Chang apologized.

As the boat reached the rocky island, the boys ran down the hill, laughing and shouting. Chang Mao-tsai, the first to step ashore, greeted them with the words, "You've done a very brave thing, little heroes." The captain and the PLA men all joined in, expressing their appreciation.

"Thank you, youngsters," said the captain hugging Chiu-shan. Ta-ming and Stone, looked at the PLA men and did not know what to say. The patrol men helped them onto the fishing-boat which had taken in tow their rowing-boat, found adrift near the rocky island. But Ta-ming and Chiu-shan jumped down to the little boat to examine their catch. To their relief, the crabs in the earthenware jars were alive and undamaged.

"We'll boil them early tomorrow," said Chiu-shan.

"And send them to the PLA fresh and hot," Ta-ming rejoined.

The fishing-boat moved off with a bright light to show the way and headed for the dock at Changchiawan.

Illustrated by Weng Ju-lan

Li Ying

Our Mother of the Mountains

One dark rainy morning
Marching through the highland,
Gullies, brooks and forests
Conjure up for me
Our mother of the mountains.

Who did not see her
In those years of darkness,
The hard day's labour done,
Drawing her child, cold and hungry,
To the fire
To mend his wretched rags?
Straw clung to her hair
Tangled as storm-tossed trees.

When winds roared
At dead of night
And clouds covered the hills,
You could hear her cry of defiance
Shaking the mountains like an urgent hand,
Calling her sons to fight the enemy.

Poor our highland,
But poorest of all
Our mother of the mountains,
Having nothing
But her wasted frame,
Her fingers worn to the bone;
Not a wisp of cloud did she own. . . .
But this indomitable mother of ours,
So frugal yet open-handed,
Stern yet warm-hearted,
Would take from her cave
Her last pinch of salt
To wash our wounds for us,
Her last handful of rice
To make us steaming gruel,
While leaves and roots
Were all she ate herself. . . .
Brushing back her hair,
With her roughened hands
She fed our men
Spoon after spoon
Till, healed, they marched back to fight
Across the length and breadth of our motherland,
Safeguarding her destiny.

If you do not understand her,
Our mother of the mountains,
You know nothing of
The hardships of revolution.

Today marching through the highland
We pledge ourselves
Never, never to forget
Our mother's ardent heart
Pulsating through these liberated mountains.



Chang Yung-hsuan

The Old Ferryman

Hair bleached by the limpid stream,
Hands callused by punting:
How much blood and sweat have filled his boat?
How much grief and anguish has he ferried?

No need to ask the green hills on the banks,
No need to ask the rushing flood;
His wrinkled brow and snow-white hair
Betoken years of wind and frost.

Now the spring breeze caresses his cheeks beaming with smiles;
Hale and vigorous he plies his pole
And sweetens the stream with his singing;
For this glorious age makes even old men high-hearted.

Hale, vigorous, high-hearted,
He punts his boat as swiftly as an arrow,
Ferrying goods and people across the stream,
Plying his trade without rest.

When he ferries fertilizer over the stream,
Terraced-fields rise verdant green to meet the sky;
When he ferries boatloads of cement,
New canals encircle hills and villages.

When he ferries harvesters across,
They bring back crates of golden grain;
When he ferries lumbermen across,
They bring back timber for new storeyed buildings.

The future unfolds lovely as a landscape painting;
Life, fiery and ardent, is only just beginning;
Beaming all over his face he laughs for joy
And smiles unceasing smooth his wrinkles away.

Kung Wei-kun

The Island Spring

Notes plangent and gay —
Is someone strumming a lyre?
Drawn by the beat
I trace the sound to the cliff.

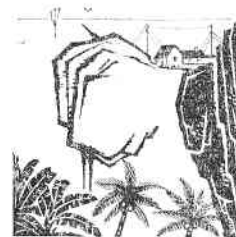
There green peaks pierce the clouds
And the cliff is pearled
With strings of translucent drops
Dripping down to be caught
In the cups by the sentry's feet.

Year in year out
We rely on these drops of water
To cook, brew tea, wash uniforms,
Grow pumpkins, squash and shallots. . . .

'This water is rarer than oil,
More precious than gold!
"But friend, this mere trickle,
How can it suffice you?"

Ask the proud pines on the cliff,
Ask the eagles in the sky,
Ask the sentries guarding the coast:
Is this hardship or glory?

Notes plangent and gay —
The fountain is humming a song. . . .
All bathed in sunshine
Is the little island,
And the spring water sparkles
Crystal in the sun.



Liu Kuo-liang

Lights from Fishing-Boats

Stars wink in the sky
And out at sea lights twinkle;
Deep blue the sky,
Deep blue the sea. . . .

Sky and sea
Merge at the horizon;
Not even the keenest eyes
Can see where they meet.

Which are stars and which are lights?
Do our eyes deceive us?
Surely those are
Our fishing-boats in the sky!

Illustrated by Hao Chan

Tales

Ching Chih

Cotton-Bolls Galore

The Crouching Dragon Mountain was wrapped in mist and rain when I arrived at the local county seat from the provincial capital of Kansu. It seemed the drizzling rain would never stop.

The pattering raindrops worried me, for I remembered the proverb: "Falling spoils wheat, drought spoils paddy, and rain spoils cotton flowers." This was the flowering season for the cotton and such wet weather would surely make the plants shed their bolls, causing a decrease in yield. The cotton fields of Cloudy Cliff Production Brigade must have been badly affected. Without waiting for the rain to stop, I pressed on towards my destination.

Hardly had I left the county town when a cart overtook me. The old driver, noticing my muddy feet, reined up to ask me, "Where are you going, comrade?"

"Cloudy Cliff."

"That's where I'm heading. Climb in."

The cart jogged along a narrow hilly track, then reached a comparatively smooth, broad highway. The old driver turned with a smile to me and asked:

"Are you on urgent business?"

I told him that I had come from Lanchow to have a look at the Cloudy Cliff cotton fields. At that he leaned towards me and asked cryptically: "So you people in the provincial capital have heard of our 'Old Scientific', eh?" While I was still wondering what this meant, he looked at the steadily falling rain and said loudly, "This rain has been licked by our 'Old Scientific'. Even a downpour would not be able to rot a single boll of our cotton plants now."

His confident air and this reference to cotton-bolls intrigued me. I asked him to tell me more about their cotton-growing, murmuring that I should like to meet their "Old Scientific". He laughed. "Well, I haven't the gift of the gab, but here goes." With that he launched into his story.

"Old Scientific" had never been to school. An elderly woman called Fragrant Peach Liu from a poor peasant family, she was head of the women's team in the brigade. Of medium height, with a sun-tanned ruddy face and a square of blue cloth on her head, she had a voice which carried like a bell and she always worked with a will. In wind and rain alike she led the women to repair dykes, build terraced fields and try out scientific methods of cotton cultivation. Everybody in the village sang her praises. But her old man Sky Joy Wang quarrelled with her over the problem of cotton-growing.

Cloudy Cliff was an old cotton-growing area. But the mist and rain during the flowering period there had always caused serious boll rot. So they grew only one variety of mountain cotton resistant to humidity and boll rot, the yield of which was low. The year before last, the Party branch had decided to grow a new variety of cotton called Bumper Harvest No. 1. This news was received with general approval, although there was also some sceptical shaking of heads.

Fragrant Peach said to herself: Chairman Mao teaches us that knowledge comes from practice. If we experiment conscientiously and sum up our experience, we will finally succeed in growing this variety in our region. That night she called a meeting of some young women in the brigade. "The Tachai Brigade has raised high-

yield crops on their stony hills," she said. "Why shouldn't we raise high-yield cotton in these mountains of ours?"

"Let our women's team grow two *mu* of the new cotton to blaze the trail," the women responded enthusiastically.

"Right you are," cried Fragrant Peach. "Let's go to the Party secretary to ask for the assignment."

Secretary Wang was discussing with other members of the brigade Party committee the problem of growing the new variety of cotton. When he heard the women's request, he smiled. "Well, the Party branch supports you. But this is a new thing, bound to involve many difficulties. Aren't you afraid?"

"Not we!" Fragrant Peach drew herself up. "We are ready to shoulder heavy burdens."

Wang beamed approval. He told Fragrant Peach that the Party committee wanted the women's team to carry out the experiment and that she, as team leader, was to go to learn the techniques of other cotton-growing areas the following day.

Fragrant Peach practically ran home in her excitement. She started at once to pack things for her trip. Then her husband Sky Joy came in. "Are you crazy, old woman?" he demanded.

"What's the matter?" his wife asked in surprise.

"I hear you're heading a group to try growing that new variety of cotton. Don't you know that rain rots the bolls of Bumper Harvest No. 1?"

"Yes, we know."

"Then why do you want to make this experiment?"

"To find out more about this variety, so that we can grow it over a larger area."

"If you fail you'll not only have wasted land, you'll cut down our original cotton yield too."

Fragrant Peach quickly finished her packing, then walked up to her husband. "You're one of the best cotton-growers hereabouts, old man. With all your experience, instead of throwing cold water on our experiment you ought to help us."

"My experience warns me against such crazy schemes. It isn't child's play growing cotton."



“Who says it is? Where there’s a will there’s a way. If we all put our heads together we shall succeed.”

Her husband snorted. “All right. If you succeed, from that day on I’ll do whatever you say.”

Here the old carter paused to eye the sky and heaved a deep, deep sigh. There seemed to be something preying on his mind. I looked at the top of Crouching Dragon Mountain. Dense clouds were encircling the peak, a torrent was gurgling through the gully, and the slopes on either side were a verdant green. Cloudy Cliff was on the other side of the mountain. How were the cotton fields there, I wondered. And how had Fragrant Peach and her group made out with their scientific experiment? Before I could ask, the old man went on with his story. . . .

Half a month later, Fragrant Peach returned to her brigade. The first person she wanted to see was Secretary Wang. On the way, however, she met several women of the experimental group who urged her to tell them what she had learned.

“Bumper Harvest No. 1 is a good variety all right,” replied Fragrant Peach. “It has large bolls with a thin boll-wall, high fibre content and long fibres. Its yield is double that of our mountain cotton. But the poor and lower-middle peasants there pointed out its shortcomings too. The main snag is that this variety sheds its bolls easily after rain. This is the problem we have to solve.”

“Let’s ask right away for two *mu* of good land for our experiment,” somebody suggested.

“No, you don’t!” boomed a voice. “Have you taken leave of your senses?”

It was Sky Joy who was standing near the women.

“Why shout like that?” protested Fragrant Peach. “We’re carrying out a scientific experiment.”

“Experiment? Bah!” Sky Joy glared at his wife. “If your experiment fails, our cotton yield will decrease and the collective will suffer a loss. Who’s going to be responsible for that?”

“I’ll be responsible,” a clear voice cried from the other side of the street. It was Secretary Wang who now strode up to join the crowd.

"The Party committee intends to allot the two *mu* near Garden Plain to the experimental group," he announced. "You can start sowing right away."

"I object!" roared Sky Joy. "Give them poor land."

"It's a scientific experiment, uncle. We should back them up to the hilt," said the Party secretary.

Fragrant Peach proposed, "Give us one *mu* of good land and another of poor land, Secretary Wang. That way, when our experiment succeeds, we can grow this new variety on all sorts of land."

"Yes, that's a good idea." Wang smiled.

"A good idea, wasting one *mu* of good land?" Sky Joy scowled.

"We haven't tried yet, how do you know we'll fail?" demanded Fragrant Peach.

"You know how to experiment?" her husband challenged.

"I can learn, can't I?"

"Learn? Learn to play the flute at eighty — too late!"

Fragrant Peach knitted her brows. "Anyone can experiment — what's age got to do with it?"

Sky Joy's eyes nearly started from his head. "Of course, of course. You're an 'Old Scientific'."

Then the nickname "Old Scientific" spread as if on wings to all the neighbouring communes. People came in twos and threes to see the cotton raised by "Old Scientific" and her group on their two *mu*. After the seedlings sprouted they grew sturdy stems and lush leaves; then buds formed and the start of flowering and fruiting delighted all the visitors to the plot.

At this point I interrupted the old carter. "Did Sky Joy admit he was wrong?"

"No. . . ." Before he could finish, the cart gave a sudden lurch — one of its wheels had bogged down in the mud. I jumped off at once and helped the old man to extricate the cart. Then he waved his long whip and continued: "Not Old Man Sky Joy. He had to make a still bigger fool of himself."

Though he wouldn't admit defeat Sky Joy couldn't keep away from the experimental plot, where he went on the sly to see how

the plants were growing. Some girls finding him there one day asked:

"What d'you think of our cotton, uncle?"

"H'm."

"Any comments?"

"H'm."

"How many cattles of cotton do you think these two *mu* will yield?"

"H'm."

Fragrant Peach who was there said not a word. She and two girls were busy picking off the withered flowers from a couple of cotton-plants, on which a plump girl then hung two small wooden labels. Sky Joy approached them fuming, "Are you crazy? Picking off the flowers like that! No cotton-grower ever did such a thing."

Torn between amusement and exasperation, Fragrant Peach said, "We're experimenting, old man."

"Experimenting? Picking off flowers at random!"

A peal of laughter made him turn his head. He discovered that some children were following his wife's example — removing the withered flowers. "What are you imps doing here?" the old man roared.

The children, pulling faces, ran off gleefully with the flowers in their hands. Fragrant Peach walked over to straighten the cotton-plants the children had pulled crooked, then hung labels on those branches from which the withered flowers had been picked off.

At that moment dark clouds from behind the mountain gathered overhead. Soon a downpour began, and continued for twenty-four hours. The two *mu* of cotton-plants, first drenched by rain and then scorched by the sun, began to shed their bolls all over the ground. Half of the bumper harvest they had hoped for was gone.

Anger written on his face, Sky Joy stumped into the meeting place where the commune members were discussing the experimental plot.

Secretary Wang standing before a table in the middle of the assembly announced, "The Party branch committee has called this meeting to listen to your opinions about the experimental plot. We hope everyone will help the women's team to sum up their experience so that they can improve their work."

Sky Joy leapt to his feet. "What? You mean to say they're going on? Two *mu* of rotted bolls, a slump in the yield — why don't they admit defeat in the face of facts?"

"We mustn't be afraid of failure while making experiments, uncle," Secretary Wang replied decisively. "Besides, only the early bolls have rotted. The late bolls haven't ripened yet. We can't be said to have failed. When we have summed up our experience and found out the laws of cotton-growing, we can safeguard the late bolls and in future grow this new variety over much larger areas. Think how much Bumper Harvest No. 1 will yield next year, the year after, and every year after that. What a contribution to the state! Don't you see?"

Warm applause burst out from the audience. The women and girls clapped so loudly that they frightened away the birds on the locust tree.

Sky Joy tucked his long pipe in his pocket. "Next year, the year after, and every year after that, bah..."

"Look!" Fragrant Peach and several girls rushed up at that moment with two labelled cotton branches in their hands. They stood in the centre of the meeting place. "Not a single boll has been shed from these two branches!" they cried.

Silence fell. All eyes fastened on the two cotton branches. Taken aback at first, Sky Joy recovered quickly and retorted, "All very well, but it's only two branches out of two *mu*..."

"Of course, two branches aren't much," put in Fragrant Peach. "But this means we've found a way to preserve the bolls. We can sum up our experience and find out the law."

Sky Joy indignantly stuffed his pipe into his tobacco pouch. "Two branches out of two *mu*, what law is this you've discovered?" He started stalking out of the meeting place.

But then Fragrant Peach spoke again. "After day-to-day observations and consulting with old peasants, we learned that boll rot is due to wet weather during the flowering period. So we picked off the withered flowers from these two branches and they didn't shed their bolls."

Sky Joy stopped to listen to what his wife would say next. But it was the plump girl who now put in, "We hung labels on them and made daily records." Fragrant Peach went on explaining, "We discovered that water collecting in the flowers is likely to make the bolls rot when the sun shines on them. If we pick off the withered flowers and leaves in time, the water drips off the plants and the bolls don't rot. Those plants from which the children picked off withered flowers for fun and those in the one *mu* of poor land haven't shed their bolls either."

Despite his angry outbursts, Sky Joy wanted the experiment to succeed. For he had seen for himself that the Bumper Harvest No. 1 variety grew much better than their mountain cotton. Glad to hear that there was a way to prevent boll rot, he rejoined the meeting and quietly lit his pipe, puffing at it as he listened carefully.

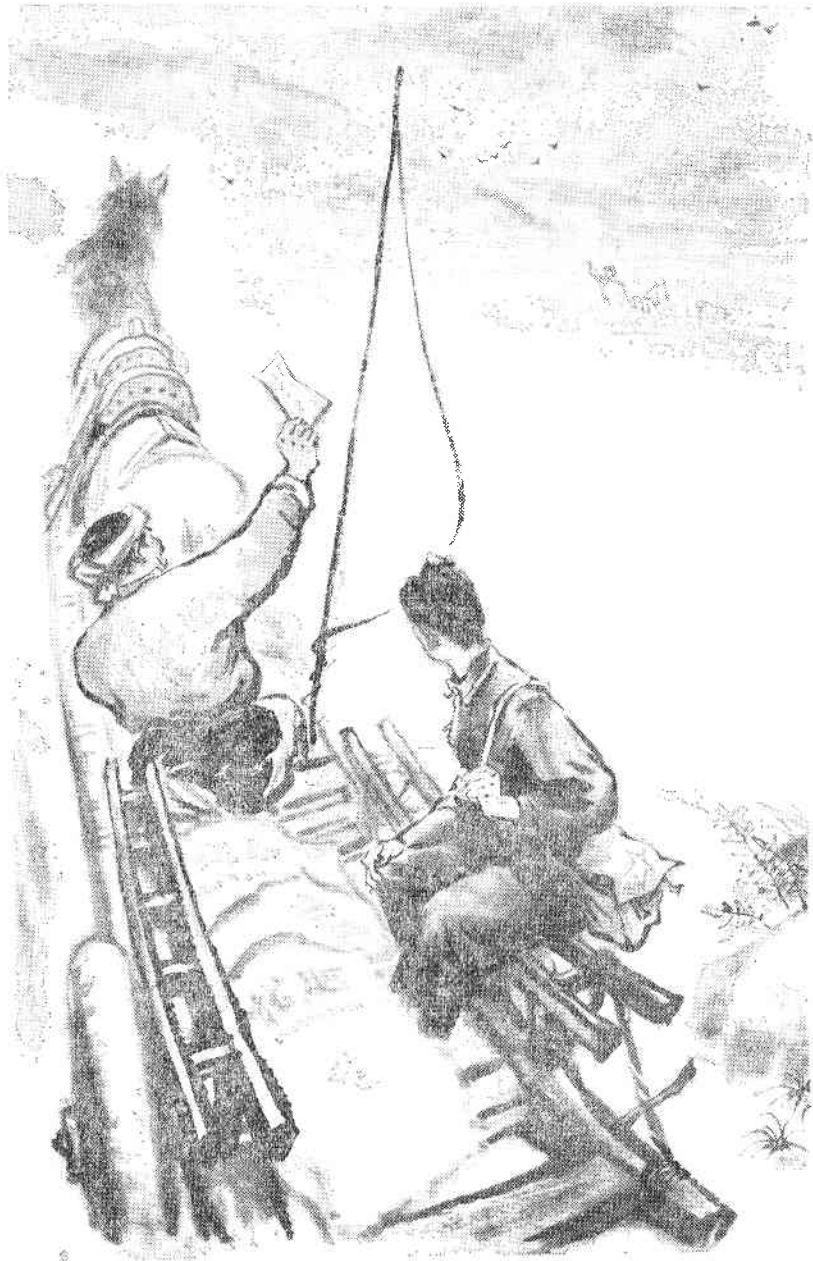
"Can we prevent boll rot just by picking off the withered flowers and leaves?" asked somebody.

Fragrant Peach's reply rang out loud and clear: "That's an important point you've raised. By picking off the withered flowers and leaves and by shaking off the water on the cotton-plants, we can prevent boll rot — our experiment proves that. But perhaps there are other better ways. We're hoping for advice from all of you."

The meeting became animated as more and more people joined in the discussion. Some suggested covering the ground with sand to raise the soil temperature. Others proposed spraying with gibberellin... Finally Secretary Wang said, "We should go all out to complete this experiment and find ways of ensuring a high yield of Bumper Harvest No. 1 cotton in our region. In the future we shall grow this variety on larger areas. To achieve better and quicker results, we want some old peasants to join the experimental group."

At this point the old carter smiled at me, then jumped off the cart swinging his whip. He led the horse down a gully, turned left, crossed a bridge, climbed a slope, and soon we were back on a broad road again.

"And later?" I prompted him.



The old man glanced at me and continued, "Later, Fragrant Peach and her experimental group succeeded in raising Bumper Harvest No. 1 cotton on a large area. Our brigade's cotton yield gets higher and higher each year — just like sesame flowers, as my old woman puts it. As to Sky Joy, he felt ashamed of himself for some days. During that time his wife reasoned with him patiently and the Party secretary had some good talks with him. Finally he went to the experimental plot and said, 'I've come to join your women's team.' 'We're very glad to have you, uncle,' said the women members. 'But from now on you'll have to do whatever your wife says.'"

The old man threw back his head and laughed heartily. My curiosity aroused I asked, "Is Sky Joy in the brigade now, uncle?"

The carter stroked his beard and replied with a chuckle, "You want to meet him, comrade? He's near enough."

"Ah?"

"I had quite a name as a cotton-grower, comrade. But that wife of mine outstripped me. And later, I changed my old views." He flourished his whip. "Last year my old woman proposed a new scientific experiment: cultivating a new variety of cotton, high-yielding, long-fibred, resistant to boll rot and able to withstand humidity and drought. She said, 'This will not only be good for our own and the neighbouring communes, it will also be good for the state.' I was the first to volunteer to join in her new experiment."

"Have you succeeded?"

"We're working on it now. I went to the county this morning because of this business." Sky Joy was in high spirits. He pulled aside the tarpaulin on the cart to show me an array of bottles and jars, chemical fertilizer, insecticides and booklets on the cotton-growing experience of other regions.

"You're another Old Scientific now, aren't you?" I quipped.

"I'm not up to her yet." The honest old fellow chuckled, then pulled an envelope out of his pocket. "I've brought back good news from the county."

He gave me the letter to read. It was from the county Party committee asking Fragrant Peach to go to the provincial capital for a

meeting to exchange experience in cotton-growing. Before I could make any comment, he took back the letter and waved it in the air, shouting, "Old woman, you're invited to a meeting in the provincial capital. . . ."

Ahead of us I saw a far-stretching plain newly washed by rain and bathed in brilliant sunshine. In the green cotton fields bolls like white jade filled the branches, thick-set as clusters of grapes. A group of women were making some observations in the fields. The oldest among them straightened up to gaze in our direction with a smile. So this was Fragrant Peach — "Old Scientific".

Illustrated by Yen Kuo-chi

Leaving the Village (coloured woodcut)
by Liao Tsung-yi, Wang Yuan-wen,
Wu Pang-sheng and Kao Lin-sheng ▶



Selling Pigs

Dawn in autumn. The air was cool and fresh, filled with a sweet fragrance from the paddy fields. A herd of pigs, plump and round, were jog-trotting along the highway to the county town.

Driving the pigs were two men, Shih Chung and Liu Five. Old Man Shih, well over fifty, had an open ruddy face and above his lips two creases indented by smiling. Liu Five, several years Shih's junior, lean and bearded but the less spry of the two, was plodding slowly behind.

"Watch your step, Brother Liu," Old Shih called back from time to time.

"Go ahead, Brother Shih. I'm doing all right following in your footsteps."

"A cart's coming. Mind the pigs don't run under the wheels. They're a contribution to the state from our poor and lower-middle peasants; we must see they don't come to any harm."

"Don't worry, Brother Shih. After sweating our guts out for a whole year, we're not going to fall down on our job at the last moment."

They both laughed heartily. True, this was the first time their production brigade was able to sell twenty live hogs to the state. A year before, when Shih first took on the job of swineherd, the brigade had seven piglets only, with no proper pens or pig-feed. Liu Five his predecessor had kept complaining of over-work, grouching that he wanted to quit. So Old Shih had been appointed to replace him. Shih built himself a hut on the pig farm and made it his home, tending the pigs day and night. He succeeded in making fermented feed out of straw and corn-cobs mixed with a little grain. The pigs lapped it up and grew fat. He then built some simple pens, bought breeding boars, and raised scores of fine healthy pigs.

As the herd increased, Old Shih found the work too much for him single-handed. He asked to have Liu Five back. A pig-dealer for many years before Liberation, Liu Five naturally knew quite well how to raise pigs. But he lacked conscientiousness and a sense of responsibility to the collective. After his return to the pig farm, Old Shih often talked to him about the need to raise pigs for the revolution. As time went by a change came over Liu Five.

"I'm determined not to fall down on my job," he would say. "I'm learning from Brother Shih how to serve the collective." And he was as good as his word, working hard and keeping the collective's interests in mind, so that the whole brigade spoke well of him. Of course, with these two old fellows pulling together, the pig farm was even better run.

Chatting as they walked they soon reached the county pig-purchasing depot. All was noise and bustle there. The courtyard was crowded with several hundred fat pigs, at the sight of which the two men exclaimed in delight.

"What do you think, Brother Liu? Are our twenty pigs first grade?" asked Shih anxiously.

"Most likely they are."

"I'm not so sure. Look at the three spotted pigs. . . ."

"Well, maybe not. . . ." Liu swallowed back the remark on the tip of his tongue.

While they were waiting their turn, Shih nipped off to the county farm tool factory to see about buying a spare part for their fodder-

crusher. When he came back to the depot, Liu Five and their twenty pigs had disappeared. But presently, grinning from ear to ear, Liu herded them in and yelled to Young Chang of the depot to weigh them for him. As there were few people left by then, Young Chang promptly caught hold of a spotted pig, ready to weigh it. Old Man Shih went over, patted the pig and asked:

"How heavy do you reckon it is, Young Chang?"

"One hundred and twenty, at least."

"Surely not?" Shih fastened his eyes on the pig as if he had discovered something wrong.

"I'm positive. I've handled enough hogs to know."

Shih said nothing, watching as Young Chang manipulated the scales.

"One hundred and twenty-two catties. First grade. Pass!" announced the young man.

Liu Five grinned broadly and tried to catch his mate's eye. However, Old Shih's face was as black as thunder. Raising one hand abruptly he shouted: "Stop!"

"Stop?" Both Young Chang and Liu Five were taken aback.

"This pig can't be weighed just now."

"Why not?"

"The weight's wrong."

"There's nothing wrong with my scales," protested Young Chang.

"Not with your scales, no, but with the pig there is."

"You've raised it well. Look at this meat like a fatted calf. And its belly is tight as a drum," retorted Young Chang.

"To be fat is all right, but to be 'tight' is all wrong," rejoined Old Shih after a minute's pause. "Young Chang, we raise pigs, you purchase pigs. In our different ways we're all working for the revolution and should be responsible to the revolution. Although your job's buying pigs, you've helped us in the past to raise good breeds. Now we pig-breeders ought to see to it that the pigs sold to the state are up to standard. There's something wrong with this pig. Let's wait for a while before weighing it. Eh, Brother Liu?"

Liu Five pulled a long face and his jaw fell, but he said nothing.

Shih beckoned to him and walked out of the depot. He was heading for the farm tool factory again. Liu tagged after him in dismay.

"You watered the pigs just now, didn't you, Brother Liu?" Shih had noticed that the pigs' trotters were wet, particularly those of the spotted one. He had estimated that pig to weigh about 118 catties, but it had turned the scales at 122! So Liu Five was up to his old tricks again. That was why Shih had interrupted the weighing.

"Well, yes, I did," Liu admitted. It had been obvious to an old hand like him that the three spotted pigs were a few catties short of first grade, and this meant less money for their production brigade. So he had watered the three spotted pigs. Then he decided to go the whole hog and water all twenty of them. That would make a big immediate increase in their weight.

"So you haven't forgotten your old tricks, Brother Liu?" Shih spoke rather caustically.

"It was like this, you see. . . ." began Liu, then stopped abruptly.

"Have you forgotten our duty?"

"Far from it, brother. This dodge will fetch our brigade an extra hundred-odd yuan. Add a little to that, and we can buy a new fodder-crusher. Isn't that doing our duty by the collective?"

"Is your memory so short? Are you so muddle-headed?" Shih came to a halt to demand: "Have you forgotten the lesson of that mating?"

This referred to an incident six months ago. After Liu came to work for the second time on the pig farm, members of other production brigades had brought sows to mate with their boar. The charge for each was a few catties of beans. One day, however, Liu Five took two piglets instead, thinking this a good deed he was doing for the brigade. To his astonishment, this earned him a stern dressing-down from Old Shih.

"But why are you against something good for our collective?" protested Liu.

"We can't take away the beams of other brigades to build houses for ourselves, can we? Selfishness is the old way of thinking, the old style of work. We mustn't put ourselves first," said Shih seriously. He took special care of the two piglets and later persuaded Liu Five

to return them to their owner. Liu made a self-criticism at a meeting of the brigade members. "My selfish ideas led me astray," he confessed. "Anyone who builds a bridge of bean-stalks is bound to fall into the water."

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In thoughtful silence Liu lowered his head. Old Shih told him earnestly: "If we've stumbled once, Brother Liu, we should remember just what tripped us up. You had a narrow escape in the depot just now. You mustn't lose sight of the big target of the revolution. Always remember our duty to socialist construction, otherwise you'll fall into your bad old ways again."

When they entered the farm tool factory they heard the roar of machines in the workshops and saw lined up in the courtyard brand-new fodder-crushers, threshers and harvesters.

A girl in the welding shop received them warmly. She accepted Shih's order and picked up a spare part to weigh it. But the next second she took it off the scales to rub some fine sand off it.

"Don't bother," said Shih with a smile. "A little sand doesn't matter."

"Yes, it does. Your production brigade wants to buy a spare part not sand. If you want sand, you have plenty. . . ." The girl replied, laughing.

Then she weighed the part carefully.

"You're a conscientious lass."

"Well, uncle, getting the weight right means getting the right relationship between the state and the collective, you know. How could I be anything but conscientious?"

Old Shih nudged Liu Five. "See what a responsible attitude the working class takes towards the revolution. We must learn from the workers."

"Oh, we've still a long way to go. We should learn from you poor and lower-middle peasants. The grain you sell to the state is so dry and clean, with each ear plump and round."

"That's our duty to the revolution, lass."

"That's right," said the girl. "All of us should do our duty by the revolution."

This exchange had made Liu Five rather ashamed of himself. He stood motionless, deep in thought.

Back at the purchasing depot, Shih asked Liu: "Shall we weigh the pigs now?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"You were right. I forgot my duty to the revolution. I could only think of the interest of our small collective. That's because I haven't rid myself of the old way of thinking and the old style of work. That made me trip up again."

Young Chang came over to urge them: "Let's weigh your pigs now, then you can get back to your work."

Liu looked at the pigs. "Wait a bit. Don't you see they're emptying the water out of their stomachs? Wait till they've finished," he said.

The truth dawned on Young Chang. Deeply moved, he said nothing but gripped Old Man Shih's hand. After the pigs had emptied their bladders he weighed them carefully. The results coincided exactly with the two pig-breeders' original estimate. Shih was pleased, and so was Liu.

Watching their receding figures Young Chang murmured, "He's grand, our Old Man Shih. He not only knows how to raise pigs, he's taught me how to purchase pigs for the state."

Never-Give-Way

I was posted as technical adviser to a militia company in a construction project. Before I left for this post, my section chief enjoined on me time and again, "Be modest and prudent and learn from the militia comrades." You needn't worry, I thought. Chairman Mao says: "**The Liberation Army should learn from the people of the whole country.**" I understand that quite well. But to be frank I felt a little tense. For this militia company was an advanced unit and had come to help the army with construction work for national defence. They would certainly be a crack outfit. So I resolved to learn from them and master their good thinking and advanced experience.

But I heard there was a women's team in the militia company which was composed of girls. They had spirit and worked with a will but they also picked on people. Their leader Never-Give-Way was even worse. If she caught you making a mistake she'd really let you have it. To say nothing of stern looks and a dressing-down, she might even call her girls together to help you analyse



your wrong thinking and straighten you out; and unless you admitted your mistake they would keep up this barrage of criticism. As I was new to my job and still rather green, I was bound to slip up somewhere. What if she picked on me and wouldn't let me off? That would be hard to take. I must watch my step.

So I arrived at the militia company in a state of pleasurable anticipation tinged with apprehension. No sooner had I stepped into the yard than a lilting voice rang out, "Hey, PLA Comrade! Are you Staff Officer Wang?" It was a girl of about seventeen with rosy, sun-tanned cheeks. Her large eyes were flashing.

"I'm Wang Kang, here to learn from you," I replied hastily.

"Learn from us? We've still a long, long way to go. Yesterday our Party branch decided that we must go all out to learn from the PLA. You've come just in the nick of time. You must give us a lot of help."

I saw from her black, sooty hands that she was collecting cinders. She'd gone through a big pile of coal ashes but picked out less than half a crate.

"That coal seems to have been burnt pretty thoroughly; why go to all this trouble?" I asked.

"There's not much to be salvaged, it's true. Still, it would be a pity to let what there is go to waste. As the saying goes: Waste not, want not."

"Is this the kind of work your women's team does?"

"What's wrong with it? Chairman Mao calls for hard work and thrift. This is a job for us like any other." Batting her eyes she added teasingly, "Staff Officer Wang, it isn't right to look down on picking cinders."

Her tongue was sharp as a razor. I regretted what I had said. If a fighter under Never-Give-Way was so sharp, I thought, how lucky for me that I hadn't run across the team leader herself. Otherwise I'd really have been put on the spot.

That afternoon a meeting was called to discuss the next month's work. Before it started I noticed that the sharp-tongued girl who had spoken to me that morning was among those present. But there

was no sign of Team Leader Never-Give-Way. I turned to ask the instructor why she wasn't there.

"There's only one women's team in our company," he told me with a smile. "And only one woman team leader. Don't you see her over there?"

"Oh!" I exclaimed, taken by surprise. So that slip of a girl was Never-Give-Way. The instructor told me that her name was Yang Chi-hung.

While I was mulling this over in my mind, the instructor stood up to open the meeting. "To meet the needs of our project," he declared, "our company is going to assign two teams to get sand and another to get gravel. Getting gravel is a hard job; we must choose a crack team to do it. We can't let the project be held up by a shortage in the gravel supply." In conclusion he said, "Think it over, everybody. Which is the best team for this job?"

By this time all the team leaders were raring to go.

"Instructor, give us the task. We guarantee to get it done on time!" Never-Give-Way's lilting voice rang out before the others had a chance to speak.

"Nothing doing!" boomed the tall leader of Team One, leaping to his feet. "That's heavy work, too much for a bunch of girls. They're delicate plants. Better give the job to us."

"Who are you calling delicate?" Never-Give-Way was on her feet ready to give tit for tat. "When have we ever fallen short of your team in any task we took on? Just tell me that."

"You've done all right so far, but this time's different." The tall fellow realized that he had dropped a brick by his use of the word "delicate", but he stood his ground manfully.

"Your mind is so chock-full of old feudal ideas that you look down on women comrades!" Never-Give-Way had flushed crimson with indignation.

"All right, let the instructor decide then," the tall team leader conceded, giving in.

She certainly lives up to her name, I said to myself. To tell the truth, I didn't approve of the women's team taking on the job alone either. But in the end both the instructor and the majority of the

comrades there agreed to the women's team getting the gravel. That delighted its leader of course. She made a face at the tall fellow and rushed out.

The work went smoothly for the first few days. The women's team completed their daily quota ahead of schedule for five days in succession. But on the sixth the record-keeper told me they were twenty per cent short of their target. Short-lived enthusiasm, I assumed. Obviously protracted warfare was beyond them — they had bitten off more than they could chew. Blaming them for not knowing their own limitations, I was on the point of going to the instructor to suggest replacing them with another team. But I thought better of it. Before jumping to rash conclusions I must make some investigations.

The following day I went to the work site with a pair of crates and a shoulder-pole. I met the girls on the way, all speeding ahead with full loads. Their leader, her pole bending like a bow under its load, was rushing along at their head as if on wings. At sight of this I was puzzled. With such enthusiasm, how come they hadn't accomplished their task yesterday?

Gazing at their retreating backs I was even more perplexed. There was plenty of gravel nearer to the work site. Why should they fetch it from so far away? Right! That must be the main reason for their falling down on their job. Though they had drive they lacked efficiency — they couldn't use their heads to save their feet. I was filling my crates from a pile of gravel close by when they returned.

"Comrade Yang, come and fill your crates here!" I called. "There's plenty of gravel here."

"No, Staff Officer Wang, we won't take that," she replied, swinging swiftly forward.

"Why not? Is the quality no good?"

"It's not that," she explained. "Tomorrow some PLA comrades will be coming here for gravel too. We're thinking of their convenience."

These words spoken so matter-of-factly went home to my heart. I had never thought that an ordinary country girl could take such a

comprehensive view of things. I hastily dumped my two crates of gravel and said, "Right you are! We should think of the convenience of others." By then the girls were already some distance ahead. I put on a spurt to catch up.

The time went like lightning. Very soon there were only three days of the month left. The militia company had completed all their tasks. The women's team was like a lark soaring skywards: they overfulfilled their target by ten per cent. At a meeting that day the regimental commander singled them out for praise and called on the officers and men in our regiment to learn from the militia company.

On our way back from regimental headquarters that evening, the instructor and I fell to talking about Never-Give-Way.

"Chi-hung is a fine girl," said the instructor approvingly. "People may call her Never-Give-Way, but in fact she's wholeheartedly for the revolution. She's always the first to take hardships, always shows consideration to other people."

"How did she ever come by such a name?"

"It happened some time ago." The instructor embarked with pleasure on the story. "Last year we were asked to send some men to learn pneumatic drilling. Because it's heavy, dirty work, we chose our toughest young fellows. When Chi-hung knew this, she wouldn't hear of her team being left out. I explained to her, 'You girls are young and you haven't the stamina. We have to consider that.' She retorted, 'We've come to help the PLA get prepared in case of war, not to be shown special consideration.' So in the end we had to let them go. This caused a stir throughout the company. In front of Chi-hung and the girls the tall team leader grumbled, 'If rabbits could pull carts who would buy horses? If these chits insist on handling pneumatic drills, there'll be plenty of crying and sobbing before they're through.' That made the girls furious. A dozen of them surrounded the tall fellow demanding to know exactly what he meant. Unable to make his escape he had to admit his mistake, but at heart he was unconvinced.

"Chi-hung is smart and has guts. In less than half a month she was operating the pneumatic drill as deftly as she did her sub-machine-gun. Once the tall team leader's drill went out of order. Sweating and frantic, he had to ask help from Chi-hung. She dismantled it and put it together again, setting it whirring in no time. The tall fellow said, 'If not for your help, I'd still be putting on a dumb-show — not able to get a sound out of my drill.' Chi-hung didn't let him off. 'I wouldn't have lifted a finger if I wasn't afraid of your crying and sobbing,' she joked. The tall fellow flushed up to his ears. After a long pause he blurted out, 'What a tongue — you never give way!' And the name stuck to her." The instructor himself burst out laughing at this point.

When we reached the work site it was bathed in moonlight. Some shadows were moving in the distance. "Look," exclaimed the instructor. "Chi-hung and her girls are working another extra shift!" Going closer we saw Chi-hung and some of her mates there, their faces glistening with sweat.

"Chi-hung, who gave you permission to work an extra shift?" the instructor demanded reprovingly yet fondly.

"The project needs a lot of cement," she answered softly. "If we wait until tomorrow it may be too late. So we're fetching a few extra loads by moonlight. We can't hold up the work, can we?"

The instructor smiled at me significantly, making no attempt to refute Never-Give-Way. He only reminded them not to work too late. "The project won't be held up," he assured them. "And there's still plenty of work waiting for you to do."

Illustrated by Huang Chia-yu

Thoughts on the Woodcut Art

We are woodcut artists in a PLA unit. Previously, because we had a fair amount of experience of army life and had each done some creative work, we thought we were in a position to produce something original. We just shut ourselves up at base to study illustrated magazines and other materials in the hope of achieving this aim. We soon found that people were dissatisfied with the work done under these conditions. They said our woodcuts were stereotyped and insipid, without any genuine feeling. This set us thinking again.

We re-read Chairman Mao's directive: **"Works of literature and art, as ideological forms, are products of the reflection in the human brain of the life of a given society. Revolutionary literature and art are the products of the reflection of the life of the people in the brains of revolutionary writers and artists."** Though we all live in the army and are in constant touch with workers and peasants, there is still a gap between our thoughts and feelings

This article was written by woodcut artists in the Kwangchow Units of the PLA.

and those of the masses, because we do not really understand them. We therefore need to integrate ourselves with the life of the masses repeatedly and for long periods to accumulate material for artistic creation. We must learn from the workers, peasants and soldiers, observe them carefully, study and analyse their life and take greater pains in our work. On the basis of this deepened understanding, we packed up our equipment, shouldered our kit-bags and went to live with the soldiers and fisherfolk on the coast.

In order to learn from the soldiers, we braved wind and rain at a sentry post perched on a peak wrapped in clouds and mist more than five hundred metres above sea level. We also rowed through wind-tossed waves to visit the garrison of a small island, a frontier post in the south sea. We went out with the troops on field training, charging to the summits of the hills, lying on burning sand in the day-time, and at night carrying out quick marches and exchanging passwords. To learn from the fishing folk, we stayed in a fishing village in the bay where we studied, worked and did sentry duty with the villagers. The close co-operation and intimate relationship between officers and men, between civilians and the army, stirred us deeply and imprinted themselves on our minds. They taught us a lesson and helped us to see our shortcomings, while the change in our thoughts and feelings deepened our understanding and observation of life.

As we grew more familiar with army life, we began to notice many significant incidents. One evening after supper one of our group went to the cooks' squad for a chat. He found the squad leader, with a look of keen concentration on his face, making his routine check-up of the cooking vessels which were neatly stacked and packed up. It struck him as a meaningful and moving scene. This was what gave us the idea for our coloured woodcut *Evening Roll Call* reflecting our soldiers' readiness for action at any hour of the day or night. We see incidents of this sort every day. Why, then, did the artist grasp its profound significance only that evening? His answer to this question was: "When we live with our soldiers and share their feelings, we realize what wonderful men they are and start noticing significant details."



Patrolling

After we have accumulated a wealth of impressions of life, we have to select and process these raw materials, **“discarding the dross and selecting the essential, eliminating the false and retaining the true, proceeding from the one to the other and from the outside to the inside”**. Another of our woodcuts *Patrolling** presents our women militia. At first we showed them scouting round the quiet seashore in the darkness of the night. We felt ourselves that this failed to show their skill in productive labour. The artist also made the girls rather stout, short and rough-looking, this being his subjective impression of fisherfolk. The fishermen commented: “Why make our girls look so clumsy?” That artist went then to live in the fishing port, where he helped to weave nets and transport fish.

By joining in the life and struggles there, the artist discovered that far from being rough and clumsy the militia women were very agile and deft. These girls did heavy productive work in the day-time, then carried out reconnaissance duty at night, not shirking any hardship. Great love for Chairman Mao and deep hatred for the enemy reinforced their natural hardiness. Then the artists conjured up a moving scene. It is evening, the sun is setting, and the harbour

*See *Chinese Literature* No. 8, 1972 for a coloured reproduction.

has a cheerful, prosperous air with fishing-boats moored by the shore, rows of fishing-nets spread out to dry, and in the distance electric lights shining in the fishermen's homes. Now that the day's work is done, the militia women take up their rifles to carry out reconnaissance. Thus this woodcut's artistic and ideological level was raised after revision.

In our draft of another woodcut *Leaving the Village* we first showed two soldiers in a house, one writing a letter of thanks to the villagers on whom they were billeted, the other replacing things borrowed from their hosts, while outside some men started mustering and others fetched water for the villagers. This was a case of “not seeing the wood for the trees” — too many details weakened the main theme. Although real life is made up of minutiae, in artistic creation we have to choose the most typical and most significant to depict. So finally we left out extraneous details to concentrate on portraying one soldier laying down a letter of thanks in a tidied room where everything has been put back in its place. In this way the main theme was more vividly brought out, reflecting the fine tradition of our people's army.

When we have revolutionary political content for a work of art, we can only make it effective by giving it a good artistic form. And this form must stem from the central theme and the real life reflected in the work. A woodcut cannot depict characters as meticulously as an oil-painting with its wide range of colour. It is not suited either to presenting big panoramas with many spectacular scenes. Instead, in a woodcut we try to use small things to epitomise something great, something strongly and concisely distilled from life. This involves studying and exploring artistic technique, the relationship between the human characters and the surroundings, the use of light and dark and the use of colour in conjunction with the main theme.

In *Evening Roll Call* for instance, we first depicted a camp in the mountain forest where a young soldier with a lantern was checking on the cooking utensils; and there were other tents and clumps of trees in the background. Of course this setting was quite realistic but the whole composition appeared confused: the surroundings



Fisherfolk

had swallowed up the central character and the main theme was not clear. Finally, we cut out all the complicated background scenes, putting the central character and objects which clarified the main idea in a space, leaving the spectator to imagine the rest. This brought out the main theme more vividly.

Another woodcut *Fisherfolk** shows a family of old and young eagerly making a stretcher at home, while outside in the distance militia women are training and patrolling. The contrast between these two groups reflects the vigilance and preparedness against war of the fisherfolk on our south coast.

The use of colour in a woodcut must be based on the requirements of the main theme. Different contents call for different colours, and we must guard against trying for spectacular effects. For instance, our aim in *National Institute of the Peasant Movement in Kwangchow*** was to reflect the dignity and grandeur of this revolutionary monu-

*See *Chinese Literature* No. 9, 1972 for a coloured reproduction.

**See *Chinese Literature* No. 8, 1972.

ment, and we tried out various combinations of colour before meeting the requirement of the theme. Similarly, at first we tried to make the colours of *Fisherfolk* and *Scouts in the Fishing Harbour* mellow and quiet and those of *Patrolling* stronger; but this was achieved only after many trials.

Our recognition of the objective world is often incorrect at first, and we need to experiment repeatedly before bringing it into line with reality. Only when we follow the instructions in Chairman Mao's *Talks at the Yenan Forum on Literature and Art* and go for long periods to live among the workers, peasants and soldiers, the sole source of our art, can we find rich materials and inspiration which will enable us to create new works of art and make steady progress as artists.

A Bronze Horse from a Han Tomb

In 1969, a tomb dating from the Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220 A.D.) was discovered in Wuwei County, Kansu, in northwest China. Among the relics unearthed were more than ten bronze horses, each one different. The finest is a galloping horse which has left the ground completely but has one hoof resting on a flying swallow.

Wuwei County in Kansu was one of four garrisoned districts in northwest China established during the reign of Emperor Wu of the Western Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-23 A.D.). These garrisoned districts helped to safeguard the Hohsi corridor west of the Yellow River and the Silk Route further west, as well as to promote friendly contacts and cultural exchanges between China and western Asia and Europe. Emperor Wu subsequently extended the Great Wall built in the Chin Dynasty (221-206 B.C.) westward from Kansu, manning the whole length with sentry posts and watch-towers at intervals of every five and ten *li*. When nomadic marauders were sighted, the sentries sent up signals by means of smoke in the day-time or flaming torches at night. The smoke signal was given by hoist-



A Bronze Horse from a Han Tomb

ing burning brushwood with a pulley to the top of a thirty or fifty-foot pole, so that in clear weather it could be seen thirty *li* or ten miles away. The alarm was relayed from one watch-tower to the next. However, when sandstorms, rain or snow prevented the lighting of the brushwood, the only way for the sentries to raise the alarm was to dispatch guards on good steeds to pass on the message. The eighth-century Tang poet Wang Wei describes this in these lines:

Every ten *li* a galloping horse,
Every five *li* the rider raises his whip;
Word comes from the garrison command:
Chiuchuan is beset by Huns;
Through the mountain passes snow whirls;
Smokeless, extinguished are the beacon fires.

This compact and graphic description emphasizes the importance of swift horses if the orders from army headquarters were to be delivered on time. Horses did, indeed, play an important role in that far distant past. No pains were spared to procure the well-known Ferghana horses. Thus in 104 B.C. Emperor Wu sent General Li Kuang-li at the head of a mighty army across the Taklamakan Desert and west of Kashgar to Ferghana to bring back three thousand horses. According to a Han-dynasty historian, these were known as "blood-sweating" horses or "heavenly steeds"; their hooves were so strong that they left an imprint on stone, and the sweat from their flanks was as red as blood.

Many accounts of the origin and excellence of these foreign horses can be found, and poets have paid high tribute to their miraculous speed. However, conveying this successfully in terms of graphic art posed a difficult problem.

At an exhibition of cultural relics from Tunhuang in 1951, I remember discussing with the artist Hsu Pei-hung the horses in the Tunhuang frescoes of the Northern Wei period (386-534 A.D.) and the horses painted by the Tang artist Han Kan. Good as these were, it seemed to us that the artists had not succeeded in capturing the spirit of these reputedly miraculous steeds. Hsu Pei-hung said, "The difficulty in painting horses lies not only in conveying their

speed but also in depicting their fine mettle and the proud spirit with which they take mountains and rivers in their stride." In other words, those representations of horses fell short of the tribute paid by Hsieh Heh of the Southern Chi period (479-502 A.D.) to the work of another artist: "He combines beauty of form with magnificent spirit." This is in the best tradition of Chinese art. Now this bronze horse is undoubtedly a masterpiece of the kind for which we looked in vain more than twenty years ago.

This bronze horse is 34 cm. high and 45 cm. long. The unknown artist who made it has expressed its spirit concisely and forcefully in the traditional Chinese style on the basis of rich experience and detailed observation. The strength and speed of this courser are depicted with consummate skill through the proud arch of its head, the vigorous, streamlined contour of its body and its galloping hooves. The proud head, tufted mane and knotted tail raised like that of a comet testify to the sculptor's minute observation of horses. The organic harmony of the whole composition suggests that some invisible electric current is impelling the horse through the air with the speed of lightning. Thus, though static, it reminds us of those legendary "heavenly steeds" which covered a thousand *li* in a single day. To achieve this is no mean feat; for to convince us that this is no ordinary horse galloping on the ground but a "heavenly steed" flying through the air involves solving the contradiction between speed and weight. This bronze horse represents a romantic legend but at the same time it is a real object. The artist therefore has to solve the problem of how to convey velocity in a substantial, three-dimensional object which must at the same time have stability and balance. How can he make the finished work stand firm? As pointed out by Ku Kai-chih, celebrated painter of the Eastern Tsin period (317-420 A.D.), an artist must show "intelligence". In creating works of art he must cudgel his brains and call all his skill into play. We find many ancient paintings of horses, dragons, serpents or men with wings or with clouds beneath them to show that they are flying through the air. However, this makes them seem mythological creatures not drawn from real life. The artist who produced this bronze horse nearly two thousand years ago makes

three of its hooves paw the air while that of the right hind-leg lightly touches the back of a flying swallow. The horse is not trampling the swallow, simply grazing it gently in passing as it draws in its hind-leg. If the horse were treading heavily on the swallow, it would seem to be stumbling and look precarious. By his skilful choice of the right split second in the action, the artist has created the impression of a horse flying through the air, portraying both the velocity of motion and the perfect balance of the animal. Here we have realism combined with imagination. Moreover, this work of art which is on a higher plane than real life presents a dialogue between the flying swallow and the horse's hoof. For as the horse passes a swallow while flying through the air, for one brief moment the swallow turns its head as if to make some remark to the horse's hoof. The artist shows originality of a high order in this depiction of a scene based on life yet higher than real life.

A study of this brilliant work of art increases our understanding of Chairman Mao's dictum that we cannot have knowledge separated from practice. The creation of art is equally impossible, divorced from real life. If the creator of this bronze horse had not spent a long time observing and experiencing life, perhaps as a sentry or soldier in those frontier outposts, we may be sure that he could not have succeeded in concentrating all his impressions of galloping horses and producing such a perfect gem of art.

Chen Chih-hung

Songs and Dances from Romania

The arrival of the Romanian "Banatul" Folk Song and Dance Ensemble brought from the far-away Carpatii Mountains not only deep friendship for the Chinese people but also a wealth of Romanian folk songs and dances.

Romania is a country with an old culture, its folk art dating way back into history. From the day of its birth, the "Banatul" Folk Song and Dance Ensemble has paid much attention to the collection and adaptation of old forms of folk art. Its artists go to the grass-roots and rearrange old art forms to present the feelings and sentiments of the Romanian people today, thus endowing them with a new spirit so that they now serve the fiery struggles of real life. *Mama, I Must Be Leaving You*, a beautiful song using the lyrical *doina* form, voices the aspirations of a young girl about to join construction work far from home. She calls on her mother to be resolute and strong. This song expresses the Romanian people's deep love of life.

The Ensemble's lively, harmonious orchestra makes a striking appearance on the stage, aptly executing a large variety of themes with

brilliant precision and verve. Traditional instruments such as the *taragot*, violin, clarinet, dulcimer and flute are used by the seven-man orchestra to bring out national characteristics and to create a distinctively Romanian style.

The flute solo is rendered with virtuosity, with clear, lilting notes. *The Mail Cart* is a charming light-hearted violin solo.

Skylark (Ciocirlia), a song familiar to the Peking audience, is rendered skilfully by violinist Radu Vincu who conveys the special features of Romanian music and evokes the liquid notes of the soaring bird. This song of spring and joy is a paean to nature and to the new life of the people.

The "Banatul" Ensemble's vocal music is also remarkably fine. The capricious and humorous *Maramures Folk Song* sung by Stan Gelu Mircea has a strong folk flavour and shows the optimism and pride of the Romanian people as well as their great love for their new life. Ana Pacatius sings folk songs representative of different parts of her country with clear intonation, rich feeling and artlessness. *A Trainload of Wool* shows the people's belief in a bright future while *Girls Gathering Hay* with its lilting melody portrays the girls' joy in their work. Song after song, redolent of freshly-turned soil and delighting the ear, is rendered with consummate skill and has a distinct national flavour.



The representative dances performed by the Ensemble give us a colourful tableau of the customs and ways of the people.

Ana Lugojana, a skilful combination of dance, song and music, is marked by exuberance, beauty and vitality. It displays the fearless spirit of the Romanian people in their fight for national independence and a happy life.

The *Calusul of Muntenia* is an old folk dance showing the peasants' joy and hope as they start their spring sowing and their confidence that they will reap a rich harvest. The strong rhythm and tempo



of this dance portray the intrepid national character, the people's collective spirit and their determination to conquer all difficulties.

The *Oltenia Group Dance* is a happy festive dance of young people making merry when their work is done. It has all the warmth, vigour and liveliness typical of Romanian folk dancing.

Another feature of the Ensemble's dance items is their elegance, lyricism and attention to detail. The *Pandelasul* which depicts the people's delight in a bumper harvest begins with young girls waving flimsy scarfs filing onto the stage. They captivate the audience with their beautiful movements and intricate dance steps. All the dances are accompanied by fine, lively and rhythmic music.

The tour of the Romanian "Banatul" Song and Dance Ensemble in China will contribute much towards enhancing friendship between Romania and China. May the flower of our friendship blossom with ever more splendour.

Illustrated by Chen Yu-hsien

Cellist Henri Honegger Gives Concerts

Around the New Year a well-known Swiss cellist Henri Honegger came to visit China with his wife Claire Honegger, pianist. During their stay in our country they gave several concerts in Peking and Shanghai.

The chief items in M. Honegger's repertoire were classical works by the great composers — Bach, Schumann and Beethoven. He showed himself a true virtuoso with his evocative renderings of widely differing styles, in which he was brilliantly accompanied by Madame Honegger. The performances drew warm applause from the audiences.

Paris Commune Exhibition in Peking

Recently an exhibition of documents and relics relating to the Paris Commune was held in our capital under the auspices of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries. The exhibits were a collection made by British friends Stanley Gordon Hutchins and his wife, who came to China for the occasion. Most of the objects displayed had been put on show in Peking in the spring of 1966, but a few more were included this time.

The more than five hundred exhibits were arranged in seven sections according to the stages of the development of the revolutionary struggle, namely, Dissemination of Marxism, Eve of the Revolution,

Armed Uprising and Founding of the Paris Commune, Dictatorship of the Proletariat, Heroic Struggle, Spirit of Internationalism, and Long Live the Principles of the Paris Commune.

The articles, photographs, paintings and documents clearly showed that the Paris Commune, whose great historic significance was so highly appraised by Marx and Engels, came into existence with the spread of Marxism.

Orders and decrees proclaimed by the Commune to smash the old state machine and improve the livelihood and working conditions of the labouring people were exhibited together with those on the adoption of other political, social, economic, cultural and educational measures.

There were photographs showing members of the Commune cheering as they pulled down the Vendome Column, sinister symbol of bourgeois chauvinism. On display were two silver coins minted by the Commune, a photo of the standard of the 27th Battalion, 9th Regiment of the National Guard made by women members of the Commune. Among the pictures on display were some depicting the Commune members' bloody battles against the reactionary Versailles troops in defence of their own state power. There was also a reproduction of the manuscript of *The Internationale*, song of the world proletariat.

Exhibition of Canadian Eskimo Art

An exhibition of art objects made by the Eskimos in Canada opened in the Peking Art Gallery on January 20.

The Eskimos are a tough, self-reliant people living in the Arctic Circle mainly as hunters or trappers. Over thousands of years they have acquired great skill in carving stone or the bones of animals. Among the exhibits were woodcuts, stone reliefs, seal-skin prints and ivory carvings on walrus tusks. These art objects, concisely and forcefully executed, give a vivid picture of the life and work of the Eskimos and were much appreciated by Chinese visitors to the exhibition, which was held under the auspices of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries.

Revolutionary Modern Peking Operas Widely Adapted

In the past few years revolutionary modern Peking operas such as *Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy*, *The Red Lantern*, *On the Docks* and *Shachiapang* have one by one been adapted into local operas and performed throughout the country.

Over a hundred varieties of local operas exist in China. Composed by folk artists, they have developed on the base of the local dialect and music, and this makes them popular in their respective regions.

In the course of adapting the model Peking operas, the artists in various places have made a conscientious study of Chairman Mao's revolutionary line on literature and art. They have also gone out to integrate themselves with the workers, peasants and soldiers and learn the progressive thinking of the advanced people among them so as to deepen their appreciation of the heroic characters in the operas.

With a view to giving a better presentation of life today, the local troupes have made bold innovations in their instrumental music and arias. Benefiting by the experience of the revolution in Peking opera, they have broken away from their original restricted use of musical instruments and adopted a mixed orchestra of Chinese and western ones. As a result, their music has become richer and more expressive while retaining its distinctive local colour.



Evening Roll Call (coloured woodcut)

by Chiu Huo-chia



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