

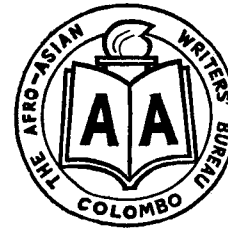
Shachiapang

MODEL PEKING OPERA
ON CONTEMPORARY REVOLUTIONARY THEME



Shachiapang

Model Peking Opera
on Contemporary Revolutionary Theme



AFRO-ASIAN WRITERS' BUREAU

1967

Having seen your performance, I wish to express my thanks to you for the excellent work you have done. Please convey my thanks to the comrades of the cast! History is made by the people, yet the old opera (and all the old literature and art, which are divorced from the people) presents the people as though they were dirt, and the stage is dominated by lords and ladies and their pampered sons and daughters. Now you have reversed this reversal of history and restored historical truth, and thus a new life is opening up for the old opera. That is why this merits congratulations. The initiative you have taken marks an epoch-making beginning in the revolutionization of the old opera. I am very happy at the thought of this. I hope you will write more plays and give more performances, and so help make this practice a common one which will prevail throughout the country.

MAO TSE-TUNG: "Letter to the Yen-an Peking Opera Theatre After Seeing *Driven to Join the Liangshan Mountain Rebels*" (January 9, 1944).

CHARACTERS

CHEN TIEN-MIN, *Secretary of the Communist Party Committee of Changshu County*

SISTER AH-CHING, *member of the Communist Party, underground liaison officer*

KUO CHIEN-KUANG, *company political instructor of the New Fourth Army*

YEH SSU-CHUNG, *platoon leader*

OLD SQUAD LEADER

LITTLE LING, *army nurse*

YOUNG WANG, *soldier*

YOUNG TIGER, *soldier*

YOUNG LI, *soldier*

LIN TA-KENG, HUO TEH-YUNG, CHANG SUNG-TAO and
OTHER NEW FOURTH ARMY MEN

AUNTY SHA, *an activist of Shachiapang*

DRAGON, *her son*

AH HSIANG, *revolutionary peasant*

AH FU, *revolutionary peasant*

WANG FU-KENG, *revolutionary peasant*

OTHER PEASANTS OF SHACHIAPANG

HU CHUAN-KUEI, *commander of the puppet "Loyal and Just National Salvation Army"*

TIAO TEH-YI, *his chief-of-staff*

ADJUTANT LIU

TIAO HSIAO-SAN, *cousin of Tiao Teh-yi, a puppet soldier*

OTHER PUPPET SOLDIERS

KURODA, *Japanese colonel*

CHOU JEN-SHENG, *interpreter for the Japanese*

TWO JAPANESE SOLDIERS



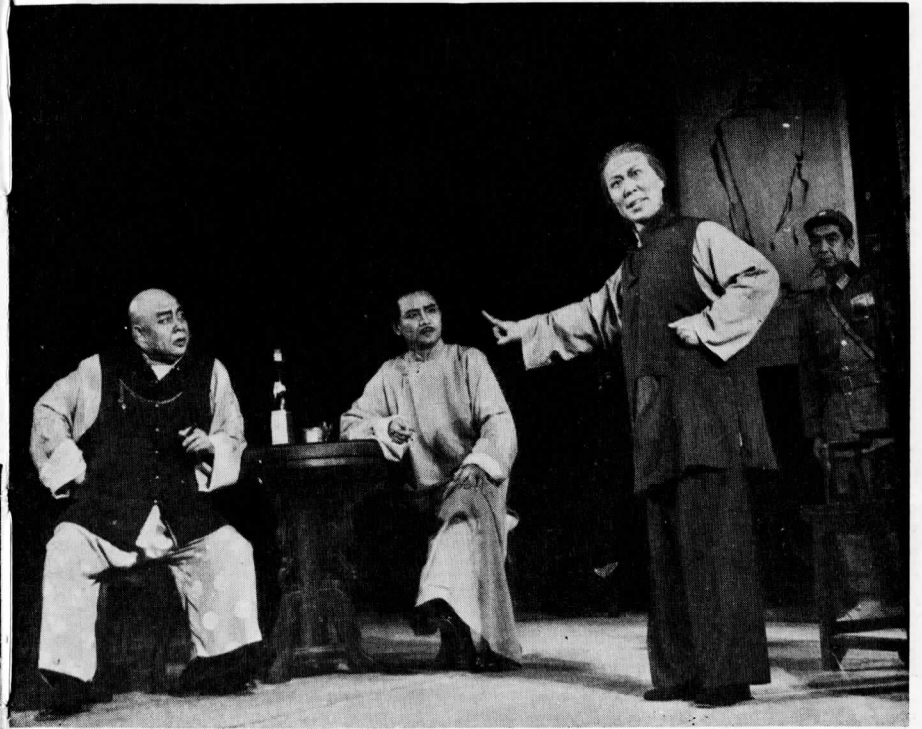
Kou Chien-kuang

"Leaving the village"



"A battle of wits"

"Holding out"



"Denouncing the enemy"



"Preparing for the attack"

"Breaking through"





"Wiping out the enemy"

SCENE I

MAKING CONTACT

Changshu County in Kiangsu Province during the War of Resistance Against Japan. A highway held and patrolled by the Japanese with a path leading to the village of Shachiapang. At the front of the stage is a big tree. It is midnight. The moon is obscured by dark clouds.

(Enter Dragon, Ah Hsiang, Wang Fu-keng, followed by Sister Ah-ching.)

SISTER AH-CHING:

*Party Secretary Chen has sent word
Tonight some wounded men will be brought to our
village,
Villagers have come with me to meet them. . .
We must watch out for the patrolling Japanese.*
(Enter Chen Tien-min.)

CHEN TIEN-MIN: Sister Ah-ching!

AH-CHING: Have all the wounded comrades come?

CHEN: All of them are here.

(Enter Kuo Chien-kuang, Yeh Ssu-chung and others.)

CHEN: Let me introduce you to each other. This is Sister Ah-ching. In public she is known as the proprietress of the Spring Tea-house. This is Political Instructor Kuo.

AH-CHING: Instructor Kuo!
KUO CHIEN-KUANG: Sister Ah-ching!
CHEN: Shall we cross the enemy line right away!
KUO: Platoon Leader Yeh, go and fetch our men.
YOUNG TIGER: Instructor! . . . The Japanese patrol!
CHEN: Get under cover! (He leads the men off.)

(A small Japanese patrol crosses the stage.)

(Enter Dragon. After looking round, he waves to Sister Ah-ching and Chen Tien-min to come over. Enter Chen Tien-min, Kuo Chien-kuang and the wounded men. Sister Ah-ching, Kuo Chien-kuang shake hands with Chen Tien-min in farewell. Exit.)

SCENE II

LEAVING THE VILLAGE

To the left of Auntie Sha's house is a willow-tree. In front of her house are some bamboo chairs and a small table.

(Auntie Sha is mending clothes. Little Ling is rolling bandages and mixing medicine. Young Wang is folding gunny-sacks.)

LITTLE LING: Young Wang! Come and let me change your dressing.

YOUNG WANG: I don't want to.

LITTLE LING: Why not?

YOUNG WANG: Little Ling! As our medicine is very difficult to get, we ought to keep it for the serious cases. My wound will soon heal.

LITTLE LING: It's true we don't have much medicine left, but our mobile hospital will send us more. Your wound is not too serious, but it cannot be considered as light either.

YOUNG WANG: I am a light casualty.

LITTLE LING: Light casualty? But when the instructor took the light casualties to help the villagers bring in the rice crop, why weren't you one of them?
(Young Wang is speechless at this remark.)

LITTLE LING: Young Wang, come and have your dressing changed!

YOUNG WANG: I just won't!

LITTLE LING: The instructor told me to do it!

AUNTY SHA: Young Wang, you wounded comrades should listen to what the doctor and nurse say. You can't always have it your own way.

LITTLE LING: See, Aunt Sha is also criticizing you.

YOUNG WANG: Hum! Aunt Sha is particularly fond of you, so when she says anything, she always takes your part.

SHA: You say I'm partial to her. Yes, I am. This girl always talks sense and acts reasonably. That's why I like her.

YOUNG WANG: Aunt Sha, when we leave, we'll take Dragon along with us and leave Little Ling behind to stay with you. We'll give you a daughter in exchange for your son.

SHA: That will be fine. I raised seven sons in my day, but never had a daughter.

LITTLE LING: Aunt Sha, you always say you have seven sons, why have we seen only Dragon?

SHA (sighs): That was all in the past. Why bring it up?

YOUNG WANG: Aunt Sha, please tell us about it.

LITTLE LING: Aunt Sha, we all want to hear your story.

SHA (sighs):

It's a long story. . .

In those years we were too poor to raise children,

So five of my seven sons died early;

Then I borrowed from the Tiaos in a year of famine,

And to pay our debt my fourth son had to work for them;

The old miser Tiao was a poisonous snake, a vicious scorpion,

*My fourth son worked very hard day and night
But was beaten to death.*

*Dragon, my seventh, has such a fiery temper,
He charged into Tiao's house to have an argument,
Tiao accused him of breaking into a private house at
night to steal or to rob,
And had the poor sixteen-year-old boy thrown in
prison.*

*When the New Fourth Army took Shachiapang,
Dragon was freed and once more saw the light of day.
So the Communist Party is as dear to him as his
mother.*

LITTLE LING: Aunt Sha, Well said!

SHA: *Without the Party my whole family would have
perished long ago!*

(Enter Ah Hsiang with a bowl of rice-balls.)

YOUNG WANG: Aunt Sha, since we have the Communist Party, we poor people are not afraid of them any more.

AH HSIANG: Aunt Sha!

SHA: Yes, Ah Hsiang?

AH HSIANG: My ma told me to bring some rice-balls to the instructor.

SHA: I've already steamed some for them.

AH HSIANG: Ma says this is only a simple expression of our love for our army men.

SHA: That's right. Put them in this basket. I'll warm them up for them later.

AH HSIANG: Young Wang, Aunt Li is waiting for you to bring her the rice sacks to be filled!

YOUNG WANG: Oh, yes! (He takes up the sacks and is about to go, but turns round.) Aunt Sha, where is that old miser Tiao?

SHA: Why, you are still thinking about that. The old miser Tiao died long ago. But he has a son who has been away at school for many years now. And we don't know what's become of him.

LITTLE LING: Enough of that. You don't have to get to the bottom of the matter now! Auntie Li is waiting for the sacks so that she can hide the grain!

AH HSIANG: Let's go together. (He goes off with Young Wang.)

(Auntie Sha takes the basket and is about to go to wash clothes.)

LITTLE LING: Auntie Sha, you are washing clothes again! Let me do the washing!

SHA: The instructor and the light casualties helped us with our work. If I wash a few clothes for them, what of that?

LITTLE LING: Then let me go with you. (Exit with Auntie Sha.)

(Kuo Chien-kuang, Yeh Ssu-chung and Young Li come in a boat. Yeh Ssu-chung and Kuo Chien-kuang unload basket after basket of grain.)

KUO: Platoon Leader Yeh! (He points at the baskets of grain.) Go and store them away for Auntie Sha.

YEH: Right!

(He carries the baskets to the back of Auntie Sha's house.)

KUO: *The glory of the morning is reflected on the Yangchen Lake,*

The reeds are in full bloom,

The fragrance of the paddy fills the air,

On the bank of the lake are rows and rows of willow-trees.

It is the hands of the labouring people

That draw for us a beautiful picture of the region south of the River teeming with fish and rice.

We won't give up a single inch of our beautiful land to these ferocious and savage Japanese invaders.

I left the battlefield after being wounded

And came to Shachiapang to recuperate.

During the past fortnight I have constantly had my comrades-in-arms and superiors in mind,

I don't know where they have evacuated to.

The army and the people are ready to counter the enemy's mopping-up campaign,

When shall we be able to raise our swords to kill these heinous wolves.

Day and night our wounded seek a way to full recovery

So that they can soon return to the front!

(Enter Auntie Sha with Little Ling.)

KUO: Auntie Sha!

SHA: Instructor, have all the comrades come back?

KUO: Yes, they are back. We've finished harvesting the rice. We've hidden your share in the dug-out behind your house.

SHA: That's fine. You must be all tired out. Come and take a rest. Look! These are the rice-balls Ah Hsiang has brought you.

KUO: The villagers are too kind to us!

LITTLE LING: Instructor, Auntie Sha has again helped us wash our clothes.

SHA: That girl! Isn't that what I ought to do?

(Enter Dragon. Yeh Ssu-chung comes out from behind the house.)

DRAGON: Ma, I've caught a fish.

SHA: Dragon, did you go to catch fish right after you finished your work?

DRAGON: Yes, I did. To give the comrades something to go with their rice.

SHA: Give it to me. I'll prepare it.

DRAGON: Let me do it. (He goes into the house.)

YEH: Instructor, several of our comrades have requested to rejoin their units.

KUO: They are so impatient! Platoon Leader Yeh, some of the comrades have already recovered and I think, may leave first.

SHA: Leave? Where to?

KUO: To look for our units.

SHA: To look for your units? How can you!

*The comrades were wounded in battle,
So Shachiapang is your home,
If the villagers have not looked after you well enough,
Tell me and I'll criticize them.*

KUO (looks at Yeh Ssu-chung): Auntie Sha has asked for our opinion about her. (To Auntie Sha) Auntie Sha, let me be the first to express my opinion.

SHA: Come on, out with it.

KUO: All right.

*The other day while the comrades were chatting,
They all talked about you Auntie Sha.*

SHA: What did they say?

KUO: *Once they started talking,*

There was no stopping them.

SHA: So there must be a lot of opinions about me.

KUO: *Each and every one raised his thumb in praise of you!*

SHA: Get along with you! Instructor, I haven't done anything much!

KUO: *You treat our comrades like members of your family,*

You wait on us hand and foot.

Your hands never stop mending and washing our things,

Every day you prepare three meals for us with fish and shrimps.

*Our comrades say: If we go on resting like this,
We shall soon be too fat and lazy to hike and climb,
Not to speak of going back to the front to kill the enemy.*

SHA: Oh, what are you talking about!

KUO: *When the comrades have fully recovered —*

SHA: *Even when they have recovered, I won't let them leave.*

*I want you to have three full meals a day
And sleep until the sun is high in the west.
Until each of you is as robust as an iron tower.
Then you will be strong enough to mount your horses. . .*

KUO: *Riding fast south of the River to kill the enemy,*

We'll destroy the traitors and the bandits,

And drive the Japanese pirates away.

And when the clouds part and the sun comes out

And a red flag hangs in front of each house,

We'll come back to pay our respects to our revolutionary old mother!

SHA: Good. Your Auntie Sha is just looking forward to such a day.

YEH: Auntie Sha, you will surely be able to see that day. You and the villagers take such good care of us that we'll certainly drive the Japanese devils out of China!

SHA: Eh?

KUO: Surely! "The army must become one with the people so that they see it as their own army. Such an army will be invincible, and an imperialist power like Japan will be no match for it."

SHA: Who said that?

KUO: Chairman Mao.

SHA: Chairman Mao! Very well said!

(Sister Ah-ching, Ah Hsiang and Wang Fu-keng come in hurriedly.)

AH-CHING: Instructor! The Japanese have started a "mopping up". They're moving fast. The County Party Committee instructs you to hide in the marshes for a time. I've got a boat and provisions ready.

(Enter Dragon.)

KUO: Sister Ah-ching, notify the militia to lead the villagers out of the village and hide the grain that is left over.

AH-CHING (to Kuo Chien-kuang): Don't you worry. We are evacuating to the place we decided upon. I'll come to fetch you when it's time. (To Aunty Sha) Aunty Sha, tell Dragon and Ah Hsiang to take the comrades there!

SHA: Dragon, you take them over! (She goes into the house.)

DRAGON: Where's the boat?

AH HSIANG: At the northwest corner of the village.

KUO: Platoon Leader Yeh, tell the comrades to assemble at the northwest corner.

YEH: Right! (Exit with Little Ling and Young Wang.)

AH-CHING: Brother Dragon, mind you keep under cover. Don't let anyone see your boat.
(Enter Aunty Sha.)

SHA: Take these rice-balls and rice crust along with you. (Sighs.) There's no kind of shelter whatsoever in the marshes. How can the wounded comrades stand it!

(Dragon takes the basket.)

KUO: Aunty Sha, we've taken over the tradition of the Red Army men, who crossed snowy mountains and swamps. No difficulties will be able to stop us.

(Guns rumble in the distance.)

AH-CHING: Instructor, you'd better hurry.

KUO: Sister Ah-ching, you should also be very careful!

AH-CHING: I understand.

KUO: Ah Hsiang, Dragon, let's go! (Exit with Dragon and Ah Hsiang.)

AH-CHING (to Wang Fu-keng): You take several militiamen to help the villagers evacuate. Hurry! And dispatch some men to hide the grain.

WANG FU-KENG: All right. (Exit.)

AH-CHING: Aunty Sha, you'd better get your things ready also. I'll go and have a look at the comrades again.

SHA: All right!

(Exit Sister Ah-ching. Aunty Sha enters the house.)

(The light fades. The gunfire draws closer. Flames flare up in the distance. Refugees rush past with Japanese troops in pursuit. Enter Colonel Kuroda with two Japanese soldiers and a traitor Chou Jen-sheng, who serves as his interpreter.)

CHOU JEN-SHENG: Report! No New Fourth Army men here, Colonel. No wounded either.

KURODA: You go find "Loyal and Just National Salvation troops". . . (In a whisper) New Fourth Army wounded soldiers; you go catch them all!

CHOU: Yes, sir.
(Sporadic gunfire.)

SCENE III

HATCHING A PLOT

Three days later. Headquarters of the puppet "Loyal and Just National Salvation Army".

(As the curtain rises, Tiao Teh-yi and Chou Jen-sheng are conferring in whispers; then burst out laughing.)

TIAO TEH-YI: I'm sure there will be no difficulty about it. Hu won't be able to get along as he did before because he is caught between your Imperial Army and the New Fourth Army. If he wants to go on having a good time, eating and playing, he must attach himself to the Imperial Army.

CHOU JEN-SHENG: Attach himself to the Imperial Army? I don't see that Commander Hu has made up his mind yet. In his army what he says still goes.

TIAO: What he says goes? In a little while it'll be what I say goes.

CHOU: You are so smart!

(Enter Adjutant Liu.)

ADJUTANT LIU: Report! The commander is here!

TIAO: Ask him in.

ADJUTANT LIU: Please, Commander. (Exit.)

(Enter Hu Chuan-kuei.)

HU CHUAN-KUEI:

*In troubled times heroes spring up everywhere
And any man with a gun can be a chief;*

I get along by keeping in with three sides:

Chiang Kai-shek, the Japanese and the bandits.

TIAO: Let me introduce you. This is Commander Hu Chuan-kuei, of the newly reorganized "Loyal and Just National Salvation Army". Commander, this is Mr. Chou Jen-sheng, interpreter for Colonel Kuroda of the Japanese Imperial Army.

HU: Good, good, good. Sit down, sit down, sit down.

TIAO: Commander, Mr. Chou has come with a proposal from the Imperial Army.

HU: Let's hear what it is.

CHOU: Commander Hu, last time Chief-of-Staff Tiao and I agreed that in this mopping-up campaign we'd attack the New Fourth Army together. But we haven't succeeded in wiping them out, so that the Japanese are not at all pleased with you.

HU: So what? If the Japanese didn't come to grips with them, why should I? I tell you frankly, I won't strike an egg on a rock. As for this army I am still the boss!

CHOU: It's true this army is still under your control, but the Imperial Army wants to control you!

TIAO: Commander, Colonel Kuroda wants to destroy our army. We have to thank Mr. Chou for helping us out.

HU: Help us out! What's the use of mere sweet words? Our army needs money, guns and ammunition.

TIAO: These things — they have already prepared them for us.

CHOU: If we come to terms, the Imperial Army will station you at Shachiapang.

TIAO: Commander, this is a very rich district, plenty of fish and rice.

HU: Old Tiao, Shachiapang is a communist area. And the New Fourth Army is not to be trifled with!

CHOU: Commander, the Imperial Army is not to be trifled with either!

TIAO: Commander, "whoever suckles me is my mother." Let's rely on the Imperial Army. We'll make a go of it! It all depends on whether you have the guts or not!

HU: All right. That's settled then.

CHOU: There's another small condition.

HU: You have so many conditions, eh?

CHOU: The New Fourth Army left some casualties in Shachiapang. The Imperial Army expects you to capture them.

TIAO: That's easy. I'll see to that.

HU: Since we're fighting the Reds together, this is nothing. Orderly!

(Enter Tiao Hsiao-san and Adjutant Liu.)

TIAO HSIAO-SAN: Yes, here.

HU: Pass on my orders: At three this afternoon we're marching to Shachiapang.

HSIAO-SAN: Right!

TIAO: Well, Commander, now you're backed openly by Chiang Kai-shek and secretly by the Japanese. You play both sides and you are taking a winding path to save the country. So you're really one of the great heroes of our time!

HU: Open or secret, this is all thanks to you making the connections. And you'll be going back to your native place. You can restore your family fortune and bring glory to your ancestors. I may be a dragon

here, but I'll be no match for a snake in its old haunts.

CHOU: You're both doing all right.

(Exit, laughing.)

SCENE IV

A BATTLE OF WITS

After three days of "mopping up," the Japanese troops have withdrawn from Shachiapang, leaving it in a state of devastation. The Spring Tea-house at the cross-roads near the wharf, a typical tea-house in a southern market town. It has three small rooms and a mat awning outside, but not many seats. At the hands of the Japanese troops, tables, chairs and tea-things got broken, and the awning out of position.

(Several peasants pass. They are refugees returning home, Sister Ah-ching among them.)

OLD MAN: Sister Ah-ching, thank you for taking care of me on the way.

SISTER AH-CHING: Don't mention it. I only did what I should.

OLD MAN: See what damage they have done?

(Enter another group of villagers.)

VILLAGERS: Sister Ah-ching!

AH-CHING: So you've all come back!

VILLAGERS: Yes, we are back. Let's all give a hand in tidying up this place.

AH-CHING: please sit down and take a rest. I'll boil some water for you.

VILLAGE WOMAN: Don't bother. We are going home to have a look first.

AH-CHING: You won't sit down?
VILLAGE WOMAN: No, thanks.
AH-CHING: Give your grandpa a hand as you go along.
(Exit villagers.)
AH-CHING:
*The enemy raids lasted three whole days,
This morning they left the village;
All our neighbours who fled are coming back,
I'll have to send a boat to fetch our kinsmen back.*
(She is about to go off.)
(Enter Aunty Sha and Dragon.)
AUNTY SHA: Sister Ah-ching!
AH-CHING: So it's you.
DRAGON: I see you are back too, Sister Ah-ching.
AH-CHING: Yes, I am back.
DRAGON: Now that the Japanese have gone, we should
fetch those wounded comrades back.
AH-CHING: Right. Let's go at once.
(Voices offstage: "Hu Chuan-kuei's troops have
entered the village.")
(Villagers cut across the stage.) (Enter Wang Fu-keng
and a young man.)
WANG: Sister Ah-ching, Hu Chuan-kuei's troops will
come very soon.
AH-CHING: Hu Chuan-kuei, eh? How did he arrive so
fast, on the heels of the Japanese? Did you see his
men?
WANG: Yes, I did. There are a little more than a hun-
dred of them.
AH-CHING: A little more than a hundred?
YOUNG MAN: They have Kuomintang insignia on their
caps and they carry a banner showing that they

belong to the "Loyal and Just National Salvation
Army."
AH-CHING: "Loyal and Just National Salvation Army",
. . . and Kuomintang insignia. . .
WANG: They say Tiao Teh-yi has come back.
SHA: Tiao Teh-yi is the son of the old miser Tiao.
AH-CHING: Well, go and make sure.
YOUNG MAN: Yes, I will. (Exit.)
AH-CHING: We don't know how long Hu will be here
or whether he's just passing. We'd better not fetch
the wounded men yet but try to find some way to
get provisions over to them instead.
WANG: I'll fry some rice flour.
DRAGON: I'll get the boat.
AH-CHING: Be on your guard.
WANG: Yes, I will! (Exit.)
DRAGON: Yes, I will. (Exit.)
(Sister Ah-ching enters the tea-house.)
(Voice offstage: "Halt!")
(Villagers cut across the stage.)
(Voice offstage: "Halt!" Enter Tiao Hsiao-san in
pursuit of a young girl holding a small bundle.)
HSIAO-SAN: Running away from me? Halt! We've
resisted the invaders and saved the country, we've
driven away the Japanese for you. So you've got to
give us something as a reward.
YOUNG GIRL: What right have you got to take my
things?
HSIAO-SAN: Not only your things, but yourself too
(rushing towards her).
YOUNG GIRL: Sister Ah-ching!
(Ah-ching comes out of the house to block him.)

AH-CHING: Why all this? After all, we're all natives of the place.

HSIAO-SAN: What are you trying to do? Obstruct me?
(Enter Adjutant Liu.)

ADJUTANT LIU: Hey, Hsiao-san! The commander will be here any minute. What are you doing here?

AH-CHING: Why, it's Adjutant Liu!

LIU: Sister Ah-ching!

AH-CHING: So you are back again.

LIU: Yes, it's a long time since I saw you, Sister Ah-ching, How are you?

AH-CHING: Very well, thank you.

LIU: We're among friends, Hsiao-san. What have you been up to?

AH-CHING: I've never met your friend before. He wasn't being very reasonable with me.

LIU: Hsiao-san, this is Sister Ah-ching who once saved the commander's life. If he knew you'd kicked up a row here, you'd catch it.

HSIAO-SAN: How was I to know? I slipped up just now, Sister Ah-ching, but I'm sure you're too broad-minded to hold it against me.

AH-CHING: That's all right. Now we know each other. I'm not the sort to count on powerful connections or speak ill of some one behind his back. Isn't that true, Adjutant Liu?

LIU: Sister Ah-ching's a decent sort.

AH-CHING (to the young girl): Run along now.

YOUNG GIRL: He's taken my bundle.

AH-CHING: Your bundle? What does he want a thing like that for? He must have taken it for fun, am I not right?

LIU: Yes, for fun. But why here of all places?
(Tiao Hsiao-san hands the bundle to Sister Ah-ching.)

AH-CHING: Take it and go home.
(Exit the young girl.)

LIU: Hsiao-san, go and meet the commander and the chief-of-staff. Go now.

HSIAO-SAN: See you later, Sister Ah-ching.

AH-CHING: Come back for tea.
(Exit Hsiao-san.)

LIU: Sister Ah-ching, he's our chief-of-staff's cousin. You mustn't mind him.

AH-CHING: No, I won't. Sit down, Adjutant Liu. When the water boils I'll make you some tea. You're a rare guest. It's not too often we have such company in our little tea-house.

LIU: You needn't bother, Sister. The commander sent me to tell you he'll be here soon himself.

AH-CHING: The commander?

LIU: Old man Hu.

AH-CHING: Old man Hu the commander?

LIU: Right. He's quite another man from what he used to be, much richer, with plenty of men and guns. Not fowling pieces either, but the real stuff.

AH-CHING: Well, isn't that grand! You've been away for some time, Adjutant.

LIU: Yes, quite a while.

AH-CHING: Now that you've returned, you must stay longer this time.

LIU: Yes, we've come to stay.

AH-CHING: For good?

LIU: Yes, we're going to make Shachiapang our base. Our headquarters will be in Chief-of-Staff Tiao's

house. We've sent men to fix it up. The commander said he'd drop in first at your tea-house.

(Footsteps offstage.)

LIU: The commander has come.

(Enter Hu Chuan-kuei and Tiao Teh-yi.)

HU: Hello, Sister Ah-ching!

AH-CHING: Commander Hu!

HU: How are you?

AH-CHING: Very well, thank you. What good wind has blown you back?

HU: How's business?

AH-CHING: Thanks to you, I'm not doing too badly.

HU: Good to hear that.

AH-CHING: Commander Hu, please sit here.

HU: Well, let me introduce you. This is my chief-of-staff, Tiao Teh-yi, son of the old squire Tiao, the wealthiest man here.

AH-CHING: I'm making a humble living in your worthy village, Chief-of-Staff. You are a big tree with deep roots. I hope you'll take me under your protection.

HU: That's right, you must help her.

TIAO: You're being too polite.

AH-CHING: Please sit down, Chief-of-Staff.

HU: Where is your husband?

AH-CHING: That man! We had words and he cleared out.

HU: He is such a restless fellow, he can't sit still at home. Where did he go?

AH-CHING: Someone saw him doing business in Shanghai. He said he wouldn't come back till he'd made good.

HU: That's the spirit. A man should aim high.

AH-CHING: How can you stick up for him!

HU: Sister Ah-ching, I had a narrow escape and I've got where I am today. I want to thank you for saving my life that time.

AH-CHING: It's just that you were born under a lucky star. But here I am talking without offering you two gentlemen any tea. Sit down a while. I'll get you some tea. (Ah-ching goes into the tea-house.)

TIAO: You seem to know her very well, Commander. Who is she?

HU: You mean Sister Ah-ching?

Some time ago I started raising troops

And had barely a dozen men, half a dozen rifles.

We ran full tilt into the Japanese.

And with the Japanese in hot pursuit

I fled to Shachiapang.

Luckily I found Sister Ah-ching

Who pluckily hid me in her water vat;

She filled the tea pots and didn't turn a hair,

*And I climbed out when Sister Ah-ching had tricked
the Japanese off.*

I shall always be grateful to her for saving my life.

(Sister Ah-ching comes out of the house.)

A gallant brigand of the good old school

Never forgets his friends.

AH-CHING: Why make so much of such a little thing? The idea just came to me in desperation. How scared that business left me!

HU: Ha! Ha! Ha!

AH-CHING: Have some tea, Chief-of-Staff Tiao. (Recalling something) I forgot to bring cigarettes. Let me go and get some.

(She goes into the house.)

TIAO: Commander! (Watches her as she goes away.)

*Although I went to school in Japan
Shachiapang is after all my home;
I have no recollection of this Spring Tea-house
Nor have I seen this proprietress.*

HU: *When guns boomed and fighting started in Shang-
hai,*

*Sister Ah-ching and her husband came here.
With no one to turn to for help,
They opened this tea-house to make a living.
She arrived when you were in Japan,
So how could you know her?*

TIAO: *She is no ordinary woman.*

HU: *What? Do you have any suspicions about her?*

TIAO: *No, certainly none about the commander's great
friend.*

HU: *The same old Tiao.*

TIAO: *Ha! Ha! Ha!*

(Enter Sister Ah-ching.)

AH-CHING: *Chief-of-Staff, have one of these poor
cigarettes. Commander Hu, please have one too.*

TIAO (*glances at her back as she passes*):
She is no ordinary woman.

AH-CHING (*aside*): *What tricks is Tiao Teh-yi up to?*

HU: *Little Tiao leaves me no face.*

AH-CHING (*aside*): *This stupid fellow is a useful wall
to keep off the wind.*

TIAO (*opens his cigarette case and offers cigarettes to
Sister Ah-ching*): *Have a smoke?*

HU: *What are you doing? You know she doesn't smoke.*

TIAO (*aside*): *She's neither humble nor pert.*

AH-CHING (*aside*): *He's neither fish nor fowl.*

HU (*aside*): *I wonder what Tiao Teh-yi is up to.*

AH-CHING (*aside*): *Are they working for Chiang Kai-
shek or Wang Ching-wei?*

TIAO (*aside*): *I shall sound her out.*

AH-CHING (*aside*): *I shall have to watch my step.*

TIAO: *Sister Ah-ching!*

*I've just heard of your brave deed
From the commander.*

*I admire your coolness and courage,
The nerve you had to trick the Japanese;
It takes real patriotism
To risk your life to save another.*

AH-CHING:

*I don't deserve such compliments, sir,
I didn't risk my life;*

*I keep a tea-house and hope for good business,
We who make a living in this way should help each
other;*

*Commander Hu was a frequent customer,
A big tree, I wanted to enjoy its shade.
It's because he was born lucky
That he escaped danger.*

TIAO: *The New Fourth Army was many months in
Shachiapang,*

*That's a big tree with fine shade;
You had plenty of dealings with them,
I'm sure you took pains to look after them.*

AH-CHING: *I built my seven-starred stove,
To boil in my copper kettles water from the three
Rivers;*

*I spread my table for eight,
To welcome people from sixteen directions.
Whoever comes here is a customer
And I have to be pleasant to him;*

*I greet all with a smile;
Once they've gone, I don't think of them any more.
When the customer goes, the tea grows cold —
What d'you mean by taking pains to look after
them?*

TIAO: Sister Ah-ching, you're the right person to open a tea-house. Nothing ever leaks out. My respects to you.

AH-CHING: What does he mean by this, Commander?

HU: He's like that, a cynical fellow. Don't pay any attention, Sister.

AH-CHING: That's all right. (She enters the house.)

HU: Old Tiao, Sister Ah-ching once saved my life. You must give me a little face. Why do you keep pestering her with questions? What are you up to, anyway?

TIAO: Commander, she's a shrewd, fearless, level-headed woman. If this is to be our base for saving the country indirectly, she could be very useful to us. We don't know, though, whether she's for us or not.

HU: Sister Ah-ching? Of course she's for us.

TIAO: She's bound to know about the wounded men of the New Fourth Army. But if we ask her, I doubt if she'll tell us anything.

HU: Well, let me ask her. You'd only get snubbed.

TIAO: Of course. You're her hero.

HU: Ha! Ha! Ha!

(Enter Sister Ah-ching.)

AH-CHING: Try some melon-seeds, Commander. The full flavour of the tea is coming out now.

HU: That's right. The full flavour. There's something I'd like to ask you, Sister Ah-ching.

AH-CHING: So long as it's something I know. . .

HU: It's about the New Fourth Army. . .

AH-CHING: The New Fourth Army. Yes, yes. . .
*You don't have to ask, Commander,
There were many New Fourth Army men here.*

HU: Many of them, eh? Any wounded?

AH-CHING: Yes.

*Quite a few wounded men,
Some worse injured than others.*

HU: Where did they stay?

AH-CHING: *Here in the village,
Every household had some;
They even came to my small tea-house
To drink tea, fetch hot water and wash towels.*

HU (very pleased, to Tiao): Well?

TIAO: Where are they now?

AH-CHING: Now?

*Once the order came to muster,
The whole lot up and left.*

HU: The wounded left too?

AH-CHING: The wounded?

*The wounded disappeared without a trace,
Heaven only knows where they've gone.*

TIAO: All gone?

AH-CHING: All gone. They must have, otherwise the Japanese would surely have found them. For three whole days they went through the village with a fine comb.

TIAO: The Japanese didn't know this place, they blundered round blindly. Nothing's easier than to hide a few men in this big village. Take the case of Commander Hu. Didn't you hide him in your water vat right under the very nose of the Japanese? Heh! Heh! Heh! . . .

AH-CHING: Oh, I suppose Chief-of-Staff Tiao thinks I'm hiding the wounded men of the New Fourth Army? What nasty insinuations. I shouldn't have saved you, Commander Hu. See what you've got me into.

HU: Now, Sister, don't. . .

AH-CHING: No, no, no, I'm not standing for this, Commander. While you're here, make your men search my tea-house inside and out. Let them turn it upside-down. Otherwise I'd be under suspicion and be hard put.

HU: Now see what you've done, Old Tiao.

TIAO: I was only joking. Why take it so seriously?

HU: That's right, he was only joking.

AH-CHING: That's no joke, Commander Hu. (Exit.)

TIAO (turns to Hu Chuan-kuei as he watches her leave): Commander, those wounded men must be somewhere near. They can't have gone far.

HU: Where are they then?

TIAO (points to the marshes): Most likely in the marshes opposite.

HU: The marshes? Right. Orderly! (Enter Tiao Hsiao-san.) Go and search the marshes.

TIAO: Hold on a minute. You're not a local man, Commander Hu, you don't understand. Those marshes are so large, so full of lakes and channels, it would be like looking for a needle in the ocean. Besides, they'll be under cover while we're in the open. They'd just pick us off. We want to do this job for the Japanese, but this is no way to go about it. We'd be the losers.

HU: What will you suggest then?

TIAO: Get them to come out themselves.

HU: You're day-dreaming. Why should they come out?

TIAO: I've a way to make them. Hsiao-san, fetch all the villagers to the back of the tea-house. I want to talk to them.

HSIAO-SAN: Yes, sir. (Exit.)

HU: Why are you sending for the villagers?

TIAO: I want them to go to Lake Yangchen to catch fish and crabs.

HU: . . . Catch fish and crabs? What's the big idea?

TIAO: In every boat we'll put some of our men in civilian clothes. If there are New Fourth Army men in the marshes, when they see the villagers going out to catch fish they'll imagine everything's all right and they'll come out. Then we'll fire at them from the boats. Then. . .

HU: You've got something there, Old Tiao! Ha! Ha! Ha! (The voices of villagers offstage come closer. Enter Tiao Hsiao-san.)

HSIAO-SAN: All the villagers are here.

TIAO: Tell them I'm going to talk to them.

HSIAO-SAN: Hey! The chief-of-staff is going to speak.

TIAO: Villagers, we are the "Loyal and Just National Salvation Army", out to fight Japan. We realize you're too poor to give us much of a welcome. That's not your fault. But we'd like you to go to the lake to catch some fish and crabs. We shall pay you the market price.

(Voices offstage in protest: "We won't go! We'll be killed if we run into the Japanese motor-boats. . .!")

TIAO: That's all right. Don't you all worry. We're sending three of our men in each boat to protect you. (Voices offstage in protest: "Nothing doing!" "We won't go!")

HU: Damn it! Who dares to refuse? I'll shoot anyone who refuses to go.

(Exit Tiao Teh-yi, Hu Chuan-kuei and Tiao Hsiao-san.)

(Sister Ah-ching comes out of the house.)

AH-CHING: *You scoundrel, Tiao Teh-yi,
Poisonous as a snake, cruel as a wolf;
You are setting a trap,
I'm afraid our men may be lured in.*

*If the fishing boats set out
There is going to be trouble.*

(Offstage the villagers protest and the puppet soldiers try to suppress them.)

AH-CHING: *If the villagers disobey orders,
There will be bloodshed and reprisals;
If only I had wings to fly to the marshes!
I'm utterly at a loss.*

(A puppet soldier shouts: "You won't go? All right then, I'll shoot.")

AH-CHING: Shoot!

*Shooting in the village
Would warn our men in the marshes;
They would smell danger
And hide themselves in the reeds.
Yes, let them shoot. . . I know what!
Steady on, don't panic!*

A sudden splash will make them open fire.

(Sister Ah-ching throws the kettle into the water, then runs inside, Tiao Hsiao-san rushes out.)

HSIAO-SAN: Someone's jumped into the water.

(Enter Hu Chuan-kuei and Adjutant Liu in haste.)

HU: What has happened?

HSIAO-SAN: Someone's jumped into the water.

HU: Fire!

(Adjutant Liu, Tiao Hsiao-san and Hu Chuan-kuei fire several shots. At hearing them, Tiao Teh-yi hurries in.)

TIAO: Stop that! Don't shoot, damn it all!

HU: Why not?

TIAO: Do you expect the New Fourth Army men to come out after they've heard all this firing?

HU: Why didn't you say so before? Hsiao-san, arrest some ringleaders.

TIAO: Adjutant Liu, stop all boats going out. I'm going to starve them out.

SCENE V

HOLDING OUT

Immediately following the previous scene, in the marshes. The sky darkens, a storm is brewing. (The soldiers and Kuo Chien-kuang are looking intently at what is going on at Shachiapang.) (Enter a soldier.)

SOLDIER: Report! No new enemy movements after the rifle shots.

KUO CHIEN-KUANG: Keep on watching.

SOLDIER: Right. (Exit.)

KUO: Comrades, set up the reed-sheds first, move the seriously-wounded in, and tell Platoon Leader Yeh I've walked to the water-front to have a look.

ALL: All right.

(Exit Kuo Chien-kuang.)

ALL: What do the rifle shots from Shachiapang mean?

YOUNG LI: They mean that enemy troops have come, either the Japanese or the traitors.

YOUNG TIGER: Then the villagers of Shachiapang are going to suffer again.

HUO TEH-YUNG: If the enemy are still at Shachiapang, we can't go out for the time being. But our supply of food and medicine has run out. This is really quite a problem!

(Enter Kuo Chien-kuang.)

YOUNG TIGER: Why did we come here? How much better it'd have been if we had stayed at Shachiapang to fight the enemy!

ALL: Right you are!

OLD SQUAD LEADER: It would have been downright foolhardiness to act the way you suggest. If you want to fight, you'll have to wait for orders! Have we not been told to set up the reed-sheds? Come on, let's do this first.

ALL: Let's go! (Exit.)

KUO: *Rifle shots from the opposite shore resounded in the marshes.*

For several days we've kept a look-out for enemy movements,

We've questioned, wondered, and made many guesses. My thoughts have risen and fallen like the Yangtze River.

Seen from afar, Shachiapang is lost in clouds and mist.

Why are there no passing boats and sails on the lake?

Why did not Sister Ah-ching come and visit us? These are symptoms of big troubles ahead.

The Japanese have long colluded with Chiang Kai-shek and Wang Ching-wei,

The people of this town will meet with sorrow and death.

My soldiers, bent on killing the enemy, seek to venture out.

One after another they've expressed their eagerness to fight.

Their state of mind is quite understandable,

They're burning with class hate and national feeling,

I must try hard to keep their impatience from growing and spreading,

I must encourage them to keep in mind the whole situation,

Hold tight their guns, and wait for orders to come.

I must be firm and cool, hold out among the reeds,

While trying to get more medicine and meet our food shortage.

If the masses are mobilized to put their heads together,

A natural granary will be found south of the Yangtze.

If we unite with our hearts directed towards the Party,

We shall become as firm as rock, as hard as steel.

(Enter Young Tiger hurriedly.)

YOUNG TIGER: Instructor! Comrade Young Wang has fainted away!

(Enter Lin Ta-keng, carrying Young Wang on his back, with Yeh Ssu-chung, Young Li and Little Ling following. Enter soldiers.)

ALL: Young Wang! Young Wang. . .

KUO: Have a look at his wound, see if it has got any worse!

LITTLE LING: Yes, after the rain has got into it, it has become a little worse. But it is not very serious. What troubles him is malaria, fever, and hunger, too. . .

KUO: Has he taken medicine?

LITTLE LING: Quinine has run out! Quite a few comrades are suffering from malaria, yet they have taken no medicine!

KUO: How are the seriously-wounded?

LITTLE LING: Their wounds have become a little worse after the rain has got into them, their medicine, too, is running out!

YEH SSU-CHUNG: Instructor, medicine and food are our chief problem!

ALL (call in a low voice): Young Wang, Young Wang!

KUO: We must find a way out!

ALL: Young Wang, do you feel a little better now?

YOUNG WANG: Comrades, look at me. Am I not quite well?

SOLDIER: Young Wang, I've got a rice-ball here, take it.

ALL: Young Wang, take it.

YOUNG WANG: Comrades, our instructor has saved his ration and given it to the seriously-wounded. Instructor, you take it and eat it!

KUO: Young Wang, comrades, though medicine and food are our chief problem, I'm sure the local Party organization will try every means to help us, and the people here will no doubt support us. But it seems that right now the Party and the people have met with some difficulty and that they cannot come to our rescue immediately. What are we to do? Will our men, for all the tradition of the old Red Army, be beaten by the little difficulty that has come in our way?

HUO TEH-YUNG: No, we will not. On the Long March our elder brothers, the old Red Army men, climbed the snowy mountains, crossed the swamps, and overcame all sorts of difficulties. We, too, are able to hold out!

ALL: Right you are!

KUO: Right!

(The sound of a motor-boat is heard. Enter a soldier.)
SOLDIER: Report! We discovered a motor-boat on the lake!

KUO: Go on watching it!

(Exit the soldier.)

KUO: Platoon Leader Yeh, take two comrades with you and guard the waterfront!

(Exit Yeh Ssu-chung, Chang Sung-tao and Young Tiger.)

KUO: You two, go and take care of the seriously-wounded.

(Exit a soldier and Little Ling.)

KUO: Comrades! Get ready for battle!

(All watch in the direction of the noise which gets fainter and fainter.)

(Enter Yeh Ssu-chung, Chang Sung-tao and Young Tiger. After them enter a soldier and Little Ling.)

YEH: Instructor, the motor-boat has gone in the direction of Shachiapang.

KUO: Judging from what has happened, the Japanese must have withdrawn. A moment ago there were rifle shots at Shachiapang. Just now a motor-boat has been discovered on the lake. . .

YEH: Only the Japs have got motor-boats.

KUO: My idea is to send two comrades first across the lake to scout.

ALL: Let me go! Let me go!

KUO: Lin Ta-keng and Chang Sung-tao, you two go over in a row-boat. Don't call on Sister Ah-ching, she must be in a tough spot herself. After you have got the necessary information about the enemy, you'd better get some medicinal herbs from the villagers. And then come right back!

*The two of you in disguise row to the opposite shore,
Fasten your boat under a tree west of the village.*

Find herbs for the wounded,

Come back at once with news of the enemy's whereabouts.

Our comrades are confident,

That you, their scouts, will return triumphant.

Basing our judgements on the actual conditions of the enemy,

We shall be able to regain the initiative.

In advancing and withdrawing, in emerging and disappearing,

We shall move with ease and dexterity.

In our dealings with the enemy, we shall be shrewd and masterly.

Our wounds will heal, we shall rejoin the troops, and ask for action,

Turn back, march eastwards, and annihilate the enemy.

We'll beat the war-drums, and unfurl the red victorious banner,

Recover at one stroke the territory south of the River.

LIN TA-KENG and CHANG SUNG-TAO: We will carry out the task resolutely.

KUO: Go and get ready!

(Exit Lin Ta-keng and Chang Sung-tao.)

(Enter the Old Squad Leader at a run.)

OLD SQUAD LEADER: Instructor! Look, Instructor! The young shoots of the reeds, aren't they edible?

KUO: Yes, they are edible indeed! With the young shoots of the reeds to support us, we shall be able to hold out in the marshes. **Chairman Mao has taught us: "Frequently a favourable situation recurs and the**

initiative is regained as a result of 'holding out a little longer.' " Comrades!

*Heroic men will not succumb to difficulties,
The wisdom of the masses easily surmount them all.
To satisfy our hunger, reed-shoots will taste sweet
and quite delicious.*

If we keep up the struggle, victory will come tomorrow.

Comrades! These marshes are the front, the battlefield. We must hold out here, and wait for orders from above!

ALL: Yes! We must wait for orders, we must fear no difficulties, we must hold out till victory is won!

(A storm rises all of a sudden.)

YOUNG TIGER: Here comes the storm!

KUO: *We must be like the evergreen pine-tree on top
of Mt. Tai!*

ALL: *We must be like the evergreen pine-tree on top
of Mt. Tai,*

That stands erect and proud before the heavens.

*The hurricane that sweeps across eight thousand li
cannot blow it down,*

Nine thousand thunder-bolts cannot strike it asunder.

*The fiery sun of summer cannot kill it with excessive
heat,*

*It grows the greener and the fresher in the snow and
frost of winter.*

*That pine has suffered hardships and calamities, in-
numerable and severe,*

Covered with wounds and countless scars,

*It looks as if its branches were made of iron, its
trunk of bronze,*

*It thrives and prospers, full of vigour and tough
stubbornness.*

Such noble qualities deserve people's praise.

We eighteen sick and wounded soldiers,

Will turn into eighteen green pines!

SCENE VI

GIVING INSTRUCTIONS

Shortly after the previous scene. At the Spring Tea-house. A storm just over, dark clouds still gather in the sky. It is sultry and oppressive. Nobody is sitting under the mat awning outside the tea-house. The noise of shuffling mah-jong comes frequently from indoors.

(Enter Sister Ah-ching.)

(Enter a young man.)

YOUNG MAN: Sister Ah-ching, are you looking for me?

SISTER AH-CHING: Have Dragon and Ah Hsiang come back?

YOUNG MAN: I haven't seen them!

AH-CHING: In case they are back, ask them to come here.

YOUNG MAN: All right. (Exit.)

(Enter Adjutant Liu.)

AH-CHING: Adjutant Liu.

LIU: Sister Ah-ching, is Chief-of-Staff Tiao inside?

AH-CHING: Yes, he is inside, watching the game. Are you here on business?

LIU: Yes, I am.

AH-CHING: What is it about? . . .

(Adjutant Liu makes no reply, but walks straight inside. Sister Ah-ching alertly follows him in.)

(Tiao Teh-yi and Adjutant Liu come out of the house.)

TIAO TEH-YI: What is it?

LIU: Mr. Chou, the interpreter, has come over and says he wants to see you on important business.

TIAO: Oh!

LIU: The Imperial Army has telephoned to ask whether or not we've found the sick and wounded of the New Fourth Army.

TIAO: What taskmasters the Japanese are! We have captured a few poor people, but they know nothing about them. Where am I to look for them?

LIU: That fellow Wang Fu-keng. . .

TIAO: Wang Fu-keng?

LIU: The one who first kicked up the row the other day.

TIAO: Very well, let's start working on him.

LIU: You'd better hurry! The motor-boat is ready, and Interpreter Chou is leaving right away.

TIAO: All right, I'll go and see. Hey, you'd better stay here. I'll be back directly.

LIU: Chief-of-Staff, I'd better stay away. The commander always vents his temper on me these days. If he has no luck at mah-jong today, he'll give it to me hot again. . .

TIAO: You think the commander is angry at you! I know better than that! I'll back you up! Go in and wait on him!

LIU: Very well, I will listen to what the Chief-of-Staff says.

(Exit Tiao Teh-yi, and Adjutant Liu goes inside.)

AH-CHING (comes out of the house, looks at the sky and the lake, and seems anxious and worried): Tiao Teh-yi is always hanging around! Hu Chuan-kuei is playing mah-jong inside. I can't go out or leave the place. Dragon and Ah Hsiang went with food to the

comrades, and they haven't come back yet. For the fifth day the comrades have been holding out in the marshes! What can I do to get our kinsmen out of danger?

The wind is howling, dark are the rainy clouds that hang low in the sky,

I cannot help becoming restless in such circumstances.

Our kinsmen lack provisions and medicine,

Nor can they get in touch with people outside.

How can they stand attacks from waves or help being flooded out?

They're priceless and invaluable for the revolutionary cause,

They are eighteen class brothers, flesh and blood of mine.

My job as liaison officer gives me a thousand responsibilities,

While leaving, Party Secretary Chen entrusted me once and again with weighty work,

In face of danger, I'm now at a loss, for I know not what to do.

I have not lived up to the Party's education of me for so many years.

Last night I sent Dragon and Ah Hsiang with rice and flour to where our comrades are,

But why is it that they have not come back yet?

I should have gone myself to visit them,

The trouble is I cannot go because I'm watched by spies and running dogs,

Besides, Tiao Teh-yi has put out more guards and seized all the boats.

What's to be done, what's to be done, what's to be done?

I've never been in such a fix.

Dear Party!

Please give me wisdom, give me courage,

Please help me beat the enemy, overcome the difficulty.

(Enter Aunt Sha with Dragon.)

AUNTY SHA: Sister Ah-ching.

AH-CHING: Has food been sent over?

DRAGON: No. Last night Ah Hsiang and I had just rowed out when we were discovered by the enemy. We jumped into the water and got away, but our boat was taken by them.

AH-CHING: Where's Ah Hsiang?

DRAGON: He caught cold, and is in bed, trying to work up a sweat!

SHA: Sister Ah-ching, what do you think we ought to do?

AH-CHING: We must try one way or another to get a boat and send them some food!

DRAGON: I'll try and steal a boat tonight.

AH-CHING: Here comes Adjutant Liu. Let Dragon pretend to be ill. When he comes, we'll ask him for a boat, pretending to send Dragon to town for treatment.

(Adjutant Liu comes out of the house, and Dragon leans over a table pretending to be very sick.)

AH-CHING: Adjutant Liu.

LIU: Sister Ah-ching. (Sees Dragon.) Hey, who's this?

AH-CHING: Aunt Sha's son.

LIU: What's he doing here?

AH-CHING: He's ill.

SHA: Adjutant Liu, the lad is ill. I beg you to lend us a boat to take him to town to see a doctor.

LIU: What? Lend you a boat? That's impossible!
SHA: Sister Ah-ching, please put in a good word for me!
AH-CHING: Well, it's this way, Adjutant Liu, see how ill the lad is! We've got no doctor here. Please do us this small favour!
LIU: Sister Ah-ching, it's not in my power to say yes or no. As to boats, there are plenty of them over there, but none of them is to be touched. This is the chief-of-staff's order. Sister Ah-ching, you'd better mind your own business so as not to get yourself into trouble.
AH-CHING: Ay, the lad is really very ill. I can't help pitying him!
LIU: Ah, ah! . . .
(A bell rings offstage. A puppet soldier shouts: "Halt! Who goes there?")
CHEN TIEN-MIN (offstage): I'm a doctor!
AH-CHING: What a piece of luck! The poor lad is sure to get well now! Don't let the doctor go! Adjutant Liu, please let the doctor examine the lad!
LIU: No, this won't do!
AH-CHING: Yes, it will be all right, it will be all right!
SHA: Adjutant Liu, since you won't lend us a boat, do at least allow the doctor examine my boy!
LIU: Auntie Sha, it is not allowed!
AH-CHING: Adjutant Liu, since the doctor is already here, shall we really send him away without asking him to look the boy over? Do let him examine the boy!
LIU: Sister Ah-ching, you know very well that I'll not be able to account for this to Chief-of-Staff Tiao.

He explicitly commands that no stranger should come to this place!
AH-CHING: But this is a mere trifle. Not to say the chief-of-staff, even Commander Hu himself will grant us this small favour!
LIU: Very well, the commander is inside. Go and ask him.
AH-CHING: Do we have to bother him with such a trifle?
LIU: Then it's not in my power to say yes or no!
(Enter Hu Chuan-kuei.)
HU CHUAN-KUEI: What's the matter?
LIU: Ah, Commander! A doctor has come. Sister Ah-ching asked that we let the doctor examine the lad.
HU: Examine the lad?
AH-CHING: Oh! It's like this. The lad is ill. By chance a doctor was passing by. I was meddlesome, so I said the doctor should examine the lad. Adjutant Liu said Commander Hu would grant the favour, but the trouble is that should Chief-of-Staff Tiao know about this, the commander would be placed in an awkward position. After he said this, I began to grow timid and didn't dare to ask you the favour.
HU: To him even a fart from Chief-of-Staff Tiao has a nice smell! A mere feather of his would be regarded as a fledged arrow of authority!
AH-CHING: Actually Adjutant Liu is not to blame. He says, too, that the commander is a good man and has a kind heart. I was afraid if the chief-of-staff should take the matter seriously. I wouldn't want to cause any unpleasantness for the commander. In that case, we had better let the doctor. . .
HU: Examine the lad!

LIU: Come over here, doctor!
AH-CHING: Then I thank the commander on behalf
of the lad!
SHA: Doctor!
(Enter Chen Tien-min.)
CHEN TIEN-MIN: How are you all?
SHA: Well, thank you. Please come here and feel his
pulse!
CHEN: All right! (Feels Dragon's pulse.)
AH-CHING: Commander Hu, how's your luck at the
game?
HU: Very bad. I didn't win a single game for four
rounds. So I came out for a breath of air.
AH-CHING: So you've come out to take a turn and
your luck will turn for the better. When you go
back to the table, I'm sure you will win three games
on end with a full house!
HU: With the help of your lucky words, I will stand
you a treat if I win!
AH-CHING: Then you will certainly stand me the
treat! Now go in. They're waiting for you.
HU: All right, all right. (Enters the house.)
LIU: Where are you from?
CHEN: I'm from Changshu. We've been doctors for
three generations.
LIU: Got any identification papers?
CHEN: Yes, I have.
LIU: Let me have a look.
(Chen Tien-min produces his identification papers
and gives them to Adjutant Liu.)
AH-CHING (brings two cups of tea): Adjutant Liu, you
and your men have had a lot to do these couple of
days. Guardsmen have been placed along the shore

of the lake. Boats have been seized. The villagers
are not allowed to go out to fish. What has really
happened?
LIU: Nothing, nothing at all. It is merely reported that
there are New Fourth Army men in the marshes.
The chief-of-staff wants to . . . (Makes a gesture of
capturing.)
AH-CHING: New Fourth Army men? Why don't you
send troops to search the marshes?
LIU: The chief-of-staff says that the marshes are so
big. Where are we to search? But let's change the
subject. (Turns to Chen Tien-min.) Hurry up!
AH-CHING: Doctor, the lad is suffering from . . .
CHEN: My patient doesn't have to tell me about his
trouble before I know its symptoms and causes. If
what I say tallies with the case, take the medicine
I prescribe. If not, I'll go away without taking any
fee.
LIU: Tut, tut! Don't boast! We'll find out how good
you are!
CHEN: Ah, there's some obstruction. He must feel a
constriction and a stifling sensation.
LIU: Wait a moment. (To Aunty Sha) Does that fit in?
SHA: Yes, just now he complained of feeling stifled in
his chest!
LIU: Oh, the fellow really knows his job!
CHEN: Let me look at your tongue. (Dragon sticks out
his tongue.) There's a hot humour in the stomach.
Not eating properly, lacks nourishment.
SHA: That's right, lacks nourishment.
CHEN: The liver is congested. That's liable to make
him restive.
SHA: Very restive, yes.

LIU: Pshaw! Restive over a headache and a touch of fever?

CHEN: Don't worry. I'll make out a prescription. I guarantee one dose will set him right!

(Adjutant Liu fixes his eyes upon Chen Tien-min and Sister Ah-ching. Aunt Sha looks anxious. After thinking for a moment, Sister Ah-ching enters the house.)

CHEN: *Don't worry, for the case isn't serious,
You'll not feel anxious if your mind's at peace.
Let someone take good care of him at home, . . .*

(Sister Ah-ching comes out.)

AH-CHING: Adjutant Liu, why are you watching?

LIU: No, no, I'm not watching. It's just that I'm interested in medicine.

CHEN: *A dose of medicine will keep you fit and whole.*

LIU: Give it to me! (Takes the prescription.)

CHEN: Well, well.

(Enter a puppet soldier.)

PUPPET SOLDIER: Adjutant Liu, the commander sends for you.

LIU: Sister Ah-ching, please watch here for me. I'll be back in no time.

AH-CHING: All right.

(Adjutant Liu goes in, Sister Ah-ching hurriedly tells Dragon and Aunt Sha to watch the enemy's movements. Chen Tien-min and Sister Ah-ching talk in a whisper.)

AH-CHING: Secretary Chen, quite a few people here have been arrested.

CHEN: Oh! So far as we know, Hu Chuan-kuei has decidedly gone over to the side of the Japanese.

AH-CHING: What's to be done then?

CHEN: We must get rid of this nuisance. The main body of our army will come here very soon!

AH-CHING: That's good news!

CHEN: Try to find out about the deployment of the enemy forces. I'll send for the information in a couple of days.

AH-CHING: What about those sick and wounded comrades?

CHEN: Move them to Red Stone Village at once.

AH-CHING: All right.

(Dragon coughs as a signal. Enter Adjutant Liu.)

LIU: Sister Ah-ching, the commander has won the game, and says you asked him to stand you a treat, so he tells me to go shopping for him. To Chen Tien-min) Hey, why are you still here?

SHA: Doctor, here's a little something for your troubles. (Gives Chen some money, which, however, he does not accept.)

CHEN: I'm leaving. The medicine must be taken in time, not later than this evening.

LIU: Be off with you, hurry!

CHEN: All right, I'm leaving.

SHA: Doctor, the sky is overcast and it is raining. Be careful!

AH-CHING: Yes, the way is uneven and covered with muddy puddles. Do be careful, please!

CHEN: Don't worry about me. Take good care of the patient!

LIU: Hurry along! Hurry along!

(Exit Chen Tien-min and Adjutant Liu.)

AH-CHING: The County Party Committee has ordered us to move the comrades to Red Stone Village. We must try every possible means to secure a boat.

DRAGON: I have an idea.

SHA: What is it?

DRAGON: Let me jump into the water, cut off the moorings, and quietly push a boat out. I shall use neither pole nor oar. There will be nobody in the boat, so it will not make much noise. If only I could push the boat out for half a *li*, it would get to the middle of the big lake. Nothing would be visible in the mist. Under the circumstances, this is the only possible way.

SHA: Sister Ah-ching, he's a very good swimmer. Let him go!

AH-CHING: On this pinch he's the only one who can. Dragon, follow that path and find a good place to get into the water. But you must be very careful! *Take caution when you cut the moorings, push the boat,*

Beware of enemy soldiers stationed on the shore.

As fast as flying you must row the boat when you've passed the middle of the lake.

DRAGON: Yes, Sister Ah-ching! Ma, here I go!

(Exit Dragon and Aunt Sha. Enter Ah Fu.)

AH FU: Sister Ah-ching, last night the Instructor sent Lin Ta-keng and Chang Sung-tao to my house.

AH-CHING: What did they want?

AH FU: They came to get information about Hu Chuan-kuai, and managed also to find some medicinal herbs. Then they went away.

AH-CHING: Didn't you give them any food?

AH FU: Yes, I did. They took it with them.

AH-CHING: Very well, you can go back!

AH FU: All right. (Exit.)

AH-CHING:

I'm sure the comrades will be able to get to Red Stone Village.

(Exit Sister Ah-ching. Adjutant Liu comes running in.)

LIU: Sister Ah-ching, here are my purchases. (Enters the house.)

(Enter Tiao Teh-yi and Tiao Hsiao-san from the opposite direction.)

(Adjutant Liu comes out of the house.)

LIU: Chief-of-Staff Tiao, has the interpreter, Mr. Chou, gone?

TIAO TEH-YI: Yes, he's gone. Commander Hu is getting married.

LIU: Getting married! Who's the lucky girl?

TIAO: The sister of Interpreter Chou.

LIU: Needless to say, Chief-of-Staff Tiao is the go-between.

TIAO: Adjutant Liu, I shall have a good job for you in a couple of days.

LIU: Chief-of-Staff, what is it?

TIAO (smiles): Go to the city of Changshu and buy things for the wedding.

LIU: Yes, sir. I thank the chief-of-staff.

(Tiao Teh-yi runs to a slope on the shore of the lake and looks into the middle of the lake through binoculars.)

TIAO: Hey! There seems to be a boat on the lake.

LIU: A boat! A strong wind has been blowing for a whole day. Maybe the wind has snapped its moorings, so that an empty boat has drifted out.

TIAO: No, no, that can't be! An empty boat with its rope snapped can only go in the direction of the wind and the current. How can it go against the wind and the current? Someone in the water must be pushing it.

LIU: Someone in the water?

TIAO: Get a few men and give chase!

LIU: Yes, sir.

SCENE VII

DENOUNCING THE ENEMY

Shortly after the previous scene. In a hall at Tiao Teh-yi's house.

(Offstage a puppet soldier's voice while inflicting torture: "Speak quick, speak quick! Speak out!")

(Hu Chuan-kuei impatiently gulps down some wine, and Tiao Teh-yi walks to and fro anxiously.)

TIAO TEH-YI: The New Fourth Army men have safely moved out of the marshes,

HU CHUAN-KUEI: The Japanese taskmasters, how can I meet their pressing, dictatorial demands?

(Offstage voices of inflicting torture and cross-examination.)

TIAO: We have grabbed a few poor beggars,
And asked who among them are Communists.

HU: For all our pains,
We've got nothing out of them!
Has anyone confessed?

TIAO HSIAO-SAN (offstage): None.

HU: I say, Old Tiao, can't we shoot some of them?

TIAO: Yes, I was thinking who would be shot first.

Orderly, bring Wang Fu-keng in!

HSIAO-SAN (offstage): Yes, sir.

(Tiao Hsiao-san and Adjutant Liu drag Wang Fu-keng in.)
HU: Speak! Where have the wounded New Fourth Army men gone?
TIAO: We'll set you free at once if only you could tell us who among the villagers are Communists.
WANG FU-KENG: You are a set of traitors and stooges, riding roughshod over the people!
HU: Orderly! Have him shot in the presence of those beggars.
WANG: You stooges!
TIAO HSIAO-SAN: Get going. (Drags Wang Fu-keng out.)
(Offstage Wang Fu-keng shouts: "Down with traitors and stooges!" "Down with Japanese imperialism!" Rifle shots.)
TIAO: Tiao Hsiao-san, have that old man Liu shot too, whose son is a New Fourth Army man!
HSIAO-SAN (offstage): Yes, sir.
(Offstage old man Liu shouts: "Down with all these traitors!" "Down with Japanese imperialism!" Rifle shots.)
HU: Orderly!
(Enter Tiao Hsiao-san.)
HU: Have that old woman Sha shot together with them.
TIAO: Wait! Put them all in prison.
HSIAO-SAN: Yes, sir. (Exit.)
TIAO: We can't shoot this old woman Sha, Commander. The Imperial Army has explicitly asked to spare her life so as to find out who is the Communist working behind the scenes!
HU: Communist? We shan't be able to know a Communist even if he's sitting right in front of us!

TIAO: Commander, there's one person who's highly suspicious.
HU: Who do you mean?
TIAO: The other day Adjutant Liu rashly fired a few shots. Where did that happen? One of the seized boats was missing. Where was that too?
HU: Eh?
TIAO: Both these incidents took place not far from the Spring Tea-house!
HU: Do you mean to say. . . ?
TIAO: Yes, Sister Ah-ching!
HU: What about her?
TIAO: She's under strong suspicion.
HU: What, in your opinion, is to be done then? Have her arrested?
TIAO: No, no, I don't mean that! Once, Commander, she saved your life! We could invite her to come over and ask her a few questions.
HU: Ask her questions? How? — "Are you a Communist?"
TIAO: Not that way! We could invite her, saying . . .
(Whispers in his ear.) How do you like that?
HU: All right, do as you please!
(Enter a puppet soldier.)
PUPPET SOLDIER: Report! Sister Ah-ching is here!
TIAO: Show her in! (Exit, following Hu Chuan-kuei.)
(Enter Sister Ah-ching.)
SISTER AH-CHING:
*The New Fourth Army men have come back and are marching east to counter the "mopping up",
So that the sun will quickly shine again over the town of Shachiapang.*

*The villagers are downtrodden by Hu Chuan-kuei
who has sold himself to the Japanese,
This blood-stained debt will be distinctly borne in
mind.*

*Carrying out instructions to get information about
the enemy, I have succeeded very well,
But the headquarters' plans are yet unknown to me,
Finding a pretext to enter the tiger's lair, I'll watch
what's going on —*

(Enter Hu Chuan-kuei and Tiao Teh-yi.)

AH-CHING: Commander Hu! The Chief-of-Staff!

HU: Sister Ah-ching!

AH-CHING: *Congratulations, Commander, on your
coming wedding!*

HU: So you've heard the news?

TIAO: You are very quick to get information!

AH-CHING: Why, it's the talk of the village. Hasn't
Adjutant Liu informed every family to offer "vo-
luntary" gifts?

TIAO: Very well, please sit down. Serve tea!

AH-CHING: Commander, they say the bride is very
good-looking!

HU: Oh! You've heard that too?

AH-CHING: Of course, I have! She's a well-known
beauty in the city of Changshu. She's excellent in
character, very talented, and extremely good-look-
ing. You don't find her like in a hundred!

HU: Ha! Ha! Ha! Sister Ah-ching, how well you talk!
I sent for you today because I wanted to ask for
your help with the wedding. Will you kindly do
that on the appointed day?

AH-CHING: Certainly, I will. It's my duty. On that
day I'll come in the early morning to serve tea and
do odd jobs. . .

HU: No, you won't be bothered with such menial work.
But when the bride arrives in her sedan-chair, will
you please see to it that we do the right things and
commit no offence against good manners?

AH-CHING: You can rest assured of that! As soon as
she comes in her sedan-chair, you can leave every-
thing to me. I'll help her to observe all the neces-
sary rules of etiquette, so that no relative or friend
of yours can have any excuse to find fault with her.
Please set your mind at peace, Commander.

HU: Excellent! Hers is a big family with a large num-
ber of relatives. These people are fond of finding
fault. Having you to help us, I'll have no ground
for worrying.

AH-CHING: Where's the bridal chamber?

HU: In the back court. When everything is ready to-
morrow, I will send for you again to have a look.

AH-CHING: All right, I'll come by all means!

TIAO (knocks at the table with an ash-tray and asks in
a stern voice): Has that old woman Sha confessed?

HSIAO-SAN (offstage): No, she hasn't!

TIAO: Bring her in!

AH-CHING: Commander, since you have business, I'm
afraid I'll be in the way. I'll go now.

TIAO: Sister Ah-ching, you can sit and rest while we
get on with our business.

HU: Yes, since the chife-of-staff asks you, you'd better
stay a little longer.

AH-CHING: All right, I'll stay a little longer.

TIAO: Bring in the old woman!

AUNTY SHA (offstage):

I'm so thankful our kinsmen have escaped, (While singing, she is dragged in by Tiao Hsiao-san and Adjutant Liu.)

I don't mind even if they break my bones.

I shall face the enemy boldly—(Is startled to see Sister Ah-ching sitting there.)

What's Sister Ah-ching doing here? (Thinks for a moment and it begins to dawn upon her.)

I think she's being tested by the enemy.

I must protect her,

And place all grave responsibility on my own shoulder!

HU: Well, old woman Sha, are you going to speak or not?

SHA: What do you want me to say?

HU: Did your son Dragon row the New Fourth Army men out of the marshes?

SHA: I don't know!

HU: Where's your son now?

SHA: I don't know!

HU: Who got you and your son to do all this? Who was behind it?

SHA: I don't know!

HU: Damn you! "I don't know." "I don't know." I'll teach you to say you don't know.

(Before he can beat her Tiao Teh-yi hastily intervenes.)

TIAO: Steady on, Commander. Let's talk this over calmly. (To Sha) Sit down, sit down, old woman. You've been put through the mill. Come, listen to me!

Aunty Sha, don't be so stubborn,

Let me put it to you straight,

You never leave the village and you're old,

How could you plan such a thing?

There must be someone giving you instructions,

Staying behind the scenes while you take the stage;

Now you're being cruelly tortured,

But she stands off, looks on, and sits impassively in her seat.

Just tell us the name,

And I guarantee you'll never lack rice or fuel.

HSIAO-SAN: Old woman, think it over carefully.

TIAO: Have you got the idea, Aunty Sha?

(Aunty Sha remains silent.)

TIAO: Sister Ah-ching, won't you persuade her?

AH-CHING: Me?

TIAO: You and Aunty Sha are neighbours. Try to make her see reason.

HU: Yes, Sister Ah-ching, try to persuade her and make her see reason.

AH-CHING: All right. Since Chief-of-Staff Tiao has such a good opinion of me, I'll try. But I know this old lady's temper. I don't expect I shall get anywhere either. (She approaches Aunty Sha.) Aunty Sha, the chief-of-staff says your son sent a boat over to the New Fourth Army men. Is that true? (Aunty Sha looks angrily at the three of them and keeps silent.)

AH-CHING: Aunty Sha, you've got an only son. How can you stand parting with him?

SHA: When a child grows up, he has to choose his own way!

HU: Tell me, what good have you got out of the New Fourth Army?

SHA: All right! I'll tell you then.

*On August 13, 1937, Japan invaded Shanghai,
Our land south of the Yangtze was lost;
Corpses piled up like mountains, seas of blood were
shed,*

*Flames scorched the earth far and wide.
The Party and New Fourth Army resisted Japan,
They went through hardships, marched east, thrust-
ing into the enemy rear,*

*Freeing towns and villages;
Where the red flag flies, there is singing,
As people see the light of day again;*

*You call yourselves the "Loyal and Just National
Salvation Army,"*

*Why don't you fire one single shot at the Japanese?
Answer me: which country do you want to save?
Why help Japan instead of saving China?
Why fight only the Communists?*

*In what way are you loyal and just?
You are traitors, stooges of the enemy,
With no sense of shame, no conscience!*

HU: Shut up!

SHA: *You dare not tell the people what you're after.
You can cut me into pieces, I don't care!
The day will come when Shachiapang is free,
And you traitors will meet your end!*

HU: Take her out! Have her shot!

(Tiao Hsiao-san and Adjutant Liu drag Auntie Sha off.)

AH-CHING: Commander Hu!

TIAO: Stop. Sister Ah-ching has something to say!

AH-CHING (lightly): . . . It's time I went!

(Tiao Teh-yi and Hu Chuan-kuei become crestfallen.)

AH-CHING: It's not for us to speak when you're settling public business.

HU: Oh, no, we'd like to hear your opinion.

TIAO: The commander wants to shoot Auntie Sha. As a good neighbour of hers, won't you try to save her?

AH-CHING: Others will come to save her.

HU: What others?

AH-CHING: If Dragon took a boat to the New Fourth Army, he's bound to come back to save his mother. Furthermore, the men of the New Fourth Army will surely come to her rescue.

HU: If I have her shot now, they'll be too late.

AH-CHING: Exactly! If you have her shot now, no one will come. If no one comes, you won't catch anyone.

HU: Ah, you mean we should keep this woman as bait to catch bigger fish? Tempt them into a trap?

TIAO: In other words, better not shoot her?

AH-CHING: You're the man with the gun. The decision's up to you. I was having the commander's interests in mind.

HU: Quite right!

TIAO: Good. Sister Ah-ching is really on our side. All right, we'll set Auntie Sha free at once, and we'll ask you to take her home. Will that suit you?

AH-CHING: Since the chief-of-staff has so much trust in me, I will do as I'm told.

TIAO: Very well. Orderly! Set old woman Sha free. (Adjutant Liu drags Auntie Sha in.)

SHA: Put me to death at once. None of your dirty tricks!

HU: Old woman Sha, we'll set you free. Don't be so stubborn!

TIAO: Aunty Sha, now you're free. Sister Ah-ching, won't you see her home?

AH-CHING: Aunty Sha, let's go!

(Exit Aunty Sha, followed by Sister Ah-ching.)

TIAO (to Adjutant Liu): Watch them from behind and hear what they say.

LIU: Yes, sir. (Exit.)

HU: Old Tiao, what tricks have you been up to?

TIAO: If only they were found talking intimately, it would be proof that they've been in the same boat. Then we could have them arrested at once and have them questioned together!

(Enter Adjutant Liu.)

LIU: Report! Chief-of-Staff, they've started fighting!

HU: Who's fighting whom?

LIU: Old woman Sha's fighting Sister Ah-ching!

HU: Bring the old woman back here!

LIU: Yes, sir. (Exit.)

(Enter Sister Ah-ching.)

AH-CHING: What a devil that old woman is! As soon as we were outside, she tried to beat me and kept calling me such bad names as "traitor" and "stooge". Alas! Look at me! My clothes are torn, and my teeth are bleeding! Just look!

HU: Old Tiao! Don't think you're cleverer than other people. Now you realize your mistake. Sister Ah-ching, I hope it's not serious? My wedding. . .

AH-CHING: Your wedding will be all right. H'm, what a blind fellow! She wanted to get the better of me. But how could an old woman like her be my match? Soon enough I smashed all her efforts!

TIAO: Sister Ah-ching, I hope you didn't take offence?

AH-CHING: H'm! If I'd taken offence, I'd not have given offence to those who were easily offended!

HU (points a finger at Tiao Teh-yi): You must be crazy!

SCENE VIII

PREPARING FOR THE ATTACK

Three days later, before dawn. In the fields.
(Enter Chang Sung-tao and Yeh Ssu-chung. After looking round, they go off.)

KUO CHIEN-KUANG (offstage):

The moon lights our path

And breezes cool us on our way. . .

(Enter Kuo Chien-kuang and soldiers.)

KUO: *We dashed across mountains, rivers and sleeping villages.*

The branch unit has cast a net

To besiege and destroy Hu Chuan-kuei's gang of traitorous bandits.

A vanguard is organized to take the lead

To give Shachiapang a surprise attack.

We'll thrust a sharp dagger into the heart of the enemy,

And take them unawares.

We'll throw the whole enemy line into utter confusion,

Like pouring hot water on an ant-hill

Or setting fire to a beehive.

(Enter Chang Sung-tao and Yeh Ssu-chung.)

YEH SSU-CHUNG: An enemy patrol!

DRAGON: Let's finish them off!

KUO: Get under cover!

(They get under cover.)

(A patrol of puppet soldiers crosses the stage.)

KUO: Platoon Leader Yeh and Chang Sung-tao!

CHANG SUNG-TAO and YEH: Here!

KUO: Look, Shachiapang is in front of us. I order you two to continue scouting. Go!

CHANG and YEH: Right! (Exit.)

KUO: *They say that the enemy cordon is dotted with sentry and pillboxes.*

To me they are merely paper fortresses.

Shachiapang is in sight,

And this time we'll destroy the den and capture the head of the bandits. (Exit.)

SCENE IX

BREAKING THROUGH

Immediately following the previous scene. Outside the wall of the back court in the headquarters of the puppet "Loyal and Just National Salvation Army."
(A puppet soldier is on sentry.)

PUPPET SOLDIER: The commander has invited the Japanese to his wedding. So he posted more guards.
(Sighs.) Damn my luck!
(Enter Yeh Ssu-chung and others. They capture the sentry.)
(Enter Kuo Chien-kuang, leading the vanguard and Sister Ah-ching, leading the militiamen.)

SISTER AH-CHING: Instructor, on the other side of the wall is Tiao Teh-yi's back court.
*The enemy positions have not been changed
As shown clearly in our report.
Their main force is stationed in the east and west,
There is only one squad at the front door.
The militia has cut their telephone line,
So the flank forces cannot come to their rescue.
In the house a wedding banquet is being set,
They are in a riotous rapture with wine and food.
You climb over this wall and dash into the very
court,*

And you'll certainly eliminate this group of vicious ogres with one stroke.

KUO CHIEN-KUANG: Dragon!

*You lead the "fire power group" to the front court
To destroy the enemy guards. (To Sister Ah-ching)
You go to the end of the village to meet our main
force.*

(Dragon leads the soldiers and Sister Ah-ching leads the militia off.)

(Kuo Chien-kuang and the soldiers get over the wall.)

SCENE X

WIPING OUT THE ENEMY

In the front court at Tiao Teh-yi's house.

(Enter Chou Jen-sheng, Tiao Teh-yi, Kuroda, Hu Chuan-kuei and others.)

CHOU JEN-SHENG: Tiao Hsiao-san, how are the preparations?

TIAO HSIAO-SAN: The motor-boat is ready.

KURODA: Telephone no can get through. Situation no good. You be careful. Lead on! Lead on!
(Exit.)

(Artillery rumbles.)

HU CHUAN-KUEI: Where did that come from?

TIAO TEH-YI: I don't know!

(Enter a puppet soldier.)

PUPPET SOLDIER: Report! The New Fourth Army is already in the back court.

HU: Stop them! Stop them! (He runs off in great haste.)

(After a short engagement, the vanguard wipes out Hu Chuan-kuei's troops.)

(Enter the main force of the branch unit, Chen Tien-min and others with Kuroda and Chou Jen-sheng in custody. Enter Kuo Chien-kuang and soldiers with Hu Chuan-kuei and Tiao Teh-yi in custody.)

(Sister Ah-ching and other villagers of Shachiapang together with those freed from prison enter with handcuffs and shackles in their hands. When the freed prisoners see Hu Chuan-kuei and Tiao Teh-yi, they cannot keep down their anger and they lift the shackles to strike at Hu and Tiao, but are stopped by Sister Ah-ching.)

KUO CHIEN-KUANG: Fellow villagers! Let's hand these traitors over to the Anti-Japanese Democratic Government for a public trial!

SISTER AH-CHING: Fellow villagers! We must try them in public.

HU: Who are you?

AH-CHING: A member of the Chinese Communist Party!

KUO: Take them out!

(The soldiers take Hu Chuan-kuei, Tiao Teh-yi, Kuroda and Chou Jen-sheng off in custody.)

(Enter Aunty Sha. She sees again Chen Tien-min, Kuo Chien-kuang and Dragon. And the people of Shachiapang under the leadership of the Party once more see the light of day.)

CURTAIN

