



KANG CHO

*When the Sun  
Comes Up*

# *When the Sun Comes Up*

By Kang Cho

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## *Foreword*

The six short stories in this book are selected from the works of the contemporary Chinese writer Kang Cho. They present various aspects of the deep-going changes in northern China villages, particularly those in the life and spirit of the peasants, during the period of the agricultural mutual-aid and co-operative movement and establishment of the people's communes.

The first four stories reflect certain new features in the early days of mutual-aid teams and agricultural co-operatives while the last two are about the big leap forward in agricultural production and the people's communes. The characters Liu Chun-tang in "The Animal Expert," Chang Wan-lien in "The Contest," Chou Chang-lin in "Spring Sowing, Autumn Harvest," and Liu Kuei-yun, Chen Yin-hai and old Ching-fa during the big leap forward are fairly typical of the progressives in rural China today. They show the new face and new qualities of the Chinese peasants. The strength of character of Liu Kuei-yun in "Early Spring," in particular, stands out as something produced by the big leap forward and the people's communes. Her beautiful and inspiring ideals, nurtured by her hard-working life in the past, moved the author deeply and he could not but write about them with feeling. The love between Chou Chang-lin and Liu Yu-tsui, their studies and their work, show fresh changes in the spirit

of the young peasants during socialist transformation. In the selfishness and conservatism of Chen Lao-mien in "When the Sun Comes Up," can be discerned the soul of certain middle peasants who still hanker after capitalism.

If, as a saying goes, "A crystal can reflect the sun," then these six short stories can be said to reflect certain facets of the changes in rural China, the progress from mutual-aid teams through the agricultural co-operatives to the people's communes, and the peasants' struggle between two ways, socialism and capitalism.

The author praises the guidance and concern the Party gives the peasants. He praises the new personalities in a socialist society—hard-working, devoted to collective welfare and whole-heartedly serving the people. On the other hand, while exposing the selfish and conservative capitalist tendencies found among certain peasants during the movement for agricultural co-operation, he is nevertheless happy and inspired when he sees them making improvement and progress.

The stories are arranged in chronological order according to the dates of writing and publication. The title of one of the stories, "The Sun Comes Up," has been chosen as the title of the book, not because this story has any particular significance, but because China's 500 million peasants have taken the road of collectivism and are enjoying a happy life in the people's communes. As a title, "The Sun Comes Up" symbolizes the new stage in China's countryside as well as the brilliant prospects for the future.

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# The Contest

## 1

A stream lined with willows on both banks divided Huatai Village into two sections — the east and the west. October was already on the way out; winter was approaching. Although the young willows planted that year were still growing, the clear water in the stream turned biting cold at sunset and sunrise. In both East and West Huatai, the autumn crops had just been gathered in. People were now busy with ploughing, for they had to get the best of the weather and turn up the soil before it froze. As for the "high-yield fields," they had to be ploughed twice.

That wasn't all. The people even pledged to overfulfil their task. Agricultural producers' co-operatives had been formed in both of the Huatais which right then were holding a round-the-year production contest. They had divided the year into several periods and decided to compare and judge their work from period to period. Their first bout was to commence with the autumn ploughing. They were full of enthusiasm for the coming match.

Apart from using its old-fashioned ploughs, the East Huatai group pushed ahead by using five improved ploughs for its shock work. Being formed as early as that spring, their co-op had a fairly solid basis and some experience.

Work had gone on smoothly for the past several days. They had set themselves loftier objectives in the contest than the other group in West Huatai. They thought it natural to do so, for all that it seemed their task was as good as done.

West Huatai wasn't doing too badly either, but conditions there were not so good, for they had formed their co-op only just before the autumn harvest, on the eve of the contest. They had little experience. They had only recently bought two new improved ploughs which nobody as yet knew how to handle. A few days previously someone had been sent to the district to learn how to use them. For the time being, however, they had asked the technical committee chairman of the East Huatai Co-op to give a few tips to several of their young men who were trying out the ploughs with great fervour in the fields from dawn to dusk. But in spite of these difficulties, members of this co-op weren't doing too badly at all. They ploughed deeply, neatly and quickly enough. Everybody was happy and sure they would fulfil their task. The young people were pledging to do even better. "Huh! Why shouldn't we put forward greater objectives for the contest?" some said, unwilling to accept the lower targets set for them. "Though our co-op was formed a little later, we'll certainly overfulfil our task!"

Then something unexpected happened. One day, when Liu Yu-cheng, a young man of West Huatai, was working with an improved plough, he struck a stone so that the share cracked. It wasn't serious, and nobody, not even Liu himself, discovered it on the spot. However, when the co-op chairman, checking the implements after the shift, spotted it, it caused quite a stir.

Over a dozen people crowded into Yu-cheng's, all speaking at once, but for all their noise, they just didn't know how to cope with the situation. No one knew whether with that crack the plough was still usable. Of course the best thing to do would be to replace the cracked share with a new one, but that implied a trip of about twenty *li*<sup>1</sup> to the town, which might not help after all. They had wanted to buy a few shares the last time they went there to buy ploughs, but the shares had been in short supply and they had had to go away without them. Now with autumn close at hand, with the plan for raised output next year and the high-yield fields needing attention, they simply couldn't do without improved farming implements. What a pretty fix they were in at this crucial time!

Lying stiffly on the *kang*,<sup>2</sup> Yu-cheng was silent, feeling completely mortified. His mother felt sorry for him. "Well now," she said, going towards him, "don't be foolish. Get up, now won't you! I don't think this will be too difficult to settle."

"Try and buy a new share," she continued, glancing around the room, "if that can't be done, use the old-fashioned ploughs for the time being. Haven't we used them all along?"

"None of your backward stuff," snapped Yu-cheng, sitting up abruptly. "The old ploughs indeed! Can't you see we're working the high-yield fields? This is a new society. But you always look backward!"

"Go ahead then!" retorted his mother. "Use the new tools and machines. Only pay for the damage yourself!"

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<sup>1</sup> A *li* is equivalent to one-third of a mile or half a kilometre.

<sup>2</sup> A brick bed which is heated during winter by piping fire under it.



"All right," cried her son, jumping down from the *kang*. "I'll pay! You keep out of this!" Once more he sat on the *kang*. "I think we had better try this share again," he remarked after a while, having calmed down a little. "The crack isn't very big; we'll take good care of it. Meanwhile we'll go to town and see if we can buy a new one."

The co-op chairman glanced at him. "Yu-cheng, it won't do," he said slowly, waving his hands. After a while, he added: "I'm afraid we'll have to ask your brother-in-law to look at it." With a smile he looked at all present as if he were soliciting their opinions.

Old Chiu, the co-op chairman, was on the wrong side of fifty. For some seven or eight years he had been the head of Huatai Village, a post which he still held. Yu-cheng's brother-in-law whom the chairman referred to was chairman of the Technical Committee of the East Huatai Co-op.

The others in the group were non-committal. Actually they looked as though they had some opinions, but somehow or other they were unwilling to speak up.

"Yu-cheng, go and find your brother-in-law," the chairman went on. "Let him look it over for us. As for the plough," he smiled at everybody, "well, I reckon they've a new share. In my opinion we should consult with your brother-in-law and see if it is possible to borrow it for a few days."

Suddenly some young men blurted out, "Oh, but. . . ."

"That's all right," remarked Yu-cheng's mother hurriedly, "I think that'll settle it."

"Oh, I'm afraid . . . Uncle Chiu . . ." Yu-cheng stammered.

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It was obvious he wasn't too keen on looking up his brother-in-law. Old Chiu thought for a moment. "You are shy, Yu-cheng, aren't you?" he said, waving his hands again. "Yet you young fellows are a headstrong lot." He ran his eyes from one face to the other, and, clearly enunciating every word, added, "Why do we challenge and compete with each other? For production! In order to raise production we should not only challenge, but also help each other. But you're looking at the contest as a real battle between two armies where neither side is prepared to give in to the other. As I said before, this is wrong. Now, Yu-cheng, go!"

Some people began to approve the idea, but a few young men were still stubbornly reticent. Seeing Yu-cheng didn't move, Old Chiu added, "Just tell him that I want him to come over." "Hurry up," Yu-cheng's mother also urged her son, "tell him that I want him to come too!"

"But if he refuses?" Yu-cheng asked Old Chiu, ignoring his mother.

"How can he?" his mother replied. "He used to come to see me every fortnight or so even when there was no special business on hand."

"Yu-cheng," asked Old Chiu, "what do you think of your brother-in-law? He's a Party member!"

"I don't mean him," said Yu-cheng. "What I'm afraid of is that the cadres and other members of their co-op won't let him! Last time when two of their ploughmen wanted the new share, my brother-in-law and the other cadres wouldn't listen to them."

"Oh, what are you driving at?" Old Chiu was becoming a little impatient. "Just ask him to come and we'll talk it over. Aren't the East and West Huatais one whole

administrative unit. Am I not in charge of their village too? We were united as one throughout the years when we fought the Japanese invaders and through the revolution, weren't we? Even if we weren't under one administrative unit, aren't we all led by Chairman Mao?"

"For instance," he went on, withdrawing his hands from his sleeves and shaking them, "when East Huatai wanted to plant trees but lacked saplings, didn't we supply them with some the last few days? Go along, Yu-cheng. Hold me responsible if he doesn't come!"

"Hurry up," Yu-cheng's mother literally pushed her son. "Tell him I won't take 'No' for an answer!"

Yu-cheng knew it was wrong not to go, that what Old Chiu had said was right. He rose from the *kang* and left, but something seemed to tug at his heart. He was really not very willing to go. He felt that even if his brother-in-law came he might not be of much help and maybe that share was needed by his own co-op. It just didn't seem right to ask for the loan of farm tools at such a busy time. And weren't people like Wang Shui-wang in the East Huatai Co-op already clamouring to beat West Huatai? Although he had reached the river bank, he found himself still wondering whether it wouldn't be better to return and have the matter raised again.

Suddenly he saw someone on the opposite bank of the river walking towards East Huatai. It looked like his brother-in-law. It would be good if it were. It would be much more convenient to talk under such circumstances. As he wasn't sure he dared not call out his name, but he quickened his steps so that he could cross the bridge in time and have a look.

Sure enough the man was his brother-in-law, Chang Wan-lien, Chairman of the Technical Committee of the East Huatai Co-op. He was on his way home after finishing his spell of work in the afternoon and having inspected the ploughed fields. He didn't notice his lack of company, and his mind was too occupied to notice someone on the other bank.

Judging from his inspection, he was thinking that their task of autumn ploughing could not only be fulfilled, but, he was sure, overfulfilled. What worried him was that Wang Shui-wang hadn't done so well on one plot. Perhaps he hadn't handled the plough correctly. Or was there something wrong with his plough? In any case, he felt he had better hurry back and find out. Another thing on his mind was the fact that the women were to plant trees the next morning. That was an important job too in the autumn season and he had better remind them to make arrangements for it as quickly as possible. Then he would talk with the co-op chairman and make Wang Shui-wang work over that plot again. I shouldn't tolerate such shoddy work. Didn't they guarantee quality when they laid down their objectives in the contest? Oh! It seemed there was more than enough business to keep his hands full. He started to hurry.

Night was falling. A gust of wind swept up from the river. He felt his nose twitch. It was cold. He had only a lined jacket on. When he went home at noon it had been rather hot, and he had been so busy he had forgotten to take his cotton-padded jacket when he went out again. He had eaten only a few mouthfuls of rice, being too busily occupied fixing a broken plough. Now he was really hungry. He remembered his warm, comfortable

home; it seemed as though he could already see his wife and child waiting for him.

"I'll hurry up," he thought aloud, "after supper I'll put on my padded jacket and get on with my work." He was running as if he were on wings.

Just then Liu Yu-cheng crossed the bridge and was close at his brother-in-law's heel. Hearing footsteps Wan-lien turned round. Panting, Yu-cheng caught up with him.

"Brother-in-law . . ." he cried.

"What brought you here? Is anything the matter?" asked Wan-lien.

"Yes. I'm looking —" he paused for breath. "Looking for you."

"For me?"

"Yes. Oh, I'm lucky to meet you here."

"But what for?"

"Well . . ." Yu-cheng stammered, drawing another breath. "Our plough. . . ."

"Plough? What's wrong with your plough?" demanded Wan-lien impatiently.

"It's bro — broken down!"

Uttering an "oh!" Wan-lien pushed Yu-cheng before him across the bridge, forgetting all he had just been thinking. "How did that happen?" he asked, but without waiting for an answer he made straight for West Huatai on the run. Yu-cheng, puzzled and undecided, followed. He didn't have a chance to say a single word of what he had prepared beforehand. He hadn't expected his brother-in-law to be so straightforward.

## 2

Now let us turn from West Huatai to East Huatai. For there, too, many people were waiting for the technical committee chairman — the East Huatai Co-op chairman, Wang Shui-wang, the plough operator, and above all, Liu Yu-feng, Wan-lien's wife.

Yu-feng was Yu-cheng's elder sister and leader of the East Huatai Co-op women's production team. She had been settling her team's work points with the co-op's tallyman that afternoon. It was a tedious job which had caused her no end of trouble. When she finally emerged from the tallyman's it was getting late. Wrapping her child up in his new printed cotton blouse and holding him in her arms, she hurried home. Suddenly remembering that her husband had not eaten a sufficient meal that afternoon and before returning to work, had asked her to prepare something nice for supper, she went round to the beancurd stall to buy a little beancurd. As soon as she arrived home she put the child on the *kang*, pushed a biscuit into his hand and started to prepare the meal.

"Ea-t, ea-t," babbled Feng-erh who was not yet two.

While teasing him, Yu-feng waited impatiently for the water to boil. When it finally did, she filled the thermos flask with some of it and put the noodles in the pot to cook. Then Feng-erh clambered to his feet and she had to steady him and coax him to play and wait for his dad to come home and eat the noodles. She put the corn bread on the stove to toast, lit the lamp, chopped a few onions and chose some peppers from the window-sill. She was ready to light the fire to fry the beancurd when her eyes fell on her husband's cotton-padded jacket on the *kang*.

Instinctively she felt a shiver run through her body. It's late, won't he feel cold? Picking up the child and wrapping him in the jacket, she walked out of the courtyard.

She couldn't see her husband on the street. Voices came from the community dining-room not far off. Going nearer she shouted: "Wan-lien. . . ."

"Is it Yu-feng? Haven't seen him," said someone. "He's gone to plough the land. He'll be back soon."

"Hasn't he returned yet?" asked another.

"Yu-feng," still another took up, "Wan-lien's gone to check up on the day's work. He's probably on the way back now."

"Oh!" she replied and returned home. She was about to light the fire again and cook the beancurd when she heard footsteps in the courtyard.

"Papa," cried the child.

"Ah, talk of a man and he comes," she thought. "All right, he can lend a hand." She was about to call out his name when she noticed that the footfall sounded different from her husband's. She turned round. A young man, with a new, improved plough on his shoulder, stalked in.

"So our technical committee chairman isn't home yet?" he asked. The intruder was Wang Shui-wang. Standing erect, he didn't even bother to put down his plough.

"So you are looking for him to fix the plough for you again? Well, go ahead and find him!" said Yu-feng, turning to make the fire.

"Hey, comrade! Where did you learn to speak like that? All right, since you've told me to, I'll find him." He put down the plough and began to look high and low all over the house.

Instead of the chairman, however, he fished out the new share from a corner of the house.

"So you want to change for a new share again?" demanded Yu-feng.

"I don't want to, but I must," answered Shui-wang. "This damned share of mine's a nuisance," he added. "Look at it if you don't believe me. I did one plot badly this afternoon."

"A fine thing!" he said, appraising the new share. "Oh, if only I could use it, I guarantee I'd overfulfil my task by a wide margin. Sister, do you think the chairman will let me have it?"

"It's the only one left in the co-op. Do you think it'll be given to you — you of all people!"

"Not given to me? Hum!" Dropping the share, he jumped towards the *kang* and made a grimace at the child. "Woof-woof!" he barked. The child screamed. Yu-feng upbraided Shui-wang, but he didn't seem to care. Inhaling deeply, he cried, "Oh! How appetizing! I bet you're having noodles again. Ah! How fortunate Brother Wan-lien is, I say, sister, can I have a little of your noodle soup?"

"You?" Yu-feng laughed. "You've the cheek to ask for noodle soup when you've damaged the plough? Not even Feng-erh would agree to that, let alone me."

"Comrade Yu-feng," replied Shui-wang, with mock seriousness, "you're a Youth League member. You shouldn't be so stingy to me, a young man outside the League." Then assuming a mild expression he added, "All right then, if you won't invite me, I can't eat. Come, I'll make the fire, then you can fry the beancurd and pepper."

He started to make the fire. When Yu-feng had nearly finished, he rose, turned and pinched Feng-erh's cheek.



Swinging the plough onto his shoulder he strode towards the door. "Well, I'll be going!" he said. "You're so afraid I'll eat here, aren't you?"

"You devil!" cried Yu-feng. "Here, have some bread!" Putting down the plate, she took a piece of toasted corn bread and ran out of the house.

"No," shouted Shui-wang. Turning round, he begged in a low voice: "Please, sister, when Brother Wan-lien returns, ask him to mend the plough for me as quickly as possible. If I'm held up and can't plough the land tomorrow then the co-op'll be prevented from carrying out its task in the contest. It'll be a big problem." Pointing a finger at Yu-feng, he added: "Then I'll hold you Liu - Yu - feng re - spon - si - ble!"

"It's none of my business!" answered Yu-feng. "Do you think I've nothing else to do! I have to arrange for the planting of trees. . . . Can't you leave the plough here?" she added, "I'll tell him about it."

"The plough?" asked Shui-wang. "A fighter never parts with his arms. I'll show it to him directly. Comrade, you know nothing about technique. You're just the chairman's better half. I won't trust you with it."

"You devil!" scolded Yu-feng. "Watch what you say!"

"All right. You're the chairman's loved one, then. Does that please you? Ha, ha. . . ."

Shui-wang went off, his last words being cut short by the appearance of someone else. Running to the courtyard, Yu-feng found the newcomer was Old Yen, Secretary of the Party Branch of Huatai Administrative Village and Chairman of the East Huatai Co-op.

"Ha, ha, how dare Shui-wang make fun of you? How can he compete with you?"