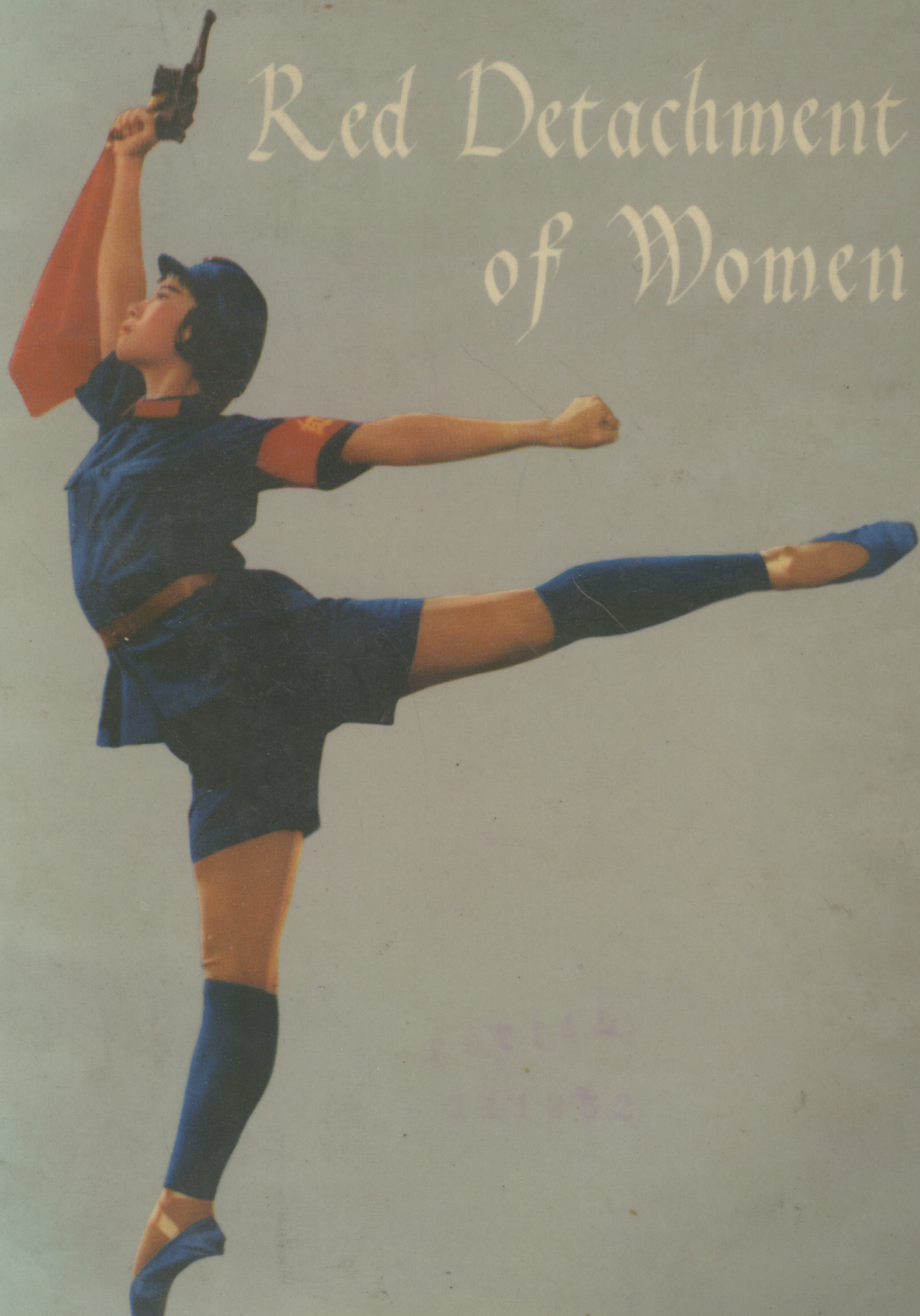


A MODERN REVOLUTIONARY BALLET

Red Detachment of Women



Red Detachment of Women

— A Modern Revolutionary Ballet —

Revised Collectively by the China Ballet Troupe

(script)

FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS

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Red Detachment of Women

A Modern Revolutionary Opera

By Lu Xun and Cao Yu

Translated by Wang Kang



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Hung Chang-ching *Party representative in the Women's Company*



Wu Ching-hua *Soldier of the Women's Company, later its Party representative*

Company Commander
*Leader of the Women's
Company*

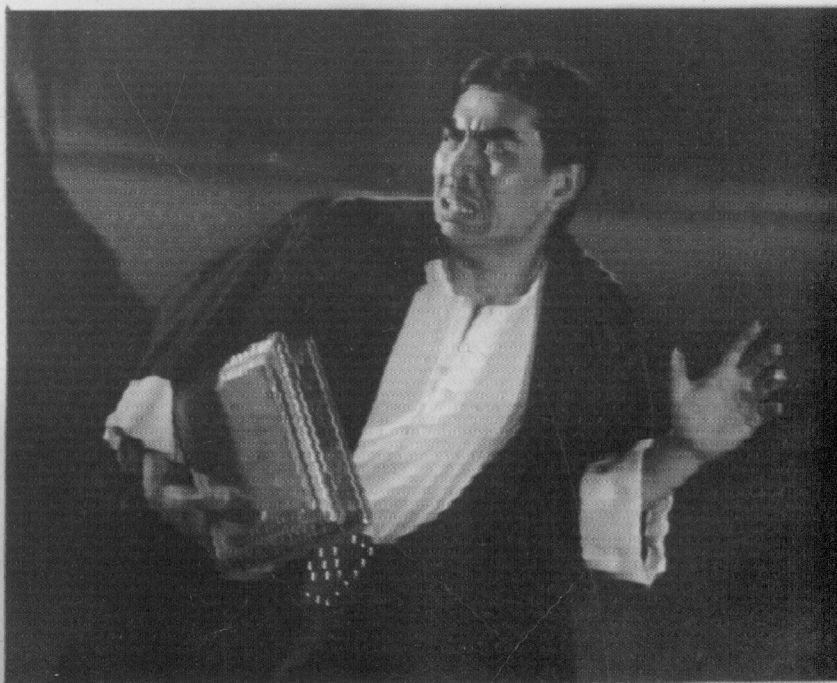


Pang *Red Army boy messenger*



The Tyrant of the South *Despotic landlord,
commander of counter-revolutionary "civil guards"*

Lao Szu *The Tyrant's
bailiff, head of the
"civil guards"*



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PROLOGUE

The Second Revolutionary Civil War Period (1927-1937). Hainan Island. Night. The Tyrant of the South's dungeon.

(The curtain rises.)

Chained to a post is Wu Ching-hua, daughter of a poor peasant. She hates being a bondmaid, a slave. Several times she has run away, but each time she has been caught, brought back and cruelly beaten. She stands with head and chest

high, her eyes blazing with hatred. If only she could smash the bloody shackles which bind her and wreck the lair of these man-eating beasts! (1)

With her in the dungeon are two other peasant women, locked up by the Tyrant because they have been unable to pay their land rent. They too have been beaten savagely. (2) Fists clenched, they pour out their hatred.

(The two women dance.)

Lao Szu, the Tyrant's bailiff and bully, enters with a guard. He has been ordered to take Ching-hua out and sell her.



(1)

He unlocks the shackles, releasing Ching-hua. Strong class feeling makes her forget her painful injuries and rush to her cellmates. She urges them to fight the Tyrant to the end.

Lao Szu comes after her and threatens her with his whip, pushing her towards the dungeon door.

Catching him off guard, Ching-hua seizes the whip and kicks him to the ground. (*At the door, she does "gong jian bu". Her arms forcefully spread, she glares at Lao Szu, and performs "liang xiang".**)

He starts to rise. The two women throw themselves on him and the guard and hold them fast. (3)

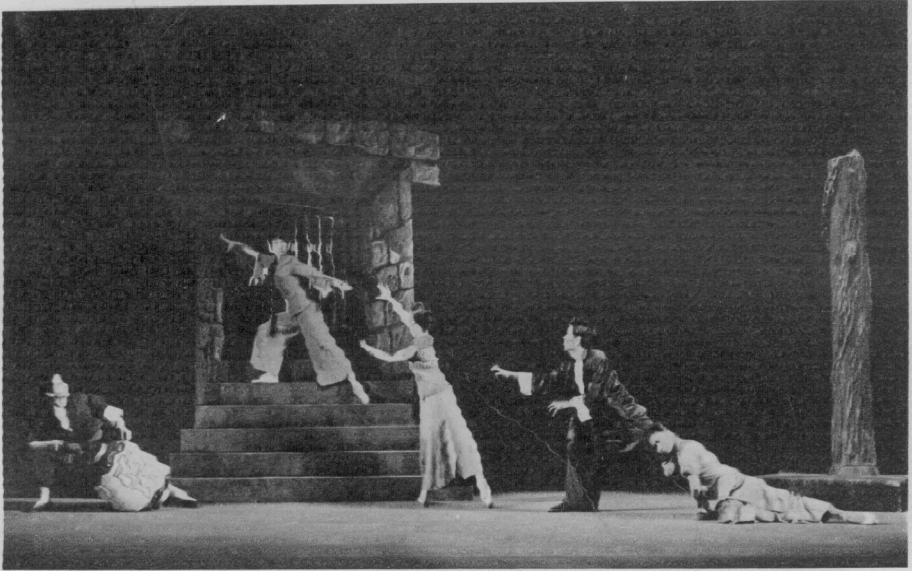
Ching-hua watches in concern. The women urge her to flee.

She dashes out of the tiger's maw with determination.

(2)



*A term in traditional Chinese opera. It is a still, statuesque pose assumed for a brief moment by the actors or dancers while entering or leaving the stage, sometimes after a dance or an acrobatic feat, in order to bring out sharply and concentratedly the spiritual outlook of the characters.



(3)

(Dark change)

SCENE ONE

Immediately following the prologue. Late at night in the dark cocoanut grove.

(Lanterns marked "South Manor" gleam.)

Lao Szu and a gang of guards are in pursuit of Ching-hua. Carrying whips and ropes, they prowl like beasts of prey among the cocoanut trees, but in vain. Lao Szu is fuming with rage. He orders his men to scatter and search.

(Dance of Lao Szu and the guards.)

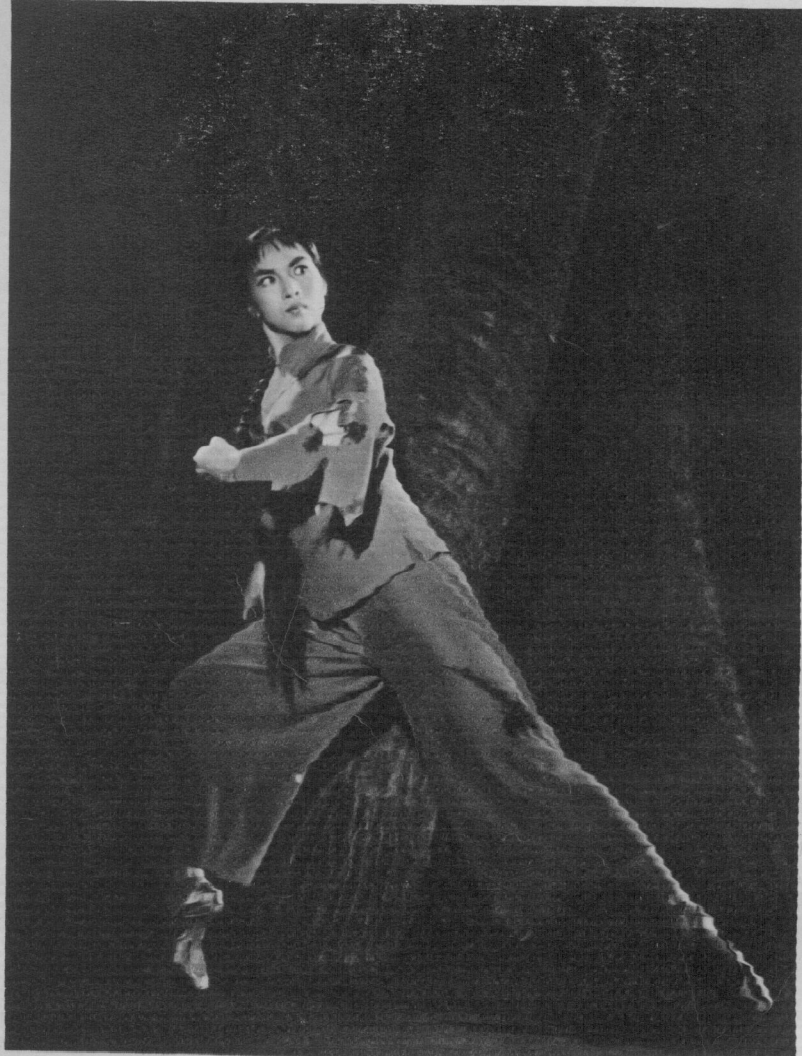
Ching-hua is hidden behind a tree. After the gangsters leave, she emerges quickly. (She does "xu jian gong jian bu liang xiang".) (4)

(Solo dance.)

She advances swiftly in big strides. (Then she rapidly does "xu jian sui bu — pas couru", and "pi cha tiao — pas de chat", followed by "pu bu".) Separating small trees

with her hands, she cautiously peers in all directions, then runs deeper into the grove. The enemy's chase intensifies her hatred. If they don't catch her, she'll flee. If they do, she'll fight. Rather death than slavery! (*She does "ping zhuan — chaîne", "ye tui zhuan — tour en dedans", "xian shen tan bai — attitude basse" and "dao ti zhi jin guan".*) (5)

(4) *Zu jian gong jian bu liang xiang*





(5) *Dao ti zi jin guan*

Discovering "civil guards" coming her way, Ching-hua nimbly hides behind a tree.

Two of the men furtively search.

She cleverly eludes them but in the darkness bumps into Lao Szu. They grapple in a desperate struggle.

(*Struggle dance.*)



(6)

Ching-hua turns and jumps up. Flinging off his arms, she swings one leg in a sweeping kick. (6) Lao Szu leaps to avoid it. She turns and runs. Pursuing, he grabs her left arm. She angrily pushes down on him. Neither give way. (*They do "xi tui la xhuan — tour lent à deux"*.)

She breaks loose. Again he pounces on her. She fights fiercely. (*She does "pi cha", "jiao xhu", "jian shi bian shen tiao — jeté entrelacé", and "diao yao", then performs "liang xiang"*.)

"You're coming back with me," Lao Szu yells.

She furiously raises her head. "I'll die first!" Lao Szu is weakening. Ching-hua's courage doubles. She twists his arm, (7) bites him fiercely and kicks him to the ground.

She runs, but the vicious guards catch up and surround her. They are too many for her. She again falls into their clutches.

The Tyrant of the South rushes in, followed by "civil guards" and bondmaids. The sight of Ching-hua's stubborn resistance enrages him. He cruelly presses her temple with the tip of his cane. She is adamant and refuses to bow

her head. (8) He strikes her savagely. She seizes one end of the cane. She will fight even if it costs her life. (They do "*chuan fan shen*".) The Tyrant trembles with rage. He orders his guards to drag Ching-hua aside. "Beat her to death!" he howls.

Whip blows are heard. The hearts of the bondmaids, who share the same suffering and hatred as Ching-hua, burn like fire. They are torn by anxiety for her. The tearing cuts of the whips seem to be ripping their own flesh. If only they could save their class sister!

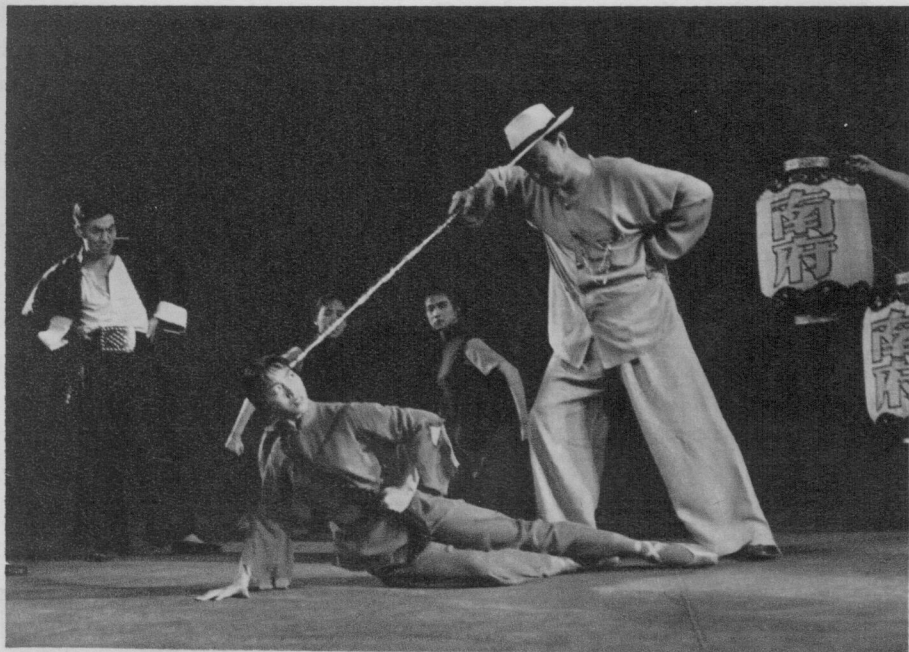
(*The bondmaids dance.*) (9)

The Tyrant decides to make Ching-hua an example to cow the others. He orders that she be dragged in and beaten to death before their eyes.

Ching-hua refuses to yield. She continues to fight courageously as the lackeys rain blows on her with their whips. (*She does "*tan hai fan shen*" and "*guo bao*".*) (10) She struggles, chest high and fists raised, until they beat her unconscious.

(7)





(8)

Lao Szu announces that she is dead. "Anyone who resists or tries to escape," the Tyrant grates threateningly to the bondmaids, "will meet the same fate."

Thunder rumbles. A storm is brewing. The Tyrant, Lao Szu and other lackeys hastily leave. Heartbroken, the bondmaids rush towards Ching-hua. (11) The "civil guards" drive them away.

Lightning flashes, thunder rumbles. A violent storm shakes the cocoanut grove.

In the deluging rain, Ching-hua slowly revives.

(Solo dance.)

Her body a mass of excruciating wounds, weak from hunger and cold, where can she go in this dark night? Is there no end to the cocoanut grove? *(She does "zu jian sui bu — pas sui vi".)* (12) Is there no road open to oppressed slaves? Haltingly, she stumbles forward, forward.... Then the pain overcomes her and she falls in a faint.

The rain passes, the sky clears. Dawn breaks through the mist. Sunlight slants into the cocoanut grove.