

**UNDER THE EAVES
OF SHANGHAI**

A Play

by

Sya Yan

Edited and Annotated by

Richard F. Chang

and

William L. MacDonald

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FAR EASTERN PUBLICATIONS

YALE UNIVERSITY

NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT

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AN ANNOTATED CHINESE PLAY

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Preface

This book, like our earlier *Modern Chinese Poetry: An Annotated Reader* (Far Eastern Publications, 1973), is designed for those who have had several years of Chinese but who still cannot read modern literary works without considerable dictionary work. The book can be used as supplementary reading in an advanced language course, or as a reader for a course in modern Chinese literature. Since these are the ways in which we plan to use the book, the needs of both approaches have controlled the organization of the vocabulary.

For purposes of compiling the vocabularies, we have assumed that the reader has completed the Yale textbooks *Read Chinese I, II, and III, Newspaper Primer* and *Twenty Lectures on Chinese Culture*, i.e., that he knows about 1,300 Chinese characters and a far greater number of compounds. None of the words introduced in these books is included in our vocabulary listings unless the word is used in a new meaning. The basic unit in the vocabulary listings is the word (regardless of the number of characters comprising it). Characters which are new to the student are introduced as vocabulary entries if they are so-called "free forms" and in parentheses after the definition if they are so-called "bound forms." Each new word or expression is defined three times. On first occurrence the word or expression is defined, in Chinese, if practical, and on the second and third occurrence, the reader is referred to the first occurrence. The romanization is underlined on third occurrence to indicate that the term will not be listed again. After this point if the reader cannot remember the meaning, he will have to consult a dictionary. Terms and expressions which are peculiar to the Shanghai dialect of Mandarin and those which come from Classical Chinese are identified by S or C respectively at the end of the definition.

This particular play was chosen for a number of reasons. First, the text of the play was rather short and therefore much more suitable for class use than some of the much longer plays of the same period. Second, the dialogue was relatively simple, and we felt it would require little in the way of grammatical explanations in the notes. At the same time the language of the play is rather colloquial and using as it does idiomatic and dialectic expressions was preferable to a more literary style. In addition, the inclusion of classical expressions gives the student a feel for the degree to which some aspects of the classical language have become part of colloquial speech. The setting of the play was also rather interesting and provided an introduction to a number of objects

quite unfamiliar to the Western reader. Finally, there is no translation of this play presently available and the reader is thus forced to understand the play without recourse to a trot.

We gratefully acknowledge the suggestions of friends and colleagues and the assistance of Prof. Robert B. Crawford, Director of the Center for Asian Studies, and the Center's secretaries, Plum and Little Barbara. We would also be remiss if we failed to acknowledge our debt to Prof. Chin-chuan Cheng and his students who "tested" the material and provided us with their criticisms and suggestions. We earnestly solicit the suggestions and criticism of readers.

Richard F. Chang
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August, 1973

An Introduction to the Play

Sya Yan (夏衍) whose real name is Shen Dwan-syan (沈端先) was born in 1900 into the family of a landowner in Hangchow.¹ In 1919, he graduated from the Chekiang Industrial School and the next year he went to Japan to study electrical engineering. After graduating from the Kyushu Engineering School in 1925 he returned to China where he soon became involved in the Northern Expedition. After this time he devoted himself to translation, writing and editorial work. During the Sino-Japanese War he continued writing as well as translating and editing, moving about the country as the military situation required. At the end of the War he returned to Shanghai, but was soon forced to flee the country for Hongkong. In 1949 he returned to China and held a number of cultural posts until his dismissal in 1965.

Sya Yan's literary career began in the May Fourth Period when he participated in the publication of a journal in Chekiang.² It was not until later in the twenties, however, that he began to devote himself to writing full time. Much of his early work was translation: he is responsible for some 15 volumes of translation done either alone or with others. He began translating works by Japanese writers, but he also translated works by Gorky, Tolstoy, Gladkov and Alexandra Kollontay.

Sya Yan's greatest contribution is in the area of drama — both on the stage and on the screen. He was one of the sponsors of the League of Left-Wing Writers and was active in its drama section. In addition, he was one of the founders of the Shanghai Dramatic Society which was dedicated to the dissemination of revolutionary ideas through travelling dramatic groups. He was also the chief of the Communist Party's film team in the early 1930's. From this early period he was active as a scenarist and he continued to write for the screen well into the 1960's. Some of his films were adaptations of works by leading Chinese writers, but many were original creations.

Sya Yan's first major play appeared in the mid-1930's. This work, *Sai Jin-hwa* (賽金花) is a patriotic treatment of the courtesan-friend of General Waldersee, the commander of the Allied Forces that put down the Boxer Rebellion in 1900. Another of Sya's pre-war plays, *The Tale of Chyou Jin* (秋瑾傳) also deals with a woman, but this time a Chinese suffragette, journalist and revolutionary of the turn of the century. While both of these plays emphasize patriotic themes, especially anti-imperialism, those plays written during the War years do so even more. His one-act plays in particular were mainly propaganda pieces to arouse

the people. His major war-time dramas all deal with the Sino-Japanese War: *City of Sorrow* (愁城記) treats life of writers in Japanese-occupied Shanghai, *Fascist Bacteria* (法西斯細菌) deals with a Japanese-trained Chinese doctor who abandons research for hospital work, and *Psychological Defense* (心防) portrays the activities of teachers in Japanese-occupied areas. Other plays from this period similarly deal with the problem of the War and the Japanese occupation. Sya Yan's last major play, *The Test*, (考驗) was written in 1953 and, curiously enough, is the only one of his plays available in English translation.³

Under the Eaves of Shanghai is one of Sya's pre-war plays, and though the War had not yet begun its imminence is suggested here and there in the play. The play deals with one day in the lives of the residents of a house in Shanghai in the Spring of 1937. The house is actually rented by Lin Jr-cheng who lives on the main floor and rents out the other rooms. Lin's wife Yang Tsai-yu and her daughter Bau-jen live with Lin. Lin is a factory worker, but he apparently has a certain amount of responsibility at the factory for he is called on in a crisis and his job has turned him into a pessimist and a cynic. His wife is really not his wife at all, but the wife of his best friend, Kwang Fu, who has been in prison for almost ten years. After Kwang was imprisoned, Lin took in Yang and her daughter to keep them from destitution. In the interim, Lin has developed a strong affection for Yang and Bau-jen. At the end of Act I, Kwang Fu returns and Lin tries to explain what he did and take all responsibility on himself.

One of the other families in the house is Hwang Jya-mei and his wife Gwei-fen and their baby Mimi. Hwang is an intellectual who is unemployed and also appears to be suffering from consumption. As if it were not enough that Hwang is tormented by unemployment and illness, he is now playing host to his father who is visiting. Old Hwang is a simple countryman but he has worked hard to get his son an education and is very proud of him. The son, on the other hand, is miserable because he feels he is a failure and has been unfilial. Gwei-fen's attempts to comfort him only intensify his despair.

The kitchen room is rented by Jau Jeng-yu and his wife and two children. Jau is a teacher and a very easy-going, optimistic, idealistic type. Quite the reverse of Lin. Jau is the perennial teacher and cannot help but treat other people as though they were children to be taught. In fact, he almost seems to prefer the company of children. As an intellectual, he does his best to keep up with the news and throughout the play he is either reading a newspaper or quoting from one. Jau's wife is a hard-headed practical woman who abuses her husband for his idealism and patience. She is a realist, and a rather impatient one at that.

The second-floor room is rented by Shr Syau-bau, a girl in her twenties with no visible means of support. Her boyfriend Johnny is a sailor who is presently away at sea. In the meantime Syau-bau is courted

and abused by a young man who is something of a hood. The attic room is rented by Li Ling-bei who makes his living selling newspapers. When Li is on stage he is usually singing snatches from an opera and quite often he is drunk.

While these characters all share the same house they each have their individual problems. Lin has been living with his best friend's wife for ten years and now that his best friend has reappeared, he must decide what to do. Yang and her daughter have been living with Lin for all these years so she has some obligation to him, but after all, Kwang is really her husband. Kwang, for his part, must decide whether to assert his rights as Yang's husband, or to leave her to Lin and disappear again.

The issues faced by Hwang are different in nature, but no less crucial to his moral and psychological state. He has been put through school by his father but is unable to find work. To spare himself embarrassment and at the same time to keep from disappointing his father, he pretends to have a teaching job. The economic and psychological costs of young Hwang's facade must be shared by his wife Gwei-fen. Her attempts to share his burden and reassure him only increase his torment.

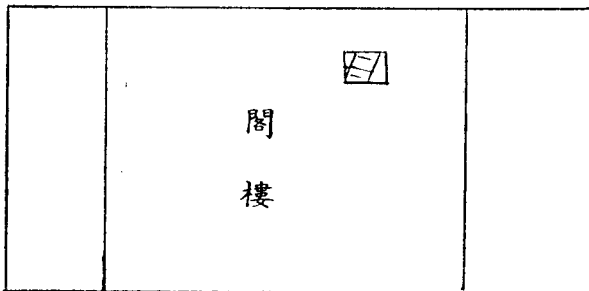
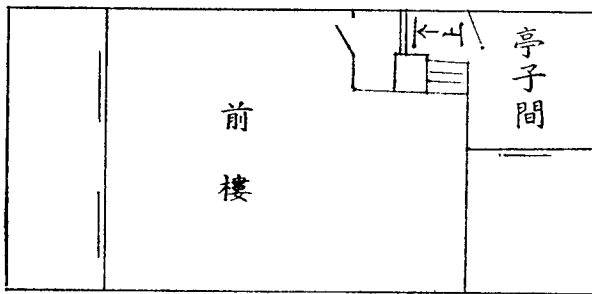
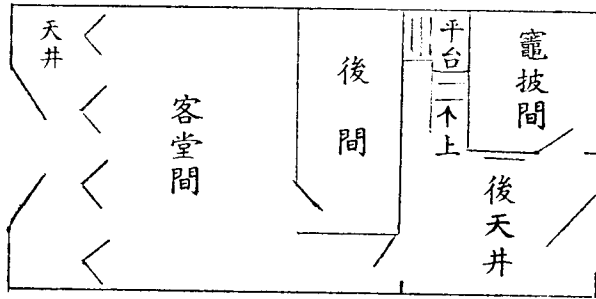
The only group which does not seem to be involved in anything more than the struggle to survive is the Jau family. Jau seems to represent the ordinary man — the one who manages to muddle through without any great crises. At the same time, the family serves as a chorus, relaying information and providing a commentary on the general state of affairs.

The play throws light on the situation among the lower economic groups in China on the eve of the war with Japan. The depression brought on by the sense of helplessness is intensified by the rain which starts and stops so suddenly that it must in some sense reflect the general unpredictability of events. In spite of the bleak outlook on the political and economic future, the play emphasizes the need of all people to maintain their human dignity and honor.

Notes:

1. This biographical sketch is essentially a summary of the entry on Shen in Howard Boorman, ed., *Biographical Dictionary of Republican China* (New York, 1970), Vol. 3, pp. 109-110.
2. N. T. Fedorenko, *Kitayskaya Literatura* (Moscow, 1956), p. 409.
3. *The Test: A Play in Five Acts*, tr. Ying Yu, (Peking, 1956).

Stage Setting



Stage Setting Explained

This house is a typical example of a middle-class housing project built in Shanghai during the thirties. There is no space between the houses, but there is a common lane (lùngtáng) which leads to the street, thus the name lane-house (lùngtáng-fángdz).

Most houses of this type have a small front courtyard (tyānjǐng) where people can plant some flowers and many also have a back courtyard for washing and drying clothes (hòu Tyān-Jǐng). All the houses have two stories with a big unpartitioned room on each story. The room downstairs (kè táng jyān) is to be used as a parlor and dining room and the room upstairs as a bedroom. The tíngdǔjyān, a small room off the landing, is the maid's room. The kitchen is quite large, especially if the house has no back courtyard. A part of the kitchen, the dzàupíjyān, is the cook's quarters. Nearby is often a ping-tai, a sort of porch. During the thirties, because of the increase in population in the city, houses like this were partitioned and sublet to several families. Even the attic (Ge-Lou), which was not tall enough to stand up in, was rented as a sleeping place.

上海屋簷下

夏衍 著

- | | | | |
|-----|-----|---------------------|---|
| 1. | 屋簷 | <i>wūyán</i> | eaves |
| 2. | 幕 | <i>mù</i> | curtain, act (of a play) |
| 3. | 人物 | <i>rénwù</i> | 戲裏的人 |
| 4. | 楊彩玉 | <i>Yáng Tsäiyù</i> | (人名) |
| 5. | 妻 | <i>chī</i> | 太太 |
| 6. | 匡復 | <i>Kwāngfù</i> | (人名, 匡是姓) |
| 7. | 前夫 | <i>chyánfū</i> | 從前的先生(夫: 丈夫) |
| 8. | 葆珍 | <i>Bǎujēn</i> | (人名) |
| 9. | 女 | <i>nyǔ</i> | 女兒 |
| 10. | 黃家楣 | <i>Hwáng Jyāméi</i> | (人名) |
| 11. | 亭子間 | <i>tíngdzjyān</i> | room off the landing (亭子: rest-house) [S] |
| 12. | 房客 | <i>fángkè</i> | 租別人房子的人 |
| 13. | 桂芬 | <i>Gwèifēn</i> | (人名) |
| 14. | 施小寶 | <i>Shī Syǎubǎu</i> | (人名) |
| 15. | 前樓 | <i>chyánlóu</i> | 前頭樓上的屋子 |
| 16. | 小天津 | <i>Syǎutyānjīng</i> | (nickname for a young person who is from Tientsin) |
| 17. | 情夫 | <i>chíngfū</i> | a married woman's lover |
| 18. | 趙振宇 | <i>Jào Jènyǔ</i> | (人名) |
| 19. | 竈披間 | <i>dzàupījyān</i> | 和廚房連在一起的屋子, 是爲
廚子睡覺用的(竈: kitchen-
range; 披: close to) |
| 20. | 阿香 | <i>Āsyāng</i> | (女孩子的名字) |
| 21. | 阿牛 | <i>Ānyóu</i> | (男孩子的名字) |

上海屋簷下

夏衍

第一幕

人物：

- | | |
|------------|-------------|
| <u>林志成</u> | 三十六歲。 |
| <u>楊彩玉</u> | 其妻，三十二歲。 |
| <u>匡復</u> | 彩玉的前夫，三十四歲。 |
| <u>葆珍</u> | 其女，十二歲。 |
| <u>黃家楣</u> | 亭子間房客，二十八歲。 |
| <u>桂芬</u> | 其妻，二十四歲。 |
| <u>黃父</u> | 五十八歲。 |
| <u>施小寶</u> | 前樓房客，二十七八歲。 |
| <u>小天津</u> | 她的情夫，三十左右。 |
| <u>趙振宇</u> | 竈披間房客，四十八歲。 |
| <u>其妻</u> | 四十二歲。 |
| <u>阿香</u> | 其女，五歲。 |
| <u>阿牛</u> | 其子，十三歲。 |

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|----|------|----------------------|---|
| 1. | 李陵碑 | <i>Lǐlíngbēi</i> | (Name of a Chinese opera about a Sung Dynasty general who was surrounded by the enemy at a place called Lilingpei. He sent his son back for relief troops which did not arrive. The music and lyrics of the opera are very sad. Here the term is used for a person who always sings a song from the opera. Li Ling was a general of the Han Dynasty who surrendered to the Hsiung Nu after his defeat. Following his death he was buried there and a tombstone (bēi) was erected. |
| 2. | 閣樓 | <i>gélóu</i> | attic |
| 3. | 換舊貨者 | <i>hwànjyòuhwòjě</i> | junkman |
| 4. | 包飯作 | <i>bāufàndzwo</i> | (restaurant which contracts to supply meals at a fixed price. The food may be delivered.)
[S] |
| 5. | 夥計 | <i>hwǒji</i> | 在飯館裏，鋪子裏工作的人 |
| 6. | 同一 | <i>túngyī</i> | one and the same |
| 7. | 場所 | <i>chǎngswo</i> | 地方 |
| 8. | 黃梅時節 | <i>hwángméisíjyě</i> | 每年在三四月裏，天常常下雨，那個時候叫黃梅天，或是黃梅時節。(時節: time, season) |
| 9. | 一日間 | <i>yítjyān</i> | 一天裏 [C] |

李陵碑 閣樓房客，五十四歲。

其 他 換舊貨者，賣菜者，包飯作夥計等。

地點：

三幕同一場所。

時代：

一九三七年四月，黃梅時節的一日間。

- | | | | |
|-----|------|-----------------------|---|
| 1. | 習見 | <i>syijyàn</i> | 常常看見 |
| 2. | 衙堂房子 | <i>lùntáng fángdz</i> | 是一種二層樓，沒有花園的房子。房子與房子間沒有空地。這種房子多半都造在一條衙堂裏所以叫衙堂房子。衙堂: lane) [S] |
| 3. | 橫斷面 | <i>héngdwànmyàn</i> | cross section |
| 4. | 右側 | <i>yòutsè</i> | 右邊兒 [C] |
| 5. | 望見 | <i>wàngjyàn</i> | 看見 |
| 6. | 人物 | <i>rénwù</i> | (見 2.3) |
| 7. | 接着 | <i>jyēje</i> | 在旁邊兒，連在一塊兒 |
| 8. | 竈披間 | <i>dzàupijyān</i> | (見 2.19) |
| 9. | 自來水龍 | <i>džláishwěilúng</i> | water faucet (龍 or 龍頭: faucet) |
| 10. | 水門汀 | <i>shwěiméntīng</i> | concrete, cement (transliteration) [S] |
| 11. | 砌成 | <i>chìchéng</i> | to build (such as a wall) with bricks and cement |
| 12. | 水斗 | <i>shwěidǒu</i> | a cement basin with a drain at the bottom built under an outdoor faucet (see illus. p. 263) |
| 13. | 上方 | <i>shàngfāng</i> | 上頭 [S] |
| 14. | 亭子間 | <i>tingdzjyān</i> | (見 2.11) |
| 15. | 稍下 | <i>shāusyà</i> | 下頭一點兒 [C] |
| 16. | 馬口鐵 | <i>mākǒutyě</i> | sheet iron [S] |
| 17. | 傾斜 | <i>chīngsyé</i> | to incline [C] |
| 18. | 雨披 | <i>yǔpī</i> | an awning [C] |
| 19. | 淘米 | <i>táumǐ</i> | 洗米 (淘: to wash in a sieve) |
| 20. | 淘籬 | <i>táulwó</i> | 洗米用的籬 (籬: a bamboo basket; see illus. p. 263) |
| 21. | 蒸架 | <i>jēngjyà</i> | a rack used to steam food (see illus. p. 263) |
| 22. | 尿布 | <i>nyàubù</i> | diaper |

上海東區習見的「衙堂房子」，橫斷面，右側是開着的後門，從這可以望見在衙內來往的人物。接着是竈披間，前面是自來水龍和水門汀砌成的水斗，竈披間上方是亭子間的窗，窗開着，窗口稍下是馬口鐵做成的傾斜的雨披。這樣下雨的日子人們也可以在水斗左右淘米。亭子間窗口掛着淘籬蒸架……和已洗未乾的小孩尿布。竈披間向左，是