

# Taming the Dragon and the Tiger

*A Play in Six Scenes*

TUAN CHENG-PIN AND TU SHIH-TSUN

FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS

PEKING 1961

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Translated by

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## CHARACTERS

HSING, Secretary Hsing, 36, deputy secretary of the county Party committee

HO, Ho Kuo-chang, 23, county prospecting technician

YIN, Yin Che-fu, 30, bridge engineer sent down from the province

MENG, Meng Tan-hua, 24, bridge-building technician, Yin Che-fu's fiancée

JIN, Jin Teh-lung, 32, head of a production brigade and commander of the Water Conservancy Engineering Battalion of Dragon Gate People's Commune

CHAO, Chao Ta-kang, 28, head of a production team in Tiger Hill People's Commune

LI, Li Yu-tao, 26, head of a women's production team and commander of the Women's Company of Tiger Hill People's Commune, Chao Ta-kang's wife

CHIN, Uncle Chin, 60, orchard man in Tiger Hill People's Commune

DAD, Dad Chao, 58, veteran boatman, Chao Ta-kang's father

CHEN, Chen Chang-shou, 35, director of the iron foundry in Huapikou People's Commune

KAO, Kao Shou-tien, 29, commander of the Transport Company in Kaoshan People's Commune

LIU, Liu Pao-shan, 32, cadre in the steel mill in Liushuwan People's Commune

FEI, Fei-mao-tui (Fast Running Legs), 20, member of a production team in Tiger Hill People's Commune

CHANG, Chang Lao-erh, 53, member of a production team in Tiger Hill People's Commune

TSAO, Tsao Lao-szu, 50, member of a production team in Tiger Hill People's Commune

PEASANTS and MEMBERS, of the hunting team



## TIME

Autumn 1958

## PLACE

Tiger Hill Area

## SCENE I

### Glad Tidings in the Hills

*Forest area skirting the Dragon River; the waves in the river can be seen rolling eastwards.*

*When the curtain rises a large tiger with a white mark on its forehead is sitting on a crag overgrown with tangled undergrowth. From the forest comes the sound of hunters' drums and horns, reverberating across hill and valley. The tiger shrinks back in alarm and leaps out of sight.*

*A short pause, then a yellow flag leads on Chao Takang and a team of powerfully-built hunters; on the flag is the inscription in red: "Youth Tiger-hunting Team of Tiger Hill People's Commune." The team looks round for the tiger's spoor.*

CHAO (*discovering the tiger's spoor*): Tieh-chu, you block the east side! Shih-tou, you block the west side! Erh-shun, you go round and head him off; Fei-mao-tui, you come with me!

*(All go off following the spoor.)*

*(Chen Chang-shou, Liu Pao-shan and Kao Shou-tien come on together. They are just going to move forward when they are halted by a shout from the forest.)*

VOICE OFF: Stop! There's a pitfall in the forest, with a noose in it!

LIU: It wouldn't stop us if there were swords in it!

KAO: We're on urgent business, neighbour.

CHEN: Hey, neighbour, how do we get to Lu Pan's Rock?

VOICE OFF: What's your business?

CHEN: I'm Chen Chang-shou, director of the iron foundry in the Huapikou Commune.

LIU: I'm Liu Pao-shan, technician in the steel mill in the Liushuwan Commune.

KAO: And I'm Kao Shou-tien, commander of the Transport Company in the Kaoshan Commune.

VOICE OFF: Fei-mao-tui, go and have a look.

*(Fei-mao-tui, a member of the hunting team, appears on the top of a rock.)*

FEI: Hello there, up here looking for ore, I suppose, are you? If I'm wrong you can do this to me! *(Makes motion of chopping off his head.)*

CHEN: You've got it.

FEI: Let me tell you something. The furnace in our commune foundry here has long since been going hungry and we're looking for something to keep it alive with at this moment.

CHEN *(to Kao and Liu)*: Huh, they're certainly keen on looking after themselves!

LIU: Whatever you say you people ought to be well-fed here.

KAO: We heard some time back that ore had been found on Tiger Hill; don't hoard it all for yourselves.

CHEN: Come on, be honest. We're here to arrange for shifting the ore.

FEI: Shifting it?

KAO

LIU

CHEN

*(together):* Yes, shifting it.

FEI: All right, just a minute while I report to the team leader. *(Turning and addressing his remarks to the forest.)* Team Leader, there are some people here who've come into the hills to transport ore.

*(Enter Chao carrying a hunting rifle.)*

CHAO: Transporting ore? Who's this coming to transport our ore for us?

CHEN: We've come to get some ore from you. You people are world-famous, you know!

KAO: We'll have carts laid on at the drop of a hat.

CHAO (*bursting out laughing*): Ha-ha-ha. . . . You're not wrong there's ore on Tiger Hill — the only trouble is it's stuck on the other side of the river and won't stir its stumps!

LIU (*to Chen and Kao*): Hear that? This one's even more set on looking after his own local interests!

CHAO: Who are you accusing of looking after their own interests? We're only out hunting and clearing the hills so that we can build a bridge and get the ore for all of us.

KAO: *Tcha*, we could go on like this all day. Let's get back and think up some other way.

CHEN (*holding Kao back*): Wait a minute. (*To Chao.*) We want to see the county Party secretary.

KAO: Which one?

CHEN: Secretary Hsing, the man who was sent down from the county to work in your commune.

CHAO: Oh, you mean Hsing. He's staying with the commune Party committee, you've taken the wrong turning.

KAO: We've been there. They told us he'd come over to Lu Pan's Rock.

CHAO: Over here to the hunting area again? Is that true?

CHEN: Can't be any doubt about it: it was Yang, the head of the commune, who told us.

CHAO (*loudly*): Attention, hunting team! Secretary Hsing is at Lu Pan's Rock, mind you look after him. . . . (*Sounds of the message being passed on come from the forest.*)

CHEN: Anyway, Secretary Hsing can't let our iron furnaces go hungry.

LIU: And the little converter in our steel mill is starving, too, when you are hungry.

CHAO: From what you say it seems you're really concerned with making iron and steel in a big way.

KAO }  
LIU } (together): We'll see to it that the key iron  
CHEN } and steel industry gets a big boost.

CHAO: Fei-mao-tui!

FEI: Here!

CHAO: Take them through the hunting area. I'll hold you responsible for their safety.

FEI: Right.

*(Roar of tiger from nearby. Chao turns and exits running.)*

CHEN: Who's he?

FEI: Ah, he's a man, as they say, who "when he goes into the mountains can kill a tiger and when he goes into the sea can shackle a dragon," a brave lad whose name is known far and wide round our Tiger Hill. . . .

KAO }  
LIU } (together): Chao — Ta — kang!  
CHEN }

FEI: Come on, then. *(Like a gust of wind he springs in behind the rocks.)*

KAO }  
LIU } : Hey, wait a minute, can't you! *(They run off*  
CHEN } *after him.)*

*(The stage is empty for a short while. Music.)*

*(Enter Meng Tan-hua with a rucksack on her back and a bunch of wild flowers in her hands.)*

MENG (excitedly): Oh, wonderful! *(Shouting to someone off.)* Che-fu! Che-fu! *(Short pause, then Yin Che-fu clambers on stage along the foot of the rocks.)*

MENG: Look, I've discovered a new continent!

YIN (looking around with admiration): This is exactly what the poet meant when he said: "At the end of the hills and the end of the streams I thought there



was no way through, when, shaded by willows and lit by flowers, a village came into view." Beautiful, isn't it!

MENG (*pointing to a clump of red flowers on the top of the rocks*): Look! A beautiful patch of red, all those flowers, and so pretty! (*She goes to climb up.*)

YIN (*stopping her*): You'll tire yourself out if you're not careful, Tan-hua.

MENG: I want to pick one of those red ones.

YIN: Well — I'll get one for you. (*He climbs vigorously up the rocks.*)

MENG: Be careful, Che-fu!

YIN (*standing on the rocks and looking out over the wild scenery*): Wonderful!

*How vast is our motherland,*

*How many hills and streams have yet to be opened up. . . .*

MENG (*continuing the recitation*):

*The slumbering earth must awake,*

*Its grassland days are done.*

(*Breaking into a peal of laughter.*) Hurry on down, comrade poet!

(*Yin clammers down with difficulty and hands the flowers to Meng Tan-hua.*)

MENG: What's this flower called?

YIN: Why, that's red-blaze-on-the-hills.

MENG: Red-blaze-on-the-hills! What perfect symbolism! In the sense that we turn red in body and mind the moment we set foot in the hills.

YIN: Well put. But just being red's not enough: we must be red through and through. Whatever we do we must build this bridge over the Dragon River and not betray the hopes that the comrades leading the provincial Party committee have pinned on us. (*Sitting down and pouring out water.*) Have a drink of water.

MENG: What's this, resting? We must be moving on, it's getting late.

YIN: No need to be in such a hurry, it doesn't look as if we've much farther to go.

MENG: How can you tell?

YIN: Why, you can see for yourself. (*Pointing.*) See how like a tiger's head that peak is over there?

MENG (*looking into the distance*): Too much like one for comfort. With that great gaping mouth it looks terrifying.

YIN: That *must* be the Tiger Hill that Secretary Chang at the provincial Party committee mentioned.

MENG: He's quite a humorist, Secretary Chang: he said the authorities had cancelled our leave and were sending us up into the hills to kill a tiger. . . . I was quite alarmed at the time and it wasn't till afterwards that I realized we were being sent down here to master this Tiger Hill. . . .

YIN (*pointing*): We've been sent to master that glittering silver Dragon River and build a bridge across it so that the hill people can open up a "hill of a hundred treasures" and exploit its rich mineral resources. We've a heavy burden on our shoulders, Tan-hua!

MENG: And one to be proud of. You must give all your knowledge and skill to these hills, Che-fu.

YIN: Don't worry about that. If I hadn't the determination of a Wu Sung\* killing a tiger I'd never have dared take on the task of building a bridge across the Dragon River.

MENG: All right, then, when the day comes to hold the opening ceremony for the great bridge you have designed, we'll do as we did at that party in the city and stage that act *Brother and Sister Reclaim the Waste Lands* for the people here.

YIN: No, I suggest a change of programme: *Husband and Wife Learn to Read!* (*He goes up to her and is about to take her in his arms.*)

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\* A well-known brave man in the popular novel *Water Margin* who killed a tiger all alone.

(A hunting horn is heard.)

MENG (pushing him away): Listen.

YIN: Sounds like somebody out hunting.

(They go over towards the foot of the slope and look.)

(The roar of a tiger from the foot of the slope.)

MENG: *Aiya*, a tiger!

YIN: Quick, come here!

(He takes her to hide in a deep gully.)

(A snarling tiger appears on the slope. At this critical moment a loud shout comes from the forest: "Don't you dare harm anyone, you brute!" At the same moment Chao rushes on with lightning steps, forcing the tiger off the rocks, and quickly pursues it with his rifle in his hands. From behind the hill comes the sound of a struggle between man and beast.)

FIRST HUNTER (raising his rifle and taking aim): Team Leader Chao! Keep away from him! (He fires.)

SECOND HUNTER: Damn, missed him!—He's got away.

FIRST HUNTER: Team Leader Chao, don't go after him!

SECOND HUNTER: He has, though. (Starting off in pursuit.) Come on, let's get after them.

FIRST HUNTER: Wait a minute. There are two comrades from outside sheltering here.

(The two men come over and greet Yin Che-fu and Meng Tan-hua.)

FIRST HUNTER: The tiger's gone, comrades.

(They help Yin and Meng up.)

YIN: It's all right, Tan-hua, the tiger's gone.

MENG: Whew, I was terrified. . . .

SECOND HUNTER: Now, comrades, you'll be. . . .

YIN: We've been sent down from the province to build a bridge. (The two hunters shake hands with them.) (Stage lights out.)

(The next scene follows at once; we are still on the bank of the Dragon River. "Lu Pan's Rock" is just that: a large rock of a curious shape.)

*(On the left by the river the corner of a newly-built house of white pine is visible, a house built according to Uncle Chin's wishes.)*

*(When the lights come on again, Uncle Chin is sitting on the sloping river bank, gazing out across the river at Tiger Hill and singing softly, accompanying himself on a three-stringed lute.)*

CHIN *(singing)*:

For water you must go to the Dragon River,  
For treasure you must dig on Tiger Hill,  
In the hill there's a treasure bowl,  
Plant trees in the bowl and money grows.  
Untold rare gems and wondrous treasures  
Have never left the hill all down the ages;  
We spend our days in hope and longing,  
But there's only the churning of the great river's waves.  
*(He walks down the bank with the lute in his arms.)*  
*(Fei-mao-tui comes running on like a gust of wind.)*

FEI *(turning and calling to someone coming along behind him)*: Hey, get a move on there! Hurry . . . hurry . . .  
*(mischievously)* there's a tiger behind you!  
*(Chen Chang-shou and his companions come running on, out of breath.)*

KAO *(gasping for breath)*: Mother of mine, you've worn me out!

CHEN *(still panting)*: We're not at a county sports meeting, you know!

FEI: I can't help it, it's my legs, they won't stop!

KAO *(taking off a cloth shoe with the sole coming off)*:

Tcha, that's one pair of new shoes as good as finished!

LIU: Are we there yet?

FEI *(pointing to Lu Pan's Rock)*: Can't you see?

CHEN: Where's Secretary Hsing, then?

FEI: I'll inquire. *(Shouting down the slope.)* Uncle Chin, there are three commune cadres here looking for Secretary Hsing.

CHIN (*pointing to the wooden house*): Old Hsing did spend the night here. . . .

THE OTHERS (*running towards the house*): Secretary Hsing!

CHIN: But he flew off as soon as it got light, over the river to Tiger Hill.

FEI (*startled*): Over the river! Mother of mine, Old Hsing gone over the river!

CHEN (*looking at the river*): How could he have got across through waves of that size?

CHIN: Old Chao took him over in his boat! I watched the little boat spin round three or four times myself, but they got across in the end!

KAO (*staring across the river*): He ought to be back by now, considering how late it is.

LIU (*also staring across*): Not a sign of the boat, either.

CHEN: There's a saying that it's easier to climb the sky than Tiger Hill. Could anything. . . .

CHIN: If he can get across he can get back. If it had been anybody else Old Chao wouldn't have agreed to take him over in his boat.

LIU (*to Chen*): Well, are we just going to stand about here looking at each other?

CHEN: Let's hear what you think we should do, then.

KAO: Let's call the whole thing off. Even supposing there was anything worth having in this bare hill it would be years before we were able to shift the stuff across. I can only repeat I think we should find some other solution.

CHIN (*flying into a rage*): Just because you've no intention of building a bridge there's no need for you to go calling Tiger Hill a bare hill! You watch your language doesn't rot your tongue off!

KAO (*sticking out his tongue with shock*): No need to snap my head off!



FEI (*drawing Kao to one side*): You don't have to go running down Tiger Hill. The old fellow's touchy about it.

CHIN: Pah, if there were no treasure in Tiger Hill do you think we'd be in such a hurry to build a bridge over the Dragon River? If there's anybody so blind that he can't see the good of Tiger Hill I'll keep him here till the middle of the night and let the whole hill shining with jewels open his blind eyes for him!

FEI: He's a stranger to these parts, you can't expect him to know that.

CHIN: Oh . . . you're a stranger. That explains it, then. (*To Chen with a smile.*) You mustn't take any notice of me when I let fly like that, it's only for a moment. In future when you see me going red in the face just ignore me, I soon get over it. And now let's go indoors and have a cup of tea.

KAO: We'd better wait here where we are, dad.

CHIN (*glaring again*): If I tell you to come indoors you come indoors! Come and look at this pine-wood house that the commune's built me, white pine throughout, from the roof to the furniture inside. . . .

FEI: Uncle Chin looks after the orchards on the hill here for the commune.

CHIN: Come inside.

(*They all go inside the wooden house, leaving Fei-mao-tui watching by the river.*)

(*The sound of hunting drums and horns approaches from the distance. Chao Ta-kang hurries up at the head of his team, followed by Chang Lao-erh and Tsao Lao-szu.*)

CHAO: Fei-mao-tui, did the tiger come this way?

FEI: Haven't seen him.

CHAO (*dispiritedly*): Huh, so the brute's given us the slip, after me tearing after him all this way. Did you see Old Hsing?

FEI: Uncle Chin says he's gone over the river and up Tiger Hill.

CHAO (*startled*): What! Gone across the river! Again?

CHIN: Yes, that superstitious father of yours took him across in his boat! He'll be even more anxious to build a bridge after a couple more trips to hunt down the treasures of Tiger Hill.

CHAO: In that case, Ho Kuo-chang must have gone across with him.

CHIN: Ho Kuo-chang?

CHAO: Yes, Ho Kuo-chang, the technician that was sent down from the county.

CHIN: Oh, you mean Young Ho that's been across the river three times in search of Tiger Hill's treasures! Hah, must be getting old, can't even remember people's proper names any longer. . . . Yes, he went over, too.

CHANG: Ah, it's very dangerous up on that hill, with the forest so thick that a wild-goose couldn't fly through it.

CHAO (*taking off his jacket*): Across with me, those who can swim!

(*Several members of the team take off their jackets.*)

CHIN: You want to get yourselves drowned, going into great waves like these, where even the wild-ducks don't dare so much as get their wings wet?

FIRST HUNTER: If Secretary Hsing can get across so can we!

CHIN: Easy does it! You can't go setting yourselves up beside Old Hsing: he's been a guerrilla, and a battalion commander in the People's Liberation Army, he's crossed the Yellow River and the Yangtse, he's been through the roughest water there is!

CHAO: Don't worry, we'll be across all right after we've been swirled round a few times in midstream.

CHIN: You think they'd be up to that?

CHAO: I'll go across on my own. . . . (*He goes to plunge into the river.*)

CHIN (*seizing him by the arm*): What's the point?

CHAO: To fetch Secretary Hsing, uncle, to fetch Secretary Hsing!

(*Fei-mao-tui catches sight of Dad Chao.*)

FEI: Uncle, here's Dad Chao back!

(*At this moment a voice comes from downstream: "Brother Chin, Brother Chin!" The voice comes nearer.*)

(*Dad Chao runs up, panting and shaken.*)

CHIN: Why's there only you come back?

DAD (*still gasping for breath*): You're lucky to see me still alive, brother.

CHAO }  
CHIN } (*together, alarmed*): An accident?

THE OTHERS: What about Secretary Hsing?

DAD: Master Lu Pan\* protected us! (*He points across.*)  
(*They all crowd across towards where Dad Chao has pointed.*)

(*Uncle Chin goes into the wooden house.*)

(*Dad Chao kneels before Lu Pan's Rock and kowtows.*)

(*A short pause, then the others return, crowding round Secretary Hsing.*)

HSING (*seeing Dad Chao kowtowing*): Dad Chao, I asked you what you were running so fast for, and now I see: you were in a hurry to see Master Lu Pan and thank him for answering your prayers!

THE OTHERS (*laughing*): Dear, oh dear! So you got back after all, Secretary Hsing.

CHAO: Come on, get up, dad.

HSING: One of you go and meet Ho Kuo-chang. He's got too much stuff to carry to manage on his own.

FEI: I'll go. (*He runs off.*)

(*Uncle Chin comes out of the house carrying a small jar of wine.*)

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\* A master craftsman and legendary figure, considered the father of carpentry in China.