



# GOLDEN EAGLE

*Isogtnarin*

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FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS PEKING

1961



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### Author's Note

To my great satisfaction as an author, the English edition of the play *Golden Eagle* is to be presented to the wide reading public.

I am a young Mongolian, educated by the Chinese Communist Party. I am devoting myself to literary work. From 1952 onwards I came into close contact with the people of the grasslands, travelling extensively through the rich, fertile land of Silingol, where I met a great many happy, healthy people, men and women, old and young. They live in plenty; working proudly and cheerfully to build a socialist motherland. As we live in the present era in China when there is no more misery, it is rather difficult to imagine the unhappy fate that befell our forebears in those dark bygone days.

Fifteen years ago our people were still under the age-old bloody rule of imperialism, feudal princes and lords. The misery and suffering of the people was endless; life was intolerable; everywhere the grassland was stained with blood and watered by the tears of slaves. What a price people had to pay when they strove for a more reasonable life, nay, a mere beautiful dream! It was only with the great victory of the Chinese people's revolution that this dark age was brought to a close.

*Golden Eagle* describes life on the grassland half a century ago when the words of a prince were law. His deified power brought the poor herdsmen countless woes and degradation, imposing on them extra-economic exploitation and inhuman treatment. The beautiful grassland was always shrouded in darkness and gloom and all the year round the horse-headed guitar played tunes of lament. The good but unfortunate people could only place their hopes in Buddha or other gods.

Nevertheless, a voice of protest, however small, echoed all over the grassland, and the news of a heroic deed, however insignificant, was passed from mouth to mouth and praised by the people. Today, after the victory of the revolution, in the period of socialist construction if we visit this grassland, we can no longer witness, nor even imagine, the former dark days of humiliation and exploitation. We can, however, meet quite a few respected old people — formerly humiliated and exploited slaves, who are now masters of the grassland. In their leisure hours, particularly when they talk about their present happy life, they cannot refrain from recalling their past misery and suffering. With great earnestness they advise the younger generation to cherish and hold dear the life they enjoy today, to be grateful to the Communist Party and never to forget Chairman Mao. It was on such occasions that I heard many stories about brave fighters who resisted the brutal rulers — stories which inspired me to write the play *Golden Eagle*. When I told my comrades and herdsman friends about my intention, I received encouragement and assistance from all sides which gave me even greater inspiration to write.

The time of *Golden Eagle* is gone for ever. The various nationalities in China are now united as brothers in our great socialist motherland. Guided by the bright national policy of the Chinese Communist Party, our people, like those of the other fraternal nationalities throughout China, with complete confidence and limitless energy, are building up the motherland.

It will be my greatest joy if, through this play, my readers will understand how, in the dark days under the black whips of the prince, the unfortunate slaves rose in revolt against the tyrant and how they united together to fight bravely and unflinchingly against their barbarous rulers.

To my foreign readers I hereby pay my friendly and sincere respects.

Tsogtnarin

June 9, 1960



**TIME:**

During the rule of the feudal princes.

**PLACE:**

The Inner-Mongolian grasslands.

**CHARACTERS:**

BURKUT — or “Golden Eagle”, a poor young herdsman of the Bahyen Banner

SHIL — an old silversmith of the Bahyen Banner, Burkut’s foster-father

SHOBU — Shil’s son, Burkut’s intimate friend

ANSAL — the warden in the Bahyen prison, father of Zanbu who is a wrestler in the service of Prince Bahyen

DOKARMA — Zanbu’s wife, Ansal’s daughter-in-law

SAMDAN — a maiden of the Akon Banner, in love with Burkut who also loves her

SAMDAN’S MOTHER — addressed by others as “Lalihua”

TCHAKANHO — a youth of the Akon Banner, ardently courting Samdan

TZAB — Tchakanho’s younger brother

PRINCE BAHYEN — ruler of the Bahyen Banner, Lord Akon’s uncle

SENKE — Prince Bahyen’s confidant

GALSAN — Lord Akon’s housekeeper

A lama of the Akon Banner — known as “Onsad-lam”

Two professional wrestlers A and B and a band of musicians  
in the service of Prince Bahyen

Maidservants in the house of Lord Akon, and a number of  
men and women guests at the wedding

Officials and soldiers of Prince Bahyen and Lord Akon

Men and women of the Bahyen and Akon Banners

## ACT I

(Prince Bahyen officiates at an *obo*.<sup>1</sup>)

(In a spacious, richly decorated tent, a round table is spread with choice food and drinks. Prince Bahyen is feasting with his confidants, officials and high lamas. From the tent in the distance red and green silk streamers as well as snow-white *batas*<sup>2</sup> can be seen fluttering in the mild breeze. On the bandstand in the meadow the band is entertaining the party with some music.)

(The wrestlers are spoiling for the final bout, while the jockeys are about to finish their races.)

PRINCE BAHYEN: Senke! Senke!

(*Enter Senke hurriedly.*)

PRINCE BAHYEN: Haven't the jockeys come yet?

SENKE: Presently, Your Highness.

PRINCE BAHYEN: Has Zanbu been taken away?

SENKE: Not yet.

PRINCE BAHYEN: Why not?

SENKE: Following Your Highness' orders, he was given sixty lashes, after which he couldn't stand on his feet.

PRINCE BAHYEN: But didn't I say fifty?

SENKE (*sinks on his knees immediately*): Your Highness, it was I who threw in the extra ten.

<sup>1</sup>This is a pile of stones built up on the top of a ridge on a hill which looks very like a fortress. Branches and small flags with words from the Buddhist scriptures written on them are stuck into the pile. Every passer-by places a stone on the pile to show his respect for the scriptures and the *obo*. Formerly every year in spring and autumn the local people offered their sacrifices to the *obo*. It was called an *obo* meeting, at which wrestling matches, horse-races and other activities also took place.

<sup>2</sup>A piece of silk about 5 inches wide and 3 feet long (sometimes it may be as long as 10 feet). It is a Tibetan custom and that of the Mongolian people of Lamaist faith to present a *bata* as a form of greeting.



PRINCE BAHYEN: Why didn't you follow my orders?

SENKE: My noble prince. . . .

PRINCE BAHYEN: Speak up, what made you overdo it?

SENKE: Your Highness, I hate him.

PRINCE BAHYEN: But why?

SENKE: I feel that anyone who proves disloyal to Your Highness is like a thorn in my throat; he has to be removed.

PRINCE BAHYEN (*melting into a smile*): Senke, you're quite clever. You'll be richly rewarded.

SENKE: Your Highness, I'm grateful.

PRINCE BAHYEN: You may rise.

(*Senke rises to his feet.*)

PRINCE BAHYEN (*pointing to the left-over meat*): Give it to the musicians.

SENKE (*quickly picks up the plate with the left-over meat*):  
*Cha!*<sup>1</sup> (*He calls the musicians.*) Hey, a reward from His Highness. Come and take it.

(*The musicians come for the plate, kowtow to Prince Bahyen and withdraw.*)

PRINCE BAHYEN: Tell Ansal to come here.

SENKE: *Cha!* (*He steps over to the right side.*) Ansal, Ansal!

(*A voice from the back: "Cha!"*)

SENKE: You are wanted by His Highness.

(*Enter Ansal.*)

ANSAL (*throws himself at the feet of Prince Bahyen*): Your Highness.

PRINCE BAHYEN: Listen carefully, Ansal!

ANSAL: *Cha!*

PRINCE BAHYEN: Take back your son. I'm not going to feed such a wrestler. He's nothing but a disgrace to my name.

ANSAL: Won't Your Highness forgive him just this time? For six years in succession, my son Zambu has unfailingly main-

<sup>1</sup>A term used by a subordinate, usually a servant when answering a superior, equivalent to Yes, Sir, Your Highness, or Your Lordship, etc., or by a younger person to an elder.

tained the glorious name of Your Highness' ancestors. . . .  
(*A break in his voice.*) This time, will Your Highness kindly consider the little he has done in his past service, and forgive him?

PRINCE BAHYEN: You must realize, Ansal, that my words, once spoken, are law.

ANSAL: But Your Highness. . . .

PRINCE BAHYEN: But what?

ANSAL: There's a saying, "Horses are liable to stumble, and men are apt to err." Zambu, after all, only failed this once.

PRINCE BAHYEN: For an unpardonable offence once is enough. You've heard my orders. Be off at once!

(*Ansal hangs his head and withdraws speechlessly.*)

PRINCE BAHYEN: Senke Baidai!<sup>1</sup>

SENKE: *Cha!*

PRINCE BAHYEN: Go and bring my wrestlers here.

SENKE: *Cha! (Exit.)*

OFFICIAL: Your Highness' wrestlers are all like tigers. Indeed, among the 600-odd contestants in the whole banner, none can match them. This year again, they'll be the first four winners.

PRINCE BAHYEN: Not this time, I am afraid. For among the four finalists only two are my men. Shame on these animals!

OFFICIAL: Your Highness, there's no cause for worry. Even with only two candidates, they'll fight like tigers and will surely win the first two titles.

PRINCE BAHYEN: You don't understand how I feel, my good Merin.<sup>2</sup> (*He pauses.*) Even after I was buried, if anyone should come to my grave and say to me, "Prince Bahyen, your wrestler was worsted," I would immediately rise and kill that contender who stole the honour from my man.

(*Enter Senke and two wrestlers.*)

<sup>1</sup>Housekeeper for the prince.

<sup>2</sup>An official title.

PRINCE BAHYEN: Very well. Sit down, both of you.

*(The wrestlers find themselves each a seat appropriate to their status.)*

PRINCE BAHYEN: Now, which of you is to win the first prize? Have you consulted each other?

WRESTLER A: We haven't had a chance to do it yet, Your Highness.

PRINCE BAHYEN: Why haven't you?

WRESTLER A: Zambu was thrown down. That means our opponents are quite strong; so the first thing is to think of a way to beat them.

PRINCE BAHYEN *(displeased)*: You both have cold feet?

WRESTLER B: No, Your Highness. I don't overrate either of the two opponents. Your Highness has nothing to worry about.

PRINCE BAHYEN: You two had better be careful. As the saying goes, "Two rats may well gnaw off a lion's tail." One should never underestimate one's foe.

WRESTLERS *(with one voice)*: *Cha!*

PRINCE BAHYEN: It's nine years to a day since I succeeded my father as ruler of the Bahyen Banner. At every *obo* meeting, for nine times in succession, none of my wrestlers have ever sustained a reverse, nor has any one of my horses lost a single race. Thus I have successfully carried on the honourable tradition of my ancestors.

WRESTLER A: Esteemed Prince, your servant vows that never shall this wrestler's suit Your Highness has bestowed on me be soiled by touching the ground.

PRINCE BAHYEN: You'll do well to remember, while my rewards for a man's merit are generous, the penalties I impose upon him for his failure are also harsh.

WRESTLERS A AND B *(in the same breath)*: Your Highness, your servants are wholeheartedly at your service.

PRINCE BAHYEN: Very well. Senke, let them have some mare's milk.

SENKE: *Cha!*

*(The wrestlers bow their thanks and withdraw.)*

SENKE: What a world! The son of an old silversmith dares challenge His Highness' wrestlers for the championship.

OFFICIAL: That's why I can guarantee that His Highness' wrestlers will win the first two prizes.

PRINCE BAHYEN: What makes you so sure?

OFFICIAL: Aren't they afraid to lose their heads?

PRINCE BAHYEN (*somewhat annoyed*): Tuslachy,<sup>1</sup> when did you ever see me punish anybody for defeating my men, I wonder?

OFFICIAL: It's a well-known fact that Your Highness is a great patron of outstanding wrestlers.

PRINCE BAHYEN: Only in this way will they be won over.

OFFICIAL (*with an insinuation*): But, Your Highness, Burkut isn't your wrestler yet, is he?

PRINCE BAHYEN: But he is a subject of my banner. (*He pauses, and then turns to Senke.*) Tell Shil to bring over his two boys.

SENKE: *Cha!* (*He steps to one side of the tent.*) Darhan<sup>2</sup> Shil, Darhan Shil!

(*A voice from the back: "Cha!"*)

SENKE: Listen, His Highness commands you to bring your sons over right away.

(*Shil, followed by Shobu and Burkut, comes forward to kneel before Prince Bahyen and kowtow.*)

SHIL: Your Highness, at your command.

PRINCE BAHYEN: Rise, all of you. (*To Senke.*) See that they are all seated. (*He turns to Shil.*) You may all sit down. (*Pausing.*) Darhan, I see you have made yourself a name. Both of your sons are quite good. . . .

SHIL (*taken aback*): Your Highness, my sons are too young. They don't know how to behave. They shouldn't have thrown down Your Highness' wrestlers. Pray, forgive them.

<sup>1</sup>Official title of an assistant to the prince.

<sup>2</sup>Title prefixed to an artisan.

PRINCE BAHYEN: What are you saying, old silversmith? These boys of yours are fine sportsmen. They are quite plucky.

SHIL: Your Highness speaks too well of them.

PRINCE BAHYEN: Not at all. They are worthy to be called the true descendants of the great Genghis Khan. (*Pausing.*) I've found it difficult to believe that among so many of my bannermen there should have been no match for my wrestlers. As it happened, at each annual contest, only a collection of weaklings turned up, and never once have I witnessed a single contender worth his salt. (*He throws a sidelong glance at Burkut.*) Today, at last, I've found a real fighter. (*To Senke.*) Bring them some mare's milk.

SENKE (*to the attendant*): I say, bring some mare's milk. (*The attendant serves some milk to father and sons.*)

PRINCE BAHYEN: Tell me, Burkut, are you well established? Do you have property of your own?

BURKUT: Ever since I was fifteen, I have only had one thing I can call my own, and that is a bronze flute left to me by my parents.

PRINCE BAHYEN: Pitiful! Very pitiful! Burkut, would you like to work in my house?

BURKUT: What service may I render Your Highness?

PRINCE BAHYEN: You can be a first-rate wrestler in my house. Then you can break in intractable horses. You can also become a musician and serve as a flutist. You can do many things. A man like you certainly needn't worry about having nothing to do. (*He turns to Shil.*) Darhan, what do you think? (*Burkut and Shobu give Shil a meaning look, just as Prince Bahyen is addressing him.*)

SHIL: Your Highness, although the boy was brought up by me, I did so only to fulfil my duty as a friend to his deceased father. I feel therefore I have no say in the matter. Besides, with us bannermen everything rests upon Your Highness' decision, as always.



PRINCE BAHYEN (*to Burkut*): Well, what do you say, young man?

BURKUT: Your Highness, I was an orphan from childhood and as I grew up, knew no discipline or manners. I am like a wild horse in disposition. Although I have two muscular arms, I am altogether untutored in my behaviour. I'm afraid I'll be a very poor servant.

(*One hears voices shouting: "Here come the horses!"*)

SENKE: Your Highness, the horses are coming.

(*Vociferous voices.*)

PRINCE BAHYEN: Fine, I'm going to have a look.

(*Everybody goes out. Prince Bahyen and his official retinue watch from a raised dais. Shil and his sons stand on another spot. People are running up in threes and fours.*)

PRINCE BAHYEN (*lowers his spyglass*): Too dusty. I can't see clearly.

SENKE (*overwhelmed with excitement*): Your Highness' jockey, young Barbu, is leading!

PRINCE BAHYEN (*looks through his spyglass*): Yes, indeed! (*Unable to conceal his intense anxiety.*) It's my horse!

(*All eyes are focused on the race, as though spellbound. Prince Bahyen, more excited than the others, obviously believes that his horse is certain to win. Suddenly he utters a loud cry, but the rest of the spectators pay no heed to him as they watch Shil's horse passing Prince Bahyen's with lightning speed.*)

SHOBU: Father, it's our horse!

BURKUT: Yes, indeed, father! It's your chestnut!

SHOBU: Come on, Burkut, let's go and meet our horse.

(*The two run off hand in hand.*)

(*Greatly disappointed, Prince Bahyen returns to the tent. Nervously he walks up and down like a caged lion.*)

(*People are crowding around Shil to extend their congratulations to him.*)

(*Enter Burkut and Shobu together with their young jockey. The welcoming crowd immediately surrounds the whole family, and everybody joins in a spirited discussion.*)

(Senke speaks to Prince Bahyen in a whisper. The latter nods approval.)

SENKE: Hey, stop that noise!

(Everybody quiets down.)

SENKE: Listen, Darhan, Prince Bahyen has taken a fancy to your chestnut.

SHIL: Oh! . . .

SENKE: I say, Prince Bahyen has his eye on your horse.

SHIL: But it's my son's pet. He started training it when it was a little colt.

SENKE: Why, you mean to say you won't part with it?

SHOBU: Prince Bahyen owns hundreds and thousands of horses. He doesn't need ours particularly, does he?

SHIL: Shobu, you have nothing to say about this.

SENKE (to Shobu): Did anybody ask your opinion, young man? Isn't it a bit too early for you to meddle in your father's business? (Scoffingly.) Not to mention a horse, I tell you, even if His Highness demands your life, you will have to give it to him. (Vehemently.) Don't you know that you are all the slaves of His Highness?

SHIL (to Shobu): Be a good boy, go!

SENKE: You ought to know the saying, Darhan, "When a ruler demands the death of a subject, the latter must give his life." Now, all His Highness wants is your horse, and you still begrudge giving it?

SHIL: It isn't that, Sir. . . .

BURKUT: Father, there's no use arguing. If they want it so badly, let them take it. Anyway the whole banner knows that the chestnut is ours, and was trained by us. It's only because it's the winner, that His Highness wants it.

SENKE: Young man, I can see you've a sharp tongue. Do you think that His Highness would take your horse for nothing? Just name what you want in return.

SHOBU: We want nothing in return. My dear Baidai, we are here to take part in the *obo*, not to sell our horse.

(In hushed voices the onlookers enter into a private discussion of the issue.)

SHIL: Boys, don't argue! Don't talk so carelessly. (*He turns to Senke.*) Sir, since His Highness is interested in my horse, take it.

SHOBU: But, father, why. . . ?

SHIL: Boys, you are yet too young to understand the ways of the world. Don't talk so much. (*To Senke.*) Go ahead and take the horse. Since His Highness likes it, I'll make him a present of it.

SENKE (*facing the rear*): Hey! Take that chestnut of Darhan's to His Highness' stables.

(*A voice from the rear: "Chal!"*)

SENKE (*turns to Shil*): Come to the home of His Highness tomorrow for your reward.

PRINCE BAHYEN (*at the pitch of his voice*): Senke! Start the wrestling match now!

SENKE: *Chal!* (*To the crowd.*) Now the wrestling match starts.

(*At the announcement the crowd gathers.*)

SHIL (*holding back Shobu with one hand and Burkut with the other*): You must be very, very careful. (*In an undertone.*) Especially watch that dark one; he's like a rabid dog. . . . Take care of yourselves, boys. (*He helps them to adjust their wrestling suits.*) Now, go. (*He prays with folded hands.*) May Buddha bless you!

BURKUT AND SHOBU: Father, don't worry.

(*The crowd on either side starts to yell.*)

(*The wrestlers leap into the ring.*)

(*Wrestler A vs. Shobu; Wrestler B vs. Burkut; both matches commence.*)

(*After a rough struggle, Wrestler B is floored by Burkut. Cheers from the crowd.*)

PRINCE BAHYEN (*to Wrestler B wrathfully*): You idiot! I've fed you for nothing!

(*Meanwhile Senke slips into the ring and cuts in between Wrestler A and Shobu to separate them. He speaks to the former under his voice while straightening his suit.*)

(Shil wants to talk to his son, but hardly has he approached Shobu when Senke gives Wrestler A a push so that the latter darts at his opponent to renew the fighting. Shil is forced to retrace his steps, but, highly apprehensive for his son's safety, he never for a moment looks away from him.)

(The onlookers are all eyes.)

(After a spirited tussle, Wrestler A throws Shobu to the ground and deliberately falls with the full weight of his body upon the latter's chest. Shobu faints away on the spot as a result of the violent fall and the weight of the man. Senke and an attendant rush over, help Wrestler A to his feet and help him walk while he pretends to have regained consciousness.)

(When Shobu is lifted up by Shil and Burkut, all can see that blood is oozing from his mouth. At this the crowd is greatly astonished and cries out in a deafening roar. Ansal, some distance away, hurries to the scene, elbows his way through the throng to see Shobu.)

SHIL (hot tears trickling down his furrowed cheeks): Shobu, my boy, wake up!

(Burkut, in glum silence, carrying Shobu in his arms, walks out of the crowd.)

ANSAL: Keep back, please, everybody. A little breeze will do him good.

(Senke struts up, shoots a swift glance at Shobu, and then turns to Shil.)

SENKE: It's nothing much. Throw a mouthful of cold water on his face, and he will recover.

SHIL (ignoring him): My boy, wake up, wake up!

(Burkut begins to massage Shobu. The latter lifts his eyelids but lets them fall again almost immediately.)

ANSAL: Let's take him to a quiet place.

BURKUT: That's right. (He bends over Shobu and is about to carry him.)

SENKE (announcing): Now the final round of the wrestling match!