1981

A translation of and commentary on Red nose (Hung PI Tzu) - a four-act play by Yao Yi-wei (1922-)

Ying-chu Yeh
Iowa State University

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A translation of and commentary on Red Nose (Hung Pi Tzu) -
a four-act play by Yao Yi-wei (1922-)

by

Ying-chu Yeh

A Thesis Submitted to the
Graduate Faculty in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
MASTER OF ARTS

Major: English

Approved:

Signatures have been redacted for privacy

Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa

1981
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CHRONOLOGY OF YAO YI-WEI'S WORKS

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INTRODUCTION: MODERN CHINESE DRAMA
AND YAO YI-WEI'S DRAMATIC WORKS

The beginning of the modern Chinese theater dates from 1907 when a drama group called the Spring Willow Society was established by Chinese fine arts students in Tokyo. The first play performed by the Society was Ch'a Hua Nu, a Chinese version of La Dame aux Camelias by Dumas. It was followed in the same year by a performance of The Black Slaves' Cry to Heaven, a full five-act play based on a translation of Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel Uncle Tom's Cabin. The Black Slaves' Cry to Heaven was considered to be "the first real creative Chinese huaju, since it radically altered the material from the novel to suit its own dramatic purpose." It was the theme of the protest against racial prejudice that appealed to the Chinese students of that period. The performance had a significant impact: it inspired a new drama movement in China with Shanghai as its center. In the following years, many amateur and professional organizations were formed, especially in big cities along the coast and in the schools, to promote the new form of drama. The new genre has been generally referred to as hua-chü (話劇) which literally means dialogue drama.

In his book on modern Chinese literature, Szu-ma Ch'ang-feng (司馬長風) divides the development of hua-chü during the years between 1907 and 1945 into four periods: 1907-1918, period of "civilized drama" (wen-ming-hsi 文明戲); 1919-
1927, period of "amateur drama" (ai-mei-chü 爱剧, ai-mei being the phonetic transliteration of the English word "amateur"); 1928-1937, period of the professionalization of the modern theater; 1938-1945, period of maturity. Since a detailed study of the history of modern Chinese drama is impossible for this introductory essay, I will confine the discussion to the major activities in the four periods as defined by Mr. Szu-ma.

After the performance of The Black Slaves' Cry to Heaven, the Spring Willow Society existed in name only because several of its members returned to China. A year later, those who remained in Japan formed a new drama club called the Shenyu Society (申音社) which staged three one-act plays. In 1909, the Spring Sun Society (春陽社) and the Evolution Troupe (进化团) in Shanghai also began to perform the new-style plays. In 1911, Lu Ching-jo (陸鏡芳) and Ouyang Yü-ch'ien (欧阳予倩), former members of the Spring Willow Society and the Shenyu Society, formed a new drama company in Shanghai and performed again under the title of the Spring Willow Society. Their performances led to an increase of the audience and the establishment of many other new troupes. The Spring Willow Society collapsed when Lu Ching-jo died in 1914. Other drama troupes were forced, for the sake of survival, to cater to the vulgar taste of the audience. The new theater began to degenerate into spectacularity and commodity. Therefore,
although for a time the civilized plays (they were so called because the term "wen-ming-hsi" was used in advertisements to mean "progressive and advanced") were popular in cities along the coast, they faded out rapidly. In 1918, they almost completely disappeared.

Most civilized plays were based on ancient and modern Chinese tales, or translations of foreign novels and adaptations of foreign plays; only a very few were straight translations. Original creation did not appear until 1919. Ibsen was first introduced in the June 1918 issue of The New Youth (新青年). A special issue on improving drama followed in October. In March 1919, Hu Shih (胡适), the spearhead of the literary revolution (1917-1920) in China, published A Matter of Marriage (结婚誓), an imitation of Ibsen's A Doll's House. In the play, Hu Shih created the first Nora in China, a woman who revolts against her parents for the freedom of marriage. The play ends with the protagonist eloping with her lover. The publication of this play stimulated many other attempts at the creation of new plays in the following years.

Starting from 1918, the new drama movement focused on the elimination of traditional Chinese dramas and the large-scale translation of foreign plays. The achievement was remarkable so far as the translation of plays of other languages was concerned. In the span of three years, there appeared thirty-three foreign plays in translation. According to T'ien Ch'in
387 Chinese translations (including some duplications) were published during the period of 1908 and 1938. Only three of them were published before 1918. Among the approximately 350 plays, there were twenty of Shakespeare's, twelve of Shaw's, twelve of Galsworthy's, fourteen of Chekhov's, and nine of Ibsen's. Of these playwrights, Ibsen was the most influential both in form and in thought. The reason was simple: China was undergoing a drastic change in every aspect, economic, social, and political, and there was the need for an effective propaganda medium to advocate social reform. Ibsen's plays which deal with the condition of society, marriage, the emancipation of women, and social disorders naturally became an object of imitation.

In May 1921, the Popular Drama Society was set up by a group of writers, professional actors of the civilized plays, and scholars. Their manifesto fully expressed the general attitudes toward drama at that time:

Bernard Shaw once said: "The theater is a place for propagating ideas." This is not necessarily so, but at least we can say this much: the time is past when people took theatre-going as mere recreation. The theatre occupies an important place in modern society. It is a wheel rolling society forward. It is an X-ray searching out the root of society's maladies. It is also a just and impartial mirror, and the standards of everybody in the nation are stripped stark naked when reflected in this great mirror, that allows no slightest thing to remain invisible . . . . This kind of theatre is precisely what does not exist in China at present, but it is what we, feeble though we are, want to strive to create."
One of the contributions of the Popular Drama Society was the promotion of the amateur drama. Its intention was to shift the emphasis from commercial profit of the civilized drama to that of artistic value. The amateur drama did not flourish until 1924 when amateur drama societies began to increase in great number among the schools and the general public. The Shanghai Drama Association, founded in 1921, deserves special attention because, up to this point, it had already developed into a semi-professional drama troupe and consequently opened up the path for the professionalization of stage activities.

In comparison with fiction and poetry, the development of the new drama was extraordinarily slow. The key problems which faced the new drama were: first, lack of readers, audience, playwrights and actors--after all, hua-chü was the product of Western literature; secondly, the predominance of Peking opera and traditional folk dramas--most hua-chü societies died out after a few years because of financial difficulties; thirdly, lack of original creative plays--hua-chü was a brand-new genre; there was no tradition that writers could follow. Moreover, there were no professional drama companies to perform the works of the playwrights; playwriting offered no good prospects for a career. Another reason accounting for the fact that the new theater made very little artistic progress in spite of all the efforts made by
playwrights and drama societies was that beginning as an instrument for achieving social aims, the new theater naturally emphasized more its contents than its form and confined itself to the attack on social evils. With Japan's intent to invade China becoming more and more obvious, hua-chū as a propaganda medium was gradually gaining preponderance over traditional dramas and Hollywood movies. The patriotic anti-Japanese hua-chū which first appeared in 1931 aimed at arousing and intensifying the patriotic anti-Japanese sentiment among the general public. The rapid increase of drama troupes and audience contributed to the popularization of hua-chū. However, the neglect of artistic value in the creation of plays was a serious detriment to the development of modern theater.

In early July 1938, the war against the Japanese invasion broke out. The war years were "the golden age" of hua-chū. According to an estimate, there were 130,000 people working in the field of drama throughout the nation. Within a year after the breakout of the war, 160 plays were published. The reasons for the boom of hua-chū were: "the craving for patriotic titillation, the need for escapist entertainment at a time of drab austerity, and the financial incentive for the writers," and most importantly, "the exploitation of the medium by Communists." In 1940 the anti-Japanese drama began to show signs of decline. It was reflected first in the playwrights' choice of subject matter. Most writers turned away
from the theme of the war and started to write about the life in the rear. Some, especially leftist writers, turned to writing plays based on history or relying on satire.

The golden age of hua-chü ended with the conclusion of the war in 1946. No sooner had the demobilization begun than the civil war broke out. The following four years (1946-1949) were a vacuum in the history of Chinese modern literature. All literary activities came to a standstill.

In 1949, the Communists took over the mainland. Since then, the belief that art should serve as an instrument for achieving social aims and political ends has been continuously emphasized and embodied. Writers were urged to further the interests of the Party. Priority was given to the political rather than artistic criteria in the study of literary works. Playwrights and actors were instructed to reform drama along the Party line both in performance and in literary production. The gigantic pressures and powerful urges towards drama along particular lines have ruled out the possibility of a genuinely good, creative modern theater.

When the Nationalist government retreated to Taiwan in 1949, the literary scene on the island was all the more barren after fifty years of the Japanese occupation. During the period of her rule over Taiwan, Japan was determined that the island people be made over into true Japanese, speaking, thinking and behaving as proper Japanese subjects. To achieve
that end, the Japanese administration in Taiwan made every
deavor to promote language teaching and encouraged writers
to write in Japanese. In 1937, Japan launched an assimilation
program, kominka, meaning complete assimilation by changing
the Taiwanese into Imperial subjects through the adoption of
Japanese ways. All Chinese newspapers and journals were dis-
continued and literary works written in Chinese were pro-
hibited. Writers were forced to visit the Japanese military
fortifications and airport and to write according to what they
saw and heard. Since no information about theatrical activi-
ties is available, I cannot provide an overview of the develop-
ment of the new theater in Taiwan during that period. It seems
that in schools there were drama societies that performed
occasionally with the permission of the Japanese authorities. 15
According to a contemporary Taiwanese writer, literary works of
that period dealt mostly with the dark side of the society, the
life of peasants and workers, the promotion of social reform,
family love in a time of misery, and the agony and resentment
of the writers themselves. 16 When we look back upon the
literary development on the island under the Japanese rule,
we find only a very small number of writers who achieved dis-
tinction as novelists or poets. The fact remained that with
their "assimilation program" the Japanese had stifled many of
the literary geniuses who might have achieved much if they had
been differently circumstanced.
Taiwan of the 1950s was often referred to by Westerners as a cultural desert for the reason that most of her artistic and literary products reflected strong anti-Communist sentiments. However, the fact that a very large portion of literary works was anti-Communist does not necessarily mean that artistic value was absent from those works. It is worth noting that the appearance and development of the so-called anti-Communist literature has its historical background. First, the Chinese who moved from the mainland to Taiwan in the 1950s had all undergone the fight against, first, Japan and, then, the Communists, and it was the victory of the latter that forced them to withdraw to the island. While the ordinary people found expression for their hatred in slogans, writers gave vent to their poignant anti-Communist feelings in their works. As Ch'en Chi-ying (陳之藩), a contemporary writer in Taiwan, says, literature of the 1950s is the reflection or record of what the writers witnessed in and felt for the period of time of disturbances. Secondly, although the Kuomintang did not set a "party line" for literary creation, it did "uphold a literary policy calling for all writers to promote the fight against Communism and Soviet Russia and to preach the ancient Chinese moral philosophy." This policy was "binding chiefly on playwrights and scenarists" who had to satisfy the requirements of censors before they could have their works published. It explains the fact that in the
1950s "many of the former conditions of dramatic creation and performance persisted without radical alterations in Taiwan . . . ." In a word, the new theater was filled with propaganda. However, there were some people who, in spite of all difficulties, devoted themselves to the promotion and improvement of modern drama. Among them was Li Man-kuei (李曼瑰), a dramatist who had published seventeen plays in her lifetime. Since the retreat of the Nationalist Government to Taiwan, Li had dedicated herself to the promotion of the new theater until her death in 1975. Among her contributions was the establishment of the San-i Drama Society, the Chinese Theater Art Center, and the Association for Appreciating Chinese Modern Drama. Nevertheless, the development of the new theater in Taiwan encompasses much more than the story of one person. There are others who have contributed to the progress in one way or another; to name a few: Yao Yi-wei (姚一苇), Wang Sheng-shan (王生善), Chang Yung-hsiang (張永祥), and Chang Hsiao-feng (張曉風).

It is true that, compared with other genres of literature, modern Chinese theater has lagged far behind in its achievement. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that the modern Chinese theater is still in the stage of experimentation and has not yet fully developed its own form and stage techniques. Even with Yao Yi-wei, who is one of the most significant contemporary writers of the modern theater in Taiwan, every play
is an experiment. Yao Yi-wei was known as a literary critic and theoretician of drama before he began to write for the stage in 1963. For seventeen years since then, he has devoted much of his time to the writing of plays and the promotion of the new theater. As the chairman of the Association for Appreciating and Promoting Modern Chinese Drama, Yao and a group of young people who have been enthusiastic about drama, initiated an experimental drama workshop in July 1980, hoping to create a new phase for the modern theater. The purposes of this workshop, according to Yao, are: first, to encourage the creation of new plays; second, to train actors and stage-hands; third, to expand the scope of theatrical activities. The workshop performed five plays in July and three in October.

Yao Yi-wei was born in 1922 and was graduated from Amoy University in Fukien. He described himself as "having loved drama since childhood." The drama to which he was exposed in childhood must have been the traditional Chinese theater which was still a favorite with a majority of Chinese in the first few decades of this century. In addition to the Chinese theater, Yao also delved deeply into the plays of Sophocles, Aeschylus, Shakespeare, Racine, Ibsen, Strindberg, O'Neill, Chekhov, Brecht, and other Western playwrights. He is one of the very few contemporary playwrights who possess a rich knowledge of both the old and the new, the Chinese and the Western theater art and who are well aware of the true worth
of the traditional Chinese drama. In an essay on the theater, Yao urged a return to the tradition in playwriting, meaning that the traditional genre should be preserved as a necessary basis for a modern theater which is genuinely Chinese in spirit because in the Chinese theater there are conventions and staging techniques that can be transplanted to the modern theater and that will thus enrich it. What he has been trying to do is to create a drama in which the old and new forms reach a harmonious meeting. In almost all of his plays, his efforts to bridge or fuse the new and the old theater art are evident. For example, with the exception of The Chest and Come Along with Me, he uses music and singing in all his plays. The idea of using music and singing in drama traces back to the traditional concept of theater art as drama, dance, and music fused into one. In The Chest the scenery and characterization suggest Samuel Beckett's influence, but the use of clowns "as a means of satire and comment on current practices and fashions" is "the good tradition" of the ancient Chinese Court Comedy.24

In the years between 1963 and 1980, Yao published eight plays. The road to success was far from smooth. As the chronology of his writing shows, there was an interval of five years between the sixth and seventh plays while the first six were published regularly every two years. Asked why he did not create any play for a period of five years, he explained
that "the main reason is the absence of strong impetus and impulse for creation" because his first six plays were "like bubbles in the air and have hardly been noticed." 25 In March 1978, The Chest was staged. The performance aroused his desire to write again. He was determined that he would write for the rest of his life.

People from Phoenixville is Yao's first play. The action of the play revolves around the three main characters, Chu Wan-ling, Chou Ta-hsiung, and Hsia Shih-chang. Together with Chu's idiot brother Hsi-kou, they are all related to the place in one way or another. Among them, Chu, a woman about thirty years old, is the protagonist. Her background is vaguely suggested in the song she sings twice in the play:

Phoenixville has a golden phoenix;  
Phoenixville has a little girl.  
The Phoenix flies up the wu-tung tree;  
The little girl is married to the big family Wang. 26

In Chinese legend, phoenix is a divine bird and its appearance foretokens the coming of the time of peace, order, and prosperity. In this play the allusion to phoenix does not seem to carry much symbolic implication, for the author says in an adjunctive remark to the play that the story is completely fictional and the names of the characters and place can be changed, if necessary, to suit special occasions or desired purpose. Obviously Chu Wan-ling is likening herself to the phoenix that wished to perch in a wu-tung tree, upon
which only a phoenix is believed to alight. The wu-tung tree was doubtlessly Hsia with whom she was in love at the age of seventeen or eighteen. Hsia was then working in her father's hospital and appeared to both her father and her as a promising youth. He went away after her father found out their affair and furiously castigated them. She was pregnant, but somehow she lost the baby. She kept on waiting for his return; she was sure that he would come back to her eventually. A year had passed; still, she heard nothing from him. Her hope gradually turned into hatred and then into a desire for revenge. She married a man younger than she and soon hounded him to death. She was cast out of the village on that account. In order to forget Hsia, she indulged herself in promiscuous sexual relations. But deep down in her heart she could not help imagining his returning a great hero or a great doctor to attend her at her deathbed. Suddenly Hsia appears, not as a hero or a doctor, but as a churchman. Chu's imagination is completely destroyed.

Chu Wan-ling. Do you know what man lives on?
Hsia Shih-chang. I only know that I'm now living on my faith in God--
Chu Wan-ling. No, no. It's imagination. It is imagination that man lives on because where there is imagination there is hope. Even if it's not very much a hope, it will do as long as man can imagine. When I saw you again a few days ago, my hope was destroyed. No, no, not hope. It's imagination. It's my imagination that was destroyed. I cannot imagine any more . . . .27
In despair she tries to commit suicide, but is saved by Chou Ta-hsiung, a jailbreaker who sneaks into her apartment to escape the police's chase. When she hears Chou relate the little kind act she did for him years ago saying that the thought of her is to him "like a floating log to a drowning man in the sea," she decides to live. She says to Hsia:

... I won't kill myself again because--because I've met a man whose life is even worse than mine, who needs imagination to live on more than I do, who imagines more than I do ... I can't let him down; I can't destroy his imagination ... .

Here Yao seems to imply that man "finds better reason to live when he feels that he is living for others." Chu rejects Hsia's offer of help because, she says, "I've found something new. It doesn't matter what you call it, imagination or hope. I'll live well." When the play ends, she is accompanying Chou back to the jail and promises to wait for him in Phoenixville. She will cling to the hope of his release and lives on.

For Chu to live is to hope. It does not make the slightest difference whether it is the hope for one man's or another's return. She has been so much corrupted by a past filled with mishaps that she is unable to cope with the harsh realities of life without a shield of some kind to protect her. Hope, or imagination which, according to her, is the very substance of hope, is the only alternative that she can find to serve that purpose. Hence, the basic formula for her survival is: When one hope is destroyed, substitute a new one for it.
The question of what a role hope plays in life is raised again in Yao's second play Sun Fei-hu Steals a Bride. As Mei-shu Hwang points out, the play is a reinterpretation of a story which was dramatized in The Romance of the Western Chamber by Wang Shih-fu in the Yuan Dynasty (1277-1367). Yao made such a drastic change of the plot and characterization that his play does not share anything in common with Wang's. The most conspicuous example is the characterization of Sun Fei-hu (fei-hu meaning literally "flying tiger"). In Wang's play, Sun is not in the least different from the bandits in Chinese folktale and fiction who out of their physical desire steal brides. But Yao makes him a dualized personality, a bad man and a true gentleman at the same time. His motivation for stealing the bride, Ts'ui Shuang-wen, is love rather than the physical desire aroused by her beauty.

This three-act play is set in a small pavilion by the roadside and begins with two travelers arguing about the personality and appearance of Sun Fei-hu, the notorious bandit. One describes him as a monster, ugly, cruel, bald and lumpy, the other as a handsome, tender, and gentle young man. At this moment, Sun and Chang Chun-jui, Ts'ui's lover who was rejected by her mother because of his lack of prominent social status, enter the pavilion. Without revealing their true identities, they join the argument and learn that it is Ts'ui's wedding day. Chang confesses to Sun that he desires
to see Ts'ui just once more. Sun advises him to disguise himself as one of the escorts in the wedding procession which will soon stop by the pavilion. In the meantime, Sun hurries to prepare for the bride-stealing.

It happens that when Sun arrives in his ugly bandit costume, only Chang, now as an escort, Ts'ui, and Ah Hung, her maid, are left alone like three "puppets." As advised by Cheng Heng, the bridegroom, Ts'ui and Ah Hung have already exchanged their clothes for the sake of Ts'ui's safety. Sun takes the three to his mountain base.

A little later, Sun appears dressed like a young scholar as in the first act. He admits that he also loves Ts'ui and suggests that he and Chang have a fair competition. Now Ts'ui insists on changing back to her original clothes. Ah Hung agrees reluctantly. Meanwhile, Sun forces Chang to put on his bandit costume.

Suddenly Cheng returns with an army and everybody runs for his life, again leaving Chang, Ts'ui and Ah Hung alone on stage. Ts'ui asks Ah Hung to exchange clothes with her for the last time. Ah Hung refuses. They fight. With great effort Chang manages to separate them and Ah Hung leaves. Facing Chang alone, Ts'ui urges him to do whatever he wants to her and is irritated by his hesitation. Hysterically, she calls him a mouse. He runs away, leaving Ts'ui alone like a statue in the pavilion.
The play ends with an epilogue in which the two travelers are engaged in another argument. One says that Sun has been captured and beheaded and that Cheng and Ts'ui are having their wedding again on the very day. The other insists that the bride is not Ts'ui but the maid and the man who was beheaded is not Sun but somebody in Sun's costume. As the play is closing, a wedding procession is coming near the pavilion, consisting of the same number of people with the same costumes as those in Act I.

Like Chu in Phoenixville, the main characters of this play also lead a life characterized by a series of waiting and hoping. Chang was Ts'ui's hope while Ts'ui was both Chang's and Sun's hope. On Ts'ui's wedding day the three meet. It turns out that they are all disappointed in their hopes and deceived in their expectations. Ts'ui and Chang realize that they can no longer be each other's hope because Ts'ui is being married to another man. Sun is about to rejoice at the materialization of his hope when he finds out that the maid has succeeded in deceiving him simply by wearing his mistress' dress. His hope is destroyed not so much by the deceit as by the fact that the difference between a maid and her mistress lies nowhere else but in their dresses. Sun says to Chang: "We all have had a hope, but it turns out to be something different in the end." For Chang, hope is nothing more than an illusion. But Sun argues that
It is not that hope is illusive,
It is that we never have a real hope.
What we have is a picture drawn by ourselves
Which is completely different from reality.33

In Phoenixville, hope, imagination, the dream are one. Chu never uses the word "illusion." However, she believes that hope and reality are incompatible. In this play, hope is equated with illusion by Chang. Yet what Sun says in the passage I quoted above seems to mean that real hope can not be illusive; in other words, hope, be it real, should be in harmony with reality. Then what is real hope? The play does not give a definite answer. When Ah Hung says that she does not know what hope is, Ts'ui asks her whether she ever thinks about her future. Ts'ui seems to suggest that hope is one's imagination of what the future will be -- this corresponds to Chu's concept of hope. Nevertheless, the future is as unpredictable as hope is undefinable. There is no ready answer to anything about the future. One must wait, "Wait for the unknown future," "Wait for the sun to set in the west and rise in the east, / Wait for the flowers to fade and blossom again."34

Most characters of this play are deprived of the capability for action by a belief in fatalism which takes the form of submission. They give themselves up to a fate which they believe is determined by others and which determines their future. Since the future is beyond their control, they can only wait and hope. Some rely on hope to "kill time" and others "look to it for strength" to live on.35
Sun Fei-hu is one of the few plays of Yao's which has not yet been performed on stage. It is by no means the best, but it seems to be the most challenging one. According to Yao, the play was written with the traditional Chinese theater and folk art in mind. It involves the techniques of traditional Chinese opera, puppet show, shadow show, and folk dance. Yao also adopts "a very popular verse language," attempting to "establish a 'reciting' (讃) form" for the modern Chinese theater. He maintains that without verse drama the modern Chinese theater will remain a cripple. As Mei-shu Hwang points out, the author uses various kinds of language for different purposes:

free verse, which is to be recited but not spoken, forms the main body of the play and serves for plot advancement, commenting, and thinking aloud; short prose dialogue is for transitional lines, to be spoken between the free verse. There are also lines sung by the chorus-like dancers, written after folk songs or popular ballads.

Because the play has never been staged, there is no way of knowing how this combination may work and what effect it will create.

Yao's third play The Jade Goddess of Mercy is based on a folktale of the Sung Dynasty (960-1279). Like Sun Fei-hu, the play shows nothing in common with the original tale in plot and characterization. However, as Yu Ta-kang, the late professor of drama at Cultural College in Taipei, has pointed out,
He [Yao] has preserved the spirit of the tale of the Sung dynasty, and has treated the romance with the sentiment and thought of a modern man. What he expresses here is the traditional Chinese spirit of silent self-sacrifice for an ideal life under great suffering. 40

When the play opens, Ts'ui Ning, an orphan and a relative of Lord Han, has just finished a sculpture of the goddess of mercy. It strikes everyone with its close resemblance of Lord Han's only daughter Hsiu-hsiu. Lady Han suspects that the good-for-nothing youth is in love with her daughter and is determined to send him away for Hsiu-hsiu's sake. However, Hsiu-hsiu has already fallen in love with him. When her parents are away at the palace, she runs away with Ts'ui in order to live a free life.

In a faraway place, Ts'ui sets up a workshop under the false name of Li. He and Hsiu-hsiu and her maid lead a poor life because there is little market for his sculptures. But Hsiu-hsiu is happy. She has sold all her jewelry to help poor neighbors.

Having searched for them for two years, Kuo Li, the head servant of the Hans, finds the three. Hsiu-hsiu consents to go but persuades Kuo to let Ts'ui alone, for she is afraid that her father may kill him out of anger. Kuo agrees. Hsiu-hsiu is pregnant. She promises to take good care of the child. At her request, Ts'ui plays the flute as she leaves.

Thirteen years later, Hsiu-hsiu's parents are dead. She herself is no longer a young girl whose happiness lies in
helping the poor but rather a practical-minded woman who knows how to use her father's influence to protect herself and who is trying to mold her son according to her own ideal. On a snowy evening, Hsiu-hsiu hears the familiar music of the flute. Tung Mei, the maid, and Kuo Li follow the music and bring back Ts'ui, now a blind, sickly beggar. Hsiu-hsiu conceals from him her identity for the sake of the child and makes him stay, promising to find Hsiu-hsiu for him. Ts'ui Ning makes another sculpture which again resembles the young Hsiu-hsiu. Upon completing the work, he says that he has found his Hsiu-hsiu waiting for him in another world and he is going to join her. He dies in peace before Hsiu-hsiu makes up her mind to reveal her identity.

The main problem Yao tries to probe in this play is the relationship between dream and reality and art and life. Yao seems to imply that art is more a product of dream than of reality. Ts'ui Ning, the sculptor, is "a man of dreams." He lives in a world of imagination or of dreams rather than of reality. Asked by Hsiu-hsiu why he made the sculpture to resemble her, Ts'ui replies, "I don't know. I didn't mean to." He adds that "All I wanted to do was to make a sculpture of a beautiful vision," which he says, has existed at the bottom of his heart for many years. When he was working, he forgot himself and the real world around him. He was blind to reality when he was engaged in the activity of artistic creation; he completely abandoned himself to the
pursuit of a dream, an illusion, a vision. When he returns to the real world, he is helpless. His physical blindness at the end of play signifies his complete isolation from the real world.

But where does the inspiration for an artist's creation come from if art is a product of dreams? Yao makes it clear that artists find inspiration in the real world. Ts'ui Ning says to Hsiu-hsiu that "I want to make a sculpture of human goddess of mercy . . . I want to make a sculpture after . . . something that lives among us." Once he is tempted to make a sculpture after a beggar whom he sees everyday. An artist is different from common people in that he sees an object through the mind's eye and can thus transcend reality to create a vision of his own with imagination. This explains how Ts'ui Ning, completely blind, can make a second sculpture after the young Hsiu-hsiu. His eyes have lost their sight, but his heart keeps its vision which is a reality or only a phantasm of his imagination.

Through Hsiu-hsiu, Yao expresses a very high esteem of the function of art. It gives the world hope, beauty, and confidence. It is interesting to note that, although Yao does not equate hope with illusion in this play, he implies that hope is rooted in something intrinsically illusive. Yao does not mean to be satirical when he has his protagonist in his first play say that man lives on imagination. Happiness
is unattainable in a world in which God does not exist. Yet, the dilemma of human existence remains that, as Hsiu-hsiu says, very few people are really happy, but they have to live on. All that they need is something that makes life worth living—it is this role that hope plays. Hsiu-hsiu herself is not exceptional. In the years after she leaves Ts'ui, she clings firmly to the hope of her son's future success as a government official, not as a sculptor. When Ts'ui Ning dies, though distressed, Hsiu-hsiu has to find an excuse to live on. She convinces herself that the Hsiu-hsiu whom Ts'ui Ning has found is not her but one of his own imagination. She still has her hope to cherish, her son. She has to live for his sake.

According to Professor Yü, this play is a bridge that connects the traditional and the modern. There are instances in which conventions of traditional theater art are successfully transplanted to the modern stage. The singing of the four maids at the beginning of the play, for example, originates in Ts'an-chün hsi (Military Counselor). The play has been performed on stage more than once (the most recent presentation was on October 20 and 21, 1980), and was made into a movie and into a television series. It is the best known of Yao's plays.

Yao's fourth play, Red Nose, will be discussed in detail in the following chapter. His fifth play is The Crown Prince Shen Sheng. The plot is roughly based on the murder of Prince
Shen Sheng of the Epoch of Spring and Autumn, which occurred between 722 and 484 B.C.

Lady Li-chi became the mistress of the court of Chin after Shen Sheng's mother died. In order to make her own son, Hsi-ch'i, the successor to the throne, Li-chi has been plotting against Shen Sheng. She has persuaded the king to send him to the battlefield, hoping that he will be killed. It is with Shen Sheng's victorious return that the play begins. A chorus formed by the court maids, is singing about, among other things, an oracle which predicts that evil will dominate over good, and about Shen Sheng as a man as brave as a lion, and as tender as a lamb, a man of good fortune and of great misfortune. Their song ends with the play's moral that all evils are born of the human desire for power. A court lady enters and sends them away.

Li-chi has a sister, Shao-chi, innocent and kind-hearted, who is the concubine of the king.

Li-chi maintains that "Power is the most attractive thing. Nobody dislikes it, nobody would refuse to acquire and retain it, to shed blood, to sacrifice, and to do everything for it." Her wish is that her son will succeed to the throne. Now that Shen Sheng has returned victoriously, she has to maneuver a new plot to get rid of him. She fabricates a story, saying that Shen Sheng's mother appeared in her dream asking for sacrifices from the prince. After the ritual has
been observed, Shen Sheng sends the meat to the king. Li-chi has a court lady poison the meat and makes the king find it out when he is about to eat it. The plot succeeds and Shen Sheng hangs himself. Accordingly, Hsi-ch'i is made the heir to the throne but is killed by Shen Sheng's supporters after the death of the king. Li-chi forces Shao-chi's son, Chuo-tzu, to succeed Hsi-ch'i. As Shao-chi anticipated, he is brought not to the throne but to death.

Now, Li-chi has lost every instrument that can materialize her desire for power. Instead of submitting herself to Shen Sheng's revengers, she decides to kill herself. She bids her sister to live on, but Shao-chi insists on following her because they are destined to be bound to each other.

The play has four acts; each begins with a chorus to "provide atmosphere, to serve as an exposition, to comment on and/or to lament the fate of the characters and human begins as a whole." The structure of the play, with its single action moving to a catastrophe which is foretold by the old woman in black who was the nurse of the two sisters and by the oracle, strongly suggests the influence of the classical Greek tragedies.

Like Captain Alving in Ibsen's Ghosts, Shen Sheng never physically appears on the stage. While Ibsen's ghosts are symbols of dead ideas of the past, Shen Sheng is the symbol of the good qualities which the Chinese would expect of a
prince and a noble man. Mrs. Alving is endeavoring to "get rid of the Alving heritage in all its forms in order to free herself and her son for the innocent, unconventional joy of life." Li-chi is trying to get rid of Shen Sheng to obtain for her son the rightful succession to the throne whereby she can satisfy her own desire for power. In both cases, the unseen wins the final victory. Oswald suffers from a hereditary disease as a result of his father's dissolute life and ends as an idiot. Li-chi, ruthless as she is, cannot entirely cast off the feeling of guilt over what she has done and is doing. She tells Shao-chi that she has dreamed the same dream over and over again: Shen Sheng, fully armed, is chasing her. In spite of the fact that she has tried all efforts to get rid of Shen Sheng, the irony is that she still lives in his shadow. Much as Ibsen's ghosts which, according to Mrs. Alving, are not actually alive among the living, but are dormant and can never be eradicated, the good as symbolized by Shen Sheng and Shao-chi, though not dominant, has latent influence.

The characterization shows an apparent white-and-black contrast. Shen Sheng and Shao-chi symbolize the good while Li-chi and her conspirators stand for the evil. The focus of the plot is centered on how Li-chi, a power-greedy woman, brings ruin to Shen Sheng, Li-chi and herself, and their sons. As typical of Chinese folktales, Li-chi, the very embodiment of the evil, is the person of action. Whatever price it may
cost, she is determined to gratify her desire. The innocent and the good are invariably the passive victims of the evil; Shen Sheng, Hsi-ch'i, and Chuo-tzu are all sacrificed.

Shao-ch'i is described as the only "good person" living in the palace. It seems that she is completely ignorant of the world surrounding her. Yet she admits to her sister in the last act that she is not unaware of the foul political machinations going on in the palace. She takes refuge in the memories of the innocent past because it is beyond her ability to deal with the complicated situation. After all, life in a dream is always more agreeable and simpler than it is in the real world. Her son's murder shocks her into reality. For the first time in her life she is face-to-face with her sister, the evil, and tries to fight her. But it is already too late.

At the end of the play, Shao-ch'i chooses to join her sister in committing suicide because, she says, their fate is bound together. If here the author means that Li-ch'i and Shao-ch'i represent the duality of human nature, the story of the play is coherent as the demonstration and illustration of the idea that the good and the evil are "twin brothers" and that they are coexistent in a society and in human personality. Thus, the conflict between the two sisters may be seen as the struggle within Li-ch'i's mind. Shao-ch'i's death seems appropriate only when she is interpreted as the symbol of one
side of Li-chi's dual personality and when Li-chi and Shao-chi are treated as a single person. Li-chi's death is Shao-chi's death.

The Crown Prince Shen Sheng is followed by The Chest in which Yao again returns to the modern world for its setting. Ah San and Lao Ta quit their jobs after a quarrel with their boss. They come to a town where a mine is newly discovered.

A physician who has lost a chest in which medical radium is kept has offered a reward for its return. Ah San and Lao Ta enter a restaurant where the lost chest is the main topic of conversation. Ah San is carrying an old chest which looks similar to the lost one as described on the radio and in newspapers. Naturally he attracts all the attention. A diner steps forward, and pretending that he knows someone belonging to Ah San's family, starts to inquire about the chest. Lao Ta, in a rage, beats the man and leads Ah San away. The diners report the incident to the police.

After they take refuge in an old temple, Lao Ta explains that the people are interested in Ah San's chest for an unknown reason. Ah San tells Lao Ta that the chest was passed down to his father and, then, to him and that he cherishes it simply because it evokes memories of his father. A little while later, two policemen guided by the diners find them. Lao Ta and Ah San escape to a lookout post. Soon the policemen follow them to the site and insist on seeing the chest,
but Ah San refuses. In the tussle which follows, Lao Ta tries to snatch Ah San's chest whereupon Ah San falls to the ground and dies. The policemen open the chest and find nothing but old clothes, toys, books.

The play is a tragicomedy. I would not say that the blending of tragedy and comedy is a pure Western influence, for the traditional Chinese theater, especially the Peking opera, is more often than not a medley of tragedy, comedy, farce, satire, and even dance and acrobatic feats. The clown is an indispensable character although in most cases he is simply an ironic or a satirical device. The setting of the first scene shows a striking resemblance to Samuel Beckett's Waiting for Godot: a country road, a slope, and a tree. There is also a similarity between the characterization of Lao Ta and Ah San and that of Beckett's Gogo and Didi and John Steinbeck's George and Lennie in Of Mice and Men. However, the use of comic characters and farcical language as a means of satire and social comment is unmistakably a Chinese tradition. Professor Yu points out that "Yao's two characters in The Chest are of the clown type, very close to the T'ang 'Military Counselor,' in which one of the two comedians was usually clever and the other stupid. The contrast between them produced the dramatic humor, which aimed to satirize and criticize."
Yao is quoted as saying that the inspiration of the play came from a newsreport of a missing box containing medical radium and his own attache case that accompanied him to the back from abroad. . . . When he walked out of the gate at the Taipei airport terminal with the case in hand and saw his family and friends, he suddenly asked himself "What have I got in my attache case? What have other people got in theirs?"  

The author's own story sheds some light on the symbolic meaning of the chest in the play. Ah San's chest, as we learn from Lao Ta, is big, clumsy, and old. But no one knows what it contains except for Ah San himself. The crowd begins the chase without knowing its content and Ah San and Lao Ta start running with no idea why they are being chased. Apparently, Yao intends it to be a satire on the people who blindly follow the patterns of others without realizing the meaning of their actions. Ah San's carrying the big, old, clumsy and worthless chest is the image of modern man who inherits unselectively everything from his ancestors and who carries an unnecessary burden upon his shoulders without realizing it. Ah San's stubbornness is a reflection of the people who preserve everything belonging to the past in spite of its uselessness and worthlessness.

The seventh play of Yao's is Fu Ch'ing-chu. Again the plot is based on the story of an historical figure who was considered to be a hero by the people who tried to overthrow
the Ch'ing Dynasty (1644-1911) and restore the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644).

The play opens with an old, blind storyteller singing the prologue from which we learn that among the people who rose against the Ch'ing dynasty, there was a hero named Fu Ch'ing-chu, also known as Chu-i-tao-jen (衣道人 meaning a Taoist priest in a red robe). He was captured and imprisoned. At a court trial, Fu refuses to admit the accusations against him in spite of all the torture he suffers and insists that there is no such person as Chu-i-tao-jen. When the second scene opens, Fu has already starved himself for two days; he has made up his mind to sacrifice himself to save his supporters and followers. To take care of Fu, a doctor gets into the prison by reporting himself as the real Chu-i-tao-jen whom the Ch'ing Court is pursuing. In the following scene, the Ch'ing Court is forced by the furious protest from the public to release Fu and those who were arrested because of their connection with him.

The second part begins again with the same old man relating the failure of the plan for rehabilitating the Ming Dynasty, the life of Fu as a doctor in the country, and the Ch'ing Court's offering official positions to the learned as a means of pacifying and befriending them. The first scene is set in a pavilion by a roadside. A group of poor sick country folk and a rich man are waiting for Fu. Among them is a
drunkard. On learning that Fu does not attend wealthy people, the rich man immediately puts on old clothes and asks the others to keep his secret. The drunkard takes advantage of this and blackmails him. Soon, Fu comes and turns out to be a kind, generous and humorous old man. "A living god" is what people call him. The second scene shifts to Fu's home in the countryside. Fu is out attending patients when his friend Tai T'ing-shih comes to ask for his permission to publish his poems, bringing at the same time the news that the Ch'ing Court offers him a high rank of honor. Fu agrees to have his poems published but refuses to accept the offer. But an order soon comes to summon him to see the Emperor in the capital. Fu is determined not to go; so, he stabs himself in the leg. Still he is carried in a sedan to the capital. When the escort stops at a monastery near the capital, Fu refuses to move another step. The Ch'ing Court sends princes and officials of high rank to see him; still Fu is not moved. At last, an official is sent to the monastery to force the honor upon him.

The play ends with an epilogue in which the same old story-teller depicts Fu's going home in a sedan carried by his two grandsons and praises the greatness of Fu's personality.

Fu Ch'ing-chu is Yao's attempt at a pure Chinese drama. The play is divided into two parts; each part begins
with a prologue. The prologue of the first part consists of a set-the-scene poem (ting-ch'ang-shih)\(^5\) a four-line poem with seven characters to each line, and a song which is also a poem in the regular meter of classical style. An old blind story-teller is to chant first the set-the-scene poem as in Peking opera and then sing the song which tells about Fu's background, and personality and about what has happened to him before the play opens. Here the playwright even suggests that the story-teller use a traditional musical instrument to accompany his singing. The second part of the play again begins with the same story-teller singing a poem about Fu's life as a doctor after his release from the jail and about the Ch'ing Court's intention to entice him into serving the government. It ends with a song praising Fu's personality.

As a matter of fact, the play is the dramatization of Fu as a noble man and a great national hero. It is a full-length portrait of Fu, apparently painted with the Chinese concept of a national hero and a noble man in mind. Fu is presented as possessing all the good qualities that are attributed to an ideal Chinese great man: learned, upright, determined, loyal, self-sacrificing, honest, kind-hearted, generous and humorous. There is no indication of any flaw in his character or any sign of conflict within him. He is always true to his principle—choose whatever is good and stick to it—without hesitation or inner struggle; for
instance, when he starves himself and when he wounds himself in the leg. A western reader may find such a character unreal, but to the general Chinese public, Fu is probably more acceptable than Ts'ui Shuang-wen in Sun Fei-hu or Red Nose.

The play suffers from a fault: the author "was too much preoccupied by his personal admiration for Fu which cost him sufficient artistic distance necessary in creation." There are instances, especially in the first part, which are too directly didactic and eulogistic. The second part is far more successful than the first. The tone is less didactic and more natural and casual. Fu Ch'ing-chu's character is made sharply distinct through his relationship with and attitude toward various types of people: his friend, country folks, prominent officials, and eminent personages.

Fu Ch'ing-chu is the first play Yao published after he ceased to write for the theater for five years. It has a special significance in his creative life because it is the embodiment of his wish that he would write for his own people plays which are Chinese in form and content.

Come Along with Me is the most recent play and the only farce of Yao's. It was published in the March 1979 issue of Modern Literature. Yao says in his afterword that for years he intended to write a farce which features simple, unrefined clowns. And his purpose of writing such a play was to raise great loud laughter from the audience after a busy, tedious day.
The play has six scenes. The first scene occurs in a corner of a park. Ah Ts'ung, a young man about twenty-five years old, thin, melancholy, somewhat nervous, and dressed like countryfolk enters the stage carrying a cloth wrapper and seats himself on the bench. Ah Mei, a girl of eighteen or nineteen, a little plump, innocent and somewhat stupid looking, also enters the stage with a cloth wrapper similar to Ah Ts'ung's. She is dressed in cheap, gaudy clothes and has disheveled hair and too much make-up. She asks Ah Ts'ung about the address written on a small piece of paper. Ah Ts'ung is not sure of the direction and suggests that they find their shadows in the sun. They fail to see their shadows because it is midday. They sit down again and start eating the food Ah Ts'ung has brought along. At this moment, two villains come to the park, each blaming the other for the escape of a girl over whom they were made to stand guard. Upon seeing Ah Mei, they secretly move toward her, one from the left and the other from the right side. When Ah Ts'ung is fighting with them, Ah Mei escapes hurriedly with Ah Ts'ung's cloth wrapper. The villains start chasing her. Ah Ts'ung unwraps the cloth wrapper and finds it filled with women's things.

The second scene takes place in a low-class restaurant where Ah Ts'ung is working as a substitute for a friend of his. He makes a mess of the restaurant by sending food to the wrong person, holding trays in a dangerous pose, and colliding
with customers and his boss. Ah Mei comes to ask for help. Ah Ts'ung sees her and returns the cloth wrapper to her. At this moment, Ah Mei sees the villains coming up and hurries away with both Ah Ts'ung's and her own wrappers. Ah Ts'ung collides with the villains and tips over two bowls of noodles on them. In confusion, Ah Ts'ung runs away.

The third scene shifts to a dressmaker's shop. Ah Mei and Ah Ts'ung come and inquire about a girl who is supposed to be working in the shop. When the dressmaker, old and half dumb, finally makes out what they want, the villains are coming near. Ah Mei puts on an overcoat and stands in the display window as a dress model while Ah Ts'ung puts on a policemen's coat which the dressmaker's nephew left to have a button fixed and hides himself behind a curtain. One of the villains lifts the curtain and is shocked at the sight of a policeman. The villains hurry away. The dressmaker is completely at a loss and is frightened by Ah Mei thinking that the dress model has come to life. Ah Ts'ung and Ah Mei run away, one with the policeman's coat and the other with the new overcoat. After the policeman returns to pick up his coat, the dressmaker finally discovers that his coat and her customer's overcoat are missing.

When Ah Ts'ung and Ah Mei realize that they are wearing others' clothes, they take them off and decide to drop them in front of the dressmaker's shop early next morning. Again,
the villains find them. At the same time, the policeman and the dressmaker come looking for their clothes. The villains sneak away, but Ah Ts'ung and Ah Mei are taken to the police station for theft.

The fifth scene is an interrogation at the police station. Ah Mei confesses that she has been sold to a brothel because her father is deep in debt and the villains are the bodyguards of the brothel. The whole story is brought to light. Both the dressmaker and the policeman agree to withdraw their accusations against them. At Ah Mei's request, the police inspector lets them stay at the police station overnight.

In the final scene, Ah Ts'ung is going home and Ah Mei is going to a textile factory to apply for a job. After much hesitation, they decide to go together.

The play was first performed by the Lan-ling Drama Workshop on July 16, 1980. Yao declares in his afterword that the play does not carry any profound or sophisticated philosophical implication. What he tries to show is that, on the journey of life, men should respect, support, and try to understand each other. The comic effect of the play depends heavily on the action of the characters. Only the experienced actors will be able to produce the effect desired.
YAO'S RED NOSE: A COMMENTARY

Of the eight plays of Yao's, Red Nose is probably not the best. But the protagonist, Red Nose, is the most complicated character that Yao has ever created.

The play is set in a restaurant at a seaside resort. There a group of people are confined because the road is blocked by the landslide caused by heavy rains. Each of them has his own problems to tackle. A young composer, Ch'iu Ta-wei, is filled with the fear that he has written himself out. The two young businessmen, Tseng Hua-te and Hu I-fan, are troubled by financial difficulty. The Yehs, a middle-aged couple, are worried about their daughter's mental retardation. P'eng Hsiao-po, a tycoon, is agonized by the news of a plane crash in which his son may have been killed. The travelling vaudeville company has difficulty finding a place to stay for the night.

In the second act, Red Nose, the clown of the vaudeville company who is so called because he wears a mask which is featured by a big red nose, dominates the stage. He moves about the stage, helping people solve their problems. At the end of this act, P'eng Hsiao-po, proposes to have the vaudeville troupe give a performance to celebrate the news that his son is not dead.

Act III is mainly the performance of the vaudeville troupe which includes acrobatic feats, singing, dancing, and
a one-man show in which Red Nose raises questions such as what is the meaning of happiness and who is the happiest man in the world. A woman steps forward saying that she can answer the question and snatches away his mask. For the first time in the play, Red Nose shows his shy, innocent face.

When the curtain rises again, Red Nose is chatting in the hotel lobby with the woman who turns out to be his wife. They talk about their past, about the reason why Red Nose left home, and about the meaning of happiness. People walk back and forth passing by Red Nose, but nobody notices his existence. His wife tries to convince him that he is as common as all the people around him and that his belief of happiness as self-sacrifice is merely his self-deceptive, megalomaniacal dream of being a great man. At this moment, people are heard shouting on the balcony that a dance girl of the vaudeville company has disappeared while swimming. Red Nose gets up, puts on his mask and walks toward the beach. A little while later, the girl swims back easily, but not Red Nose who had tried to save her. The girl reveals that Red Nose does not swim at all. Then comes the news that the road is open. Everybody is on his way to his destination. The play ends with Wang P'ei-p'ei murmuring confusedly "I know he won't come back."

Red Nose is a four-act play and each act has a title:

Act I--The Befalling of Calamities; Act II--The Removing of
Calamities; Act III--Thanking Gods; Act IV--The Offering of Sacrifice. The division of the play corresponds very closely to the stages of an ancient religious ritual celebrated after various natural disasters. Red Nose's allusion to the story of Wu Feng in Act IV strengthens the association. Wu Feng was an official in Taiwan under the rule of Ch'ien-lung of the Ch'ing Dynasty between the years of 1736 and 1796. In those days, head hunting was still common among the aborigines on the island. Wu Feng was determined to put an end to the practice when he was appointed to the position. He soon succeeded in winning the aborigines' trust and respect. Under his persuasion, the aborigines did give up head hunting for a certain period of time. In 1768, the island suffered a severe drought. The aborigines went to Wu Feng for his permission to resume the ritual. They believed that they had provoked the wrath of the gods by not offering them sacrifices. Wu Feng made them promise that it would be their last practice and then told them that on a certain day a man dressed in red and covering his face with a red scarf would pass by a certain place and they could kill him. They did according to his advice only to find that they killed the man whom they loved and respected most. In deep regret they agreed to abolish head hunting.

Mei-shu Hwang, in his essay on Yao Yi-wei's plays, asserts that "Structurally Red Nose resembles Gorki's The Lower
Depths and Eugene O'Neill's The Iceman Cometh, especially the latter. As I see it, the similarities are rather superficial and coincidental. In The Iceman Cometh, Harry Hope's saloon is "a refuge for sodden human derelicts who have been deprived of the will to act and the power to make decisions by a cankerous past" and who believe in "dream and drunkenness" as "the formula for survival." The characters of Yao's play are of a completely different type: they are confined in the hotel temporarily by a natural calamity. To some extent, they do use dreams to evade reality, but drunkenness never plays an important role in the life of Yao's characters. The accordionist in Red Nose is the only character who shows a tendency to take refuge in alcohol. The "derelicts" of O'Neill's play are troubled by the "illusory quality of faith, hope, love; the irreconcilability of love and peace." In Red Nose the characters are vexed mainly by worldly trivialities such as Tseng and Hu's financial problem, Yeh Hsiao-chen's illness or by the vain attempt to improve their life condition as in the cases of Dance Girl B and Mr. Hsiao. The problem facing Red Nose is primarily that of identity.

Despite all the differences cited above, death is the theme of both plays—death as the way to peace, as a solution to the dilemma of human existence which, as Larry puts it, is the fact that man is "afraid to live" and "even more afraid to die," or in Red Nose's words, is man's "instinctive fear of life and death."
Red Nose sounds didactic when Red Nose interprets true happiness as sacrifice. Although he mentions also Christ and Buddha, Wu Feng turns out to be the very example he takes after. (He emphasizes the noble motive of Buddha's giving up his royal family life mainly to justify his desertion of his wife.) Wu Feng sacrificed himself to save the rest of people in Taiwan from ritual murder; Red Nose drowns himself attempting to save a dance girl. But an analysis of the play shows that he has a completely different motive when he walks toward the beach. Wu Feng sacrificed himself in the hope that the aborigines would give up their cruel head hunting and that no other human life would become again the victim of savage superstition. But the motive of Red Nose's final act is ambiguous. Since he does not swim, he certainly cannot hope that he will save the girl simply by throwing himself into the sea. The only possibility is that he means to kill himself. One may raise such questions as why he chooses to commit suicide at the moment when a dance girl is believed to be in danger of being drowned and why he puts on his mask again before he walks toward the beach. The key to the answer of these questions lies in the character of Red Nose.

The dialogue between Red Nose and his wife, Wang P'ei-P'ei, provides us with fragmentary information about his family background. He seemed to have had an over-protective, if not tyrannical, mother who by lavishing too much care and love on
him deprived him of the ability to cope with his own environment. His wife, as she appears in the play, is the same type of woman as his mother, competent and domineering. Under the care of these two women, Red Nose turned out to be a good-for-nothing; at least, he himself thought that way. He felt that he could not accomplish anything meaningful in life and did not even know who he was. When he questioned himself about the significance of his existence, he could not find an answer, not in his life with his parents or wife. So he left home to look for his identity and for a meaning in life in a world with which he had little experience. The first step in his quest for his own human condition was to prove that he was a man who was able to achieve something. He tried many kinds of jobs, but he failed because of his insurmountable shyness and cowardice. It was not until he joined the vaudeville troupe and put on the mask that he felt he could do something. By wearing a mask, he has created a false identity to project to the world. When the play opens, he is known as Red Nose, a clown whose face is as mysterious as his past.

In the first three acts, Red Nose appears as a man capable of bringing happiness and peace to those who are troubled. Directly or indirectly he solves the problems of one character after another. His ability to help others gives him a little more comfort that he is not an utterly useless man. But he is by no means happy. When he sings alone that
"I am happy, I am happy. I have Little Monkey to frolic with me. I am happy," his voice, as described in the stage direction, is "ludicrous and painful." His search for happiness leads to an awareness that true happiness is hardly attainable. Only great men like Wu Feng, Buddha, and Christ have the access to true happiness, that is, through self-sacrifice. He dreams of being a man like them.

The appearance of Wang P'ei-p'ei brings him back to reality. Wang P'ei-p'ei serves not only as a device to disclose Red Nose's past but also as a factor which helps to move the action toward its end. By unmasking Red Nose, she actually robs him of his identity. That Ch'iu Ta-wei and Ho Mei-li, and the Hsiaos do not notice Red Nose's existence when they pass by him indicates that Red Nose, without his mask, is a man of no identity. Wang P'ei-p'ei further anguishes him by unveiling the fact that his view of self-sacrifice as true happiness is but his megalomaniacal dream of being a great man. She is not aware that she is striking hard at the very foundation of his existence. Now Red Nose is plunged into a predicament—he is faced with loss of identity (for him to return to Wang P'ei-p'ei means to subject himself to her sway again and to live a life without meaning) and the destruction of the illusion which has sustained his life and has given him a false sense of dignity. The only solution is self-annihilation, for he cannot live with the truth that he is nobody. He puts
on his mask before he heads toward the beach only to regain his identity which makes it possible for him to die free of the fear of death. It is now clear to us that Red Nose's final act is an act of suicide motivated by his loss of identity and dream and his desire to escape from his wife who stands for the real world which is incompatible with his dream.

Red Nose's suicide seems surprising at first, but on reflection it seems to be an action which appropriately if not fully, expresses his nature. It is disclosed in Act IV that Red Nose is a man who has failed to meet life successfully and has retreated to a make-believe world. In fact, no character of this play is very effective in his dealings with reality. Most of the characters are, like Red Nose, dreamers. But Red Nose is the character that stands out and is most carefully developed.

Red Nose is alienated from the society first by his inability to integrate himself into it. He is so much weighed down with uncertainty and lack of confidence in himself that any type of involvement is a burden to him. He has to cut off his ties first with his family and then with the rest of the humanity. Although, on the surface, the mask seems to serve as an instrument by means of which, Red Nose, as a clown, assumes a peculiar mode of contact with people, it actually further isolates him from the world. The mask gives him a sense of freedom which, in turn, makes him remain unencumbered
by human relationships. Being free and unattached, he feels that he can "observe" others freely. In other words, it is Red Nose, the clown, who engages in worldly affairs, but behind the mask there is Shen-szu (Red Nose's real name) isolated as a bystander in the human scene. Psychologically Shen-szu is destroying himself by cutting off all human relationships.

Another aspect of Red Nose's personality is reflected in his outlook on life and death. In Act II, Red Nose tries to comfort P'eng Hsiao-po who is troubled by the fear that his son might have been killed in a plane crash. He points out that P'eng's agony is more a result of a fear of himself than of the death of his son. His viewpoint is that man is born with an instinctive fear of life and death and with an inclination to worry about himself and about those who are related to him. It is a roundabout way of saying that life is the source of the sufferings of the human race. Although there is no hint that Red Nose is a Buddhist, his view of life is strongly suggestive of Buddhistic influence. Yao seems to take much interest in Buddhism. In an essay on the tragic vision in Chinese drama, he discusses how the general Chinese outlook on life is influenced by the simplified and vulgarized version of Buddhism which advocates that man is born to suffer. In another essay, he quotes a passage from Buddhist scriptures which describes fortune and misfortune as inseparable twin
Hand in hand they visit every household and no one in the world is given a choice between them. Man is destined to have them both under his roof; there is no way of accepting one and rejecting or escaping the other. The mundane existence for mankind is bound to be hard and it is from being that man suffers most. To make it easier for human beings to get along with life, Buddhists have evolved the theory of retribution, the concept that one inevitably reaps what he sows. The Buddhistic view of retribution has been deeply rooted in the mind of the Chinese people. This accounts for the reason why P'eng Hsiao-po believes that the untimely death of his son in a plane crash is a retribution, a punishment for what he has done to others. Closely associated with the idea of retribution is the notion that after people die, their souls will undergo a trial and will then be sent to different hells to receive punishments according to the evils they have done in the world of the living. Suffering from a sense of guilt, P'eng envisions himself in a trial which he believes will take place after he dies. However, retributive justice works both ways: while evil deeds or even thoughts are punished, whatever good is done is rewarded, though not necessarily in this life. The idea that good will eventually be rewarded is fully expressed in the idiom: "Heaven helps a good man" which is uttered twice by Mr. Hsiao and once by Hsiao Ting. It is an expression of the same idea when P'eng
Hsiao-po says that he will do good if his son returns safely. He means to make up for the wrongs that he has done with good, charitable deeds.

The dialogue between Red Nose and P'eng is didactic if it is taken literally. It deserves special attention not because it carries a strong moral implication but because it shows Red Nose's outlook on life which helps to clarify the ambiguity of his final act. Red Nose fully understands his own predicament—his inability to deal with life which is filled with fear and worries. Torn by the fatalistic belief that man is bound to lead a life of suffering and his desire to revolt against or transcend life as such, he creates the illusion that peace and happiness can be achieved through self-sacrifice for which Christ, Buddha, and Wu Feng are the models. At the same time, Red Nose is keenly aware of his insignificance. Lacking confidence in himself, he is eager for others' praise and worship to confirm the value of his existence. The role of a clown who brings happiness to others, however temporary that happiness may be, satisfies his vanity that he is capable of something significant. His illusion is destroyed when Wang P'ei-P'ei tries to convince him that what he has done to others is of little importance. Now that he is stripped of his mask, there is nothing to protect him against reality. His dilemma is whether to submit himself to reality or end all his troubles and worries once for all. The false report that the dance girl
is in danger serves as a catalyst in his choice of the second solution.

The play is tinged with a mysterious, religious color. Red Nose's given name, as it is revealed by Wang P'ei-p'ei, is Shen-szu which literally means a gift of gods or gods' blessing. His family name is unknown and his familial background vague. The name Shen-szu suggests the possibility that he comes from a religious family. It goes without saying that his parents must have thought of him as a gift sent by the gods. But after Shen-szu takes the role of Red Nose, his name seems to denote another level of implication. As the play shows, he places himself in a position similar to that of Christ, Buddha, and Wu Feng. It is the role of a savior which Red Nose tries to act, a vulgarized, degenerate one as it turns out to be. To a certain extent, the author seems to equate Red Nose with a god or at least a representative of the gods sent to solve human problems. This parallel is clear. In Act I, the befalling of calamities implies both the natural disaster and the problems, worries, fears that beset the people in the hotel. In Act II, the weather clears up and the problems of the people are solved. While it is gods who remove the natural calamity, it is Red Nose who helps solve the worldly problems. As is still common with people in many places, religious rite is practiced after calamities are over. Act III and IV constitute the religious rite which is completed.
with Red Nose offering himself as a sacrifice. Superficially, this act of Red Nose's is, on his part, the realization of his belief that true happiness is self-sacrifice. In terms of the play's religious implication, the act signifies the final episode of the ritual service. It is interesting to note that Red Nose begins his life as a gift given by the gods and ends it as a sacrifice to the gods.

The play has an undertone of irony. Red Nose's final act is clearly a suicide. The irony is that he who tries to give his death nobility under the pretext of sacrificing himself to save a dance girl turns out to be the victim of her mischief whereon the would-be savior turns out to be the one people seek to save.

Red Nose can also be seen as a dualized personality. Though a coward inwardly, he is obsessed with heroism and the idea of achieving immortality through such great deeds as accomplished by Wu Feng, Buddha, and Christ. He wears the mask in order to show to the public a personality which is completely different from his real one—a capable, brave man rather than a shy, cowardly good-for-nothing. He takes after Buddha in trying to raise the human race from suffering and models himself on Wu Feng by sacrificing himself to save a human life. He interprets the acts of self-sacrifice as true happiness, and, apparently, an access to immortality. It is an irony that death should take place in a land of immortality.
which means here endless existence—the name of the hotel is P'eng-lai, a legendary island of Taoist immortals. Nevertheless, the allusion to the Taoist legend seems to intimate something of a deeper connotation than such an irony. It is the idea that happiness and immortality, be it endless existence or lasting fame, are as illusory as the island itself. Red Nose's adherence to illusion as a goal in life leads him inevitably toward destruction.

The use of masks to represent the duality of human nature can hardly be explained as a Western influence. According to the history of Chinese drama, Prince Lan Ling during the period of 550 and 577 A.D. was an illustrious warrior. He used to put on a mask when he went to the battlefield because his face was too effeminate to show the awe-inspiring air of a prince. Out of an enthusiastic admiration of his bravery the people of his kingdom created Melody of Prince Lan Ling's Going into Battle, imitating his gestures and movements on the battlefield. The dance also involved the wearing of the mask. The use of face paintings in Chinese opera to indicate the personality and dispositions of the characters is believed to have developed from the mask of the Lan Ling melody and dance. Red Nose's mask is closer to Prince Lan Ling's in function than the face paintings in Peking opera. In Prince Lan Ling's case, the mask serves to create the effect which can not be produced by his outward appearance. In Red Nose's case, the
mask stands for his public character which is an opposite of his inward nature. The two instances have one thing in common: one of the purposes of wearing the mask is to make an affixed impression on the public. However, Red Nose's mask seems to be in the Western tradition. In Peking opera the clown has white make-up just around the eyes and nose. Yao's stage instruction gives the impression that Red Nose wears a bulbous nose.

Structurally, the play shows more Western influence than Chinese originality. It conforms loosely to the pattern of exposition, rising action, and climax. It also relies on the devices of suspense, surprise, and coincidence to create effective situations. It is the dramatization of Red Nose's quest for his human condition. Belonging to the drama of concentration, the play shows on stage only the end of the quest. The protagonist's past is brought up again only in the light of the present and its outcome.

The play begins with an exposition of characters and a description of their situation. This first act is the longest of all the four acts, starting with the news of the suspension of the traffic and ending with Red Nose's success in persuading the hotel manager to accept the vaudeville troupe. Generally speaking, Yao is skilled in the selection and arrangement of incidents. The main weakness of Act I is the overloaded exposition of characters and the much too detailed description of their situation. One gains the impression that it is a
concatenation of events rather than a movement of the psyche. The pace is slow and heavy. It is possible that the author intends to make it what it is in order that it may correspond to the situation suggested by its title. I am afraid that it may be too tedious to keep the spectator interested.

The second act in the beginning follows the same pattern. It is the members of the vaudeville company and their situation that are exposed to the audience. But Red Nose is deliberately wrapped in mystery to raise the audience's expectation. The scanty, vague information about him given by the four dance girls well serves the purpose. He is described as a shy, nice-looking man, a college graduate, and a good man. Nothing is known about his name, his family, and his past. Act II ends with the promise of a new development by introducing a new element, Wang P'ei-p'ei, with her identity unrevealed.

Act III is a hodgepodge of acrobatic feats, singing, dancing, and a one-man show. It is in sharp contrast to the first act: it is as short and light as the latter is long and somber. Since the entertainment takes place after both human and natural calamities are over and everyone is light-hearted and happy, the author, by making it short, seems to suggest that happiness can be captured and held for only a moment. Red Nose expresses the same idea in the following act, saying that happiness is temporary.
When the play opens for the last time, Wang P'ei-p'ei who has unmasked Red Nose physically is unmasking him psychologically and forcing him to face the realities about himself. The function of Wang P'ei-p'ei is the most complicated among all minor characters. On the one hand, she is the instrument for unveiling the mystery which surrounds Red Nose. On the other hand, she is the symbol of the hidden reality which Red Nose has been trying to evade. The presence of Wang P'ei-p'ei puts Red Nose in a direct confrontation with reality. At the moment when it looks as if reality had won the victory and Red Nose were determined to accept reality as it is, the play takes a quick, unexpected turn and ends with his self-destruction. This last stage of his destruction corresponds to the last stage of the ritual—the sacrificial ceremony. That Red Nose is the sacrifice is beyond question. It is Wang P'ei-p'ei's role at this religious service that is ambiguous. Instead of having her follow Red Nose to the beach as everybody else does, the author has her remain on the stage, first kneeling in prayer and then prostrating herself as if before an altar. It seems that she is placed in the position of an officiant, and, by sacrificing Red Nose (in reality, she is partly responsible for his death), she completes the ritual in a posture suggesting humility and abject submission demanded by all religious services.

Yao seems to show more interest in characters than in theme. Red Nose is actually a study of a certain type of man—
man who is a coward inwardly but is burning with a passion for doing great things and who is driven to live in a make-believe world by his inability to cope with life successfully. Yao tries to make even his minor characters distinct and interesting. He usually does not give elaborate descriptions of his people. Neither does he define them in the way Chekhov does: by their age, by their social background, or their special interests. The personality of Yao's characters is revealed mostly through their speech. For instance, Wang P'ei-p'ei's role takes up a very little portion of the play. Yet the dialogue between Red Nose and her at the beginning of the fourth act, though short, presents her as a character of distinctive personality: competent, self-confident, independent, and domineering—a sheer opposite of Red Nose's. The conflict between Red Nose and her is one of the personality if viewed devoid of its symbolic implication.

In this play the minor characters serve mainly to comment on, or reflect, or reveal the personality of the protagonist rather than explore the theme. Whatever function they are given, it is the author's intention that they turn out to be living people. They have their own specific personality. Ch'iu Ta-wei's arrogance and eagerness for fame, P'eng Hsiao-po's greediness, the hotel manager's and Yeh Yao-chih's hypocrisy—all these are revealed primarily by their speech and occasionally by their gestures. They belong to the general
public who are too much preoccupied with petty mundane affairs to query the meaning of life or the significance of existence. For the elements of the composition, the scenes or episodes, for instance, Yao takes actual material such as we find in life. The scene in which Yeh Yao-chih and his wife argue about their daughter's education is a domestic scene true to life.

However, Yao's characterization is not devoid of defects. For example, there is a scene in which, in the course of telling Red Nose about his son, P'eng Hsiao-po mistakes Red Nose for his son and beats him. The shift in P'eng's emotion is too abrupt to be convincing. The play as a whole suffers from a fault--the overuse of coincidences. P'eng Hsiao-po is plunged into despair by the coincidence that an air plane has crashed into the sea and his son is supposed to be on the plane. In the second act, after Red Nose comforts him for his worries, P'eng receives a telephone call informing him that his son, having postponed his departure for a day, has escaped the accident--another coincidence. It is also a coincidence that Hu I-fan and Tseng Hua-te should chance upon P'eng when they need his help. The most obvious coincidences take place at the end of the first act--when Red Nose moves about the stage enumerating common human troubles. By coincidence Red Nose hits the target at every shot; he makes each character painfully aware of that character's specific problem. It is interesting to note that on hearing Red Nose's words P'eng,
Ch'iu, Ho, Tseng, and Hu all react in the same way; they all "stand up in alarm" as the stage instruction dictates. Coincidence is one of the devices of the drawing room drama of playwrights like Scribe to heighten the effective situations. However, the overuse of it may make a play too contrived.

The readability of the play is beyond question. As to what effect it may produce on stage, we have to wait for actors to find out for us.

The translation of the complete play follows in the next chapter. While reading my rendition, a reader must keep in mind that it will not convey the full force of the original. In the translation of this play, I have tried to be as faithful to the original as possible. In the phrases where faithfulness might cause misunderstanding or undesired effect, I have tried to replace them with English equivalents. The following example is the conversation between Waiter A and Mr. Hsiao in the second act.

Waiter A. May I have your name?
Mr. Hsiao. Hsiao.
Waiter A. Mr. Hsiao.
Mr. Hsiao. Yes.

The Chinese original implies a sense of politeness and humbleness which is less obvious in its English equivalent. The following is the literal translation of the dialogue.

Waiter A. May I have your honorable name?
Mr. Hsiao. My humble surname is Hsiao.
Waiter A. Boss Hsiao.
Mr. Hsiao. I don't deserve it (the title).
A literal translation like this may seem ludicrous to an audience or reader who is not familiar with the cultural background in which the play is created.

With the exception of Red Nose and Little Monkey (both names are translated literally), all other characters' names are phonetically transliterated because they do not have any symbolical function or meaning. I have adopted the modified Wade-Gile system of romanization and transliterated all the names according to their Mandarin pronunciation, for Mandarin is the official spoken language. Since Chinese is a tonal language, the same Roman alphabet transliteration may be applied to several Chinese characters which are pronounced exactly the same but in different tones. For example, in the names of the characters of this play, there are three characters whose names are pronounced as "hsiao": a common Chinese family name, pronounced in the first tone; the third tone, meaning small or little; the fourth tone, meaning "filiality." (There is no character which is pronounced as "hsiao" in the second tone.) To reduce confusion, I have reproduced the Chinese original to supplement the non-tonal transliteration.

Chinese names are arranged in the order of family name first and then given name. I have kept this order. The Chinese usually address their friends by their full names. Only people who are closely related such as parents-children,
husband-wife, sisters, brothers and relatives may address each other by given names which consist of either one character or more commonly two characters. Among friends, especially among males, the character 衍, "hsiao" is often added to family names in addressing one's peers or juniors with whom one is familiar, as in Hsiao Lu, Hsiao Chang. It can also be used by a person to address his subordinate who is young, as in Hsiao Ting. In the case of Yeh Hsiao-chen, "Hsiao" is part of her given name. To distinguish the "Hsiao" as part of a double given name from the "Hsiao" which is prefixed to a name, I have used hyphens in the former but not in the latter: Hsiao-chen vs Hsiao Lu.

Another character which needs to be explained is 老 "lao." "Lao" literally means old. It is often added to a family name by a male in addressing his peers. In this situation it does not necessarily mean "old," for it can be used among young and middle-aged people. It is also often used in addressing people who are not young and who hold low positions such as janitors or custodians in schools or old servants. In the first act of Red Nose Tseng Hua-te and Hu I-fan mention P'eng Hsiao-po as "Lao P'eng." According to the Chinese custom, it is inappropriate to address one's superior or elders in that way. One may notice that Hu I-fan addresses P'eng as Po Lao in the second act. Addressing one's superior by adding "lao" to either the first and second character of their given names implies both intimacy and respect.
An accurate translation of proverbs and idioms is especially difficult because they are often unique to a special culture or nationality. Most usually there are no equivalents or counterparts for them in other languages. I have replaced them with their English counterparts wherever such an arrangement is possible. I have kept close to the original in translating adages which do not have English counterparts. And I have used footnotes where there is the need for an explanation.
Red Nose

Characters

Tseng Hua-te 曾化德
Hu I-fan 胡義凡
P'eng Hsiao-po 彭孝柏
Hsiao Ting 胡範
Ch'iu Ta-wei 鄭大為
Ho Mei-li 何美麗
Yeh Yao-chih 葉耀治
Mrs. Yeh 葉
Yeh Hsiao-chen 葉小珍
Manager (Chou Ch'eng-ch'üan 周成全)
Waiter A
Waiter B
Newsboy

The time: the present time.

The scene: a middle-class hotel at a seaside summer resort.

Act I: The Befalling of Calamity
Act II: The Removing of Calamity
Act III: Thanking God
Act IV: The Offering of Sacrifice
Scene: The play is set inside the lobby of a middle-class hotel at a summer resort. At the back center of the stage is the entrance of the hotel. At the far right is a counter behind which is a door leading into the inner quarters. Next to the counter a door leads to the backstage. A little further is a staircase running up to guest rooms. To the right of the stage are sofa and chairs. To the left are a few dining tables (at least four or more if the stage is large). At the far left are French windows leading out to the balcony from which can be seen the seascape in the distance.

At the rise of the curtain it is an early evening in early fall. Rain is pouring outside. The view of the seascape through the French windows is hazy. Inside the lobby Ch'iu Ta-wei is drinking alone at a table on which a few pieces of music paper are scattered disorderly. Waiters A and B are setting other tables for dinner. The hotel manager is behind the counter absorbed in work.

Light music is heard on the radio.

Ch'iu Ta-wei writes something on the music paper, then tears it up.

Radio. Weather forecast for today and tomorrow: The moist stream brought along by the tropical low pressure has encountered the southerly cold front, thus forming an
occluded front which has triggered heavy rains in this area. In the past three days the rainfall has reached 34 inches. Now that the tropical low pressure is moving on, the rainfall is expected to decrease. Tomorrow it will be mostly cloudy with a southeasterly wind flow expected at 10 to 15 knots. The temperature will range from 79 to 87 degrees. The heavy rainfall has caused several landslides. Because the northbound highway is blocked, all scheduled buses to the north were cancelled at 5:00 this afternoon. The Highway Bureau has got the highway crew working on it now. Flooding has also occurred on the southbound highway. Since no serious damages have been produced, the road remains open to traffic. The Highway Bureau hasn't decided whether to suspend its service. It will depend on the rainfall and the momentum of the flood. Please listen to our broadcast for further information.

(Music starts.)

(Telephone rings.)

Manager (into the phone). Hotel P'eng-lai. Yes, Hotel P'eng-lai. Uh, uh, what? A vaudeville company? Oh, I got it. How many people do you have? Twelve? Oh! How many rooms? We don't have so many vacancies. Uh, uh, sleeping in the lobby? How could it be possible? Yes, yes, it's all right . . . . I know. The road is
blocked. I've just heard it on the radio . . . . Hm, hm, we can't help . . . . Uh, uh, I don't mean to turn you down. We don't have any vacancy. It's not that . . . . We can't help. That's it. (Hangs up the phone, displeased.)

(To Waiter A). A vaudeville company wants to come and stay.

Waiter A. Oh! A vaudeville company? How exciting!
Manager. Exciting or not, leave them alone! They've got a dozen people. We don't have enough vacancies for them. Neither is this the right place for them.

(Waiter A exits through the right door.)

Ch'iu Ta-wei (humming). Do-re-mi-fa-so-fa-mi, do-re-mi-fa-so-fa-mi. (Sighs). Damn it. (Tears the music paper into pieces, takes his chin in his hands and forgets himself.)

(Hu I-fan and Tseng Hua-te come down the stairs. Hu I-fan is carrying a suitcase in front and Tseng Hua-te follows indolently. They stop at the counter.)

Hu I-fan. Our bill, please.
Manager. Okay.
Hu I-fan. Could you see for us if there's any bus available at this moment?
Manager. Going south or north?
Hu I-fan. North.
Manager. The road is blocked.

Hu I-fan (flabbergasted). What?

Manager. I've just heard the news broadcast that all buses
going north were cancelled because of landslides.

Hu I-fan. Well--then-- When will the road reopen?

Manager. I don't know. Not until tomorrow. They've got the
highway crew working on it now.

Hu I-fan (stunned, a moment later). What a mess! What a
mess!

Manager. I suppose-- I suppose it's something that can't
be helped. Here's your bill. But I'm afraid that you
two have to stay one more day?

Tseng Hua-te (waving his arm). Sure, sure. We'll check out
later.

(Tseng Hua-te and Hu I-fan sit down.)

Tseng Hua-te. So as the saying goes: Man proposes, God
disposes. 63

Hu I-fan. You are sarcastic. You know the check is due
tomorrow. If we fail to deposit the money in the
bank . . . .

Tseng Hua-te. We are finished. I've said it for you.

Hu I-fan. Finished? You are pleased?

Tseng Hua-te (hysterically). Ha-- I'm pleased! Lao Hu,
what do you want me to say?
Hu I-fan (displeased). Why did you come here? Why did you make me lay down work only to look for you?

Tseng Hua-te. I've told you a thousand times. I don't know.

I just couldn't help it. I couldn't save it although I've tried everything that crossed my mind.

I simply couldn't stand to see the business I established all by myself going to pieces or falling to other hands. So I left.

Hu I-fan. So you've tried everything?

Tseng Hua-te. Exactly. To tell the truth, I couldn't get any loans. No one would lend us a penny. They are nice enough not to push us when we are down. But nobody would give us a hand.

Hu I-fan. As you see it, there's no way out.

Tseng Hua-te. I'm wondering if you have found a better way out.

Hu I-fan. Haven't we got a big order?

Tseng Hua-te. What's the use of an order? Who would put faith in an order? It neither proves the quality of our products nor guarantees that our products wouldn't be returned. Who would lend you money for that?

Hu I-fan. At least it bespeaks our future.

Tseng Hua-te. Future? What a talk! Future is something built on imagination, but money is not. People judge
you by what you are as they see you, not what you'll be in the future. They won't lend you money for your imagination.

Hu I-fan. But I have a different view.

Tseng Hua-te. Why don't you talk about it?

Hu I-fan. I think it's no use to escape.

Tseng Hua-te. You're right. I suppose you have a better solution?

Hu I-fan. Now that the road is blocked, I don't see any point of talking about it. It's too late for any solution, however good it may be. Not even God can save us if they go cash the check tomorrow morning. We're simply talking nonsense.

Tseng Hua-te. Even if it's nonsense, what difference does it make talking about it?

Hu I-fan. I mean we can ask him to postpone cashing the check for a couple of days.

Tseng Hua-te. Ask him? Whom do you mean?

Hu I-fan. Lao P'eng.

Tseng Hua-te. P'eng Hsiao-po? The board director of Ta-hua Textile Manufacturing Company?

Hu I-fan. You think it's funny, don't you? But you can't say that there won't be any chance.

Tseng Hua-te. I've never met him. His son and I were classmates. Don't you know what a guy he is?
Hu I-fan. I do. I know him.

Tseng Hua-te. He's known as a hard-boiled man. He wouldn't even help his own closest relatives. Let alone us who are not even related to him.

Hu I-fan. But you can't say that he won't do anything exceptional for once?

Tseng Hua-te. Okay. Let's say he will. Let's say he agrees to postpone a few days. A few days? How many days do you want?

Hu I-fan. One week.

Tseng Hua-te. Oh, God! What's the good it can do for us?

Hu I-fan (changing mind). One month?

Tseng Hua-te. Forget it! One month! It will only make our pain last one month longer.

Hu I-fan. How long do you want it to be postponed?

Tseng Hua-te. At least half a year.

Hu I-fan. I think three months will do.

Tseng Hua-te. At least half a year.

Hu I-fan. Three months. Three months, I say. As soon as our goods are shipped, we can obtain a documentary draft.

Tseng Hua-te. Can you guarantee that our goods will be shipped in three months? I tell you, you are not as good as I am in matters of manufacturing.

Hu I-fan (greatly displeased). It's true that I'm not as good as you in matters of manufacturing, but I'm better
than you in matters of management. Even if we can't get our goods shipped in three months, we can at least have products. Products are money.

Tseng Hua-te. All right, all right. Let's say you're right. Three months. Three months will be enough. Do you think he'll be accommodating enough to postpone it three months?

Hu I-fan. Well--

Tseng Hua-te. That's simply a daydream.

Hu I-fan (depressed). Now we can't even dream. We can only sit here talking nonsense.

Tseng Hua-te (calling waiter). Hey, waiter. Wine, a bottle of wine, please.

Hu I-fan (standing up). I can't just sit here having drinks with you. I'm gonna study all the documents I've brought along and then make a phone call back there.

Tseng Hua-te (teasingly). Certainly you're a practical man.

Hu I-fan. I suppose it's better to be practical than to be sitting here dreaming.

Tseng Hua-te. Sometimes there isn't any difference between realities and dreams.

(Waiter B brings over a bottle of wine.)

Hu I-fan. I don't want to argue with you.

Tseng Hua-te (pouring wine). Have a drink. To our friendship and great luck.
(They drink.)

Hu I-fan. Now, now. Enjoy yourself.

(Hu I-fan goes up the stairs carrying the suitcase.)

(Tseng Hua-te keeps drinking. He can't hold his liquor. A while later he bends over the table.)

(P'eng Hsiao-po enters the hotel, followed by Hsiao Ting carrying a huge suitcase.)

P'eng Hsiao-po. Let's take a rest here.
Hsiao Ting. Yes.
P'eng Hsiao-po. I can't stay overnight.
Hsiao Ting. We can leave as soon as the road is cleared.
P'eng Hsiao-po. I'm afraid that there won't be any chance tonight.
Hsiao Ting. It's hard to say.
P'eng Hsiao-po. Is the rainfall decreasing?
Hsiao Ting. I think so.
P'eng Hsiao-po. What did the weathermen say?
Hsiao Ting. They said that the rainfall is gonna decrease.
P'eng Hsiao-po. You know I've got to go home. My son's coming home. He's been in the United States for eight years. It's not at all easy that I finally can expect his return.
Hsiao Ting. Should we get a room?
P'eng Hsiao-po. Yes. Go get that done first. Then make two phone calls. One back to our company. Make sure that
they go pick up my son if I can't be there in time. Tell them to get in touch with the airport. Get it?

Hsiao Ting. Yes.

P'eng Hsiao-po. Then call my wife. Tell her that I got stuck in this God-forsaken place. So the old woman won't be worried.

Hsiao Ting. Yes.

P'eng Hsiao-po. Ask them to fix dinner for us. You know what I'd like to have.

Hsiao Ting. Yes.

(P'eng Hsiao-po finds himself a seat.)

(Hsiao Ting walks over to the counter.)

Hsiao Ting. I'd like to have the best room.

Manager. The best room?

Hsiao Ting. The largest and best in your hotel.

Manager. Sorry. It's not available.

Hsiao Ting. You don't have any room available?

Manager. No. All rooms are taken.

Hsiao Ting. Then what should I do?

Manager. I'm sorry.

Hsiao Ting. Can't you do anything for us?

Manager. It's not for you?

Hsiao Ting. No. For our board director, Mr. P'eng. P'eng Hsiao-po, the board director of Ta-hua Textile and Hua-yang Trading Company.
Manager (astonished). Where is he?

Hsiao Ting. Over there.

Manager. Oh! Why didn't you say so earlier? Such a distinguished guest is beyond my expectation.

Hsiao Ting. Any vacancy?

Manager. Wait a second--

(The manager rushes out of the counter and walks over to P'eng Hsiao-po and Hsiao Ting follows.)

Manager. Sir. It's indeed an honor to have you here.

P'eng Hsiao-po (severely). Hsiao Ting, did you mention my name again?

Hsiao Ting. No . . .

P'eng Hsiao-po. You dare say no.

Hsiao Ting. Because--it's because we wouldn't get a room if I didn't mention your name.

P'eng Hsiao-po. For all these years in my service you haven't got rid of this bad habit.

Hsiao Ting. No, sir.

Manager. It's true that there's no vacancy. Because the road is blocked, all rooms are taken.

P'eng Hsiao-po. Then we can only go.

Manager. No, no. I've never expected to have such a distinguished guest. Let me see. I'll make some changes.

P'eng Hsiao-po. I appreciate it.
Manager. Hi, come over here.

(Waiter B comes over.)

Manager. Show these two gentlemen to room 205.

Waiter B. Yes.

Manager. If there's anything I can do for you, please feel ease to let me know. My name is Chou Ch'eng-ch'üan.

(Handing P'eng Hsiao-po a name card.)

P'eng Hsiao-po. Can I make a few long-distance calls in the room?

Manager. Sure, sure.

P'eng Hsiao-po. Please fix some food for me. Hsiao Ting will let you know what I'd like to have.

Manager. Sure. I'm afraid that we don't have anything good enough for you.

P'eng Hsiao-po. I'd like to continue to be informed about the condition of the road. I have to go as soon as the road is reopen. I'm in a hurry.

Manager. I'll be attentive to it. Don't worry.

P'eng Hsiao-po. Hsiao Ting, you have to take after this Mr. . . . , Mr. . . . .

Manager. Chou Ch'eng-ch'üan.

P'eng Hsiao-po. Yes. Mr. Chou.

Manager. Thank you.

(P'eng Hsiao-po, Hsiao Ting, and Waiter B go up the stairs.)

(Manager returns to the counter.)
(Yeh Yao-chih, his wife and their daughter Yeh Hsiao-chen come down the stairs.)

(Yeh Hsiao-chen is a girl of eight or nine. She has pleasant-looking features but looks dull and is slow in movements because of mental retardation. She has lost the ability to respond to speech.)

(The three of them sit at a table. Waiter A comes up to them.)

Mrs. Yeh (looking at the menu). I'd like shrimps. What about you?

Yeh Yao-chih. As you like.

Mrs. Yeh. What about fish again?

Yeh Yao-chih. All right.

Mrs. Yeh. And rice with beef for my little girl.

Yeh Yao-chih. A bottle of beer, please.

(Waiter A exits.)

Yeh Yao-chih. How time passed!

Mrs. Yeh. How time passed!

Yeh Yao-chih. My vacation is almost over.

Mrs. Yeh. We expected it for a long time.

Yeh Yao-chih. Yes, we did. For quite a few years.

Mrs. Yeh. I never expected that we would be confined within doors because of this dreadful weather. It would have been better to stay at home!

Yeh Yao-chih. That's what I think.

Mrs. Yeh. We wouldn't have to spend money like this.
Yeh Yao-chih. Don't talk about money, okay?

Mrs. Yeh. Why not?

Yeh Yao-chih. It'd be better not to think about money when we are on vacation.

Mrs. Yeh. Not even talk about it?

Yeh Yao-chih. Don't talk about it. Don't think about it.

Mrs. Yeh. I can't help thinking about it.

Yeh Yao-chih. We want to be happy.

Mrs. Yeh. I'm always happy. Not like you. You are not an optimistic person.

Yeh Yao-chih. What did you say? I'm optimistic. As a matter of fact, I've seen through everything.

Mrs. Yeh. Come on. I'm scared of seeing you furrow your brows, scolding people, beating kids as if the whole world turned against you and everything became an eyesore.

Yeh Yao-chih. There, there. Once you start complaining, there's no end to it. You get on my nerves by yakking on and on.

Mrs. Yeh. I complain only when you make me mad. Sometimes you are really unreasonable.

Yeh Yao-chih. I'm unreasonable?

Mrs. Yeh. For most of the time.

Yeh Yao-chih. I'm always the most reasonable man in the world.
Mrs. Yeh. Come on, come on. Don't brag about yourself.

Yeh Yao-chih. Tell me on which occasion I was unreasonable?

Mrs. Yeh. On which occasion? On too many occasions. You want me to enumerate them?

Yeh Yao-chih. Go ahead.

Mrs. Yeh. You mean it?

Yeh Yao-chih. You can't recall!

Mrs. Yeh. On that occasion! On that occasion when a teapot was broken . . . .

Yeh Yao-chih. What teapot? What the hell was that teapot?

Mrs. Yeh. You forgot it? A teapot is a teapot.

Yeh Yao-chih. I really don't remember anything about a teapot.

Mrs. Yeh. See what a memory you've got.

Yeh Yao-chih. I've got an excellent memory. It's you who have got a poor memory.

Mrs. Yeh. Come on! You can't even remember a teapot. Let me tell you. That fine china teapot with blue flowers!

Yeh Yao-chih. Oh--oh--oh! Don't mention that teapot any more. That was my favorite.

Mrs. Yeh. So what? Even if it was so, you still didn't have to fly off the handle like that.

Yeh Yao-chih. I flew off the handle?

Mrs. Yeh. Don't you remember it? You got so mad that you broke a bowl.
Yeh Yao-chih. You mean I shouldn't have got mad?
Mrs. Yeh. Of course, you shouldn't.
Yeh Yao-chih. If a person shouldn't get mad when his favorite teapot is broken, when should he get mad?
Mrs. Yeh. What's the good of getting mad after it's been broken?
Yeh Yao-chih. How easy it is for you to talk! Anybody would get mad in this situation.
Mrs. Yeh. What's the good of getting mad anyway?
Yeh Yao-chih. It isn't a question whether it would do any good to get mad but rather a question whether one should or shouldn't get mad at all.
Mrs. Yeh. One shouldn't at all.
Yeh Yao-chih. Should!
Mrs. Yeh. Shouldn't!
Yeh Yao-chih. Should!

(Waiter A brings over food and drinks. They eat out of spite and in silence.)
Mrs. Yeh. These shrimps taste bad. I've never had such bad-tasting shrimps.
Yeh Yao-chih. I think they are good.
Mrs. Yeh. They are awful.
Yeh Yao-chih. Don't be fussy, okay?
Mrs. Yeh. I'm not fussy. Do you really mean to say that they are good?
Yeh Yao-chih. I didn't say that. And I wouldn't say they are bad either. I'm merely eating. I don't criticize.

Mrs. Yeh. How you can criticize at home!

Yeh Yao-chih. Well--well--

Mrs. Yeh. Well what?

Yeh Yao-chih. I criticize only when food is awfully bad.

Mrs. Yeh. You mean worse than this?

Yeh Yao-chih. I didn't say that . . .

Mrs. Yeh. You didn't say! (Crying.)

Yeh Yao-chih. Come on, come on.

(They get into an impasse.)

Mrs. Yeh. I regret taking this trip.

Yeh Yao-chih. Didn't you long for it for a long time?

Mrs. Yeh. But everything went wrong.

Yeh Yao-chih. No, no. Not at all.

Mrs. Yeh. I've spent money only to be a punching bag.

Yeh Yao-chih. Didn't you say it would do good to our child?

Mrs. Yeh. Our child. Oh, Hsiao-chen, Hsiao-chen, what's the matter with you? You haven't eaten anything?

Come, come, let me feed you.

(Mrs. Yeh is feeding Hsiao-chen. Yeh Yao-chih is drinking.)

We shouldn't keep her within the doors all the time. If she always sits, she won't be able to walk in the future.
Yeh Yao-chih. I think the most important thing is to get her to a doctor.

Mrs. Yeh. Get her to a doctor? What can a doctor do for her?

Yeh Yao-chih. You shouldn't say that.

Mrs. Yeh. You forgot what the doctor said? This kind of disease is incurable.

Yeh Yao-chih. You should put it this way. There's no medicine for it.

Mrs. Yeh. Doesn't it mean the same thing?

Yeh Yao-chih. No. He meant that there's no efficacious medicine for it.

Mrs. Yeh. So there you are!

Yeh Yao-chih. Although there's no medicine for it, perhaps--perhaps there are some other kinds of treatment.

Mrs. Yeh. Other kinds of treatment? What are they?

Yeh Yao-chih. Physical therapy, for instance.

Mrs. Yeh. Then why didn't the doctor try it?

Yeh Yao-chih. I--I'm just thinking. Perhaps they don't have the facilities for that purpose. Perhaps the facilities haven't been invented yet--

Mrs. Yeh. Oh-- I thought you knew some good treatment. The doctor said that although it's incurable, someday she might get over it by herself.

Yeh Yao-chih. Get over it by herself?
Mrs. Yeh. He said that someday excited by something she may recover herself as if waking up from a dream.

Yeh Yao-chih. What's the reason for it?

Mrs. Yeh. Don't ask about the reason.

Yeh Yao-chih. Certainly I have to.

Mrs. Yeh. The doctor said he doesn't know it either.

Yeh Yao-chih. If he doesn't know it, then it doesn't make any sense.

Mrs. Yeh. You shouldn't say that. The doctor said that although he doesn't know the reason, he has seen cases like that.

Yeh Yao-chih. Really?

Mrs. Yeh. Exactly.

Yeh Yao-chih. She's a nice girl. (To Hsiao-chen) You are nice girl.

Mrs. Yeh (to Hsiao-chen). You are a darling little girl.

Yeh Yao-chih (to Hsiao-chen). You won't remain this way forever, will you?

Mrs. Yeh (to Hsiao-chen). No, you won't.

Yeh Yao-chih (to Hsiao-chen). Do you understand?

Mrs. Yeh (to Hsiao-chen). You'll get over it.

Yeh Yao-chih (to Hsiao-chen). You'll recover someday, Hsiao-chen. I'll take you high up to the mountain.

Mrs. Yeh (to Hsiao-chen). Yes, yes. Hsiao-chen, we'll take you to see the ocean, the boundless ocean!
(Yeh Yao-chih and his wife exchange a look; their eyes glisten with tears.)

(They wake up as if from a dream.)

Yeh Yao-chih. Our food has got cold.

Mrs. Yeh. Let's eat.

(They eat.)

(Music.)

(Ho Mei-li enters the door carrying a suitcase. She stops at the door and has a look around. After a moment of hesitation, she goes toward Ch'iu Ta-wei.)

Ch'iu Ta-wei (raises his head suddenly). How come? You haven't gone?

Ho Mei-li. I couldn't go.

Ch'iu Ta-wei. Why not?

Ho Mei-li. The road is blocked.

Ch'iu Ta-wei. Ah--ah! So you are back.

Ho Mei-li (sits down). What do you think I should do?

Ch'iu Ta-wei. Let's say. Go to another hotel?

Ho Mei-li. I was smart enough to have thought about it.

There are three hotels in the neighborhood. I checked with them one by one. None of them would take me. All full.

Ch'iu Ta-wei. Ah-- no wonder--

Ho Mei-li. You think I wished to come back?

Ch'iu Ta-wei. I didn't say that.
Ho Mei-li. You think I'm back to see you?

Ch'iu Ta-wei. I didn't think that way.

Ho Mei-li. Don't imagine that I'm in love with you.

Ch'iu Ta-wei. I don't.

Ho Mei-li. Let me tell you something. I hope I'll never see you again in my whole life.

Ch'iu Ta-wei. Your whole life is a very long period of time.

Ho Mei-li. Surely it's very, very long.

Ch'iu Ta-wei. Can you foresee things that far?

Ho Mei-li. It's not a matter of foreseeing; it's rather a kind of determination.

Ch'iu Ta-wei. A great determination.

Ho Mei-li. So what?

Ch'iu Ta-wei. Nothing. Determination can't stand wavering.

Ho Mei-li. Wavering? You're dreaming!

Ch'iu Ta-wei. Yes, I am.

Ho Mei-li. You certainly are good at dreaming. You're dreaming all day long.

Ch'iu Ta-wei. It's not bad to be able to dream.

Ho Mei-li. Someday you'll find it even impossible to dream, I tell you.

Ch'iu Ta-wei. Why?

Ho Mei-li. When a dream comes true, it's no longer a dream.

Isn't that right?
Ch'iu Ta-wei. You've finally said one sentence right.
Ho Mei-li. Thank you. To my surprise, I’ve said one sentence right!
Ch'iu Ta-wei. Let me ask you something. Is it a dream or is it a reality that we are sitting together in this place again?
Ho Mei-li. Of course, it is a reality.
Ch'iu Ta-wei. Good.
Ho Mei-li. What's good about it?
Ch'iu Ta-wei. It proves that I'm not dreaming.
Ho Mei-li. Nonsense.
Ch'iu Ta-wei. It is nonsense.
Ho Mei-li. Can't you say something serious?
Ch'iu Ta-wei. We've finished everything serious.
Ho Mei-li. Disgusting.
Ch'iu Ta-wei. I've heard that word one hundred times.
Ho Mei-li. Disgusting, disgusting, disgusting! I'll repeat it a thousand times, ten thousand times . . . .
Ch'iu Ta-wei (impatient). Come on, come on. Now we have to presume that . . . .
Ch'iu Ta-wei. Didn't you say that you don't want to see me again?
Ho Mei-li. Yes.
Ch'iu Ta-wei. And whatever I said is nonsense?
Ho Mei-li. It is nonsense.
Ch'iu Ta-wei. So let's presume that we didn't meet or see or hear each other. We-- we have to presume that we are mutually non-existent. Get it?

Ho Mei-li. Yes. I agree.

Ch'iu Ta-wei. From now on, we won't talk with each other.

Ho Mei-li. Okay.

Ch'iu Ta-wei. Let's make a deal. Agree?

Ho Mei-li (hooking his little finger with hers). Agree!

Ch'iu Ta-wei. Whoever opens his or her mouth first should take punishment.

Ho Mei-li. Okay. But how?

Ch'iu Ta-wei. How? Let's see.

Ho Mei-li. I'll think about it, too.

(They think.)

I got it. One hundred-dollar fine.


Ho Mei-li. Then how?

Ch'iu Ta-wei. Stand up for the whole night.

Ho Mei-li. That's not fair.

Ch'iu Ta-wei. Why not?

Ho Mei-li. I'm in high-heeled shoes and yours are flat.

Why don't you stand in high-heeled shoes for an hour and see how you take it?

Ch'iu Ta-wei. Well-- then stand barefooted.
Ch'iu Ta-wei. Barefooted. Agreed!
Ho Mei-li (hooking his little finger with hers). Agreed!
(They exchange a look and keep silent in a serious manner.)
(Ch'iu Ta-wei goes back to his work. Ho Mei-li opens her suitcase and takes out a purse from which she brings out a mirror. She looks into the mirror.)
(Waiter B comes to them.)
Waiter B. Wouldn't you like to have dinner?
Ho Mei-li. Hm-- (Looks at Ch'iu Ta-wei silently, then makes gestures and is embarrassed because the waiter does not understand her. At last she snatches the menu away from him and points at the items she wants.)
Waiter B. You want those?
Ho Mei-li (nodding silently).
Waiter B (to Ch'iu Ta-wei). Would you like anything else?
Ch'iu Ta-wei. No. Oh-- oh, uh, a bottle of beer, please.
(Waiter B exits.)
Ho Mei-li. You've talked.
Ch'iu Ta-wei. I haven't talked to you.
Ho Mei-li. Is it all right to talk to others?
Ch'iu Ta-wei. Sure.
Ho Mei-li (breathes a sigh of relief). Oh!
(They fall into silence again. Ch'iu Ta-wei again engages himself in writing. Ho Mei-li takes out a book from the
suitcase. After reading two, three lines, she stops and becomes fidgety, breathing a sigh, shaking her head and squirming in her seat.)

Ch'iu Ta-wei (humming). Do-re-mi-fa-so-fa-mi, do-re-mi-fa-so-si-do, do-si-re-do-si-la-so.

(Ho Mei-li is all ears for it.)

(Humming). Do-re-mi-fa-so--fa--mi, do-re-mi-fa--si--do, do-si-re-do-si-la-so, do-re-mi-fa-so--fa-mi, do-re-mi-fa-so--si-do, do-si-re-so-si-la--so (his voice is getting more and more woeful and horrible), do-re-mi-fa-so--fa-mi, do-re-mi-fa-so-fa-mi, do-si-re-do-si-la-so, do-re-mi-fa-so--fa-mi, do-re-mi-fa-so--si-do, do-si-re-do-si-la-so--

(All diners stare at him.)

Ho Mei-li (cannot stand it any more). How come you are repeating those two lines?

(Ch'iu Ta-wei falls back on the chair dejectedly and covers his face with hands, crying.)

Ho Mei-li (startled). What's the matter with you? What's the matter? Tell me what is the matter? Tell me what is the matter?

Ch'iu Ta-wei. Leave me alone.

Ho Mei-li. What is it the matter with you?

Ch'iu Ta-wei (crying). I-- I-- I have no talent--

Ho Mei-li. Don't say that, don't say that.
Ch'iu Ta-wei. I really mean it.
Ho Mei-li. You do, you do have talent. I know you do.
Ch'iu Ta-wei. No, no, not at all.
Ho Mei-li. Yes, yes, you do.
Ch'iu Ta-wei. For three days, three days straight, I've only written these three rubbish lines. I can't think of anything else. My mind seems frozen hard, as hard as if it were made of iron.
Ho Mei-li. It's all my fault. I made a row with you on purpose.
Ch'iu Ta-wei. It's nothing to do with you.
Ho Mei-li. It's me, it's me to blame.
Ch'iu Ta-wei. But I haven't written a single line after you left.
Ho Mei-li. That's because you haven't got inspiration.
Ch'iu Ta-wei. Inspiration?
Ho Mei-li. You won't be able to write anything if you haven't got inspiration.
Ch'iu Ta-wei. Really?
Ho Mei-li. Sure. My father always says that without inspiration he can't write any poems. He's a poet.
Ch'iu Ta-wei. Some poet he is!
Ho Mei-li. Yes, he is. He is a poet.
Ch'iu Ta-wei. Okay, okay. He is a poet.
Ho Mei-li. So inspiration is very important. Without it even the greatest genius would be helpless.

Ch'iu Ta-wei. I don't believe it.

Ho Mei-li. You have to, you have to.

Ch'iu Ta-wei. I don't believe a bit of it.

(Ch'iu Ta-wei bends over the table.)

(Waiter B brings over a big tray of food.)

Ho Mei-li. Why so much!

Water B. You ordered it.

Ho Mei-li. Me?

Waiter B (showing the menu). You pointed to this, this, this, and that.

(Waiter B exits.)

Ho Mei-li (distractedly). What should I do? Ta-wei! Ta-wei! Ta-wei! What should I do? (Pushing Ch'iu Ta-wei) What should I do?

Ch'iu Ta-wei. Do you think that someday I'll end up with something great?

Ho Mei-li. Sure, Ta-wei, sure.

Ch'iu Ta-wei. You believe it.

Ho Mei-li. Yes, I do.

Ch'iu Ta-wei. I don't mean now.

Ho Mei-li. Eat something!

Ch'iu Ta-wei. I mean in the future.

Ho Mei-li. Come on. Eat something. Then you'll feel better.
Ch'iu Ta-wei (dreamily). Someday in the future, someday in the future, someday . . . .

Ho Mei-li. Eat something and you'll feel better.

Ch'iu Ta-wei. Really?

Ho Mei-li. Yes, yes.

(Ch'iu Ta-wei and Ho Mei-li eat.)

(Soft music comes up from the radio.)

(P'eng Hsiao-po comes down the stairs, followed by Hsiao Ting.)

(P'eng Hsiao-po sits at a table while Hsiao Ting stands by.)

P'eng Hsiao-po. Sit down, Hsiao Ting.

Hsiao Ting. Yes. (Sits down.)

P'eng Hsiao-po. You don't have to stand on ceremony with me when we are out for business.

Hsiao Ting. Okay.

P'eng Hsiao-po. Have you called our men?

Hsiao Ting. Yes, I've got it done. I told them to get to the airport on time without fail. I also told them to call here if anything important comes up.

P'eng Hsiao-po. I'm wondering what my son looks like now. He's been in the States for eight years. I'm anxious to see how he's changed.

Hsiao Ting. Hasn't he got married?

P'eng Hsiao-po. Surely not. I've urged him so much. But he simply doesn't seem to be anxious about it. After he's back, I'll get him married by any means.
Hsiao Ting. I'm expecting the wedding feast.

(The hotel manager comes over.)

Manager. Mr. P'eng, I've taken care of everything. But I'm afraid that we don't have anything good enough for you.

P'eng Hsiao-po. Thanks, thanks.

Manager. We have a famous dish called "Kuei-fei fish." I'll treat you to that.

P'eng Hsiao-po. No, I can't let you do that. We only just met. Why taking the trouble?

Manager. Just to show my regard. You are too distinguished a man for my hotel.

P'eng Hsiao-po. Then we'll show ours by taking it.

Manager. I'll have to leave you to enjoy yourselves.

P'eng Hsiao-po. Go ahead, go ahead. (Thinking of something.) Oh-- oh, hey, hey.

Manager. What can I do for you?

P'eng Hsiao-po. Is there any chance for the road to be cleared?


P'eng Hsiao-po. All right, all right.

(The manager exits.)

P'eng Hsiao-po. Well, let's rest comfortably for the night.

(Waiter A sets the table and brings over food and drinks.)
P'eng Hsiao-po. Come, come. I'm sort of hungry.

(P'eng Hsiao-po and Hsiao Ting eat.)

(Newsboy enters.)

Newsboy. Evening papers! Evening papers! Great news!

Good news! Evening papers!

(Yeh Yao-chih buys newspaper.)

Evening papers! Great news! Good news! Evening papers!

P'eng Hsiao-po. Go get the newspaper.

(Hsiao Ting buys newspaper and hands it over to P'eng.)

P'eng Hsiao-po (reading newspaper). No great news. What?

What? Plane crash? No survivors?

Hsiao Ting (stands up in surprise and reads newspaper together with P'eng Hsiao-po). What? What's it?

P'eng Hsiao-po. The Pacific Airline. (In panics.) The Pacific Airline. My God! (Fumbling about in his pockets.)

Hsiao Ting. What's it? What's it?

P'eng Hsiao-po. Telegram, telegram. I remember I put it in my pocket. (After feeling in all his pockets, he finds the telegram.) This--this-- (His hands are shaking.) You take a look. I can't see clearly--(All of a sudden, he looks older.)

Hsiao Ting (reading the telegram). "Coming home 15th by Pacific Airline via Tokyo."

P'eng Hsiao-po (murmuring). The Pacific Airline, the Pacific Airline. (To Hsiao Ting.) Read, read this news.
Hsiao Ting (reads). "A Pacific Airliner, which left the U.S. on the 15th, has crashed into the sea in a fog before it reached Tokyo this morning. The Japanese Marine Police Bureau has sent life boats to the rescue. There were fifty-nine passengers whose names are yet to be released. Chances for survival are slim."

P'eng Hsiao-po (plumps down on the chair dejectedly). This is it.

Hsiao Ting. Could it be a coincidence?

P'eng Hsiao-po. It's finished. All finished.

Hsiao Ting. Would you like to make a phone call and inquire about it?

P'eng Hsiao-po. Where to call, Hsiao Ting? Don't let my wife know about it.

Hsiao Ting. Okay.

P'eng Hsiao-po. We've got only a son. She can't stand it.

Hsiao Ting. I won't say anything about it. What if she has read the news?

P'eng Hsiao-po. She never pays much attention to newspapers. If she has read it, we have to lie to her. Understand?

Hsiao Ting. Yes, I do.

P'eng Hsiao-po. Maybe God is punishing me. I've done much evil in my life. People all say that I'm shrewd and hard. Yes, I'm shrewd and hard. I've never spared anybody. But how can a man succeed in business without
being shrewd and hard? How can a good man make out in the business world?

Hsiao Ting. You—you are not that kind of person.

P'eng Hsiao-po. But I've never done any harm to anybody.
I've never got any filthy pelf. I've been toiling and moiling to make a fortune. Only that I know the ropes better than others in the trade. Why should I be punished like this? Why should I be punished like this?

Hsiao Ting. Don't be upset. Heaven helps a good man—


(His words trail off into a murmur. Finally he leans back in the chair and covers his face with both hands.)

(Music starts softly.)

(Hu I-fan comes down the stairs and walks towards Tseng Hua-te who is bending over the table in sound sleep.)

Hu I-fan (pushing Tseng Hua-te). Lao Tseng, Lao Tseng, what's the matter with you?

Tseng Hua-te. Oh, oh. I've fallen asleep. How come I've fallen asleep?

Hu I-fan. You didn't get a wink of sleep last night, did you?

Tseng Hua-te. Hm. (Covering.) It doesn't matter.

Hu I-fan (sees P'eng Hsiao-po). Hi, see who he is?

Tseng Hua-te. Who? Who do you mean?
Hu I-fan. Lao P'eng. What made him come here?
Tseng Hua-te. He can't be on vacation. Uh, uh, could it be
the blocked road?
Hu I-fan. What a coincidence!
Tseng Hua-te. You want to have dealings with him? He's a
hard guy.
Hu I-fan. What would it matter just to try?
Tseng Hua-te. We would only be rejected. I'm not going.
Hu I-fan. You and his son were classmates. You are not
going? You have to.
Tseng Hua-te. All right. If you insist--
Hu I-fan. Go, go!

(Hu I-fan and Tseng Hua-te walk over to P'eng Hsiao-po who
is staring abstractedly into the distance. Hsiao Ting is
reading newspaper. A tableful of food remains untouched.)
(P'eng Hsiao-po is not aware of their coming.)
(Hu I-fan and Tseng Hua-te are astonished by what they see.
They nudge each other.)
Hu I-fan. Mr. P'eng.
P'eng Hsiao-po. Oh, oh. Mr. Hu.
Hu I-fan. This is Tseng Hua-te. Mr. Tseng was your son's
classmate at school.
Tseng Hua-te. Sir.
P'eng Hsiao-po. Hm, hm, uh--
Tseng Hua-te. I've heard that your son has gone to the United States. We haven't seen each other for quite a few years. He should be a Ph.D. by now.

P'eng Hsiao-po. He just got a Ph.D. degree in the summer.

Hu I-fan. Congratulations.

P'eng Hsiao-po. Thank you, thank you. (To Tseng Hua-te.)

How old are you?

Tseng Hua-te. Thirty-two.

P'eng Hsiao-po. Same as my son.

Tseng Hua-te. Yes. But he is a Ph.D. already.

P'eng Hsiao-po. (sighs). What's the good of a Ph.D.? I wish he could have been like you.

Tseng Hua-te. Thank you.

P'eng Hsiao-po. What are you doing now?

Hu I-fan. We are running a factory. He's the manager.

P'eng Hsiao-po. Isn't that nice? What good is a Ph.D. going to do?

Tseng Hua-te. We've got into a very big trouble.

Hu I-fan. We'd like to ask a favor of you.

P'eng Hsiao-po. Oh, what is it?

Hu I-fan. We have a dealing with your company. Tomorrow is the term day. Could you please see that it is postponed a few days?

P'eng Hsiao-po. Oh—why?

Hu I-fan. We've been short of money these days. We really
can't manage it.

Tseng Hua-te. We've been in great difficulties.

P'eng Hsiao-po. In difficulties?

Hu I-fan. Great difficulties.

Tseng Hua-te. If anything goes wrong, all our efforts will go down the drain.

P'eng Hsiao-po (bursts out). But can you have the plane crash postponed a few days?

Hu I-fan (looking at each other). What?

Tseng Hua-te (A plane crash?)

P'eng Hsiao-po. Have you read the evening newspaper?

Hu I-fan. No, not yet.

P'eng Hsiao-po. Look!

(Hsiao Ting hands over the newspaper.)


P'eng Hsiao-po. My son was on that plane.

Hu I-fan (in unison). How could it happen?

Tseng Hua-te (How terrible!)

P'eng Hsiao-po. It just happened. He left behind a large family property and gave up the position of a manager only to get a Ph.D.

Hu I-fan. Take it easy, Mr. P'eng. It's all you can do about matters like this.

P'eng Hsiao-po. Take it easy? You know I've got only a son.
Tseng Hua-te. But there's no help for it.
p'eng Hsiao-po. Is it God's will? A retribution? Isn't it?
Hu I-fan. It's not that.
p'eng Hsiao-po. Then what is it?
Hu I-fan. Well-- well--
p'eng Hsiao-po. Say it, say it-- (Loudly.) Say it! Say it!
(Hu I-fan and Tseng Hua-te look at each other, stunned.)
(Tseng Hua-te tosses his arms and shrugs his shoulders as
if saying "It's all up.")
p'eng Hsiao-po (bursts out). Tell me why? Why?
(Enter the twelve members of the vaudeville company led by
Mr. Hsiao. Their names are: Mr. Hsiao, Mrs. Hsiao, Little
Monkey, Red Nose, T'ien Ta-li, Hsiao Lu, the Accordionist,
the Trumpeter, Dance Girl A, Dance Girl B, Dance Girl C, and
Dance Girl D. Their costumes, gestures, and movements are
somewhat peculiar. Among them all the most peculiar is Red
Nose. He is wearing a mask featured by a big red nose.)
(They stand in serried ranks and take off their hats.)
Mr. Hsiao. Nice to meet you! Nice to meet you! (Waving his
hat.)
(The arrival of the vaudeville company attracts all
attentions and breaks the quiet which pervaded the scene
a moment ago. Red Nose makes a face. Little Monkey jumps
up and down. T'ien Ta-li stretches himself, the Accordionist
plays the accordion, the Trumpeter blows some notes, the Dance Girls dance to the music.)

Mrs. Hsiao (nudging Mr. Hsiao). Can we afford to stay in a hotel like this?

Mr. Hsiao. Stop your gab! Old woman. Heaven helps a good man.

Little Monkey. We are gonna have a big meal, aren't we?


(The hotel manager comes in hastily.)

Manager (in panic). You! you!

Mr. Hsiao. My name is Hsiao. I'm the boss of this company.

Manager. A vaudeville company?

Mr. Hsiao. Yes, you are right.

Manager. We really don't have enough rooms for you.

Mr. Hsiao. I've phoned you before.

Manager. But we don't have enough rooms for you.

Mr. Hsiao. Don't be so modest. We only need a place to shelter ourselves for the night.

Manager. How could it be possible? How could it be possible?

Mr. Hsiao. Please, friend. We'll go as soon as the road is cleared.

Manager (resolutely). No, no.

Mr. Hsiao (to members of the company). Kids, see what you can do!
(All of them become active at once.)

(Little Monkey performs a somersault on T'ien Ta-li's body.)

Hsiao Lu sings. The Accordionist and the Trumpeter play their instrument. The Dance Girls dance.

Hsiao Lu (sings). Let's be happy whenever we can.

Vaudeville Company (in chorus). Whenever we can.

Hsiao Lu (sings). Let's sing a silly song for you.

Vaudeville Company (in chorus). Sing a silly song for you.

Hsiao Lu (sings). The sun's shining in the west and the rains pouring in the east.

Vaudeville Company (in chorus). Hei! The sun's shining in the east and the rain's pouring in the west.

Hsiao Lu (sings). There's a sky full of moons and a star.

Vaudeville Company (in chorus). Hei! There's a sky full of stars and a moon.

Hsiao Lu (sings). Chiang Tzu-ya made a prime minister at twelve.

Vaudeville Company (in chorus). Hei! Ch'in Kan-lo made a prime minister at twelve.

Hsiao Lu (sings). Ch'in Kan-lo fished by the Wei River at eighty.

Vaudeville Company (in chorus). Hei! Chiang Tzu-ya fished by the Wei River at eighty.

Hsiao Lu (sings). Confucius went to Han Ku on a cow.
Vaudeville Company (in chorus). Hei! Li Lao-chün went to Han Ku on a cow.

Hsiao Lu (sings). Li Lao-chün had seventy-two disciples.

Vaudeville Company (in chorus). Hei! Confucius had seventy-two disciples.

Manager (enraged). Stop that noise! Be quiet! Please go, go, go, go!

Mrs. Hsiao (mincing up). Take it easy, take it easy, friends, old friends. Don't go too far, don't go too far. We haven't eaten yet. Who's gonna take care of our dinner?

Red Nose. Me, me.

(Red Nose becomes the focus of the following show. The rest of the vaudeville company simply serves as a background.

When Red Nose moves around the tables, the other members make movements only to match his.)

Red Nose. We are a group of wanderers.


Red Nose. We've just arrived here.

Vaudeville Company (in chorus). We've just arrived here.

Red Nose. We are looking for a place to rest.

Vaudeville Company (in chorus). A place to eat and stay.

Red Nose. Friends.

Vaudeville Company (in chorus). Yes.

Red Nose. Where are your mouths?
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Vaudeville Company (in chorus). On our faces.
Red Nose. They want to eat.
Vaudeville Company (in chorus). Eat and drink.
Red Nose. Where are your buttocks?
Vaudeville Company (in chorus). On our legs.
Red Nose. They can't be dragged along all the time.
Vaudeville Company (in chorus). They like to lie down.
Red Nose. Friends.
Vaudeville Company (in chorus). Yes.
Red Nose. Pipe up your instruments.
Vaudeville Company (in chorus). Yes.
(Music starts.)
Red Nose (reads). 69 We are born as wanderers; we grow old as wanderers.
Vaudeville Company (in chorus). We are born as wanderers; we grow old as wanderers.
Red Nose (reads). We wander all over the world at will.
Vaudeville Company (in chorus). We wander all over the world at will.
Red Nose (reads). Ladies and Gentlemen.
Vaudeville Company (in chorus). Ladies and Gentlemen.
Red Nose (reads). Give us a hand, please!
Vaudeville Company (in chorus). Give us a hand, please!
Red Nose (reads). You should know that the sky won't keep sunny for ten days straight; man won't remain in good
circumstances for three days straight.70
Vaudeville Company (in chorus). The sky won't keep sunny
for ten days straight; man won't remain in good
circumstances for three days straight.
Red Nose (reads). Those who sail are afraid of encountering
storms.
Vaudeville Company (in chorus). Don't be afraid, don't be
afraid.
Red Nose (reads). Beggars are afraid of being bitten by
dogs.
Vaudeville Company (in chorus). Don't be afraid, don't be
afraid.
Red Nose (reads). Tailors are afraid of mending ragged
clothing.
Vaudeville Company (in chorus). Don't be afraid, don't be
afraid.
(Red Nose comes up to P'eng Hsiao-po.)
Red Nose (reads). Those who travel by airplane are afraid
of crashes.
Vaudeville Company (in chorus). Don't be afraid, don't be
afraid.
P'eng Hsiao-po (stands up, alarmed). What? What?
Red Nose (to P'eng Hsiao-po). Don't be afraid, don't be
afraid.
(Red Nose moves toward Tseng Hua-te and Hu I-fan.)

Red Nose (reads). Those in business are afraid of money troubles.

Vaudeville Company (in chorus). Don't be afraid, don't be afraid.

Tseng Hua-te and Hu I-fan (rise together, alarmed). What? What?

Red Nose (to them). Don't be afraid, don't be afraid.

(Red Nose moves toward Ch'iu Ta-wei and Ho Mei-li.)

Red Nose (reads). Those who work with their head are afraid that they fail to understand their subject.

Vaudeville Company (in chorus). Don't be afraid, don't be afraid.

Ch'iu Ta-wei and Ho Mei-li (rise together, alarmed). What? What?

Red Nose (to them). Don't be afraid, don't be afraid.

Vaudeville Company (in chorus). What are you afraid of?

What are you afraid of?

Red Nose (reads). I'm afraid that I won't get a place to sleep.

Vaudeville Company (in chorus). Don't be afraid, don't be afraid.

(Red Nose moves toward the Yehs.)

Red Nose (reads). Little girl, what are you afraid of?

What are you afraid of?
Vaudeville Company (in chorus). Don't be afraid, don't be afraid.

Red Nose (reads). Little girl, don't be afraid, don't be afraid. Little girl, come, come, don't be afraid, don't be afraid.

(Yeh Hsiao-chen twinkles her eyes and walks slowly toward Red Nose.)

Red Nose (reads). Little girl, come, come, come, don't be afraid.

Vaudeville Company (in chorus). Little girl, don't be afraid, don't be afraid.

All (in chorus, as if spellbound). Little girl, don't be afraid, don't be afraid.

Mrs. Yeh (screams). Oh, heaven! God!

Yeh Yao-chih (almost at the same time). Heaven! Heaven! God!

Manager (walking up). All right, all right. Stop that noise.

I'll let you stay.

(Curtain.)
Act II

Scene: the same as Act I. Two hours later.

At the center of the stage is a long table formed by joining two dining tables. Plates, bowls, cups etc. are strewn all over it. The vaudeville troupe have just finished dinner. They scatter about on the stage. Some of them are drinking water, some picking their teeth, some sitting, and some standing. All other guests are gone except P'eng Hsiao-po who is sitting at the same place absent-mindedly. Mr. and Mrs. Hsiao are chatting by the long table.

Mr. Hsiao. The meal was pretty good.

Mrs. Hsiao. You know how much it cost, old man?

Mr. Hsiao. Can't you stop worrying about it?

Mrs. Hsiao. Not that I want to worry, I'm afraid that you won't be able to get out of here.

Mr. Hsiao. Where else haven't we been? What crises haven't we gone through? What can they do to us?

Mrs. Hsiao. You are the boss, old man. We all depend on you. If you are finished, where could we get away to?

Mr. Hsiao. Don't worry, old woman. I won't be finished. It's my lot to have help whenever I'm in need. Things will settle themselves when the time comes.

Mrs. Hsiao. Okay, okay. Look--

Mr. Hsiao. Sssh!

(Waiter A comes up to clear the table.)
Waiter A (clearing the table). You are in charge of this company?

Mr. Hsiao. Yes.

Waiter A. May I have your name?

Mrs. Hsiao. Hsiao.

Waiter A. Mr. Hsiao.

Mr. Hsiao. Yes.

Waiter A. You've been traveling all the year round?

Mr. Hsiao. All the year round.

Waiter A. How exciting!

Mr. Hsiao. Just to keep the pot boiling.

Waiter A. I believe it's exciting.

Mr. Hsiao. As I said, just to keep the pot boiling.

Waiter A. To tell the truth, I've liked the vaudeville companies ever since I was little.

Mr. Hsiao. Oh!

Waiter A. I was living in a village then. Once in a while a vaudeville company would come. I used to mix with them all day long. I almost went away with them.

Mr. Hsiao. It's lucky for you that you didn't.

Waiter A. It would've been nice if I had. (Seriously). You know they are all nice fellows and they make true friends.

Mr. Hsiao. You are right. When you are away from home, you can only look to friends for help. But this is a hard job. Today we are here, but who knows where we'll be tomorrow.
Waiter A. It still sounds better than staying under the same roof all the time.

Mr. Hsiao (to himself). If we could only have a house to settle down.

Waiter A (to himself). I've been moving back and forth in this house since early morning. I don't know how many times I've moved like this. On and on I've been moving about, but I've never moved out of this house. How boring!

Mr. Hsiao (to himself). If we had a house, we could rest a little while; we wouldn't have to knock about all the year round. A man needs a house to settle in just as much as a mouse needs a hole to hide itself.

Waiter A (to himself). Boring! Alas!

Mr. Hsiao (to himself). Boring to death!

(Waiter A exits carrying a tray.)

(The focus of the play shifts to the four dance girls.)

Dance Girl A. I'm tired to death!
Dance Girl D. I'm not tired.
Dance Girl B. I only wish to have a bed.
Dance Girl C. I'm feeling all right.
Dance Girl A. Only if I could have a bed and take a hot bath.
Dance Girl B. A hot bath. I agree.
Dance Girl D. I prefer a cold shower in this weather.
Dance Girl C. I love swimming best.
Dance Girl A. The beach's out there. You can swim to your heart's content.

Dance Girl D. Not now. It's all dark.

Dance Girl B. I -- I'm tired of everything. I'm tired to death.

Dance Girl A. Then why did you come here?

Dance Girl C. (almost at the same time). Tired of what?

Dance Girl D. What?

Dance Girl B. Dancing, dancing, dancing, dancing. To hell with it.

Dance Girl A. How come you make it sound so vulgar?

Dance Girl D (to herself). Nothing's wrong with dancing. I like it very much.

Dance Girl B. If I had known that things would have turned out this way, I'd rather have chosen to be a shop clerk.

Dance Girl C. I don't want to be a shop clerk.

Dance Girl D. Me, neither.

Dance Girl B. I had a chance to be a shop clerk when I was her age (pointing at Dance Girl D). I thought the same way as she does now.

Dance Girl D. I'll never become a shop clerk.

Dance Girl A. If you had chosen to be a shop clerk, you might have become a shop keeper by now.

Dance Girl C. What if I were a shop keeper? A shop keeper is busy from morning till night and leads a much harder
life than we do.

Dance Girl A. At least, you could have a home. Isn't that right?

Dance Girl B. Cut it out. What about yourself?

Dance Girl A. I'm not thinking about anything.

Dance Girl B. Oh! You've got Hsiao Chang.

Dance Girl C. Yes, I know it.

Dance Girl D. So do I.

Dance Girl A. Don't talk nonsense!

Dance Girl B. Who's talking nonsense?

Dance Girl C. (simultaneously). She isn't talking nonsense. It's true, it's true.

Dance Girl D. (simultaneously).

Dance Girl A. You've got Hsiao Lu.

Dance Girl B. Hsiao Lu? Nonsense.

Dance Girl D. He's courting you.

Dance Girl C. Yes, I can see that.

Dance Girl B. What the hell do you kids know?

Dance Girl A. You don't like him?

Dance Girl B. Cut it out. It's disgusting.

Dance Girl D. You like Red Nose.

Dance Girl B. What nonsense! You'd better watch out. I'll pinch you.

Dance Girl C. Why does he always wear that red-nose mask?

Dance Girl D. It's weird. I've asked him about it.

Dance Girl A. What did he say?
Dance Girl D. He said that he wears it for fun.
Dance Girl C. He said the same thing to me.
Dance Girl A. Is it likely that he's a jailbreaker who needs a mask to cover his face?
Dance Girl B. Nonsense. He's a serious man, a college graduate. Don't talk nonsense!
Dance Girl A. Then he must have a scar or something like that on his face?
Dance Girl C. No, no such thing. I've seen his face.
Dance Girl B. Really?
Dance Girl D. What does he look like?
Dance Girl C. He's neat and good-looking.
Dance Girl A (in unison). Really?!
Dance Girl B.
Dance Girl C. Who's cheating you? I stole a glance at him once when his mask dropped off.
Dance Girl B. What did he say?
Dance Girl D. He smiled at me and put it on at once.
Dance Girl B. He didn't say anything?
Dance Girl C. No, he didn't. But -- but his smile was sort of strange.
Dance Girl B. What do you mean by strange?
Dance Girl C. I -- I don't know how to describe it. Uh, uh, sort of shy.
Dance Girl D. Shy?
Dance Girl B. Yes, he looked a little shy.
Dance Girl C. But he's a nice man!
Dance Girl D. Sure.
Dance Girl B. You're right. He's a nice man.
Dance Girl A. He isn't like us.
Dance Girl B. What did you say?
Dance Girl A. He isn't like us. He's not our kind. He's different from us.
Dance Girl C. He's a puzzle.
Dance Girl D. Puzzle? What puzzle?
Dance Girl A. You put me in mind of a story. Oh, no, a joke.
Dance Girl B. What joke?
Dance Girl D. I'd like to know.
Dance Girl A (looking around). Come over if you want to know.
(The four dance girls draw together whispering in each other's ears. The audience can hear their laughter now and then but not what they are talking about.)
(The focus of the play shifts to the male members of the company.)
T'Ien Ta-li (yawning).
Hsiao Lu (yawning). Boring!
Accordionist (coming over). Hsiao Lu!
Hsiao Lu. What?
Accordionist. Got some money?
Hsiao Lu. No.
Accordionist. Please. A few bucks will do. I'll pay you back tomorrow.
Hsiao Lu. No way. You haven't even cleared off your previous debt.
Accordionist. I'm awfully thirsty. You should have a drink after the meal. Isn't that right?
Hsiao Lu. Go drink water!
Trumpeter. Ha--ha. Right. You're right.
Accordionist. Treat me to a drink. I'll repay you tomorrow.
Trumpeter (shrugs). I'm just like you.
Hsiao Lu. His money all goes to his treasurer. If you have the guts, go borrow it from that lady over there.
Trumpeter. Don't talk nonsense.
Accordionist. What about Brother T'ien?
T'ien Ta-li. You know I don't drink.
Trumpeter. Don't put the bite on him. He's got a family to maintain.
T'ien Ta-li. Amitabha! 71
Hsiao Lu. Hsiao Li, go borrow it from the boss.
Trumpeter. The boss? He can't even take care of himself.
Accordionist. The company will be all finished sooner or later.
T'ien Ta-li. Amitabha!
Trumpeter (to the Accordionist). Didn't you say that a night club wanted to hire you?

Accordionist. Well --

Hsiao Lu. Hsiao Li, don't forget to get a position for me.

Accordionist. It's all over.

Hsiao Lu. Over? How come?

Trumpeter. What's good about a night club?

Hsiao Lu. Better than knocking about.

Trumpeter. I don't think that way. To tell you the truth, people in our line have to knock about. Who would come to you if you stay in one place? Someday you will get to the end of your tether. If you don't believe me, ask Brother T'ien. What would you say, Brother T'ien?

T'ien Ta-li. Amitabha!

Accordionist. Amitabha!

Hsiao Lu. I believe someday I'll be able to sing in big cities.

Trumpeter. Sure, sure. You'll make a great splendid singer. Your name will appear in the most popular newspapers. People will surge like a tide just to watch you. Many of them wouldn't even find a place to stand. Radio stations will broadcast your songs, music shops will sell your records --

Hsiao Lu. Don't be sarcastic!
Trumpeter. I'm not sarcastic. Everybody thinks that way; so do I. Brother T'ien, you are well experienced in matters like this. What would you say?

T'ien Ta-li. Amitabha!

Accordionist. What's the use of thinking?

Trumpeter. Better than not being able to think.

Hsiao Lu. I've never thought that way. I simply think that I can't fool away my life in a vaudeville company. I should take a chance to make my way in the world.

Trumpeter. That's simple.

Hsiao Lu. What about yourself? What are you thinking about?

Trumpeter. I'm not thinking about anything.

Accordionist. He's thinking about getting married and having a family.

Hsiao Lu (talking back). That's simple.

Trumpeter. Simple? What grounds do you have for saying that? On what grounds do you think that we can get married and raise children? Look at Brother T'ien.

T'ien Ta-li. Amitabha!

Hsiao Lu. What are you gonna do then?

Trumpeter. I don't have the nerve to think about it. I can only dream.

Hsiao Lu. Dream?

Trumpeter. Dream. Dream a beautiful dream. No, not a beautiful dream. I only dream of having a little money,
just a little. Once I get a little money, I'll trample
the trumpet on the floor until it becomes flat.

Hsiao Lu. Why?

T'ien Ta-li. Amitabha!

Trumpeter. I'll trample it. I won't play it any more, nor
my sons or grandsons.

Accordionist. If I were you, I would sell it for a drink.

Trumpeter. No, never. I'll trample it, stamp on it.

Hsiao Lu. Sounds horrible!

Accordionist. Hsiao Lu, what would you say if I pawn my
accordion to you? Lend me a few bucks!

Hsiao Lu. See how greedy you are! Forget it. I'll treat
you to a drink.

Accordionist. Really?

Hsiao Lu. Only one drink. Let's make it clear. Only one.

Accordionist. Sure, one drink.

Hsiao Lu. To be frank with you, I -- I myself want to have
a drink, too.

(Hsiao Lu and the Accordionist walk over to the counter.)

(T'ien Ta-li sits straight like the statue of Buddha.)

(The Trumpeter is lost in thought.)

(Music starts.)

(The focus of the play shifts to Red Nose and Little Monkey.)

Little Monkey. Uncle Red Nose, uncle Red Nose.

Red Nose. Hm.
Little Monkey. What are you thinking about?

Red Nose. Nothing.

Little Monkey. Let me tell you something.

Red Nose. Oh!

Little Monkey. My pa said he's gonna send me to a high school after the summer. He won't let me stay with the vaudeville company any more.

Red Nose. That's great.

Little Monkey. Why? I don't want to go to school. I don't want to go to school.

Red Nose. Why not?

Little Monkey. It's no fun to study. I enjoy staying in the vaudeville company. I'll make a great magician. I like magic.

Red Nose. You know it's good to go to school.

Little Monkey. You think that way, too?

Red Nose. Sure.

Little Monkey. Have you been to a high school?

Red Nose. Yes.

Little Monkey. Have you read a lot?

Red Nose. Hm.

Little Monkey. They said you are a college graduate. Is that true?

Red Nose. Well -- hm.

Little Monkey. If you've been to a high school and then a college, why did you get into this line?
Red Nose. There's nothing wrong getting into this line.
Little Monkey. Right. But my pa won't let me stay in this line.
Red Nose. Your father has his reason.
Little Monkey. What about yourself?
Red Nose. I have my own reason.
Little Monkey. I have mine, too.
Red Nose. You are but a kid.
Little Monkey. What about yourself?
Red Nose. You certainly have a ready tongue. I can't outtalk you.
Little Monkey. Do you really enjoy playing a clown?
Red Nose. Yes, I do.
Little Monkey. Are you happy?
Red Nose. Yes, I am.
Little Monkey. Me, too.
Red Nose (singing). I am happy, I am happy. I have Little Monkey to frolic with me. I am happy.
Little Monkey (singing). I am happy, I am happy. I have uncle Red Nose to frolic with me. I am happy.

Red Nose (singing together). I am happy, I am happy. I have uncle Red Nose to frolic with me. I am happy.
Little Monkey (singing). I am happy, I am happy. I have uncle Red Nose to frolic with me. I am happy.

(The Manager enters the right door.)
Manager (clapping). Gentlemen, gentlemen. I've got your
rooms ready. You can go take a rest.

(The vaudeville company bursts into a round of cheers. The following conversations are noisy.)

Dance Girl B. I want to take a shower.
Dance Girl A. I want to go to bed.
Trumpeter. Let's go!
T'ien Ta-li. Amitabha!
Mrs. Hsiao. Little Monkey! Little Monkey!
Little Monkey. Coming! Coming!

(The vaudeville company hustles out the right door noisily.)

(On the stage remain only Red Nose and P'eng Hsiao-po.)
Red Nose (singing absent-mindedly). I am happy, I am happy. I have Little Monkey to frolic with me. I am happy.

(His voice sounds ludicrous and painful.)

(P'eng Hsiao-po gets up slowly from the chair while Red Nose is singing and walks over to him. He looks much older than he first appeared in Act I.)
P'eng Hsiao-po. Hi, hi!
Red Nose. Are you calling me?
P'eng Hsiao-po. Let me ask you a question. Have you read the evening newspaper?
Red Nose. The evening newspaper? What evening newspaper?
P'eng Hsiao-po. Today's.
Red Nose. Oh, no, no. I rarely read newspapers.
P'eng Hsiao-po. How did you get to know about the plane crash?

Red Nose. Plane crash? What plane crash?

P'eng Hsiao-po. A Pacific Airliner crashed in Japan today.

Red Nose. I don't know it.

P'eng Hsiao-po. You don't know?

Red Nose. I really don't have any idea about it. Japan is quite a distance from us, isn't it?

P'eng Hsiao-po. Quite a distance.

Red Nose. Then what does the plane crash have to do with us?

P'eng Hsiao-po. It doesn't? Then why did you mention it?

Red Nose. Did I?

P'eng Hsiao-po. Didn't you sing that "Those who travel by airplane are afraid of crashes"?

Red Nose. I was singing casually. I meant that planes rarely crash; even then it happens once in a while. I said once in a while. Isn't that right?

P'eng Hsiao-po. Oh-- but it has a lot to do with me.

Red Nose. With you?

P'eng Hsiao-po. My son was on the plane.

Red Nose. Your son.

P'eng Hsiao-po. You know, I've got only a son, a darling son.

Red Nose. That's too bad.
P'eng Hsiao-po. He was a very obedient and smart son. He got a Ph.D. degree in the United States this year. But what's the use of a Ph.D.? I didn't want him to go. I said: "Son, why go to the United States? You should stay with me and inherit my business." (At this moment he mistakes Red Nose for his son.) You know I've got plenty of money for you to spend. I've set up a successful business for you. You didn't want it. You didn't want pretty girls, you didn't want to get married. You wanted to go to the United States. Why on earth did you go to the United States? To get a Ph.D.? You deserted your parents; you didn't even give us grandchildren. You are no good. You presumptuous rascal! Go to hell! You-- you-- I want to beat you! Beat you! Beat you! Beat you-- (beating Red Nose).

Red Nose. Ouch! Ouch! You're beating the wrong person.
P'eng Hsiao-po. The wrong person? You dare say I'm beating the wrong person. (Beating Red Nose) I'm beating you to death.

Red Nose. Ouch! Ouch! I'm not your son. I'm Red Nose.
P'eng Hsiao-po. Oh! Oh! Sorry, sorry. I got mixed up.

Red Nose. It's all right.
P'eng Hsiao-po. Shouldn't I scold him?

Red Nose. You should.
P'eng Hsiao-po. Shouldn't I beat him?
Red Nose. You should.
p'eng Hsiao-po. But what's the use? He-- he-- he's dead!
Red Nose. He's dead?
p'eng Hsiao-po. He's dead! He's dead!
Red Nose. Who's dead?
p'eng Hsiao-po. My son.
Red Nose. Your son?
p'eng Hsiao-po. What's the matter with you? Didn't I tell you about the plane crash?
Red Nose. How did you get to know that?
p'eng Hsiao-po. It says clearly in the evening newspaper.
Red Nose. Does it say that your son's dead?
p'eng Hsiao-po. Surely not. It simply says that the plane cracked up.
Red Nose. Then how come you said your son's dead?
p'eng Hsiao-po. He took that plane.
Red Nose. How do you know that?
p'eng Hsiao-po. I got a telegram, a telegram from him.

(Taking the telegram out of his pocket). Read it.
Red Nose (reading). "Coming home 15th by Pacific Airline via Tokyo." Where's the newspaper?
p'eng Hsiao-po. Here it is. (Picks up the newspaper from the dining table).
Red Nose (reading newspaper). "A Pacific Airliner, which left the U.S. on the 15th, has crashed into the sea in a fog before it reached Tokyo this morning. The Japanese Marine Police Bureau has sent life boats to the rescue. There were fifty-nine passengers whose names are yet to be released. Chances for survival are slim." These two things can't prove anything.

P'eng Hsiao-po. They can't prove anything?

Red Nose. They can't prove that your son's dead.

P'eng Hsiao-po. Why not?

Red Nose. Because there are quite a few possibilities. It's possible that your son didn't leave today or if he did, it's possible that he didn't take that plane. It's also possible that he was saved. There's a great chance for survival from a plane which crashed into the sea. You shouldn't jump to the conclusion that your son's dead.

P'eng Hsiao-po. He isn't dead?

Red Nose. Have you read any law books? According to the law, only after a doctor's examination of a person's body can he be judged to be dead or not.

P'eng Hsiao-po (disappointed). We are not discussing matters of the law.

Red Nose. You know judicial judgment is based on facts. So is the judgment of death. These two things can't prove any fact and can't be used to judge anything.
p'eng Hsiao-po. You think . . . ?
Red Nose. I can see more of your fear than of any fact.
p'eng Hsiao-po. Why?
Red Nose. Because man is born with an inclination to fear.
p'eng Hsiao-po. I don't understand you.
Red Nose. Man is just like that. He is born with an
instinct to worry and fear. He has an instinctive fear
of life and of death.
p'eng Hsiao-po. What? A fear of life and death?
Red Nose. Yes, exactly. He is worried about money, about
his family, his career, his reputation, and his sons;
this is a fear of life. Of course, he is worried more
about himself than anything else. He is afraid of death;
so is everybody. This is a fear of death.
p'eng Hsiao-po. Why on earth are you talking about that?
Red Nose. What if your son's back safely?
p'eng Hsiao-po. If so, I'll be the happiest old man in the
world. I have money and position. I'm not in need of
anything and I won't be worried about anything.
Red Nose. Then what are you going to do?
p'eng Hsiao-po. I'll do good deeds and charitable work.
Red Nose. Your son will be back on your say so.
p'eng Hsiao-po. Why?
Red Nose. From what you've said, I see that what you are
really afraid of is not your son's death but you yourself.
p'eng Hsiao-po. What? What did you say?

(Lights become dim. A chilly wind starts blowing. Red Nose's nose turns into a black nose. It reminds one of the trial scene in hell.)

Red Nose (uttering every word clearly). How many evil deeds have you done?

p'eng Hsiao-po (has become a criminal on trial). None, none.

Red Nose. You dare say none?

p'eng Hsiao-po. Yes, a few.

Red Nose. Just a few?

p'eng Hsiao-po. Quite a few, quite a few.

Red Nose. Confess!

p'eng Hsiao-po. I dealt with people harshly!

Red Nose. Much more than that!

p'eng Hsiao-po. I practiced usury.

Red Nose. What else?

p'eng Hsiao-po. I bullied --

Red Nose. Whom?

p'eng Hsiao-po. Orphans and widows.

Red Nose. Don't you have any humanity?

p'eng Hsiao-po. Yes, I do. I regret it, I regret it, I regret it . . . . (His voice becomes sorrowful and ghastly.)

(Lights come up again. P'eng Hsiao-po falls to the floor pliantly. Red Nose helps him get up.)
Red Nose. What's the matter? Are you all right?
p'eng Hsiao-po. Yes, I'm all right.
Red Nose. How are you feeling now?
p'eng Hsiao-po. I'm feeling better, much better.

(Hsiao Ting runs down the stairs.)

Hsiao Ting. Sir, sir. A long-distance call from the Company.
p'eng Hsiao-po. Where? Where is it?

Hsiao Ting. In your room.

(P'eng Hsiao-po walks hurriedly. Limps.)

Hsiao Ting. What's the matter?

Red Nose. Help him along, help him along. (Hsiao Ting helps

P'eng Hsiao-po walk up the stairs slowly.)

(Muttering to himself) God have mercy on them! Have mercy on them!

(A deafening sound. Ch'iu Ta-wei is tumbling down the stairs,

holding a bottle of wine. Ho Mei-li is running down right

after him.)

(Red Nose hurries up to them.)

Ho Mei-li. What's the matter with you? (Crying.) What's

the matter with you?

(Red Nose helps her to get him up.)

Red Nose. You -- ?

Ch'iu Ta-wei. I-- I'm all right. (Trying to rise.)

Red Nose. Wait a minute. Let me see if you got injured.

Ch'iu Ta-wei. No, no.
Red Nose (examining his body). Good. No injuries except this bump.

Ch'iu Ta-wei. It is a bump.

Ho Mei-li. What a big bump!

Red Nose. It's all right as long as there are no internal injuries.

Ho Mei-li. Let me massage it.

Ch'iu Ta-wei. Ouch! Ouch! It hurts!

Red Nose. Don't touch it. Let him rest for a while.

(Red Nose and Ho Mei-li help Ch'iu Ta-wei move to the sofa.)

Red Nose. You've drunk too much, haven't you?

Ch'iu Ta-wei. A little.

Red Nose. Only a little?

Ho Mei-li. He never touched liquor before. He's not himself today.

Red Nose. No wonder!

Ho Mei-li. You know he's a musician.

Red Nose. A musician?

Ch'iu Ta-wei. Don't believe her. I'm not a musician. I'm nothing.

Ho. Mei-li. He's a musician, Ch'iu Ta-wei. His name is Ch'iu Ta-wei. He's composed quite a few songs. Have you heard about him?

Red Nose. Glad to know you, Mr. Ch'iu.

Ch'iu Ta-wei. That's all over.
Ho Mei-li. He composed songs for quite a few movies. You can hear his songs on the radio. His "Little Clouds" is very popular. Have you heard it?

Red Nose. I--I think I have.

Ch'iu Ta-wei. Don't believe her. They are all garbage.

Red Nose. No. They are very good.

Ho Mei-li. He's changed recently. He thinks that he should compose something better.

Red Nose. Ah! Something better.

Ch'iu Ta-wei. Not always the same thing. Right? I mean pop songs as people call them.

Ho Mei-li (taking the words out of his mouth). He wants to compose art songs.

Ch'iu Ta-wei. The kind of music which is more graceful, profound, and imaginative.

Ho Mei-li. And more beautiful. Understand?

Red Nose. I think I do.

Ho Mei-li. He wanted to go to a beautiful place. That's why we are here.

Ch'iu Ta-wei. Let me tell him. We've been here for quite a few days, but I haven't been able to write anything.

Red Nose. Why?

Ch'iu Ta-wei. I couldn't. That's it.

Ho Mei-li. It's not that he couldn't write. He's been writing and tearing it up. He was not satisfied with
what he wrote.
Ch'iu Ta-wei. Because I always wrote the same thing, I came
to realize that I don't have any talent at all. I'm not
a musician, not at all.
Ho Mei-li. Don't believe him. He's gifted. He's a genius.
Ch'iu Ta-wei. Who said that? Who said I'm a genius?
Ho Mei-li. A lot of people. Everybody said so.
Ch'iu Ta-wei. Tell me who they are.
Ho Mei-li. Film-makers, managers of music shops, and
producers of radio programs.
Ch'iu Ta-wei. You believe them?
Ho Mei-li. Of course, I do.
Ch'iu Ta-wei. What about yourself?
Ho Mei-li. Me?
Ch'iu Ta-wei. What would you say?
Ho Mei-li. I-- I believe it.
Ch'iu Ta-wei. You mean I'm a genius.
Ho Mei-li. You-- you are a genius.
Ch'iu Ta-wei (loudly). You're lying!
Ho Mei-li. I'm not.
Ch'iu Ta-wei. You're not? You forget what you said? You
said: "What music have you composed? It's awful."
Ho Mei-li. I was quarreling with you.
Ch'iu Ta-wei. What one says in a row is always from one's
heart.
Ho Mei-li. You can't count on what one says in a row.
Ch'iu Ta-wei. Of course, you can.
Ho Mei-li. You want me to recount how you reviled me?
Ch'iu Ta-wei. How did I revile you?
Ho Mei-li. You really want me to recount it?
Ch'iu Ta-wei. I don't remember that I ever reviled you.
Ho Mei-li (loudly). You said I was ugly, I was imagining that
you loved me. Is that also true?
Ch'iu Ta-wei. Well-- well--
Ho Mei-li. Well what? What do you mean?
Ch'iu Ta-wei. It's hard to say.
Ho Mei-li. To hell with you! (Crying) To hell with you!
You should've died when you fell!
Ch'iu Ta-wei (rising). You are cursing me.
Ho Mei-li. You heartless rascal. You will never compose
anything.
Ch'iu Ta-wei. Nonsense!
Ho Mei-li (furiously). You talk nonsense!
Ch'iu Ta-wei. You are ugly! You are ugly!
Ho Mei-li. What a genius! Nonsense! Rubbish! Rubbish!
(They are extremely angry with each other. Red Nose comes
over to mediate between them.)
Red Nose. There! There!
Ho Mei-li. I meant well. But he didn't appreciate it.
Ch'iu Ta-wei. I'm afraid that I'm just what she said, rubbish.
Red Nose. Forget it, forget it.

Ho Mei-li. Rubbish! Rubbish!

Ch'iu Ta-wei (plumps down on the chair dejectedly).

Ho Mei-li (startled). You-- What's the matter with you?

Red Nose. Are you okay?

Ch'iu Ta-wei (calmly). I'm okay, I'm okay.

Red Nose. I'm wondering if you've ever heard a kind of voice.

Ch'iu Ta-wei. What voice?

Red Nose. A kind of mysterious voice. I don't know where it comes from. Maybe from the abyss of our mind, maybe not. Maybe from heaven or somewhere outside the universe. It's not a human voice. It's such a beautiful, mysterious voice that no human being has ever uttered.

Ch'iu Ta-wei. I haven't.

Red Nose. Try it. When you are in peace or when you are excited or when you are in love, or when you are crying, but nobody knows for sure when it will come.

Ch'iu Ta-wei. Ah!

Red Nose. It can be heard only by people who are sincere, pure, and as innocent as children. It can also be heard by musicians, true musicians.

Ch'iu Ta-wei. How come I've never heard it?

Red Nose. Try it.

Ch'iu Ta-wei. Oh!

Red Nose. Why don't you try it?
Ch'iu Ta-wei. Stop talking!

(Light, exquisite music comes up.)

(Dreamily) Ah! What's that?

Ho Mei-li (incomprehensively). What? What?

Ch'iu Ta-wei. Keep quiet. Listen! I've heard something.

Ho Mei-li (to Red Nose). What did he say?

Red Nose. Sssh!

(Exquisite music is getting louder.)

Ch'iu Ta-wei (wildly). I've heard it, I've heard it.

Ho Mei-li (startled). What's he heard?

Red Nose. Sssh!

Ch'iu Ta-wei (jumping up from the chair). I've got it! I'm saved!

(Ch'iu Ta-wei rushes up the stairs.)

Ho Mei-li (following him). What's the matter? What's the matter?

(Ch'iu Ta-wei and Ho Mei-li exit.)

(Red Nose is standing at the center of the stage looking up distractedly. Exquisite music is heard coming from the sky. The Yehs come down the stairs. Music stops.)

Mrs. Yeh. Sir, Sir!

Red Nose. Are you calling me?

Mrs. Yeh. Where are the others? Where is the vaudeville company?

Red Nose. They are resting in their rooms.
Mrs. Yeh. Oh--

Red Nose. Anything I can help?

Mrs. Yeh. It's about my little daughter--

Red Nose (stroking Yeh Hsiao-chen's head). What a cute little girl!

Mrs. Yeh. She-- Well, how to say it?

Yeh Yao-chih. Let me tell him. (To Red Nose) It's just like this. My daughter became an imbecile all of a sudden when she was three, oh, no four years old. Since then she's never talked and seems unable to understand speech. She's addlepated like this all day long. I can't tell you what a big swag of money we've spent sending her to doctors. But all our efforts were vain.

Red Nose. Did she get injured? Did she fall?

Yeh Yao-chih. No.

Red Nose. Was she shocked in some way?

Yeh Yao-chih. I don't remember anything like that. It appears that she wasn't.

Mrs. Yeh. No, she wasn't.

Red Nose. Well-- well--

Mrs. Yeh. But doctors said that someday she will get over it herself. There are cases like that.

Red Nose. Possible, it's possible.

Mrs. Yeh. She's looked a little different since she watched your performance a little while ago. She seems restless.
Look at here eyes!

(They squat and look at Yeh Hsiao-chen.)

Look at her eyes! There's something shining in her eyes, something that was never there. Is it possible that she's waking up?

Yeh Yao-chih. I have the same feeling. She seems to be waking up. God help her. Wake her up.

Red Nose. What's her name?

Mrs. Yeh. Hsiao-chen, Yeh Hsiao-chen.

Red Nose. Little girl! Hsiao-chen! Come! Come! One, two, three. Come over when I say one, two, three. Now let's start! One! Two! Three!

(Yeh Hsiao-chen stares straight and starts moving.)

Mrs. Yeh. How strange, how strange!

Yeh Yao-chih. Sssh!

Red Nose. Right! Come, come, come. Slowly, slowly. One! Two! Three! One! Two! Three!

(Yeh Hsiao-chen is walking steadily toward Red Nose while he keeps stepping back.)

One! Two! Three! One! Two! Three! One! Two! Three!

(They complete a circle and return to the spot where they started.)

Hold out your hands like this, like this. Hold out your hands like this.
(Red Nose helps her hold out her hands and holds both her hands. A ring of red light is surrounding them. Red Nose looks like a god.)

I am Yeh Hsiao-chen. I am Yeh Hsiao-chen, Yeh Hsiao-chen, Yeh Hsiao-chen. Hsiao-chen, Hsiao-chen, Hsiao-chen!

(Red Nose starts dancing with hand holding Hsiao-chen's.)

(Yeh Hsiao-chen and Red Nose who is half squatting dance in a peculiar, exquisite style to the music (the type of music which has a touch of mysteriousness).

(Singing while dancing).
To flowers what belongs to them,
To birds what belongs to them.
To you what is yours,
To me what is mine.
To Yeh Hsiao-chen what is Yeh Hsiao-chen's,
To Yeh Hsiao-chen what is Yeh Hsiao-chen's.

Flowers are blooming,
Birds are singing.
You are smiling,
I am smiling.
Yeh Hsiao-chen is smiling, too,
Yeh Hsiao-chen is smiling, too.

(This song can be repeated as many times as is necessary.)

(In their dancing the hotel manager, Waiters A and B, and the
The rest of the vaudeville company come in one by one. They all stare in astonishment at the scene. They stop there and watch. (Tseng Hua-te and Hu I-fan come down the stairs and stand aside, watching.)

(Wang P'ei-p'ei enters the hotel. She wears a pair of sunglasses with broad rims and carries a suitcase. She stops by the door and looks around without arousing any attention. After a moment of hesitation, she stands by watching the performance.)

(P'eng Hsiao-po and Hsiao Ting run down the stairs.)

P'eng Hsiao-po. I'd like to tell you something -- (He stops as soon as he sees the scene and forces himself into the crowd in order to watch the show.)

(The following show is led by Red Nose. The rest of the people follows in chorus as if spellbound. Their voice is getting louder and louder.)

Red Nose (singing). To flowers what belongs to them.
All (in chorus). To flowers what belongs to them.
Red Nose (singing). To birds what belongs to them.
All (in chorus). To birds what belongs to them.
Red Nose (singing). To you what is yours.
All (in chorus). To you what is yours.
Red Nose (singing). To me what is mine.
All (in chorus). To me what is mine.
Red Nose (singing). To Hsiao-chen Yeh what is Yeh Hsiao-chen's.
All (in chorus). To Hsiao-chen Yeh what is Yeh Hsiao-chen's.
(Ch'iu Ta-wei runs down the stairs, followed by Ho Mei-li.)
Ch'iu Ta-wei (shouting loudly). What is this noise? What is
this noise? What are you making this noise about?
(Nobody pays any attention to Ch'iu Ta-wei. So he and Ho Mei-
li join the others and watch.)
Red Nose (singing). Flowers are blooming.
All (in chorus). Flowers are blooming.
Red Nose (singing). Birds are singing.
All (in chorus). Birds are singing.
Red Nose (singing). You are smiling.
All (in chorus). You are smiling.
Red Nose (singing). I am smiling.
All (in chorus). I am smiling.
Red Nose (singing). Yeh Hsiao-chen is smiling, too.
All (in chorus). Yeh Hsiao-chen is smiling, too.
Red Nose (singing). Yeh Hsiao-chen is smiling too
All (in chorus). Yeh Hsiao-chen is smiling, too.
(Music and dance stop suddenly. Yeh Hsiao-chen bursts into a
loud cry. All the people squat around her.)
Red Nose. Don't cry! Don't cry!
All. Don't cry! Don't cry!
Yeh Hsiao-chen (with great effort). I scared.
Red Nose. Don't be scared! Don't be scared!
All. Don't be scared! Don't be scared!
Yeh Yao-chih (as if bewitched). She, she, she . . . .  
Mrs. Yeh (as if bewitched). She can talk, she can talk.  
Yeh Yao-chih. God! She's got over it. She's got over it!  
Mrs. Yeh (steps forward to hold Yeh Hsiao-chen in her arms).  
Baby, baby, you've recovered!  
Yeh Yao-chih. God! How did it happen? How did it happen?  
Red Nose. She's recovered. Yes, she will recover.  
(P'eng Hsiao-po and Ch'iu Ta-wei come over and hold Red Nose at the same time. Red Nose looks from one to the other.)  
P'eng Hsiao-po. Go ahead.  
Ch'iu Ta-wei. Go ahead.  
P'eng Hsiao-po. My son isn't really dead.  
Red Nose. Oh!  
Ch'iu Ta-wei. I've really heard a voice.  
Red Nose. Oh!  
P'eng Hsiao-po. My men just got a telegram from him.  
Ch'iu Ta-wei. A voice which comes from the abyss of my mind.  
P'eng Hsiao-po. He didn't take that plane because something came up.  
Ch'iu Ta-wei. A voice which comes from heaven.  
P'eng Hsiao-po. He shifted to tomorrow's plane.  
Ch'iu Ta-wei. I believe I can compose.  
P'eng Hsiao-po. Thank God!  
Red Nose. You should thank God.  
Ch'iu Ta-wei. I've regained confidence.
Red Nose. Congratulations!

p'eng Hsiao-po. I'd like to have you give a performance for celebration.

(Clapping). Ladies and Gentlemen, I'd like to ask the vaudeville company to give us a performance.

Mrs. Hsiao (to Mr. Hsiao). What did he say?

Mr. Hsiao. Sssh!

p'eng Hsiao-po. Manager, manager.

Manager. Yes.

p'eng Hsiao-po. I'd like to have the vaudeville company give us a show.

All (cheering joyfully). Oh!

Manager. You--

p'eng Hsiao-po. I'll pay all the expense.

Yeh Yao-chih. No, no. I'd like to have a share in paying it.

Manager. Good!

p'eng Hsiao-po. I'll pay alone. You can have your turn next time.

Yeh Yao-chih. I'll pay half of it.

p'eng Hsiao-po. No, no. You can't, you can't.

All (shouting joyfully). Oh!

Manager (pushing Mr. Hsiao forward). Have you heard it?

Mr. Hsiao. Then we can only show our poor skill.

All (shouting joyfully.) Oh!

p'eng Hsiao-po. Come on, come on! Let's start!
Mr. Hsiao. Hello, everybody.

Vaudeville Company. Yes.

Mr. Hsiao. Have you heard it? These gentlemen would like us to give them a show. Do your best!

Vaudeville Company. Sure!

(Tseng Hua-te and Hu I-fan force their way to P'eng Hsiao-po.)

P'eng Hsiao-po. Mr. Hu!

Hu I-fan. Po Lao.

P'eng Hsiao-po. What did you say to me a little while ago?

Hu I-fan. We have a dealing with your company. The check is due tomorrow.

P'eng Hsiao-po. Ah! I remember it.

Hu I-fan. We hope that you wait a few days to cash it.

P'eng Hsiao-po. Oh! No problem, no problem.

Hu I-fan. Could you please call up your men?

P'eng Hsiao-po. Okay, okay. I will, I will. (clapping).

Hello, everybody. Get ready, everybody.

(P'eng Hsiao-po, Hu I-fan, and Tseng Hua-te walk over to the counter.)

P'eng Hsiao-po. I'll make the phone call right away. Let's talk about the details some other time.

Tseng Hua-te. Thank you.

Hu I-fan.

P'eng Hsiao-po. You need not thank me.
Mr. Hsiao. Please make way for us. We need to clear up a space for our show.

(Curtain.)
Act III

Scene: the same as Act I. Immediately following the preceding act.

The dining tables have been moved away to make room for the vaudeville company's performance. Members of the vaudeville company are sitting at the rear of the stage. The audience, including P'eng Hsiao-po, Hsiao Ting, Ch'iu Ta-wei, Ho Mei-li, Tseng Hua-te, Hu I-fan, the Yehs and Yeh Hsiao-chen, Wang P'ei-p'ei, the Manager, and Waiters A and B, is sitting at both sides of the acting area. The show is about to start. Mr. Hsiao gets up and walks over to the acting area, followed by Mrs. Hsiao. The audience claps.

Mr. Hsiao (bows with folded hands to the three sides of the stage). Gentlemen! 72

Mrs. Hsiao (bows with folded hands). And Ladies!

Mr. Hsiao. And ladies. We are a vaudeville company.

Mrs. Hsiao. Exactly, a vaudeville company.

Mr. Hsiao. We are touched —

Mrs. Hsiao. Hey, old man, you should say it's an honor.

Mr. Hsiao. It's an honor. It's a great honor that we can earn a living by entertaining —

Mrs. Hsiao. Old man, you should say give a performance.

Mr. Hsiao. Give a performance. It's a great honor that we can give a performance in this splendid inn.
Mrs. Hsiao. You should say hotel.

Mr. Hsiao. Hotel. (Please forgive us if our performance is not good!)

Mrs. Hsiao. Thank you.

Mr. Hsiao. Thank you. Thank you. Now everybody.

Vaudeville Company. Yes.

Mr. Hsiao. Pipe up your instruments.

(The Accordionist and the Trumpeter step into the acting area. They play a song together. After that they play an accompaniment for the following show.)

(Mr. Hsiao performs a sleight of hand.)

Audience. Once more! Once more!

Mr. Hsiao. Have you heard that, old woman?

Mrs. Hsiao. Yes, I have.

Mr. Hsiao. We have to try harder.

Mrs. Hsiao. Yes, try harder.

(Mr. Hsiao performs a sleight of hand which has comic effect and arouses a roaring laughter among the audience.)

(Mr. and Mrs. Hsiao return to their seats.)

(T'ien Ta-li steps into the acting area and gives two muscleman's performances. The audience applauds.)

(Little Monkey steps into the acting area. He turns a couple of somersaults and practices boxing. The audience applauds.)

(Little Monkey and T'ien Ta-li give two performances of stunts together. The audience applauds.)
(Little Monkey and T'ien Ta-li return to their seats.)
(The four dance girls steps into the acting area and start dancing. Their dance requires special choreography. It must have a touch of primitiveness and mysteriousness. The audience applauds. Hsiao Lu steps into the acting area and dances with the four girls.)

Hsiao Lu (singing). 73

Once upon a time

Four fairies descend to the earthly world,
Looking for a perfect man
To make him an immortal.
The oldest sister is fault-finding;
The second is somewhat selfish;
The third is a little jealous;
The youngest is confused,
Innocent and happy.
The second sister is not satisfied with the oldest's choice;
The third complains about the man the second favors;
Only the youngest doesn't care,
She thinks they are all lovely
And never complains about any one.

Day in, day out,
Year in, year out,
They are looking for a perfect man
To make him an immortal.
The oldest sister considers some people to be too ugly;
The second rejects others because they are too beautiful;
The third complains that some are too tall and some too short;
Only the youngest doesn't care,
And is never displeased with the ugly, the beautiful, the tall, or the short.
The oldest sister says some people are a little lazy;
The second says some are irresolute;
The third says some are slow-witted;
Only the youngest doesn't care,
She sees only men's good qualities,
Never their faults.

Day in, day out,
Year in, year out,
They are looking for a perfect man
To make him an immortal.
The oldest sister has her own views;
The second has her opinions;
The third has her plans.
It is as difficult as climbing to the sky,
To satisfy all three of them.
They've been traveling mountains and rivers,
And searching all over the world,
Searching until now,
Until now,
Until now!

Waiter A (nudging Waiter B). Have they found him?
Waiter B. Who knows!
(The audience roars with laughter.)

Hsiao Lu (singing). Until now,
Until now!
(The audience applauds.)

Hsiao Lu and the dance girls return to their seats.
(Red Nose enters the acting area.)

Red Nose. Ladies and gentlemen, my name is Red Nose. Red Nose doesn't have any knack for doing anything else; he can only tell stories. Now I'd like to tell you a story, a very old story. A long, long time ago, there was a king, a very able king. Under his rule everything was in order, the weather was favorable for raising crops, the kingdom was prosperous and at peace, and the people lived in happiness. But one day a question crossed his mind, that is "What is happiness? Who is the happiest man in the world?" The more he thought about the question, the more unhappy he became. So he summoned the wisest official in his kingdom.
(The following is Red Nose's one-man show.)
King. People say you are wise. I'd like to ask you a question. What is happiness?

Official. Well-- well-- well--

King. Stop your well's.

Official. Your Majesty, happiness is the state of being free from care.

King. Let me ask you another question. Who is the happiest man in the world?

Official. Surely it's Your Majesty.

King. I'm the happiest man?

Official. Your Majesty is the happiest man in the world.

King. I'm concerned over the welfare of the whole country. I'm worried about lots of things. Do you really mean to say that I'm free from care?

Official. Well-- well--

King. Let me ask you. Are you happy?

Official. I-- I'm happy.

King. Are you happier than I?

Official. How can I compare with Your Majesty?

King. I ask you whether you are happy?

Official. I--I'm not.

King. Let me ask you again. What is happiness?

Official. I-- I, I don't know.

King. You don't know?

Official. I really don't know.
King. People always say you are wise. To me, you are just so-so.

Official. Yes, Your Majesty.

King. Now I want you to find a really happy man in a month.

Official. Yes, Your Majesty.

King. If you can't find one by then, you will be the most unhappy man.

Official. Yes, Your Majesty.

(The official retires and wipes his forehead.)

(To himself). This is a hard nut to crack, a really hard nut.

(The Official walks to and fro, thinking.)

(To himself). I might as well offer a reward.

(Writing notice.)

(Reading). "Whoever knows the meaning of the word happiness will be rewarded 10 oz. of gold; whoever thinks of himself as the happiest man will be rewarded 100 oz. of gold."

(Posting the notice.)

(Loudly). Can anybody answer my question? Reward! reward --

(Wang P'ei-p'ei gets up and walks toward Red Nose.)

Wang P'ei-p'ei. I, I know. I can answer it.

Red Nose. You? You?
Wang P'ei-p'ei (takes off her sunglasses). Shen-szu, don't you know me any more?

Red Nose (drawing back in alarm). You? You?

Wang P'ei-p'ei. Shen-szu, Shen-szu. You really don't recognize me?

Red Nose. I-- I--

(Wang P'ei-p'ei moves close to him and snatches away his mask.)

(Red Nose's face shows. It's a nervous, shy, and innocent face.)

(Red Nose is taken aback for a moment. Suddenly he covers his face with both hands and squats.)

(The audience bursts into roaring laughter.)

(Curtain.)
Act IV

scene: the same as Act I. Early morning, the next day. The dining tables have been put back in order as they were in Act I. At the rise of the curtain, a gleam of morning light is spreading from the windows. The weather has cleared up, but the wind is still blowing at 15 to 20 knots per hour. We can see vaguely the waves surging back and forth. It is still the time for sound sleep. The room is full of nightly atmosphere and everything is quiet.

Red Nose (without his mask) and Wang P'ei-p'ei are sitting side by side on the sofa. Obviously they have been sitting up the whole night.

Wang P'ei-p'ei (smoking heavily). I've changed our door. Now we have the new-styled swinging door.

Red Nose. What door?

Wang P'ei-p'ei. Of course, it's the door of our old store.

Red Nose. Ah-- How is our old store?

Wang P'ei-p'ei. The sign board has been replaced with a new one and the interior newly refurbished. It's completely changed. You won't recognize it.

Red Nose. Surely I won't.

Wang P'ei-p'ei. You know I had to make a change. A new pharmacy was set up next door with new, fashionable facilities. If we hadn't changed ours, we wouldn't be able to get along.
Red Nose. How does the business fare?
Wang P'ei-p'ei. Not bad.
Red Nose. People in our town are old-fashioned.
Wang P'ei-p'ei. I remember we quarreled over that. I said we had to change our door, but you insisted that we keep the old one. Do you remember it?
Red Nose. Had we? I can't recall it.
Wang P'ei-p'ei. You can't recall it?
Red Nose. We--we really had a quarrel?
Wang P'ei-p'ei. I said what would it matter if we changed the door?
Red Nose. Right.
Wang P'ei-p'ei. You said no.
Red Nose. Did I?
Wang P'ei-p'ei. You said no and you insisted that we not change it. You were trying to make trouble with me on purpose.
Red Nose. Trying to make trouble on purpose?
Wang P'ei-p'ei. I don't know. Ay! It's all over.
Red Nose. But you've won.
Wang P'ei-p'ei. I've won? What? What did you say?
Red Nose. I mean, I simply mean that you changed the door finally, didn't you?
Wang P'ei-p'ei. Yes, after you left.
Red Nose. Yes, yes.
Wang P'ei-p'ei. I've learned a lot of things since you left, especially business matters. After you left, I couldn't just leave our store alone. I had to take care of it; so, I had to learn. I've learned quite a lot in the past few years.

Red Nose. You are very competent. I knew you could manage it.

Wang P'ei-p'ei. You are taking a very easy tone about it. Competent? Competent in what way? I couldn't even keep my husband from running away. Competent in what way?

Red Nose. That was not your fault. It was mine.

Wang P'ei-p'ei. After you left, I felt really embarrassed. What should I say if somebody asked about you? "Hi, where is your husband?" "Where has your husband gone?" "Where is your husband working?" I said you'd gone to the United States; you were studying there.

Red Nose. Oh, oh. Gone to the United States?

Wang P'ei-p'ei. I could only keep all my grievance to myself. I thought you would come back eventually. I was sure that you'd come back and I'd settle accounts with you. One year, two years, and three years had passed, still I hadn't heard anything from you. Now people no longer ask those questions. They ask: "When will your husband come back?" "Your husband should be back by now, shouldn't he?" "How come your husband hasn't come back? Can it be that he's married an American woman?"
Red Nose. Married an American woman?

Wang P'ei-p'ei. It doesn't matter if you married an American woman.

Red Nose. Really?

Wang P'ei-p'ei. Of course, not everybody can marry an American woman.

Red Nose. But I hadn't gone to the United States, let alone married an American woman.

Wang P'ei-p'ei. Surely not. I knew you hadn't gone to the United States. I knew for sure that you couldn't have gone there.

Red Nose. What are you gonna say in the future?

Wang P'ei-p'ei. I think-- I think-- I think I can handle it.

Red Nose. Will you say that your husband's back from the United States?

Wang P'ei-p'ei. Well-- well--

Red Nose. Will you say that your husband is working for a foreign agency and is making big money?

Wang P'ei-p'ei. Well-- that's not your business. I haven't thought about it carefully. I'm sure I can handle it.

Red Nose. I'm sure you'll say those things.

Wang P'ei-p'ei. Let me ask. What should I say?

Red Nose. I don't know.

Wang P'ei-p'ei. You want me to say that my husband has been fooling around with a vaudeville-- (thinking that it is improper to say, she stops).
Red Nose. Let me say it. Playing a clown in a vaudeville company.

Wang P'ei-p'ei (seriously). Have you been staying with the vaudeville company all these years?

Red Nose. You've asked this question several times.

Wang P'ei-p'ei. Yes. I just can't believe it.

Red Nose. I've been with it for about a year.

Wang P'ei-p'ei. What about the years before that?

Red Nose. I tried all kinds of jobs.

Wang P'ei-p'ei. What did you do after all?

Red Nose. Nothing significant. Nothing I can show off.

Wang P'ei-p'ei. What would it matter if you told me about them?

Red Nose. I was a teacher at one time, then a salesman, and a correspondent for a few days; I also set up a vending stand for a time. But I didn't bring off anything.

Wang P'ei-p'ei. What was the matter with you?

Red Nose. I had the feeling that I wouldn't make a go of anything. I couldn't do anything well. I was good for nothing. I was afraid.

Wang P'ei-p'ei. You were afraid?

Red Nose. I was afraid. When I was teaching, I was afraid of seeing students, extremely afraid. Certainly I couldn't make a salesman.
Wang P'ei-p'ei. But you didn't look afraid when you were performing.

Red Nose. That's because I had my mask on. When I put on the mask, I have no fear. I have no fear at all. I feel free. I feel free at last, living freely in a world of my own. I feel that I can observe others calmly and I am no longer afraid of myself.

Wang P'ei-p'ei. You've never thought about coming home?

Red Nose. Yes, I have. I've thought about it.

Wang P'ei-p'ei. But you didn't come home. You didn't even send me a word.

Red Nose. No. I couldn't come home with my mask on.

Wang P'ei-p'ei. Can't you take off your mask?

Red Nose. No, I can't.

Wang P'ei-p'ei. Haven't you taken it off?

Red Nose. It was you who took it off for me.

Wang P'ei-p'ei. What difference does it make?

Red Nose. You know, I grew up in a very good family. My parents cared for me so much that they took care of everything for me. I didn't have to use my own brain and hands to do anything, not even a small thing like socks. Then I married a good wife. She was just like my parents. She took care of everything for me. Again I didn't have to do or think about anything. But one day I asked myself: What am I for in the world? What is the

Wang P'ei-p'ei. So you ran away from home?
Red Nose. No wonder that Sakyamuni gave up the life of a prince and left his wonderful family.

Wang P'ei-p'ei. You want to be Sakyamuni?
Red Nose. Don't talk nonsense. Don't blaspheme the saints. I'm simply thinking that way.

Wang P'ei-p'ei. Is that the reason for your running away from home?
Red Nose. I left home in a state of confusion. I wanted to know what I could do without anybody taking care of me. Perhaps I should say that I wanted to see the world with my own eyes.

Wang P'ei-p'ei. Have you seen it?
Red Nose. A little, just a little of it.

Wang P'ei-p'ei. Do you think you can do something?
Red Nose. It was only after I joined the vaudeville company and put on the mask that I felt I could do something.

Wang P'ei-p'ei (sarcastically). Play a clown?
Red Nose. I felt that I could give people happiness, even though it might be temporal. You know what happiness is?

Wang P'ei-p'ei. Isn't it what your show was concerned about?
Red Nose. I'm asking you what happiness is?
Wang P'ei-p'ei. I-- I don't know.

Red Nose. Are you happy?

Wang P'ei-p'ei. Can I ever be happy?

Red Nose. Let me tell you something. Happiness is sacrifice.

Wang P'ei-p'ei. What? sacrifice?

Red Nose. Sacrifice. True happiness is sacrifice.

Wang P'ei-p'ei. I don't understand. I don't understand at all.

Red Nose. A man is in the happiest state when he sacrifices himself for others. When Sakyamuni walked out of his palace, when Jesus headed for the Cross, when Wu Feng--

You know Wu Feng?

Wang P'ei-p'ei. Sure.

Red Nose. When Wu Feng rode to sacrifice himself, they were the three happiest men in the world.

Wang P'ei-p'ei. Shen-szu!

Red Nose. P'ei-p'ei (His eyes shed strange radiance).

Wang P'ei-p'ei. Shen-szu!

Red Nose. Are you calling me?

Wang P'ei-p'ei. Shen-szu! What are you thinking about?

Red Nose. Me?

Wang P'ei-p'ei. You -- you are a megalomaniac.

Red Nose. Megalomaniac?

Wang P'ei-p'ei. You were a megalomaniac when I married you.

But that was also something lovable about you.

Red Nose. What are you talking about?
Wang P'ei-p'ei. You don't understand yourself. You dream of being a great man. Let me tell you this. You are common, more common than common people. You are so timid and cowardly that you stagger and become shy when you are among a big crowd of people. You are afraid of sleeping alone at night, of darkness, of everything. You are even afraid of mice, and of little insects. You scream when you see a hairy caterpillar. You are afraid of putting on new clothes, of people's attention, of thunder, of getting sick. You are afraid even more of death.

Red Nose (staggeringly). You-- you-- don't-- don't -- don't, don't-- don't-- don't say-- don't say any more!

Wang P'ei-p'ei. You forget what you are?

Red Nose. I-- I-- I-- I--

Wang P'ei-p'ei. Just because you are too insignificant, you dream of being a great man; you dream of changing the world.

Red Nose (painfully). You-- you-- you--

Wang P'ei-p'ei (as if she were talking to her mischievous child). Okay, okay. (Stroking him) I won't say, I won't say any more.

(They remain silent for a while.)

Wang P'ei-p'ei. Don't be angry.

Red Nose. N--no.

Wang P'ei-p'ei. I went too far, didn't I?

Red Nose. No.
Wang P'ei-p'ei. Are you feeling better?
Red Nose. Yes.

(They fall into silence again.)
Wang P'ei-p'ei. It's dawn already.
Red Nose. Yes.
Wang P'ei-p'ei. Time flies.
Red Nose. Yes.
Wang P'ei-p'ei. But sometimes it passes so slowly that it seems to be frozen.
Red Nose. Yes.
Wang P'ei-p'ei. When I couldn't sleep, I looked out of the window and time seemed to be stagnant or frozen.

(The room is resplendent with the sunlight which shines through the French windows.)
Red Nose. The sun, the sun!
Wang P'ei-p'ei. Sometimes I think it would be nice if time got frozen.
Red Nose. A nice day.
Wang P'ei-p'ei. Shen-szu!
Red Nose. Oh!
Wang P'ei-p'ei. We'll get home today.
Red Nose. Oh!
Wang P'ei-p'ei. You still like seafood?
Red Nose. Hm!
Wang P'ei-p'ei. I'll get some prawns and raw fish. You still can't drink?
Red Nose. No.
Wang P'ei-p'ei. What about a little?
Red Nose. Just a little.
Wang P'ei-p'ei. I'll have some.
Red Nose. Sure.
Wang P'ei-p'ei. I've learned smoking and drinking recently. Would it bother you?
Red Nose. No.
Wang P'ei-p'ei. You are still very gentle.
Red Nose. Gentle?
Wang P'ei-p'ei (smiling). As gentle as a nice little boy.
Red Nose. You've changed the door?
Wang P'ei-p'ei. Yes. I told you before, didn't I?
Red Nose. What color did you paint the door?
Wang P'ei-p'ei. The same. Red.
Red Nose. Why not white?
Wang P'ei-p'ei. White? How would that do?
Red Nose. Why not?
Wang P'ei-p'ei. Nobody paints the door white. A white door gets dirty easily.
Red Nose. Is that the reason?
Wang P'ei-p'ei. Isn't that reason enough?
Red Nose (dismal and silent).
(Waiters A and B enter the right door. They wipe the tables and chairs. They turn on the radio. Delightful music comes up.)

(The open the windows to let in the sea breeze.)

Waiter A. Good morning!
Wang P'ei-p'ei. Good morning!
Waiter B. Good morning!
Wang P'ei-p'ei. Good morning!
Waiter A. A nice day!
Wang P'ei-p'ei. When do you serve breakfast?
Waiter A. Seven to nine. I'm afraid that you have to wait a little while.

(Ch'iu Ta-wei and Ho Mei-li come down the stairs.)

Ch'iu Ta-wei. Ah! (Yawning.) A nice day!
Ho Mei-li. You stayed up the whole night?
Ch'iu Ta-wei. No.
Ho Mei-li. Got it done?
Ch'iu Ta-wei. I think so.
Ho Mei-li. How did it turn out?
Ch'iu Ta-wei. It's something I've never done in my life.
It's completely different from what I've composed before.
It's brand-new.
Ho Mei-li. Ah!
Ch'iu Ta-wei. It's the voice which is buried within the depths of my heart. (Exaggerating.) The voice which has long been buried within the depths of my heart.
Ho Mie-li. That's great.

Ch'iu Ta-wei. Now I can wipe out the disgrace.

Ho Mei-li. Disgrace? What disgrace?

Ch'iu Ta-wei. You know a lot of people think that I'll never be able to compose anything. They all think that Ch'iu Ta-wei has written himself out and that he's finished. They are happy about it.

Ho Mei-li. I don't believe that people think that way. I've never heard anybody say so.

Ch'iu Ta-wei. What the hell do you know? How would people tell you that? How would they speak ill of me to you?

Ho Mei-li. I've heard people praise you a lot.

Ch'iu Ta-wei. On the surface they do. But in their heart, it's another matter. Let me tell you something. Nobody enjoys seeing anybody else succeed. People are delighted at other's misfortune and are happy to see others fail.

Ho Mei-li. What a horrible thing you are talking about.

Ch'iu Ta-wei. I'm telling you the truth. But I won't delight them. I'll surprise them. I'll let them know that Ch'iu Ta-wei doesn't fail so easily. I'll show them that Ch'iu Ta-wei has unlimited ability and vitality and that he has talent, real talent! Whoever has talent won't fail.

Ho Mei-li. Why are you talking big again?
Ch'iu Ta-wei. Talking big? Who's talking big?
Ho Mei-li. You forget what happened last night?
Ch'iu Ta-wei. What happened last night?
Ho Mei-li. You forget what Red Nose said to you?
Ch'iu Ta-wei. Which Red Nose?
Ho Mei-li. The one of the vaudeville company.
Ch'iu Ta-wei. Ah-- ah-- the clown of the vaudeville company!
Ho Mei-li. Exactly.
Ch'iu Ta-wei. What is he? He is no more than a clown of a
vaudeville company. What the hell does he know?
Ho Mei-li. Wasn't he right?
Ch'iu Ta-wei. I don't remember what he said. Don't mention
him again. Okay?
Ho Mei-li. Can you let me hear your song?
Ch'iu Ta-wei. You--? Sure. But there's no rush on it.
	ah! Such beautiful sunshine. Let's take a look at the
seascape.
(Ch'iu Ta-wei takes Ho Mei-li by the hand and draws her toward
the balcony on the left. When they pass by Red Nose, they
don't even give him a look.)

(Talking while walking) Don't be anxious! We've got
plenty of time.
Red Nose (holding Wang P'ei-p'ei's hand). P'ei-p'ei!
Wang P'ei-p'ei. Have you heard it?
Red Nose. Hm!
Wang P'ei-p'ei. You've heard everything?
Red Nose. Yes.
Wang P'ei-p'ei. Now what do you think you can do?
Red Nose. What can I do?
Wang P'ei-p'ei. You can't do anything. We can't do anything for anybody except for ourselves.
Red Nose. We--? Did you say we?
(The Yehs and their daughter come down the stairs. Yeh Hsiao-chen still looks dull, but her eyes show that she is much better than she was in the preceding act.)
(They take up a table.)
Mrs. Yeh. Doesn't she look better?
Yeh Yao-chih. Surely she does.
Mrs. Yeh. Dear! Hsiao-chen! Hsiao-chen!
(Yeh Hsiao-chen rolls her eyeballs as a response.)
Mrs. Yeh. We are going home, going home!
(Yeh Hsiao-chen smiles mysteriously.)
Mrs. Yeh. Say, say going -- home, going -- home.
Yeh Hsiao-chen (her lips are moving, but the audience cannot hear what she is saying). Going--
(Waiter B comes over.)
Waiter B. You have to wait a little while for your breakfast.
Mrs. Yeh. Three eggs with ham. Eggs should be soft, not overdone.
(Waiter B exits.)
I think we have to get a tutor for her.

Yeh Yao-chih. Can't we teach her ourselves?

Mrs. Yeh. How can we? It's time-consuming and it needs great patience.

Yeh Yao-chih. But --

Mrs. Yeh. We've got to spend the money.

Yeh Yao-chih. Let me think it over.

Mrs. Yeh. Think over what? There's nothing to think over.

Yeh Yao-chih. How it is easy for you to talk! Don't you know how much money I make per month? It's hardly sufficient to maintain the family.

Mrs. Yeh. Then why did you insist on paying the vaudeville company last night?

Yeh Yao-chih. Well--

Mrs. Yeh. How do you explain it?

Yeh Yao-chih. You don't know it. It's a matter of keeping up appearance.

Mrs. Yeh. How come I don't know it? You! Again I feel like giving you a scolding.

Yeh Yao-chih. For what?

Mrs. Yeh. You just don't spend money where it's needed.

Yeh Yao-chih. Let me ask you this. Have we paid it?

Mrs. Yeh. Did you insist on paying it?

Yeh Yao-chih. Answer my question first!

Mrs. Yeh. Answer mine first!
Yeh Yao-chih. Okay. I'll answer your question first. I did insist on paying it. But I didn't pay it. To have insisted on paying it does not necessarily mean that I've paid it.

Mrs. Yeh. That you insisted on paying it means that you've got the money to pay.

Yeh Yao-chih. They are different matters.

Mrs. Yeh. Why?

Yeh Yao-chih. He's a big shot in the business world. Can't you see it? Haven't you seen how the hotel manager has been bowing and scraping in front of him?

Mrs. Yeh. So what if he's a big shot?

Yeh Yao-chih. A big shot is a big shot.

Mrs. Yeh. What's great about a big shot anyway? The richer a man becomes the more stingy he is.

Yeh Yao-chih. You don't know about men.

Mrs. Yeh. I don't know about men? If I were him, I'd let you pay it.

Yeh Yao-chih. That's you.

Mrs. Yeh. What if he lets you pay it?

Yeh Yao-chih. How much?

Mrs. Yeh. The total, the total expense.

Yeh Yao-chih. How can it be the total? I said I'd like to pay half of it.
Mrs. Yeh. Okay, okay. Half of it. How much is half of it?
Yeh Yao-chih. I don't know. Let me ask you this. Shouldn't we pay some money now that our daughter has got better, has taken a turn for the better?
Mrs. Yeh. It's not a question of should or shouldn't. It's rather a question of can or cannot.
Yeh Yao-chih. I asked whether we should or shouldn't.
Mrs. Yeh (loudly). Okay. Let's say we should. Then shouldn't we get a tutor for her?
Yeh Yao-chih. All right, all right. Take it easy, take it easy.
(Waiter B brings their breakfast. They start eating.)
(Tseng Hua-te and Hu I-fan come down the stairs. They take up a table.)
Tseng Hua-te. I had a nice sleep last night.
Hu I-fan. That's because you hadn't slept well for quite a few nights.
Tseng Hua-te. Now you wouldn't say that your trip is worthless.
Hu I-fan. You are complacent, aren't you?
Tseng Hua-te. Things wouldn't always turn out the way we think they would. As the saying goes, we have found something accidentally after tracking miles in vain for it.
Hu I-fan. Coincidence. It's simply a coincidence.
Tseng Hua-te. Coincidence or not, at least our problem is solved.
Hu I-fan. Our problem is solved? Did you say our problem is solved?
Tseng Hua-te. What's the matter with you? Didn't you hear him talk on the phone? Didn't he tell his men not to cash the check today?
Hu I-fan. That's right. But it's only a temporary solution which allows us a breathing spell.
(Waiter B comes up to them.)
Tseng Hua-te. Two portions of gruel, please.
Hu I-fan. Hey, is the road open?
Waiter B. Don't know yet. They'll announce it on the radio later. You can listen to the radio.
(Waiter B exits.)
Tseng Hua-te. What did you say?
Hu I-fan. Don't be complacent! We'll have lots of problems in the future.
Tseng Hua-te. He'll eat his words?
Hu I-fan. It's not that. He only said that he won't cash the check today. What if he does tomorrow?
Tseng Hua-te. Is it possible?
Hu I-fan. It's hard to say. You know he granted our request right away last night only because he was excited. Once he calms down, he would be quite different.
Tseng Hua-te. I know that old man is very shrewd.
Hu I-fan. Much more than that.
Tseng Hua-te. What should we do now?
Hu I-fan. We have no way out at the moment. We can only try and see. However, we have to be chary of his honeyed talk and his trap. We shouldn't rely on him; we should hold to our ground and try other means.
Tseng Hua-te. You're right.
Hu I-fan. He'll certainly add conditions later.
Tseng Hua-te. What conditions?
Hu I-fan. I don't know. He wouldn't play into our hands without expecting something from us. He's good at playing tricks.
Tseng Hua-te. I think we are no suckers, either.
Hu I-fan. He's been struggling in the business world for a couple of decades and has made quite a fortune. He's certainly no simpleton. We're not his equals. In comparison with him, we are merely greenhorns and are far and away inexperienced.
Tseng Hua-te. Why should we be afraid of him? It will be all right if we are cautious.
Hu I-fan. How easy it is to talk! He's one thing on the surface, another thing at heart. He's so shrewd and crafty that it's impossible to guard against him. We'd better not tell him everything. We have to keep something
to ourselves and talk it over later. In short, don't fall into his trap.

Tseng Hua-te. You're right.

(Waiter B brings their breakfast.)

(Tseng Hua-te and Hu I-fan start eating.)

(The dance girls enter the right door.)

Dance Girl A. Is the road open?
Dance Girl B. Who cares.
Dance Girl A. If it's open, we are leaving.
Dance Girl B. It won't be as comfortable as here no matter where we go.
Dance Girl C. No. I don't feel like leaving. It'd be nice if we could stay one more day.
Dance Girl D. Me, either. I do wish we could stay another day. Look at the sea. It's right there!
Dance Girl A. So what? I grew up near the seaside.
Dance Girl C. I like the sea.
Dance Girl D. Me, too. Very much.
Dance Girl C. Let's hurry up. Look! (Lifting a corner of her dress) I'm wearing this.
Dance Girl D. Swimsuit. Go swimming?
Dance Girl C. Yes.
Dance Girl D. It's a pity that I learned very little about swimming. I don't have nerve enough to swim.
Dance Girl B. Be careful! The waves are huge!
Dance Girl C. It doesn't matter. The shore is shallow.
Dance Girl A. Don't kid me.
Dance Girl C. I'm sure I won't get drowned.
(The dance girls go out to the balcony on the left. There are
outbursts of mirth.)
(P'eng Hsiao-po and Hsiao Ting come down the stairs. P'eng
Hsiao-po again looks as healthy and strong as he was in Act I.
They take up a nearby table.)
P'eng Hsiao-po. Is the road open?
Hsiao Ting. I just phoned to enquire about it. No further
information.
P'eng Hsiao-po. We'll go as soon as the road is open.
Hsiao Ting. Yes.
P'eng Hsiao-po. Check the bill later. The hotel manager is
very shrewd. I don't want to be swindled.
Hsiao Ting. Yes.
(Waiter A comes over.)
I've ordered.
Waiter A. Okay.
(Waiter A exits.)
P'eng Hsiao-po. What a piece of great luck I've got this
time.
Hsiao Ting. Heaven helps good men.
P'eng Hsiao-po. It's my luck, it's my luck.
Hsiao Ting. Those who do enough good deeds will have more than enough blessings to share.

P'eng Hsiao-po. This time I'll make my son stay by any means. I'm too old to take any shock.

Hsiao Ting. Certainly.

P'eng Hsiao-po. You know that boy is hard to deal with. He's as much a mule as I. When you want him to be one way, he'll just go the other way.

Hsiao Ting. That's not true.

P'eng Hsiao-po. He's just like that. So I have to think of a scheme, to play some tricks.

Hsiao Ting. I think there must be a way out.

P'eng Hsiao-po. Well-- You know the stick won't do. I know his headstrong temper.

Hsiao Ting. Then use the carrot.

P'eng Hsiao-po. The carrot. The carrot won't do, either.

He isn't that simple. You know he's a Ph.D.

Hsiao Ting. Your son is marvelous.

P'eng Hsiao-po. In a word, it's really hard to deal with him. I've got to think of a subtle scheme to maneuver him into staying.

(Tseng Hua-te and Hu I-fan come over.)

Hu I-fan. Good morning, sir.

Tseng Hua-te. Good morning, sir.

P'eng Hsiao-po. Good morning. Have seats.
(Tseng Hua-te and Hu I-fan sit down.)

(Waiter brings over breakfast.)

P'eng Hsiao-po. Like to have some?

Hu I-fan. We've had our breakfast already. Go ahead, please.

(P'eng Hsiao-po and Hsiao Ting are eating.)

P'eng Hsiao-po. You two are promising young men.

Hu I-fan. Thank you. We are looking to you for favor.

Tseng Hua-te. Our factory needs your orders.

P'eng Hsiao-po. What kind of factory are you running?


P'eng Hsiao-po. Yes, that's right. I'm getting old and confused.

Tseng Hua-te. Certainly it's no match for your company.

Hu I-fan. Ours is merely a small factory.

P'eng Hsiao-po. No, no. It's very impressive. Are you engaged in export?

Hu I-fan. Primarily export.

P'eng Hsiao-po. Very good, very promising.

Tseng Hua-te. Thank you.

Hu I-fan. We have dealings with your company from time to time. Mr. Tseng, our manager, was your son's classmate.

P'eng Hsiao-po. Yes, yes.

Hu I-fan. The matter we mentioned to you last night --

P'eng Hsiao-po. A check, is that right?

Tseng Hua-te. Yes.
P'eng Hsiao-po. I phoned my men last night. They won't cash it today. 
Hu I-fan. We'd like to ask you to allow us a few more days.
P'eng Hsiao-po. Well-- I still don't quite understand the whole matter. My men are taking care of it. It's not a big figure, is it?
Hu I-fan. Only two hundred thousand something.
P'eng Hsiao-po (smiling). A small figure.
Tseng Hua-te. Yes, yes.
P'eng Hsiao-po. They take care of dealings of small numbers like that without consulting me.
Hu I-fan. Sure, sure.
P'eng Hsiao-po. Let's say. I'll ask them about it and straighten it out. In the meantime I'd like to have a better understanding of your factory. To tell the truth, I have no idea about it and certainly can't make out anything.
Hu I-fan. Surely not.
P'eng Hsiao-po. If the road remains blocked for a while, we can have a good talk. If it's open, you can come over to my company and we can discuss it. But you'd better make an appointment with me; I'm very busy and not easy to catch.
Hu I-fan. Sure, sure.
P'eng Hsiao-po. Then it's settled.
Tseng Hua-te. We've delayed your breakfast.
Hu I-fan. Thanks, thanks.
P'eng Hsiao-po. Not at all.
(Tseng Hua-te and Hu I-fan get up and go back to their seats.)
Tseng Hua-te. What do you think?
Hu I-fan. Take it easy, take it easy. It's no use getting anxious.
(The Hsiaos enter the right door.)
Mrs. Hsiao. Should we have breakfast first?
Mr. Hsiao. Why in such a hurry? They haven't got up yet.
Mrs. Hsiao. We'd better have our breakfast and go.
Mr. Hsiao. Go where? The road hasn't been cleared yet.
Mrs. Hsiao (gently). You know after the midday they would charge us with extra money.
Mr. Hsiao. Don't worry, old woman. It's our fate that we get help when we are in need.
Mrs. Hsiao. There you are again!
Mr. Hsiao. How come? Didn't my words come true?
Little Monkey. Mom, let's go over there.
Mrs. Hsiao. Stop your gab!
Mr. Hsiao. Okay. Let's go get some fresh air.
(The Hsiaos move toward the balcony on the left.)
Little Monkey (talking while walking). Uncle Red Nose, where's uncle Red Nose? He wasn't in his room.
Mr. Hsiao. He wouldn't have left. He wouldn't.

(They pass by Red Nose, but none of them notices the existence of the unmasked Red Nose. They go out to the balcony.)

(T'ien Ta-li, Hsiao Lu, the Trumpeter, the Accordionist enter the right door one after the other.)

Hsiao Lu. Have you seen Red Nose?

Trumpeter. No.

Hsiao Lu. He didn't return to the room. Where did he sleep?

Trumpeter. He got a woman.

Accordionist. Who's that woman to him? T'ien, do you know?

T'ien Ta-li. Amitabha!

Trumpeter. Maybe his wife.

Hsiao Lu. His wife? I don't believe it.

Trumpeter. If not, she must be his mistress.

Hsiao Lu. That sounds better.

Accordionist. I don't have any idea of what kind of a man he is.

Hsiao Lu. Me, either.

Accordionist. T'ien, what do you think?


Amitabha!

(Suddenly the people on the balcony roar out noisy shouts:
"Don't swim further!" "Come back quickly!" "Swim back!"
"Hey, hey, swim back!" "Hsiao Lin, Hsiao Lin, don't you hear me?" "It's finished! It's finished!")
(The Manager and Waiters A and B are running toward the balcony while Mr. and Mrs. Hsiao rush into the dining room, followed by Ch'iu Ta-wei and Ho Mei-li.)

Mr. Hsiao. What to do? What to do?
Manager. What's the matter? What's the matter?

Ch'iu Ta-wei (taking the words out of Mr. Hsiao's mouth).

Something happened to a little girl of the vaudeville company while she was swimming. Do you have life guards?

Manager. Who told her to go swimming?

Ch'iu Ta-wei. Do you have any life-saving facilities? Any life boats?

Manager. Not in a small hotel like this.

Mr. Hsiao. Does anybody swim? Does anybody swim? Does anybody swim?

(They all look at each other in fear, not knowing what to do.)

(Red Nose gets up, puts on his mask and comes over.)

All: Ah! Red Nose! Red Nose!

(Red Nose walks toward the balcony.)

Wang P'ei-p'ei (frightened and confused). Where are you going? Where are you going? (Calling loudly) Shen-szu! Shen-szu! Shen-szu!

(The crowd hustles Red Nose out to the balcony.)

(Only Wang P'ei-p'ei remains on the stage.)

(Confused). You, you, what do you think you can do? You think you are a god? You don't understand yourself at all, you don't understand yourself at all. (Kneels) God
forgive him! Forgive him! Forgive him . . . .
(Her words trail off until they are heard no more.)
(She lies prostrate on the floor.)
(A long pause. The stage is all quiet.)
(Gentle and somewhat sad music comes up on the radio. Suddenly noises arise from the balcony: "That's her, that's her!"
"Come, come, come, come back quickly." "See how beautifully she swam!"
"Coming! Coming! She's coming!" "Good! Good! Good!"
"Excellent!" Dance Girl C enters the French windows, attended by the crowd. She is in high spirits and is wiping her forehead. Everybody looks at her excitedly.
All (noisily). You scared us to death!
It's nice that nothing happened.
Thank God!
Dance Girl C. I'm okay! I'm perfectly okay!
Little Monkey. Uncle Red Nose, where's uncle Red Nose?
Where's uncle Red Nose?
All (noisily). Ah! Red Nose. Where's Red Nose?
Yes. I almost forgot about him.
How come he hasn't come back?
He went to save you. Have you seen him?
(Wang P'ei-p'ei gets up.)
Dance Girl C. He, he, he doesn't swim at all. He doesn't know anything about swimming!
All (noisily). My God! My God! I don't believe it!
Why did he go?
What did he mean to do?
He sought death? Wouldn't he be drowned?
Little Monkey (crying). Uncle Red Nose, Uncle Red Nose!
All (noisily). Can anybody go find him? Can anybody go save him?
Try to get a life boat!
Phone the police! Quick!
Hurry up. Hurry up. Hurry up with something!
(All of them are busy and flurried. Nobody knows what to do.)
Radio. This is newsreport. Under the influence of a tropical low pressure this area suffered from heavy rains and damages. Now that the tropical low pressure has moved out of this area toward the south, the weather has cleared up. The highway crew worked with all-out effort in the dead of night to clear the landslides caused by heavy rains. Now the highway is completely repaired and is open to traffic. The damages produced by heavy rains are estimated to be not too great . . . .
All (noisily). The road is open! The road is open! Let's go! Let's go!
P'eng Hsiao-po. Hsiao Ting! Hsiao Ting!
Hsiao Ting. Yes.
P'eng Hsiao-po. Get the car ready! Get the car ready!
Hu I-fan. The bill! The bill!
Mrs. Yeh (dragging Yeh Yao-chih). Let's go, too! Hurry up!
Hurry up!
Little Monkey. Uncle Red Nose! Uncle Red Nose! Uncle Red Nose!
Mrs. Hsiao. What should we do? What should we do? What should we do?
Dance Girl B. Save him! Save him!
T'ein Ta-li. Amitabha! Amitabha!
Wang P'ei-p'ei (confused). I know he won't be back! I know he won't be back!
(Curtain.)
NOTES


2 Szu-ma Ch'ang-feng (司馬長風), *A History of Chinese New Literature* (中國新文學史), II (Hong Kong: Chiu Ming, 1976), 290.

3 It was so nicknamed because there were people who did think that there were barbaric elements in traditional drama.


5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.

7 T'ien Ch'in (田禽), *The Drama Movement in China* (Chungking: Shang Wu, 1944), p. 105.

8 T'ien, p. 107.

9 Dolby, p. 205.


12 Szu-ma, III, 259.

13 Ibid.


*All Chinese names except Mei-shu Hwang are arranged as they are in Chinese: family name precedes given name.*
15 A History of the Development of Chinese Drama

16 Yang Tzu-ch'iao (揚子喬), "A Transplanted Flower: The
Windmill Poetry Society Which Was Strongly Influenced by
Surrealism (移植的花朵: 油畫自然主義影響的風車詩社),"

17 "In a Rising Age: A Conference on Literature and Arts
of the 1950s (揚起的年代: 五十年代文藝座談會)

18 Hsia, A History of Modern Chinese Fiction, p. 250.

19 Ibid.

20 Dolby, p. 231.

21 "Establish Our New Cultural Mode (樹立我們新的文化模式),"

22 Yao Yi-wei, A Collection of Essays on Drama (戲劇論集)

23 Yao, A Collection of Essays on Drama, p. 147.

24 Yu Ta-kang (俞大綱), "My Personal Reflection on the
Performance of The Chest (由“一口箱子”演出引發的個人感想),"
The China Times (中國時報 ), March 21, 1977, as quoted in
Mei-shu Hwang, "Yao Yi-wei: A Modern Chinese Playwright,"
Tamkang Review, IX, No. 2 (1978), 179.

25 Yao Yi-wei, "I Wrote Fu Ch'ing-ch'iu (我寫島秀之),"
The China Times, Dec. 20, 1977, as quoted in Mei-shu Hwang,
p. 179.

27. Yao, Six Plays, p. 65.
31. Hwang, p. 163.
32. Yao, Six Plays, p. 162.
33. Ibid.
34. Yao, Six Plays, pp. 118-119.
35. Yao, Six Plays, p. 163.
37. Ibid.
38. Hwang, p. 164.
41. Chang Chien (張健), "Reading The Jade Goddess of Mercy (讀碧玉觀音)," Ta-hua Evening News (大華晚報), Feb. 20, 1967, as quoted in Hwang, p. 171.
"Ts'an chun hsi" is a kind of performance which was very popular during the eighth and ninth centuries A.D. "Ts'an-chün" literally means "military counselor."


This poem serves to greet the audience.


60 Yao Yi-wei, "An Introductory Study of the Tragic Vision in the Yuan Drama（元雜劇中悲劇觀之初探）," *Chinese and Foreign Literatures* (中外文學), 4, No. 4 (1975), 55-56.


63 The Chinese original of this idiom is 人不如天算.

64 Here Tseng says that P'eng is nicknames as "liu-ch'in-pu-jen [六親不認]," a Chinese idiom meaning that he does not even acknowledge his closest six relations, namely, parents, brothers, wife or husband, and children.

65 Here Yao uses the idiom "p'ing-shui-hsiang-feng [萍水相逢]," P'ing is a kind of waterweed whose scientific name is "spirodela polyhiza." Shui means water and hsiang-feng means to meet each other. This idiom is used to describe the situation in which one person meets another by accident.

66 The Chinese original of this idiom is 吉人天相.

67 The following sentence "He won't amount to anything if he is like me" is left out because it is too self-effacing.

68 Starting from this line, Hsiao Lu gives wrong information and the chorus corrects him. Chiang Tzu-ya (姜子牙), Ch'in Kan-lo (康甘羅), and Li Lao-chün (李老君) are legendary figures. The Chinese are familiar with them because their stories are adapted into many folk dramas.
The original of the following passage is rimed.

This proverb means that human fortune is as capricious as the weather.

Amitabha is the Buddha of infinite light. This exclamatory expression is equivalent to "Jesus Christ" or "God" in English. I have kept it because of the allusions to Buddha in the play.

I have rearranged this dialogue in order that it will suit better the English speech order. The same speech is attributed to the same person as in the original.

The following song and the one which appears at the end of the second act are original with the author.

Sakyamuni is Buddha's name.
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my deepest thanks to Dr. James Lowrie, my thesis adviser, for his generous gifts of advice, time, patience, and encouragement. I am also grateful to Dr. Dah-yinn Lee who is well versed in both the Chinese and the English languages: his advice and support were indispensable to the completion of the translation of Red Nose; and to Dr. Quentin Jhonson who acted as a member on my thesis committee and gave me invaluable comments and suggestions.

I also wish to thank Mr. Yao Yi-wei for giving me permission to translate Red Nose and taking the trouble to answer my letters and send me the chronology of his works.

Finally, I want to thank Mrs. Maxine Bogue for exerting her utmost skill in typing my thesis.