

**TEAOU-SHIN: A
DRAMA FROM THE
CHINESE, IN FIVE ACTS**

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Teaou-Shin: A Drama from the Chinese, in Five Acts by Robert Alexander

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ROBERT ALEXANDER

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A Drama from the Chinese.

IN FIVE ACTS.



LONDON :
RANKEN AND COMPANY,
DRURY HOUSE, ST. MARY-LE-STRAND.
1869.

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1818

Albion, R.

PREFACE.

THE main plot, the principal characters, and some of the scenes of the following drama have been taken from a popular Chinese work called "The History of the Three States," and those who may be curious to know to what extent the original has been departed from, are referred to *Once a Week* for May, 1861 (No. 100), which contains a free translation by the author of that portion of the Chinese work from which the incidents have been drawn which constitute the leading features of the piece.

The period of the play being antecedent to the Tartar conquest, the costume properly belonging to it would be the rich flowing robes always employed by the Chinese themselves in their dramatic representations; and the range for selection is so great, that everything grotesque or unbecoming might be dispensed with, without a single essential characteristic being sacrificed. This is important, for were it not so, it would be very difficult to place a Chinese play upon a European stage in any other form than a burlesque.

STORY OF THE PLAY.

WANG-WAN, an Imperial Councillor and Minister of State, is filled with a patriotic desire to rescue the Empire and its young Emperor from the hands of a brutal and unscrupulous adventurer, Tung-chow, who, after a long period of civil war, has usurped supreme authority, placed himself at the head of the Government as Regent, and is now secretly aiming at the destruction of the child-Emperor and his own recognition in his place. Wang-wan is also actuated by fears for his own safety; and these feelings are intensified by the tyrant causing one of the members of the Council to be cruelly executed.

Puzzled how to act, he at last finds the means of effecting his purpose through the proffered aid of a beautiful girl—Teaou-shin—who had been rescued from death by him as a babe, and brought up amongst his wife's attendants. Teaou-shin is romantic and enthusiastic; he sees that she is beautiful, and determines upon making her beauty the instrument of the tyrant's destruction. Having made her swear to carry out his wishes, he unfolds his plan to her. It is this:—

Tung-chow has an adopted son, Lew-poo, the commander-in-chief of the army and its idol, who forms the main-prop of his power. Both Tung-chow and Lew-poo are slaves to beauty. Wang-wan is to offer Teaou-shin, whom he calls his daughter, in marriage to Lew-poo, and before the arrangements for the wedding can be completed, to give her—no longer his daughter—as a slave to Tung-chow; whilst she, accepting both parts, is so to manage matters as to create and foster the most bitter and deadly animosity between them.

The trap is duly baited and set. Lew-poo becomes madly in love with Teaou-shin, and she returns his love with romantic ardour. She is his affianced bride when Tung-chow casts his amorous glances upon her; she is given to him by Wang-wan, and, in ignorance of what has previously occurred, he takes her to his palace and places her amongst his singing-girls. Lew-poo hears of this, and the insult is too deadly to be borne even by a son.

Wang-wan, who manages to keep Lew-poo in the belief that Teaou-shin is his daughter, foments the deadly feud which has sprung up between him and his father, and induces him to join in a conspiracy against him. The result is the death of Tung-chow, but Teaou-shin falls a victim to Wang-wan's treachery, for she stabs herself at the very moment that the arrival of her lover would have rescued her from the tyrant's power. She dies in his arms, and he drives Wang-wan from him in horror on discovering how cruelly he has been deceived.

The several events of the play are supposed to take place in or near Nanking, and the time occupied by them to extend over six consecutive days.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

TUNG-CHOW, *the Regent, who has usurped the supreme power, and aims at the Imperial throne.*

WANG-WAN, *a member of the Imperial Council.*

LEW-POO, *Commander-in-Chief of the Imperial Army, and Tung-chow's adopted Son.*

LEE-SOO, *a General of Cavalry.*

HO-CHING, *servant to Wang-wan.*

Captain of Guard, Soldiers, Sailors, Servants, a Bouze, a Cripple,
a Citizen, &c.

MUN-WHA, *wife to Wang-wan.*

TEAGU-SHIN, *a foundling, adopted in Wang-wan's household.*

A-LINE, *servant to Mun-wha.*

Dancing Girls, Attendants, &c.

TEAOU-SHIN.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—Interior of WANG-WAN'S palace at Nanking. A richly-decorated inner room.

MUN-WHA enters and sits down at an embroidery frame. She has scarcely done so when WANG-WAN enters and throws himself into a chair, as if overcome by fatigue.

Mun-wah. My lord, so soon returned!

Wang-wan (*absently*). So soon returned!
Is it so soon? It seemed a life to me,
A long, long life—but, ah! I do forget—
So soon returned, did'st ask? Aye, why, indeed!
I have returned,—another time, perchance,
I may not do so.

Mun. Husband! not return!

Wang. I did but jest, good wife. We do not now,
Since we have backward rolled the tide of war,
Which surged in angry waves around the throne,
Carouse so deep. Tung-chow no longer needs,
To cheer his spirit or to calm his fears,
That he should steep his gloomy soul in wine.

Mun. But if Tung-chow be sobered by success
I see not why success should make thee sad.
But art thou ill? thou tremblest.

Wang. (*wildly*) 'Tis nothing;

'Tis nothing, my good wife. An ugly dream—
An ugly waking dream, in which I saw—
Ye gods! ye gods! I see it even now.

Mun. What dost thou see that thou dost fix thy gaze
In such a look of horror? Speak! oh speak!

Wang. (*recovering himself*) It is no dream. Oh would it
were a dream!

Tung-chow rules, the young Emperor is in his hands,
And the good Chang-wan is dead.

Mun. Chang-wan dead!

The Emperor's most true and faithful servant!
Dead! when? where?

Wang. He sat and feasted with us,
Tung-chow, coarse, brutal monster that he is,

In his most jovial mood, when Lew-poo came
 And whispered in his ear. "What!" shouted he,
 "Has it then come to this? Dared he speak thus?
 Seize him at once and take him from the hall."
 Chang-wan was carried out, and as we sat,
 Speechless and pale, a gory head was brought—
 Upon a dish it was—oh! ghastly sight!
 And placed before the tyrant. Then he laughed,
 A hideous laugh, and bade us have no fear
 Because a traitor had been justly doomed.
 Tung-chow and justice! spirits of the past
 Look down with pity on the race of Han.

Mun. Oh, it is terrible; but why submit?
 Were ye mere sheep, ye could not be more tame.
 I would I were a man!

Wang. Hush! woman, hush!
 Beware of idle words. We are so weak,
 And he, base coward that he is, so strong.
 The war-tried legions now fight on his side,
 For Lew-poo is his son, and well he knew
 That when he took their idol for his heir,
 He soon would hold the empire in his grasp.
 And so the monster rules, spending his time
 In low, licentious pleasures. Yes, he rules,
 Whilst I, a Minister of State forsooth
 Must tremble in his presence.

Mun. I would not.
Wang. Ah, patience! patience, we must pray the gods
 And they will help us. But enough of this,
 In times like these, Mun-wha, men's unsaid thoughts
 May lose the heads which breed them. Patience, good wife;
 A little waiting and the time may come
 For retribution; and come it soon or late,
 The Minister, Wang-wan, will not be wanting.
 I hear the spirit of Chang-wan cry vengeance!
 Patience, good spirit; thou shalt be avenged.
 'Tis Wang-wan swears it.

Mun. And when the right time comes
 Thy wife will share its perils. Now, my lord,
 If I may dare advise, banish these thoughts
 And seek in sleep awhile the rest and strength
 Thou must so greatly need.

Wang. Sleep, my good wife!
 'Tis for the young, with sleep, to banish care.
 Would I could sleep! but my dim aged eyes
 Refuse to close on sorrow. If they did,
 They'd not shut out, alas! the bloody scene