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*Dramatic Publishing*

# SUN YAT SEN IN THE MOUTH OF THE DRAGON

A Play in Three Acts  
by  
EDWARD F. EMANUEL



**Dramatic Publishing**  
Woodstock, Illinois • England • Australia • New Zealand

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## From the Playwright

*Sun Yat Sen In the Mouth of the Dragon* is based on the life of Dr. Sun Yat Sen, the founding father of the Republic of China. The play is based on the original writings by Dr. Sun and on contemporary news commentary detailing the twelve days in which he was held against his will in the Manchu Legation, London, October 10-22, 1896. Much of the play represents my dramatic interpretation of the events that took place in Dr. Sun's life at this time. What is not dramatic interpretation is my undying admiration for his personal accomplishments, contributions to world democracy and unflagging devotion to the welfare of China. It is not my intention to glorify or deify Dr. Sun, although it may seem that way by the end of the play, but to represent what I think is the dynamic transformation of a good and honorable man to the status of a super patriot at a level rarely seen in history. This is a play that forges recognition of the truth out of the fire of near failure and threatened murder.

\* \* \* \*

A Chinese translation by Mickey Lin EmanuEL, James Shen and Lena Tsai is available through the publisher.

There is a percussion score available for the script composed by Louis Labovitch. He may be contacted through my office:

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*Sun Yat Sen In the Mouth of the Dragon* gave its premiere performance at the California State University, Fresno, December 1999. The production was directed by Edward Emanuel and included the following artists:

Sun Yat Sen	KHETPHET PHAGNASAY
Tang	MICHAEL REAVES
Guan Yu, the Red-Faced General	HONG P. INTHAVONG
Sir Halliday Macartney	JOSH FEEMSTER
Sir James Cantlie	JAMES RUNCORN
Mrs. Cantlie	TENA M. RUNCORN
Minister Gong	VARTAN HEKIMIAN
Feng Ling	NOÉ ESPINOZA SANCHEZ
George Cole	A. ROBERT JACOBS
Confucius	CHRIS RAISKUP
Thomas Jefferson	SCOTT J. DAVIS
Dowager Empress of China	SHANNA LISA SCHEPPNER
Mother Sun/China	KRISTEN ANNE ALDANA
Brother Sun	LENG HER
Police Inspector	LOUIS LABOVITCH
Fitzhugh	HEATH KISHPAUGH
Reporters 1,2,3	JOSEPH ROSATI
Cleaning Woman	AMY L. WEHRELL
Emperor Chin	CARLOS RENTERIA
Policeman	A. CARLOS SERRANO
Little Emperor of China	DARREL WENG
Ping Ting	ELIJAH RUNCORN
Choreographer/Featured Dancer	YU-HSUEH WU
School Kids	EMILY BARTH, MARYANN BARTH, RYAN REAVES

Thugs, Soldiers, People of the  
Royal Court

JOSEPH ROSATI,  
ELVIA BAROCIO,  
DEAWNA MCGINLEY,  
BIANCA MARTINEZ,  
NICOLE HEDGES,  
JAMES R. MEDEIROS III,  
CARLOS RENTERIA,  
CHRISTOPHER ANTONIO  
VALLEZ JR.

### **Chinese Cast**

(in alphabetical order)

MENG-CHIANG CHEN  
SAIHON CHEN  
BETS CHOU  
MICKEY LIN EMANUEL  
JOHN FU  
IVAN HOONG  
CIAO KU  
SEW-PING LAI  
JAMES SHEN

### **Production Staff and Crew**

Scene Design	JEFF HUNTER
Lighting Design	CHRIS SOUSA-WYNN
Costume Design	M.C. DRAKE
Audio Design	DAN CARRION
Original Music Composed and Performed by	LOUIS LABOVITCH
Stage Manager	JENNIFER MARKS
Asst. Stage Manager/Crew Chief	KEVIN SIKORA

## Synopsis of Scenes

This play takes place in the *mind* of Dr. Sun Yat Sen while he was held captive and tortured in the Manchu Legation, London, October 10-22, 1896, to force him to confess to acts of treason against China so that he could be taken back to Peking and executed.

### Act One

- Scene 1. Court of Emperor Chin, First Emperor of China
- Scene 2. Manchu Legation/Dr. Sun's prison cell, October 22, 1896
- Scene 3. Dr. Sun's prison cell. October 22, 1896
- Scene 4. A street in London. October 10, 1896
- Scene 5. Manchu Legation, London, October 10, 1896
- Scene 6. A street in London, October 10, 1896
- Scene 7. Dr. Sun's prison cell, October 11, 1896
- Scene 8. A Chinese school in Hsiangshan village, 1876

### Act Two

- Scene 1. Manchu Court in the Forbidden City, Peking, 1861
- Scene 2. Dr. Sun's prison cell. October 13, 1896
- Scene 3. A police station. London. October 13, 1896
- Scene 4. Manchu Legation/Sun Yat Sen's apartment, London. October 12, 1896
- Scene 5. Manchu Legation, London, October 13, 1896
- Scene 6. Hsiangshan Kwangtung Province, 1879
- Scene 7. Honolulu, 1879
- Scene 8. A police station, London, October 14, 1896
- Scene 9. Weymouth Street, London, October 14, 1896
- Scene 10. Portland Place West, London, October 14, 1896
- Scene 11. Manchu Legation, London, October 15, 1896
- Scene 12. British Foreign Ministry office, London, October 16, 1896
- Scene 13. Dr. Sun's prison cell, October 16, 1896
- Scene 14. The Forbidden City, Peking, 1896

### Act Three

- Scene 1. Manchu Legation, London, October 20, 1896
- Scene 2. Dr. Sun's prison cell. October 21, 1896
- Scene 3. A battlefield, China, 3rd century B.C.
- Scene 4. Dr. Sun's prison cell, October 22, 1896
- Scene 5. In front of Manchu Legation, London, October 22, 1896



# SUN YAT SEN IN THE MOUTH OF THE DRAGON

A Play in Three Acts

For 25 roles plus ensemble as needed  
May be doubled to 12 actors (10 m., 2 w.)

## CHARACTERS

SUN YAT SEN  
TANG  
GUAN YU, THE RED-FACED GENERAL  
SIR HALLIDAY MACARTNEY  
SIR JAMES CANTLIE  
MRS. CANTLIE  
MINISTER GONG  
FENG LING  
GEORGE COLE  
CONFUCIUS  
THOMAS JEFFERSON  
DOWAGER EMPRESS OF CHINA  
MOTHER SUN/CHINA  
BROTHER SUN  
POLICE INSPECTOR  
FITZHUGH  
REPORTERS 1,2,3  
CLEANING WOMAN  
EMPEROR CHIN  
POLICEMAN  
THUGS, SOLDIERS, PEOPLE OF THE ROYAL COURT  
LITTLE EMPEROR OF CHINA  
SCHOOL CHILDREN  
CHOREOGRAPHER/FEATURED DANCER

# ACT ONE

## SCENE 1

### Court of Emperor Chin, 3rd century.

*(The theater is dark. We hear the sounds of distant drums which come closer and closer. The drums are mixed with gongs. Lights come up revealing the processional entrance of the court of Emperor Chin, the first Emperor of China. It is opulent. We see soldiers, courtesans, courtiers, entertainers of all sorts including tumblers and acrobats. The court is busy and noisy. Suddenly, an incredibly loud gong is heard and all members of the court turn toward the direction of an elegant silk sedan chair bedecked in jewels being brought on stage on the backs of four guards. The drums take up a wild cadence. The guards place the sedan chair, which is closed to the view of the audience, on a platform overlooking the court. The prime minister of the court, TANG, takes his position next to the sedan chair. TANG lifts his hand and the drums and gongs come to an end.)*

TANG. China! This is China!

*(The curtains around the sedan chair are drawn away revealing the magnificent EMPEROR CHIN. All of the actors bow to EMPEROR CHIN except for one who was masked from the audience's view while the previous ac-*

*tion was going on. All fall to the floor in complete obeisance. Only one peculiarly dressed person, DR. SUN YAT SEN, remains standing in the middle of the stage. SUN is dressed in a bloody, white shirt, black pants and shoes of the 1890s. He looks broken and tired. He lifts his head to stare at TANG and EMPEROR CHIN. Slowly EMPEROR CHIN rises and steps out of the sedan chair. He looks at SUN. EMPEROR CHIN stares at TANG but says nothing.*

TANG. His Imperial Majesty, the great Chin, Emperor of China, conqueror of nations, glorious in all ways, magnificent in name and spirit, bringer of wealth... (*EMPEROR CHIN raises his hand as a signal to TANG that he has given enough introductions.*) Who are you?

SUN (*hesitates, as if trying to understand the question*). I... don't know.

*(There is a loud rumbling from the court which stops as EMPEROR CHIN comes to the edge of the platform and looks directly into SUN's face. TANG follows closely behind EMPEROR CHIN.)*

TANG. His divine presence demands that you bow. (*SUN tries to lower his head and bend his body but something keeps him from doing it.*) Bow or die! (*Immediately, several guards lift their axes and surround SUN.*) The Emperor wants to know who you are and why you won't bow to his exalted presence! Bow! This is China!

SUN. I... want to bow ...I'm trying to bow ...help me!

*(TANG comes all the way down the stairs and whispers in SUN's ear.)*

TANG. Do you want to die?

SUN. No...

TANG. Then bow...

SUN. I can't.

TANG. Now...

SUN. I'm trying...

TANG. Hurry, or you'll die.

SUN. No! No, don't kill me! I want to bow.

TANG. Emperor! He won't bow! He can't bow to China!

*(The entire stage erupts in chaos! The court screams and rages at SUN. The guards lift their axes and begin to swing down on SUN. SUN breaks away from the crowd and races up the stairs. He stands face to face with EMPEROR CHIN. Everybody on stage freezes.)*

SUN. Emperor Chin... you are a god... you are China!

*(SUN tries to bow but he can't. EMPEROR CHIN slowly shakes his head.)*

TANG. The Emperor says that you cannot bow to China because you are China's mortal enemy! You are the dagger at our throat, the poison in our tea, you are the destroyer of 5,000 years of Chinese culture!

*(Again the stage erupts in chaos but this time the court vanishes. EMPEROR CHIN, the sedan chair, everybody except SUN and TANG have vanished. The lights have*

*erupted into the same chaos but eventually focus on SUN who is in agony on the platform. The noise in the court has become a recorded cacophony and then fades out. Slowly the lights come up revealing TANG, now dressed in the European fashion of the 1890s. He stands behind SUN.)*

## SCENE 2

**Manchu Legation/Dr. Sun's prison cell, Oct. 22, 1896.**

TANG. You look tired. Please, sit down. Have some tea, something to eat... How long have you been without food? What is it now? You came to us twelve days ago...

SUN. I did not come to you ...

TANG. Of course you did...you came to the legation to recruit us for your revolution...you thought we were all as disloyal to China and to the Emperor as you.

SUN. I was kidnapped! I was taken off the street against my will ...you kidnapped me!

TANG. It never happened...

SUN. It's true!

TANG. It's not!

SUN. You did!

TANG. I did not. We had nothing to do with it! You had a guilty conscience, perhaps? Maybe that was it...you knew that your public statements, your traveling to the United States and then here in London, spreading your sedition, your treason, your hate for China... You see you're weak...you're hungry ...you're in need of refreshment ...tea ... have some tea, Sun Wen.

SUN. Sun Yat Sen... Dr. Sun Yat...

TANG. Sun Wen...and maybe you're a doctor...maybe not... Have some tea...can I interest you in some green tea...hot green tea...soothing...medicinal...green tea... and maybe a cookie...a small almond cookie? We make them in our kitchen...our chef is famous. And he's a proud man. He's lost a great deal of honor because you won't drink his tea...or eat his food. What do you say, Sun Wen?

SUN. Sun Yat Sen... Dr. ... Sun Yat Sen ...

TANG. Tea?

SUN. Yes.

TANG. Yes?

SUN. Yes.

TANG. Yes to what? Yes that your name is Sun Wen? Yes that you're an enemy of China! Yes that you are the leader of a seditionist gang of terrorists called Young China! Yes that you want to destroy all that is Chinese! *(Begins to fly into a terrible rage.)* Yes that you are a coward and a traitor! Yes that every breath you take suffocates the Chinese peasants who can only survive because they are bound spiritually and culturally and faithfully to our Emperor! Yes to the fact that you're in league with this rotting, opium-pimping British vampire government that will not be satisfied until every Chinese lord and peasant sits on the filthy ground with glassy eyes and drool running down his unshaven chin! Is this what you're saying yes to, Sun Wen?!

*(There is a pause after this furious onslaught by TANG. Slowly SUN YAT SEN speaks.)*

SUN. Yes...I would like some green tea...hot...and perhaps a cookie...please.

*(TANG smiles. He reaches into his pocket and takes out a silver bell. He shakes it once. At the sound of the bell GEORGE COLE enters. He is a major-domo of sorts. He is in his 20s. He limps. His face is bandaged. He has a tray of hot tea, two cups, and cookies. He comes to a table and sets it down. He stares at SUN. SUN looks at him. COLE looks at the tea and the cookies and then back to SUN. COLE tries to talk. This exchange gets TANG's attention.)*

TANG. That's enough, Mr. Cole. I'll take care of our Sun Wen.

*(COLE nods and steps back. TANG pours the tea but only one cup. He takes a cookie and puts it on a plate and hands the tea and cookie to SUN. SUN stares at the drink and food. Then he stares at COLE.)*

TANG. Mr. Cole is silent. I have his tongue in my pocket. Go on, enjoy the tea...have some.

SUN. Aren't you having any?

TANG. No...too rich for me...might disagree with me... and besides, this was prepared just for you, Sun Wen.

SUN *(picks up the cookie and smells it)*. It smells bitter.

TANG. Must be the almonds...almonds smell bitter...go on, drink the tea...or does it smell bitter too?

*(SUN YAT SEN smells the tea and then pushes it away. He takes a position indicating that he won't eat or drink.)*

TANG. I see. The chef has taken great pain to prepare this and you have insulted him again. (*Turns to COLE.*) Go on. Tell the chef what has happened. Tell him he has displeased Sun Yat Sen. Write it down. He isn't fit to live! Tell him that he embarrassed me and dishonored me before this man, this doctor... Go on, tell him.

(*COLE nods and exits.*)

SUN. That wasn't necessary.

TANG. I have a paper for you to sign. I've promised my superiors that you will sign it. If you don't sign it I'll be embarrassed. I'll be dishonored. Go on...read it...go on, read...but sign it.

(*TANG hands SUN the paper. SUN stares at TANG without reading.*)

SUN. I can't sign this...this isn't true...It's a confession... and I have nothing to confess...I didn't do any of these things. I am not an enemy of China! I am not an enemy of the Chinese people!

TANG. I told you that if you don't sign this I'll be dishonored just the way you've dishonored the chef...didn't you hear me? Don't you understand?

SUN. You've been giving me lies to sign for twelve days.

TANG. What's a lie? What's the truth? What difference does it make? It'll settle everything. You'll be set free... Isn't that what you want, Sun Wen? You want to walk out of this place to the open arms of all those fawning English peasants downstairs? All your friends! All your supporters! Isn't that it?



SUN. You'll let me go?

TANG. Free as the sunrise. Just chop your name... Sun Wen. And...tell us where to find the other names on the list at the bottom... you see that list? That's all.

SUN. That's all...just sign my name and help you find these people.

TANG. As a loyal Chinese subject to the Emperor...but of course there'll be a small punishment for your bad behavior...what you've done to your hair... And we didn't like several speeches that you gave criticizing China...so maybe your tongue will have to be...well, compared to what might happen to you...what *will* happen to you...it's a small price. Go on, sign. (*SUN slowly tears the paper in half and throws it on the floor. TANG kneels on the floor and picks up the pieces.*) I'm very disappointed. You didn't drink our tea. You didn't taste our cookie. You didn't sign our paper. There's a price to pay for all of this. Twelve days you've been here and you've learned nothing...it makes me sad. You ignore all of my arguments... I'm just trying to save your life...we both want that, don't we Sun Wen? (*Suddenly we hear a scream from downstairs. TANG ignores it.*) That was the chef. He cut his finger. It's bleeding. He'll bleed to death. Too bad. I liked him. I liked him very much. (*TANG turns to leave. Before he exits he turns back to SUN.*) Sun Wen...did I tell you how much I like you. I like you very much.

*(The screams continue. He stares at SUN YAT SEN and then exits. SUN puts his hands over his ears and the screams stop. The lights dim in SUN's prison room. TANG walks down the stairs to what appears to be the*

*central room of the legation. There is a large Englishman waiting there. He is a well-dressed man in his 60s. He is SIR HALLIDAY MACARTNEY. He is pacing. He smokes a cigar. When he sees TANG he looks anxiously at him.)*

MACARTNEY. Well? Mr. Tang? Did he sign the document? Mr. Tang?

TANG. No. We'll have to kill him.

MACARTNEY. Not until he signs...and not here... You're still trying to poison him, aren't you? I've told you that we can't kill him in the legation! It can't be done! The legal consequences would sink us all!

TANG. And we can't smuggle him out because of the crowds hanging about the street *and* the police *and* the news reporters *and* his friends...how did he make so many friends in such a short time?!

MACARTNEY. We have a problem here, you know that, don't you? A huge problem and not easily solved. Are you listening to me? I'm under investigation by the Foreign Office! I could be arrested at any moment! We've got to settle this thing right now! Tang! Pay attention! The sky is falling, man, and it's going to crush all of us!

TANG. I know, I know ...and it's all your fault.

MACARTNEY. What are you saying? Are you crazy?

TANG. You know what I'm saying! Don't play the fool with me, you know exactly what I'm saying!

MACARTNEY. If you had taken my advice, nothing like this...

TANG. And I'll see that the Emperor knows exactly what...

MACARTNEY. The Emperor! It's not the Emperor I'm afraid of! No, no, no! It's the Dowager Empress! She'll cut our throats

TANG. Cut your salary! That's what you mean!

MACARTNEY. Same thing to me, Mr. Tang! My money is my life! I've got a soft job here. Easy money. Big money and I'm not going to lose it because of some wild-eyed fanatic with delusions of an ethical revolution that nobody in the world cares about!

TANG. He cares about it! He cares! Don't you see, you selfish, greedy, ignorant, pompous ghost!

MACARTNEY. I beg your pardon!

TANG. Haven't you learned anything about this man? He'll destroy 5,000 years of Chinese civilization with this insane notion that Chinese peasants ought to govern themselves! Don't you see, you Anglo pimp, you degenerate agent of western civilization!...this man, this Sun Yat Sen could bring an end to a way of life...to a culture that I have sworn an oath and promised to defend to the death! This isn't some legal game we're playing here, some foolish burlesque-house comedy! That man upstairs is no clown! He's a devil! And I will kill him! Listen to me! I *will* kill him! And I don't care what the "legal consequences" are. Sun Yat Sen and what he represents will die...no discussion...no debate...no advice!

MACARTNEY. You hate him that much.

TANG. No...I don't hate him...I hate you. I hate Britain... I hate every western rapist and carpetbagger from Marco Polo to Queen Victoria... No, I don't hate Sun Yat Sen... I'm afraid of him.