

The Story of Shim Ch'ōng (II)

Original Korean text compiled by
The National Theatrical Compilation Committee

Introduction and English translation by
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ACT II

Scene 1. The Crystal Palace

Narrator: At that time, everyone naturally assumed that Shim Ch'ōng died after throwing herself into the sea. However, the King of Heaven ordered the Dragon King of the Sea to attend upon Shim Ch'ōng upon her descent into the sea at that fixed hour. The Dragon King, awaited the moment, suddenly saw a beautiful girl descended into the sea, and at once escorted her in a beautiful carriage to the Crystal Palace.

(There, curious rocks and seaweed sway back and forth softly in the sea. Coral reefs and crystals sparkle with lights of five different colors. The Dragon King is seated upon a throne and is attended upon by ministers and court ladies. Eight angels enter the palace dancing in time with the music carrying Shim Ch'ōng in a beautiful white carriage. Shim Ch'ōng follows the angels and sits beside the Dragon King as if she were in a dream. The Dragon King

and his ministers receive her kindly. The music adds to the joyful atmosphere, and the court ladies and angels dance even more beautifully.)

Lady-in-waiting: The Lady Okchin now descends from Heaven.

(Lady Okchin appears with ladies-in-waiting on both her left and right. She was formerly Lady Kwak, the mother of Shim Ch'ōng.)

Lady Okchin: *(Holding Shim Ch'ōng's hands) (Chinyang-jo)* You do not know me. I am your mother who bore you into the world. Your father must be very old now. After my death, I became Lady Okchin of the Kwanghan Palace. I came to see you when I heard that you came here by selling yourself for 300 bags of rice to give to the Buddha to make your father's eyes open once again. *(Embracing Shim Ch'ōng)* Oh, my daughter! Can this be but a dream from which I shall awaken? Gazing upon your

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beautiful throat and ears makes me think you take after your father exactly.

Shim Ch'ōng: (*Embraced in her mother's breast*) Oh, mother, mother! Is this a dream or is it really happening? This disobedient Shim Ch'ōng left her blind old father in the world and came here. On whom can my lonely old father depend now? I can't recognize my mother's face because she died seven days after I was born. And now I meet you here at the Crystal Palace. I don't know whether I'm dreaming or this is real life.

Lady Okchin: (*Touching Shim Ch'ōng*) Unfortunately, I died after your birth. It was indeed a lasting regret that I was not able to give you even a drop of milk from my breast. And now fifteen years have passed and you have grown into adulthood. I want to embrace you. Your lovely white ears and neck remind me so much of your father, and your hands and feet are so like mine.

Lady-in waiting: My lady, a word if I may. Now it is time to return to Heaven.

Lady Okchin: (*Anxiously*) Oh, my daughter, Shim Ch'ōng! I want to live without any separation from you, but I have to depart for my duties in the Kwangan Palace. How it saddens me to depart from you once more. But please do not sorrow over our farewell. In the near future, you shall be returned to life once more, as Heaven has been deeply moved by your filial piety. When you return to the mortal world once more, do not bear any grudge for what your life once was. (*She bows before the Dragon King and departs.*)

Shim Ch'ōng: Oh, my dear mother!

Scene 2. The Return to Life

(*Ladies-in-waiting of the palace officials carry a large lotus flower.*)

Dragon King: The King of Heaven has commanded that you be returned to the mortal world once again with much gold and jewels

because of your deep filial piety. So I will send you back in a lotus flower to the world where you came from after having a farewell party.

Shim Ch'ōng: I will not forget your favor, God of the Sea, when I return once more to the human world!

Chorus: (*Chungjung-mori*) Ah, how very beautiful you are! Shim Ch'ōng was an angel in the previous world and was born into the human world. She lost her mother in her infancy and devoted herself to serving her blind father. She sold herself to sailors so that the eyes of her father could see again. She threw herself into the sea at the age of fifteen. Her filial piety must be the most remarkable in the world. The gods of heaven were deeply moved so that she is now once more to be returned to the human world. We wish you health, prosperity, and happiness in the mortal world.

(*Shim Ch'ōng gets into the lotus flower with the help of two ladies-in-waiting.*)

Narrator: (*Chung-mori*) The lotus flower carrying Shim Ch'ōng floats on the South Sea. It floats as if it is floating in a dream. Truly, 'tis by the wonder of Heaven and the miraculous skill of the Dragon King. It is not steered in the wrong direction by the winds; neither is it ever drenched by the rain. It floats on the wide sea surrounded by clouds of five colors.

(*The rowing chant of the sailors aboard the ships that do trade with Nanjing in China is heard as they approach the flower.*)

Sailors: Ōgiya ōya ōhōiya ōhōya!

Captain: Hey there, men! This is the Indang Sea. Cast the anchor and let us hold a sacrificial rite.

(*The ships are stopped and a ritual is held.*)

Sailors: (*Chung-mori*) It is a spirit, it is a spirit; a spirit it doth be. Whose spirit doth it be? 'Tis not the spirit of Kongmyōng (Ch.

Kongming) who died at Ojangwōn. 'Tis not the spirit of King Ch'ohae who died at Samnyōn Muu Fortress. 'Tis the spirit of Shim Ch'ōng sold for 300 bags of rice who died in the Indang Sea so that her father could see again. With her favor of filial piety, we have made a good fortune on the way to our country. As we cannot forget her, let us console her lonely soul with a cup of wine. (*Discovering the lotus flower*)

Boatman: (*Chung-mori*) What is that? (*Approaching the flower*)

Sailor 1: The fragrance seems to spread all over the world.

Sailor 2: The flower is surrounded by clouds of five colors. This flower must be the reincarnation of Shim Ch'ōng. Let's take it out of the sea. (*Lifting the flower onto the ship*)

Sailors: (*Chorus*) The great filial piety of Shim Ch'ōng was turned into a flower by the King of Heaven. The flower on the sea may be a good omen for the emperor. Such a beautiful flower symbolizes the glory of spring for the people. We will put it in a jade pot and give it to the emperor.

Scene 3. The Monument to the Filial Daughter

(*The villagers gather and perform a rite to console the soul of Shim Ch'ōng.*)

Narrator: At that time, having lost his only daughter, Blindman Shim leads a wretched life and spends his days in idleness. Lady Chang, too, held a rite every spring and autumn for the soul of Shim Ch'ōng at the riverside. As the villagers of Tohwadong were deeply moved by the filial piety of Shim Ch'ōng, they erected a monument to her memory.

Chorus of Villagers: Oh, beautiful Shim Ch'ōng. Her mother died in her infancy, so she served her father dutifully. Now, the fame of her filial piety has spread all over the world, for she sold herself as a sacrifice and threw herself into the sea so that the eyes of her father could be opened

once again. She will return to life again because of her wonderful filial piety, so may riches and prosperity be with her.

(*When the villagers finish singing and disperse, Shim approaches the monument, groping along with a cane in his hands.*)

Shim: (*Chinyang semach'i*) (*Weeping before the monument*) Oh, my poor daughter, Ch'ōng! I come here again once more. You buried yourself in the sea so that one day my eyes might open! But I am still not rid of this wretchedness! What dire circumstances I'm in! I don't care anymore about seeing again or even living now, for that matter!

(*A woman named Ppaengdök appears on the scene and approaches Shim.*)

Ppaengdök: Hello there, blindman.

Shim: (*Wiping away his tears*) Who are you?

Ppaengdök: I'm a lady called Ppaengdök who dwells in a village over the hill.

Shim: You are Ppaengdök?

Ppaengdök: Yes. Time rushes by like flowing water, but you still continue to shed tears thinking of your daughter. Why? Come on. Forget about it and let's be off.

Shim: (*Calming himself*) Thank you, Ppaengdök.

Ppaengdök: (*Playing the coquette*) Here, give me the tip of the cane. (*She leads him with the tip of the cane in her hands.*) Although you lost your daughter, you should marry again, as you can now well afford it. From now on, you should take it easy and live in comfort and happiness with a good wife and raise a nice family, huh? How about it?

Shim: (*His mind is attracted by what he hears and he exaggerates his smile.*)

Ppaengdök: Would you mind if I arranged a match for you?

Ppaengdök: Of course there is.

Shim: Is there a good woman around?

Shim: But she wouldn't want to marry a blindman such as I.

Ppaengdök: There's a woman who lives in a village over across the stream.

(*Chajin-mori*) She is big, clumsy, and pock-marked. She is unreliable, wicked, and cunning. At night, she wanders around the village, and in the daytime, she sleeps all day. She uses rice to buy rice cake and taffy. She bears false witness against the faithful widow, but buys wine for the young man with a large nose. She makes trouble for the neighbors with outrageous lies. Seeing women makes her seethe with anger, but upon seeing men, she plays the coquette. When she sleeps, she grinds her teeth and dusts off her feet. She insults noblemen and fights for tobacco. She has the loosest morals in the world. She is changeable, capricious, and unpredictable from one minute to the next. Well, what do you think of her?

Shim: (*Giggling*) She is a very funny character, indeed. I don't think I care for such a woman. But I do like the sound of your singing, Ppaengdök.

Ppaengdök: Do you really? You know, as a matter of fact, I was thinking of arranging a match for you, but, seeing as you like me, well, I might just consider marrying you myself....

Shim: (*With a beaming smile*) I can easily guess from the beauty of your voice that your face must be beautiful like a flower and your figure like that of the moon. How deeply I regret not being able to gaze upon you with these dark eyes of mine.

Ppaengdök: Oh, my dear. I, too, bear a deep regret in my bosom (*Making queer sounds and playing the coquette*).

Shim: My dear? My dear? Do you call me "my dear"? (*Laughing as if he is mad*)

Ppaengdök: If I had known that you liked me, I would have called you "my dear" much earlier. Oh, my dear....

Shim: Why, what's the matter?

Ppaengdök: Let's go home. I will prepare some good food for you.

Shim: (*In a loud voice*) Oh, my dear. Where have you been all my life? Have you just come back from a trip to the Weaver Star in the Milky Way or the maid in the Palace of the Moon? Ah, how very wonderful it

will be to have a new wife.

Ppaengdök: Please enjoy yourself with songs and dances while I prepare lunch.

(*Shim exits in high spirits with songs and dances.*)

Scene 4. A Garden of the Royal Pavilion

Narrator: It happened at that time that the emperor was living alone after the death of the empress. He didn't marry again and consoled himself by growing beautiful flowers and curious plants in the garden of his palace. Among the flowers was the lotus flower carrying Shim Ch'öng which had been offered by the sailors who were trading with Nanjing in China.

(*Chungjung-mori*) The flowers and plants that were there were many in number. Lotus flowers, plum blossoms, peach blossoms, herbaceous peonies, cherry blossoms, cuckoo flowers, chrysanthemums, ginkgo blossoms, pear blossoms, garden balsam, crêpe myrtle, royal azaleas, azaleas, banana plants, orchids, gardenia seeds, potatoes, citrons, pomegranates, apple trees, grape trees, and wild grapes. Various flowers and fruit trees can be seen to the left and right. As the fragrance is spread by the breeze, bees, butterflies, birds, and animals play and sing among them. The lotus flower was placed like the king of flowers among them in the garden of the emperor.

(*Under the bright moonlight, the fairies of the flowers dance to a mysterious tune. Among them can be seen the ladies-in-waiting from the Dragon King's palace. On his way to the garden, the emperor is surprised at seeing the fairies, for his mind seems to be in a state of distraction. The fairies enter the flowers hastily, but the ladies-in-waiting from the Dragon King's palace are discovered by the emperor. He finds the appearance of the ladies-in-waiting to be strange, and is surprised upon seeing the lotus flower open.*)

Emperor: Who are you? Are you humans or ghosts? If you are ghosts, I bid you take your leave. If you are humans, I bid you come forth and let it be known. (*The two ladies-in-waiting stand before the emperor making a low bow with their hands in front of them.*) I bid you speak.

Ladies-in-Waiting: We shall speak. Your Majesty, we are ladies-in-waiting from the palace of the Dragon King of the South Sea. We have been ordered by the Dragon King to carry a maiden up from the sea and bring her here to your Majesty's garden. Please forgive our intrusion.

Emperor: Oh, is that so? 'Tis indeed most strange. Who doth the maiden be?

Ladies-in-Waiting: She sleeps inside the flower.

Emperor: Does she? Why is the maiden in the flower?

Ladies-in-Waiting: We were sent here to accompany the maiden by the Dragon King, who was ordered to do so by the King of Heaven.

Emperor: (*Calling outside to the ladies-in-waiting of the Imperial Palace*) You out there!

Ladies-in-Waiting: (*Entering the Garden from outside*) Yes, Your Majesty.

Emperor: Move this flower to the palace annex and have all of the court ladies of the palace guard it with their life. Anyone who comes near the flower shall be severely punished.

Scene 5. Empress Shim Thinks of Her Father

Narrator: After it was moved to the palace annex, Shim Ch'ōng awoke and emerged from the flower. The emperor was very pleased when he saw her. At the end of his morning cabinet meeting, he discussed the story of the flower with his ministers, all of whom persuaded the emperor to marry Shim Ch'ōng, as Heaven had sent her to him as a consolation for his lost empress. The emperor heard what the ministers

said and had the officers in charge of the matter select a day suitable for the royal marriage ceremony. The day was the fifth day of the fifth month, and Shim Ch'ōng became the empress. After that, every year saw a good harvest. Although Shim Ch'ōng had now become an empress, she always continued to think of her father.

Shim Ch'ōng: (*Chinyang-jo*) The autumn moon makes all who gaze upon it sigh with deep sentimentality, and the wild geese cry flying high in the sky. Do they send news of the north sea to someone? If you fly to the peach village, please send my heart to my poor, helpless father. I wish to write a letter to him, but I am unable to do so because of the many tears and sighs that well up and fall from within me. The tears fall from my eyes even before I begin to write, and I am at a loss to find the proper words. I folded the letter and saw the wild geese take it to my father, but I don't know where the geese have gone. Only the stars and moon shine beyond the vast cloud.

(*Seeing her weep, the emperor approaches Shim Ch'ōng.*)

Emperor: (*Looking at Shim Ch'ōng*) You are the empress and rule the whole country. Why do you weep? What troubles you so?

Shim Ch'ōng: (*Hiding her tears*) I beg your pardon, Your Majesty.

Emperor: Surely as there is something troubling you, I beg you to speak frankly.

Shim Ch'ōng: I beg your pardon not to serve you with mild manners and to display my grief. The first administrative business of the king of the Chu (Ch. Zhou) Dynasty was to make all elderly people calm and peaceful. That of Emperor Mu (Ch. Wu) of the Han Dynasty was to help poor people. The most miserable people are the old cripples, and the most miserable among the cripples are the blind. Confucius said that to tend the blind is the noblest service of all. Please have all of the blindmen in our country gather here and let us make a great party for them. Please accept my wishes.

Emperor: (*Greatly pleased*) It is admirable. What you have said is exactly what I desire. That is the source of blessedness. I will do as you request. (*Calling inside*) You there!

Chamberlain: (*Making a polite bow with hands in front of him*) Yes, Your Majesty.

Emperor: I will hold a banquet for the blindmen from all of the thirty-six provinces of China and eight provinces of Korea on the first day of the seventh month and offer those who attend the best hospitality. Go and issue forth a royal decree!

Chamberlain: Yes, Your Majesty.

Shim Ch'ōng: I am exceedingly grateful, Your Majesty.

Scene 6. The Journey to the Capital City

(*Shim enters, feeling his way with a cane.*)

Shim: Hey there, Ppaengdōk!

(*A young man rushes forward from the room with his shoes in his hand after exchanging glances with Ppaengdōk.*)

Ppaengdōk: Oh, my dear! Why are you so late? You know I cannot live without you.

(*They sit astraddle on the floor.*)

Shim: Hey, Ppaengdōk. You are young but I am old. After living together so lovingly, how could you live on if I should die?

Ppaengdōk: I want to die at the same hour of the same day as you, and enter the same grave together.

Shim: What would you do if I had to travel far away on business matters?

Ppaengdōk: As a wife should always be with her husband, so would I follow you, even if it meant going a long way.

Shim: Is what you say true?

Ppaengdōk: (*Speaking disdainfully*) How should the daughter of a bitch lie!

Shim: It's alright. Although I already knew

what was in your mind, I just said it to see how you would react. Frankly speaking, I heard at the public building that the emperor of the Song Dynasty decreed that he will hold a banquet at the palace in the capital of the empire and will give government posts to learned blindmen. What a good opportunity. I will enjoy sightseeing around the capital, eat delicious foods, and enter the government service. Just think, if I become a government official, you will ride in a fine carriage. What do you say to that?

Ppaengdōk: (*Bewildered by the sudden news in spite of herself*) That's good! Let's go to the capital after pawning all our property and borrowing some money.

Shim: Let's go, let's go! (*Leaving his house with a bundle on his back followed by Ppaengdōk*)

(*Chung-mori*) How shall I go? How shall I travel such a long way? How shall I travel such a long way to the capital? Where shall I sleep tonight and where shall I sleep tomorrow night? Why is it that some men are fortunate, and rich, and have many children? But such a man as I, why is it that I must lead such a desperate life? How shall I go? How shall I travel such a long way to the capital? Hey there, Ppaengdōk! Let's sing as we go along. I'll sing a song of my miserable fate while you keep time with the stick.

Ppaengdōk: Won't we we disgraced if we are seen by anyone?

Shim: Don't worry. If there is no one about, we'll sing. If anyone comes along, then we won't sing, that's all.

Ppaengdōk: Well then, alright.

Shim: Because King Sun (Ch. Shun) was a saint, he had four eyes. The Buddha had 1,000 eyes. What crime did I commit in the previous world that I don't have even one eye?

Ppaengdōk: (*Keeping time with the rhythm*) *Kkūng kkung kkung!*

Shim: On the long road to the capital city, whom else can I trust in but my darling beloved wife, Ppaengdōk. (*Giggling*) As we had a close relationship in the previous

world, so have we now become a couple in this world. We have a deep fascination for each other that is unrivalled elsewhere. (*Giggling*) Having talked over life's matters both great and small, let us now sing together on the way to the capital. (*Giggling*) You are most beautiful, Ppaengdök. Indeed, a most distinguished beauty you are. Should any brazen fellow dare so much as to lay a lascivious hand on you, he shall be killed at once. And if you ever run away from me, I will report you to the emperor. Then you will be captured easily.

Ppaengdök: Oh, my dear. There, across the stream, many blindmen are coming.

Shim: Hm! It would be difficult for them to greet us, wouldn't it? Hey, Ppaengdök. Take a look and see if there are any young and handsome blindmen among them.

Ppaengdök: They are all old and ugly.

Shim: That's okay, then. When I rest upon the roadside with a beautiful wife, I don't like to sit in a place where young men gather.

Ppaengdök: Oh, are you worried about losing me?

Shim: Although I know that you are a chaste woman, you might, nonetheless, be tempted by the seduction of a sly, quick-witted fellow, if you happened to come across one. It is best to evade the likes of such. Come, let's take a rest here.

Scene 7. Ppaengdök's Escape

(At this time, a chorus is heard at a corner of the stage. Twenty blindmen, led by a group of children, appear singing and dancing lightly.)

Blindmen: If we were able to see everything, how easy the going would be. Of course, that's right. What mountain is that, and what waters are these? When a village is situated in a good site, those who dwell within shall live in prosperity. When a grave is situated at a propitious site, the

descendants of the deceased shall live in honor as high-ranking officials. When we go on our way holding hands, telling jokes, and swinging our arms back and forth, the road doesn't seem so long, and we don't feel tired. As we are blind, we are being led by children without knowing where we are. We are overcome with drowsiness and our legs are so tired; but, alas, there's nothing that can be done about it.

(Shim takes a rest, laying his bundle aside, and Ppaengdök sits beside him. Unknown to Shim, Ppaengdök takes the bundle and disappears among the crowd. She runs away to the other direction with a young blindman. Not knowing what Ppaengdök has done, Shim engages in a conversation with another blindman.)

Shim: May I have the pleasure of introducing myself to you. (*Making a bow*)

Blindman: (*Blowing in return*) May I also introduce myself to you.

Shim: Since we have never met before, let us introduce ourselves.

Blindman: Would you know me even if we had met before? Since it is impossible to see each other's face, let's introduce ourselves through our voices. Now that we have heard each other's voice, we have already become friends.

Shim: Where are you going?

Blindmen: We are going to the banquet for the blind to be held in the capital. If you are going to the capital, please accompany us.

Shim: I would like to go with you, but I am taking a rest here with my wife for a while. Please go ahead. I hope we meet at the capital.

Blindmen: Ah, how fortunate he is. Please go in peace.

(The blindmen leave singing together. Shim smiles with contentment and scratches his back.)

Shim: (*Thinking that Ppaengdök is sitting*

beside him) The room where we stayed last night had many bedbugs and fleas. As they swarmed around me, I couldn't get a wink of sleep. But you had a good sleep. *(After a while)* *(Still scratching his back)* Dear, please scratch me here. *(After a while)* Would you please scratch my back? Then I will scratch yours. *(After a while)* Oh, are you sleeping again? *(Groping around with his hands)* Maybe she has gone off for a bowel movement... Oh, Ppaengdök dear! *(Crawling and groping here and there with his hands)* Ah! My bundle isn't here. Why do you play tricks on me? *(Laughing)* Dearest, we will be late. Let's hurry and be off!

(A certain passer-by sees the sight and thinks it very strange.)

Passer-by: Hey there, blind one. Whom are you looking for?

Shim: Did you not see a young woman carrying a bundle around here?

Passer-by: I didn't see a female dog, to say nothing of a woman. *(Sensing that Ppaengdök has run away, Shim is filled with despair.)*

Shim: How many leagues is it from here to the capital?

Passer-by: Maybe more than 25.

Shim: What time is it now?

Passer-by: Maybe getting toward sunset.

Shim: Where are you going?

Passer-by: I'm going to the capital.

Shim: As I am also going to the capital, I hope that I might go together with you. But I'm sorry that I'm not able to because I'm waiting for someone. If you see a woman who is very beautiful with a bundle, and who stammers, please tell her that I'm sitting here waiting for her.

Passer-by: If I see her, I'll tell her. *(He leaves.)*

(Listening to the sound of the disappearing footsteps, Shim suddenly bursts into tears.)

Shim: *(Chinyang-jo)* Oh, oh! Ppaengdök

has run away. Damn it! You ungrateful, pitiless bitch! If you wanted to run away, why didn't you do it in my hometown? Abandoning me like this in a strange land will never reap you any reward whatsoever, mark my words. You bitch! You shall never even a ghost become! You are a wench that should be chewed to bits by tigers! *(Tottering with much difficulty)* Oh, you wretched woman! You have truly abandoned me. You slut! You thief! You have truly made off with all that I acquired from selling rice. I, an old fool, was stupid enough to believe her words and promised to live with her for the rest of my life. You are merciless, evil, dirty, and crude! Mark my words! You will never be able to enjoy a good life with your new husband. I am a fool to shed tears thinking of you. My wise wife, Lady Kwak, died long ago, and my filial daughter, Shim Ch'öng, is also dead. I am crazy to even bother thinking of such a wretched woman. Oh, my dear wife, Lady Kwak! Oh, my dear daughter, Ch'öng!

Scene 8. On the Road to the Capital City

(A group of women sing together while milling grain.)

Women: *Öyua pangayo, öyua pangayo tölk'udöng töngdöng!* Good mill that thou art. Thou millest the grain well.

Shim: *(Entering in a hurry with an impatient voice)* Would you mind my asking something?

(The surprised women stop their milling.)

Woman: Hey there! Are you unable to tell the difference between men and women? How dare you rush into a place where women have gathered? We will pick your glaring eyeballs out!

Shim: No need of that. Since I previously heard that the women around this village might pick out the eyeballs of a passer-by,

I already picked mine out and left them at home.

Woman 1: Hold on a moment. Let's have a good look at the eyes of this man to see whether he really has his eyes or not.

Women 2: (*Looking into Shim's eyes with a light in her hands*) Oh! This man is truly blind.

Women 3: How can you come here at night without your eyes?

Shim: Although I cannot see, I can still find the vulva of a woman every night.

Women: Hm, a sly old fox this blindman is....

Shim: No, but truthfully speaking, I heard that a banquet for the blind is to be held in the capital city, and I came here with my wife. My wife ran away from me on the way, so I came here to spend the night.

Woman 4: (*With sympathy*) Hey, blindman. Why don't you mill the grain together with us. If you sing the grain-milling song well, we will take you in for the night in our drawing room and show you the way to the capital banquet in the morning.

Shim: (*With delight*) Okay! Let's do that!

(The women dance and sing the milling song.)

Song of milling: (*Chungjung-mori*). *Hōōyua pangayo, hōōyua pangayo, tōlgūdōng tōlgūdōng!* The mill grinds the grain well. In ancient times, King Ch'ōn became a king due to good administration of the mills, and that was greatly helped by his minister, Kang T'ae-gong (Ch. Jiang Taigong). There was a beautiful woman with a jewel who slept deeply. When we saw her thin waist, it seemed to be just like the waist of a court lady of King Ch'ō. When the mill goes up, it looks like an angry blue dragon. When the mill goes down, it looks like King Mun (Ch. Wen) of the Chu (Ch. Zhou) Dynasty bowing very low. After the death of the previous wise ministers, the sounds of the mills were not heard in the country. But after the enthronement of the present emperor, we have seen national prosperity

and the welfare of the people. The banquet for the blind is unprecedented. As we are now under a peaceful reign, let us sing the grain-milling song together.

(*Chajin-mori*) *Ōyua pangayo, ōyua pangayo,* *ōyua pangayo!* On the long road to the capital city, here am I milling grain for the first time. Have you made this mill by entering the heart of the mountains and cutting good trees? Indeed, 'tis both strange and interesting to mill the grain with one leg on the mill going up and down. Prepare the pumpkin porridge in the rice-cleaning water. The mill grinds the grains well. Hey now, we'll be late for lunch. *Ōyua pangayo!*

Scene 9. Father and Daughter Meet Again

Narrator: At that time, Empress Shim held the banquet for the blind for 100 days and made a list of the blind in the country after asking their names and ages. But she could not find her father's name anywhere among them.

(Hundreds of blindmen sit in rows on the broad floor of the palace eating delicious foods and enjoying the songs and dances of the court entertainers.)

Shim Ch'ōng: (*Chinyang-jo*) The purpose of this banquet for the blind is to meet my father. Did he perhaps not come to this banquet because, being seventy years old, he is now too ill and feeble? Did he perhaps not come because his sight was restored by the miraculous virtue of the Buddha? Did he perhaps, in his deep grief, already die because he thought I was dead and gone forever? Did he perhaps, on the way to this banquet, meet with an accident? Ah, today is the last day of the banquet. Oh, what's to be done? I wonder. Is it that he shall never come?

(A commandant appears and bows to the empress.)

Commandant: Her Majesty is informed that a blindman has come in just now who is sixty-three years old, lost his wife at the age of forty, and lost his sight when he was twenty. He studied very hard in his youth but has no occupation now. He is Shim Hak-kyu from the village of Tohwadong in Hwangju County.

Shim Ch'ōng: (*Restraining herself, though she is almost moved to tears*) Have him come in.

Commandant: Yes, Your Majesty. (*He leaves.*)

(*The commandant appears leading Shim.*)

Shim: Oh! I shall surely die now. I know why the empress has summoned me. I shall be put to death for the crime of selling my daughter. I shall not appear before her. (*He plumps down on the ground.*)

Shim Ch'ōng: You there!

Lady-in-Waiting: Yes, Your Majesty.

Shim Ch'ōng: Tell Blindman Shim to state whether he has his wife and children, and the financial condition of his family.

Lady-in-Waiting: (*Approaching Shim*) You are to state, without any omission, whether you have your wife and children, and the financial condition of your family. It is the order of the empress.

Shim: (*Chung-mori*) Yes, I will tell you, Your Majesty. I live at Tohwadong in Hwangju County and my name is Shim Hak-kyu. I lost my wife during the first month of the year of *ūlch'uk* due to complications arising from childbirth. I brought up my daughter by begging for food from door to door. At last, she became fifteen and proved to be very filial. But some three years ago she died in the Indang Sea as a sacrifice, for she sold herself to the sailors who trade with Nanjing in China so that her father's eyes could be opened again. But, despite her death, my sight has still not been restored. My beloved daughter's sale and sacrifice has proved to be all in vain. Please kill me, Your Majesty.

Shim Ch'ōng: (*Upon hearing the story, she rushes to the blindman and embraces him*

in tears.) Oh, my father!

Shim: What? "My father", you say?

Shim Ch'ōng: Please open your eyes and look at me. This is your Shim Ch'ōng who is now alive after drowning herself in the Indang Sea.

Shim: (*His eyes shimmering and groping with his hands*) Wait a minute. What's going on? What is all this? In truth, my daughter Ch'ōng died as a sacrifice in the Indang Sea. Have I died and come to the Crystal Palace after death, or is this just a dream?

Shim Ch'ōng: I have been returned to life again by virtue of the King of Heaven, who was moved to tears by my sacrifice for you. But the Buddha has no virtue, since you still cannot see anything. Please know it is me by my voice.

Shim: (*Taking the hands of his daughter firmly*) Am I dreaming? If I'm dreaming, don't wake me up. Are you a spirit or something? If you are a spirit, then please take me away.

Shim Ch'ōng: (*Touching the face of her father with her hands*) As my filial piety was insufficient, I came back to life again; but, alas, I cannot make your eyes open. So I will die once again and supplicate the King of Heaven to restore thy vision.

Shim: If my daughter has truly returned to life once again, I have absolutely nothing to regret; nay, not even the loss of my eyesight. No, no, surely, do not die again. Oh please, let me but once again look upon my daughter. Oh, how terribly frustrating it is not to be able to look upon one's own daughter because of this infernal blindness. Oh, by the grace of God, let me look upon my beloved daughter! (*He rubs his eyes for a while, and then, miraculously, his eyes suddenly pop open. He blinks his eyes, opens them wide, and looks around.*) Oh! what is all this? Is it a dream or is it truly for real? (*shouting with joy*) By the saints! My eyes are open! I can see!

Shim Ch'ōng: (*Taking his hands with deep emotion*) Father!

(*He looks at Shim Ch'ōng and is astonished*

at her appearance in the guise of the empress. He turns his face away.)

Shim Ch'ōng: Father!

Shim: Now I'm positive that this is all a dream.

Shim Ch'ōng: Father, I am the Shim Ch'ōng who died before and has come back to life again. Now I have become the empress.

Shim: Although I look at you carefully, I cannot believe you are my daughter as I see you now for the first time in my life. But since you say you are my daughter, well, then, I believe you. (*Suddenly his knees begin to knock together.*) Ah yes! Now I know! Now I know! Yours is the very face I saw in my dream on the eighth day of the fourth month in the year of *kapcha*. Oh, my dearest daughter, Ch'ōng!

Shim Ch'ōng: Father!

(*They embrace each other.*)

Chorus: 'Tis indeed a most happy occasion! The blindman opened his eyes and his filial daughter returned to life again. Father and daughter are reunited again at long last. 'Tis indeed a most joyous occasion!

(*The blindmen all bow before Empress Shim with their hands in front of them.*)

All the People: 'Twas by dint of your filial piety that the eyes of your father are opened once more, and now you are the mother of the nation. Please bestow your kind favor for those gathered in the garden of the palace so that they, too, may see again once more.

(*The blindmen all bow before the empress, stand up, and suddenly begin to shout for joy.*)

Blindmen: My eyes have opened! My eyes have opened! (*The great sound of "my eyes*

have opened" is heard here, there, and everywhere.) Ah, what a wondrous thing it doth be! We could not see anything until now, but today our eyes are open once more, and now we can see everything! (*Speaking to the cane*) Oh, thou faithful walking stick, thou who hast served us so well. You are free to go wherever you like now. Ah, how wondrous life doth now be!

Emperor: (*After observing the scene, he approaches Shim Ch'ōng.*) Hear me, my ministers!

Ministers: Yes, Your Majesty.

Emperor: Being that Shim Hak-kyu is my father-in-law, it is incumbent upon me to bestow upon him the honorary office customarily given to the father-in-law of the emperor. I will also bestow separate honors upon Lady Chang, wife of the ex-prime minister, and the villagers of Tohwadong in Hwangju County and the sailors who presented the lotus flower shall be exempt from the national tax. And finally, let the people, one and all, celebrate this day with joyous festivities, and enjoy themselves to their heart's content.

Ministers: Yes, Your Majesty.

Chorus: (*Chungjung-mori*) Ah, how wondrous it is, as if a dark and empty room is filled with light once more, and as if a good general has come to save a desperate battle. Joy comes after the end of sorrow, and pleasure follows pain. As we now have the best emperor and empress, we may now enjoy the most peaceful of times.

Long live the Emperor of the Song Dynasty!

Long live Empress Shim!

Long live the father-in-law of the emperor!

Long live all the guests!

Long live everyone, one and all!

Filial piety is indeed the root of all human behavior!

Ah, how wondrous it is!

Ah, how truly wondrous it doth be!

The End