

**TO FIND MEN TRULY GREAT  
AND NOBLE-HEARTED  
WE MUST LOOK HERE  
IN THE PRESENT**

—In Praise of the Modern Revolutionary  
Peking Opera *Taking Tiger Mountain*  
*by Strategy*

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Peking Opera *Taking Tiger Mountain*  
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FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS  
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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Guided by Mao Tsetung Thought and personally cultivated by Comrade Chiang Ching, the modern revolutionary Peking opera *Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy*, carefully revised, perfected and polished to the last detail, now glitters with surpassing splendour.

This book contains four commentaries selected from China's newspapers. They enthusiastically praise the splendid successes which *Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy* has achieved in its ideological content and form of art.

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## Quotation from Chairman Mao Tsetung

Revolutionary culture is a powerful revolutionary weapon for the broad masses of the people. It prepares the ground ideologically before the revolution comes and is an important, indeed essential, fighting front in the general revolutionary front during the revolution.

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# Strive to Create the Brilliant Images of Proletarian Heroes

## —*Appreciations in Creating the Heroic Images of Yang Tzu-jung and Others*

by the "Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy" Group  
of the Peking Opera Troupe of Shanghai

Guided by the great red banner of Mao Tsetung Thought, the modern revolutionary Peking opera *Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy* has again been revised and polished to reach a greater degree of perfection. It has made its appearance before the public in a new presentation of heightened grandeur and power.

Eleven years have passed since it was first adapted and performed. But it came to life only in the last seven years, seven glorious years from early 1963 to the present day marked by sharp class struggles at every turn, during which the revising of the script proceeded under Com-

rade Chiang Ching's direct leadership and with her personal participation.

In mid-January 1963, Comrade Chiang Ching made an investigation and study of the sphere of literary and art work, and in Shanghai came across this opera. She saw that while there was much that was trashy in its content it provided, in a way, the possibility of presenting contemporary life through the medium of Peking opera. Therefore she decided to take it over and transform it thoroughly. From then on this theatrical piece and the Peking opera it represents have steadily embarked on the revolutionary road guided by Mao Tsetung Thought. It was also from then on that the renegade, hidden traitor and scab Liu Shao-chi and company started their flagrant attacks and wrecking activities of one kind or another against this opera and the revolution in Peking opera.

This struggle finds expression in many ways: the struggle between those who adhere to Chairman Mao's proletarian line on literature and art and those who oppose it; the struggle for winning over the literary and art circles between the proletarian headquarters headed by Chairman Mao and the bourgeois headquarters headed by Liu Shao-chi; and the struggle, as regards ideas on art, between those who adhere to the principles of **"making the past serve the present and foreign things serve China"** and **"weeding through the old to bring forth the new"** and to the method of combining revolutionary realism with revolutionary romanticism and those who want to preserve the old order, prostrate before anything foreign and follow other erroneous tendencies. In creative work, the chief problem, the focus of acute struggles, is the characterization of heroes.



The theme of an opera or play is reflected by the images of characters, and the plot is laid with the characters in mind, the leading character being the most important one. Who is to be the leading character means which class is to dominate the stage and the representative of that class to hold the centre of the stage.

Our great leader Chairman Mao points out: **“If you are a bourgeois writer or artist, you will eulogize not the proletariat but the bourgeoisie, and if you are a proletarian writer or artist, you will eulogize not the bourgeoisie but the proletariat and working people: it must be one or the other.”** This profound Marxist-Leninist thesis of Chairman Mao’s shows, from the nature of class and the nature of art, the fundamental difference between proletarian literature and art and bourgeois literature and art of all times. The renegade, hidden traitor and scab Liu Shao-chi and counter-revolutionaries like his agent Chou Yang and company in literary and art circles spared no pains to eulogize and puff the kind of literature and art which sings the praises of the bourgeoisie. At the same time they opposed all efforts to create the heroic images of workers, peasants and soldiers and made it possible for ghosts and monsters to hold the proletariat and other working people in subjection on the stage. Proletarian art cannot effectively set up and eulogize the heroic images of workers, peasants and soldiers on the stage without going through extremely acute and arduous struggles.

Guided by Chairman Mao’s proletarian line on literature and art, we have smashed the various schemes of the class enemies, criticized their various fallacies and created the brilliant images of Yang Tzu-jung and other proletarian heroes by the method of combining revolu-

tionary realism with revolutionary romanticism. Not particular individuals in real life, these heroic images are the quintessence of thousands and thousands of heroes coming to the fore in revolutionary struggles. They are **“on a higher plane, more intense, more concentrated, more typical, nearer the ideal, and therefore more universal than actual everyday life”**. The heroic image of Yang Tzu-jung in *Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy* is a brilliant example without parallel in the art history of mankind, the image of a communist fighter battling bravely for the complete liquidation of all exploiting classes and the system of exploitation itself, a powerful weapon to consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat and a mighty force to **“help the masses to propel history forward”**.

Now we shall dwell at some length on some of our appreciations in creating the heroic image of Yang Tzu-jung.

### **Depict from Different Aspects the Splendid Images of Proletarian Heroes by Combining Revolutionary Realism with Revolutionary Romanticism and Highlighting the Inner Thoughts and Feelings of the Characters**

How to depict proletarian heroes in images that are lofty and mature and shining with brilliance is a political task of prime importance facing us today, a new subject in the proletarian revolution in literature and art. Here lies the fundamental difference between proletarian literature and art and the literature and art of all exploiting classes, including bourgeois literature and art during the “Renaissance” and the “Enlightenment Movement” and

bourgeois literature and art belonging to the school of critical realism in the 19th century.

If we are to tackle this new subject successfully, we must follow Chairman Mao's teaching of combining revolutionary realism with revolutionary romanticism to put our heroes in the typical background of revolutionary class struggle in a given historical period, reveal completely, penetratingly and from various aspects the class traits of the proletariat embodied in their world outlook, thinking, style of work and moral fibre, show their high political consciousness, and bring out the rays of communism in their hearts. Such is the proletarian method of art used in characterizing Yang Tzu-jung, the proletarian hero in *Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy*.

Yang Tzu-jung is a scout hero of the Chinese People's Liberation Army who is armed with Mao Tsetung Thought and imbued with revolutionary wisdom and courage, characteristic of the revolutionary proletariat. Seizing upon various parts of the plot and drawing on literature, music, dancing, acting, decor and other art media, we concentrated our efforts on depicting Yang Tzu-jung as a hero and made a point of projecting the following main aspects: While portraying his deep class feelings for the commander, the comrades and the working people, we also manifested his bitter class hatred for U.S. imperialism, Chiang Kai-shek, the bandits and all class enemies. While describing his firm revolutionary will to overthrow the Vulture bandit gang, lackeys of U.S.-Chiang reaction, we also showed his magnificent and high revolutionary ideals. While defining his ideal of the Chinese revolution, we also referred to his ideal of the world revolution. While delineating his indomitable courage and soaring spirit, we also gave expression to

the steadiness and poise, the sagacity and alertness in his make-up. The description of these facets in his character rests firmly on one essential point, the soul of the hero Yang Tzu-jung, and that is "the morning sun in his heart" — a red heart that is infinitely loyal to Chairman Mao and Mao Tsetung Thought. Thus Yang Tzu-jung appears before us as a fearless proletarian revolutionary hero, with largeness of mind and a thoroughgoing proletarian revolutionary spirit, one who in all circumstances gives prominence to proletarian politics. It is a brilliant image of a hero who is at once lofty and mature.

The road taken in the new presentation with regard to characterization is completely different from that taken in the original script.<sup>1</sup> Pursuing their reactionary political aims, a handful of representatives of the bourgeoisie did everything they could to smear Yang Tzu-jung in the old script. Under the pretext of "truthful writing", they blatantly clamoured for prominence to be given to Yang Tzu-jung's "daredevilry and dashing roughness", that is, "bandit-like airs". They therefore made Yang Tzu-jung hum obscene ditties on his way up the mountain to the bandits' lair, flirt with Vulture's foster-daughter, Rose, and tell ribald stories in the bandits' stronghold. The result was that they turned Yang Tzu-jung into a filthy-mouthed desperado and a reckless muddle-headed adventurer reeking with bandit odour from top to toe. Such a character can only be a living sample advertizing Liu Shao-chi's reactionary military line of putschism, adventurism and warlordism.

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<sup>1</sup>The one used before 1963.

We criticized and repudiated this erroneous trend and made great efforts to achieve a typical portrayal of Yang Tzu-jung as a hero in the image of the proletariat. The following are some examples:

(1) The original script did not make the least mention of Yang Tzu-jung's contact with the masses, to say nothing of describing the flesh-and-blood relationship and class feelings between him and the working people. This, however, is definitely indispensable to the creation of the images of proletarian fighters and to the implementation of the spirit underlying Chairman Mao's great directive: **"Build stable base areas in the Northeast."** Following Comrade Chiang Ching's instruction, we resolutely cut out the two scenes about superstition and murder which were specially written to play up the negative roles. These were replaced by a new scene "Asking About Bitterness", purposely designed to demonstrate the fish-and-water relationship between our army and the people and the flesh-and-blood relationship between the working people and Yang Tzu-jung who relies on the masses and conducts propaganda among them. It shows how with the help of the masses he pursues and captures Howling Wolf and secures more information about the Contacts Map and the Hundred Chickens Feast. Thus the two essential sides to his character — class love and class hatred — are clearly defined. Without describing these two aspects of his character, it would be impossible to detect the class traits in the hero's inner world and Yang Tzu-jung would remain a reckless adventurer divorced from the masses.

(2) Though the original script touched on how Yang Tzu-jung thrust his way into the bandits' stronghold, the mental groundwork preparing him for this

action and for defeating the enemy was missing. This mental groundwork, however, is particularly important for an outstanding Communist and scout hero armed with Mao Tsetung Thought. As instructed by Comrade Chiang Ching, we therefore specially composed for Yang Tzu-jung in Scene Four, when he asks for the mission to go into the bandits' lair, a complete "song cycle", "A Communist" sung to the tune of *xi pi yuan ban* at a free tempo and to the tunes of *er liu — kuai ban*. This gives expression to Yang Tzu-jung's conscientiousness and determination in carrying out Chairman Mao's strategic and tactical thinking, to his high proletarian political consciousness and firm resolve and fighting will: "The flames that blaze in my red heart shall forge a sharp blade to kill the foe" and "Well I know that there's danger ahead, but I'm all the more set on driving forward." These characteristics of Yang Tzu-jung's are, to a certain extent, also brought out in the arias in Scenes Three and Five. As all this imparts to the character deeper ideological meaning, one can see that Yang Tzu-jung is the representative of millions of worker-peasant soldiers who, nurtured by Mao Tsetung Thought, have grown up and been steeled in revolutionary wars. Without accentuating Yang Tzu-jung's high political consciousness due to his being armed with Mao Tsetung Thought, the audience would not know what ideological force propels him to go deep into the enemy's stronghold, and would even feel worried about him or even doubt if he could succeed in his mission.

Needless to say, the original script did not portray Yang Tzu-jung as a fighter armed with Mao Tsetung Thought. Moreover, it did not even mention Mao Tsetung Thought for once, and yet invincible Mao Tsetung

Thought is the soul of all heroes of the Mao Tsetung era. Failing to set forth a hero's political consciousness, the essential aspect of his character, the creation of the image of a proletarian hero is but idle talk. We have therefore completely altered Scene Eight and composed for Yang Tzu-jung a principal aria, which is the centre of the whole scene. As Yang Tzu-jung sings "the morning sun in my heart", he is giving rein to his loyalty to the Party and the people and showing that Mao Tsetung Thought is the fountainhead of all his wisdom and strength. Without Mao Tsetung Thought Yang Tzu-jung would certainly be reduced to a nincompoop, a vulgar and miserable mountebank on the stage.

(3) In the original script, Yang Tzu-jung was cast as one who had no ideals of the Chinese revolution, not to mention ideals of the world revolution. What is more, he was described as having little understanding of the importance of the battle of taking the Tiger Mountain to the War of Liberation as a whole. He was engrossed in such nonsense as "In the endless sea of forest I have only my shadow as a companion", and "Besides skeletons and bloodstains, not a human being I see". That was what he was thinking all the time. For a proletarian hero the most essential political quality, however, is "to have the whole country at heart and the world revolution in mind", fight for the realization of communism — the **"supreme ideal of the future, a future of incomparable brightness and splendour"** — and resolutely fulfil every task assigned by the Party. Lacking this ideal, a hero on the stage would have no largeness of mind and his image would not be great and noble. Accordingly we have thoroughly recast Scene Five and composed for Yang Tzu-jung a long aria set to the tune of *er huang*

followed by *xi pi* to express his great and far-sighted ideal and lofty revolutionary ambitions — “Let the red flag fly all over the world”, “and welcome in spring to change the world of men”. This revolutionary ideal is articulated again in some arias in Scenes Three and Four too, as for instance, the aria “I’m set on smashing the chains of a thousand years to open a freshet of endless happiness for the people”. We hold that a powerful portrayal of the noble communist ideal cherished at heart by a hero is an important content of combining revolutionary realism with revolutionary romanticism. Without revealing this side of his character, Yang Tzu-jung would become a dwarf who cares nothing other than what is right under his nose.

To reveal the two aspects of Yang Tzu-jung’s character — his dash and courage as distinct from his sagacity and alertness — is also a point that should not be neglected. In order to demonstrate his courage and great aspiration — “Shake the heights with my will” and “with my courage the valleys fill” — we added a new prelude to Scene Five, which begins with stirring music illustrative of the hero galloping on a fine horse through a blinding snowstorm, followed by a new-type *er huang dao ban* of leisurely singing to the quick rhythm of percussion instruments to produce the effect of a valiant, singing Yang Tzu-jung entering at flying speed on horseback. In this way, the audience will see with the mind’s eye, even before the entry of the leading character, a dashing and dauntless hero approaching on horseback, whip in hand. We also designed for him a militant and sprightly riding dance and tiger-killing dance after his entry to emphasize his courage and daring spirit. On the other hand, in order to display his sagacity and alert-



ness, we laid stress, in the key aria in Scene Eight, on his careful reasoning, his quick wit and his ability to take quick decisions, which enable him to "know the disposition well". Besides we arranged for him three face-to-face battles of wits with Vulture and two with Luan Ping on different occasions. The two aspects mentioned above are further stressed in the fight in Scene Ten. Obviously, without depicting Yang Tzu-jung's dash and courage his image would not appear lofty and radiant on the stage; and if his sagacity and alertness are not shown, his image would not give one the impression of firmness or maturity.

We followed the same principle in depicting the other heroic characters in *Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy*. Take Li Yung-chi for example. Typical of the labouring people, a victim of exploitation and oppression, Li Yung-chi has a revolutionary tradition behind him and feels a bitter class hatred for the Kuomintang reactionaries. Once his class hatred is aroused, enhanced and guided by the Chinese Communist Party and the People's Liberation Army, it generates inexhaustible revolutionary strength. In addition to depicting his blazing class hatred for Vulture, as he sings "You Vulture! I'll hack you to pieces for this blood debt," we show his affection for his mother and profound comradeship for Chang Ta-shan and other class brothers. Apart from representing him in an engrossing soliloquy — "these soldiers care for us folks and cure our ailments", we show the torrent of his feelings when he learns "here before us our own army!" For generations the Li's had suffered from crushing class exploitation — "soldiers and bandits were of the same brood, always oppressing us" and "those lashes and bruises" — his is a family history written in blood and