HAIL THE GREAT VICTORY IN THE REVOLUTION OF PEKING OPERA

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The revolution of Peking opera sounded a call to arms for China’s great proletarian cultural revolution and marked an excellent beginning of it. It was a tremendous victory for Mao Tse-tung’s thought and for Chairman Mao’s *Talks at the Yenan Forum on Literature and Art*.

Drama and opera are important positions in the struggle between the two classes and between the two lines on the literary and art front. Our great leader Chairman Mao has always attached great importance to them. In 1944, he pointed out after seeing *Driven to Join the Liangshan Mountain Rebels* presented by the Yenan Peking Opera Theatre:

"History is made by the people, yet the old opera (and all the old literature and art, which are divorced from the people) presents the people as though they were dirt, and the stage is dominated by lords and ladies and their pampered sons and daughters. Now you have reversed this reversal of history and restored historical truth, and thus a new life is opening up for the old opera. That is why this merits congratulations."

After liberation Chairman Mao further put forward the important policies of "letting a hundred flowers blossom and weed-
\[\text{ing through the old to bring forth the new}\]" and "making the past serve the present and foreign things serve China". Chairman Mao’s instructions, the supreme criteria for guiding the revolution of drama and opera, have solved a series of basic questions in this revolution.

Using Mao Tse-tung’s thought, Comrade Chiang Ching discussed the great significance of the revolution of Peking opera and expounded its guiding principles as formulated by Chairman Mao, in her July 1964 speech at the forum of theatrical workers participating in the festival of Peking opera on contemporary themes. This speech is an important document which uses Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tse-tung’s thought, to solve the problems in the revolution of Peking opera.

For a long time, because of the domination of the counter-revolutionary revisionist line in the field of literature and art represented by Chou Yang, Chi Yen-ming, Hsia Yen and Lin Mo-han, Chairman Mao’s revolutionary line could not be carried through in the field of Peking opera. Many bad operas glorifying emperors, princes, generals, ministers, scholars and beauties dominated the Peking opera stage. These bad operas played the reactionary role of disintegrating the socialist economic base to pave the way for the restoration of capitalism.

Abusing their usurped power and position, a handful of Party persons in authority taking the capitalist road and some reactionary “authorities” controlled Peking opera circles, and, by drawing deserters and traitors into their service and forming cliques in pursuit of their own selfish interests, turned these circles into an impenetrable independent kingdom of the feudal landlords and the bourgeoisie.

The top capitalist roader in the Party was the main pillar and support for bourgeois reactionary forces and all ghosts and monsters in Peking opera circles and the biggest obstacle to the revolution of Peking opera. For a long time he stubbornly opposed the rev-
olution of Peking opera and spread the idea that "old operas have much educational value". He heaped praise upon *Fourth Son Visits His Mother*, an opera which disseminated a traitor's philosophy, the philosophy of survival. He said, "It doesn't matter much if this opera is staged. It has been performed for so many years; didn't New China emerge in spite of that?" He lauded *Fierce Tiger Village* which made every effort to prettify scoundrels like Huang Tien-pa, a lackey of the feudal landlords, and described it as "an opera which has been well revised". He even recommended such an obscene Peking opera as *The Dragon Flirts with the Phoenix*. He worked closely with the top counter-revolutionary revisionists in the former Peking Municipal Party Committee and Chou Yang, Chi Yen-ming, Hsia Yen, Lin Mo-han, Tien Han, Chang Keng and company to use old Peking opera to serve a counter-revolutionary restoration of capitalism.

But the new-born forces eventually defeat all that is decadent. Illuminated by the radiance of the great thought of Mao Tse-tung, guided by Comrade Chiang Ching and with the efforts of the great numbers of revolutionary comrades in Peking opera circles, new revolutionary Peking opera finally broke down stubborn resistance to fight its way out from the old fortress of emperors, princes, generals, ministers, scholars and beauties.

Rich results have already been achieved in the revolution of Peking opera. Such model Peking operas as *Taking the Bandits’ Stronghold*, *On the Docks*, *The Red Lantern*, *Shaohiapang* and *Raid on the White Tiger Regiment* represent most valuable achievements. They are fine models not only for Peking opera, but for proletarian literature and art as a whole. They also serve as fine examples for "struggle-criticism-transformation" on all fronts of the great proletarian cultural revolution. These splendid results of the revolution of Peking opera have shaken the entire field of the arts like a spring thunder-storm, indicating that it is now time for the hundred flowers of the proletariat to bloom. This will have an immense impact and influence on the development of proletarian literature and art as a whole.

Only a short while ago, the handful of capitalist roaders in the Party sneered at the vanguards in the revolution of Peking opera, "So you people want to capture the stronghold?" Yes, we do want to capture the stronghold, to attack this most stubborn "fortress" in theatrical art and to capture for the proletariat this most closely guarded position of the bourgeois reactionary forces. Today, Peking opera has broken through the bonds of counter-revolutionary revisionism. The great red banner of Mao Tse-tung’s thought has now been hoisted high over the opera stage. The stage once occupied by emperors, princes, generals, ministers, scholars and beauties has been turned into a place where the workers, peasants and soldiers can fully display all their talents. The position for spreading feudalism and capitalism has been turned into one for the propagation of Mao Tse-tung’s thought. This is a great victory for Chairman Mao’s revolutionary line on literature and art, an earth-shaking transformation. It proves to the masses that the great thought of Mao Tse-tung is all-conquering. Can there possibly be any other old fortress that cannot be taken now that we have succeeded in taking the fortress of Peking opera which was under the strictest control of the counter-revolutionary revisionists and where the old forces were most stubborn?

authority who are taking the capitalist road, to criticize and repudiate the reactionary bourgeois academic 'authorities' and the ideology of the bourgeois and all other exploiting classes and to transform education, literature and art and all other parts of the superstructure not in correspondence with the socialist economic base, so as to facilitate the consolidation and development of the socialist system." — Tr.

1 "Struggle-criticism-transformation" is the abbreviation of the statement in the Decision of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party Concerning the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, which reads, "At present, our objective is to struggle against and overthrow those persons in
The victory in the revolution of Peking opera has proclaimed the bankruptcy of the counter-revolutionary revisionist line on literature and art and ushered in a brand-new era for the development of new, proletarian literature and art.

The revolution of Peking opera is an important part of China's proletarian cultural revolution. We must make a high appraisal of the tremendous achievements in the revolution of Peking opera and lay great stress on its immense historical significance. A clear understanding of its achievements and significance will increase considerably our confidence in the proletarian cultural revolution. We are convinced that after this cultural revolution, a completely new situation never before seen in history, an encouraging prospect of a hundred flowers blooming luxuriantly, will appear in the field of culture and art in our country.

APPENDICES