CHAPTER 12
CHINA IN THE 1960s

VISUAL SOURCE
Behold, the East is Red:
Images of Mao in the 1960s

GREAT PROLETARIAN CULTURAL REVOLUTION: The Cultural Revolution began in 1966 largely engineered by Mao Zedong as a means to catapult him back into power. The political campaigns were largely an assault on lingering "bourgeois" elements in society, counter-revolutionaries, and anyone disloyal to Mao. Extremely violent in the initial three-year-period, the political consequences reverberated until Mao Zedong's death in 1976.

TIANANMEN RALLIES: On August 18, 1966 Mao Zedong held the first of eight massive rallies in Tiananmen Square with more than 2 million people in attendance. Typically the square would begin to fill up in the dark early morning hours. With deeply symbolic timing, Mao Zedong would arrive just after sunrise, walking through the square before he ascended Tiananmen Gate to address the adoring crowd, by this time, ecstatic.

RED GUARDS: At this first rally, Mao publicly received the Red Guards thus officially validating their radical and violent tactics. "Chairman Mao's Red Guards" first formed among Beijing middle school students in the spring of 1966. Across the country teenagers formed their own Red Guard units to fight against the Four Olds: Old ideas, old culture, old customs, old habits.

LITTLE RED BOOK: Marshal Lin Biao in 1964 selected, compiled and published the quotations of Mao Zedong. Designed with portability in mind, the "treasured red book," was only about five inches tall and typically bound in a shiny durable red plastic with Mao's likeness on the cover. By 1974 more than a billion copies had been published and translated into eight indigenous languages and 37 foreign languages.
EAST IS RED: The phrase "the East is Red" originally came from a revolutionary song of the late 1930s proclaiming the arrival of Mao and Communism. By 1966, the sun rising in the east had been transformed into a potent symbol representing the arrival of Communism led by Chairman Mao. In the poster above (right), Chairman Mao is superimposed over the sun with the words the "East is Red" in front of his hand. Along the bottom it reads: "Chairman Mao is the red sun in our heart."

PROPAGANDA POSTERS: The public posting of information on walls and public places dates back well into imperial China. With the founding of the People's Republic propaganda posters took on a new dimension. The posters apart from their visually striking style sought to reinforce messages being disseminated in other media forms such as newspapers, speeches, radio, and film. The poster pictured here is originally in black and red on a white background.

INTERNATIONALIZATION: As tensions rose between the Soviet Union and China, the PRC increasingly sought to promote itself as the center of the international communist movement. In this poster, an unmistakably Chinese worker leads China's communist African, Asian, and Latin American comrades along the socialist road (each proudly holding a copy of the "Little Red Book").
In the summer of 1966, China launched the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. The Sixteen Point directive adopted on August 8 presented the revolutionary aims with some precision (12.5). This directive instructed the people to “revolutionize people’s ideology,” and as a consequence to achieve greater, faster, and more economical results in all fields of work. The Chinese people were called upon to remove all traces of traditional culture, to overthrow all remnants of the bourgeoisie, and to make all elements of Chinese society conform to the socialist system. Most ominously, the document anticipated violence by stating explicitly that the masses should expect to encounter resistance. The titles of the campaigns unleashed by Mao and the central government offer a bone-chilling glimpse into the terrifying nature of this period: “Bombard the Headquarters,” “Sweeping Away All Monsters and Demons,” “Destroy the Four Olds.” What is disconcerting is the fact that this was not a campaign unleashed immediately after the CCP had secured power and sought to “purify” the population. This was, rather, a political campaign led by the most powerful individual in China—Mao Zedong—against large segments of the population within his own country who had displayed little indication of political disobedience.

To begin to understand the impact that the Chinese Cultural Revolution era had on any individual it is essential to understand the depth to which the state regulated virtually every aspect of their citizen’s lives. A key tool of this central government control was the personal dossier (dang’an), which gave them power over each individual. The importance of this dossier for the common Chinese citizen cannot be overstated for it contained every significant document relating to a citizen’s personal, academic, and professional life. To a Chinese citizen in the 1960s, the most consequential elements would be family background (jiating chushen), political appearance (zhengzhi mianmiao), and the various behavior evaluations of job, political, or personal conduct. Furthermore, since a work unit’s (danwei) authorization was required to get married, give birth, or transfer jobs and the fact that those decisions were largely based on the dossier—that dossier to a large extent dictated a future career, an ability to find a partner, and even permission to attend college.

The personal dossier was property of the state and, as such, the individual was permitted to see it. Only a person’s superiors or Communist Party members had authority to review the file. Any information put in the personal file could only be expunged in exceptional circumstances with considerable effort. The constant fear that any errant behavior could be entered in the dossier served as one of the PRD’s most powerful deterrents. Even more worrisome were the ways in which this system could be subverted: by irritated neighbors reporting politically inappropriate comments, by jealous co-workers embellishing any work-related shortcomings, or a resentful superior knowingly filing half-truths and out-right falsehoods in the dossier. These worries were compounded by radical political campaigns like the Cultural Revolution.

Unlike previous political campaigns that were mostly top-down affairs orchestrated by the central government, the Cultural Revolution gave extensive power to Chiyun. With Mao Zedong’s explicit authorization, revolutionary youth groups ca “Red Guards” (hongweibing) were whipped into a revolutionary frenzy to purify

**FAMILY BACKGROUND**—Depending on the class background of one’s parents (and sometimes on grandparents), each individual was designated as “red” or “black.” If one’s parents were workers, poor peasants, lower-middle-class peasants, revolutionary cadres, or revolutionary soldiers, they were classified as belonging to one of the “five red types” (coming from a “revolutionary” background). If one’s parents were landlord-rich peasants, counter-revolutionaries, evildoers, rightists, capitalists or reactionary intellectuals, they were classified as belonging to one of “seven black categories.”
country. They were to attack all suspected counter-revolutionaries and cleanse society of the Four Olds: old culture, old ideas, old customs and old habits. Officially sanctioned by Mao, sporting Mao buttons, and quoting from their "Little Red Book" (Quotations from Chairman Mao), they spread a public reign of terror such as the nation had never witnessed. Although the earliest Red Guard units were from Beijing, revolutionary gangs quickly materialized throughout the country. Seeking to show their commitment, the units would work their way through neighborhood homes searching for evidence of revolutionary crimes. People wearing close-fitting clothes and high-heeled shoes, or having long hair (all considered "improper bourgeois attire," [zhanjiejie qiizhuang yifu]) were accosted on the streets and the offending articles of clothing were removed or hair was cut in a more "appropriate" revolutionary style. Items as innocuous as pre-liberation photos, books in a foreign language, or letters from abroad could be enough to precipitate verbal abuse, physical beating, and incarceration in cells, referred to as cow sheds (niupeng), for months on end. Those found to be counter-revolutionary would be paraded through the streets and forced to wear oversize dunce-caps and derogatory placards announcing their crimes. These placards labeled them as counter-revolutionaries, traitors, or spies—or worse, "son of a bitch," "whore," or "ox ghost and snake spirits." It was routine for such public humiliations to culminate at massive struggle sessions where the accused would be publicly demeaned and frequently beaten. By the end of 1966, thousands of cadres, teachers, and so-called counter-revolutionaries had been rounded up, accused in public struggle sessions, and then killed. Liu Shaoqi, Mao Zedong's former chosen successor, and his wife were paraded through the streets of Beijing and pilloried in public struggle sessions before enormous crowds. He would die alone, naked and devoid of any political standing in a Henan prison cell in 1969.

Chinese society became more and more unhinged as the revolutionary excesses reached new extremes. These excesses altered even the normal rhythms of the day. The day would begin with "morning instructions" (zaoqingshii), conclude with "evening reports" (wanhuibao), and could be interrupted day or night with Mao Zedong's "highest directives" which people were required to greet with appropriate celebratory behavior. To accidentally sit on a newspaper wherein Chairman Mao's name was printed was a crime. Children mis-writing a slogan on a wall were said to be subversives working against the Communist Party, and their parents arrested. The fierce nature of the political attacks ripped apart the very fabric of Chinese society. Family members would be urged to "draw a distinct line" (huaqing jixian) between themselves and a disgraced family member. Spouses were told to divorce their partners, children told to renounce their parents. People abandoned the habit of writing diaries or letters, terrified that the thoughts and ideas politically acceptable during one campaign could suddenly be used against them in another. Parents, fearful their children might say the wrong thing at school or on the street and bring unwanted attention to their family, self-censored what they said in front of them; they never dared to explain the complex political tides to their children and thus facilitated on some level the excesses that teenagers unleashed on China. Life was chaotic.

**MAO BUTTONS**—Worn as a symbol of one's loyalty to Mao Zedong during the Cultural Revolution, at least 2 billion badges were manufactured with well over 10,000 different designs.

**RED GUARDS**—Middle and high school aged students who answered Mao Zedong's call in 1966 to spread his teachings, fight against the "Four Olds," and remove all counter-revolutionary elements from society.

**COW SHEDS**—A place of confinement chosen by the Red Guards, usually in a vacant classroom, lecture hall or even a bathroom converted for their detainees.

**STRUGGLE SESSIONS**—Cultural Revolution rallies where individuals accused of "black," or counter-revolutionary, activities would be publicly attacked in sessions lasting many hours held in large auditoriums.
The first and most violent phase of the Cultural Revolution ended in 1969. Estimates at least half a million people died as a direct result of the initial revolutionary excesses, and it is likely two million were killed in the entire period. Virtually no emerged unchanged from the Cultural Revolution. Families were split apart as they were consigned to separate parts of the country (if they were lucky enough to avoid education, labor camps, or prison). Teenagers were raised without adult supervision encouraged by the government to carry out appalling excesses in the name of revolution. They found themselves working in remote parts of the countryside with no notion of when they would be allowed to return to their home cities (12.7). Yet children entering school at this period were taught only a "revolutionary education" Maoist propaganda, and the formal instruction at the universities for all intents and purposes stopped for the duration.

If there was any bright spot to the Cultural Revolution, it was that most Chinese began to realize that the aging Chinese leadership was not infallible. Most Chinese never again followed the central government with the same blind faith as they did through the Cultural Revolution.

**Pursuing New Loyalties**

Quite early in the history of the Chinese Communist Party, Mao Zedong sought to pursue a "China-first" policy with regards to China–Soviet Union relations. The tension established between the two Communist powers in the early 1950s (discussed in the previous chapter) was a partnership of mutual convenience for both Stalin and Mao. Stalin's death in 1953 and Mao's growing disagreement with his successor, Khrushchev (who sought to pursue a policy of "peaceful co-existence" with the United States) brought China and the USSR a Sino-Soviet split. This split culminates in an article from the Soviet Central Committee publicly criticizing China. In this clinching of accusations of Khrushchev's revisionism and charges of Soviet breaks with orthodox Marxist-Leninist thought became the norm (12.1). During this same period, Chinese domestic propaganda began to emphasize model workers like Lei Feng (12.2). Communes like Dazhai (12.3) would become mainstays of state campaigns well into the 1970s. In the case of Lei Feng, this emphasis was occasionally revived well into the

**12.1 The Khrushchev Revisionists Are Betrayers of People's War (September 3, 1965)**

A brilliant military strategist, PLA General and hero of the Chinese Civil War (1946–1949), Lin Biao succeeded Peng Dehuai in 1959 (Mao secretly believed Peng Dehuai would succeed him as Defense Minister). In 1969 Mao officially designated Lin as his successor, but in 1971 he would mysteriously die in a plane crash attempting to escape to the Soviet Union. Although the Chinese had successfully detonated their nuclear explosion in 1964, Lin Biao, like Mao, believed China's strength lay in a "peaceful co-existence," with China's massive population as its greatest asset. The following speech underscores China's growing international strategy of bolstering communist insurgency.

**Sino-Soviet Split (c. 1959)—Relations between the Soviet Union and China soured in the late 1950s with a series of diplomatic disagreements over Taiwan, India and the United States. As a result, the S government withdrew their experts, scientific information, and financial support from China. This led to an acrimonious 30-year split between China and USSR that ended with Gorbachev's visit in 1989.**
you receipts. The Chinese people are a great, valiant people. We have the courage to shoulder the heavy burden of combating U.S. imperialism and to contribute our share in the struggle for final victory over this most ferocious enemy of the people of the world.

It must be pointed out in all seriousness that after the victory of the War of Resistance Taiwan was returned to China. The occupation of Taiwan by U.S. imperialism is absolutely unjustified. Taiwan province is an inalienable part of Chinese territory. The U.S. imperialists must get out of Taiwan. The Chinese people are determined to liberate Taiwan.

[...] All peoples suffering from U.S. imperialist aggression, oppression and plunder, unite! Hold aloft the just banner of people's war and fight for the cause of world peace, national liberation, people's democracy and socialism! Victory will certainly go to the people of the world!

Long live the victory of people's war!

12.2 LEI FENG, CHAIRMAN MAO'S GOOD FIGHTER (1963)

As China's Defense Minister, Lin Biao played a central role in educating and building up the People's Liberation Army (PLA). Lin promoted Mao's teachings, eventually collecting and publishing Mao's quotations into a compact red handbook, first for the PLA soldiers and later for all Chinese. As part of this broader campaign to promote Mao Zedong Thought, Lin Biao also promoted a model soldier, Lei Feng, to reinforce the notion of individual sacrifice and commitment to Mao. Mao officially bestowed his blessing on this endeavor in a 1963 speech in which he urged the Chinese masses to "Learn from Lei Feng." According to his official biography, Lei Feng began work as a tractor driver before becoming a steel worker. He finally joined the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and later died in a truck accident in 1962. His undeviating adherence to Mao and China's socialist path, as revealed in his freakishly aseptic diary that was discovered and published, as well as the amazing degree to which Lei Feng's life was photo-documented, has led many to suggest it is all a bit too convenient. Regardless of these suspicions, Lei Feng's pristine class background and his unselfish, and steadfast commitment to Mao's teaching made him an ideal model to be emulated by all Chinese.

In China today his name lives on. To tell a friend or colleague to "Learn from Lei Feng" is to suggest that they pursue an overly altruistic (even foolish) course of action.

Questions

1. What practical lessons did Lei Feng learn from his studies of Mao Zedong's teachings?

2. What type of behavior do you think the average Chinese would attempt to emulate after "learning from Lei Feng?"

To me Chairman Mao's works are like food, weapons and the steering wheel of a vehicle. To live you must have food, to fight you must have weapons, to drive a vehicle you must have a steering wheel, and to work for the revolution you must read Chairman Mao's works.

From Lei Feng's diary

[...] Lei Feng had begun to regularly study Chairman Mao's writings from 1958. He had made a rule by which he studied one hour every morning and up to ten or eleven o'clock in the evenings. He had made a point of studying the Selected Works of Mao Zedong during every spare moment when he worked in the coal yard of the Anshan Iron and Steel Company. After joining the army he had managed to complete...
volume three of the Selected Works while boiling water for the amateur cultural troupe. Then the army leadership called on the men to “study Chairman Mao’s works, follow his teachings, act in accordance with his instructions and be good soldiers of Chairman Mao.” Lei Feng took this call as a maxim and wrote it down on the front covers of his copies of Chairman Mao’s works. But where the leadership had asked the men to study Chairman Mao’s works,” he added “every day” so that he would study them more diligently. Lei Feng’s job as a driver often took him to various places so wherever he went he always carried a satchel containing different essays by Chairman Mao, which he read at every opportunity. Soon his comrades had described his satchel as a “mobile library.”

About this time one of his comrades grumbled, “There’s so much work to do we haven’t got enough time for our personal affairs, nor for rest.” Lei Feng did not agree, and to encourage himself to work and study even harder he wrote this passage in his diary which he remembered from a book he once read:

> How do you put a screw into a piece of wood which is perfectly smooth and has no holes? You use force and screw it in. Then just as a screw has to be forced and screwed in, so when you study you should bore firmly into the subject.

It was with this spirit that Lei Feng was able to complete Chairman Mao’s Selected Works, from volume one to four. And among many of the essays he repeatedly read were: “In Memory of Norman Bethune,” “Serve the People,” “Carry the Revolution Through to the End,” “On Practice,” and “On Contradiction.”

Lei Feng found an inexhaustible source of strength and wisdom in Chairman Mao’s works, and he gradually came to understand the meaning of life, of revolution and the laws of social development. He learnt how to treat one’s enemy and one’s comrades, and what attitude one should take to work. He felt he could see things more and more clearly, that his vision of life was broadening and that a new big world was opening up before him.

It was about nine o’clock on the morning of August 15, 1962. Lei Feng and his assistant, who had been driving in a drizzle, returned to their barracks. Jumping down from the cabin Lei Feng told his comrade to drive the truck away and get it washed down and cleaned. Lei Feng’s comrade took the driver’s seat, got the truck in gear and turned the steering wheel. The truck chugged, shook itself, and backed, splashing mud all round. Meanwhile, Lei Feng waved and shouted, “left, left, back, back….”

The ground was covered with water and the road was slippery. While making a turn the truck bumped into a big wooden post standing by the roadside. Lei Feng was so busy directing the truck that he did not notice the post which crashed on his head knocking him unconscious….

Within minutes the deputy company commander himself was driving at full speed to Shenyang to bring the city’s most competent surgeon to Lei Feng’s aid. Not a minute, not a second must be lost, the officer thought to himself as he raced against time for medical help.

Sweat was running down the deputy company commander’s face as he returned with the surgeon, but it was too late — Lei Feng had died from a cerebral hemorrhage in spite of emergency treatment by the army doctors. And so Lei Feng parted from those close to him that morning, unable to hear his commander’s call, his assistant’s cries, his comrades’ sobs…

Lei Feng died on duty. He lived only twenty-two years, a short but glorious life. He was born in misery and poverty and brought up in happiness, and his life shed a brilliant light in the era of Mao Zedong.

[...] Every river has its source, every tree its root. Lei Feng’s character also had its source — Mao Zedong’s thought and the Party’s instructions. Lei Feng knew very well that “the more often and the more intensely you study Chairman Mao’s works the clearer will be your mind, the broader your views, the firmer your stand and the more far-reaching your thoughts.” He compared Chairman Mao’s teachings to food, to a soldier’s weapon and to a vehicle’s steering wheel. That was why he took to them with such great zeal, not only creatively studying and applying them, but applying them while studying them. This was essentially how Lei Feng, a poor orphan in the old society, became a hero in the new society and a communist fighter.

Lei Feng is immortal. In the words of a poet:

> What death does to you;
> From one Lei Feng come millions of Lei Fings.

To remember Lei Feng, Chairman Mao, our beloved leader, called on us to “Learn from Comrade Lei Feng.”

Yes, we must listen to what the Party and Chairman Mao say and follow Lei Feng’s example. We are now confronted with the heavy task of socialist
construction and may face acute class struggle at any moment. Like Lei Feng we must always remember the misery suffered by the proletariat in the old society, take a firm stand in the class struggle, recognize whom to love and whom to hate, and devote ourselves entirely to the revolutionary cause of the proletariat. Like Lei Feng we must be “a screw that never rusts” in our work. Like Lei Feng we must, in our daily work, add brick after brick and stone after stone to the edifice of socialism. Above all, like Lei Feng, we must ceaselessly study Chairman Mao’s works, constantly raise our level of class consciousness and Marxism-Leninism, and be good pupils of Chairman Mao.

12.3 WHAT IS DAZHAI SPIRIT?

In 1964, Mao Zedong introduced two new campaigns: “In industry learn from Daqing” and “In agriculture learn from Dazhai.” At the base of both campaigns was Mao’s desire to emphasize the self-reliance of communes as embodied by Daqing and Dazhai. In an increasingly turbulent society, it appeared to many that the safest way forward was to emulate the Dazhai model. Thus many villages and communes sought to reclaim land and cadres would refuse central government aid even when it was desperately needed. Regardless of the actual efficacy of this commune campaign, as a propaganda tool it was a stunning success. In the decade following Mao’s proclamation, Dazhai received about 10 million visitors. The following document was published in the English-language magazine China Reconstructs under a column entitled “Questions and Answers” which was meant to help explain various political movements that might not be self-evident to the foreign readership. As was common in the Cultural Revolution, all quotations from Chairman Mao are in bold.

Questions
1. What aspects of Dazhai made it a model other agricultural communes should emulate?
2. Why do you think the central government relied so heavily on such model campaigns as “Learn from Dazhai” and “Learn from Lei Feng”?

Dazhai is the name of a production brigade of Dazhai People’s Commune which lies at the foot of inhospitable Hutuo Mountain in Xiyang county, Shanxi province.

In 1964 our great leader Chairman Mao issued the call to the nation: “In agriculture, learn from Dazhai!” In the years since, and especially since the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution began, the millions upon millions of China’s commune members, filled with militant daring, have carried on a mass movement to learn from and catch up with Dazhai. They vow: “We must resolutely take the Dazhai road and firmly learn the Dazhai spirit!”

What is the Dazhai spirit? Premier Zhou Enlai, in his report on the work of the government at the First Session of the Third National People’s Congress in December 1964, said: “The spirit persisted in by the Dazhai brigade is worth promoting—that is, the principle of putting politics in command and proletarian ideology in first place, the spirit of self-reliance and hard work and the communist style of love for the state and the collective.” This is both a summary and high appraisal of the Dazhai spirit.

Putting politics in command and proletarian ideology in first place means concretely that the...

DAZHAI—A village located in the mountainous Shanxi province which Mao Zedong held up as a model village encouraging all Chinese to “Learn from Dazhai in agriculture.”
revolutionary masses of the city residents held a grand garden party in the People’s Park this afternoon with a repertoire full of unrestrained revolutionary vigor.

MUSIC, OPERA AND PLAYS — CREATING A CULTURE BEFITTING A REVOLUTION

From the beginning of the communist movement in China, music played a central role in attempts to attract and retain support among the Chinese. In 1942 Mao’s Forum on Literature and Art dictated that there were only two categories of literature and art: capitalist or proletarian. As Jiang Qing provocatively, if not very imaginatively, asked a group of musicians below (12.9): “Which class do you support?” From the 1950s onward, Mao sought to integrate “realism and romanticism” in order to portray accurately the life of the peasants in their fields, the workers in their factories and the soldiers protecting the nation. For Mao, romanticism meant praise of the proletarian socialism of China (visible in the songs collected in 12.11). Many of China’s songs also sought to retell the glorious history of China’s revolution, and the difficulties that the Chinese people and Chinese Communist Party overcame to create the People’s Republic of China (12.10). During the Cultural Revolution China’s theaters and stages, as well as amateur productions, were dominated by the “Eight Model Works” (Yangbanzi) and other appropriately revolutionary plays, operas or mov

12.9 JIANG QING’S SPEECH ON THE REVOLUTION IN BEIJING OPERA (JULY 1964)

Born Li Yunhe in 1914, Jiang Qing had an undistinguished career as an actress (under the name of Lan Ping) in Shanghai’s fledgling film industry. More famous for her tempestuous relationships than her politics, she left Shanghai before the Japanese attacked the city and made the hazardous trip to Yan’an where she became romantically involved with Mao Zedong. Mao, who was still married to his third wife, He Zizhen, sought a divorce despite stiff resistance from the CCP elite. It is commonly said that the party leaders granted Mao his wish on the grounds that Jiang Qing was to have no political powers or appointments. For the most part, Jiang Qing remained in the background through the 1950s, accepting only an honorary appointment to the Ministry of Culture. In 1964, she was elected as a representative to the People’s Congress — a position without any tangible power. The following document is a speech she delivered in 1964 which was not published until May 10, 1967. In the intervening period, Jiang Qing became progressively more powerful — personally supervising the creation and revision of model revolution operas and more generally becoming the creative umpire of all things artistic or liter

Questions

1. Why does Jiang Qing suggest that Chinese should create more art and literature for the proletariat?

2. What does Jiang Qing mean when she suggests “Theatres are places in which to educate the people, but now the stage is dominated by emperors and kings, generals and ministers, scholars and beauties?”

Jiang Qing (1914–1991) — Wife of Mao Zedong who advocated a radical line of political thought during the Cultural Revolution. After Mao’s death she and her allies, the Gang of Four, were arrested, tried, and in 1981 found guilty. Her death sentence was commuted to life in prison, where she committed suicide in 1
[...] We must have unshakable confidence in the staging of Beijing Operas on revolutionary contemporary themes. It is inconceivable that, in our socialist country led by the Chinese Communist Party, the dominant position on the stage is not occupied by the workers, peasants and soldiers, who are the true creators of history and true masters of our country. We must create literature and art which protect our socialist economic base. When we are not clear about our orientation, we must try our best to find the right orientation. Here I would like to give two groups of figures for your reference. These figures strike me as shocking.

Here is the first group: according to a rough estimate, there are 3,000 theatrical troupes in the country (not including amateur troupes and unlicensed companies). Of these, around 90 are professional modern drama companies, 80-odd are cultural troupes, and the rest, over 2,800, are companies staging various kinds of operas. Our operatic stage is occupied by emperors and kings, generals and ministers, scholars and beauties, and on top of these, ghosts and monsters! As for those 90 modern drama companies, they don't necessarily all depict the workers, peasants and soldiers either. They, too, lay stress on staging full-length plays, foreign plays and plays on ancient themes. Therefore we can say that the modern drama stage is also occupied by ancient Chinese and foreign figures. Theatres are places in which to educate the people, but now the stage is dominated by emperors and kings, generals and ministers, scholars and beauties—by feudal and bourgeois stuff. This state of affairs cannot serve to protect our economic base but will undermine it.

Here is the second group of figures: there are well over 600 million workers, peasants, and soldiers in our country, whereas there is only a handful of landlords, rich peasants, counter-revolutionaries, bad elements, Rightists and bourgeois elements. Are we to serve this handful, or the well over 600 million? This question calls for consideration not only by Communists, but also by all those literary and art workers who are patriotic. The grain we eat is grown by the peasants, the clothes we wear and houses we live in are made by the workers, and the People's Liberation Army stands guard at the fronts of national defense for us and yet we do not portray them. May I ask which class stand you artists take? And where is the artists' "conscience" you always talk about? [...]