

***THE REVOLUTIONARY OPERA THE SEA OF BLOOD IS A NEW OPERA  
OF A TYPE OF OUR OWN***

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Speech to the Creators of the Revolutionary Opera The Sea of Blood  
July 17, 1971

Today you put on an excellent performance of the revolutionary opera The Sea of Blood for the great leader.

As you had little time to prepare the production, and some of the lyrics and music were being improved as late as yesterday, I was worried just before the performance about how successful you would be. But you have done much better than I expected. We emerged as honourable victors in adapting the immortal classic The Sea of Blood into a revolutionary opera. Of course, there are still shortcomings in the interpretation, but they can be corrected quickly.

Today we brought great pleasure and satisfaction to the great leader. This is a marvellous success achieved by our creative workers, who made great efforts and got very little sleep while making a hearty response to the intentions of the Party. There is no greater glory or joy for us than to bring pleasure and satisfaction to the leader. I am very happy today.

The great leader enjoyed the revolutionary opera The Sea of Blood today and was very satisfied; he said that a Juche-orientated, revolutionary opera of our own style had been created, an opera which perfectly combined ideological and artistic qualities. He was very appreciative of the fact that the recitative had been eliminated, the lyrics had been divided into stanzas, the pangchahg<sup>16</sup> and dance had been introduced into the opera and the scenes had been made to flow in a three-dimensional way. He said that all this meant that an end had been put to the old pattern of conventional operas and that an original, unique way of operatic interpretation had been created. He ascribed this innovative success to the fact that our writers and artists had conducted creative activities in strict accordance with the Party's Juche-orientated idea and policy on art and literature.

He said the opera was in general a good interpretation of the original, and at several points praised the writers and artists for their good work. Like all the other members of the creative staff, I, being one of them, feel great pride at the leader's approbation.

Today is a significant day in that we gave the first performance of The Sea of Blood, a new revolutionary opera in a style all our own, with the great leader attending. We will not forget this historic day—the day we proclaimed to the world the birth of the Sea of Blood-type revolutionary opera<sup>17</sup> in the presence of the leader.

The adaptation of the immortal classic The Sea of Blood into a revolutionary opera is a landmark not only in the safeguarding of our Party's glorious revolutionary traditions and the development of art

and literature in our country, but also in the development of revolutionary art and literature throughout the world. Many operas have been produced, but none of them has portrayed the profound truth of the Juche idea in as artistic a way as the revolutionary opera *The Sea of Blood*. This opera reaches a high standard unsurpassed by any other work of stage art in depth of ideological content and intensity of artistic interpretation.

The adaptation of the immortal classic *The Sea of Blood* into a revolutionary opera marked the beginning of the revolution in world opera and ushered in a new era of operatic art. The production of this opera marks a historic turn in the creation of new operas, and a new era of the *Sea of Blood*-type revolutionary operas has dawned. With the production of *The Sea of Blood*, a classic model of opera for our times has been created. With this classic model we will be able to make innovations in opera in our country and make great changes in the overall development of such stage arts as music and dance. This opera with its innovative significance will exert a great influence on the development of opera in the world. By producing *The Sea of Blood*, a revolutionary opera of our own type, we have humbled those who believed they monopolized the medium of opera.

The successful production of *The Sea of Blood* is truly something of which we can boast to the world. It is a great triumph in implementing the leader's Juche-orientated idea on art and literature.

We were able to achieve such brilliant success in producing a new type of opera because we faithfully adapted the original immortal classic *The Sea of Blood* which the great leader himself wrote. We put great effort into perfectly reproducing the high ideological and artistic levels of the original, and worked hard, setting our main task as the proper embodiment of the popular spirit and our national characteristics and conventions, which are the fundamental principles elucidated by the leader for producing Juche-orientated operas.

A revolutionary opera requires not only revolutionary content but also a revolutionary change in its form.

In accordance with the Juche-orientated policy advanced by the great leader on producing operas, we put the main stress on making the libretto stanzaic. Breaking the libretto into stanzas is a basic principle put forward by the leader for producing revolutionary operas in a unique manner, and it is the basis of opera music. By singing the songs of *The Sea of Blood* in stanzas, we made the opera music truly popular so that people could understand it easily and enjoy singing it themselves.

During the performance today, the great leader remarked that because the old pattern of opera had been smashed once and for all, and stanzaic songs had been introduced in place of a recitative, our popular spirit, national characteristics and conventions were embodied excellently in the opera. He was very pleased, saying that we now have a unique opera of our own.

Until today the recitative has been considered as the main

component of an opera. Now that we have been bold enough to destroy the old form and pattern, we have brought about a fundamental change in highlighting the work's ideological and artistic qualities and making opera a truly popular form of art. All the songs in this opera are divided into stanzas, so they have become gentle, popular and distinctive masterpieces. Song is the main component of an opera, so it must be excellent. We can take as an example the first song in this opera. Don't Cry, My Dear Ul Nam. This song flows out in the first scene of the opera, making it an impressive debut. The repeated singing of the song in Act 6 is better. Making all the songs in an opera stanzaic can be called a type of revolution in the development of operatic art.

From now on we should apply the policy of using stanzaic songs in the production of all opera.

The great leader was highly appreciative of the frequent use of the pangchang in the opera and said that our country had become the motherland of the pangchang .

The form of conventional opera cannot communicate the ideological and spiritual world or psychology of the hero, or of the other characters effectively. When creating the revolutionary opera The Sea of Blood, therefore, we decided to solve this problem through wide use of the pangchang. This represents an innovation in the history of the opera. That it was correct to use the pangchang in the opera was proved in today's performance. Because the pangchang was used, the theme of the opera was conveyed clearly and the innermost thoughts of the heroine were shown from various angles. The pangchang is a powerful means of depiction that highlights the ideological and artistic qualities of the work and draws the audience deep into the drama.

However, we cannot as yet say that a perfect solution has been found to the problem of the pangchang in the production of opera.

We should examine the use of the pangchang more closely and further enhance its position and role in opera.

The inclusion of dances in an opera is a basic principle for creating a Juche-orientated opera, a principle the great leader taught a long time ago.

Including dances in an opera, a composite art, is a very effective way of meeting our people's ideological and emotional requirements, and an important demand of operatic art itself. We satisfied this demand in full in the course of creating The Sea of Blood.

The great leader said that the singing and dancing in the scene at the watermill in today's performance was very good. The singing and dancing is lively, and overflows with revolutionary romance. Both the dance and the song in this scene are excellent. The dance pieces in other scenes are all wonderful, too.

Dances in this opera contribute to highlighting the ideological and spiritual world of the heroine and to heightening the ideological and artistic value of the work. In general, the dances appeared in the opera at the appropriate moments, thus performing their role satisfactorily. Dance in an opera increases the value of an opera.

Another success we achieved in producing this opera was the creation of three-dimensional stage art across a revolving stage. Three-dimensional stage art makes an active contribution to clarifying the theme and idea of a work by changing the scenes to suit the essence and logic of life, making them as lifelike as the reality they reflect. The stage art in this opera is another great and original creation of ours which eliminates the pattern of the conventional opera.

From now on we can invite foreigners who are visiting our country to a performance of the revolutionary opera *The Sea of Blood*. We can step proudly out onto the stages of other countries with this opera. In the past the opera *Bean Mouse and Red-bean Mouse*, the dance drama *The Tale of Sado Castle* and the like were presented in other countries. They were truly pitiful. The production of the revolutionary opera *The Sea of Blood* enables us to demonstrate the revolutionary popular art of Juche Korea in foreign countries. The great leader said that it would be advisable to reduce the number of artists when visiting other countries to perform this opera. We must perfect the ideological and artistic aspects of the opera and conduct extensive artistic activities in the newly-emerging and capitalist countries, to say nothing of the socialist countries.

We should produce, in the same style as the revolutionary opera *The Sea of Blood*, another opera reflecting the reality of today. We can produce an excellent opera of this type. It is only when we produce another revolutionary opera based on reality that we can demonstrate widely the superiority of the *Sea of Blood*-type opera.

Creators and artists should continue to make strenuous efforts in order to make the revolutionary opera *The Sea of Blood* even better.

The great leader pointed out that the song sung in the scene in which the heroine and Kyong Chol's mother meet in Act 4 of the opera is not yet in stanzas. It must be made so, as he has taught.

The members of the creative group, particularly the conductor, did a great deal to ensure that the first performance in honour of the leader today was a success. The flow of today's performance was sometimes quick and sometimes slow. The conductor seemed to be slightly nervous. He should be bold. Today the heroine and other characters sang and acted well. The actress who played the heroine has a poor musical background, but she has made a lot of progress. She played the part of the mother very well. At the beginning of the performance she was pitching her voice a little too high, probably because of nerves. The actor who played the guerrilla political worker, too, did well. The scene in which the village head Pyon and Ung Phal appear was well presented in an operatic way, unlike in the film.

I believe that the creators and artists, who are unfailingly loyal to the Party and the leader, will bring about a fresh upsurge in creation and thus brilliantly fulfil the tasks of creation given them by the great leader.

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