

**ON COMPLETING THE FILM THE FAMILY OF CHOE HAK SIN AND  
MAKING IT A MASTERPIECE WHICH CONTRIBUTES TO ANTI-US  
EDUCATION**

A Talk to the Officials in the Field of Literature and Art as well as to  
Workers in the Arts  
December 27, 1966

Workers in the arts have toiled hard this time around to produce the  
film *The Family of Choe Hak Sin*.

I submitted to the great leader the script which you had revised in  
accordance with his instructions given after his viewing of the fast  
copy of the film.

The great leader went personally over the script of the revised film  
and said that, although other scenes had been mended well, in the  
scene where Song Gun, Rev, Choe Hak Sin's son, is arguing with  
Yong Su, the future husband of his sister, the latter's words are not  
expressive enough. The leader said that the reason why the puppet  
army captain Song Gun lowers his pistol that has been aimed at Yong  
Su, a squad leader of the People's Army, should have been strongly  
felt in their words, but it is not.

Yong Su's words must express vividly that if Song Gun does not  
wish to be tried by the people as a traitor to the nation he must quit  
the disgraceful puppet army and come over to the side of the people.  
The words of Song Hui, his girl friend and Song Gun's sister, must  
express the same idea. Only when Yong Su and Song Hui make a  
strong attack on Song Gun's national conscience will the reason be  
cinematically clear as to why Song Gun lowers his pistol. The words  
should be altered in this direction.

A few days ago the great leader saw this film and said that it must not  
give the impression that the motive behind its production was to  
grapple with the unsolved problem of religion in our country,  
because, to the contrary, this issue had been resolved in our country.  
Saying that this film should show how religion in our country has  
disappeared and how believers have all been re-educated, the leader  
has instructed that the film should show the minister is opposed to the  
Yankees, regardless of whether the minister is living in Kangdong  
County or in Taedong County.

The problem of religion was resolved in our country during the  
Fatherland Liberation War. Christianity was spread in our country  
quickly by American missionaries in the latter half of the 19th  
century. There had been many believers in the north before the war,  
but during the war all the churches were destroyed by the barbarous  
bombings of the US imperialist aggressors, and many Christians were  
killed by the American atrocities. Those who survived, like the  
minister in Taedong County, became awakened to the truth and  
ceased believing in Jesus Christ. In the northern half of Korea there  
are not many people who believe in religion, and moreover the

freedom of religion is completely guaranteed by law, so there is not the slightest problem tied to the question of religion in the north. The film *The Family of Choe Hak Sin* must not find fault with the Christians or Christianity itself, but must criticize the worshipping of US imperialism as ‘°God’± as well as approaching US imperialism with illusions.

Workers in the arts have toiled hard to produce *The Family of Choe Hak Sin*, to make it a film of high ideological and artistic quality in accordance with the creative direction indicated by the great leader. But they will have to go still one more step forward.

The scene in which Song Gun, who, although forced to shoot the old man (the bell-ringer), suddenly turns round and shoots Kingster must be justified so that his sudden psychological metamorphosis is more cinematically convincing.

Formerly, some people condemned the drama *The Family of Choe Hak Sin*, as a ‘°reactionary’± work by criticizing the conversion of the puppet army captain Song Gun as a departure from the working-class code of behaviour. Their criticism cannot be justified. The point at issue was not his conversion itself, but the lack of artistic description of the motivation justifying his act of conversion.

It is not easy for a person like Song Gun, who fears the United States and acquiesces in the sorrow of a ‘°lesser’± nation while knowing that the anaconda of the United States is crushing him and south Korea in its coil-like grip, to level his gun at the Americans.

Therefore, if you are to describe the act of his conversion, you must show the process of the awakening of his national consciousness convincingly. In the play it was difficult to depict this process in the space of a scene, but in the film it will be possible to show the process in a concentrated manner because the technique of recollection can be employed readily.

At the moment Song Gun is standing with his gun levelled at the bell-ringer in the film, a vivid picture of his life experience and his feelings of wrath at US imperialism must be given. He must be reminded of himself during his boyhood when he was held in the bell-ringer’s arms, tugging on the bell-rope, of his sister who died, feeling giddy, hearing the bell ringing, of his mother’s face cursing the Americans, of Kingster who is guffawing and killing his sister and other Koreans in cold blood, of the ugly face of Richard as well as the images of Yong Su and Song Hui who are harshly accusing him of crimes in his courtyard where they have levelled guns at each other. If this scene of recollection is depicted skilfully, the audience will be convinced of the truthfulness of Song Gun’s action. His mental state at the moment of his decisive action will be obvious to all and the process of the development of his consciousness can be felt to be the process of being awakened to national consciousness.

Like a drama a film hinges on the theatrical art of characterization. Films can be works of high ideological and artistic qualities only when personalities and dramatic moments are drawn richly and vividly.

Since the film *The Family of Choe Hak Sin* is a film of new modality,

involving mainly negative characters, special efforts must be directed to the vivid individualization of different characters such as Rev. Choe Hak Sin and his son Song Gun, who worship the United States, and the US imperialist aggressors. In works of literature and art people's personalities should be personifications of distinct social classes and strata while at the same time they should be original individuals with varying characteristics. Only then can these works acquire ideological and aesthetic values and attractive power.

An important issue in characterization is the ideological consciousness of characters. A man's ideological consciousness is the core of his mental world, and the basic feature of his personality is defined by his ideological consciousness, because all his activities are defined and prompted by his ideological awareness as well as his knowledge and feelings, which are also regulated by his ideological consciousness.

A man's ideological awareness is the basic factor in characterizing his personality. However, this does not mean that people with the same ideological consciousness have the same personality. Even people who have the same ideology differ from one another in their understanding of the ideology and in their conviction, and the ideology finds different manifestations in their thinking and actions. Therefore, people have different personalities.

Workers in the arts must, with a correct understanding of the correlation between ideological consciousness and personality, depict the principal character of the film, Rev. Choe Hak Sin, and his son Song Gun as believing in and worshipping the Americans but at the same time being of very different temperaments and personalities.

Rev. Choe Hak Sin is a hardcore US-worshipper whose Christian belief and illusions about the United States have been fused into an integral whole during the decades of his religious life. The basic characteristic of his personality is that he believes in the United States as 'God' and worships it unconditionally. In the film, therefore, all his actions and feelings must emanate from such an ideological stand, and his family tragedy must be shown as lying precisely in this.

In order to portray Rev. Choe Hak Sin's personality as a completely blind worshipper of the United States, it is necessary to describe clearly his US-worshipping stand and attitude regarding the atrocities committed against our people by the Americans. Through his eyes the atrocities were mistakes made by individual American soldiers who have renounced their faith in 'God', he does not perceive the aggressive nature of US imperialism. The film must convincingly portray the actions and psychological state of Rev. Choe Hak Sin, who misguided by his illusions about the United States, calls on Richard and asks him to save the People's Army soldier Yong Su who is hiding out in his home during the time when the Americans are making frantic efforts to arrest patriots. He does not allow himself to believe the fact that his eldest daughter Song Ok was killed by Kingster.

It can be said that Song Gun is much the same as his father in his belief in and worship of the United States. But his US-worshipping is

of a slightly different sort, in experience, conviction, intellect and actions. Unlike his father, Rev. Choe Hak Sin, who is ignorant of the aggressive nature of the United States and worships it blindly. Song Gun, although aware of the fact that the United States is an anaconda that is crushing him along with the whole of south Korea in its coil-like grip, accepts it with resignation because he fears the United States.

The major characteristic of his personality, that of a man who fears the United States, must first of all be portrayed skilfully. In addition, it is important to show the wretchedness and agony of the puppet army officer who can do nothing against the Americans' atrocities and contempt although he feels national humiliation and indignation for them. Only by delving into life, deep into the personality which is characterized by intelligence and national indignation as well as fear of the US, can you depict sensibly the sudden mental metamorphosis. His decisive action to free himself from the ideological fetters of fearing the US by shooting at the heart of the American in the exact moment when he is being forced to shoot at the heart of his fellow countryman, will seem like a natural progression. Richard, Kingster and James, too, should be described in such a way as to give prominence to their varied individualistic personalities as aggressors. They are the spokesmen and executors of the aggressive policy of US imperialists towards Korea. They are all evil in that they are aggressors, but they perform different duties for the implementation of the aggressive policy of the US imperialists, and also have a varied understanding and belief about the means and methods of aggression. That is why they should be portrayed in depth, so as to emphasize the different traits of their personalities, although they are the same aggressors.

In the Korean war, as is always the case with them, the US imperialist aggressors overtly invaded our country with guns in one hand while at the same time waving olive branches in the other so as to deceive our people by stepping up the ideological and cultural offensive. In order to show the brutality and craftiness of Richard, Kingster and James properly, it is necessary to stress how their personalities mirror the two-pronged policy of US imperialists. The minister Richard is the spokesman of the US imperialists' ideological and cultural invasion, so this must be manifest in his hypocritical personality, appearing in the guise of 'God's apostle' and a 'friend' of Koreans while at the same time being the craftiest and evilest of men.

The US army officer Kingster is the representative of the US imperialists' military invasion. This fellow should be characterized as a wolf that believes in the 'philosophy' of regarding guns as sacred, as a brute who feels pleasure and joy in killing our people right and left.

James is an adviser from the US Central Intelligence Agency who implements the US imperialists' two-pronged policy. This character should be depicted as an influential and cunning person who controls Richard and Kingster behind the scene.

The workers in the arts must express anti-US sentiments thoroughly, through the depiction of characters' personalities and in their words as well as in the scenes, and complete The Family of Choe Hak Sin so as to make it an excellent piece, both in terms of ideological and artistic quality.

The main basis of this film has already been established, the altering of it a little in the direction I have indicated today will polish it off as an excellent film.

We have only a few days left until the New Year, so you must speed up your reworking efforts so as to show the finished piece to the leader on New Year's Day.

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