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**Aggrieved Ghost and Revolution: The Ghost Opera “Li Hui Niang” and the New Chinese Play (Theatre?) Reform Movement**

The New Chinese theatre reform movement in the 1960s, was an all round socialist cultural and political practice. It centred on how to rebuild national ideals and people-centred themes, how to change political and cultural style and cultivate cultural identity, and how to rebuild the life of the masses and their moral and ethical concepts.

This article explores the constantly changing critical responses to and social debate about traditional ghost and bawdy operas including “Li Hui Niang” and “Huo Zuo San Lang” in the Theatre Reform Movement. By analysing and interpreting the images of vengeful women in the plays, it clarifies the emotional, ethical and cultural political aspects of the doctrine of “out with the old and in with the new” in socialist China.

Those aggrieved ghosts which for all sorts of reasons have had their lives torn from them, appear in a different form among the living and express their state of mind even more powerfully than when they were alive. They reflect a critical point of view towards the current state of society, to which they demand change. The heterodox power generated by these demands was treated by the mainstream ideology as a taboo and also in certain historical contexts, developed into a “revolutionary” energy. In the case of “Li Hui Niang,” it even became one of the fuses which ignited the Cultural Revolution and thus a deep metaphor for the cultural politics of the “New China.”