

## **Asian 204**

### **Unit 05: The White-Haired Girl**

#### **Basic Information**

Chinese Title: *Baimaonü* 白毛女

Date of Release: 1972

Production Company: Shanghai Film Studio

"Collectively revised and performed by the White-Haired Girl Drama Unit of the Shanghai Municipal Dance Academy"

#### **Historical Background**

1. Milestones in Chinese History from the 1920s
  - a. The Nanjing Decade, 1928-1937
  - b. The War of Resistance against Japan, 1937-1945
  - c. The Chinese Civil War, 1946-1949
  - d. The Early Years of the PRC, 1949-1966
  - e. The Cultural Revolution, 1966-1976
  - f. The Post-Mao Era (Reform Era), 1976-1989(?)
  - g. The Post-Post Era, 1989-present
2. Early History of the Chinese Communist Party
  - a. Formed in Shanghai 1921
  - b. Underground organization and rural regrouping during Nanjing Decade
  - c. The Jiangxi Soviet and Mao Zedong (1893-1976)
  - d. The Long March, 1934-1935
  - e. New base in Yan'an, Shaanxi province, northern China
3. The War of Resistance against Japan, 1937-1945
  - a. Second United Front (alliance between Nationalists and Communists), 1936
  - b. Outbreak of war, 1937
  - c. Collapse of United Front
  - d. 1941 outbreak of Pacific War
  - e. Japan' surrender, 1945

4. Civil War 1946–1949
  - a. Communist victory
  - b. Nationalist retreat to Taiwan
  - c. Establishment of People's Republic of China (PRC), 1949
5. The Early Years of the PRC
  - a. Social and economic restructuring
  - b. Great Leap Forward, 1958
6. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, 1966–1976
  - a. Origins
    - i. Power struggles within the Party
    - ii. Mao's vision of unending revolution
  - b. The Red Guards
    - i. Assault on authority and tradition
  - c. Stages of the Cultural Revolution
    - i. Struggle and chaos, 1966–1968
    - ii. Ideological conformity and the cult of Mao, 1968–1976

### **Art and Literature in the Mao Era**

1. Mao Zedong's "Talks at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and the Arts," 1942
  - a. Blueprint for the arts in China during the Maoist era
  - b. Essential points:
    - i. Art is a political tool
    - ii. Art must serve the proletariat
    - iii. Art must adhere to the correct attitude
    - iv. Artists must learn from the masses and follow the guidance of the Party
2. Art and Literature after the Founding of the PRC
  - a. Monitoring of content
  - b. Institutionalization and centralization of means of production and distribution
  - c. Alternating periods of restriction and relative relaxation

### 3. The Arts during the Cultural Revolution

a. Strict ideological conformity

b. The "Model Dramas"

i. Sometimes (inaccurately) referred to as "The Eight Model Operas"

ii. Role of Mao's wife Jiang Qing

### 4. The White-Haired Girl

a. History of the material

i. Yan'an period stage play

ii. 1950 feature film

iii. Adaptation into dance drama

iv. 1972 film version

b. Themes

i. Class struggle and anti-imperialism

ii. The leadership of the Party

iii. The role of women

c. Artistic and rhetorical techniques