# *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms* and Mao's Global Order of Tripolarity

LAI SING LAM

Peter Lang

This book examines the impact of classical Chinese literature on Mao Zedong's political rhetoric and his vision of a tripolar geopolitical landscape at the peak of the Cold War. The historical novel *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, in which two weaker sovereign powers (Shu and Wu) collude to defend themselves against the dominance of another power (Wei), is here identified as a particular inspiration for Mao in building a Sino–Soviet alliance in opposition to the powerful United States. This classical Chinese text provided Mao with a framework for understanding the complexity of global politics, establishing a balance with the two superpowers, and gaining diplomatic autonomy in China's development.

This study traces Mao's use of a tripolar policy throughout his leadership, including the role of the Korean War in isolating China, the influence of Sino–US hostility on Mao's Cultural Revolution in the 1960s, and the initiation of 'ping-pong diplomacy' with the United States to counteract the Soviet threat. The author offers an original insight into Mao's navigation of US and Soviet pressures while promoting socialist modernization in China.

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Printed in Germany

*To the memory of my parents*
*Lam Wan Poh and Wong Keng Hei*

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# Preface

Research on Mao's relations with the twin superpowers since the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in October 1949 has not been satisfactory. With the appearance of new documentation of his comments regarding the classical Chinese historical novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* and its influence on him in PRC publications in recent years, I was able to produce this original piece of work on Mao's foreign policies in relation to China's role among the superpowers.

This work argues that immediately following the establishment of the PRC, and inspired by the concept of the Chinese 'international' order of tripolarity as espoused in the above novel, Mao created a similar order by assigning China the role of a superpower in global power politics, though it was not yet a superpower. 'Sharing' the contemporary world with the twin superpowers, it was to contend with the powerful United States while *striving at all costs* to collude with Joseph Stalin's Soviet Union. Thus the post-war bipolar struggle between the Soviet and American blocs gave way to a more complicated pattern of international relationships in which the world was no longer split simply into two clearly opposed blocs.

During the last sixty years, I have been taking note of the development of the 'events' described in the historical novel. I find in my study of Mao that his perceptiveness was profound even regarding its minor details.

This work will certainly enlighten not only sinologists, political scientists and students, but also political leaders of both worlds regarding the relations of Mao's China with the twin superpowers.

My previous work *The International Environment and China's Twin models of Development* concerns Mao's defense-oriented economic development policy during the period 1950–76, dictated by the hostile international environment. Unavoidably, thus, part of the research material in each of Chapters Three to Five of this work is adapted from the previous work. These include the 'right opportunist' purge as well as the origins of

the Liuist capitalist economic approach. They substantiate my arguments particularly regarding Mao's perception of the 'US-USSR collusion at the disadvantage of the PRC' in his global order of tripolarity.

The romanization in this work adopts the Pinyin system.

I am indebted to Mary Beltran for putting the finishing touches to part of the final version of the work.

Lam Lai Sing
Macau, China
January 2011

PROLOGUE

# The Political Role of Classical Chinese Literature in Mao's Fight against the Twin Superpowers

When analysing the origins and development of Mao Zedong's fight for China's equality with the twin superpowers, it is difficult for us to do so effectively without considering the factor of classical Chinese literature, particularly the historical novel of the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (*San Guo*) (三国演义). These novels inspired Mao's thinking, shaped his character, and provided him with a viable alternative to contemporary power politics. Having drawn inspiration from their characters and events, Mao treated this literature as history. It was so profound a factor that he himself was consciously aware of this literature's pervasive influence on his view of reality.

Authors such as Luo Guanzhong (罗贯中) (1330–1400), Cao Xueqin (曹雪芹) (1715–1763), Feng Menglong (冯梦龙) (1574–1646), and Shi Naian (施耐庵) (? – ?) not only were brilliant historians, but also outstanding prose writers, as was Si-ma Qian (司马迁) (145 B.C.–86 B.C.), the Former Han dynasty's Grand Historian. These novels reflect the various political, social, economic conditions as well as human factors. The significance of these works lies in the intimate relationship between history and literature, for the life history of the characters and historical events are pre-dominant in the literature. For Mao, since these novels served as pure history, there was no demarcation line between history and literature. They are not only referred to by Chinese interpreters, but also by Western scholars as the finest pieces of Chinese literature in terms of realism of description, intricacy of the plot and excitement of character design, and above all, their colorful imagination. No wonder they have captured great masses of readers throughout the centuries. As a fan of these authors, Mao was therefore not exceptional. The realistic analysis of the warring situation

in the historical novel of the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* inspired him to analyse situations of his own time. The significance of this historical novel is that it also reflects these factors common to all ages.

This study entails a rather new approach to understanding Mao's fight against the twin superpowers with classical Chinese literature as his political weapons. This analysis of how the theme of the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* inspired Mao and how he creatively applied it to the contemporary world is unprecedented. Mao's use of classical Chinese literature in different political contexts to fight US imperialism and Soviet 'revisionism' was original. In the following, I will first consider the novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*.

I argue that, inspired by this classical Chinese historical novel – which concerns contention initiated by a sovereign power, Shu, against another, Wei, by colluding with the third power, Wu, from a weak position in 220–80 – Mao initiated his own global order of tripolarity. This followed the establishment of the PRC in October 1949. It would fight for power with the United States through trying to collude with the Soviet Union.

In his fight for global power in relation to the powerful United States, China's primary enemy, in 1950 Mao adopted the united front strategy similar to that of the Shu state's premier, Zhuge Liang. He did so by striving *very hard* to get Stalin to sign the proposed Sino-Soviet Treaty and Agreements in Moscow that aimed at 'opposing the possible imperialist invasion'.

Referring to the theme of the historical novel as 'dialectic', Mao quoted it on a number of occasions, stating that the communist giants 'long united, must divide'. The Sino-Soviet alliance began to sour, however, when the 'US-USSR alliance at the disadvantage of China' became evident in 1954, as Mao saw it. Inspired by the same theme of the novel, he then dropped hints to the US about his wish to 'swim in the Mississippi River', implying that he would improve the Sino-US relationship at the expense of that with the Soviet Union. However, he was not taken seriously. In the late 1960s, the new Kissinger-Nixon Doctrine calling for gradual withdrawal of the US from Western Pacific region was initiated. Mao was then convinced that the United States and China 'long divided, must unite'. Thus he personally

initiated the ping-pong diplomacy in 1971 leading to President Nixon's China visit and improving the Sino-US relationship.

Mao's 1974 concept of the 'Three Worlds', I argue, was based on the blueprint of Zhuge Liang's 'international order of tripolarity'. It referred to contending with the 'hegemonic' Soviet primary enemy through aiming to collude with the non-antagonistic secondary enemy of the First World, namely, the 'imperialist' United States.

The theoretical foundation of Mao's global order of tripolarity can be traced to (a) Cao Cao's *qi*, (b) Zhuge Liang's concept of the Chinese 'international' order of tripolar powers of Shu, Wei and Wu, and (c) the Battle of Chibi in the novel, which was won by small forces over big and by inferior over superior forces in a tripolar situation. Mao was impressed with Zhuge's conception of a Chinese 'international' order of tripolarity by colluding with the state of Wu, Shu's secondary enemy, to fight the powerful Wei, its primary enemy, from a weak position. Mao understood that the essence of the victory of the celebrated battle at Chibi was the firm cooperation of the allied forces so that astronomical power could be generated. However, he felt that, in the long run, lack of cooperation between the twin allies would render Zhuge's anti-Wei strategy ineffective. Moreover, he understood that Zhuge's basic strategy, which could not concentrate strong enough forces to defeat Shu's enemies one by one, was basically – geographically – faulty. Furthermore, he considered that Zhuge's staunch anti-Wei policy was overly rigid, due to the positions of the primary and secondary enemies being consistently fixed, thus eliminating the opportunity for the consideration of flexible reversion of their positions. Lack of cooperation between the Shu and Wu allied forces vis-à-vis the powerful Wei in the long run strengthened Mao conviction that Zhuge's consistent anti-Wei strategy would not work. In practice, Mao therefore made the positions of the primary and secondary enemies flexibly interchangeable, as he saw fit. Therefore, in the early 1970s, he successfully improved Sino-US relations at the expense of the Soviet Union by reversing the position of the US primary enemy into that of the secondary enemy, and vice versa, in a tripolar situation. The Shu leader Liu Bei would not have been defeated in the Battle of Yiling, had Zhuge advised him to try to

collude with the Wei against Wu – reversing the positions of the primary and secondary enemies.

Treating the United States as the primary enemy and the Soviet Union as the *de facto* enemy in Mao's tripolar worldview following the establishment of the PRC in October 1949, Mao's foreign policy, inspired by Zhuge's 'international' order of tripolarity, entailed allying with the latter against the stronger former so that China might gain power from a weak position. However, in January 1954 he perceived this gradual 'US-USSR collusion to the disadvantage of the PRC'. The theme of the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, i.e., 'the world phenomenon under the heavens, long united, must divide, and vice versa', which Mao interpreted as 'the empires under the heavens, long united, must divide, and vice versa' was confirmed in Mao's prediction in January 1957 that 'a flare up of Sino-Soviet hostility would occur sooner or later'. Thus, his domestic policy of a national united front for China's defense against US imperialism and also to guard against the new 'US-USSR collusion' was devised. Based on the Yenan model as a prototype, Mao's mass line strategy, which was to serve as his collectivization drive, was aimed at 'uniting with all possible'. The drive was meant to ultimately lead to his defense-oriented communization goal.

Inspired by the theme of the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, he tried but in vain to collude with the United States against the Soviet Union in the late 1950s. He considered Peng Dehuai's 'collusion with the Russians to oppose the three red flags' as an act of high treason, and the 1959 dismissal of the 'right opportunist' Peng was part of a growing Sino-Soviet acrimony.

Taking a 'rightist-cum-revisionist' approach, which was considered as dangerously detrimental to Mao's mass line, Liu Shaoqi ignored the simple fact that the Soviet Union had become 'No. 1 accomplice of the US' primary enemy in Mao's tripolar worldview since 1954. Inspired by the theme of the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, Mao tried to befriend the United States at the expense of the Soviet Union during the period of 1959–69 without success. The US remained the primary enemy with the Soviet Union considered the 'No. 1 accomplice of the US'. Understandably, thus, Liu's US-inspired 'rightist-cum-revisionist' policies and his opposition

to Mao's communization endeavors inevitably led to the latter's launching of the Cultural Revolution.

I argue that Mao's Cultural Revolution would have been delayed or his decision to launch the movement could even have been changed, if the United States had grasped the political meaning of his hints at wishing 'to swim in the Mississippi River' in the mid-1960s. However, it was not until the late 1960s that a golden opportunity for the improvement of Sino-US relations appeared and Mao initiated his 'ping-pong diplomacy' in 1971.

Mao's initiation of his 'ping-pong diplomacy' leading to President Nixon's China visit in 1972 was dramatic. China began to view the Soviet Union as its primary enemy and the United States as a non-antagonistic secondary enemy, leading to improved Sino-US relations. In 1974, inspired by the well-known theme of the historical novel as well as Zhuge Liang's tripolar concept, Mao envisioned his concept of the 'Three Worlds' to contend with China's primary enemy, the Soviet Union, while aiming to collude with the secondary enemy, the United States, plus the second and third world nations. Although Mao's global order of tripolarity did not help much in isolating the Soviet primary enemy, China's crucial strategy of establishing tripolar relationships was confirmed. As international environment was now conducive to his plan of opening up China to the outside world, Mao began to adopt a more relaxed economic policy starting in 1971. His four modernizations scheme was initiated to promote the acquisition of the US-led Western capital and modern technology along with its capitalist economic principles. This was not only to 'befriend' the US-led West at the expense of the Soviet Union, but also to improve the livelihood of the Chinese people.

Deng's 'good-neighbor' policy, which, starting in 1979, was designed to induce other countries worldwide to help modernize China, it subsequently included Russia, as a result of the collapse of the Soviet Union. Deng's policy helped maintain a peaceful and stable international environment. Ironically, the policy marked the end of Mao's global order of tripolarity. The collapse of the Soviet Union confirmed the end of Mao's global order.

In sum, inspired by the theme of the historical novel of the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, Zhuge Liang's 'international' tripolar order as well

as the battle of Chibi, Mao sought to realize his own anti-imperialist and anti-'revisionist' aims through a global order of tripolarity during the period of 1950–76. In the following, I consider how, starting from depicting his animosity towards the pre-war fascist aggressors of Germany, Italy and Japan in May 1938, Mao made use of the stories and issues as described in classical Chinese novels to fight against US imperialism and Soviet 'revisionism', both externally and internally, in different political contexts during this period. He also 'fought' them with his own classical poetry. His approach was original with classical Chinese literature to serve his political objectives in relation to changing political climate.

First, in 1957, he attempted to consolidate the Sino-Soviet alliance and the Soviet camp with the statement that made reference to 'the East wind is prevailing over the West wind', a phrase first uttered by Lin Daiyu (林黛玉), the heroine of the classical novel of the *Dream of the Red Chamber* (红楼梦). Mao interpreted this phrase referring to how 'the forces of socialism are overwhelmingly superior to the forces of imperialism'.

Second, treating US imperialism as a ghost, Mao implanted the spirit of fearlessness into the mind of the Chinese people as well as in those of oppressed and bullied peoples around the world. He furthermore fought imperialism with the published book of the *Stories of Not Scared of Ghosts* (不怕鬼的故事). He made it very clear that 'We were not scared of ghosts, that was why (in 1958) we bombarded (the islands of) Quemoy and Matsu'.

Third, in his domestic anti-revisionist efforts in 1959, Mao exposed the 'treasonous right opportunists' with his description of his appreciation of Feng Menglong's (冯梦龙) historical novel of *Records of the Various Kingdoms of Eastern Zhou* (东周列国志). In addition, in a number of classical Chinese poems he composed in mid-1959, he referred to Peng Dehuai's 'treasonous act' of 'ganging up with the revisionist clique of Khrushchev' in criticism of his GLF and communization schemes.

Fourth, he made use of the Monkey King, Sun Wukong (孙悟空), from the novel of *Journey to the West* (西游记) to fight the 'revisionist clique of Khrushchev' in his classical Chinese poems. He described Khrushchev as the 'evil spirit' who 'rose from a heap of white bones' as described in

the novel. He also challenged the Soviet leadership and claimed to be the leader of the international Communist movement.

Fifth, Mao 'fought' US imperialism and Soviet 'revisionism' through the utilization of his own classical *lu shi* and lyric poetry. In addition, in his lyric poem entitled 'Two Birds: A Dialogue', he used the hyperbolical legendary bird Kun Peng (鲲鹏) created by Zhuang Zi (庄子) (369 B.C.–286 B.C.) to depict the limitless 'harm' of the 'US-USSR collusion to rule the world'.

Sixth, he interpreted the surrender of Song Jiang (宋江) to the Song emperor in the novel *Shui Hu Zhuan* (水浒传) as 'good teaching material by negative example'. He 'criticized' Song Jiang who turns 'revisionist', Soviet 'revisionism' under Khrushchev and the new Soviet leadership as following Khrushchev's 'revisionism'. Internally, he accused both Liu Shaoqi and Lin Biao of practicing 'national capitulationism' towards the Soviets in the 1960s.

In the following, I will deal with Mao's contention with the US imperialist and Soviet 'revisionist' superpowers in terms of the above stories and issues featured in classical Chinese literature.

## *The Dream of the Red Chamber* (红楼梦)

The celebrated classical Chinese novel of the *Dream of the Red Chamber*, written by Cao Xueqin (曹雪芹) (1715–63) of the Qing dynasty, was one of Mao's favorite classical novels. Politically, it helped him in his fight against US imperialism and Soviet 'revisionism' in the following ways.

First, in the early 1950s, the US grand design of the containment of communism and the domino theory was primarily directed against the PRC. The day after the Korean War had broken out, the United States dispatched the Seventh Fleet to 'neutralize the Formosa Straits'. At the same time President Truman announced increased aid to the French in Indochina and the strengthening of US forces in the Philippines. By dragging in the

issues of Taiwan, Vietnam, and the Philippines, the US was determined to contain China. Reacting to the US's anti-communism with the success of his socialist revolution, China naturally needed to consolidate its alliance with the Soviet Union (and the third world nations) to form a united front against the United States. According to Mao, the Sino-Soviet Treaty and Agreements he signed with Stalin in April 1950 'serves us conveniently in our opposition towards the possible imperialist invasion'.[1]

Following the Soviet launching of the first inter-continental ballistic missile (ICBM) and space satellite, Mao suggested to the Moscow Conference of Communist Parties in November 1957 that the situation had reached a new turning point. Following the Soviet strategic achievement, he quoted the heroine of the above-mentioned classical Chinese novel, Lin Daiyu (林黛玉): 'the East wind is prevailing over the West wind'. In so doing, Mao referred also to his own attempts to consolidate the Sino-Soviet alliance and the Socialist camp in the face of US hostility.

> The international situation has now reached a new turning point. There are two winds in the world today, the East wind and the West wind ... It is characteristic of the current situation that the East wind is prevailing over the West wind. ... The forces of socialism are overwhelmingly superior to the forces of imperialism.[2]

The PRC's confidence was boosted by nuclear reactor materials 'received from Russia in 1956–7, and by the many Soviet physicists sent as advisers; there were also unconfirmed reports from Poland that the Soviet Union had agreed to supply China with atomic missiles'.[3] Thus Mao's description of this superiority during an address to some Chinese students in Moscow in mid-November 1957 reflected this sense of confidence:

> The world now has a total population of 2,700 million. The socialist countries account for nearly 1,000 million, the independent, formerly colonial countries account for more than 700 million, and the countries now struggling for independence, or for complete independence and the capitalist countries with tendencies towards neutralism, have 600 million. The population of the imperialist camp is only about 400 million, and what is more, is internally divided.[4]

That same month, in the Communist International and Workers Representatives Conferences held in Moscow, Mao repeated that they had

reached a new turning point by quoting Lin Daiyu.[5] He tried to encourage confidence and consolidate it in the socialist camp. He (1977:321) quoted Lin repeatedly in his Speech at the Second Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee of the CCP in mid-November 1956.

Second, when analysing the origins of Mao's resolute spirit against the twin superpowers, we cannot fully understand without including Wang Xifeng (王熙凤), a female character in the novel of the *Dream of the Red Chamber*. Mao was drawn to Wang, admired her and tended to identify with her (1969:179, 189). He often advised others to emulate her, who claims: 'Even if it results in having my whole body cut in pieces, I dare to pull the emperor down from the horse' (1969:179). It became very common for him to quote lady Wang in his speeches, as he did in his Speech at the Second Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee of the CCP in mid-November 1956 and his speech at the CCP's National Conference on Propaganda Work in mid-March 1957.[6] Mao's favorite saying: 'dare to think, dare to say, and dare to act' is a virtual rephrasing of Wang's fiery statement.[7]

Mao's approach of making Lin Daiyu's statement relevant to real-life international relations of the second half of the 1950s was unprecedented. Also unusual was his original incorporation of references to Wang Xifeng's fiery character to reflect his stance as 'not scared of US imperialism and Soviet revisionism'. It is therefore in this context that in the following I will consider Mao's 'spirit of fearlessness' in the face of the US imperialist and Soviet 'revisionist' threats and pressures, beginning in the early 1950s.

## *Strange Tales of the Leisure Study* (聊斋志异)

In many of his informal speeches to, and ordinary conversations with, different levels of society and even with foreign dignitaries, particularly in the late 1950s and early 1960s, Mao often unconsciously revealed his true self – a rational self of 'fearlessness'. His spirit of fearlessness, which

was a critical element of his resolute contention with the imperialist and 'revisionist' superpowers, can be seen in many of his statements such as the following:

> Why fear! To fear does not get things done. We do not fear World War III though we do not like it started (1956).[8]

> Even when you (the US) have taken half of China, I still will not be scared. Had not Japan taken away more than half of China? Yet, later, have we not created a new China? (1957).[9]

> No matter what happens, don't be excited ... When the atomic bomb is dropped on us, we can't expect to be doing more than going to see Marx: To die is a natural thing ... In short, we are prepared to fight; when fighting a battle, don't be excited even if atomic bomb is used. Don't fear, the worst that can happen is the appearance of a chaotic world, or being killed. One has to die once – standing up or lying down. When not killed, we will fight on; even when half (of us) are killed, we will still have the other half left ... Don't be scared when facing imperialism. We will lose our strength when scared (1964).[10]

It was in this context that the *Strange Tales of the Leisure Study*, a collection of stories of ghosts, demons, fox spirits, and so on, compiled by Pu Songling (蒲松龄) (1640–1715) of the early Qing dynasty (1644–1911), became one of Mao's favorite classical Chinese novels to serve his political purposes. Based on folklore and popular legends with diverse occult themes ranging from romantic, fantastical to semi-historical and others such as the exploits of magicians or martial arts adepts, it is a collection of about five hundred tales of varying lengths from short anecdotes and jottings to fully fledged stories.[11] Written in classical Chinese style, the genre first appeared during the Jin (晋) dynasty (265–420), and continued to be popular throughout the centuries including the periods of the Tang (618–907), then the subsequent Song (960–1279), Yuan (1279–1368) and Ming (1368–1644) dynasties.

On 15 April 1959, speaking at the Sixteenth Supreme State Council Meeting regarding the 1958 Taiwan Straits Incident, Mao quoted the story 'the Mad Youth's Night Sitting' (狂生夜坐), a story from the celebrated collection of *Strange Tales of the Leisure Study* to demonstrate his own spirit

of fearlessness. By virtue of contending fearlessly and therefore actively with the ghost, the Mad Youth, Mao argued, was determined to defeat the ghost as follows:

> We should not fear any threat. In one of the old stories called 'The Mad Youth's Night Sitting', it says that there is a mad youth who does his studies until quite late at night while a ghost tries to terrify him from the window by projecting his long tongue thinking that this student would be scared stiff. The mad youth, however, calmly picking up his brush, paints his own face just like Zhang Fei's (张飞) or like Yuan Shikai's (袁世凯) of our time. He then projects his own shorter tongue. Both of them (fearlessly) stare at each other. At last, the ghost retreats. The author of the *Strange Tales of the Leisure Study*, telling us not to be scared of ghosts, says, 'The more you are scared, the more certain it is ... you will not be alive. He certainly will devour you'. We were not scared of ghosts, that was why we bombarded Quemoy and Matsu.[12]

Overcome by horror, victims, as in most Chinese ghost stories, are usually in a passive position unable to initiate a fight. However, the Mad Youth's case is an exception. The protagonist battle with the ghost, motivated by his fearlessness, originates in rational thinking. It is in this context that we should understand Mao's contending spirit.

Mao understood that one of man's fundamental instincts is fear of the supernatural. With the understanding of this element in human nature, he deliberately drew the attention of his audience to the case of the Mad Youth's confronting a ghost. He believed that man's fear of the supernatural must be overcome through a scientific understanding of himself before he could deal with his enemy. In his work *Mao Tse-tung's Purposive Contention with the Superpowers*, I argue that Mao's understanding of the Mad Youth's confrontation with the ghost was that it sprang from realizing that the ghost could not do him any physical harm. This inspired Mao to contend with the most powerful nation in the world, namely, the United States, by initiating the Taiwan Straits Incident, given his understanding that the US dared not launch a nuclear confrontation with the PRC. Certainly Mao was convinced that 'in 1958 John Foster Dulles was dangerously isolated from both Allied support and American public opinion' (Snow, 1966:641). It showed that Mao 'understood himself as well as his enemy', that is, the US,

before initiating the Incident. Therefore it would be inadequate to maintain that this resolute attitude sprang merely from Mao's spirit of fearlessness. Certainly his fearlessness was based on rational thinking.

First, from the viewpoint of rationality, 'to fear does not get things done', according to Mao, 'we will lose our strength when scared'. Second, Mao's sense of fearlessness indeed was built on the logic that from the military viewpoint 'to fear ... imperialism is to overestimate it – it is an improper attitude' (1969d:1162). Mao argued that 'imperialism all over the world ... (is) already rotten and has no future. We have reasons to despise it, and we are confident and certain that we shall defeat all the ... enemies of the Chinese people'. Thus, he went on, 'we must dare to think, dare to say, and dare to act'. Obviously, his rationale was that 'imperialism and all reactionaries, viewed in essence from a long-term perspective, must be seen for what they are – paper tigers. On this basis we must build our strategic thinking ....'[13] Thus his 'paper tiger' thesis is that imperialism was built on an unstable foundation due to its oppressive nature towards the majority of the people both internally and externally, and, as a result, imperialism would eventually crumble as it could not secure support from these great masses of the peoples (1969:99). 'On the other hand', he continued, 'there are living tigers, iron tigers, real tigers, which can eat people; they are not to be slighted. On this we should build our tactical thinking, instead of getting scared ....'[14]

In addition, the Chinese Leninist view of imperialism was rooted in, and therefore shaped by the modern Chinese historic experiences with the West (and Japan) since the mid-nineteenth century. Mao argued that 'the purpose of the imperialist powers invading China was to transform China into their own semi-colony or colony' (1967d:310) and that they 'had continued to use military, political, economic and cultural means of oppression against China' (1969d:1373). This had resulted in unequal treaties, extra-territorial rights, war indemnities, economic exploitation, concessions, the monopolization of China's banking and finance, occupation by foreign troops, massacres and the looting of Chinese cities resulting in not only bitter Chinese hatred, but acute fearfulness on the part of the Chinese people. Understandably, that Mao's implantation of fearlessness into the mind of the Chinese people was to rid them of fears and insecurity.

Having bombed the islands of Quemoy and Matsu, Mao claimed that the Taiwan Straits had become safe for navigation.[15] He declared that 'the imperialists were ghosts' and that 'not being scared of them could we defeat them'. His success inspired his decision to implant the spirit of fearlessness not only in the Chinese population, but also in the oppressed and bullied peoples around the world.

In April 1959, according to the Chinese, 'all over the world, imperialism, the reactionaries in various countries, and the revisionists organized a big anti-China chorus'.[16] In addition, they continued, 'the revisionists inside the country rose in response to international revisionism and launched a frenzied attack against the leadership of the Party'. In response, Mao commissioned He Qi-fang (何其芳), Editor-in-Chief of the Chinese Literature Section of the Chinese Academy of Science, to publish a book entitled *Stories of Not Scared of Ghosts* for his anti-'imperialist-revisionist' fight.

A month later, in a meeting with representatives and consuls of the Soviet Union and eleven other socialist countries, Mao confirmed the forthcoming publication of the *Stories of Not Scared of Ghosts*.[17] Relating the story of the Mad Youth to them, he continued, 'Our strategy is to inspire the Asian, African and American peoples not to be scared of ghosts'. This was because, according to him, 'there were lots of ghosts – imperialists – in the world: in the West as well as in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, who are the running dogs of imperialism and its reactionaries'. On the tenth of May that same year, talking to representatives of the German Democratic Party, he advised them not to be scared of ghosts: 'The more you are scared of ghosts, the more ghosts will appear', he continued, 'but if you are not scared of them, they will disappear'.[18] At the end of the year 1960, according to Mao, the Representative Conference of Eighty-first Communist and Workers Parties was convened in Moscow to announce the anti-imperialist, anti-reactionary and anti-revisionist stance of 'not to be scared of ghosts'.[19]

On 4 January 1961, having read He Qifang's draft of the *Stories of Not Scared of Ghosts*, Mao advised him, first, to strengthen the political nature of the manuscript, making it a tool for political and discursive struggles, and second, to emphasize his dictum that 'strategically we must utterly despise the enemy; tactically we must take it seriously', apart from featuring