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| YOUTH

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EDITORIAL

Springtime of Life: Youth in Chinese History

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This editorial introduces the research articles on the topic of "Youth". Further, it discusses the recent developments of censorship and self-censorship.

本期歐洲漢學學會年刊的專題是"青年"。此外還討論有關審查制度和自我審查機制的最新發展。

Keywords: Youth, Censorship, Self-censorship, Sinology, Chinese Studies, Editorial

關鍵詞：青春，青年， 審查，自我審查，漢學，编者序

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Youth, being 'young', by definition has something of immaturity and impetuousness about it. Youth is about vigour and chasing dreams. It is water gushing from its spring that, after finding its way to the lowlands in great movements, flows quietly into the sea. As the Chinese saying goes: "The Yangzi never runs backwards; man recaptures not his youth" (長江從不倒退；人不重拾青春). It is in the context of accepted "mature" norms that the significance of "youth" gains importance.

Youth, like other temporal concepts such as generation, is firstly a category of thematisation of oneself and of these new norms and ideas. Second, it is an analytical category. The authors of this second issue want to discuss both. Self-thematisation means that people belonging to an age cohort think that it is relevant to understand themselves in connection with others as a part of a distinct lost youth culture (Clark 2012). It is a "stratification of biographical experiences" and, when we grow old, it is an "imagined common origin" (Jureit 2017, 2). The May Fourth Movement, the Red Guards (Chan 1980; 1985) or the generation of rusticated youth (Bonnin 2013), the participants in the Tiananmen protests in Beijing in 1976 and 1989 (Liao 2011), or the student protests in Hong Kong and Taiwan (Ho 2021) became one of these turning points for many participants and their societies.

As an analytical category, youth describes a defined period of our life span. The fixation on parents is becoming weaker. The elderly integrates the upgrowing generation into the society as adults and as full members, endowed with new rights, responsibilities, and duties. In the eyes of these young people, this transfer is not always consensual, passive, or exclusively through traditional rituals. Youth in its temporality marks a crucial and renegotiated space of change and reorientation. It is a distinct period in our life when newly-formed groups challenge societal norms and "try to perceive historical change collectively in biographical time, linking it to the generational renewal of society" (Jureit 2015, 3). The Tiananmen protesters in 1989 were not only protesting for a better society but criticising the dominant ruling elders. The generation gap between the young and the elderly became obvious in Taiwan with the Wild Lily Student Movement and the Sunflower Student Movement. The increasing concern of the youngsters about their future in Hong Kong was a major impetus for Hong Kong's Umbrella

Movement in 2014. These concerns of mainly young people developed into the fight for their political rights as Hong Kongers in an unforeseen scope in the last protests of 2019/20.

In this second volume of the *Journal of the European Association for Chinese Studies*, the freshness, ambitions, and ideals of Chinese youth – whether in imperial times or in the contemporary period – are in focus. In this way, changes in religious beliefs and the alteration of women's domain of personal relationships during the Tang dynasty are explored in the contribution by Giulia Falato; the images of children in adult-oriented political cartoons of the 1950s are scrutinised with respect to the degree to which children are portrayed as being able to speak 'for themselves' in the contribution by Mariia Guleva; Helmut Opletal traces the flow of information towards the leadership at the time of the 1978-1981 Democracy Wall Movement; and Sofia Graziani explores the discourses and debates surrounding the reform of the work of the Communist Youth League during the 1980s.

Giulia Falato asks what it was to be a young girl growing up in the Tang, through a detailed analysis of the genre of "female instructions" (*nüxun*). She sheds light on the continuities and discontinuities in the moral characteristics ascribed to young women over the course of the first millennium of the Chinese empire. Although the instructions reflect the long-standing influence of Han-era prescriptions, they also bear witness to some modifications brought about for instance by Daoism and Buddhism. Her study begins with an overview of the situation in early imperial times, which were marked by a strong inner/outer dichotomy, but also by the emergence of female educators, as exemplified in Liu Xiang's *Lienü zhuan* and Ban Zhao's *Nü jie*. Falato then focuses on Tang educators, and how they adapted Han precepts to their times. Among other works, she uses the *Nü xiaojing* and the *Nü lunyu*, both of which titles bear explicit references to the classical era, "to establish an ideal dialogue with young, unmarried ladies and to impart a series of moral lessons." As guidelines for the private sphere, such instructions insist on the various stages of a woman's life, and the proper way to handle them, from their native family to their husband's, without neglecting their social aspects.

Mariia Guleva looks closely at the representation of children in the (adult-oriented) cartoon magazine *Manhua* in the 1950s. Including a broad range of illustrations by well known popular artists such as Feng Zikai, Zhang Leping, and Zhang Ding as well as by those less celebrated, she shows that the image of the child was used in a variety of ways, sometimes as a pathetic figure suffering under the woes of capitalism or pre-1949 "feudalism", sometimes as a cheerful emblem of a bright future, often drawing on traditional folk-art images of chubby infants on *nianhua* posters. One of the features of 1950s China was the "revolutionary" overthrow of long-established ideas of the respect due to age, so that children might be represented as teachers of their elders: thus a girl is shown helping her illiterate grandmother to spell out the name of Chairman Mao, and a Young Pioneer tells off an unhygienically spitting adult. In other instances, the vivid imagination of playful children is used to conjure up a vision of the bright future of socialism. The Party's emphasis in the 1950s on modernisation and development towards social and economic maturity made the growing child a natural image of "New China's" growth. Guleva examines how the *Manhua* cartoons represent the "good child" and appropriate or inappropriate adult reactions to children's behaviour under socialism, often granting these imaginary children a degree of agency not just greater than that of the adults in the cartoons, but greater than was actually enjoyed by most people in society at the time.

Based on the analysis of a great variety of official documents, **Sofia Graziani** asks how the Communist Youth League faces the new needs of the times with the beginning of the "reform and opening up". However, it could only partially meet the need for greater responsiveness to the needs of its members and of the new political ruling class in the 1980s. As a mass organisation or the traditional "transmission belt" of a Marxist-Leninist party, it is also not sufficiently independent or strong to ensure that the laboriously opened reform windows and new topics can be sustained. This documented fragility and inability to address the needs of the youth continue to decline after the suppression of the Tiananmen protests and especially with the reign of Xi Jinping.

An illuminating paper by **Helmut Opletal** reveals the extent to which CCP leaders were kept informed of what was going on at Democracy Wall during the heady days

of 1978–80, and how the aims of the young activists aligned or conflicted with the differing reform agendas promoted by such influential figures as Deng Xiaoping and Hu Yaobang. How much did high-ranking cadres really know about the grassroots movements, not just around Beijing's Democracy Wall but in far-flung parts of the country? Did the democracy activists have any impact on the reforms enacted by the Party? Opletal is careful to stress that much remains unknown, but he discusses in detail the ambiguous role played by journalists from the official Chinese media (who had their own biases and agendas) as conduits between the activists and the Party. He pays particular attention to the role of Tang Xin, a reporter/cadre with the *Beijing Daily* and the son of Tang Ke, the powerful Petroleum Industry minister. He shows clearly that discussions within the Party, and particularly within the Communist Youth League, where Hu Yaobang held sway, could be somewhat favourable towards the activists, but as we all know, Deng Xiaoping decided that no threat to the Party's authority could be permitted, and the brief "Beijing Spring" came to an end. This paper draws on extensive interviews which Opletal has conducted with activists and others involved with the Democracy Wall events; these interviews are available in full (in Chinese, German, and English) on his website.

To the historians of Chinese literature, translators, and literary critics among us, Jaroslav Průšek is well known as a highly esteemed, though somewhat legendary, major figure of European sinology in the 20th century. During times and under circumstances that made the study of Chinese literature, particularly of modern Chinese literature, almost tributary to directly opposed ideological notions, Průšek was an unconventional scholar in every sense. His vast scholarly interests, from "lyricism" as a feature at the core of Chinese modernity to the role of nomads in the formation of early Chinese culture, maintain, together with his published works, their influence on contemporary scholarship. His engaged and rigorous polemics, however, as exemplified in his notorious dispute with C.T. Hsia, remind us that the study of "things Chinese" remains closely intertwined with the schisms of our contemporary world. **Olga Lomová**'s Spotlight on Průšek succeeds in conveying the aura of his personality and at the same time lays open the historical person in "his time and place".

Ming-sho Ho turns our gaze to how young voters determined the outcome of the 2020 Taiwan elections. This case study of Taiwan shows how the ongoing demonstrations in Hong Kong and repressive policing increased fears for Taiwan's future. Younger Taiwanese citizens, who did not grow up under the authoritarian system, engage themselves in the democratic discourse because they think participation can make a substantial change.

The inaugural issue of our journal opened with the topic of censorship and self-censorship (Klotzbücher et al. 2020). One year ago, however, we could hardly anticipate the growing importance of this topic. After the Braga incident (Greatrex 2014), several European institutions and scholars have since been sanctioned by the People's Republic of China in March 2021 (Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo zhu Oumeng shituan 2021). After a leaked intervention at the Confucius Institute in Hamburg about a panel on the Tiananmen protests (Demes 2021), the Confucius Institutes in Duisburg and Hannover have confirmed that they cancelled a public book presentation at the request of the Chinese side (Mützel 2021). As these recent incidents within the German context exemplify, documented or failed actions of external threads (Rotella 2021; Yar 2021), censorship and self-censorship closely map the relationship between politics and science in any research field. The question of how an academic community discusses censorship and self-censorship touches upon how such a community sustains the autonomy of their academic discussion and their research independence.This public debate is overdue.

The ongoing discussions on commercial platforms and in social media do not reach everyone, so we are willing for this journal to become the scholarly forum for our field of Chinese Studies to document and discuss these developments. In the spotlight section of this issue, **Andreas Fulda** is the first to continue the discussion on censorship in Volume 1 by analysing the German discussion of the last few years. He identifies different topics in this discourse and concludes with recommendations on how to continue to communicate with scholars affiliated in China.

Against silence and invisibility, the outcomes of censorship and self-censorship, it is our endeavour to discuss the embeddedness and the implications for our academic positionality in our field.

This volume's reviews focus on historical research: **Huiyi Wu** has scrutinised Noël Golvers' study, published in English, of a German-born Swiss Jesuit and missionary *Johann Schreck Terrentius SJ, His European Network and the Origins of the Jesuit Library in Peking*, which sheds light on the importance of inter-European scholarly networks for knowledge transfer between the Christian world and China at the initial stage around the turn from the 16th to the 17th century. **Joseph Ciaudo** has reviewed for us Lilian Truchon's voluminous monograph *Évolution et Civilisation en Chine : Le darwinisme dans la culture politique chinoise*, which embarks on another transcultural journey. This, however, cannot be assessed by following the life and works of a historical individual. Instead, as Ciaudo sees it, the results of Truchon's research offer various and often valuable insights into and materials on a tremendously complex aspect of intellectual history. **Johannes Preiser-Kapeller**, global historian at the University of Vienna, was inspired by Kai Vogelsang's new book *China und Japan. Zwei Reiche unter einem Himmel. Eine Geschichte der sino-japanischen Kulturbeziehungen*. Preiser-Kapeller delivers a comprehensive review, which, although from an external perspective, assesses a book whose author intended to transcend the limits of history centred around myths of national culture. Beside these reviews of monographies on historical topics, **Bart Dessein** continues his reviewing of the Princeton University Press edition of Chih-Chung Tsai's cartoon versions of Chinese classics, this time the *Dao De Jing*.

The volume concludes, as usual, with a **list of recently defended PhDs**, which reflects the wide range of European institutions for pursuing graduate work in Chinese studies, from Barcelona to Oslo, and from Bucharest to Stockholm. Besides providing English abstracts, each entry often contains links to online repositories where the dissertations can be downloaded.

Last but not least: We are happy to announce that starting from JEACS, vol. 3 (2022), we will also include another spotlight subsection on "resources".

Finally, the editorial team gladly welcomes Alison Hardie (Leeds) as its sixth active member. All of you who want to contribute to this journal, please get in touch with us.

And follow us on Twitter via our new Twitter account @JournalEACS for new Calls for Papers and announcements (https://twitter.com/JournalEACS).

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Falato, Giulia. "Growing Up in the Inner Chambers in late Tang Times: Moral Duties and Social Expectations". *Journal of the European Association for Chinese Studies*, vol. 2 (2021): 11–35.
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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Growing Up in the Inner Chambers in Late Tang Times: Moral Duties and Social Expectations

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This study proposes to explore the moral precepts, daily duties, and ritual practices addressed to young girls in the late Tang 唐 period (eighth to tenth century). It relies on works written for women by women, which on the one hand reproduced some of the female tasks and virtues codified during the Han 漢 dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE), but on the other introduced a number of time-specific innovations. These ranged from changes in religious beliefs, particularly due to the predominant role of Buddhism and Daoism in post-Han society, to the alteration of women's domain of personal relationships, especially regarding their husbands, family members, and guests. By intercepting and highlighting such elements of discontinuity within preexisting tradition, this paper will analyse how young girls' domain of agency within the family (the inner chambers) and the broader society changed over time. Moreover, through the examination of moral and ritual elements of female education, this work will provide fresh insights into how the roles of daughters, wives, and mothers were understood in the late Tang period, with a particular emphasis on their complementarity, rather than subordination, to male figures. The selected texts examined below, all belonging to the *nüxun* 女訓 (female instruction) genre of the late Tang period, will be treated as invaluable sources of the cultural history of women and family units between the eighth and tenth centuries.

本文旨在探究唐末女子教育以及女性在社會和日常生活中的道德義務。主要通過由女性爲教導女子撰寫的作品如女孝經、女論語等分析唐代婦女和家庭教育的特點及其與漢代的區別。隨著社會與家庭的演變，女訓在唐代也衍生出新的特點，其中夫妻關係、主客禮儀、宗教信仰等都有時代的烙印。文章將重新評估唐末女性在家庭和社會中的地位並展示對女性道德期望的嬗變。

Keywords: Tang education, Han education, nüxun, womanly duties, social expectations

關鍵詞：唐代教育，漢代教育，女訓，女工，社會期望

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Introduction

What did it mean to grow up as a woman during the Tang dynasty (618–907)? The varied repertoire of archaeological and textual sources available today draws a complex and fascinating picture of the female condition during the Chinese medieval period. Aside from the most notable political figures such as Empress Wu Zetian 武則天 (624–705), Empress Wei 韋 (d. 710), and the imperial consort Yang Guifei 楊貴妃 (719–756), the extraordinary diversity of women's experiences during the Tang is exemplified by their many achievements and contributions to a number of fields.[1] However, in a world still largely based on the traditional cosmological assumption, inherited from the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE), that the male element (*yang* 陽) dominated the female element (*yin* 陰),[2] the historical and legal records of the time failed to take into account the complexity of women's lives, and consistently depicted them in their roles of daughters, wives, and mothers (Hinsch 2020, 9; Pissin 2012, 45–46).

By adapting to the exceptional socio-cultural transformation of the period, including the slow decline of aristocratic families, the renewal of the examination system, and the revitalisation of Confucianism, women readily found alternative ways to make up for their exclusion from the public domain, such as by consolidating their power within the family realm (Hinsch 2020, 29) or by cultivating literary talents. Education, interpreted as the process through which the intellectual and moral potential of a child is developed (Kinney, 1995, 12), offers an interesting glimpse into how Tang girls were shaped into their roles, and into the tools they used to empower themselves within the

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[1] For a comprehensive and recent examination of women's role in Tang society see Hinsch (2020), which provided useful theoretical resources for the revision of this study, alongside Ko's (1994) pioneering work on women's cultural history in Ming-Qing China.

[2] The reevaluation of the hierarchical relationship between *yin* 陰 and *yang* 陽 dates back to the Han period, when Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (c. 179–104 BCE) presented evidence from canonical texts suggesting that the former was subordinate to the latter. Drawing from cosmological theories that discussed the position and interrelation of Heaven (*tian* 天) and Earth (*di* 地), or *qian* 乾 ("pure yang") and *kun* 坤 ("pure yin") in the universal order, Han Confucianism paved the way for a new hierarchical world view, which advocated gender-specific roles and the differentiation of duties, relegating women to the domestic sphere. For recent discussions on Dong Zhongshu's theories and how these affected gender relations from the Han dynasty, see Indraccolo 2011, IX-X, and Pang-White 2018, 31-37.

boundaries of social expectations. Hence, this study will explore the educational practices aimed at young women from the late Tang period and how these affected their position and relations within the family. It will focus on the era of political turmoil following the An Lushan 安祿山 (755–763) rebellion, when growing anxiety for the fate of the state brought about a revival of strict Confucian etiquette. Such an attitude was reflected in the books for female instruction (*nüxun* 女訓),[3] which were texts written by women and addressed to female readers from various social strata. These works on the one hand reproduced some of the female tasks and virtues codified during the Han dynasty, but on the other introduced a number of time-specific innovations. Given the prescriptive nature of these texts and the impossibility of attesting to what extent their teachings were put into practice in daily life, this study will not venture into a micro-historical investigation of the actual living conditions of late Tang girls, but it will rather act as a testament of the increasing "popularisation" of Confucian education and how this was adapted to the ever-changing Tang society.[4]

Women and the inner chambers in the Early Imperial period

In order to effectively understand how precepts and practices of female instruction changed under the Tang, it is necessary to look back at the Han period, when pedagogical theories were refined and integrated into broader cosmological discussions, and moral education became associated with the ideal of a peaceful and stable society. The new form of Confucianism that emerged in this period also had a long-lasting

[3] The *nüxun* 女訓 (instructions for women) tradition existed from at least the Eastern Han period (25–220 CE), thanks to Ban Zhao 班昭's (c. 45–117 CE) *Nü jie* 女誡, (Admonitions for Women, c. 100 CE), the earliest extant text specifically aimed at the education of women. The text comprised a preface and seven chapters, which illustrated the wifely way (*fudao* 婦道), namely the recommended conduct, domestic duties, relationship with one's husband, parents-in-law, and other members of the family, etc. *Nü jie* set the trend for its genre and became the source of inspiration for generations of *nüxun* authors. As we shall see in the following sections, *Nü jie* was later included in *Nü sishu* 女四書 (Four Books for Women), the codified canon of conduct books for women. For a detailed examination of the *Nü sishu* with an annotated translation in English, quoted in this study, see Pang-White 2018. See also Indraccolo 2011, who translated and analysed the canon in Italian.

[4] This feature is particularly evident in the *Nü lunyu* 女論語 (Analects for women), which will be examined in the following sections; see Hinsch 2020, 99.

impact on the role of women within the family and in the broader society. The redefinition of social hierarchy during the Han reinforced the ritual boundary between genders, exemplified by the principle of "differentiation between men and women (*nannü zhi bie* 男女之別)", which prescribed specific, but complementary, sets of obligations which male and female members of a family had to fulfil (Li-Hsiang 2004, 47). In discussing gender-specific roles and duties and how, from the early imperial era, these gradually came to regulate man-woman relationships, it is also essential to delineate the particular domains associated with their sphere of agency: the binary *nei/wai* 內/外 (interior/exterior). Traditionally connected with the Western dualistic concept of private/public, and generally blamed for the perceived static structure of Chinese society, the *nei/wai* formula has already been examined in a broader philosophical framework and proved to be more "prescriptive than descriptive of how gender relations really worked" (Ko 1994, 12).

Early canonical texts provide significant contributions towards reconstructing the narrative of gender differentiation: in the *Yijing* 易經 or *Zhouyi* 周易 (Classic of Changes), for instance, this distinction relied on the observance of specific duties (or "positions" *zheng wei* 正位), which for women tended toward the administration of domestic affairs (*nei*), while men were projected outward to the external sphere and dealt with public matters:

> "The principle of righteousness of Heaven and Earth [prescribes] that, within the family, the proper place of a woman is the interior, while the proper place of a man is the exterior (家人，女正位乎內，男正位乎外，天地之大義也)."[5]

A few centuries later, the *Liji* 禮記 (Record of Rites), compiled in the early Han period, introduced a new dimension to *nei/wai*, as they were shaped into physical spaces, often separated by real or conventional margins that were not to be crossed:

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[5] See ZYJJ 8. 1. Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, library and archival access at the time of writing was extremely limited. I have therefore consulted and used either published primary sources or translations, which have sometimes been adapted. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are mine.

> "The observances of propriety commence with a careful attention to the relations between husband and wife. They built their mansion and its apartments, distinguishing between exterior and interior parts. The men occupied the exterior; the woman the interior. [⋯] The men did not enter the interior, the women did not come out into the exterior (禮，始於謹夫婦，為宮室，辨外內。男子居外，女子居內 [⋯]。男不入，女不出。)." (Legge 1967, 470)

In light of these normative precepts, the "interior" or "inner chambers" (my translation choice for "*nei*" when applied to the specific context of a household) could actually symbolise the reclusive condition of Chinese women, the limit within which their agency extended. However, if we look at the family as a microcosm for Chinese society, we notice that the *nei/wai* boundaries were continuously renegotiated as the historical context changed (Ko 1994, 13) and so was their dwellers' sphere of influence.

It was also during the Han period that women were fully legitimised as educators, when the authoritative thinker Liu Xiang 劉向's (77–6 BCE) *Lienü zhuan* 列女傳 (Biographies of Exemplary Women) introduced mothers as the primary agents of the moral development of a child.[6] Hence, as the prescribed space of agency for women, the inner chambers came to epitomise the place where life was generated, education was imparted, and where mothers could fully exert their power. A woman's role in shaping children's temperaments began even before giving birth with the so-called *taijiao* 胎教 (foetal education), which required future mothers to follow a strict code of discipline in their posture, moral conduct, eating, and sleeping habits in order to favour the correct development of their baby.[7] The mother-child relationship was particularly nurtured in the first few years after their birth, when morally outstanding '*mu* 母' (mothers, female elders) acted as primary caregivers and looked after the physical and moral

6 See the "Preface" to "The Maternal Models (Muyi 母儀)" translated by Kinney (2014, 1).

7 Examples of foetal or prenatal education date back to the pre-Han period, although the term first appeared in Jia Yi 賈誼's (201–169 BCE) *Xinshu* 新書 (New Writings). It was based on the idea that a child's development in the womb was interconnected with environmental influences to which pregnant women were subjected. Although *taijiao* practices were not equally followed at all social strata, they were also revitalised by Neo-Confucian education during the Song period. See Kinney 1995, 27-28, for a study of the Han *taijiao*, and Pissin 2009, 246–250, for its significance in Tang China.

wellbeing of children. Although young boys and girls could enjoy relative freedom within the household until the age of six *sui* 歲, waking up late and eating whenever they wanted (Legge 1967, 452), between the ages of six and nine they still followed a similar educational path and were exposed to the same rudiments of literacy, numerical training, and some aspects of ritual propriety.[8] The turning point happened at the age of ten *sui*: it was at that moment that boys were projected out to the external world, leaving home to be initiated into the earliest stages of their education, while girls were confined behind the closed doors of the inner chambers to begin learning womanly work.

> "A girl at the age of ten ceased to go out (from the women's apartments). Her governess taught her (the arts of) pleasing speech and manners, to be docile and obedient, to handle hempen fibres, to deal with the cocoons, to weave silks and form fillets, learn (all) woman's work, how to furnish garments, to watch sacrifices, to supply liquors and sauces, to fill the various stands and dishes with pickles and brine, and to assist in setting forth the appurtenances for the ceremonies. (女子十年不出，姆教婉娩聽從，執麻枲，治絲繭，織紝組紃，學女事以共衣服，觀於祭祀，納酒漿、籩豆、菹醢，禮相助奠.)" (Legge, 1967, 479)

The age of ten *sui*, therefore, marked an important moment in the life of young children: as their educational paths went separate ways, their spheres of agency were also sharply redefined. Outside of the domestic domain, boys established their first external bond with a master, who was in charge of teaching them the literary and ritual knowledge required to become a valid member of society,[9] while girls began their personal cultivation under the supervision of their mothers and other female members of

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[8] "At six years, they are taught numbers and the names of the cardinal points; at the age of seven, boys and girls did not occupy the same mat nor eat together; at eight, when going out or coming in at a gate or door, and when going to their mats to eat or drink, they were required to follow their elders: the teaching of yielding to others was now begun; at nine, they were taught how to number the days. (六年教之數與方名。七年男女不同席，不共食。八年出入門戶及即席飲食，必後長者，始教之讓。九年教之數日。)" See Legge, 1967, 478.

[9] As we shall see below, the educational process was inevitably strongly entangled with the socio-cultural context. In the early imperial period, for instance, the basic rules of propriety and etiquette for boys (*you yi* 幼儀) were a part of elementary learning (*xiaoxue* 小學) alongside reading (*shu* 書) and counting (*shu* 數). From the age of 13, children were initiated in the "great arts" (*dayi* 大藝), which comprised propriety (*li* 禮), music (*yue* 樂), archery (*she* 射),

the family. Female education had one specific purpose: preparing daughters for marriage and providing them with the means to execute their future duties as wives and mothers. Literacy was therefore not deemed as necessary to their place and obligations within the family, which were embodied in the *sancong side* 三從四德 (three followings and four virtues).The idea that a woman, in order to comply with the righteous Way, should "follow (*cong* 從)" her father and older brother in her natal family, or husband or son after her marriage, had its roots in the *Liji* and was meant to become one of the "pillars of Confucian ethics" alongside the *nei/wai* differentiation (Pang-White 2018, 43; Ko 1994, 6). It was also the *Liji* that mentioned the *side* for the first time, as teachings that young women received in the three months preceding their wedding.[10] These norms of conduct were transmitted to the Tang dynasty mainly thanks to Ban Zhao 班昭's (c. 45–117 CE) *Nü jie* 女誡 (Admonitions for Women, c. 100 CE), which was utilised alongside *Lienü zhuan* as core material for education in the inner chambers (Hinsch 2020, 92).

As we shall see in the following sections, while continuing to take Ban Zhao as the highest authority in the domain of female instruction, Tang educators did not solely rely on past models, but strove to find time-specific solutions to the new challenges and social issues they were facing.

Society, family and education in the Tang dynasty

By the time the Sui (581–618) and Tang reunited "all under Heaven", the physical and cultural boundaries between *nei* and *wai* had already shifted many times, redesignating the notions of "civility and bestiality" and "centre and periphery" of the empire.[11]

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and charioteering (*yu* 御). For an overview on traditional education in imperial China, see Bai 2005, 21-46. From the Tang period onwards, upper class families gradually started neglecting martial skills such as archery and charioteering in favour of a more erudite approach to instruction, in accordance with the transformation taking place within the aristocratic system (Ebrey 2010, 114).

[10] "Therefore, anciently, for three months before the marriage of a young lady, [...] she was taught the wifely virtues, speech, appearance, and work. (是以古者婦人先嫁三月 [...] 教以婦德、婦言、婦容、婦功)" Adapted from Legge 1967, 432.

[11] For an insightful discussion on *nei/wai* as a special boundary between the imperial court and the outside world, see Li-Hsiang 2010, 42–44.

A number of additional dramatic changes characterised the almost three centuries of Tang rule, from the consolidation of the bureaucratic system at governmental level to the blossoming of extended families[12] and the slow but inexorable "Confucianisation" of the cultural elite (Knapp 2005, 13–21). Such a complex, vibrant society was reflected in the revitalised educational programme aimed at the younger generations, which started with emperor Taizong 太宗's (r. 626–649) modernised curriculum and opening of official schools (Bai 2005, 25). Following the reform of the examination system in the late seventh century, literary education acquired an increasing importance among elite families, and was fostered alongside moral cultivation by making use of canonical books (Pissin 2009, 215).

With regard to what constituted the literary canon in Tang times, the two official histories offer a slightly different explanation. While the *Jiu Tangshu* 舊唐書 (Old Book of Tang), compiled during the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period (907–979), spoke of 12 literary categories that qualified as "*jing* 經 (classic, canonical text)", the *Xin Tangshu* 新唐書 (New Book of Tang) of the Song dynasty (960–1279) recorded only 11.[13] In both histories the "elementary learning (*xiaoxue* 小學)" section comprised materials for the acquisition of characters and pronunciation (*ziti shengyun* 字體聲韻), thus marking a differentiation between works on literary skills and conduct books, such as the *Liji*, the *Xiaojing* 孝經 (Classic of Filial Piety), and the *Lunyu* 論語 (Analects). In quantitative terms, literary productions of the "elementary learning" genre amounted to 797 volumes in the *Jiu Tangshu* and to 2,045 volumes in the *Xin Tangshu*, featuring mostly wordbooks or primers for speech eloquence.

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[12] There is general scholarly consensus that family units gradually became larger and more complex from at least the Eastern Han period. This phenomenon was initially more evident within the elite class, but by the Tang dynasty it extended to all social strata. As reported by Knapp, the average family on the tax register from AD 747 had 6.3 people, while 25% of registered families counted over nine members. For a comprehensive examination of the evolution of extended families and the reasons behind this, see Knapp 2005, 13–17.

[13] These included: "*Yi* 易 (Changes)", "*Shu* 書 (Documents)", "*Shi* 詩 (Odes)", "*Li* 禮 (Rites)", "*Yue* 樂 (Music)", "*Chunqiu* 春秋 (Spring and Autumn [Annals])", "*Xiaojing* 孝經 (Classic of Filial Piety)", "*Lunyu* 論語 (Analects)", "*Chenwei* 讖緯 (Confucian divinatory books)", "*Jingjie* 經解 (Commentaries)", and "*Xiaoxue* 小學 (Elementary learning)". The *Jiu Tangshu* differentiated between three types of "divinatory (*chenhou* 讖候)" works: "*tuwei* 圖緯", "*jingjie* 經解", and "*guxun* 詁訓". In the *Xin Tangshu* the first and the third category were clustered under the "Confucian divinatory books" genre, which began circulating from the Eastern Han period (XTS, 57.1451).

Authoritative texts aimed at girls' moral instruction, such as Liu Xiang's *Lienü zhuan* and Ban Zhao's *Nüjie*, featured respectively in the "Histories section (*shibu* 史部)" and in the "Masters section (*zibu* 子部)" of the *Jiu Tangshu* and were a testament to the increasingly prominent status conferred upon female education (JTS 33. 122–123). In the *Xin Tangshu* the *nüxun* genre reached full maturity, as it appeared as a stand-alone category and came to include a number of innovative literary productions of the time, such as empress Zhang Sun 長孫's (601–636) *Nüze* 女則 (Rules for Girls), Wang Fangqing 王方慶's (d. 702) *Nüji* 女紀 (Records for women), and the *Nü lunyu* 女論語 (Analects for women) by the Song sisters (XTS 58.160–161).

The development of female pedagogical literature undoubtedly reflected an increasing acknowledgement of educated women's contributions to the domestic and public sphere. As persuasively argued in a popular mid-Tang treatise, *Tai gong jiajiao* 太公家教 (Master Tai's Family Education): "If you don't educate girls as you raise them, you might as well raise pigs [instead]. (養女不教，不如養豬)" (Zhou 2005, 20). Poet Li Shangyin 李商隱 (813–858) held similar views, and considered it an "unjust treatment (*wangqu* 枉屈)" not to educate girls in the same way as boys.[14] Thus, Tang families took the business of female instruction very seriously, as attested to by a number of anecdotes in *the Jiu Tangshu* and the *Xin Tangshu* (Zheng and Zhu, 2002, 413–415). Mothers once again held primary responsibility for the education process, although it was not uncommon for female masters (*mushi* 姆師) to tutor the daughters of prominent families. When mothers were not present, other family members took charge of their role, with fathers or older siblings acting *in loco matris*, as in the case of Song Ruoxin 宋若莘 (768–820), credited as the compiler of the famous *Nü lunyu* and described as a strict instructor of her four sisters.[15]

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[14] See *Yishan zazuan* 義山雜纂 (Miscellaneous Records by Yishan), quoted from Zhou 2005, 20. Li Shangyin's benevolent attitude towards the children of his family, particularly girls, is also attested to by the requiem he wrote for his niece Jiji, who died only a few months after her birth. Although the piece does not advocate education, it speaks in direct terms of an uncle's deep affection for his prematurely lost niece and of ritual propriety for the burial of children: "With the help of geomancers I have chosen a plot for your grave and a tombstone with an inscription. I know I am doing more than what proprieties would allow for a child, but how can I do less than my deep feelings demand?" See Wu 1995, 141–142.

[15] Biographic information on the Song sisters is recorded in the JTS 77.351 and XTS 52.263. See also Zhou 2005, 23.

In terms of purpose and content, Tang *nüxun* works were conceived as material for the cultivation of the wifely way (*fudao* 婦道), which integrated rules of conduct, literary skills, and housework (*nügong* 女工). As we shall see in the following section, the authors looked at the Han, particularly at Ban Zhao, as everlasting examples of virtue, but did not hesitate to adapt her teachings to the current times. The following examination is based on two of the most influential treatises of Tang female education: the *Nü xiaojing* 女孝經 (Classic of Filial Piety for Women) compiled in the mid-eighth century by Madam Zheng 鄭氏,[16] and the aforementioned *Nü lunyu*, composed by Song Ruoxin and revised by her sister Ruozhao 若昭 (761–828).[17] These made use of Ban Zhao's authoritative voice to establish an ideal dialogue with young, unmarried ladies and to impart a series of moral lessons, which would enable them to perform all the duties required in their new family roles. Due to the modest literacy of their readership, these texts were written in clear, if colloquial, language, although they also included quotations from other canonical works. The literary and pedagogical value of the *Nü xiaojing* and the *Nü lunyu* was meant to transcend the Tang period: during the Ming dynasty these two works became part of the *Nü sishu* 女四書 (Four Books for Women), alongside Ban Zhao's *Nüjie* and Empress Renxiaowen 仁孝文's (1361–1407) *Neixun* 內訓 (Instructions for the Inner Quarters, 1405). The *Nü sishu* echoed the Neo-Confucian canon codified during the Song dynasty, thus conferring indisputable authority on their precepts. However, during the Qing period (1644–1911) the

[16] According to Hinsch, this text had limited influence during the Tang, but was rediscovered and widely disseminated during the Song (Hinsch 2020, 96). Notwithstanding this, it has been included in this examination as a testament to aristocratic education during the Tang period. This study is based on Murray 1988, 95–129, whose work focused on the Song illustrations of the text but also provided a comprehensive analysis of most of the content, and on Woo 2002, 132–143, who compared the *Xiaojing* and the *Nü xiaojing*. My translations are based on a 1991 reprint of the original text.

[17] The authorship of this unquestionably influential work is still the subject of an ongoing debate. Some scholars have highlighted that the text could be a later forgery, since it does not appear written in dialogue form, as stated in the official histories. The original form also comprised only ten chapters, two less than the existing version. While the controversy has not yet been settled, Chen contended that the current edition could be an explanation (*shenshi* 申釋) Ruozhao compiled from her sister's work, written in colloquial language so as to reach a broader audience (Chen 1995, 68); in a more recent study, Yamazaki argued that the text might actually have been authored by Madame Wei 韋氏, the wife of the ninth-century poet Xue Meng 薛蒙, and based on Ban Zhao's *Nü jie* (Yamazaki 2002, 109; Hinsch 2020, 190). For an introduction and translation of the text, including a study of the authors and historical background, see Pang-White 2018, 71–77, and Indraccolo 2011, 21–46 (in Italian). When quoting from Pang-White's translation, only key terms in Chinese will be provided.

Nü xiaojing was replaced by another Ming text, Madame Liu 劉氏's *Nüfan jielu* 女範捷錄 (Short Records of Models for Women, c. 1580).

It would be restrictive to consider Tang education a mere prerogative of the aristocratic or official families, through which they could propagate old-fashioned values or maintain the *status quo*. In fact, the instruction of children was a preoccupation that united all social strata and was perceived just as strongly at the centre as it was at the periphery of the empire, as demonstrated by the flourishing educational environment in Dunhuang 敦煌.[18] Approximately 250 texts aimed at instructing children were brought to light in the excavations, among which were 110 books on moral conduct (Zhu 2005: 39). Their content showcases two main points: that educational practices were still gender-specific[19] and that female instruction was considered a *conditio sine qua non* for the successful management of the family. Most precepts addressing girls' moral cultivation are scattered throughout the various Tang *jiaxun* 家訓 (family instructions), with the only complete work being the *Cuishi furen xunnü wen* 崔氏夫人訓女文 (*Madame Cui's essay for instructing girls,* hereinafter *Cuishi furen*), a short *nüxun* poem that was popular in Dunhuang towards the end of the dynasty.[20] This was a seven-character rhymed essay, written by an anonymous woman on the day of her daughter's wedding. The name in the title is thought to be an alias, as the Cuis 崔 were one of the most prominent families in the northeast, whose women were regarded as highly desirable spouses by most scholar-officials (Zheng and Zhu 2002, 413; Zhao

[18] The scholarly literature that reconstructs the educational environment in late-Tang Dunhuang integrates textual analysis and material culture. It provides evidence that the complex network of schools and institutions set up at prefectural and county level, the so-called *liu xue er guan* 六學二館, extended as far as Dunhuang (Zhou 2005, 20). Between the ninth and tenth centuries 25 schools were active in the area, which were run either by the government, Buddhist temples, or private owners (Zhao 2006, 91). Even if schooling was flourishing in all areas of the empire, it was still a privilege granted only to boys, as excavated texts and wall paintings seem to confirm (Zhao 2006, 91). For comprehensive studies of the pedagogical theories and materials in Dunhuang, see Wang 1957; Zheng and Zhu 2002.

[19] Buddhist prayers are even more exemplificative in this respect, as demonstrated by Pissin's study (2009, 219–221). As an example of the gender-tailored purpose of Tang education see the following verses from *Fumu enzhong jing jiangjing wen* 父母恩重经讲经文: "Boys must be cultured and benevolent; girls should [know how to] cut and sew [clothes] and play wind and stringed instruments (男須文墨兼仁義, 女要裁縫及管弦。) (Wang 1957, 687).

[20] The background and circulation of the texts are examined in Zheng and Zhu 2002, 413–414; Zhu 2005, 40–41 and Zhao 2006, 92. The first also includes a transcription of *Cuishi furen*, which is used as source for my translation and analysis.

2006, 92). Given the popularity of the text among commoner families in Dunhuang, Zhu suggested that the poem was composed by an aristocratic woman in the capital and was somehow copied and put on the market, as attested to by the seal of the Li printing house, rediscovered on one of the three editions of the work (Zhu 2005, 41). Madame Cui's teachings are presented through the touching words of a mother to her parting daughter, whose tears reveal the reality behind the overly-celebrated rite of marriage. In simple language the text deals with tropes recurring in other *nüxun* books, such as moral conduct, the relationships with the husband and in-laws, and the importance of womanly work, thus restating that gender-specific expectations transcended social status and personal background.

Content of the Tang *nüxun*

As previously observed, female instruction remained strictly relegated to the inner chambers even as the structure and composition of family units changed over time. Women acted as role models for their younger family members and held primary responsibility for the successful outcome of their formation: "A strict mother brings up a chaste daughter, a strict father brings up a virtuous man (嚴母出貞女，嚴父出賢良)" stated the *Biancai jiajiao* 辯才家教 (Family instructions on eloquence), drawing from the long-established trope of gender-specific moral qualities. In stressing the mother-daughter connection in the educational process, the *Taigong jiajiao* also indicated that: "The method for raising daughters [prescribes that] they should not be allowed to leave their mother's side. (育女之法，莫聽離母)" (Zhu 2005, 41).

Young ladies from different social backgrounds all shared a turning point in their lives: marriage. This was the rite of passage that marked the transition from being someone's daughter to becoming someone's wife, with all the pressure and responsibility that came with being incorporated into another family. "As a daughter at home you used to receive love and tenderness; today, as someone's wife, (you) believe in predestination (在家作女慣嬌憐, 今作他婦信前緣)" (Zheng and Zhu 2002, 413), stated *Cuishi*

furen, introducing the Buddhist concept of "*yuanfen* 緣分 (destiny, predestined affinity or relationship)" to convey a sense of ineluctability to the marital bond.[21]

Girls prepared for this event from an early age: marriage was the ultimate purpose of their childhood education, when they learned how to be obedient, diligent, and filial, so that they could meet their role-specific expectations and avoid bringing shame to their paternal family. "Respect and support [your] parents-in-law, respect and serve [your] husband, treat older and younger family members with affection, and instruct sons and daughters (孝養家翁，敬事夫主，親愛尊卑，教示男女)": such were the duties of a new bride according to the *Taigong jiajiao* (Zhu 2005, 41), which also highlighted how women's domain of agency changed after marriage. After bidding farewell to their family, they moved to a new reality, where they became chiefly responsible for the inner chambers, along with household management, internal harmony, and, as mothers, for the literary and moral education of children.

So, what characterised Tang female instruction, particularly in comparison with the Han period? In what way were precepts and practices influenced by the socio-cultural environment of the time? To address these questions, this study will draw from the aforementioned *nüxun* texts to highlight the most distinctive trends of Tang female education in three specific areas: a. Natal family; b. Husband's family; and c. Social dimension.

a. Natal family

The implications marriage had on a girl's life can be inferred from the two characters that convey the meaning "to marry (of a woman)": "*jia* 嫁", which includes the pho-

[21] As products of their specific socio-cultural background, conduct books in the Tang dynasty integrated precepts from the Confucian morality, widely followed among elite families, with elements of the syncretic religious environment of the time. The aforementioned *Biancai jiajiao* is representative of this trend (Zhu 2005, 41-42). The concept of "predestination" in marriage appeared also in chapter seven of the *Nü lunyu*: " [What was] set by fate in a previous life, today results in marriage (前生緣分，今世婚姻)." For an examination of the various religious references in the *Nü lunyu*, see Pang-White 2018, 75–77.

netic component "*jia* 家 (family)", and "*gui* 歸", which hints at the concept of "belonging". Being married into a new family meant in some periods (particularly after the Song dynasty) almost completely cutting ties with one's parents, something that added a strong emotional dimension to this crucial event.[22] However, little is told about the bride-to-be's feelings in *nüxun* texts: girls were reminded of their lowly status and of their wifely duties, but these impersonal precepts seemed to imply a blind, resigned acceptance of their fate. In this context, the first two couplets of *Cuishi furen* appear almost refreshing: "The fragrant carriage and treasured horse compete in splendour, while you, my daughter, weep in sincere sorrow in front of the ancestral hall. Today I urge you not to cry, for three days after the wedding you will be able to return for a visit. (香車寶馬競爭輝， 少女堂前哭正悲。吾今勸汝不須哭， 三日拜堂還得歸.)" (Zheng and Zhu 2002, 413). While these verses provide reassurance that the mother-daughter bond was not to be completely severed after the wedding, there is no doubt about the challenges that await the new bride as she moves from being the recipient of education to becoming a future educator. Given the prominent value attributed to marriage and the social expectations associated with it, it is not surprising that the most popular *nüxun* texts emphasised the role of wife (and educator) over that of daughter. Ban Zhao's *Nü jie* was specifically composed for her daughters, who were approaching the age of marriage, but had "not learned the proper rituals of being a married woman" (Pang-White 2018, 40), whereas Madame Zheng addressed her instructions to her "unrefined (*temeng* 特蒙)" niece, who was about to become Prince Yong's consort (NXJ intro. 2). An exception to this trend can be seen in *Nü lunyu*, which clearly indicated the natal family as the origin of education, and reserved the first five chapters for the duties and moral qualities a daughter needed to cultivate. Chapter one stated that a girl's priority was to establish her person (*li shen* 立身) through fostering chastity and tranquillity. Only after mastering proper conduct and understanding differentiation ("men and women should manage the inner and outer

[22] This was, however, not the case during the Tang period. As demonstrated by Hisch's study, brides were often encouraged to preserve good relations with their parents, even if they were legally members of their husband's family. For a detailed examination of marriage practices during the Tang, see Hinsch 2020, 11–28.

sphere respectively (内外各處，男女異群)": Pang-White 2018, 83) could a girl become familiar with womanly work (*nügong* 女工) and etiquette (*lishu* 禮數). While being diligent at housework and carrying on the family ancestral rites were also crucial stages of Ban Zhao's educational process, she believed personal cultivation began with a woman becoming aware of her lowly and weak status (*beiruo* 卑弱), and bracing for a lifetime of service and unrewarded sacrifice.[23]

The Song sisters' focus on daughters' duties culminates in chapter five: "Serving one's parents (*shi fumu* 事父母)." At home, girls were expected to look after their parents' wellbeing, attending to their food and clothes and assisting them, particularly when they were ill. These filial acts, which draw extensively from the *Liji*, demonstrate that Tang women were perceived as more than just wives, while their natal family was credited for providing the natural environment to train them in the *sancong side*. After all, a daughter's success or failure in her wifely duties had an inevitable effect on her family's reputation, as eloquently summarised in "*Bai shilang zan* 白侍郎讚 (Assistant Minister Bai's Eulogy)," which concluded *Cuishi furen*: "[If a bride] lacks education, the fault falls on her parents (若乏禮儀， 過在父母)" (Zheng and Zhu 2002, 413). The trope of how the good name of a family was preserved through the descendants' virtuous deeds permeated most *jiaxun* works, transcending gender and status, but resonated particularly among the crumbling aristocracy of the mid- and late-Tang periods. For women, establishing and maintaining their reputation was inevitably associated with their moral conduct and the cultivation of specific virtues. The *Nü xiaojing* prescribed: "From empresses to commoners, it is unheard of for someone who didn't practice filial piety to be able to establish their reputation (上自皇后，下及庶人，不行孝而成名者，未之聞也)" (NXJ *intro*. 2). Conversely, "to disgrace one's relatives (*ru qin* 辱親)" was frequently used by *nüxun* authors to trigger a sense of shame in the readers and warn them against dishonourable conduct. For instance, this expedient was regularly adopted by the Song sisters when stigmatising specific female behaviour, such as being slack in the housework, learning rituals, treating guests or

[23] In particular, see chapter one of *Nü jie*, Pang-White 2018, 43–47.

relatives, and in educating children.[24] Hence, the key to maintaining a woman's and her family's reputation lay necessarily in strict obedience to moral precepts, as indicated in the original preface of the *Nü lunyu*: "If [young girls] can follow these instructions, they will become virtuous women and will not let our predecessors alone enjoy splendid reputation through the ages" (Pang-White 2018, 81).

b. Husband's family

A couplet from the *Shijing*, quoted in the *Nü xiaojing,* asserted that "When a young woman goes forth (to get married), she distances herself from her parents and siblings (女子有行，遠兄弟父母.)" (NXJ, 6.9). As a fresh addition to the new family, it was the bride's responsibility to establish good relationships with her husband's relatives, starting with winning the affection of her parents-in-law. " (Sons') wives should serve their parents-in-law as they served their own father and mother (婦事舅姑，如事父母)," stated the *Liji* (Legge 1967, 450) demonstrating that, since at least the Han dynasty, this was one of the essential wifely duties and a vital condition to win one's husband's heart (Pang-White 2018, 60–62). Attending to parents-in-law implied both practical and moral responsibilities: providing for their food and clothes, particularly in winter, and assisting them in their daily necessities (Legge 1967, 453), but also conceding to them with blind obedience and complying with their every command regardless of their own opinions.[25] Ban Zhao considered looking after the parents-in-law instrumental to fulfilling the ultimate purpose of a woman's life: honouring the husband-wife relationship and avoiding disgrace.[26] This attitude reflects the scholarly opinion that, during the Han period, the centre of the family "was not the aging parents,

[24] "Do not learn from these lazy women. [...] When they get married, they bring shame to both their natal and matrimonial families (嫁為人婦，恥辱門庭)" (Pang-White 2018, 85-87).

[25] "Do not act contrary to the in-laws' commands regarding right or wrong. Do not argue with them over what is crooked and what is straight." Adapted from Pang-White 2018, 61.

[26] The "seven reasons for repudiating one's wife (*qichu* 七出)" have been known since at least the early Han dynasty, as they were recorded in *Kongzi jiayu* 孔子家語 (School sayings of Confucius), which dates back to that period. According to Tang sources, these included: infertility, licentious behaviour, not serving the parents-in-law, stealing, being belligerent, jealous, and of ill health. See also Hinsch 2020, 27. They were also mentioned in *Nü xiaojing,*

but their able-bodied sons and their wives" (Knapp 2005, 15), a trend that seemingly shifted alongside the societal changes. Both the *Nü xiaojing* and the *Nü lunyu* prioritised the duty of serving parents-in-law over obligations to one's husband: the texts highlighted the parents' role as the "head of the husband's family (夫家之主)" (Pang-White 2018, 98) and restated that they were to be respected and loved as if they were the wife's own mother and father (NXJ, 6.9; Pang-White 2018, 98–99). Moreover, in *Nü xiaojing* the chapter "Serving parents-in-law" echoes the chapter "Serving the sovereign" in *Xiaojing*, reflecting their prominent status in the family hierarchy (Woo 2002, 135–136). While the influence of Han etiquette, particularly that of the *Liji*, appears evident in the description of the rituality addressed to the senior members of the family, *Nü xiaojing* and *Nü lunyu* are innovative in depicting the role of the daughter-in-law. Serving the husband's father and mother was no longer just an indirect tool to strengthen the matrimonial bond, but it was, more broadly, a filial duty that elevated a woman's status to a model for the inner quarters. As explained in Wang Xiang 王相's commentary to the *Nü lunyu*: "Once [a wife] completes the ritual of serving her parents-in-law to its utmost degree, in the inner quarters her sisters-in-law and children will emulate her deeds and follow her teaching" (Pang-White 2018, 100). A daughter-in-law's filiality was therefore perceived as a transformative power and as an indicator of a family's moral status, essential in establishing and preserving their reputation in the neighbourhood.

Confucian tradition considered family to be the microcosm of society and, as such, the husband-wife relationship was equated to the ruler-subject bond. As we have seen, it was during the Han dynasty that an authoritative emphasis was placed on the *yang* element, which was used to restructure the hierarchy of the reciprocal Five Cardinal Human Relationships (*wulun* 五倫) and to cast subjects, wives, and children in a lowly status (Pang-White 2018,10). This position is strongly advocated by Ban Zhao, who was certainly influenced by Dong Zhongshu's theories, although in her opinion a wife's

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where jealousy (*duji* 妒忌) appeared as the "capital offence" a woman could commit to harm her matrimonial bond (NXJ 11.13).

unconditional obedience and respect were as important as a husband's righteous behaviour (i.e. not scolding or beating her) (Pang-White 2018, 20–53). To serve one's husband was therefore justified by his association with Heaven (*tian* 天), the *yang* elements, and strength (*gang* 綱); conversely, a wife's role was equated to Earth (*di* 地), her nature dominated by the *yin* element and by gentleness (*rou* 柔). As expressed in *Nü xiaojing*: "*Yin* and *yang*, strength and gentleness are the essence of Heaven and Earth, while man and woman, husband and wife are the essence of the Human Relationships. [⋯] The husband is Heaven and the wife is Earth, neither of which can be disregarded (陰陽剛柔，天地之始；男女夫婦，人倫之始。婦地夫天，廢一不可)" (NXJ,13.16).

While the trope of "serving one's husband as Earth serves Heaven" continued well into the Tang dynasty, the marital bond, as depicted in the *nüxun* of the time, appears more balanced than during the Han. "When a young woman is married, her husband becomes the head of her person and is the closest relation of all. (女子出嫁，夫主為親)" (Pang-White 2018, 101). The husband was therefore no longer only considered "Heaven" or a hierarchically superior figure, but also "*qin* 親 (an intimate relation)".[27] "[The old saying] comparing a husband to Heaven is not to be taken lightly. The husband ought to be strong and the wife gentle; they should be kind and loving toward one another and should be mutually dependent on each other" (Pang-White 2018, 102). The chapter goes on to illustrate the various ways a wife's thoughtfulness was to be expressed, from keeping her husband's food warm when he returned late to caring for him when he was ill, to avoiding confrontation when he was angry. While still upholding the ideal of differentiation between man and woman, the Song sisters' depiction of wives resembled more that of a companion than a subject. Moreover, a departure from the trope of the quietly obedient spouse presented in the *Nü jie* is particularly evident in the passage: "Should he slide into evil ways, the wife ought to remonstrate with him repeatedly" (Pang-White 2018, 103). The duty of remonstration (*jianzheng* 諫諍) was also strongly reasserted in chapter five of *Nü xiaojing*, where

[27] It should be pointed out that in this sentence, the term "*zhu* 主" could be also interpreted as an adverb, "mainly [regarded as]". See Pang-White 2018, 101.

criticising one's husband was seen as a wife's moral obligation to avoid disaster falling on the family. Drawing from the wife/subject parallelism, the author restated how, in ancient times, remonstration enabled emperors not to lose their *Dao* 道 and to maintain their Heavenly mandate (NXJ 15.18–19). However, it was also essential that disagreements were worked out within the family, to avoid losing one's face in front of strangers, as expressed in these couplets from *Cuishi furen*: "When your husband is drunk inquire [about it] with a smile; as you come forward to receive him, assist him and accompany him to sleep. Don't humiliate or curse him in front of other people: you will certainly be able to express your disappointment once he is sober (夫婿醉來含笑問， 迎前扶侍送安眠。 莫向人前相辱罵， 醒後定是不和顏)" (Zheng and Zhu 2002, 413). When stressing a woman's responsibility to contribute to ensuring a harmonious relationship with her husband, as harmonious as the sound "of the *qin* zither and the *se* zither playing together" (Pang-White 2018, 103), Tang *nüxun* authors offered a less subordinate depiction of wives and their roles, thus bringing Heaven and Earth a bit closer together.

c. Social dimension

As we have seen, the Han conduct books mainly relegated women to the interior, limiting their social sphere to their relationships with their husbands or other members of the family. In chapter five of her *Nü jie*, Ban Zhao explicitly stated that, in order to abide by ritual propriety and righteousness, wives were "not to hold parties or gatherings to entertain their [female] peers", nor to "peek outside from inside the house" (Pang-White 2018, 57-59). Guest etiquette was not addressed in this text, with only a brief mention in chapter four, where preparing food for guests was indicated as one of the domestic duties (Pang-White 2018, 54-56). In this respect, the *Nü xiaojing* follows the same line as *Nü jie*, perhaps because they were intended for a similar readership: the young daughters of elite families. In discussing the guidelines for womanly behaviour, *Nü xiaojing* echoed the *Liji* and indicated that: "When a woman goes out of the door, she must keep her face covered. She should walk at night only with a light; and

if she has no light, she should not stir. When seeing her brothers off, she should not trespass over the doorway (出門必掩蔽其面，夜行以燭，無燭則止。送兄弟不逾於閾."[28] A similar traditionalist tone can be found in *Cuishi furen*, which did not expound on guest etiquette but offered advice about *nei/wai* interactions: "When you meet people on the street, you must salute them submissively, retreating and not rushing ahead of your seniors and juniors. Do not bring home word from the outside and do not report to strangers what is spoken within the family (路上逢人須斂手， 尊卑迴避莫湯前， 外言莫向家中說， 家語莫向外人傳。)" (Zheng and Zhu 2002, 413). While keeping a clear dividing line between the internal and external realms, *Cuishi furen* and *Nü lunyu* offer an interesting glimpse into how social interactions were incorporated into Tang female education. In particular, the Song sisters' treatise mentions guest etiquette in three chapters: "*Xue li* 學禮 (Learning the ritual)", "*Xun nannü* 訓男女 (Instructing boys and girls)", and "*Dai ke* 待客 (Hosting guests)". These chapters provide an overview of proper rules for greeting, treating, and feeding guests in three specific roles: as a daughter, as a wife, and as a mother.

While reminding girls that they "should stay within the family (當在家庭)", *Nü lunyu* seemingly implied that social interactions were a normal part of life during the Tang dynasty[29] and as such needed to be regulated by conduct norms. In "*Xue li*" the Song sisters provided advice on how daughters should behave as hosts and guests, with their duties only limited to welcoming visitors, engaging in conversation, and offering tea (Pang-White 2018, 88-90). However, looking after guests as wives or mothers was a totally different matter: everything became their responsibility, from the quality and composition of food, to the tidiness of utensils and behaviour of children, which demonstrated their ability to manage the household. Since the family reputation was at stake, the husband was also primarily involved in the role of host: "Serve guests tea and water. [Once this is done] withdraw to the back of the hall and listen for the husband's instructions. [If guests are staying,] discuss quietly with the husband whether to

[28] NXJ, 12.15–16. See also Legge 1967, 455.

[29] See, for instance, the opening of chapter 10: "Generally, every family will have guests visiting the hosts." (Pang-White 2018, 111).

kill a chicken or use millet for the meal" (Pang-White 2018, 112). Despite the subordinate role highlighted in this passage, women could also receive their husband's guests if he was not at home. A servant would first enquire about their name and origin and then the wife would receive them "if they ought to be met", offering tea and discussing the purpose of their visit before reporting to the husband (Pang-White 2018, 112).

Although the historical accuracy of these practices can hardly be confirmed, their inclusion in a widely-known text like the *Nü lunyu* is possibly a reflection of how the boundaries of the social sphere changed at the time. It is also plausible that it was a consequence of the Song sisters' writing purpose and intended readership, non-elite women, who unlike the sisters could not opt out of marriage. Perhaps it was thanks to their unique position as unmarried women from a declining aristocratic family with access to a career at court that they were able to adapt a seemingly static moral system to everyday practices. In particular, the recurring formula "Do not learn from those women (莫學他人)", and the related stigmatised behaviours, offer an interesting glimpse into the reality of family life. When it came to social interactions, for instance, *Nü lunyu* singled out the negative example of girls wandering around the village day and night, gossiping, getting drunk at friends' houses, bringing disgrace to their families, and inflicting shame upon themselves (Pang-White 2018, 88-90). Disorganised wives who were not able (or willing) to properly host guests were also sharply criticised, due to their lacking household management skills and the resulting embarrassment brought upon the husband and his visitors (Pang-White 2018, 111–113).

In conclusion, the particular stress on guest etiquette appears to be a unique feature of Tang female education, as it was not included in later canonical *nüxun* such as *Neixun* or *Nüfan jielu*. At the same time, it could also reflect a less rigid hierarchy in late Tang society and the more comprehensive, far-reaching nature of female education.

Conclusions

The three *nüxun* texts analysed above (*Nü xiaojing*, *Nü lunyu*, and *Cuishi furen*) are the product of different backgrounds and targeted a diverse readership. While explicitly drawing from Han conduct books, such as *Liji*, *Nü jie*, and *Lienü zhuan*, they also showcased time-specific trends, which reflected the socio-cultural environment of the time. Tang women were no longer depicted merely in the role of subservient wives, but also as filial daughters, with a particular emphasis on the relationship with their parents and on how their natal family prepared them for marriage and their future responsibilities. *Tang nüxun* texts also indicated parents-in-law to be the centre of the husband's family and consistently highlighted winning their affection as a new bride's primary duty, rather than just a route to her husband's heart. The marital bond was considered the foundation of the Five Human Relationships, but appeared more reciprocal than hierarchical, as depicted in the Han texts. Wives' devotion to their husbands was no longer based on the cosmological order between Heaven and Earth, but justified by sincere affection, since their relationship was predestined. Finally, while women's main sphere of agency was still the inner chambers, they were no longer precluded from social interaction, although they still needed to conform to strict guest-host etiquette.

In China, the history of women and family has always been deeply interconnected with the domestic realm (*nei*), where women's agency was realised through the management of the household, the fostering of harmonious relationships, and the education of children. However, as this study has demonstrated, family and education cannot be seen as entities detached from the socio-cultural context of the time, as they reflected innovation of a political, economic, and religious nature (Ebrey 2003, 12). In focusing on female education and on the inner chambers, this examination hoped to provide fresh perspectives on the fluidity of the *nei/wai* boundaries and on the power dynamics within late Tang families, quoting directly from women's voices.

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

How to Deal with a Good Child? Prescribed Normality in Images of Children and Child-Adult Relations in *Manhua* Magazine, 1950-1960

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Children in propaganda serve various purposes and are aimed at different audiences. This paper looks at images of children in adult-oriented political cartoons from the 1950s magazine *Manhua* 漫畫 in order to establish the prescribed norms of child behaviour and child-adult interactions. This is achieved through analysing eulogising and satirical depictions of children as embodiments of prosperity and the future, as model citizens and moral authority, as well as misbehaving individuals and victims of abuse. Special attention is paid to the degrees of children's agency, their ability to speak "for themselves" and to stand up to adults, and to the ensuing complications, e.g. the ambiguity of child-adult roles, the unclear ways for children to retain their "good nature" under bad influences, and even the whole idea of impeccably happy childhood under Chairman Mao. It is clear that children in the cartoons mostly act independently, speak up and pronounce their opinions, wishes, and judgements, and expect to be heard by adults. Therefore, children are not presented as voiceless or powerless. However, they are not given any higher position than the other social groups "exploited before the liberation" (labourers, women, ethnic minorities, etc.): their standing appears to be determined by their sense of duty and political consciousness.

針對不同群體的受眾，政治宣傳中兒童的形象往往身負多重使命。1950 年代的《漫畫》是一份以成人為受眾且帶有政治目的的半月刊。通過分析刊物中兒童的形象，筆者發現對兒童角色的歌頌與諷刺，不僅體現對繁榮社會和美好未來的展望，也展示了模範公民與道德權威的標杆。對不端行為和受害者飽受不公對待的刻畫，則是對兒童及其與成人互動時行為規範的側寫。另一方面，在漫畫中兒童應具有一定能動性，積極主動，表達所思所想，因而使之與成人之間易產生矛盾。漫畫中歌頌和批評的內容即是對這些衝突的揭露，讓人對 1950 年代兒童的社會地位有更深的理解。本文旨在闡述社會演變過程中兒童地位的提高也取決於兒童自身的責任感和政治覺悟。

Keywords: Socialist propaganda, cartoon, *Manhua* magazine, child, child-adult relation

關鍵詞：社會主義宣傳，漫畫，《漫畫》半月刊，兒童，兒童成人關係

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Introduction

Children have been used for the purposes of indoctrination, mobilisation, and advertising both as the addressees of messages and as means of conveying messages to the adult population. The two most famous examples from totalitarian propaganda, Herbert Norkus in Nazi Germany and Pavlik Morozov in the USSR, left a very noticeable impact on the way children were educated under these regimes and on the perceptions of children's normative behaviour. The detailed analysis of each boy's life and legacy shows how their mythologised biographies changed shape and purpose over time with little regard for their actual lives (Kelly 2009, 157–59, 173–74; Baird 1990, 118–19). Such an application of children's images is not limited to totalitarianism. Perceptions of children's fragility and, at the same time, importance for the future transcends national, political, and ideological borders. Margaret Peacock demonstrates how, during the Cold War, both governments and societies in the USSR and in the USA wove images of children into the dissemination of ideas about self-defence, peace, order, and the desired future (Peacock 2014). Even outside of such sharp oppositions as the Cold War antagonism, children can just as often become a tool for promoting various agendas. Images of children as happy consumers, symbols of national salvation, pathetic victims in enemies' hands, etc., have remained an effective, ever-sharp instrument. To give but a couple of examples, the British Minister of Agriculture John Gummer was shown feeding his four-year-old daughter a beef burger during the 'mad cow disease' scare of 1990 (Erlichman 1990), while, more recently, international NGOs and the Afghan government insisted on children's school attendance in spite of the immediate dangers of terrorist attacks.[1] Susan Sontag points out how a photograph of a child's mutilated body can be "used and reused" by various sides in conflicts to increase the militant spirit, to legitimise claims to be on the "right" side, and to

[1] A study of children's rights in this matter demonstrates that children "are being used as propaganda tools in the war on terror in Afghanistan by the Afghan government, and their allies and certain national and international NGOs and UN bodies which encourage and facilitate school attendance without adequate security such that the children's right to life and well-being is being treated as if secondary to their right to access education" (Grover 2011, 259).

demonstrate the "oppression and injustice" of opponents (Sontag 2004, 10).[2] On the other hand, joyful smiling children are often portrayed to describe the reliable quality of goods, a stable economic or political situation, proper social values and morals, a bright future, and a peaceful existence. In commerce, politics, religion, and art children remain ubiquitous tools for conveying various messages.

The emphases in the representation of children – both for children's own consumption and for adult audiences – reflect a variety of trends in society and the state: ways of protecting childhood, the extent of a state's involvement in private life, the degree of children's agency, and many other aspects. In the case of the 1950s People's Republic of China, where the party, state, and society were undergoing massive changes, "building socialism" and, therefore, aiming to involve each citizen of every age in multiple political and economic campaigns, the institution of childhood necessarily gained new characteristics. Child rearing and education were ways of raising the new generation of citizens – at once obedient comrades and creative revolutionaries, a paradox pointed out by Anita Chan (Chan 1985, 12). Childhood policies were aimed at strengthening the nation and multiplying the labour force and army, while at the same time dealing with the question of liberating women from childcare and domestic chores. The theoretical grounds for the importance of children were closely connected to the issues of national salvation and the modernisation of China throughout the twentieth century; such ideas were rooted in the preceding millennia of thought and vividly expressed in Lu Xun's 鲁迅 call to "save the children" (*jiujiu haizi* 救救孩子) (Lu 1931, 252; see also Pease 1995, 280, 295; Naftali 2014, 4; Tesar et al. 2019, 383). Pedagogic theories and practices were, therefore, naturally a focus for the newly established Communist government from 1949 – a matter analysed in detail by Margaret

[2] Whereas Sontag refers to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, similar principles can be found in the already mentioned Afghanistan case, where in parallel to the West's and the government's attempts at demonstrating safety through children's school attendance, the Taliban use children "to send the opposing message; that the country will remain unstable and no development progress of any kind made unless the government accedes to extremist Taliban demands" (Grover 2011, 7–8).

Tillman (Tillman 2018, 160–209). However, whereas pedagogy is concerned with children themselves and their parents and educators, the images of children became an important part of Communist propaganda for a much wider audience.

This paper looks into the ways in which the Chinese illustrated satirical magazine *Manhua* 漫畫 (*Cartoon*, published 1950-1960) portrayed children. Since the magazine was not child-oriented, the cartoons depicting young people were not meant to educate children themselves, but rather to entertain older readers and instruct them on how to interact with and learn from children, as well as to create certain aspirations in these adult audiences. Such an approach has already been applied to propaganda posters by Stephanie Donald, who emphasised that Cultural Revolution images of children "continue to exemplify desirable patterns of behaviour and to address adults" (Donald 1999, 97). Yet political cartoons show not only exemplary but also undesirable behaviour, because *Manhua* published both positive eulogising depictions (*gesonghua* 歌頌畫) and negative satirical ones (*fengcihua* 諷刺畫) in response to all the major campaigns in China at the time. This adds another dimension to such adult-oriented images of childhood.

It has been noted that children can be considered among the "subaltern" classes whose right to speak for themselves and to have agency is suppressed or challenged by the "elite" of adults (Hirschfeld 2002, 613). Thus, Mark Lupher writes about the early days of the Cultural Revolution that, "University and middle school students, and in the elite schools most of all, readily related to denunciations of educational authorities in the pre-Cultural Revolution school system" and that the big character posters (*dazibao* 大字報) "call for and celebrate the freedom, release, and empowerment of youth" (Lupher 1995, 328). As the preceding period, the 1950s, the formative years of the PRC and of the "pre-Cultural Revolution" education system, provide an interesting angle from which to study child-adult relations. By considering the displays of children's activity and the adult-child interactions in cartoons, I explore two questions: how does a "good" socialist child look and behave and how should socialist adults respond to such "good" children's actions. These questions relate to some of the

points raised in a paper about childhood and agency in children's literature, in particular to the notion of constructed childhood forming "complex manifestations of power played out within the normalised and desired ideas, beliefs and attitudes of dominant discourses" (Tesar et al. 2019, 384). However, where Tesar and his co-authors elaborate on literary creations for young readers from the most recent years, I consider the construction of "good" children in the adult gaze of the first decade of the PRC. Naturally, cartoons as a medium do not show factual relations, but their messages demonstrate both the prescribed ideal and the criticised deviations. These images are made even more expressive through comparison with the condition of children abroad, visible in the same magazine in a number of cartoons and photographs portraying infants and youths in other socialist countries and in the capitalist world. Iconological analysis and categorisation of the cartoons provide an overview of approved and disapproved behaviour, while also disclosing underlying conflicts between generations and contradictory expectations of different actors.

Sources of the study

Manhua produced 164 issues in the eleven years of its existence, first as a monthly and later as a fortnightly (starting from issue 68, July 1956) illustrated periodical.[3] For the first three years, 1950-1952, *Manhua* published black-and-white images, with only the front and back covers in full colour, each issue consisting in most cases of 22 or 28 pages. The print runs for these early issues were quite low (from 6,000 to 36,500). The time-spread over the three years was somewhat uneven: *Manhua* appeared in the summer of 1950, continued steadily throughout 1951 and the first half of 1952, but then had a pause from September 1952 to March 1953 due to reorganisation. The new version produced after that became shorter in length (12 pages, eventually increasing

[3] This study is based on the issues preserved in the libraries of the Czech Academy of Science in Prague and the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Science in St. Petersburg (issues 7 and 37–164), as well as on digital copies available in the Chinese Pamphlets collection of the Center for Research Libraries (https://dds.crl.edu/search/collection/1). Almost all other issues have been kindly supplied to me in digital form by my colleagues and friends, whom I sincerely thank for their invaluable time and help.

to 16 and 20 towards the late 1950s), but with increased print runs (near or over 100,000) and full colour inner pages, as well as covers. The editorial board was located in Shanghai until 1955, after which it was moved to Beijing. The magazine, although not directly part of the central news press, was first connected to the Shanghai branch of the Chinese Artists Association and the Cultural Bureau of the municipal administration, and later moved under the supervision of the East China Military Government Committee's News and Publishing Office, before finally being published by the People's Art Press and, thus, coming under the control of the Ministry of Culture's Arts Bureau (Altehenger 2013, 86–89).[4] *Manhua* was hardly a mass-read magazine (if only for the reason of the relatively high price of subscription and low per capita print runs even in the late 1950s), but it spread the ideas of mass-produced visual propaganda, published amateur works, and provided local level cartoonists with template images for reproduction; therefore, it has to be considered an informative source on what types of visual images were transmitted between the central government and local activists. Satire as a part of agitation and propaganda existed both in China before 1949 and in other Socialist countries (*Manhua* was largely modelled on the Soviet *Krokodil* magazine), and visual means of indoctrination retained their importance throughout the Mao years.

Children were not a central topic for *Manhua*, but at times there would be whole pages devoted to the treatment of children or their roles in society and labour (as, for example, pages 1, 2, 5, and 8–9 of issue 25, 1 June 1952; 5 cartoons on page 5 of issue 63, 18 February 1956; or the first pages of issue 113, 23 May 1958). In total, there are no less than 536 such depictions in *Manhua*. Before delving into the way these cartoons were spread through the eleven years of the magazine's existence, a remark should be made on what cartoons are taken into account. The two large age groups considered "children" in this study are infants or toddlers and primary school pupils. In some drawings a person depicted cannot be unambiguously identified as a school child or a young adult; sometimes captions and commentary mention either the age or the status

[4] For the history of the magazine, discussion of a part of its contents, and some of the biographies of artists see Altehenger 2013; Crespi 2020, 103–48; Lent and Xu 2017, 79–105.

of the person. Drawings where the depicted can be interpreted as adults and no commentary is provided are not included in the corpus for this study. However, the corpus covers youths from different geographic backgrounds, so long as they appeared in the magazine. In around 70 cases children are portrayed in China's urban surroundings, while more than 150 cartoons show them in rural parts of the country; there is also a large proportion of cartoons which cannot be unambiguously ascribed to either urban or rural areas, but without doubt show China (around 220 cases). At least 25 cartoons display children in the Soviet Union or other socialist countries, and almost 80 cartoons and photographs narrate the life of youngsters in the capitalist world. There is little class differentiation: the vast majority of depicted children are of proletarian origins; the few cartoons about China that criticise rich families' misconduct show children either as tools for their parents to obtain more wealth or as misbehaving and thus exposing the parents' lack of discipline (e.g. Xiao 1954; Miao 1955). Naturally, class division is seen in depictions of Western society, where children fall prey to bourgeois culture and turn into criminals or beggars.

Dynamics in an eleven-year span cannot be traced through a monthly or even a fortnightly magazine with precision, especially because for two years out of these eleven (1950 and 1952) the magazine was published for only half a year, and the volume of issues shifted between 12 and 30 pages. Apart from that, one should bear in mind the amount of campaigns in the first decade of the PRC. Julia Strauss has counted at least four types of campaigns in the early years of state building, three of which required the involvement of wider social groups than the immediate bureaucracy (Strauss 2006, 896–900). This means that *Manhua* together with other media had to promote multiple slogans within the limited space of the magazine. Therefore, statistical data is distorted not only by the magazine's changing frequency, but also by counting cartoons where youths are a marginal element or merely a background for another matter altogether. Nonetheless, some observations can be made from the monthly amount of the magazine's cartoons representing children (see fig. 1).

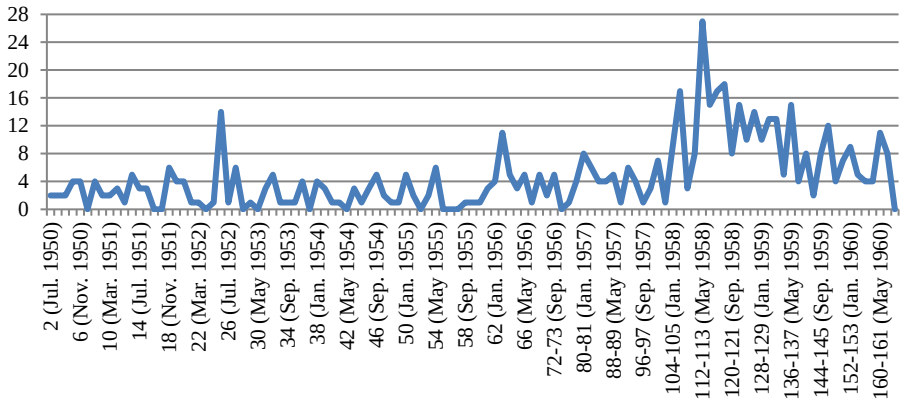

Figure 1. Number of cartoons depicting children in *Manhua*, issues 2–164, per month[5]

The average of less than five cartoons a month is visible throughout the first hundred issues (1950–1957), whereas the issues from the last years of the decade, 1958–1960, demonstrate a greater interest in depicting children. The early spike-like increases are noticeable in issues 25 (1 June 1952) and 63 (18 February 1956), followed by the frequent rises in issues 106 (8 February 1958) to 137 (23 May 1959) and, to a lesser degree, until the end of the magazine's publication in 1960. The February elevations were connected to the theme of women and family related to International Women's Day (8 March), with children as a necessary attribute of both. May and June issues sometimes celebrated youth due to International Children's Day (1 June), and that was when children took up a prominent place on the magazine's covers (Tan 1952; Ma and Zhang 1958; Tian, Wang & Li 1959). The overall increase in the later years of the decade can be explained by the fact that by then a generation of children born "after liberation" grew into the age of active "little revolutionaries" who would be the "successors" (*jiebanren* 接班人) in the socialist country (e.g. Feng 1959, fig. 2).[6]

[5] Issues 68–164 (fortnightly) are represented in pairs to better reflect the monthly dynamic. This causes a certain distortion in comparison to the monthly issues; however, as the rise occurs not in summer 1956, when the magazine became fortnightly, but around February 1958, the distortion can be ignored to some extent.

[6] Feng Zikai 豐子愷 (1898–1975) was a highly acclaimed cartoonist whose works have regained popularity lately. He paid special attention to depictions of children, but was more actively published before 1949 than in the Mao years. His observations of children in pre-Communist years are analysed in Laureillard 2014. For more about the

Figure 2. Feng Zikai 豐子愷 (1959).[7]

At the same time, the policies of the Great Leap Forward brought children's images among the means of showing large harvests, the benefits of people's communes, and the masses' enthusiasm for work and education, while contrasting these against the miseries of life in capitalist countries.

The only theme that showed a clear change over the decade is the sufferings of children in pre-1949 China: such cartoons appeared at least ten times in 1950–1952, but became very rare in later years (no more than eight in 1953–1960). Artists aimed to compare the newer developments, creating a more positive image and juxtaposing China's achievements not so much with its own sad past as with contemporaneous crises in the capitalist camp. Additionally, cartoons from the years of the Korean War

transformations of his art and world views during the War of Resistance, the Civil War, and the decades after 1949, see Barmé 2002: 236–346; Harbsmeier 1984: 127–198; Hung 1990.

[7] The text above the drawing says: "Ten-year-old children's happiness and wisdom are deep, they are the same age as new China. Today they have the honour to join the Young Pioneers troops, in future years they will certainly be successors." Text on the placards the girl and boy are holding says: "Celebrating National Day."

(1950–1953) promoted greater love for the soldiers of the People's Liberation Army, so children can be found expressing their admiration for the "heroic warriors" – this theme naturally withdrew from the foreground with the end of the war. Other matters where children frequently appeared in cartoons remained relatively stable during the decade, so this paper is organised not by chronological but by thematic principle. It first looks at children as "auspicious" symbols and embodiments of the nation's future development; it then explores the young as exemplary citizens and paragons of morality; and finally delves into cartoons criticising misbehaviour by children or towards them.

Prosperity and the future

The tradition of depicting children on religious, funerary, or auspicious images (such as tomb reliefs, Buddhist sculpture, paintings on silk and paper, popular prints, etc.) goes a long way back in China. Han-period tombs (most vividly, the famous Wu family shrines, *Wu shi ci* 武氏祠, second century AD) were equipped with some images of children from didactic stories about filial piety (Wu 1995). During the next centuries, small children became part of iconographic tradition in the Buddhist portrayal of the Pure Land and of Buddha's entourage. Depiction of children (predominantly boys) moved out of an exclusively religious and funerary context by the eighth century (Wicks and Avril 2002, 10) and from the Tang and Song periods onwards developed into a vastly popular genre of auspicious pictures with messages of longevity, abundant and talented offspring, and a happy and prosperous life. Popular prints, such as New Year pictures (*nianhua* 年畫) and deity pictures (*shenhua* 神畫), were wide-spread in imperial China and retain a lot of their attraction to the present day. Cards of good wishes and decorative pictures often show chubby boys playing with auspicious plants and animals and carrying attributes of power, learning, prosperity, and happiness – the boys themselves being the auspicious symbols of healthy male offspring.

Figure 3. Yu Ren 于人 (1959).[8]

When the CCP took power in 1949, these images did not disappear but were partly remoulded to suit new goals. The colourful propaganda posters appropriated their language to promote the promise of a bright socialist future, while also relying on the printing techniques developed during the Republican decades (e.g., Min et al. 2015, 478–81, 486, 577, 584; Chineseposters.net). *Manhua*'s cartoonists also took up some *nianhua*-like aesthetics to demonstrate the achievements of the new state and socialism's benefits for simple families of labourers, albeit with a little less lustre than the propaganda posters, due to the need for cheap and fast printing. In this study's body of sources, from around 460 cartoons showing children in China and the socialist camp, 59 can be described as closely following popular print conventions, of which 7 were placed on the front cover of the magazine. Prominently resembling popular prints are the cartoons "Five children pass exams" (Yu 1959, fig. 3), "Jubilantly greeting National Day" (Zhang 1959, fig. 4), and "Treasure bowl" (Zheng 1958). The first cartoon is filled with *nianhua* attributes: pine, carp, peaches, jade and gold ornaments worn by the children, as well as babies' hairstyles and red bibs. The second cartoon is also explicit in following the tradition: plump children are carrying a peach, musical instruments, and an elephant-shaped vessel overflowing with goods. Yet the differences from the purely auspicious prints of the past are just as evident: in fig. 4 children are dressed in contemporary clothes, they carry staple crops (grain and cotton) and industrial items (coal and, presumably, steel), and both fig. 3 and fig. 4 contain political

[8] Note the 'archaic' calligraphy of the section headline, "New spring greetings". The inscription on all of the children's bibs reads, "People's commune Red Flag".

messages: the benefits of people's communes in the first case and the glory of the PRC's tenth anniversary in the second. In "Treasure bowl" a boy and a girl are carrying a pile of boat-shaped ingots, which, instead of being made of precious metal, are various kinds of fertilisers, from stove cinders in the bottom through various types of animal manure to human faeces at the very top. This was again a response to the policy of collecting all available fertilisers, and such a down-to-earth interpretation of "riches" is hardly imaginable in old popular prints, even though the chief idea of "treasure" is clearly still present.

Figure 4. Zhang Leping 張樂平 (1959).[9]

Quite often children appeared in popular-print-like cartoons to emphasize scale: small humans portrayed next to giant vegetables, cotton bolls, pigs, or bulls underlined the massive harvest and, sometimes, the need for collective effort to plant and gather it (Te 1954; Li 1956; Liu and Yu 1957; Meng 1958; Bi 1958). The concept of years passing related to the *nianhua* imagery developed into visualisations of auspiciously-dressed children (in red garments and bibs) as embodiments of the New Year or future years – although the departure from strictly local tradition is clear in a cartoon where a group of children are pulling a turnip. The turnip represents a 70% increase in agricultural production, and the seven children running to help each other pull it out are the years 1959–1965. The whole item is a eulogising cartoon to celebrate the Soviet

[9] The text on the peach reads, "Long live chairman Mao"; on the elephant, "Long live the Fatherland".

Union's newly announced seven-year plan, with the seven children, therefore, dressed in "Slavic" costumes and the narrative a clear reference to the Russian[10] folk tale about a giant turnip (Jiang 1959).

Another aspect is the child's "innocence" or "purity": in a number of images a child becomes an indicator of peaceful intentions and follows the conventional depiction of an "angel", a winged baby, or an infant riding a dove of peace (Li 1950; Gaoliangyefu 1959; Bi 1959; Luo 1959). Such images had frequently been used earlier, in pre-1949 cartoons. In the 1950s, they stood for the desire of the socialist countries and "people of the world (*shijie renmin* 世界人民)" to stop wars and peacefully conquer outer space (after the successful launch of the Soviet Sputnik in October 1957). In contrast, the image of a child New Year in the capitalist world, cartoons about which were never created in the popular print style, was that of a waif, suffering from cold, hunger, and mistreatment (Zhang 1958; Zheng 1959, fig. 5).

Figure 5. Zheng Wenzhong 鄭文中 (1959).[11]

[10] The folk tale "Turnip" (*Repka*) appears in a number of European languages, but since here it is connected to the Soviet Union, I describe it as Russian. The tale was collected in the Archangelsk and Vologda regions in the mid-nineteenth century (see Russian literature and folklore website, http://feb-web.ru/feb/skazki/texts/af0/af1/af1-1074.htm).

[11] The caption reads, "Conscript press-gang: 'Who cares if he's young or old, just grab anyone!'" The inscription on the helmet in the hands of the person on the left (most probably a caricature of Syngman Rhee 이승만) reads, "National defence force." The plaque in the top left corner reads, "Seoul."

In these images, as in the preceding tradition of popular prints, children were primarily the medium for carrying somebody else's message – parents' hopes in the case of traditional prints and governmental propaganda in the case of cartoons. Children, especially infants, were objects of care or aspirations, mostly voiceless and lacking agency. However, cartoons which moved away from the popular print style depict children as having more opportunities to speak "for themselves" and to express their "own" wishes. This brings us to the cartoons portraying children as "the future generation".

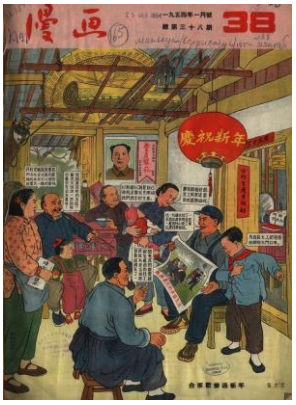

Figure 6. Zhang Wenyuan 張文元 (1954).

The front cover of a January 1954 issue of *Manhua* shows the home of a large family of at least nine people: elderly grandparents sitting slightly in the background at a nicely carved table, the grandfather holding a long pipe and supporting a little girl who is standing a little shakily; two middle-aged women, one of them holding a recently-born infant; two men sitting on stools closer to the foreground, one of them showing a propaganda poster to the others; and a boy of about ten years old wearing a Young Pioneer's (*shaoxiandui* 少先隊) red scarf. The whole interior is blessed by the portrait of Mao Zedong 毛澤東 placed on the wall behind the old couple, the chairman benevolently looking above the family into the eyes of anyone holding the magazine (Zhang 1954, fig. 6). The smallest children – the infant and the little girl – remain silent, the infant even seemingly asleep, the girl only pointing a chubby finger at the colourful poster held by one of the men. On the other hand, each adult and the oldest of the

children – the Pioneer boy – are supplied with square-shaped word-bubbles.[12] Thus, the cartoon demonstrates that all family members, male and female, old and young, are equal, participating in the conversation freely. Their words are highly politicised. The speakers note that life has become better after the liberation; that much more still has to be done to catch up with the Soviet Union (the poster in the man's hands shows "the happy life of Soviet peasants" and consists of a fountain and five human figures, including one child in its father's arms, holding a balloon[13]), and, therefore, that peasants need to join cooperatives to support the industrialisation effort. The Pioneer says: "Wait until I grow up, I will drive a tractor up to our front door." His zeal and positive attitude, confirmed by both his Young Pioneer status and his gestures, resemble the practice of adult workers' socialist pledges to increase production ahead of the plan. Compositionally, the Pioneer boy draws a lot of attention as he is placed in the foreground of the cartoon and right next to the central item, the propaganda poster. His voice is a part of everybody's enthusiasm and hope for the future.

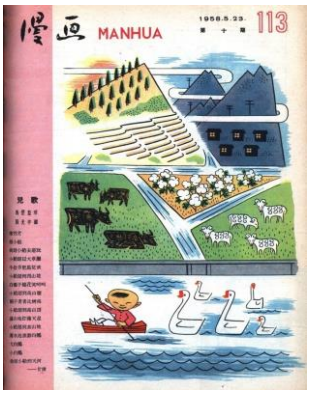

Figure 7. Ma Wen 馬雯 and Zhang Guangyu 張光宇 (1958).[14]

[12] This comic art convention was often used in 1920s and 1930s cartoons, but came to be disapproved of in later Chinese cartooning; this particular cartoon was criticised for the use of such speech-bubbles and their illegibility by one of the magazine's readers in a later issue (Anon. 1954).

[13] The complicated interplay of pictures-within-pictures in this and several other cartoons deserves to be the subject of a separate study.

[14] The song reads, Take a bamboo strip, / Row a small boat, / I am rowing a small boat to go on a trip. / The small boat glides past big grassy banks, / Bulls are mighty, sheep are fat, horses are joyful. / The small boat glides to the

In two other cases, both of which are cartoons on the front covers of late May issues (from 1958 and 1959), a child is solitary, independent, active, and given full voice. There is a poem accompanying each cartoon, containing the first-person singular pronoun (figs. 7 and 8): "I am rowing a small boat to go on a trip" (Ma and Zhang 1958) and "The Commune's pond is my home. [...] Row straight until I grow up" (Tian et al. 1959). The earlier (1958) cartoon is a semi-fantastic voyage in the present – the boy rows his boat up a hill and surveys the treasures of his neighbourhood, reaching the Milky Way. The panoramic view, great numbers of well-fed animals, and electrification of the area are clear references to the ongoing Great Leap Forward, and the boy with his childish tuft of hair participates in surveying these riches. In the later (1959) cartoon, a similar image emerges of a boy in a boat among auspicious symbols – lotus flowers, ducks, and fish – with the difference that the scale is somewhat smaller (the commune's pond) and the boy is now a Young Pioneer, not just roaming for enjoyment but gathering treasures from under and above water all the way into his adulthood. The motif of growing up is present here as in fig. 6, thus moving the reader to think about the future into which everyone is supposed to be investing their labour.

Figure 8. Tian Xin 田新, Wang Jixiang 王紀湘, and Li Cunsong 李寸松 (1959).[15]

Western hillside, / The white-bearded cotton laughs, ha, ha. / The small boat glides halfway up the hill, / The paddy is green and higher than trees. / The small boat glides to the top of the hill, / The whole hill is electric lights, the whole sky is stars. / The small boat glides to the Eastern hillside, / In the reservoir swim white geese, / Big geese, / Small geese, / I row the small boat to the Milky Way (Gansu).

[15] The poem reads, Row a small boat, splash, splash, / The commune's pond is my home. / Above water and under water are treasures, / Flowers are fragrant, fish are jumping, ducks are quacking. / Row a small boat, splash, splash,

Girls were also given a chance to speak about their place in time and their relation to progress towards the future. For example, a five-year-old girl wearing a beautifully coloured dress and holding the flag of the PRC was shown in front of an approaching demonstration in honour of the first Five-year Plan. She sits on her father's shoulder (himself decorated with a medal) and says: "Daddy! I am exactly five years old this year!" (Wu 1954).[16] Another example of a girl pointing out signs of socialist change is the cartoon from the front cover of the February 1956 issue: a primary school girl with an open book sits beside her grandmother, who is busy measuring brightly-coloured cloth, and looks at two passing women of about 20 years old, both carrying tools for measuring plots of land (Jiang 1956). The poem in the caption reads, "Grandmother's ruler – measures cloth to make new clothes; aunties' ruler – measures the fatherland to build socialism!" These words are pronounced from the child's point of view, and the atmosphere of new spring and joy resonates with the idea of the girl as the conscious successor of her parents' and grandparents' generations. Moreover, the shift in women's social roles (from "clothes makers" to participants in nation building) is visible here, and the girl looks up to the "aunties" to decide what her own role will be. Thus children – both male and female – gain their say in defining their country's fate, not only symbolising the transition from gloomy past into shining future, but also embodying the progress, the movement of time, and the notion of "the country belonging to the people". Of course, the words placed in children's mouths are strictly within the bounds of what the CCP and its ideology saw as befitting a patriotic child's thinking, but the same was true of adults' speeches. Importantly, here the interaction between

/ Row straight until I grow big. / The small boat carries a thousand fish, / The bamboo pole drives back ten thousand ducks.

[16] Similarly, in the already quoted cartoon by Feng Zikai, two Young Pioneers, boy and girl, are the same age as their country (fig. 2). The connection between human age and a country's development is shown in a celebratory drawing consisting of 11 panels, each of which shows a boy – first a very thin baby, later growing into a strong and energetic young adult, each age representing a year from 1949 to 1959 (Pitesitelupu 1959; fig. 9). Although the last example is the work of a foreigner, Danish cartoonist Herluf Bidstrup, such a pairing of human life with the fate or "maturing" of the country bears a great resemblance to the ideas of early 20th-century Chinese thinkers and writers; as Catherine Pease points out, "Historically their [Chinese writers' of the 1920s and 1930s] transition from childhood to adulthood – the process of *cheng ren* [成人] (literally, 'becoming a person') – took place within the context of China's entry into the modern world: their paths toward individual personhood paralleled China's progress toward modern nationhood" (Pease 1995, 279–80) and that was given play in the writers' creations.

children and adults is mostly that of support and unified intentions – father and daughter, grandmother and granddaughter, and boys pronouncing themselves members of the commune: everyone is united in yearning for a bright path towards a happy future.

Figure 9. Herluf Bidstrup (Pitesitelupu 皮特斯特鲁普 1959).

Model citizens and moral authority

At the same time, children in cartoons were also very eloquent when it came to shaming adults or pronouncing truths. In nearly 30 cartoons a child asks or says something to an adult to make them see their mistakes, mostly to do with production quality, saving resources, and behaving in public. *Manhua*'s campaign against poorly made consumer goods is analysed in some detail by John Crespi (2020, 122–27); the magazine's critical sections such as "Mirror" (*Jingzi* 鏡子), to which readers could send their complaints about particular cases of bad produce, service misconduct, etc., were often present in issues of *Manhua*. Besides those, the idea that "out of the mouths of babes" the truth sounds stronger was very actively used, mostly outside of criticism directed at particular units or individuals. For example, a girl with straight as joyfully invites her father to look at her grades, while he tries to hide his "marks" – the lowest quality grades for textile production of a cotton mill at which he is the director. The commen-

tary explains that such low grades mean that his production is mostly below the acceptable threshold (Lü 1954). Unlike publication in "Mirror" or a similar section, here no names or addresses are provided, but the contrast between a child's diligence and an adult's negligence presumably exposed all administrators who failed to provide good quality items. In another cartoon, a child's question pinpoints the father's selfishness in preparing his own home for winter, but not doing so at the institution where he works (Miao 1955); similarly, a peasant child's observation of starving cooperative cows in contrast to immensely fat pigs at his father's private pigsty demonstrates how the father steals cooperative fodder to increase his own gains (Zhao 1957). A twelve-year-old Young Pioneer's innocent remark that he is not six any more puts his father to shame for trying to get a free infant ticket (Wang and Ding 1957).

Figure 10. Jiang Fan 江帆 (1958).[17]

[17] The commentary reads, "In Liangtiantun village of Yulintun township in Huailai coun-ty, Hebei province, a percussion ensemble was established; every morning the drums serve as a wake up alarm, but a few individual members of the cooperative still don't get up, so the percussion ensemble pays them a 'visit'."

Towards the later years of the decade, with the Great Leap Forward and smaller campaigns for planting greenery, wiping out illiteracy, and maintaining hygiene under way, children were often shown reprimanding adults for spitting, keeping their clothes and houses in disarray, eating wastefully, breaking road regulations, sleeping late, and many other acts that were frowned upon. A detailed cartoon of a village scene by the "new member of Liming 黎明 cooperative" Jiang Fan 江帆,[18] shows a group of school-age children beating drums and cymbals under the windows of a house. The commentary explains that in Liangtiantun 良田屯 village of Yulintun 榆林屯 township in Huailai 懷來 county, Hebei province, a percussion ensemble was established to wake villagers up in the mornings, "but a few individual members of the cooperative still don't get up, so the percussion ensemble pays them a 'visit'" (Jiang 1958; fig. 10).

The very early waking times (as early as 3:30 a.m.) during the hoeing season drove the village cadres to actually walk into people's homes to get them out of bed (Yan 2003, 126). This cartoon, drawn as eye-witness evidence to the achievements of the Great Leap Forward, demonstrates how children were given the responsibility of shaming and waking the "lazy" peasants (without actually walking into their homes, but under the approving gaze of adult neighbours).[19]

Even the cartoon series by one of the most outstanding Chinese cartoonists, Zhang Leping 張樂平 (1910–1992),[20] "Annals of father and son" (*Fu zi chunqiu* 父子春秋), which mostly consisted of light humour, joined in the campaigns. An example is a six-panel drawing where the father spits and misses the spittoon; the son (a boy of indeterminate age, possibly a primary school pupil) sees this and writes a notice "When

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[18] Jiang Fan (1924–) is a prominent professional cartoonist who actively published his works in *Manhua*; in 1958 he went to this village cooperative to be 'tempered through labour' *laodong duanlian* 勞動鍛煉.

[19] This is to an extent comparable to the way children were encouraged to engage in propaganda work and other relatively safe activities as part of the war effort in 1937–1945 (De Giorgi 2014), as mentioned below.

[20] Zhang Leping's most famous creation was San Mao 三毛, a never-aging kid, who was an urchin in Republican Shanghai – suffering from cold, hunger, and bad treatment, sometimes cunningly getting the upper hand, sometimes looking lost, but never quite defeated, later a hero of the War of Resistance, inventive and miraculously victorious, and then, following the liberation, a Young Pioneer joining the various campaigns of the early PRC years (for more about him see Pozzi 2014b; Liang Liang 2017; Farquhar 1999, 203ff.). This fictional character remains very popular and typically figures in histories of cartoons in China (Bi and Huang 2006, 260–66; Hu 2018, 823–25; Lent and Xu 2017, 25–27, 72, 102).

you spit, please spit into the spittoon" – the comical effect added thanks to the fact that the boy has to ask his father how the character *yu* 盂 for spittoon is written (Zhang 1958). Upon seeing the notice, the father smiles and blushes, so that the education is achieved in a friendly and mutually beneficial way. This can also be interpreted as a suggestion on how adults should respond to children's admonitions, because in another cartoon on a similar topic, the adult's reaction is quite different. In the first part of a two-panel drawing, a little Young Pioneer sees an adult spitting in the street and pronounces through the loudspeaker: "Uncle, please do not spit on the ground!" (a couple of other children are visible in the background also promoting the use of spittoons). In the second panel the "uncle" aggressively shouts, "I know!!!" (Jiang 1958; fig. 11).

Figure 11. Jiang Zhenmin 姜振民 (1958).[21]

[21] The captions read, "Uncle, please do not spit on the ground!" – "I know!!!"

The moral of the cartoon is, therefore, two-fold: one shouldn't spit and one should be polite to little comrades who are doing their part. Yet the cartoon shows the high degree of annoyance at such omnipresent behavioural tips, which was probably not the author's intention. Indeed, there are so many cartoons where children are portrayed as exemplary citizens, enthusiastically participating in campaigns, showing initiative in the small ways available to them, doing good for the public benefit, teaching elders, and being overall ahead of adults in embracing the new norms and values (up to 95 cartoons out of 440 dealing with children in China), that the target of such drawings was clearly double: not only to inspire grown-ups to work more, faster, and with greater enthusiasm through the children's example, but also to get adults to acknowledge the children's "authority" and active role in building socialism, and to approve of such a role.

An effort to convince parents to let their children participate in adult affairs was made earlier, during the War of Resistance, as Laura De Giorgi demonstrates based on publications of *Kangzhan Ertong* 抗戰兒童 (The Resistance Child) magazine from the late 1930s and early 1940s (De Giorgi 2014, 63–64). Although De Giorgi concludes that this was a form of subjugation of children to the needs of adults[22] (which is also true of the 1950s), it meant that children obtained a degree of agency in the public discourse that was much wider than that encouraged by traditional filial piety. Moreover, social hierarchy and degrees of engagement were changing rapidly in the Mao decades: the children of the 1950s would become the Red Guards of the 1960s, and, according to the interviews with former activists of the Cultural Revolution period carried out by Anita Chan, "[t]hey all claim that during the Great Leap Forward they participated enthusiastically and genuinely believed in the value of their efforts" (Chan 1985, 28). The *Manhua* cartoons show that all adults, not only parents, were strongly urged to accept this input from children.

[22] "Celebrating the virtues of an imagined childhood for national salvation, war propaganda perpetuated the subjugation of Chinese children to the expectations and demands of the world of adults" (De Giorgi 2014, 80). Laura Pozzi (2014a) studies the more contradictory images of children in war outside of the main war effort propaganda.

In addition to the already quoted examples, there is a noticeable share of cartoons demonstrating children as adults' teachers and even superiors. A drawing where a peasant girl shows an urban man how to sow seeds is primarily a response to the idea of practical knowledge being more important than "dead" bookish learning (Jin 1958). But a similar cartoon where a little girl picks beans faster than her grandmother to the encouraging smiles of fellow villagers (Ding and Yue 1959; fig. 12) does not juxtapose the city and the village.

Figure 12. Ding Wu 丁午 and Yue Qi 岳岐 (1959), detail.[23]

It contrasts the old experience of past generations to the zeal and energy of their successors, which was primarily necessary to defend the peculiar farming practices of the Great Leap years, but also gave the children and young people more leverage against the traditional respect for old age and experience. In at least seven cartoons children teach older people – neighbourhood housewives, grandparents, and even complete strangers – to read and write. Again, such teaching takes place almost everywhere: it is

[23] The sign on the left reads, "Finishing line of the bean-picking competition."

shown to happen at home (Lü and Wang 1958), in the street (Wu 1958), when chancing upon written characters (Tian 1958; Guo 1958; fig. 13), while helping a woman with her domestic chores (Zhao 1958), in a classroom (Ding 1958), or while writing big-character posters (Miao 1958).

Figure 13. Guo Yan 郭燕 (1958).[24]

The dates of these cartoons (late spring – mid-autumn of 1958) show a close correlation to the slogans "a great leap in eliminating illiteracy" (sao mang dayuejin 掃盲大躍進) and "a cultural 'atomic explosion'" (wenhua shang de 'yuanzi baozha' 文化上的'原子爆炸') announced in the spring of 1958 (Anon. 1958a; Anon. 1958b). In one of the earlier cartoons a child actually invents a name for his elderly grandmother who has lived her whole life without even a name of her own, simply as a woman from Li Si's family – the child thus reverses the social order of elders picking an auspicious name for the young (Yang and Jiang 1953). Children's role as educators appears highlighted in the cartoons, while adults obey their "teachers" with kind and slightly embarrassed smiles.

[24] The characters on the paper in the old lady's hand read, "Chairman Mao."

Adults' doubts about children's eagerness and abilities are mildly ridiculed in several cartoons, e.g. where an adult admires a flowerbed and warns his interlocutor against children who might pull up the flowers – only to learn that it was the children who had planted them (Lü and Wang 1958). In another case, a group of Young Pioneers jokingly hide part of the harvest to puzzle the head of the production brigade and then bring the hidden part out to demonstrate that yields per mu 畝 are as high as required (Wang 1958). Adults thus learn that children are successful and efficient farmers, workers, and creators, not to be ignored, dismissed, or mocked.

It should be noted here, that while establishing the ethical example of children, *Manhua* did not reproduce the images of Chinese child martyrs, even though the early years of the PRC saw the emergence of "a pantheon" of them, "with children an important part of the CCP's cult of the red martyr" (Kauffman 2020, 12). The probable explanation is that, on the one hand, a satirical magazine was not seen as a fit place to visualise such tragic and heroic myths and, on the other hand, since adult readership was not the chief target of child martyr narratives, other media were preferred to convey them.[25]

Misbehaving and abused

It would be somewhat counterproductive for a satirical magazine to portray all children exclusively as exemplary comrades who never err and all adults as perfect friends to them. Therefore, a number of critical cartoons appeared. It should be noted that the perceived limits of a child's "misbehaviour" outside of political satire could vary quite widely – e.g., one of the interviewees of Anita Chan said that due to the high pressure of being a "model of good behaviour" at school, upon returning home he became "naughty", "messed around with the neighbourhood kids, playing hide-and-seek, marbles and chess" (Chan 1985, 25). Of course, playing games with other children could

[25] Kauffman lists the forms of short story, song, poetic drama, and picture book among those used for this purpose (2020, 11).

hardly be considered worthy of serious criticism from the central press, even in the mass mobilisation years. To become an object of criticism in cartoons a child had to do more than frolic. Cartoons criticising children's misbehaviour can be divided into two groups: one is spoilt or lazy children inside the PRC and another the under-age criminals in the capitalist world (no exemplary behaviour was present in depictions of children from Western countries for the implied reason that the conditions of bourgeois culture and the capitalist economy did not yield any good fruit).

In the corpus of this study, there are 44 cartoons that can be recognised as showing Chinese children doing "wrong" things. Out of these 44, 16 cases show parents' or other adults' bad influence causing children to behave improperly, while 12 contain criticism directed at children themselves. 17 cartoons are works by Zhang Leping (some of them from the already mentioned series "Annals of father and son"), mostly with a humorous rather than critical tinge (Jin and Zhang 1956; Zhang 1956a; Zhang 1957; fig. 14).

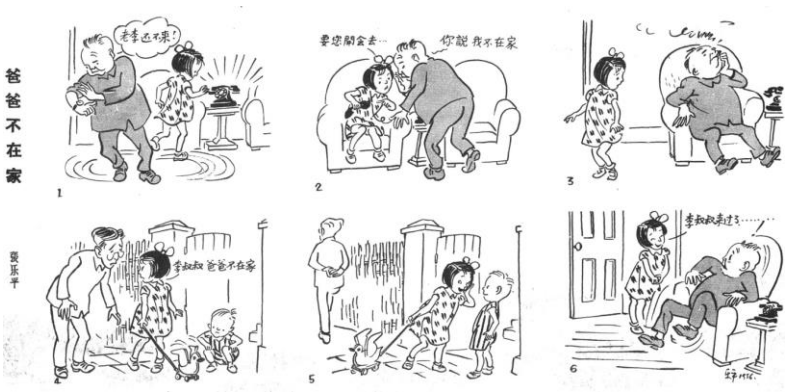

Figure 14. Zhang Leping 張樂平 (1956a).[26]

The drawings where a child is affected by their parents' bad example show youths wanting money for their school grades (Yuan and Lao 1956), bullying people as the

[26] The thought bubble in the first panel says, "Old Li is still not here!" The words in the second panel read, "They want you to come to a meeting..." – "Say I am not at home." In the fourth panel the girl says, "Uncle Li, father is not at home." In the sixth panel she says, "Uncle Li's been..."

high-ranking father does (Lü 1957), smoking, again through their father's example (Li 1960), or generally acting as spoiled brats because of their parents' indulgence (Pan 1955; Zhang 1956b). In a number of Zhang Leping's cartoons, children are shown to have "learnt" from their parent's bad example to the dismay of the adults themselves, and thus the adults realise that teaching a child to lie or covertly tearing library books when nobody but the child sees you can turn out badly even for yourself. In all these cases, the object of criticism is evidently not the child but rather the adults who fail to discipline themselves and their offspring as befits members of socialist society.[27] Parents who brought up their children in the spirit of greed, laziness, egoism, and unhealthy living thus appeared to transgress the prescribed norms of child-parent interaction and carried the responsibility for their children's misconduct. Such drawings also emphasise the idea, expressed quite often and repeated in the same magazine, that by the misbehaviour of a child one can see how "arrogant and wilful" (*jiaozong* 驕縱) the parents are (Hua 1959).

Cartoons laying responsibility on the children themselves are scanty in *Manhua*, possibly because the magazine was not aimed directly at a young readership. The few that are present show the badness of breaking public property – books, musical instruments, and the like – (Lü and Han 1955; Shuo and Shen 1956; Er Chi 1958), as well as being lazy, slovenly, and shying away from work or study (Wang and Shi 1953; Li and Zhou 1959a, 1959b, 1959c). There is one cartoon where school pupils appear to show disrespect to their teacher by leaving the classroom as soon as the bell rings, before the teacher does – this cartoon is interesting because it was made by a school student, as stated next to the publication (Wu 1958). Thus it was an example of the peer-pressure and "collective criticism" encouraged to a degree by pedagogical workers at the time (Tillman 2018, 221).[28] But here as well as in previous cases, the mildness

[27] In one case the cause of misbehaviour lies in the American-style comics a Chinese child reads – such a cause was more typical in depicting misbehaviour among capitalist youth (Zhang 1956c).

[28] Tillman goes on to say that such involvement of children in political discussions "ignored a key injunction" that "teachers aggressively direct children's political growth" (Tillman 2018, 221); however, another key injunction of the 1950s was that cartoons by amateurs (workers, peasants, cadres, children, etc.) had to be given space in mass media, to give the voice to the masses and let them show their creativity, as was especially required during the Great Leap Forward. Such contradictory signals from the top were characteristic of the era.

of the criticism is striking both in comparison to cartoons against political outcasts (e.g. against the Rightists) and against "miscreant" children of the capitalist world.

These latter ones were quite a shocking crowd: there were killers, robbers, racists, vandals, and plotting villains among the young generation growing up in the West, according to *Manhua*. No less than 13 cartoons show children who, upon reading comics or watching Hollywood films, rob strangers or their own parents (Mao 1950; Ye 1956; Sun 1958; Ya 1959) or kill their whole families (Huo 1954; Anon. 1958c). The inverted "normality" of such behaviour in capitalist countries was emphasised in a cartoon where a child shows no inclination to read violent detective stories or watch television thrillers, does not want to join his father in going to a gun-shop, and tries to feed pigeons instead. The child shocks his bourgeois parents by his kindly disposition "unlike other children" so much that they take him to a psychiatric hospital (Zhao 1958; fig. 15).[29]

Figure 15. Zhao Yannian 赵延年 (1958).[30]

[29] Conversely, there was also an eight-panel cartoon showing a father's effort to save his son from the disturbing influences of street hooligans, murder-inspiring comics, aggressive films, shocking TV programmes, etc. – but this is a lonely example against the other cartoons (Ye 1959).

[30] The caption under the last panel reads, "This child is different from the other children, [we] must quickly take him to the psychiatric hospital for examination!"

Almost all of these cartoons emphatically drove home the argument that the criminal behaviour of these Western children (primarily American, but not exclusively) was caused by their bad upbringing, especially reading comics and watching Hollywood films, with the addition of examples from daily news where members of the KKK tortured black people and politicians screamed about the nuclear threat. A clear representation of all such bad influences is shown on the back cover of a March 1956 issue (Ye 1956; fig. 16).

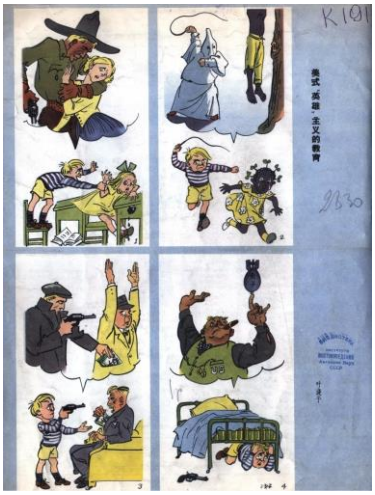

Figure 16. Ye Qianyu 葉淺予 (1956).

In other words, the moral abyss of underage criminality was opened by the corrupt culture and politics of capitalist countries, and children were victims of this corruption. Parallel to this, the youths thus educated were to grow into aggressive and violent soldiers, the tools of future wars – a narrative quite similar to what Margaret Peacock shows in the images of "other" children in the USSR and the USA during the same years (Peacock 2014, 42–58).

Yet there is an even greater number of cartoons about children of workers abroad as victims not so much of wrongful education, as of poverty, hunger, and cold: 59 photographs and cartoons invite the magazine's readers to sympathise with the offspring of labourers in Western countries. Those images most probably brought associations

with China's own "dark past", when orphans were begging and sleeping in the streets. By juxtaposing these pathetic views of the unjust capitalist life with the achievements and happiness of the children's existence in new China and other socialist countries, the cartoons added sharpness to the "benefits" of socialism. Importantly, in photographs of suffering children there is relatively little interaction between them and adults, and children are generally voiceless and passive in their misfortunes.[31] The parents are either absent (e.g. a photograph of children in the street: Anon. 1959a; fig. 17) or, if present, cannot provide care and look away, even if the child is in their arms (e.g. Anon. 1959b; Xian 1959). Such despair was aimed to show the hopeless state of the working class in the West, where the next generations and the future bring no light. The use of photographs as "evidence" is also a striking change from the drawn cartoons about domestic matters.

Figure 17. Anonymous (1959a).[32]

[31] One exception is a cartoon from one of the earlier issues, where a French girl violently refuses to give flowers to a "Yankee" (*Meiguo lao* 美國佬) but a photographer manages to make a snapshot which looks "as if" the French child is happily greeting the American (Zhou 1953). In other cartoons children in the West did not appear to participate in adult protests against the American presence.

[32] The caption explains that photographs are reprinted from Soviet, East German, and Japanese magazines and newspapers. Individual captions to photographs are, top to bottom, left to right: Italy, Japan, USA, South Korea, and Spain.

Mistreatment of children inside China was sometimes criticised in cartoons as well, but this never reached the hopelessness of the capitalist world and, importantly, they were never photographs, the "incontrovertible evidence" of which was reserved primarily for the display of capitalist evils. All the same, there are 28 cartoons showing disapproved adult treatment of children. Most of these (24) appeared in the mid-1950s, before the Anti-Rightist campaign of 1957: in the early 1950s Chinese children were shown as suffering only in cartoons about gloomy past, whereas after 1957 and the Anti-Rightist campaign the magazine aimed to show internal affairs in a positive, eulogising tone, praising the ongoing Great Leap Forward and related lesser movements. The "guilty" parties in these 28 cartoons were: teachers or kindergarten workers (12 cases), parents (10 cases), strangers in the street or in playgrounds (3 cases), and manufacturers who produce low-quality goods or provide poor service (3 cases). One cartoon shows a child who is badly treated by both parents and teachers (Liu 1957), and another does not assign a specific guilty party but criticises some unidentified force that has deprived children of a "children's home" (*shaonian zhi jia* 少年之家), so that they have to loiter about (Feng 1957). Two noticeable kinds of ill-treatment are inattention (8 cases) and physical violence or the threat of it (7 cases). In the former cases, children appear to try and attract the adults' attention (e.g. Xu 1954; Shen 1956; Wang 1959) or, conversely, remain silent in tacit rebuke (e.g. Mei 1956; Li and Zhao 1956; Liu and Er 1956). In the latter cases, the children look offended, pained, and often shocked – as, for example, in cartoons "'Heroes' of the playground" (He and Liu 1956) or "Deliberate offence" (Jiang 1958; fig. 11). As John Crespi writes about the first example, where a group of grown-up hooligans take over the playground while children cry in terror or stand aside, "the callous buffoonery of the middle-aged men in 'Heroes' pushes internal satire into the absurd" (Crespi 2020, 129). This cartoon shows the adults' bad behaviour as immature, ridiculous, and at the same time almost unbelievable – unlike the "realistic" depictions of capitalist misdemeanour and suffering. It also shows the reaction of children – here, as in another cartoon, "Pages of spring sadness" (Zhang 1957; fig. 18), they stay and wait for the adults to leave, looking displeased and showing disapproval with their glances, twisted lips, accusing gestures, grim faces, and

tears. Thus, adults' behaviour is judged by the children, who serve as the moral authority, similarly to the group of exemplary children described in the previous part of this paper.

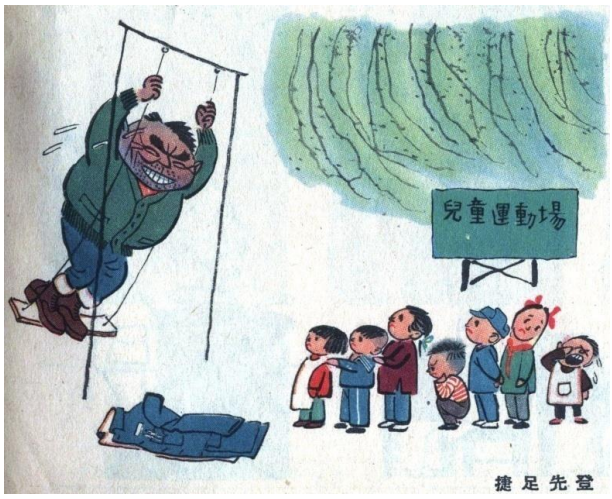

Figure 18. Zhang Ding 張仃 (1957), "Pages of spring sadness 傷春篇", detail titled "Jie zu xian deng 捷足先登" (The swiftest wins the race).[33]

It should also be noted here that kindergarten workers were criticised for the maltreatment of their wards only until early 1957; later the magazine joined in the effort of persuading mothers that kindergartens and crèches are good places for infants to grow healthy and well-educated, where babies are not mistreated but are happy and even eager to go (e.g. Yan 1958; Tong 1959). Such cartoons appeared at approximately the same time as depictions of happy old age in homes for the elderly and generous meals at public canteens in people's communes (e.g. in the front cover cartoon of issue 131, the three are joined as the symbols of all-round care in a commune: Tian Yuan 1959; fig. 19).

[33] The characters on the green board read, "Children's sports ground."

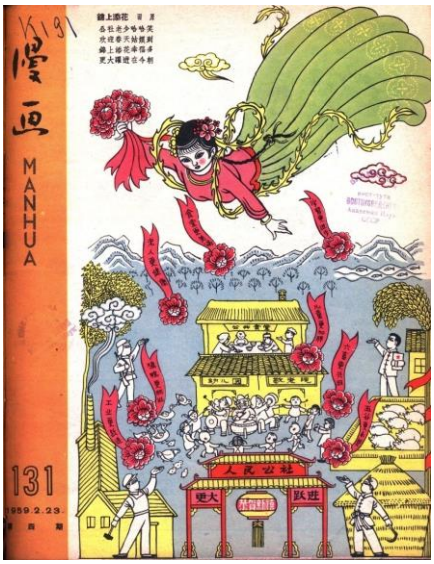

Figure 19. Tian Yuan 田原 (1959).[34]

Such emphasis on the benefits of kindergartens and crèches is easily understood in the light of the Great Leap Forward's need to free female labour from all domestic chores. But at the same time the need to promote kindergartens as safe and enjoyable places for children indicates that many women were unwilling to put their children there – as Margaret Tillman points out, "even in 1958, rumors circulated in the relatively rural Chaoyang [朝陽] district of Beijing that mothers would not be allowed to breastfeed in new daycare centers, and that boys were being kidnapped for adoption in the Soviet Union to rectify its gender imbalance" (Tillman 2018, 195). The children's depicted eagerness to become part of a crèche or kindergarten group was, thus, an argument "from the child" to persuade the parent into following government policy.

[34] The song reads, "In communes old and young laugh, haha, / Welcoming the girl spring's arrival, / Making perfect even better, there is more happiness, / An even greater leap is here today. The characters on the gateway read, "People's commune" and "Even greater leap." The three yellow pavilions are captioned "kindergarten", "elderly home", and "public canteen". The falling red ribbons contain the slogans "Plumper children", "Healthier old people", "More perfect canteens," and promises of greater achievements in grain and livestock production, study, and industry.

Conclusion

The cartoons analysed above, for all their thematic and stylistic variety, have a recognisable prevailing thread that unites them into a relatively coherent portrait of the Mao-era child. This child is by no means a real human, it is rather a prescribed ideal that fits with the above quoted notions of childhood as a constructed manifestation of superimposed power, which subjugated the actual people of the time to the expectations and demands of dominant discourses. In the *Manhua* magazine cartoons, the "normative" children appeared neat, healthy, energetic, enthusiastic, well-educated in whatever knowledge was required from them at the time, helpful, and looking forward to the brave new world ahead. The deviations from such a norm were also present; where a child's misbehaviour was shown, the cartoon was clearly demarcated as criticism – in a mild form when it came to children in China itself and as outright condemnation of the young miscreants of the capitalist world. Physical deviations, such as a child's poor condition – dirty clothes or starved look – were mostly attributes of the capitalist world as well, whereas inside China, according to the "normality" implied by *Manhua*, those were things of the sorrowful past, not even to be depicted towards the mid-1950s. All this was natural to the socialist discourse of happy and healthy childhood, very similar to the contemporaneous images in the USSR and hardly breaking any conventions other than some traditions of pre-socialist China. Yet the satirical nature of *Manhua* magazine opened the way to (probably unintentionally) showing some underlying conflicts and contradictions.

The fundamental issue lies in the degree of agency given to children in cartoons. The images, instead of remaining within the limits of metaphorical representation of prosperity or poverty, insistently showed active young people speaking out in support of or even in opposition to adults, teaching the suddenly less knowledgeable elders, or reprimanding parents for not pursuing the public good. Of course, such agency was not a display of complete freedom – it was not the voice of children but rather of the same authority as was heard in every other form of mass media of the time; however, as mentioned above, many children accepted this voice for their own by embracing Mao's campaigns. Yet for a great part of *Manhua*'s adult readers even such agency was

problematic, whether it was only prescriptive or actually carried out. An urban man who proved himself far less capable of labour than a small village girl would have to undergo a great deal of "education" to accept such a situation. A grown-up who was shamed by a near-toddler for being untidy or a parent whose own child pointed out how one should care for public property would find themselves faced with a question: how to deal with such "good" children? The magazine's cartoons offered unambiguous instructions: children held the moral authority, their efforts were aimed at the common good, and therefore an adult was to accept being taught by them and to correct his or her wrongs.

Such an idealised depiction of exemplary children came into contradiction with pedagogical practice, where teachers held the initiative in shaping children into "little revolutionaries". At the same time, various ideological campaigns of the 1950s undermined teachers' authority. This is curiously reflected in cartoons: there are several critical depictions of teachers mistreating children and only one cartoon criticising children for showing lack of respect to the teacher. The confusion over the matter of children's innate qualities was also visible: while in some cases children seemed to be innately "good" (hence their ability to educate less perfect adults, including their own parents), in other cases children could be spoilt by the adults' bad example (which was more typical for the "corrupt" capitalist society, but also figured in Chinese families). Some of the criticism towards mistreatment of children – lack of child-oriented facilities, adults' misuse of such facilities, teachers' neglect of their primary duties – also unveil a number of contradictions in the depiction of a perfectly happy childhood under Chairman Mao. The "distraction" in the form of "miserable" images of Western children might also have played a misleading role, since among the criticised aspects of children's existence in the capitalist system was either their hard labour or lack of employment – which, illogical in itself, might raise questions about depictions of children working at schools and in communes in China. However, these contradictions seem to have gone unnoticed by the cartoonists (although maybe not by their readers). The prescribed warmth of relations between "good" socialist children and

adults remained a clear ideal, whereas deviations from it were to be cured, not analysed in depth.

To sum up, it is fair to say that children in *Manhua* cartoons became noteworthy and independent actors, expressed their wishes, aspirations, and criticisms, and were to be reckoned with by the adult "elites" – much as the other formerly "voiceless" social groups, "exploited before the liberation" (labourers, women, ethnic minorities, etc.) appeared to speak up and act of their own will. Yet all of them could show agency only in so far as it was immersed in the sense of duty and political consciousness. In this sense, socialism was portrayed as the way to bring people of all ages and genders to being conscious members of the new society, and children served as an example to the slower adults of internalising revolutionary values – but any deviation from the socialist path turned the "guilty party" back into a voiceless object of satire and criticism.

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Between Chinese Youth and the Party: The Communist Youth League's Revival and Adjustments in the Early Post-Mao Era

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Since the beginning of the new century Chinese leaders have attempted to increase the 'relevance' of the Communist Youth League (CYL) by calling for a more responsive organisation as a way to cultivate political loyalty at a time of profound social change. Yet, the call for more responsive patterns of work is not new. Mainly based on the Chinese youth press, official documents, and leaders' speeches, as well as memoirs and biographical material, this paper provides an organisational analysis of the CYL in the post Cultural Revolution period, focusing on the functional adjustments that were discussed when the CYL was revived nationally and the economic reforms were launched. As such, it explores early national initiatives, discourses, and debates surrounding the reform of the work of the CYL as developed through the 1980s, and highlights the influence of reform-minded political leaders in pursuing a new approach to "youth work" that, by envisaging a loosening of the Party's control over League affairs, aimed at moving away from past practices and enabling the organisation to better relate to a wide range of youth concerns. This paper sheds light on the way the policies of reform and opening up impacted upon a traditional political body that was called to increasing responsiveness to the demands coming from society, but also shows the structural paradox of an institution embedded in the Leninist political system and designed to serve as an intermediary between the Party and the country's youth.

21 世紀以來，胡錦濤等中國領導人提倡共青團要創新並增強社會性職能，只有將共青團的政治職能向服務職能轉變，才能增強對青年的吸引力。回顧歷史會發現這其實並非新問題。通過對中國媒體資料、歷史數據和中共領導人傳記的研究，本文分析了共青團在文化大革命結束後的發展，尤其是自 1978 年開始的有關共青團地位、作用和體制改革的討論和政策。在胡耀邦等人領導下，共青團在 1980 年代的發展反映了改革開放政策對一個傳統團體產生的影響以及共青團在新形勢下要轉型成一個代表青年的組織所面臨的挑戰。

Keywords: Chinese communist youth league, Chinese youth movement, Youth work, Hu Yaobang, Mass organisations, People's Republic of China

關鍵詞：中國共青團，中國青年運動，青年工作，胡耀邦，羣衆組織，中華人民共和國

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Introduction[1]

Over the past forty years, the policies of reform and opening up to the outside world have affected many aspects of Chinese society, bringing about profound changes to the country's socio-economic structure as well as in people's mentality and behaviour. The early transition that occurred in the value system of society and the tension between official ideology and social realities had the greatest implications especially among China's younger generation. While since the 1990s urban youth have been generally described as "success-oriented", "money centred", and pursuing "the good life" (Rosen 2004), their counterparts in the 1980s have been defined as "searching for life's meaning" (Xu 2001). This definition points to the members of a generation that had lost confidence in the future of socialism and was alienated from the regime and its ideology (Ownby 1986; Kwong 1994; Hooper 1985, 159–174). As rapid economic reforms engendered new opportunities for personal welfare and social mobility, Chinese young people became less idealistic and more independent, concerned less with politics and more with their personal lives.

The majority of youth in the early and mid-1980s were born on the eve of the Cultural Revolution and grew up in a period of great turmoil and terror (Gold 1996, 186–189). This experience, combined with the contradictions generated by the promotion of old social ethics and political beliefs and the simultaneous glorification of material consumerism, led to increasing alienation from the existing Party-state. As Stanley Rosen has shown in his study of youth and public opinion on the eve of the 1989 "pro-democracy movement", the limited appeal of official values and norms, the pursuit of individual values, and the attitude of thinking and acting independently went hand in hand with a declining political commitment toward the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) (Rosen 1990a, 62–67; 1992). This was also reflected in officially sanctioned

[1] This analysis has benefited from conversations with many people. In particular I wish to thank Merle Goldman for exchanging ideas about youth-state relations in early post-Mao China, and Michael Schoenhals for sharing historical material on the CYL organization. I am also grateful to Pang Ching Lin for her suggestions on an earlier draft of this paper and the two anonymous reviewers for their insightful comments, which makes this piece better.

youth groups, as evidenced by the diminished appeal of the Communist Youth League (CYL) among its target population in the age bracket 14-28 (Ch'i 1991, 147–148).

Whereas most scholarly works have focused on the changes in values and belief system occurring among the young, as well as on students' attitudes toward official values and "traditional" channels of political participation (Francis 1991; Rosen 1992, 1990b, 1989b; on post-1989 changes in value orientation and attitudes see especially Rosen 2009), official "youth work" and the CYL organisation have so far been largely understudied. Despite its crucial importance in the Chinese political system, the only Western scholarly works available on the CYL until a few years ago dated back to the early 1980s (Healy 1982; a study on the CYL also appeared in Taiwan in the 1980s, Tang 1985). Newly published studies on the CYL as a bridge between youth and the Party in post-Mao China have appeared recently. In particular, they have shed light on the organisation's low appeal for young people and the constraints limiting both its responsiveness to the youth and its ability to influence policymaking in the Hu-Wen era (Tsimonis 2021), but also on its role as a promotion path for future party leaders (Kou 2014, Doyon 2020). Recent research has also looked at the CYL's institutional changes over time (Tsai and Liao 2021) and its activities in the welfare sector through volunteering programs, at both the domestic and international levels (Xu 2012, Ceccagno and Graziani 2016).

Yet the only work that has been published so far on the impact of economic reforms on Party-youth relations in the early post-Mao era, with a focus on the CYL's initiatives directed at young people, is the one by Stanley Rosen (1985), that analysed CCP attempts to find a coherent strategy to re-engage with a disillusioned and increasingly independent young generation following the disaster of the Cultural Revolution. In addressing the main debates over how to revive the activities of the organisation, he revealed the tension between those who criticised the pressure of political education and saw the need to accommodate youth demands, and those who proposed more "conservative" solutions, arguing that ideological control had to be strengthened so as to avoid the youth's increased independence eventually undermining the country's

stability. This tension clearly reflected deepening intra-Party divergences between reformists and conservative leaders over the direction of youth work, which in turn were also the result of a generational transition of the leadership at that time.

This article focuses on the CYL's organisational developments in the post Cultural Revolution period, highlighting the influence of reform-minded leaders in the discussion over the CYL work reform as it developed in the 1980s — a largely neglected era in CYL studies. Mainly relying on Chinese documentary sources, including official CCP and CYL documents, the national youth press, biographical material, and CYL yearbooks, as well as reports and articles produced by cadres and scholars affiliated with League schools, it explores how the organisation tried to identify its position and adjust its work in the light of the broader changes taking place in Chinese society, attempting to strengthen its representative function and carve out new spaces of autonomy vis-à-vis the Party. As such, in this article, I mainly delve into internal debates and national initiatives aimed at making the CYL more responsive to the demands coming from youth by engaging more actively with their real needs and interests. The focus of this analysis is on reform-oriented discussions and intentions at the centre, rather than on their implementation and impact on the ground.

The article will first provide an overview of the CYL organisation in the People's Republic of China (PRC). Then it reviews the process of reviving CYL activities after the Cultural Revolution ended and the reforms were launched, highlighting its role in pushing for a new reformist vision under the influence of Hu Yaobang. Finally, the paper clarifies the main difficulties encountered in the new period and examines the early debates about reforming the CYL's work that eventually led to the formulation of a plan for the institutional reform of the CYL that would have allowed the organisation more autonomy, had the Tiananmen movement in 1989 not renewed calls for a strengthening of Party control over its mass organisations. In the conclusion, I address the relevance of this analysis for the understanding of more recent developments in CCP-CYL-youth relations.

The CYL: An Overview

In the PRC there have been and continue to be a series of mass organisations which were set up on a national basis around 1949 in order to propagate Communist ideology and assist the CCP. Even though they are not part of the state power apparatus, China's mass organisations are nonetheless tied to it in many ways, representing an essential part of the organisational matrix of Chinese communist rule. They function as "transmission belts" which bring the masses of people into direct organisational contact with the CCP, encouraging them to conform to the demands of the political authorities and producing the popular support of Party policies that the "mass line" (*qunzhong luxian* 群眾路線) demands. As Barnett put it, they were to represent the means through which "the weight of communist apparatus makes itself felt upon the average individual" (Barnett 1951, 76). Although on paper they are also responsible for defending the interests of their members (the upward functioning of the transmission belt should indeed guarantee that the views of the masses are reflected to the higher authorities), however, because of the supremacy of the collective interest in China, they have always devoted more attention to supporting the Party policies than to reflecting their members' interests, thus being generally regarded as "little more than appendages to the Party" (Townsend 1969, 151–157; Teiwes 2000, 129; Saich 1989, 51). Not by chance, both Chinese terms used to refer to this kind of political association, *renmin tuanti* 人民團體, "people's organisations", and *qunzhong zuzhi* 群眾組織, "mass organisations", refer to the greatest collective interest, with qunzhong zuzhi indicating a close but subordinate relationship to the Party (Ma 2006, 82–84). Today, mass organisations "continue to deliver CCP policy, and their prestigious status represents the reach of the party into society" (Ibid., 71). Yet, while being close to official Party-state institutions, they are directly in contact with the population: this ambivalent position or "in-betweenness" (Audin and Doyon 2019, 5) has made possible the adoption of new strategies to remain appealing to their constituencies, including the development of forms of advocacy to influence the policymaking process, as evidenced, in particular, by the work of the All-China Women's Federation (see, for instance, Jin 2001).

Being an age-based mass organisation, the CYL brings young people aged fourteen to twenty-eight[2] into organised political activity. Originally named the Socialist Youth League, it held its First National Congress in 1922, when the birth of a national unified youth organisation was proclaimed. Thereafter, the organisation changed its name several times: to Communist Youth League in 1925, New Democratic Youth League in 1949, and Communist Youth League of China in 1957 (Pringsheim 1962; Graziani 2014). While before 1949 the League played a key role in mobilising young people towards revolutionary objectives and in the CCP struggle for power, after the establishment of the PRC it became an instrument for the Chinese Communists to politically socialise and manage youth (Graziani 2019, 110–112). As such, it was characterised by a well-developed and powerful basic-level organisation, that reached almost every corner of society (with League units within the PLA, the industrial system, and the educational system) and monopolised "youth work" (*qingnian gongzuo* 青年工作), providing leadership of youth activities. As shown by studies on the Red Guards, Party-sponsored youth groups such as the CYL played an important role in supervising the political life of young people and shaping their values and behaviour so as to gain the active commitment of the new generation to the Party's policies and to Mao's vision (see especially Chan 1985).

In addition, the CYL's main functions as assistant (*zhushou* 助手) to the CCP and reserve force (*houbeijun* 後備軍) – enshrined in both the CYL and the CCP statutes since the 1950s – made it an important tool for supplying new blood to the Party and "cultivating successors", which explains the League's close relationship with the CCP. This aspect became especially important in the early 1960s, as the "struggle to revolutionise youth" (see Hu Yaobang's report 1964 to the Ninth National Congress of the CYL in Gongqingtuan Zhongyang bangongting 1964, vol. 1, 34) was brought to the forefront and the task of "cultivating revolutionary successors" (*peiyang geming jiebanren* 培養革命接班人) took on unprecedented urgency (Townsend 1967). Not by chance, in this context competition to join the CYL increased among urban youths

[2] Before 1982 people aged between 14 and 25 were eligible for CYL membership.

(Chan 1985; Unger 1982; Shirk 1982 and others). Many youths eagerly pursued admission into the CYL in order to prepare themselves to become political activists and cultivate the necessary qualities to deserve Party membership, as former members recalled (see, for instance, the memories in Bennett and Montaperto 1971, 18; Frolic 1981, 139).

Yet, with the onset of the Cultural Revolution, the CYL became one of the most challenged institutions (Funnell 1970, Healy 1982, Leader 1974, Wang 1970). In June 1966, its Beijing Municipal Committee was purged, and later that year its Central Committee was reorganised, with several of its leaders being singled out for criticism (including the First Secretary Hu Yaobang, accused of being a loyal agent of Liu Shaoqi). In August 1966 the CYL was eventually replaced by Red Guard organisations, which operated in a relatively autonomous way. After that, the Youth League ceased to exist in any meaningful sense for years until the mid-1970s.

It was only in 1978 that the CYL resumed its political functions at the national level (with the convening of its National Congress after 14 years), reasserting control over the political life of Chinese youth. However, the traumatic experience of the Cultural Revolution and the profound changes that occurred following the death of Mao Zedong impacted upon the way both youth and the leaders understood "youth work". As a new reform discourse emerged, the very nature of the League was discussed in an attempt to redefine its position vis-à-vis the youth. As a result, new spaces for the articulation of a discourse on the reform of the CYL's work emerged, against the backdrop of weakened CCP legitimacy and a widespread crisis of faith in the party and official ideology among the younger generation. This issue will be addressed in the following paragraphs.

The revival of the CYL after the Cultural Revolution

The revival of the Communist Youth League structure at the national level in October 1978, after twelve years of suspension, was aimed at re-establishing political control

over young people. Yet the first attempts at reconstructing the organisation took place at the local level in the early 1970s and followed upon Party reconstruction as announced by the Ninth National Congress of the CCP (April 1969). The process of reviving the CYL was largely completed by 1973 with the convening of the municipal, regional, and provincial League congresses throughout the country. The task was complex, as the rectification process required the achievement of a new consensus and synthesis of outlook among newly formed groups and between old cadres and those who had emerged as talented activists during the Cultural Revolution (Montaperto 1981). At the national level, it was only in February 1975 that the CCP Centre initiated preparations for the convening of the CYL Tenth National Congress, which in the end was not convened for yet another long period of time. Indeed, after the arrest of the Gang of Four the preparatory group (*choubeizu* 籌備組) stopped working and a reorganisation of the leadership was carried out at all levels to remove leaders associated with ultra-left radicals. Preparations for the convening of the CYL National Congress were resumed only after Deng Xiaoping returned to work in 1977 under Hua Guofeng (Li Yuqi 2009, 277–290; Zhonggong zhongyang zuzhibu et al. 2000: vol. 19, 285–286, 393; Vogel, 531–610).

On May 4th 1978 the CCP Central Committee issued the "Circular on the convocation of the Tenth National Congress of the CYL" which set the task of the forthcoming Congress and praised the League's work in the Maoist era, while denouncing the damage brought about by the Gang of Four. The Circular affirmed that the majority of young people were "full of promise" (*dayou xiwang* 大有希望) and "able to develop their ability to the fullest" (*dayou zuowei* 大有作為), and urged the rectification of the leadership of the League at every level, calling for the convocation (where necessary) of provincial level congresses (Zhongyang tuanxiao qingniantuan gongzuo jiaoyanshi 1979, 450–457). Afterwards, a preparatory committee for the Tenth National Congress began work under Han Ying (Zhonggong zhongyang zuzhibu et al. 2000: vol. 19, 393). In July the Central School of the CYL reopened, while the newspaper *Zhongguo Qingnian Bao* 中國青年報 (China Youth Daily) and the journal *Zhongguo Qingnian*

中國青年 (China Youth), suspended during the Cultural Revolution, resumed publication in September-October, becoming important vehicles of new ideas and political approaches (Goldman 1994, 39–40). At the same time, in some places (e.g. Shanghai, Guangdong, Zhejiang, Heilongjiang) provincial congresses were held to elect a new leadership (Zhonggong zhongyang zuzhibu et al. 2000, vol. 19).

The Tenth National Congress was finally convened in October 1978. The work report delivered by Han Ying adhered to Mao's revolutionary line and stressed continuities with the past, calling on young people to "hold high the great banner of Mao Tsetung Thought" while making contributions to the "four modernisations" (Han 1978). At the same time, it underlined the importance of "seeking truth from facts" and "practice as the sole criterion for testing truth", a principle that was at the centre of the ongoing ideological campaign to legitimise political change from the Maoist policy at a time when the struggle between the "whateverist" faction and the pragmatists was unfolding within the CCP (Misra 1998, 19–53; Schoenhals 1991).

The newly elected Secretariat confirmed Han Ying (a leader who benefited from the Cultural Revolution and was promoted to this post directly by Hua Guofeng) as first secretary, and included a few leaders close to Hu Yaobang, such as Hu Qili (as second-in-command) and Hu Dehua (Zhonggong zhongyang zuzhibu et al. 2000, vol. 19, 393–394; Kou 2001, 21). Both had worked under him in the CYL before the Cultural Revolution and Hu Qili would become one of his closest associates in the following years.[3]

Available material suggests that Hu Yaobang, as former Secretary of the League from 1953 to 1966 (with experience in guiding the Party's youth work that could be traced back to the years of rural revolution in the Jiangxi soviet) and current head of the CCP Organisation Department, played a key role in the revival of the CYL, supervising the preparatory work for the convocation of the National Congress and participating in

[3] Between 1980 and 1981, with the weakening and the end of the influence of the whateverist faction, the leadership would undergo a reshuffle with new leaders close to the reformists entering the Secretariat (among them Li Ruihuan and Chen Haosu), while in November 1982 Han Ying would be replaced as First Secretary by the reform-minded Wang Zhaoguo (Zhonggong zhongyang zuzhibu et al. 2000, vol. 19: 393–394).

central meetings (Chen 2012). As early as May 1978, he had directed attention to two delicate issues that needed to be tackled in order for the CYL to move towards new directions: the generational transition and the definition of new tasks in line with the goal of the "four modernisations" (*sige xiandaihua* 四個現代化). During a speech delivered on 4 May in front of more than 2,500 youth and members of the CYL in Beijing (Dongcheng district) to commemorate the national Youth Day, he stated:

> "All of us, old comrades who have worked in the Central Committee of the CYL, have come here today mainly to express our mood. You have just told us 'welcome' but this is not appropriate because we have become or are becoming old and no longer have the qualifications for conducting the League's work. You must say goodbye to us and welcome the leaders of the CYL committees at the provincial level who are being elected and will conduct the work of the League in the future" (Sheng 2007, vol. 1, 171).

Then, he mentioned the "new Long March" (*xin changzheng* 新長征) as the main task of the Party, defining it as a march that "makes our great nation a strong socialist country based on the four modernisations", as a march that "required 23 years of proof in practice" as well as "preparations, a firm and correct political orientation, and a high technological and scientific level" (ibid., 171–172). After his speech, precisely on 6 May, the first meeting of the preparatory committee for the Tenth National Congress of the CYL criticised the negative influence of the Gang of Four and stressed the importance of 'emancipating minds' and propagating the idea of the "new Long March" (Han 2009, 275–276)[4].

On 28 October, two days after the end of the CYL National Congress, Hu Yaobang spoke at a meeting with old and new cadres, saying that the most important question at that time was how to better and faster realise the "four modernisations". He thus exhorted the cadres to dedicate themselves to study and investigation and to rely on

[4] The slogan of the "new Long March" entered the report to the Tenth National Congress and in 1979 became a nationwide CYL activity centered on economic development (Tsimonis 2021: 258).

facts, pointing to the validity of Mao Zedong Thought, in particular the principle "practice is the sole criterion for testing truth", and saying, "If we do not discuss clearly this question, we won't resolve the problem of talking big words, empty words, false words, and superfluous words", that is the problem of "using stereotyped expressions, using a lot of rhetoric in speech and writing" (Sheng 2007, vol. 1, 233–235).

A few weeks later, the reversal of the verdict on the 5 April 1976 (Qingming) Tiananmen protests against Mao and the Gang of Four was officially announced by the CCP Beijing Municipal Committee. On 21 November the *Zhongguo qingnian bao* published an editorial entitled "The great April 5th movement" (*weida de siwu yundong* 偉大的四五運動) (Dai 2004, 140–141). The rehabilitation of the "Incident" as a revolutionary movement was welcomed with exhilaration by the people (especially youth), whose resentment against the radicals led by Jiang Qing and the desire for change had been growing since 1976. It was also crucial for the consolidation of the power of Deng Xiaoping and his supporters vis-à-vis the remaining Maoists within the party.

In point of fact, the CYL had a certain influence in those days, standing at the forefront of the efforts to expand freedoms: it was the CYL official journal, *Zhongguo qingnian*, in which, as former head of the CYL, Hu Yaobang played an important role, which was first to express approval of the 5 April 1976 Tiananmen protests. After twelve years of suspension, its inaugural issue scheduled for distribution in mid-September contained articles that called for a reversal of the verdict on the events of April 5th and the release of those who had been arrested, as well as an article written by Hu Yaobang himself that contained indirect attacks on the Cultural Revolution and compared the cult of Mao to blind religious faith and superstition. Confiscated twice by Wang Dongxing, then Director of the CCP CC Propaganda Department and a supporter of Hua Guofeng, the issue was finally distributed a few weeks later, appearing page by page on Xidan Wall and triggering euphoria and hope among the Chinese people (Goldman 1994, 39–40; Misra 1998, 23–24; Vogel 2011, 251–252).

The movement that followed, known as the "Democracy Wall Movement" (see Opletal's article in this issue), saw young activists expressing new ideas, debating political issues, denouncing the injustices caused by the Cultural Revolution, and calling for the

ousting of the "Maoists" within the Politburo and for far-reaching political and economic reforms (Goldman 2005, 25–50). As is well known, popular movements were initially supported by Deng Xiaoping as useful in his political struggle against Hua Guofeng, but as soon as the activists went further by asking for political rights and freedom, Deng Xiaoping set the limits of change, with the enunciation of the "four cardinal principles" on March 1979, the most important of which was the leadership of the party. By then, the *Zhongguo qingnian* had become a major forum for new approaches, echoing ideas debated among the leaders and intellectuals close to Hu Yaobang (Goldman 1994, 35-57).

Adapting the CYL's work to the new priorities: the role of Hu Yaobang

The decision adopted by the third plenum of the Eleventh Central Committee of the CCP (18-22 December 1978) had a profound impact on every aspect of the life of the country. The decision to shift the focus of the Party's work from class struggle to economic development implied that the CYL would adapt to the new Party priorities. Following the third plenum, a meeting of the provincial secretaries of the CYL was convened in Beijing by the Central Committee of the CYL in order to adapt youth work to meet the new tasks set by the Party. The meeting was held from 19 to 24 February while Party leaders and intellectuals close to Hu Yaobang were discussing the direction of the reforms and the Xidan "democracy wall" movement was still unfolding (Goldman 1991). The meeting made clear that the "four modernisations" should be the main lesson of the CYL's work in the new period and cadres should 'emancipate their minds' in order to serve the new priorities of economic development (see *Tuan nei tongxun* 1979, n. 2, 22–24). But uncertainty and reservations still existed among the cadres, some of whom were wondering whether class struggle would be still upheld. In a speech delivered on 23 February to CYL provincial secretaries, Hu Yaobang urged cadres to abandon old slogans that were the product of specific historical conditions, in favour of new ones that could fit the new circumstances, and emphasised

the role of the CYL in providing "positive guidance" (*jiji yindao* 積極引導) to the youth. He then urged the adoption of more flexible methods, stating that "in the past the authorities had interfered too much in young people's life and it was now essential to pay attention to their particular interests and characteristics" (Gongqingtuan zhongyang bangongting 1979, 26–40). The same idea had been put forward a few days earlier (on 13 January 1979) during a meeting with officials of the CCP Central Propaganda Department, when Hu Yaobang underlined the importance of keeping close ties with the youth, and called on cadres to "be good at guiding youth" (*dui qingnian yao shanyu yindao* 對青年要善於引導) by considering their characteristics and starting from reality (Han 2009, 278).

In his 23 February speech, Hu Yaobang also touched upon the role of the youth press, which – in his view – should focus on issues that directly pertained to the life and problems encountered by the youth, avoiding sermons. By mentioning the Xidan movement, he thus also encouraged cadres to report those positive solicitations that came from below (Gongqingtuan zhongyang bangongting 1979, 26–40). Hu Yaobang showed a tolerant and mild attitude towards the student protests and the demands coming from a young generation who had suffered greatly and unjustly during the Cultural Revolution and whose voices should be listened to (Chen 2012). This attitude, which would continue to characterise Hu Yaobang and his associates in the following years, can be partly explained by considering the trauma experienced just a few years before: indeed, "the memory of the traumatic Cultural Revolution was still fresh and acute for many intellectuals and even party leaders who had been attacked" (Fang 2020, 241).

During his one year as director of the CCP Organisation Department, and after December 1978 as Head of the Propaganda Department (1979–1980), Hu Yaobang also oversaw the rehabilitation of tens of thousands of intellectuals and cadres purged under Mao in the mid-1950s. Those rehabilitated from the so-called "wrong and mistaken verdicts" (*yuanjia cuo'an* 冤假錯案) included former cadres who had worked under him in the CYL in the 1950s and early 1960s. For instance, on 25 December 1978, Hu Yaobang addressed the rehabilitation of Xiang Nan, former head of the

CYL Central Propaganda Department in the mid-1950s (Dai 2004, 18; Zhong and Wang 1999, 4–5). Xiang Nan had been criticised and purged for "rightist opportunism" at the third plenum of the Third Central Committee of the CYL (2 June–13 August 1958) which adopted the "Decision on the mistake of Xiang Nan". In autumn 1956, during an enlarged meeting of the CYL Secretariat, Xiang Nan had indeed put forward a "proposal in ten points" (*shi dian jianyi* 十點建議) which called for "three main transformations" (*san hua* 三化): democratisation (*minzhuhua* 民主化), massification (*qunzhonghua* 群眾化), and empowerment (*zizhuhua* 自主化). The proposal also urged the youth press to become an effective vehicle of the voices of youth, so as to facilitate the genuine expression of their concerns and needs (Zheng 2004, 213–214; Zhong and Wang 1999, 6). The above-mentioned 1958 "Decision" criticised Xiang Nan and his "Proposal", defining it as a "real programme of rightist opportunism", an "attack on the leadership of the CCP", an attempt to "falsify the orientation of the communist youth movement" (Gongqingtuan zhongyang bangongting 1958, 63–64). In 1979, the rehabilitation of Xiang Nan (who would soon become Secretary of the Fujian Party Committee in 1980) was accompanied by a reversal of judgement regarding the proposal he had originally put forward in 1956. The "Report on the rehabilitation of Xiang Nan" affirmed the validity of its original spirit as providing positive suggestions to overcome the main problems facing the CYL's work in the new period (see "Zhonggong zhongyang pizhun tuan Zhongyang shujichu" 1979 and the 14 May 1979 circular "Guanyu wei Xiang Nan tongzhi pingfan de tongbao" in Gongqingtuan zhongyang bangongting 1979, 46–47).

The CYL's declining relevance and major challenges

With the launching of the reforms, the CYL encountered enormous challenges as it sought to recover the social and political prestige it enjoyed before the Cultural Revolution. Its relevance had indeed declined significantly among Chinese youth, as a consequence both of the experience of the Cultural Revolution and of broader changes taking place in the socio-economic system.

In that complex historical period, the leaders confronted declining public faith in the CCP and official ideology as well as growing social instability. In February 1980, Hu Yaobang, who was made General Secretary of the CCP at the fifth plenum of the Eleventh CCP Central Committee, admitted that "the party confronted a threefold crisis of faith, belief and trust in its relations with the Chinese people" (Baum 1994, 91). That crisis was particularly widespread among young Chinese, many of whom had been sent to the countryside and were now coming back to the cities asking for redress of their grievances and sufferings during the Cultural Revolution. While many cities saw the explosion, in the late 1970s, of demonstrations and protests on the part of sent-down youth (see, for instance, Pan 2002, 221–237), the growing political disillusionment of youth with socialism, unemployment, and juvenile crime was becoming a serious problem that threatened social stability (Chiang 1983). The problem of youth alienation was publicised by the domestic press as early as 1980, when the first opinion surveys among the youth were also initiated (Liu 1984). In the following decade, while a minority of educated youth remained committed to seeking new political institutions and new ideas for change (Goldman 2005), the majority of young people abandoned interest in politics and became increasingly individualistic. In fact, alienation from the Party-state was exacerbated by the new social circumstances resulting from market reforms and the opening to the West (and its cultural influences), which exposed youth to new opportunities for individual development and upward mobility and to a diversified socio-cultural life, accelerating the process of diversification of outlooks and values among the younger generation (Xu 2001 and Clark 2012, among others). As Clark put it, "Most young Chinese in the 1980s and subsequent decades were not politically engaged beyond a vague sense of expectation that the state should continue to step back from its earlier intervention in people's everyday life" (Clark 2012, 195). In this context, traditional channels of social mobility, like the Communist Youth League, encountered difficulties.

At the time when the CYL Eleventh National Congress was held in December 1982, the CYL reached less than 20% of young people in the age bracket for membership (Liu 1984, 991). During the Congress it was pointed out that 26 million of the Youth

League's 48 million members had been recruited in the previous four years. Of these, 2.7 million outstanding members had been admitted into the Communist Party (Communist Youth League Congress 1982). A document released in May 1983 by the Organisation Department of the CYL reported the following data: 46.6 million members, comprising 22.5% (that is one quarter) of the total youth population in the age-bracket (Zhongyang tuanxiao qingnian gongzuo jiaoyanshi 1983, 418–420).

However, problems were plaguing youth work. In 1982 CYL cadres complained that recruitment of new members was becoming difficult, and the CYL official organ, the *Zhongguo qingnian bao*, published letters from students objecting to teachers who were trying to force them to join the League (Rosen 1985, 20). In June 1981 the secretary of the CYL, Han Ying, reported that the percentage of League members to the target population had registered a reduction of 3.2% since 1977 and admitted the existence of cases of 'voluntary abandonment' among League members, which meant that many young people had either withdrawn from or renounced their affiliation to the CYL: a phenomenon that would have been unthinkable before (Han 1981, 3–4) and that, according to local reports, continued to plague the CYL in the following years (Gong 1990).

Moreover, there was a problem of organisational weakness at the grassroots that needed to be tackled, as many basic level organisations in rural areas and urban street-level organisations were in a state of laxity and paralysis (Han 1981, 3–4). The problem was particularly serious in rural areas where the introduction of the individual responsibility system stimulated the pursuit of new economic opportunities (Rosen 1985, 9-10). According to a letter sent to the editor of the journal *Jilin qingnian* (Jilin Youth) published in May 1982, "some League organisations do not hold a single meeting or give a single lecture for six months running, to say nothing of giving political and ideological education to League members" (Hong 1985). The fact that League cadres had too many concurrent jobs, that they usually failed to attend to the work of the CYL, and, finally, that some of them were busy with work in the fields were considered important factors in explaining this situation (ibid.). The lack of basic-level cadres was also particularly serious. For example, by the autumn of 1983, it was reported that

many units in Gansu province had abolished the office of full-time League cadre while reorganising the administrative structure in the course of setting up townships (to replace people's communes). According to a stipulation of the provincial authorities, the office of township CYL Committee secretary was to be held by the deputy secretary of the Party committee at the same level. It was believed, however, that this stipulation had weakened youth work in rural areas not only because Party deputy secretaries did not have time to attend to the League's daily work but also because of their age being around 40 (Tai 1985). Lastly, limited financial and material resources impacted negatively on CYL activities, which were described as "high in tone but low in effect" (Gong 1990, 44).

In urban areas, CYL membership remained remarkably high, albeit mainly as a result of lax admission standards rather than League organisational vigour. Available official statistics related to the distribution of membership in the early 1980s reveal the highest percentages of CYL members in universities and colleges (ca. 80%) and in government (administrative) organs (65%) (Zhongyang tuanxiao qingnian gongzuo jiaoyanshi 1983, 418; Zhongguo jiaoyu nianjian bianjibu 1984, 427, 431). According to the *Yearbook of China's Youth Work*, in 1986 the percentage among university students reached 86.5 percent (Zhongguo qingnian gongzuo nianjian bianji weiyuanhui 1987, 153).

But numbers alone do not explain the whole picture, as they do not necessarily reflect the political prestige of an organisation. In fact, students were among those captive groups that were traditionally more exposed to pressure to join the CYL. As one of my informants – a former member in the late 1980s – recalled, being a member of the CYL meant nothing more than a membership title. While some students found themselves admitted on the strength of teachers' recommendations, the majority merely joined the CYL "because it was the correct thing to do at middle school and while at the university, they maintained their membership for the social functions the League organised, such as outings and dances" (Cherrington 1991, 119). This was, for instance, the case at Peking University where in the late 1980s most students showed themselves to be more interested in social get-togethers than League policies, which were viewed as "'stuffy' and 'out of touch with reality'" (ibid).

Surveys conducted in 1986 on the League situation in Beijing universities confirmed that many local branches were poorly organised and that the great majority of students (95%) joined the CYL while at middle school, being generally indifferent toward the CYL as a political organisation. This was also reflected in students' preferences when it came to the activities they most favoured: the majority of League members welcomed recreational and "knowledge" activities, followed by activities pertaining to current affairs. Activities related to politics and ideology had become almost completely un-appealing, according to the research (Qiao, Qu, and Zhang 1988, 216–219).

At the same time, the League membership still had some appeal to a minority of students who were looking favourably at the option of joining the Party and pursuing a political career after graduating. By choosing the political track, a young student "could become a division chief in four to five years, taking advantage of forced retirement of older cadres and political apathy of most other people" (Ch'i 1991, 302, footnote 66). But despite attempts to stress the CYL's work of recommending outstanding youth for the CCP (*tuiyou gongzuo* 推優工作), the CYL contribution to the expansion of the CCP youth component remained unsatisfactory (Ch'i 1991, 146–150). The percentage of League members joining the Party in 1982 was indeed a mere 0.9% (ca. 400 thousand League members) (Zhongyang tuanxiao qingnian gongzuo jiaoyanshi 1983, 419). The percentage increased to less than 2% in 1985 (Zhongguo qingnian gongzuo nianjian bianji weiyuanhui 1987, 211). If a political career through the League was appealing to a small percentage of students motivated by Deng's decision to step up retirement of older cadres and fill state posts with younger and better educated bureaucrats, however, as posts were filled and attitudes towards the CCP further changed (also in the light of alternative routes to success) in the second half of the 1980s, Party membership became almost completely un-appealing (Zhao 2001, 111). This is also evidenced by the very low percentage of Party members among the student population at that time, especially after 1984 (Guo 2005, 375–378; Rosen 1990a, 56-67).

The Party-League relationship and the reform spirit

The new reform policies brought about profound social and economic changes and impacted upon intermediary political bodies and their relations with the CCP. The League was indeed called to adjust to the new socio-economic situation in order to increase its attractiveness among young people and win back their support.

Frictions between the CCP and the CYL had emerged since the 1920s but, at different times, the leading role of the Party had always been re-affirmed (Pringsheim 1962; Graziani 2014). Tentative efforts at gaining more autonomy from the Party's organisational control had been undertaken, for instance, in the mid-1950s, ending, however, in abject failure with the above-mentioned purge of Xiang Nan, the head of the Propaganda Department of the League Central Committee, denounced as a "rightist" for having opposed Party leadership over the League and altered the orientation of the communist youth movement (Zheng 2004, 213–214). The subsequent trend was a tightening of the Party leadership over the League during the Great Leap Forward when the "central tasks" of the Party became the unique area of activity for the League (Healy 1982).

The same tension re-emerged in the 1980s. In fact, the post-Mao reform policies opened up new opportunities for the existing mass organisations – what White (1996, 208) defined as belonging to the "caged sector" of social organisations – to broaden their traditional role and gradually move toward a more active and autonomous role in pursuing the interests of their members, albeit within Party-defined boundaries (Saich 1989, 50–53; White 1993, 219–223). A series of proposals concerning mass organisations' autonomy appeared as early as 1980, soon after Deng's 18 August speech initiated the discussion on the need for political reforms, and again in mid-1986 within a more open public discourse on political and institutional reforms. They included the famous 1980 recommendation of Liao Gailong, who called for the Party's separation not only from the government and the economy but also from mass organisations and the media, the proposal of some editors at the forum of 30 chief editors

of provincial newspaper convened by the Propaganda Department from 9 to 15 August 1986 who called for the establishment of independent newspapers by the CYL, Women's Federation, and ACFTU, and, lastly, Zhao Ziyang's recommendation in 1987 that mass organisations carry out their "work independently in light of their own characteristics" (Goldman 1994, 67–68, 171–172, 235). Seen as not representing the true interests of their constituencies and acting merely as the Party's tool, mass organisations were heavily criticised in an article appearing in *Xin Guancha* (New Observer) which urged them to seek more independence (Li 1988, 14). The CYL was also exposed to these calls as the need to move in new directions so as to win back youth support was widely acknowledged and discussed among the leaders.

In the time frame 1978–1980, especially following Deng's August 18 speech and the September 1980 NPC plenum which advocated major political and economic reforms, the views of reformers held sway, and a debate on the reform of the CYL's work soon emerged, which was also echoed in the national media (Rosen 1985, 14–16). The media reported comments and opinions by reform-minded leaders who had worked in the CYL in the 1950s and 1960s, such as Hu Qili (then Party Secretary and Mayor of Tianjin), who on 4 October talked to the cadres of the Municipal Committee of the CYL, stressing that the CYL "must in the first place represent youth interests, report and make known their voice, strive to defend the legitimate rights of youth, help them resolve concrete problems". According to him, old methods of political indoctrination had to be abandoned in favour of new – open and flexible – approaches that would integrate ideological and political work with the resolution of concrete problems (Sun 1980). In November, Liang Buting, then first secretary of the Party Committee of Qinghai province, stated to journalists that Party committees should give the CYL organisations more autonomy to make their own decisions and represent youth so that youth could trust the organisation and report their opinions and problems. He said, "We should reform the relations between the CYL and the masses. The CYL is both an advanced and a mass organisation. If it stresses its advanced nature, it will separate itself from the masses, and thus have no energy in the society. [...] One of the guiding principles of the youth work should be do not suppress but persuade youth when

dealing with ideological problems; we should 'guide', not 'suffocate' them. [...] Genuinely paying attention to youth opinions will benefit our reforms" (Zhonggong Qinghai shengwei 1980). His opinion was reported in the Party's official newspaper.

At that time, the official youth media became a channel through which new ideas and political approaches envisaging a loosening of the Party control over League affairs were raised. As early as July 1980, a young participant in the discussion about the "meaning of life", launched by the journal *Zhongguo qingnian*, asked that the CYL took more genuinely into consideration the concrete problems of youth, rather than merely serving as a tool of the Party (*Zhongguo qingnian*, 7, 1980, 17). On July 24, an article appearing in the *Zhongguo qingnian bao* entitled "Do you know the characteristics of the 1980s youth?" explored the reform of the work of the CYL as discussed during a meeting held in Sichuan province (Ceng, Zhu, and Zhang 1980). The article expressed the dilemma of adjustment that characterised youth work at that time and revealed the existence of divergences among cadres on how to deal with young people who, due to the impact of the Cultural Revolution, showed signs of being more independent, increasingly disaffected with politics, and mainly concerned with their private lives. How should we understand and carry on the CYL work in the new period? How should we re-engage with youth? This is a significant passage:

> "Some comrades say the change that has occurred in young people is not a bad thing but progress. What is needed now is that the work of the League is also reformed according to this change, this progress. The method of 'cutting the feet to fit the shoes' which expects young people to adapt while our work remains unchanged, cannot possibly bear any fruit."

This passage suggested that youth organisations should adopt a flexible approach in re-engaging with youth. The Chinese idiom, *xuezu shilü* 削足適履, refers to the method of "cutting the foot to make it fit into a smaller shoe", alluding to the method of forcing young people to adapt rather than expecting the CYL to be abreast of the times. This method, it was argued, would no longer bear any fruit. What was needed instead to increase the appeal of the organization and its socialization functions was

that the League should also be reformed in line with the changing needs and expectations of youth. The article goes on to report the point of view of other cadres who raised the question of whether or not the CYL had the courage to adapt to youth, providing some examples: as youth wanted to sing songs that reflected their feelings, wanted to dance, and were more concerned with their private lives, including dating issues, could the CYL organise activities that accommodated these new desires and preferences? "We know what youth wants but we do not dare to do this." "We talk too much about youth and the importance of catering for their needs but besides words nothing is done" (ibid.).

By autumn 1980, reform of the CYL's work had become the subject of significant and animated debate. In October (5–14) a national meeting on grassroots work was convened in Beijing by the CYL Central Committee, focusing on how to carry out independent activities, represent youth interests, rejuvenate and professionalise cadres, strengthen organisations at the grassroots, and improve the leadership system (Su 1981, 49; see also Jiefang sixiang 1980). On 18 October, an editorial entitled "The only way to attract youth is to represent them" (*daibiao qingnian cai neng xiyin qingnian* 代表青年才能吸引青年) appeared in the *Zhongguo qingnian bao*, praising those branches that had catered to youth needs as a model to be followed, and urging CYL organisations to expand activities for the young in the realms of technical education, culture, and recreation and to contribute to alleviating problems related to employment, education, and marriage (Daibiao qingnian 1980).

Yet it was especially following the third session of the Fifth National People's Congress that the official youth press stimulated this debate, urging cadres, League members, and young people in general to express their opinions on every aspect of the League's work. A special column entitled "Forum on CYL work reform" (*Tuan de gongzuo gaige luntan* 團的工作改革論壇) was featured in the *Zhongguo qingnian bao* in the latter part of 1980, while the *Zhongguo qingnian* entitled a similar column "Reform of the CYL is an imperative" (*gongqingtuan de tizhi gaige shizai bixing* 共青團的體制改革勢在必行). Articles published in this section addressed the weaknesses in the CYL's work, pointing to the Party's pervasive control or "absolute leadership" (*juedui*

lingdao 絕對領導) over League affairs, to the unsuitability of many cadres in terms of age, knowledge, or professional training, as well as to the bureaucratic tendencies and the attitude of many cadres of being concerned about higher levels rather than lower levels and thus unable to transform their concern for youth into concrete actions. At the same time, they called for "representation of youth interests" (*qingnian liyi de daibiao* 青年利益的代表) and the right to "independent activities" (*duli huodong quan* 獨立活動權) in line with the principle of organisational independence once affirmed in the CCP Central Committee Resolution on the establishment of the CYL adopted in 1949 (see, for instance, Yue 1980). Gao Delin, vice-secretary of the CYL committee of Guiyang city, used these words, stressing the departure from past practices that the CYL reform implied: "For many years we have only talked about the need for the CYL to perform well the role of Party assistant, while no words have been spoken about representing youth interests." Then, he wrote that many cadres did not dare to express the voices of youth as they feared being criticised for "claiming independence from the CCP" (Gao 1980). A young member from the Beijing College of Economics (Beijing Jingji Xueyuan) even proposed to reform the electoral system so as to allow League members to choose their candidates freely, abandoning the practice of only nominating candidates approved by Party committees (Liu 1980).

The titles of the articles appearing in this column – i.e. "We should give the CYL the power to make its own decisions", "The safeguarding of youth interests should be added to the CYL Constitution", "The electoral system of the CYL congresses should be reformed", "What kind of leadership should the CCP exert over the CYL?" – indicated that the main area of discussion was the redefinition of the CYL-CCP relationship and the expansion of the League's autonomy and social functions (see also the articles appearing on December 2 in the *Zhongguo qingnian bao*, for instance Qiu 1980).

In the same period, reform of the CYL's work had been subject of animated and lively discussions also within the Central League School (Zhongyang Tuanxiao), where ideas such as "the League has already lost the value of its existence" (*gongqingtuan yijing sangshi cunzai de jiazhi* 共青團已經喪失存在的價值), "it should be reformed into a

youth federation" (*gaige chengwei qingnian lianhehui* 改革成為青年聯合會), "the appeal of the CYL lies in providing welfare/material benefits to youth" (*gongqingtuan de xiyinli zaiyu wei qingnian mou fuli* 共青團的吸引力在於為青年個福利), or even "the CYL should be turned into a people-run or non-official organisation" (*yao shi gongqingtuan bianchengwei minban zuzhi* 要使共青團變成為民辦組織) were raised by members (Wu 1981, 9).

A few months later, the reform of the CYL's work was taken off the agenda (Rosen 1985, 16–17). Wu Mu, then vice-president of the CYL Central School, in a speech delivered at the "Symposium on the youth issue" held at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, stated that, like the reform of the leadership system of the Party and the State, which was aimed at strengthening and improving the leadership structure, the reform of the CYL's work was aimed at increasing its appeal among the young and at improving the style of work of the cadres, rather than at weakening the leadership of the CCP (Wu 1981, 9). As early as January 1980, in his report to the Central Committee, Han Ying had in fact made clear that in the reform of the CYL, the question of carrying on its work independently according to the specific characteristics of youth was something fundamentally different from "asserting its independence" (*nao duli-xing* 鬧獨立性) from the Party (Han 1980, 17).

Early 1981 was indeed a time of growing ideological concerns and prevailing conservative forces that saw in China a renewed emphasis on ideological control, moral education, and "spiritual civilisation", with mass campaigns reviving Lei Feng and promoting socialist ethics and behaviour in order to counter growing materialism and individualism (Hooper 1985, 168–170). As a result of the Campaign against Spiritual Pollution, youth work turned to concentrating on anachronistic ideological appeals in an effort to re-educate China's youth in socialist values (Rosen 1985, 16–19). This trend would temporarily re-emerge with subsequent campaigns launched by conservatives (such as the 1983 campaign against "spiritual pollution").

Despite the alternations between periods of ideological tightening and periods of political relaxation (the so-called *fang-shou* cycle resulting from policy divergences – also due to generational transition – within the Chinese political leadership at that time)

and the continuing importance of ideological work in the form of socialist morality, in the 1980s reformist leaders nonetheless remained committed to creating a milder environment for youth and a relaxed atmosphere in ideological work, which should be concerned with real stories and problems faced by youth rather than Communist principles (see, for example, the "Shekou Storm" controversy in Xu 1995). The idea of "being at the service of young people" (*wei qingnian fuwu* 為青年服務) thus continued to receive particular attention, and in 1988, as will be shown in the following paragraph, the safeguarding of youth interests eventually came to be officially recognised as one of the main social functions of the CYL (Luo 1996, 284–286; Ding 1999, 119–120).

In point of fact, the authorities in the 1980s called for an expansion of the CYL's social functions and moderation of its bureaucratic outlook, emphasising the need for a more genuine engagement with the needs and demands coming from its constituency. While this may have recalled the moderate policies of the 1950s, now in the new historical context and a depoliticised social atmosphere the emphasis on the social function was seen among reformers as the only way to prevent the CYL from becoming completely irrelevant in the eyes of youth. As such, addressing and alleviating problems related to employment, education, and marriage and providing recreational facilities became important aspects that could contribute to forge a new image for the CYL, making it possible for the organisation to present a new appeal and win back a young generation that showed itself to be no longer interested in official politics or CCP membership (Ch'i 1991, 149–150; Gold 1991; see also the work report delivered by Wang Zhaoguo at the CYL Eleventh National Congress in Gongqingtuan zhongyang bangongting 2001, 65). For instance, League organisations were called upon to show concern for the well-being of youth, coordinating with relevant departments by devising ways to help young people awaiting employment to start small businesses and to provide matchmaking services in the realm of courtship and marriage. By the end of 1980 marriage introduction bureaus (*hunyin jieshaosuo* 婚姻介紹所) had been set up in several cities (Su 1981, 50), while the youth press praised League cadres who acted as go-between for young people, making tireless efforts to pair people up (Pei 1980; Ma 1980). The issue

of helping young people find a mate was given particular importance at that time, especially because of the increasing number of people in their late 20s and early 30s who were not yet married (a problem mainly resulting from the experience of the "educated youth" during the Cultural Revolution, which induced them to postpone marriage in order to secure a return to the cities in the late 1970s). Regarded as a new type of political work, matchmaking was endorsed by the highest echelons of officialdom, but the institutions devoted to providing State-sponsored matchmaking services were run not only by the CYL but also by the Labour Unions and the Women's Federation. This mattered in terms of actual "ownership" of these activities, which gradually expanded from mere introductions to organising social events and cultural activities such as day trips, parties, cultural groups, etc. (Honig and Hershatter 1988, 82–87). The extent to which these marriage introduction bureaus were efficacious is difficult to assess. We know for instance that, between October 1980 and October 1981, more than 12,000 young men and women registered at six marriage introduction bureaus in Beijing. Of these, more than 600 couples were dating and 150 had already married. However, we also know that in 1984 bureaus had handled 120,000 registrations with a success rate (marriage rate) of only about 10 percent. Moreover, young people's perceptions of official bureaus were not so positive; it has been documented that in Shanghai, for example, a hundred young people began to organise what they called "spontaneous marriage introduction bureaus" in local parks, saying that they had taken social activities to the streets. Instead of State-sponsored matchmaking they challenged the local authorities by choosing informal ways to meet (ibid., 86–87).

The influence of the "Three Hu" over youth affairs and the 1988 plan for institutional reform of the CYL

The new pragmatic approach toward official youth work centred on the idea that young people had to be observed so as to understand their genuine needs and aspirations and emphasised the principle of "serving young people", instead of considering

them merely as "docile tools" (*xunfu gongju* 驯服工具). Consultation rather than imposition seemed to gain prominence (Pang 1988, 7–8; Ding 1999, 118). This change reflected the Communist leaders' acknowledgement that the current young generation, being profoundly affected by the experience of the Cultural Revolution, should be "re-engaged" and "guided" by means of new models and approaches. In the words of Wang Zhaoguo, who served as first secretary of the CYL from 1982 to 1984:

> "This generation of youth was brought up during the ten years of internal disorder. They do not readily believe or follow blindly. They are not satisfied with prefabricated conclusions and truths. Yet they are ready to accept truth only after their own empirical study, personal experience, and analysis" (Gongqingtuan zhongyang bangongting 2001, 79).

These ideas were closely associated with Hu Yaobang, who had devoted most of his time to the youth movement in the past, and his associates who came to be known as the "three Hu" (Hu Yaobang, Hu Qili, and Hu Jintao), embracing the definition of the CYL as a reform-minded group and symbol of reformism in the 1980s (Ding 2005, 107–162). As Secretary General of the Party, Hu Yaobang exerted a strong influence over CYL affairs, in terms of both personnel change and policy choices. His report to the XII Congress of the CCP acknowledged that youth work lagged behind the actual needs and instructed every League and Party organizations to get close to youth (Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi 1986: vol. 1, 54). In the following years, he continued to be concerned about reforming the CYL's work, emphasising professionalism, intellectual achievements and calling for the adaptation of ideo-political work and broadening of youth activities, while urging cadres to go deep into the grassroots and develop their role as models in serving society and the needs of modernisation at the same time (see also Yang 1988 on Hu Yaobang's approach). According to Ding Wang, in his view "the CYL should not sit and pontificate, should not educate by assuming a tone of superiority without taking action" (Ding 2005, 126). In the same period (1982–1987), the CCP leader Hu Qili, who also had a past in the youth movement, assisted him in supervising League affairs, exhorting the CYL to overcome the trend of acting more as an administrative department than as an organisation genuinely

committed to serving youth and their needs, while Hu Jintao was quickly promoted to the highest positions in the CYL Secretariat (1982–1985) – assuming the post of First Secretary in 1984–1985 – to further promote the CYL's self-reform (ibid, 134–136, 142–147).

Under the influence of the "three Hu" the organization undertook a series of reform initiatives that made possible the broadening of youth programmes and envisaged a "moderate" assertion of youth interests. These attempts would result in 1988's "Tentative plan for the institutional reform of the CYL", formally approved in May at the Twelfth Congress of the CYL, emphasising the social representative functions of the League and its role in social consultation and dialogue. Development of this document started in 1987 when a small group (*gaige yantao xiaozu* 改革研討小組) was formed under the leadership of the CYL Secretariat with the aim of formulating a "preliminary plan on the reform of youth work and the CYL" to be submitted to the CCP Central Committee (Luo 1996, 263–266; Zheng 2004, 214–216). It was following the Thirteenth Congress of the CCP (1987), when Zhao Ziyang acknowledged that China was a pluralistic society and suggested that mass organisations carry out their "work independently" (Goldman 1994, 234–235), that the reform of the League formally entered the political agenda of the CYL Central Committee. As such, at the CYL Congress in 1988, in his congratulatory speech entitled "The hope is in youth" (*Xiwang zai qingnian* 希望在青年), Hu Qili called on youth cadres to "bring forward a reform of the CYL enabling it to participate in social consultation dialogue, democratic management, and supervision", "to overcome the League tendency of acting as an administrative department" and "to better represent and defend the personal interests and legitimate rights of youth" (Gongqingtuan zhongyang bangongting 2001, 117). The document adopted in 1988 explained that the main purpose of reform was to provide the CYL with a clearly defined social function and legal status, an improved democratic life, vital grassroots organisations, and an effective capacity to represent youth interests (see the "Circular on the basic tentative plan on the reform of the CYL system" in Gongqingtuan zhongyang yanjiushi 1991, 407; the Plan is available at pp. 408–416). According to Li Yan, for the first time the representation and safeguarding of youth

interests was officially established as one of the main social functions of the CYL (quoted in Zhang Hua 2013, 17). These developments reflected attempts at making the CYL more relevant by opening up spaces for consultation and opportunities for a more genuine bottom-up representation of youth views and demands. At the same time, the internal debate unfolding in the latter part of 1988 on how to promote the League structural reforms also suggests the existence of different opinions (e.g. regarding the relationship between its "advanced" and "mass" nature) as well as concerns and uncertainties among cadres about how to proceed (Li 1989).

The call for a closer relation with youth may have impacted on the ground on the eve of the Tiananmen protests, intertwining with broader public discussions on political reforms and unintentionally "encouraging" the CYL organisations' siding with students. In fact, we know that during the 1989 student movement, local units on campus were involved in rebellious politics and the journal *Zhongguo qingnian* established contacts with editors of several unofficial presses that were publishing accounts by people supportive of the movement (Zhao 2001, 172; Ding 1994, 99). Moreover, the League published a declaration of sympathy for the student movement: the "Urgent letter of appeal" (*jinji huyushu* 緊急呼籲書) appearing on 18 May 1989 in the CYL mouthpiece, the *Zhongguo qingnian bao*. The declaration urged every walk of society to proceed from humanitarianism and give first aid to the students on hunger strike, safeguarding their health and safety. At the same time, it also called for the problems to be solved through dialogue and discussions, in line with the stance of Zhao Ziyang (quoted in Li 2007, 4 and Ding 2005, 138).

Immediately after the tragic events of Tiananmen, while many League cadres and secretaries were removed from their positions as punishment for the CYL's actions, the Party called for a halt to the CYL reform proposal (Li 2007; Ding 2005, 130; Doyon 2020, 783–784). The Tiananmen crisis led to a strengthening of ideological education among youth and Party control over mass organisations. At a meeting on CYL ideopolitical work held in November 1989, the League secretary Liu Yandong delivered a report which later appeared in the national media, stressing the fundamental role of ideological and political education (Liu 1989). Soon afterwards (in December 1989),

the CCP Central Committee issued a "Circular on strengthening and improving the CCP leadership over the work of the Labour Unions, the CYL, and the Women's Federation" that reaffirmed the role of the ACFTU, the CYL, and the ACWF as mass organisations under the leadership of the CCP and defined them as "social pillars of the State's political power" (Gongqingtuan zhongyang bangongting 2001, 11–19). In July 1990, at a conference convened by the research office of the CYL Central Committee, Liu Yandong clarified that reform of the League must be advantageous to the enhancement of the Party leadership over the CYL and should not weaken the role of the Party; in fact it should integrate politics with the social function and the characteristics of the members, with the function of assistant to the Party being the core (Guo 1992, 300–301). Not by chance, one of the main critiques that the League faced after the Tiananmen crackdown was having neglected ideological work and the "advanced" character of the League by "catering to the whims of the less progressive youth" and accommodating "unhealthy" liberal ideas (Rosen 1992, 182–183; Gong 1990).

Conclusion

After the Tiananmen protests movement, the space for manoeuvre was drastically reduced, as the role of the Party in the direction of Youth League affairs was strengthened, and ideological education and political control of Chinese youth were prioritised in line with the need for "maintaining stability". Even though the CYL has been expanding its functions since 1993 and the focus of its work has been gradually shifting toward social welfare activities, this shift has been primarily understood as a way to assist the CCP in managing an increasingly complex society, encouraging young people's public participation along officially-sanctioned lines, and advancing the Party/state presence at the grassroots (Lu 2007, 117–123). In the early 2000s, under Hu Jintao, Chinese leaders stepped up attempts at increasing the CYL's "relevance" to its constituency by calling again for a more responsive organisation able to engage better with the views and problems of youth. Yet these efforts have largely failed: under Xi Jinping the CYL has been attacked and we have seen a renewed emphasis on Party

leadership over the League as part of the regime's broader attempts to intensify ideological and political indoctrination and bring the Party back to the centre of everything (Tsimonis 2021; Doyon 2019). These developments have occurred at a time when youth is also featuring prominently in the "China dream of national rejuvenation" narrative as loyal, patriotic, and subject to the leadership of the CCP.

This paper has shown that the question of how to define an acceptable framework for CYL autonomy and how to limit the role of the Party so as to facilitate a more genuine engagement with young people in an acceptable way has been historically central for the League. Indeed, it goes back at least to the early reform era when the direction and patterns of "youth work" emerged as a key topic of domestic debate as part of both a response to pressures from below, and a shift in the mood at the higher levels that coincided with former CYL cadres, who had suffered during the Cultural Revolution, acquiring increased influence at the top of the political system. Reform-minded leaders promoted ideas and approaches that envisaged a redefinition of youth-CCP-CYL relations and a new position for the League vis-à-vis Chinese youth. A loosening of Party control was indeed considered essential to enliven the activities of local organisations, allowing for more responsive patterns of work and for a more meaningful participation in policy process.

These debates and initiatives emerged out of the need to maintain the CYL as a relevant organisation at the frontline of state-society relations and were promoted especially at a time when a more liberal political atmosphere prevailed. While reflecting a new strategy for cultivating legitimacy for the Party among the youth in times of profound social and cultural change, they also mirror the structural paradox of reforming an institution heavily embedded in the political and bureaucratic system, highlighting the intrinsic contradiction between the CYL's political identity as "assistant to the Party" and its identity as an agency catering for the needs of young people (or, to express it differently, between its advanced and mass character) that could not be solved except by radically changing the nature of the organisation and its relationship with the Party.

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

The 1978-1981 Democracy Wall Movement and the Reformists in the Communist Party Leadership after Mao's Death

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In late 1978, two years after Mao's death, a reform debate on a wide range of economic and political issues erupted under Deng Xiaoping's leadership. Groups of young people demanded liberties and a democratisation of the political system. They published their demands on big-character posters (*dazibao*) and in small independent journals in a number of cities – a movement soon called the "Democracy Wall Movement" or "Spring of Peking". Some reformers in the communist leadership were attracted by this grassroots movement of young citizens. Heated debates involved even the highest levels of the Party hierarchy. Deng Xiaoping had at first praised the role of critical opinions, but later, in his famous speech on the Four Basic Principles, the sympathisers of this grassroots movement were eventually stopped by him. Based on interviews with activists and the memoirs of some reformist party cadres, this article traces the flow of information towards the leadership, cross-relationships between reform activists inside and outside the CCP, and the evolving roles of party leaders such as Deng Xiaoping and Hu Yaobang.

1978 年底，時值毛澤東逝世兩周年之際，鄧小平領導下的中國爆發了一場縱貫政治、經濟領域的改革大辯論。一些年輕人主張社會自由化、政治民主化。他們把訴求以大字報的形式張貼在城裡的民主牆上或發表在小型民辦刊物上。這一運動很快被冠以"民主牆運動"之名，也被稱為 1978-1981 年間的"北京之春"。中共領導高層的一些改革派也被這次黨外的基層民主運動所影響，甚至在最高層的中央改革會議上也能聽到各種不同的觀點。鄧小平起初對大字報及其發揮的批評作用予以肯定，但後來在關於"四項基本原則"的重要講話中，遏止了同情民主運動的勢力。本文基於對民主運動親歷者的採訪和當時黨內改革派人士的回憶錄，分析高層幹部和領導人獲取基層民主運動信息的縱向途徑，黨內改革派與黨外民運活動分子的橫向關係。對民主運動的鎮壓由鄧小平親自策劃指揮，時任中共黨委書記、前共青團第一書記的胡耀邦並無足夠權力支持這次基層運動並保護這批年輕的民運人士。

Keywords: Democracy Wall Movement, *dazibao*, Forum on Theoretical Work, Deng Xiaoping, reform faction

關鍵詞：民主牆運動，大字報，理論工作務虛會，鄧小平，改革派

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Introduction: Witnesses speaking out

The "Spring of Peking" 北京之春 of 1978 to 1981 (in contrast to the Tian'anmen events of 1989, also sometimes referred to as Spring of Peking) was a young citizens' movement at the beginning of the Reform and Opening (*Gaige Kaifang* 改革開放) era at the end of the 1970s. On "big-character posters" and in independent journals, it advocated civil liberties and democratic reforms. A number of artists and writers joined the movement.

Some reformers inside the Communist Party sympathised with the youthful rights activists; others saw them as allies against the still powerful "conservatives" in the leadership. But as the Democracy Movement also challenged basic principles of communist rule, all pro-democracy activities were banned in early 1981. Dozens of activists were eventually arrested and received harsh prison terms; many later went into exile.[1]

This article focuses on how high-level cadres and politicians were kept informed on the movement, and on the relationship and cross-connections between Communist Party reformers and the grassroots democracy activists. Between 2013 and 2015, this author interviewed about 30 main activists and observers, most in their 70s or 80s at the time. Related memoirs and personal accounts published on the internet, as well as some articles and books printed inside and outside mainland China, have also been analysed. (The interviews and other materials are accessible at https://beijing-spring.univie.ac.at.)

Until the late nineties, about fifteen to twenty years after the events, there was still little information available from China on the debates between party officials and independent activists. After 1989, China continued to remain silent on much of the contemporary history related to democratic and liberal ideas. Many former activists were still in jail or did not dare (or have an opportunity) to speak out. Those in exile were often

[1] For summaries and details of this first Spring of Peking, see (among others) Sidane 1980, Christiansen et al. 1981, Garside 1981, Nathan 1985, Black 1993, Goldman & MacFarquhar 1999, Paltemaa 2005 and Chen 2006.

more concerned with political campaigning than with historical details. And foreign sinologists rather focused on the 1989 events and issues of China's new global role. International authors analysing the Democracy Wall Movement and the key events of 1978-1981 either lacked information about such cross-relations, or they often focused on factional disputes within the party leadership.

Even Ezra Vogel, whose book *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, which first appeared in 2011 (Vogel 2013), discusses at length the power struggles with Mao's declared successor Hua Guofeng 華國鋒 and his supporters, also puts the debates on Democracy Wall into this perspective. But he had also interviewed exiled reform economist Yu Guangyuan 於光遠, who reported some of the sympathies at the 1979 Forum on Theoretical Work (*Lilun Gongzuo Wuxuhui* 理論工作務虛會) for the Democracy Wall activists (Vogel 2013, 254–260). George Black and Robin Munro in their *Black Hands of Beijing* do already mention the meetings between Hu Yaobang 胡耀邦 and activists Wang Juntao 王軍濤 and Lü Pu 呂樸 and the debates among various dissident groups (Black 1993, 54–73). The question of party officials systematically collecting information on the Democracy Movement was not touched upon.

It was only around the year 1995 that some of the former activists (almost all in exile by now) and former party cadres (some also disgraced and in exile, other reformists remaining inside China, but often side-lined or disappointed by the increasing anti-reformist mood in the country) were willing to speak out and contribute their personal recollections and views. These are the new insights this article tries to analyse. Even official Chinese publications on Party history have tried to give an interpretation of what happened at this crucial crossroad of recent history, namely the years of intensive reform debates and social changes after Mao Zedong's death in 1976, and the emergence of a new political power center around Deng Xiaoping 鄧小平 and leaders such as Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang 趙紫陽 (see Cheng et al. 2008).

Even today we can obtain only a partial view of how the leadership dealt with this grassroots democracy movement. Many details remain tightly locked up in the Party archives away from the Chinese and international public. From some of the highest

Party and state leaders we just know of a few remarks that need interpretation and analysis. From some others, though, especially some mid-ranking cadres, we have obtained more comprehensive accounts.

The sources I was able to use for this analysis are by no means fully representative, but – as often for Chinese contemporary history – we have to take what we can get and try to evaluate the information available. The following accounts are an analysis of oral history (the interviews) and various personal reminiscences of people active in the movement (or on the side of party reformers), and an attempt to relate these memories to known historical and political facts.

Some of the main questions that this article tries to answer are the following:

- How well were high-ranking cadres in China actually informed about the Spring of Peking movement?
- How close were the contacts between the young grassroots activists and known reformers inside the Communist Party?
- How was the Democracy Wall Movement debated at various Party conferences?
- To what extent did the demands and proposals of the independent activists impress and influence reform-minded cadres?
- And what role did politicians such as Deng Xiaoping and Hu Yaobang play?

Internal reports on the Democracy Movement

The Chinese system of privileged information for different levels of the "elite" (Party and other cadres) has been analysed by various authors (e.g. Rudolph 1984, Schoenhals 1985, or Opletal 1981). Nevertheless, actual material relating to the democracy movement of that time remains scarce. Again, we have to rely on the little available to draw conclusions. Still, this gives us an idea about what higher Chinese officials knew about the movement, and what kind of biases were carried by such reports for the "elite".

Top Chinese politicians, it seems, were all along well informed, not only about political statements and goals of the democracy movement, but also about individual activists and debates inside the organisations. A number of internal (or classified) government publications for high-ranking cadres reported on the contents of the independent journals and big-character posters and on the debates at the Democracy Wall and even in the meetings of activists.

"Reporters" (in fact party officials sent out by their superiors to collect information) were conducting interviews with the mostly young (and often a bit naïve) activists, with the objective of writing "internal" (*neibu* 内部) accounts for the political elite. One such report on the Guizhou Enlightenment Society (*Qimengshe* 啟蒙社) was leaked a few years ago and made public on various websites (e.g. Wang & Zhou 1979).

The Harvard College Library (Cambridge, Massachusetts) holds copies of several issues of a publication called *Situation Summary* (*Qingkuang Huibian* 情況彙編) from the end of 1978. This information bulletin, restricted to high-ranking cadres, was printed by the *People's Daily* up to several times a day. The available copies report some contents of the latest big-character posters as well as current trends and debates at the Beijing Democracy Wall.

Several of the activists interviewed by this author describe how they were contacted and questioned at the end of 1978 or in 1979 by such representatives of internal party media. They were not only media workers, but also sent to observe and sound out Democracy Wall activists. Nevertheless, they often used their real names, and the young civil rights activists (and avant-garde artists) were usually quite aware of their identities. They knew that these journalists were not only reporting, but also playing a mediator role between the dissidents and leading officials. Details of a number of their reports have become known since then.

The Story of the Guizhou "Enlightenment Society" ("貴州啟蒙社"始末記)

In 1979 (the precise date is not mentioned), two journalists of the *People's Daily*, Wang Yong'an 王永安 and Zhou Xiuqiang 周修強, were sent out to investigate the Guizhou Enlightenment Society, one of the first grassroots groups of the Democracy Movement. In October 1978, the poet Huang Xiang 黃翔 and some of his friends had travelled to Beijing to put up posters with their poems and political demands.

The two journalists held several longish interviews with Huang and other members of that group. Their report was published by the internal service of the *People's Daily*, but was later leaked to websites outside China. It was reposted on several Chinese sites, but has been removed since. A copy of the original printed report is held by the Harvard College Library.

The report itself tries to be neutral, often even sympathetic to the group and its main representatives. It explains their family backgrounds (e.g. noting that some of their parents had been "unjustly" considered "spies" and "counter-revolutionaries" during the 1950s, and that some were imprisoned or executed). It speaks of maltreatment of the young activists during the Cultural Revolution (when Huang Xiang was labeled both a "reactionary" and a "mentally ill person"; others were kept in prison as "counter-revolutionaries"). Such experiences are explained as reasons for their critical stance towards the Communist Party and their demands for "democracy", "human rights", or a "legal system".

The account also explains that Huang Xiang and the others were encouraged in November 1978 by Deng Xiaoping's statement that China's constitution allowed *dazibao*. But it also recounts that when Huang Xiang, just after the establishment of diplomatic relations with Washington in January 1979, wrote his letter asking for support from US President Jimmy Carter, some "representatives of the masses" critically asked, "Is America really a paradise for democracy?" and "Why should China discuss its internal politics with foreign leaders?" This letter was also presented as one reason for a split in the Society in February 1979. The report also describes debates in the group whether to support or oppose Deng Xiaoping, and disagreement among Guizhou

provincial leaders whether to arrest the activists or just put them "under surveillance" (a kind of house arrest).

In its conclusion, the article argues against persecution of the activists. Yes, they did commit "some mistakes" in their writings, it says, but often their "words were distorted", adding that they acted openly, exercising their "right to form associations"; and it argued that the fact that the "enemy" (notably a Taiwanese radio station) had praised them was not enough to consider them "bad people" (all quotes from Wang & Zhou 1979).

The "Situation Summary"

This was a regular publication printed twice a day, informing high-ranking cadres about on-going delicate political developments, and supplying details usually not available to average newspaper readers.

The five available issues of this internal publication from late 1978 give an interesting insight into how high-ranking cadres learned about the Xidan Democracy Wall in Beijing and the contents of *dazibao*. The issues represent only a limited period of time and are certainly not sufficient for an overall analysis, but we can see that the details were carefully selected; the quotes from *dazibao* were brief, with their context often omitted. It specified places where posters had been affixed (No. 758, 24.11.1978), and it added some analytical comments. Readers were, for example, informed that the number of *dazibao* had "increased" and that "many, many thousands" (No. 770, 30.11.1978) gathered to read the posters.

It is mentioned also that readers of the *dazibao* debated with foreigners present (No. 758, 24.11.1978), and that they questioned them about the Watergate scandal when US president Nixon had to resign in 1974. The *Summary* refers to "open letters" to Party Chairman Hua Guofeng and other leaders (usually giving a few details), and says that many authors of posters speak about personal grievances, often asking for rehabilitation and removal of past injustices (ibid.).

The same issue mentions a critical *dazibao* posted by the Enlightenment group from Guizhou, without quoting the contents, but saying that others "refuted" such criticism, and told them "just to go back to Guizhou". Readers are told that the group made "malicious attacks on the Great Leader Chairman Mao", which again were strongly "refuted" by other authors (ibid.).

One issue a few days later (No. 780, 2.12.1978) reports that "more posters that disapprove debating about Chairman Mao are seen in the streets of the capital", citing a large number of positive remarks on Mao and also his successor Hua Guofeng. Especially from this issue, the intention to manipulate its high-ranking readers into a certain direction can definitely be felt. In general, from the few issues available, criticism of the leadership is mentioned, but often without giving precise wordings, while voices affirming the official line seem to be highlighted.

Tang Xin's internal report on the Democracy Movement

One name regularly mentioned in the interviews with activists[2] is that of Tang Xin 唐欣 who used to work for the *Beijing Daily* 北京日報 internal service, but who was also a party official in close contact with Beijing mayor Lin Hujia 林乎加 and other "moderate conservatives". In his reminiscences in an interview given in 2008 to journalists of the reformist magazine *Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Yan Huang Chun Qiu* 炎黃春秋) and later published in Hong Kong (Ding & Xing 2015, 1–27), Tang asserts that between February 1979 and 1980, he had drafted "a number of internal reports" on the activities of dissident groups, and that they were read by politicians such as Hu Yaobang (Tang 2015, 13).

Tang is the son of Tang Ke 唐克, who held several ministerial posts (such as those of petroleum industries and metallurgy) during the 1970s and 80s. Tang Xin also studied engineering, but became a "journalist" (or rather a party cadre) of the *Beijing Daily* in

[2] University of Vienna [n.d.] includes interviews with Xu Wenli, Wang Juntao, Liu Qing, Huang Xiang and Xue Mingde, conducted in 2014.

1978, more precisely of its internal publications department, an institution that existed (and still exists) in every big state or Party newspaper. Such publications were not intended for "ordinary" readers, but for selected groups of cadres and high-ranking politicians, as they also reported on politically sensitive issues and details not usually covered by the regular media.

At the end of 1978, Tang Xin relates in his memoirs (Tang 2015, 4), living in the home of an important politician, he already had access to such classified information on dissident activities and the contents of critical posters from Democracy Wall. As he often asked himself why it was mainly foreign journalists who were reporting on them, he proposed to his editor-in-chief to take a closer look himself at the *dazibao* near the Xidan intersection.

The editors agreed, and in early 1979, initially for ten days, Tang Xin investigated Democracy Wall. He met with a number of leading dissidents and drew up a 10,000 character report headlined *Investigations and Impressions from Democracy Wall* (*Minzhuqiang wai caifang yinxiang ji* 民主牆外採訪印象記) and printed by the *Beijing Daily Internal Service* (*Beijing Ribao Neican* 北京日報內參) (Tang 2015, 8).

The full text of this report has never become available to the general public inside or outside China, but from Tang's own account and from a leading dissident who had a chance to read it (Liu 2014),[3] we learn some details about what was written up for the state and party officials. The basic assessments that Tang elaborates in his memoirs seem to follow those from his original report:

> I felt like this: At Democracy Wall there were three factions. The first and most important one was the 'April 5th Forum' led by Xu Wenli 徐文立, Liu Qing 劉青 and Yang Jing 楊靖. ... Xu had, like many others, suffered during the Cultural Revolution, but not very heavily. His main slogan was that common people should also participate in debating big politics. ... The second faction

[3] Liu Qing was a co-founder of the independent journal *April 5th Forum* in Beijing. Arrested in 1980 for publishing the transcript of the 1979 trial of Wei Jingsheng and imprisoned for almost eleven years. In 1992 he arrived in the US where he became chairman of the organisation *Human Rights in China*.

was the leftists, represented at Democracy Wall by the journal *The Spring of Peking*.[4] Their chief editor was Zhou Weimin 周為民, a Central Committee member of the Youth League, and his deputy was Wang Juntao, an alternate member of the Committee. ... Among the eleven editors, nine were sons of high-ranking cadres, and almost all of them were "April 5th Heroes".[5] They ... seemed to follow the most radical party line.[6] ... The third faction stood on the right; it consisted mainly of Wei Jingsheng 魏京生. Wei was more advanced than all others in the emancipation of minds. His journal *Exploration* proposed a "Fifth Modernisation" because "Four Modernisations" without political modernisation were inconceivable for him. And he opposed any form of personality cult; he was particularly worried that such a cult might arise around Deng Xiaoping. (Tang 2015, 9)

Photo 1: Selection of independent journals

4 *The Spring of Peking* was the English title for the journal *Beijing zhi chun* 北京之春 used at the time by its publishers.

5 Persecuted activists of the 1976 Tian'anmen protests.

6 Advocating reforms more than others.

Liu recalls Tang's very negative assessment of Wei Jingsheng's journal *Exploration*, adding that activists from other journals (like his *April 5th Forum*) also disapproved of some of Wei's positions, but Tang's opinion seemed a lot more devastating:

> For Tang Xin it was not only "extreme" but it also represented a bourgeois and reactionary ideology and dangerous leaning. He included in this group organisations like the Chinese Human Rights Alliance.[7] The journals that Tang Xin liked most were 'The Spring of Peking'[8] and 'Fertile Soil',[9] both almost openly praised by him. In his article he also wrote positively about 'Today',[10] which he referred to as a "contribution" and an "achievement" for literature and arts. The other people's journals and organisations he just described as remaining in a grey area. (Liu 2003, 3)

When Liu Qing, a leading editor of the dissident journal *April 5th Forum* (*Si Wu Luntan* 四五論壇), talked to this author in 2014, he said that he never possessed Tang Xin's report, but had a chance to read it at that time. In his recollections written in 1995 (Liu 2003, 3), he still remembers some of the details of Tang Xin's judgments on the Democracy Movement. Liu more or less confirms Tang's accounts:

> Tang Xin's article emphasised the individual personalities: to more than ten he devoted a whole paragraph in his text. ... On the 'Spring of Peking' people he made quite flattering remarks, calling them "Tian'anmen heroes", [11] and adding that some of them were Central Committee members or candidates of the Youth League, that they came from families of high-ranking cadres, and therefore they possessed a good background in politics. They also had a clear political stance, and they were usually a few steps ahead of the leadership's intentions. The staff members of the other journals and organisations were more vaguely

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[7] Zhongguo Renquan Tongmeng 中国人权同盟 of Ren Wanding 任畹町.

[8] Beijing zhi Chun 北京之春, the journal close to the *Youth League.*

[9] Wotu 沃土.

[10] Jintian 今天, a dissident literature and art magazine.

[11] Referring to the 1976 protests.

> described: on the 'April 5th Forum' he wrote that we mainly consisted of workers who preferred organisational activities, and that we showed no peculiarities in regard to ideology or theory. (Liu 2003, 3)

Liu Qing also tries to analyse how Tang Xin did his work, and why he had more sympathies for some, and less for others:

> Tang Xin's article was obviously based on personal impressions, sometimes far from reality. As for the 'April 5th Forum', he only noticed some members of the core editorial board, although there existed several other gifted contributors ... Tang Xin himself was the son of a high-ranking official, and therefore he more easily understood ideas and opinions that came from the same sphere. Some of his judgments still seemed quite questionable. ... The internal reports only painted a rather vague picture; it was certainly not a signal for repression, as the authorities at that time were more interested in influencing the Democracy Movement and even clinching a deal with it. (ibid.)

Liu Qing, the main interlocutor of Tang Xin, tried to justify his preparedness to talk openly to the party official by saying that he believed the analysis of such "journalists" could exert a positive influence on the opinion of the Chinese leadership, different from much harsher State Security files:

> Although these were internal reports, they were quite different from those forwarded by police or security institutions who wrote on us in the style of enemy reconnaissance, while the internal media, although not eulogising, employed a generally objective and fair approach towards us. Not just any reporter could write for the internal publications: their journalists always acted on behalf of someone. What happened at Democracy Wall was considered important, and those who had contact were all well-trained and influential. A bit later we could also read this report. It began with a sentence in which the reporter described

> his participation in the Joint Editorial Conference[12] as being like a step on the surface of the moon, as arriving in a completely different world. (ibid.)

When we analyse the various reports that have become known externally (in full, or by some details reflected in various accounts and memoirs), we should still keep in mind that they were not objective and comprehensive factual accounts, but tried to filter information in such a way as to give it a bias intended by the authors (or those who had ordered the reports).

What Tang Xin tried to do, for example, was to distinguish between "good" and "bad" dissidents. But assessments like his seem to have only temporarily influenced the higher party leaders. In the end, when the general crackdown was ordered in early 1981, Deng Xiaoping put them all into the same basket of "illegal publications" and "anti-party" and "anti-socialist" groups (Zhonggong zhongyang, 1981).

"An Analysis of the Xidan Democracy Wall" (*Xidan Minzhuqiang pouxi* 西單民主牆剖析)

Several sources mention another internal report on the Democracy Movement that was presented to the Forum on Theoretical Work held in Beijing in early 1979 (e.g. Zhang 2015, 52). This was a meeting of several hundred leading propaganda and media cadres, economists, social scientists, and some *Politburo* members (including Deng Xiaoping and Hu Yaobang, who did not actually participate but delivered important speeches).

This *Analysis of the Xidan Democracy Wall* by two *People's Daily* reporters, Fan Rongkang 范榮康 and Yu Huanchun 餘煥春, was first orally presented to the participants of the Forum, then printed in one of the briefing papers (*jianbao* 簡報) for the participants, and later in the *People's Daily Internal Service* (*Renmin Ribao Neican*

[12] General meeting of editors of the independent journals.

人民日報内參), distributed to a much larger number of high-ranking officials throughout the country.

Again the full text is not available, but some details have become indirectly known through recollections of participants and a book by the official party historians Cheng Zhongyuan, Li Zhenghua, and Wang Yuxiang (Cheng et al. 2008), analysing the Theory Forum and confirming the wide-spread sympathies for the Democracy Wall activists among the participants.

While the basic text of this book comes from a version available in regular Chinese bookstores, luckily there exists a slightly expanded text, adding names and a few details. It probably derives from an earlier (maybe restricted) version of this book. The precise source needs still to be verified, but there is no doubt about the authenticity. On the Theory Forum of 1979 it says [with information from the "expanded version" in brackets]:

> Two comrades [Forum participants Fan Rongkang and Yu Huanchun from the 'People's Daily' wrote a long contribution and] spoke together on February 14 on the topic 'An Analysis of the Xidan Democracy Wall'. They enumerated many facts, coming to the conclusion that the main tendency of the Democracy Wall was a healthy one proving that the young people analysed problems strictly according to the principles of Marxism-Leninism, that they courageously handled the truth and contributed their forces to implementing the Four Modernisations [of industry, agriculture, national defence and science]. The authors also pointed out that the Democracy Wall had caused many problems to be resolved. Nevertheless it seems that their viewpoints have approached those who used the Democracy Wall to propagate erroneous ideas and create unrest. (Cheng et al. 2008, 297)

Photo 2: Independent journals sold at the Xidan Wall (June 1979, photo by Helmut Opletal)

The presentation was followed by a lively debate and even a formal resolution to propose a central venue for the *dazibao* that could replace the Xidan Wall:

> After the collective presentation [by Fan and Yu], a passionate debate emerged among the group members present, leading to a clear consensus: The Xidan Democracy Wall was a vivid example of democratic life in China that was widely noted in China and abroad. The issues debated at the Democracy Wall, the proposals and criticisms raised there, made it necessary to support it. In a resolution, the steering group of the Forum was prompted to transmit this viewpoint to the Central Committee. (Cheng et al. 2008, 297)

The expanded text (no page numbers) adds the precise wording of this proposal to the *Central Committee*, including some arguments:

> The Workers' Cultural Palace should become a place where people could freely express their opinions. Inside the park, a space for putting up *dazibao* should be set aside, a location for discussions and controversial debates, a site

> for people to express their personal opinions. This could also strengthen the close ties between the Party and the masses. Important Party and State officials could alternately show up there to listen to the opinions and demands of the people, and to directly explain the difficulties and problems of China. At the same time they could clarify contradictions. The tiny minority of troublemakers would be led to the right path in this way.

Noting the very sympathetic tone of the report towards the Democracy Movement, one must keep in mind that the main editors of the *People's Daily*, Editor-in Chief Hu Jiwei 胡績偉 and his deputy Wang Ruoshui 王若水, were already known as open sympathisers of the Democracy Wall at that time. In 1989, after the Tian'anmen events, they were both sacked. They left for exile in the United States. Therefore, when the first edition of this book was published by the Party historians in 1998, it was already used to present them as belonging to "a small number" of participants who "completely negated socialism and ... Marxism-Leninism" (Cheng et al. 2008, 296).

The meetings between Tang Xin and the dissidents

To better understand the intentions and mechanisms of information gathering, it is worth taking a closer look at the contacts between *Beijing Daily* reporter Tang Xin and Liu Qing of the *April 5th Forum* and other dissidents already mentioned before. Tang himself talks extensively about this very peculiar episode, while Liu Qing has made public his version of these meetings.

During the time when Tang Xin was investigating Democracy Wall in 1979, he met most of the leading dissidents, altogether 125 persons, as he recounts, and he drew up the 10,000 character report mentioned before. Before visiting the Wall for the first time, Tang Xin spoke to his direct superior Wang Fengyu 王豐玉, who was a close collaborator of Hu Yaobang (a Politburo member in charge of propaganda at that time), which means that Tang's research was known and agreed at the highest level.

Before it started, Tang worried about how he would be received by the dissidents, and he even took some precautionary measures:

> Going to Democracy Wall for the first time, I felt quite anxious. When I arrived there, I found an edition of the 'April 5th Forum', one of the big publications. It had a contact address written on it, Dong Si Shi Tiao 東四十條, Liu Qing's apartment. I noted this address on a piece of paper which I handed to my sister telling her: In case I am not able to come back, please immediately call Uncle Lin[13] so that he can rescue me. But when I arrived at Liu Qing's place, he received me very cordially. This was the beginning of my long contacts with the Democracy Wall that were to last for several months. (Tang 2015, 8–9)

From the other side, Liu describes this first meeting like this:

> Tang Xin briefly knocked at the door, opened it, and stepped in. I was just in a conversation with Lin Gang of 'Spring of Peking'. ... Tang Xin looked at us and asked which person was Liu Qing of the Joint Editorial Conference. He introduced himself as a journalist of the 'Beijing Daily' and pulled out a press card to show it to me, smiling, not bragging, but more to prove himself open and trying to gain our trust. It belonged to his job to meet us, unlike other officials who had come and told us that they wanted to talk to us in a private capacity. (Liu 2003, 3)

Liu Qing says that he remained sceptical when Tang tried to explain and justify his interest:

> Tang Xin said that the whole world was discussing Democracy Wall, but the Chinese media kept their eyes closed; it seemed an awkward situation that they did not notice and ask questions. He hoped that information would not only depend on reports from abroad. He had come to find out things himself, without any ulterior motives; there was no reason for us to worry. I did not know

[13] Beijing's Mayor and Party Secretary Lin Hujia.

> why he used this phrase, but it seemed as if he was actually trying to tell me the contrary. ... We had often heard of spies and had earlier discussed this among us, but we wished to remain open and transparent, and even the police we wanted to receive in such way. That is what I also told Tang Xin ... to demonstrate our openness and transparency to him, and as there was a meeting of the Joint Editorial Conference planned for this very evening, I decided to tell him that he could also come and listen if he wanted. This time he arched his eyebrows and just said "Really?" (Liu 2003, 3)

Liu had just invited the representative of one of the main Communist Party papers to attend the Joint Editorial Conference of the various independent journals, where the dissidents coordinated – especially after the arrest of the female activist Fu Yuehua 傅月華[14] – their common approach and line of action. It was by any measure an extremely sensitive meeting. But, as Liu Qing recalls, there was hardly any critical remark: the participants of the meeting were even interested and eager to talk to an official, hoping that such a meeting would lead to "objective" articles in the media, and they thought that the unforeseen interest by an official journalist was probably arranged by reformist forces in the Party. Liu Qing remembers:

> Tang Xin arrived an hour later than agreed; he explained that he wanted to give us the opportunity to discuss thoroughly whether we would really allow him to attend the Joint Conference. ... It seemed that his thoughts were even more numerous and weirder than ours. That probably had its reasons. He removed his coat, and again pulled out his journalist accreditation to let every single participant inspect it. Most were taken by surprise: they only kept it briefly, some even said, "Did we not trust you enough?" But not with all of them did the perplexity exceed their curiosity. When someone wanted to hand the press card back to Tang Xin, Wei Jingsheng and Lu Lin 路林, who were sitting at the end of the bed, interrupted him. Lu Lin stretched out his hand to grab the

[14] A woman arrested because she had organized a protest march in January 1979 by so-called petitioners who carried a banner reading *"Down with hunger, down with repression, we want human rights, we want democracy"*.

> card, turning it around also to closely scrutinise both the front and the back. And smiling and completely innocently, they asked Tang Xin two more questions, whether the press accreditation had been issued just recently, and if he was a reporter working for the internal publications department. (Liu 2003, 3)

Liu Qing thinks that one reason why Tang eventually, in his report for the *Beijing Daily Internal Service*, portrayed Wei Jingsheng and the *Exploration* magazine in such a negative light, was the cool reception and scepticism he felt from Wei on this first occasion.

In his later recollections, Tang Xin seems somehow to euphemise his judgments on the Democracy Movement, or at least put it into a more positive context, without mentioning some of his originally negative conclusions. He says, for example, that in one of his conversations with Lin Hujia, the Beijing mayor also opposed Wei Jingsheng's detention (Tang 2015, 11), and he mentions that he convinced Lin Hujia that Ren Wanding's arrest, in April 1979, was not right:

> Wei Jingsheng was arrested in March, Ren Wanding on April 5th because of his 'Human Rights Manifesto'. This seemed a bit exaggerated to me, as people were there to protest Wei Jingsheng's detention. I happened to be present that day. Plainclothes police in gym shoes, but otherwise in street wear, had come to beat up the crowd; they pushed the Democracy Wall people directly towards a female foreign correspondent. When I left, as I had no other business, I went directly to Lin Hujia's office. That's roughly what I told him: "How can it be that during broad daylight, you are sending people to cause turmoil and making us look like fools in front of the whole world? Aren't we just losing our face this way?" Lin Hujia was furious; he banged on the table and loudly cursed the public security office. This was probably one of the reasons why they initiated an investigation against me. (Tang 2015, 12–13)

In the 2008 interview, Tang claims that he even became accused of "illegal activities" because of his connections with the dissidents. But Lin Hujia put this into the right

perspective again, yelling at a security director that he himself had ordered Tang's activities (Tang 2015, 12).

There were certainly other similar meetings between party officials and dissidents (e.g. at local levels), but those between Tang Xin and the independent Beijing editors are not only relatively well documented, they also clearly show how such relations were used by each side to sound out the other's intentions, to try to influence the other side, or to test some ideas. It was not a level playing field, though: the party representative was clearly in a stronger position (as it eventually turned out), and he certainly did not always reveal the full intentions and realities of power behind the scenes.

Tang Xin also mentions that practically all the dissident organisations were infiltrated by police informers (ibid.), a fact confirmed by other activists. Xu Wenli says in his interview that there had been at least one secret agent planted into the *April 5th Forum* editorial board under a false name. He passed information on a meeting of Xu with *People's Daily* editors directly to the public security authorities, who immediately informed Deng Xiaoping's office, with questions asked and negative consequences for the editors (Xu 2014). Deputy Editor Wang Ruoshui later (when he was in exile in the US) also confirmed that he had been formally denounced and questioned by the Ministry of Public Security for his contacts with Xu Wenli (Wang 1994).

Other reports

There must have been many other "internal" reports published in Beijing and in the provinces. Tang Xin mentions other investigation papers he compiled (Tang 2015, 13). Liu Qing speaks of one of his contacts, Tang Ruoxi of the Politics Research Department of the Youth League: "Together with colleagues he drafted a report on the Democracy Wall in the name of the Youth League's Central Committee, describing meticulously various journals and organisations. The report contained many positive and commendatory phrases as well as some proposals on how to control and influence the Democracy Movement." (Liu 2003, 3) And the *People's Daily* chief editor Hu Jiwei remarks:

> When the Democracy Wall first appeared, the central leaders all followed it very closely. Chen Yun 陳雲[15] issued special instructions for the People's Daily to send a reporter deep into the midst of the crowd to relay the movement's dynamics and situation. The paper dispatched Internal Political Bureau editor Wang Yong'an[16] to perform this task. I repeatedly warned him to do no more than try to learn the situation, understand its direction, and ask for materials, and to absolutely avoid declaring his own opinions. Wang Yong'an wrote numerous "internal" reports for the central leadership. (Hu 2004)

One question we might ask is whether the various "internal reports" on the Democracy Wall movement spread relative sympathy towards the movement and its activists. They probably did, particularly because some of the main media who published these reports (like the *People's Daily*, and to some extent also the *Beijing Daily*) were close to the reformist factions in the party. But if we look at Tang Xin's judgments, they were mixed or even negative towards some groups and individuals. And others, especially those that did not come from the media but from state security organs, were certainly not as benevolent to the activists and their demands.

Tang Xin as an intermediary

Tang repeatedly portrays his own perception of the Democracy Movement in a positive light, and he even tries to present the attitudes of well-known conservative officials as more favourable than they probably were. But neither Deng Liqun 鄧力群 nor Hu Qiaomu 胡喬木 (both holding leading posts in the Academy of Social Sciences and in the CCP Propaganda Department) nor Lin Hujia were known to be friends of the Spring of Peking. This became clear also in a debate that Tang had with Hu Qiaomu on the removal of the Democracy Wall from the central Xidan intersection to the much remoter Yuetan Park 月壇公園 towards the end of 1979.

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[15] 1905-1995, Party elder supporting Deng Xiaoping.

[16] The journalist who co-authored the report on the Guizhou Enlightenment Society.

The authorities had already discarded the idea of allowing "a kind of Chinese Hyde Park" (Tang 2015, 11) in the city centre of Beijing at the Workers' Cultural Palace just next to Tian'anmen and instead proposed the more remote Yuetan Park. Tang Xin was used to convey the leadership's decision to close down the Xidan Wall and open a much more restricted venue to the democracy activists. Of course they did not agree, but Tang just put forward all sorts of arguments without disclosing that the matter had already been decided by his superiors: "I transmitted this opinion to Liu Qing and the others, and discussed this matter with them. Liu Qing has never understood in whose name I was doing this" (Tang 2015, 11).

Liu Qing remarks that he never considered Tang's proposal an honest one. And looking back, he describes this conversation in a slightly different way:

> As he always did, Tang Xin started with some explanations before exposing his new idea. This time he not only stressed in a serious and firm tone that these were purely his personal thoughts, that he spoke in nobody's name, and that he had not been asked by anyone to do this, but he also explained verbosely the advantages and the necessity of moving the Democracy Wall. ... Only at the end did Tang Xin say that he considered Yuetan Park a suitable location. (Liu 2003, 3)

It became clear, Liu says, that Tang had not played honestly. And looking back on such a proposal, it remains very doubtful that the leadership would ever have seriously considered it.

Encounters between politicians and democracy activists

There was another matter that Tang Xin saw himself in a capacity to mediate, apparently with some initiative of his own. He wanted to establish contacts between moderate democracy campaigners and politicians he was close to. He says that he personally initiated meetings between the CCP Central Committee members Hu Qiaomu and Hu Yaobang with the independent editors Wang Juntao and Lü Pu of the magazines

The Spring of Peking and *April 5th Forum*, activists who were both connected to the Communist Youth League. The meetings eventually took place and lasted several hours each. "The leadership wanted to solve the problems through dialogue and to make use of the positive attitudes towards democracy for the party's course," explains Tang (Tang 2015, 13). Wang Juntao, who now lives in the United States, confirms his meeting with Hu Qiaomu, although his recollection is much more negative than that of Tang Xin:

> I have talked once with Hu Qiaomu; he was a rather disgusting person. When I talked to him in his apartment and said one must do away with corruption, he just answered: "Corruption has existed through all the dynasties, one cannot just do away with it, and this is not necessary." (Wang 2014)

Hu Yaobang, on the other hand (in a different meeting), left a profound impression on him:

> At first, our conversation should have lasted 15 to 30 minutes, but then he was so much into our talk that it continued for several hours. He told me that he had stayed at home that day because of a painful tooth, but I think that he took the day off because he actually wanted to talk with us.... I clearly told him that I opposed the detention of Wei Jingsheng. Hu Yaobang did not give an answer to this. He just pulled out a report by the Guizhou Provincial Party Committee and said: "Look, the Guizhou Provincial Committee ordered the arrest of Huang Xiang from the '*Enlightenment Society*' and later released him again because of humanitarian considerations. I agree that this should be our way to solve problems." ... Later he added: "Young people like you have three advantages: first, you have ideals; secondly, you are well educated; and thirdly, you have the zeal and energy to realise your aspirations. But you also have two disadvantages: you are not realistic, you never start from the facts when you consider what has to be done, you only believe it must be done like this or like that; and secondly, you are impatient and always worried." (ibid.)

There are some other accounts of these conversations between Hu Yaobang and the moderate dissidents (Black 1993, 54-55 or Baum 1995, 75),[17] basically confirming the mixed feelings this meeting left with Wang Juntao. He was proud of his direct access to a top party leader, but at the same time felt that he had not succeeded in impressing Hu. "Little brother," Hu is quoted as telling Wang, "I recognise that you have done correct things, but you need to do them at the correct time and in the correct place." (Black 1993, 55)

Welcoming Democracy Activists to the Communist Youth League?

Liu Qing mentions another interesting proposal transmitted by Tang Xin. He suggested integrating at least some of the democracy activists into the official political structures, more precisely into the Communist Youth League, which was at that time considered close to the reform faction around Hu Yaobang. It was known that some of the dissident editors already had connections to the Youth League. Liu Qing quickly understood that Tang Xin had the intention and probably also some assignment to recruit at least some of the activists:

> It was Tang Xin who clearly offered a co-operation to the Joint Editorial Conference, and also tried to influence it. ... Tang Xin then asked, how would it be if you and some others from the Democracy Wall who had some influence on young people were given posts in the Youth League Central Committee to engage in youth work there? This way, we could on the one hand remain committed to China's affairs and show our courage to speak out and act openly; on the other hand, this would become supported and coordinated by an organisation. (Liu 2003, 3)

[17] In a footnote (p. 412) Baum (1995) says Hu Yaobang invited Wang Juntao for this meeting "after visiting the Xidan Wall with Deng Xiaoping on November 16". Such a visit, however, has not been mentioned anywhere else and seems very unlikely.

Liu Qing says that this surprised him, but he admits that it made him also ponder about the real intentions of the authorities:

> I did not need to think much about Tang Xin's proposal, but rejected it outright. I told him that I had joined the Democracy Wall because I did not want any restrictions and obligations. Hearing this, Tang became a little embarrassed. ... The fact that he had made this proposal at least showed that the government had tried to think about an idea, that a certain faction in the communist leadership wanted to clinch a deal with us, tried to use us, and that this seemed more important to them than to suppress and persecute us. (ibid.)

Tang Xin told the activists that they should think about it for a few days. But none of the groups wanted to take up this proposal. That would have deeply split their ranks. Tang just expressed his disappointment.

Debates on the Democracy Movement within the CCP Leadership

When the CCP Central Committee met for its legendary Third Plenary Session in December 1978 to debate mainly on economic reforms, people at Beijing's Democracy Wall were already discussing much more radical changes such as abolishing the monopoly on political power held by the Communist Party, freedoms of expression and the media, human rights, and the question of whether or not the "West" did possess a better political system than China. There was a group of high-ranking Party politicians who not only sympathised with the dissidents of Democracy Wall, but who took up some of their viewpoints to fuel debates within the Communist Party.

A "work conference" preceding the official plenary session (from November 10 to December 15, preparing the formal agenda) also came under some influence from the Democracy Wall that geographically was just a few hundred meters away from the conference venue. Off the stage "people were discussing daily the latest news from the Xidan Wall," writes the historian and former Xinhua journalist Yang Jisheng 楊繼繩, "the posters from the Xidan Wall and the debates at the conference on the

emancipation of minds got intermingled, ... inspired each other." (Yang 1998, 137) Party Chairman Hua Guofeng and Wang Dongxing 汪東興, who led the Maoist traditionalists, were according to Yang "losing the right of control" on the contents of the debates at this work conference. More and more "forbidden subjects" became openly discussed (ibid.).

It was also during this work conference that the 1976 Tian'anmen protests were rehabilitated (on November 14) and Deng Xiaoping made his encouraging remarks on critical big-character posters and free expression of opinions (on November 26 and 28). On December 13, reports the reformist economic expert Yu Guangyuan, who also helped to draft Deng Xiaoping's speeches, Deng asked him to include such a positive remark on Democracy Wall into the official discourse he was preparing for the Third Plenary Session, probably to take account of the new liberal mood among many delegates who would like to see more political reforms. But the speech eventually given by Deng did not contain such remarks (Vogel 2013, 254–255).

The (other) speech given by Deng earlier at the preparatory work conference apparently did contain some paragraphs on Democracy Wall and open debates in general, according to Yu Guangyuan. He says Deng asked him to prepare some disapproving remarks on Beijing municipal officials who wanted to prosecute people who had written critical posters:

> On the day after the text was finalized, Deng Xiaoping asked me to come to his home. When he saw me, he said: "Yu Guangyuan, it is really absurd, that the Beijing municipal authorities want to open a case to investigate people who wrote their views on the 'Xidan democracy wall'. In my speech, when I speak of the problem of 'creating files' on people to criticize, I will depart from the speech text to interpose a few remarks." He assigned me to draft some remarks on my own and cite some instances. (Yu 2017, 139–140)

Speaking on "democracy", says Yu Guangyuan, Deng used this term in a new and different way. The subheading of Deng's speech was titled "Democracy is a Major Condition for Emancipating the Mind". Deng also referred to the rehabilitation of the

1976 Tian'anmen protesters by saying: "The masses should be encouraged to offer criticism. There is nothing to worry about even if a few malcontents take advantage of democracy to make trouble." (Yu 2017, 144) All this confirms that at this point – in November and December 1978 – Deng Xiaoping held a positive attitude towards people expressing critical opinions, even on the party and its leaders.

Yu Guangyuan mentions that he himself would have liked to have some first-hand knowledge of Democracy Wall, but that he did not dare to go himself at his "advanced age", as he had heard that some party officials had been "roughed up" there. Only Politburo member and Party propagandist Hu Qiaomu, according to Yu's hearsay, insisted on a personal on-site inspection. He once "went there at night to read the big character posters by flashlight" (ibid.).

The "Forum on Theory Work"

The Third Plenum and the preceding preparatory conference mostly dealt with issues of economic reform. The place where sympathies for the Democracy Movement became more evident, and other historical and ideological issues were hotly debated, was the Forum on Theory Work that lasted – with a long interruption – for more than two months in early 1979. Commissioned by the party leadership and organized by the Central Committee Propaganda Department and the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, it started on January 18. Some 160 high-ranking Party journalists, legal experts, economists, and scientists were invited, representatives of the reformers (who seemed to constitute a majority at the beginning) as well as "conservative" Maoists. Hu Yaobang and Deng Xiaoping gave the opening and closing speeches. During the final stage of the conference (when Deng delivered his key address on the Four Basic Principles, departing 180 degrees from the originally liberal mood at the forum), more than 200 additional delegates from provincial institutions and the PLA were added to listen to and to evaluate Deng's speech.

The debates were closely linked to current political issues: how to deal with Mao's legacy and the Cultural Revolution as well as the negative repercussions of other political

campaigns of the 1950s and 60s; the need for a serious "De-Maoisation" (*feimaohua* 非毛化), a term that never appeared in the official media, but was widely used in the conference debates; the role of democracy and freedoms under socialism; cultural policies; the relation between Communist Party and state; the attitude towards the Soviet Union.

The discussions were quite controversial, including personal accusations among the delegates, as we can see again from the book on the *Pivotal Years: China 1976-1981*. One participant is quoted as saying, "The question of democracy is one of the big issues that have never been resolved well by the socialist countries." High-ranking officials, he demands, should be democratically elected. Another delegate warns: "If China does not succeed in fully unfolding democracy, the society could develop some envy for capitalist democracy." (Cheng et al. 2008, 274) Others, however, cautioned against "democratic individualism", a term that Hu Yaobang had also used in his opening statement.

In a subchapter that Cheng Zhongyuan calls "The flooding by false ideas and the errors of the conference" (Cheng et al. 2008, 291), he first describes the Democracy Wall activists in very negative terms before linking them to the Theory Forum:

> A very small minority of bad elements propagated a bourgeois liberalisation of the society, questioning and even rejecting the leading role of the Communist Party, the socialist system, and the ideas of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the teachings of Mao Zedong. ... Even inside the Party and among theoreticians (including participants of the Theory Forum) there are a small number of comrades who do not understand the true character of this ideological trend and its destructive potential, and even support it directly or indirectly. During the Forum on Theory Work the flooding by false ideas has rather increased than decreased. (ibid.)

From the discussions cited, it becomes quite clear who the "small number" (in reality probably more numerous and certainly not insignificant) of sympathisers with the Democracy Movement were: liberal journalists like Hu Jiwei (chief editor of the *People's*

Daily), leading economist Yu Guangyuan, Yan Jiaqi 嚴家其 and Su Shaozhi 蘇紹智, Marxist theorists from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, while the "conservative" Party faction at the Theory Forum was headed by Hu Qiaomu (President of the Academy of Social Sciences) and Deng Liqun (Vice President of the Academy). Cheng's book describes the debates like this:

> Some of the statements that had been made in the debates were leaked to become widely known to the outside public. But there were also some ideas from the Xidan Democracy Wall and the society in general that found their way into the Theory Conference. ... Some opinions did pop up that questioned, weakened, or even negated the leading role of the Communist Party, the socialist order and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, vilified or completely rejected Mao and Mao Zedong Thought. ... there were a few who held the Xidan Democracy Wall in high esteem and actively supported it. ... A 'People's Daily' staff member [Su Shaozhi] said: ... The Xidan Democracy Wall is a good thing, a milestone of socialist democracy, one could say. Of course we cannot support some phenomena like the letter to Jimmy Carter, but it sounds a bit too harsh to speak of a tendency of "democratic individualism". The Central Committee should adopt a positive attitude towards the Democracy Wall. (Quotes again from the 2008 edition, Cheng et al., 292–297, with names and details added from the slightly expanded version.)

In other instances, even some of the party elders praised the Democracy Wall activists. Zhou Enlai's widow Deng Yingchao 鄧穎超 is quoted as saying that everybody who wanted to know what democracy really meant should go to see the Xidan Wall (Zhang 2015, 52). But let us not forget, Deng Xiaoping had also commended critical posters earlier.

The turnaround: Deng's "Four Basic Principles"

Deng Xiaoping's attitude towards the Democracy Movement and critical posters seems to have changed completely between October 1978 and March 1979 – at least as far as we can verify this from his public and internal statements.

In November 1978, in meetings with journalists from the US and Canada, Deng still called *dazibao* "nothing to be afraid of" (*People's Daily*, 28.11.1978). Three months later, however, Deng had changed his opinion. In his famous speech at the end of the Forum on Theory Work on March 30, 1979, Deng proclaimed the so-called "Four Basic Principles" (sometimes also translated "Four Cardinal Principles"), meaning in their essence to maintain the Marxist-Leninist and Maoist teachings and the exclusive leadership of the Communist Party. The decisive phrases in Deng's speech went like this:

> The Party Centre believes that in realising the Four Modernisations in China we must uphold the Four Basic Principles in thought and politics. They are the fundamental premise for realising the Four Modernisations. They are as follows: One, we must uphold the socialist road. Two, we must uphold the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. Three, we must uphold the leadership of the Communist Party. And four, we must uphold Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought. ... Moreover we must resolutely fight the ideological tendencies that cast doubt on the Four Basic Principles mentioned. (Cheng et al. 2008, 301)

Had Deng really changed his mind within a few weeks? Or were his positive comments on the Democracy Wall and critical posters more of a tactical nature, unleashing public criticism to contain the conservative adversaries of his reforms? Or did he want to appease the United States before the establishment of full diplomatic ties and his planned visit to Washington?

We do not really know, as we do not have enough insight into Deng's personal views and feelings, but we do have some indications that he was at odds with himself to some extent in regard to the issue of liberties and democratisation, and that he did actually change his mind. On the one hand he considered himself a reformer (and he wanted

to act like one), but he was not sure how far he should or could go. On the other hand he was up to all the dodges of a long-standing communist politician who had got to know the "dangers" of a debate becoming too liberal.

How Deng Changed His Mind

At that time Li Honglin 李洪林 led the Party History Department of the Chinese History Museum. In 1979 he was also a delegate to the Theory Forum, and he was regularly asked to draft speeches for political leaders. In an interview recorded in 2008 and published in 2015 in a book by Ding Dong and his colleagues (Ding & Xing 2015, 61–94), he remembered how he perceived Deng's change of opinion.

In a preliminary debate on the planning of the Theory Forum in mid-January 1979, Deng had demanded, "There must not be any forbidden zones or topics" (Li 2015, 63). But Li remembers also that there was pressure coming from a different direction: from Sichuan (from provincial Party Secretary Zhao Ziyang) and Shanghai there was criticism that protests by young people who had been sent to the countryside and now wanted to return home to the cities, or by victims of the Cultural Revolution who demanded rehabilitation, were getting out of control (Li 2015, 64). On March 27, Li was – together with three other officials – summoned by Deng Xiaoping to help to draft the speech he was to give three days later. The officials listened and made notes on Deng's remarks in order later to put them into the draft. Li remembers:

> What surprised me most was that he did not talk of an emancipation of minds any more, but criticised the extreme democratisation of society and the weakening of ideological work. He spoke in a very severe mood, in short he said things could not go on the same way, they had to be corrected! ... The speech that Deng eventually gave, was the one "On Upholding the Four Basic Principles" that everybody knows. ... Deng Xiaoping's original draft was even more strident, but the text officially published later was made softer. Still, after the conference, some people said it was rather "Four Cudgels". (Li 2015, 65)

Li notes, however, that two days before this conversation with Deng (on March 25), Wei Jingsheng, the editor of the most outspoken dissident journal *Exploration*, had posted his famous *dazibao* "Democracy or New Despotism" (*yao minzhu haishi yao xin de ducai* 要民主還是要新的獨裁), which personally attacked Deng Xiaoping (ibid.), calling him "a dictator like Mao". But, in a footnote, Li Honglin remarks that this big-character poster could not be the original reason for Deng Xiaoping's change of mind, as Deng had already, in another speech on March 16, severely criticised Democracy Wall and the Theory Forum, saying:

> There are still many elements not in accordance with stability and unity. We must resolutely uphold the great banner of Chairman Mao, which is very important for the issue of stability and unity, and it also touches upon the question of international influence. In their articles the media also need to uphold the banner of Chairman Mao; we must not damage this banner. Whoever disowns Chairman Mao also disowns the People's Republic of China and the whole history connected to it. (ibid.)

It was already in this speech that Deng had attacked Wei Jingsheng in person. This criticism had reached Wei's ears, and his poster, nine days later, was actually a reaction to Deng's speech, and not the other way round! (ibid.)

Li Honglin also refers to an episode that happened months later, after the court verdict against Wei Jingsheng (in September 1979, when he was sentenced to 15 years in prison). When Li happened to meet Hu Yaobang (at the time CCP Secretary General), he asked him why the sentence against Wei had to be so harsh. Hu told him that it had been Peng Zhen 彭真[18] who had brought the text of Wei Jingsheng's *dazibao* to the attention of Deng Xiaoping, and it had been Peng who had convinced Deng to express his harsh reaction, to order Wei's arrest and – later – to order the closure of the Xidan Wall. Hu Yaobang is said to have added: "I did not agree to his arrest. One could have chosen a softer method, more like teaching him a lesson." (ibid.)

[18] A former mayor of Beijing and high-ranking victim of persecution during the Cultural Revolution.

Back at the Theory Forum where Deng Xiaoping's March 30 speech was to be debated over the following two days, at least some of the delegates openly criticised Deng's Four Basic Principles as concentrating too much on questioning political reform groups and ignoring conservative Marxists and Maoists:

> The most important and fundamental difference of opinions ... arose in debating the question what the "main danger" was. Some even ... did not agree with Deng's upholding the Four Basic Principles. One group's briefing paper asked: Is it really the case that the main danger at the moment comes from troublemakers and rightist tendencies such as the "Chinese Human Rights Group" or the "Discussion Group for Democracy", or does it rather come from an "Association for the Study of Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought" which thinks that the Third Plenary Session means a restoration of power, and from revisionist "leftist" tendencies? (Cheng et al. 2008, 303–304)

Cheng Zhongyuan in his book (and in the extended version) names again the main critics of Deng's speech as coming from the group closely connected to the *People's Daily*: Hu Jiwei and Wang Ruoshui, and he adds the philosopher Zhang Xianyang 張顯揚[19] and the historian Li Honglin[20] (Cheng et al. 2008, 304–305).

On April 3, Hu Yaobang gave a second closing speech at the conference, and he also adapted his tone in accordance with Deng's remarks, says Li. It became clear that Hu did not want to snub the delegates. He does not know exactly when and how these decisions were taken, writes Li Honglin, whether there was for example a meeting of the innermost circle of the CCP Central Committee, but he adds:

> What I could notice was a relatively liberal mood at the beginning. When (Hu) Yaobang and (Hu) Qiaomu spoke to me, they certainly did not just express their personal opinions, but they had made their deliberations for some time together with (Deng) Xiaoping and Hua Guofeng, and what they told me was

[19] 1936-2013; during the 1970s at the International Philosophy Research Department of Peking University, in the 1980s at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

[20] 1925-2016; Party historian, in the 1980s at the CCP Propaganda Department.

> also the opinion of the central leadership. So when did these changes happen? It was during the time when the conference adjourned.[21] (Li 2015, 66)

The big changes towards a reform policy, and the beginnings of the Democracy Movement and the *dazibao* at the Xidan Wall, all coincide with the rise of the former Youth League First Secretary Hu Yaobang to the inner circle of the Chinese leadership. Hu served at the top of the official youth organization between 1952 and 1966, before he was purged during the Cultural Revolution and sent to a re-education through labour camp. His fate became closely linked then to that of Deng Xiaoping, who had also been persecuted. Only in 1977, when Mao had died, was he eventually rehabilitated – just as was Deng Xiaoping.

Hu became responsible in the party for the rehabilitation of Cultural Revolution victims; later he was head of the powerful Propaganda Department of the CCP Central Committee, in 1980 he was chosen for a seat in the Politburo Standing Committee (the highest Party organ), and became Secretary General of the Communist Party. The next year he was formally made its Chairman to follow Mao's originally chosen successor Hua Guofeng. But the real political power shifted more and more into the hands of Deng Xiaoping, although Deng had renounced holding any formal top positions.

Hu and others from his reformist faction supported in various ways the new grassroots Democracy Movement and the right to publish critical posters. And they opposed or criticised the arrest of well-known activist Wei Jingsheng. They viewed the dissidents as allies in their struggle against the old Maoist cadres who still occupied many key positions in the political hierarchy. At least between the end of 1978 and March 1979, there seemed to exist a possibility that the ideas of the Spring of Peking might take root and embrace larger parts of the Communist Party to become the foundation of a Chinese reform communism. One reason that this did not happen was Deng's political

[21] After February 22, 1979.

turnaround. The titular Party Chairman Hu Yaobang eventually had to give in to the authority of the de facto leader Deng Xiaoping.

Hu Jiwei, who was chief editor of the main party newspaper *People's Daily* at that time, published in 2004, when he was already in exile in the US, some memories explaining how Hu Yaobang sympathised with the dissident movement, and how he also came under attack for this:

> Comrade [Hu] Yaobang was greatly interested in the Xidan Democracy Wall, having already indicated his admiration for it, and believed its big-character posters to be different from those of the Cultural Revolution and before. He believed that in the past they had mostly been used by leaders to punish and harm people. This time, the big-character posters were like those of the April 5th Tian'anmen Movement,[22] voices coming from people's hearts, a new people's awakening. ... After the arrest of Wei Jingsheng at the end of March 1979, Comrade [Hu]Yaobang indicated his disagreement in a speech to the Second Session of the Fifth National People's Congress in June. [Hu] Yaobang said: "I support anyone exercising their democratic rights under a socialist system. I hope everyone can enjoy the greatest freedom under the protection of the Constitution. Despite the numerous comrades criticising me by name or otherwise during the Central Work Conference and this People's Congress, saying I was going behind the central government's back, supporting a so-called democratisation movement that violated the Four Modernisations, and encouraging anarchy, despite all that I still maintain my views". Regarding Wei's arrest he said: "I respectfully suggest that comrades do not arrest people who engage in struggle, still less those who merely show concern. Those who are brave enough to raise these problems, I fear, will not be put off by being thrown in jail. Wei Jingsheng has been held for more than three months, and if he dies he will become a martyr of the masses, a martyr in the hearts of all." (Hu 2004)

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[22] Of 1976, altered from "May Fourth Movement" in Chubb's translation with reference to the Chinese original.

Hu Yaobang apparently also initiated articles in the major Party media to support the rights of free speech and debate. On November 14, 1979 (just a few weeks after the harsh verdict of 15 years in jail against Wei Jingsheng), the *People's Daily* carried an article advocating that one should be able to speak out without being threatened by punishment. But Politburo member Hu Qiaomu complained to Deng Xiaoping that the *People's Daily* was supporting Wei Jingsheng by downplaying his "crimes". This article had been edited and authorised personally by Hu Yaobang, according to Hu Jiwei.

Hu Jiwei cites even more instances where Hu Yaobang directly or indirectly supported free speech, *dazibao*, and a dialogue with young people who criticised the system and the leadership; and he opposed many of the measures to curtail it. But eventually he had to give up his efforts to change the party line:

> As far as I know, Hu Yaobang knew all about the shifting circumstances that surrounded the arrest of Wei Jingsheng and the banning of Democracy Wall. He was clear on Deng Xiaoping's "*Uphold the Four Cardinal Princip[le]s*" and the gradual backsliding of the central Party's anti-leftist policy. ... [Hu] Yaobang was increasingly powerless to halt the Party's retreat from the anti-leftist policy following the "Four Cardinal Principles" speech. (Hu 2004)

Conclusions

The available sources will certainly not sustain a completely new picture of this key era of Deng Xiaoping's rule, but they can show that there was a close relationship between party reformists and independent democracy activists, and that some high-ranking cadres bore more sympathy towards the Democracy Wall Movement than previously known; and that there was at least a brief period of deliberation among some top CCP leaders about whether to integrate some of the ideas (and activists) into the Party mainstream.

It becomes quite clear that Politburo member and Party Secretary General Hu Yaobang had strong sympathies for the Democracy Wall Movement and some of its demands. He was against arrests and judicial clampdowns, but at the same time he seemed to waver all along: he was concerned about Party unity, and he obviously knew that in the end he had to give in to the more powerful Deng Xiaoping.

As for Deng Xiaoping, we still cannot be sure how his thinking developed and why his convictions with regard to the Chinese political system might have changed. But these are the facts: the Democracy Wall Movement eventually failed, Deng Xiaoping and other top party leaders turned away from more radical reform ideas (such as much wider media freedoms or abandoning the leading role of the Communist Party). We do not have to rewrite post-Mao history. But we might perceive that – at the end of 1978 and in early 1979 – there existed a possibility (and inner-Party support) for much more substantial political reforms in China, initiated by a group of formerly completely unknown young people.

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SPOTLIGHT

Jaroslav Průšek (1906–1980): A Man of His Time and Place

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Czechoslovak sinologist Jaroslav Průšek (1906–1980) is recognised as the founder of the Prague School of Sinology and one of the great figures of twentieth-century European scholarship on China. He held the first chair for Chinese and Japanese languages and literature established at Charles University in Prague in 1945. Later he became director of the Oriental Institute of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, but after the Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 he was purged and his work was suppressed, while at the same time interest in his pioneering work on modern Chinese literature started to grow internationally. This article will contextualise Průšek's research on Chinese literary modernity within his broader interest in history and the early vernacular story, and in his general approach to Chinese culture. This will enable us to see Průšek's 1961–1962 polemics with another great scholar of modern Chinese literature, C. T. Hsia, in broader perspective.

捷克斯洛伐克漢學家雅羅斯拉夫·普實克（Jaroslav Průšek）被公認為布拉格漢學派的奠基人，是二十世紀中國研究領域卓有成就的歐洲學者之一。1945 年他成為布拉格查理大學中國和日本語言文學專業第一任教授，之後擔任捷克斯洛伐克科學院東方研究所所長。1968 年蘇聯和其它四個華沙條約組織國家派軍隊入侵捷克斯洛伐克後他受到清洗，工作上遭到排擠。而與此同時，普實克對中國現代文學獨創性的研究卻越來越受到國際上的關注。本文將從普實克與中國歷史和早期白話小說的淵源及其對中國文化的整體認知來分析他對中國文學現代性的研究，以期構建一個解讀普實克與另一位偉大的中國現代文學學者夏志清（C. T. Hsia）於 1961-1962 年間論戰的新視角。

Keywords: Jaroslav Průšek; Prague School of Sinology; Chinese literature studies; C.T. Hsia

關鍵詞：雅羅斯拉夫·普實克，布拉格漢學派，中國文學研究，夏志清

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Much has been written about Průšek[1] by his students and friends, mostly in the spirit of homage to a great master.[2] Recently, there has been an upsurge of interest in his work among younger scholars, particularly in China and Taiwan, driven mainly by his ground-breaking research into the origins of modern Chinese literature, and his questioning of the May Fourth paradigm of imported modernity and the complete break away from domestic tradition.[3]

Průšek is remembered primarily as a scholar of modern Chinese literature, but he was a historian by training and in his broader scholarly outlook. In his work, he also touched on diverse fields and topics, such as linguistics, art history, Confucianism, the invention of gunpowder, and contemporary politics. Besides modern literature, he mainly researched the vernacular literature of the Song and Yuan dynasties, and early Chinese history. In his native Czech environment, he is also remembered as a fine translator of Chinese literature who attracted a broad readership.[4]

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[1] I wish to thank my teacher Zlata Černá, a former student of Jaroslav Průšek and later his collaborator at the Oriental Institute, for sharing her memories and insight into Průšek's scholarship. Research for this article was supported by the European Regional Development Fund Project "Creativity and Adaptability as Conditions of the Success of Europe in an Interrelated World" (No. CZ.02.1.01/0.0/0.0/16_019/0000734) and by the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation International Sinological Centre at Charles University.

[2] For example Gálik 1998, Gálik 2010, Doleželová-Velingerová 2006. There were two decisive voices shaping the distinct face of the Prague school, that of Leo Ou-fan Lee and of Milena Doleželová-Velingerová. Průšek's lasting impact on Chinese literature studies internationally was made possible by Leo Lee, who edited an anthology of articles about modern literature published in the year of Průšek's death (Lee 1980). It is to the credit of Leo Lee's congenial spirit that he prepared an excellent selection, which displayed the best and most inspiring of Průšek's scholarship. See also his informative foreword (Lee 1980), in which he summarises Průšek's unique contribution to the field. Průšek's student Milena Doleželová-Velingerová (1932–2012), who after 1968 emigrated, first to the United States and then to Canada, carried on the work of her teacher and further contributed to its visibility (Doleželová-Velingerová 1980; see also Doleželová-Velingerová, Král, & Sanders 2001).

[3] However, it should be mentioned that some of Průšek's lesser-known publications about the origins of Chinese literary modernity offer somewhat contradictory arguments, and he sometimes also used the conventional May Fourth narrative. He did this most often in the introductions to larger synthetic works, such as Průšek 1967b, 113–121. Průšek mostly presents the standard May Fourth narrative also in his introduction to the ground-breaking collection of articles about modern Chinese literature written by his students and published in Berlin in 1964, despite individual observations to the contrary scattered throughout the text (Průšek 1964a). (The Introduction had in fact already been written in 1961.)

[4] For full a bibliography, see Šíma & Palát 1994. The denomination of the "Prague School of Sinology" started to be used in modern Chinese literature studies from the late 1970s, and was adopted also by scholars in other fields such as early vernacular fiction and drama (e.g. Mair 1989). Prague sinologists themselves were hardly aware of it until after 1989, when regular communication between the former Eastern Bloc and the West was re-established. With the explosion of modern Chinese literature studies during the 1990s, new theories and methodologies gradually came to dominate the field, and the younger generation of scholars does not necessarily refer directly to Průšek and the "Prague school". On the other hand it is essential for scholars elaborating on the "lyrical tradition" (Chen &

Studies of modern literature

Průšek belonged to what Leo Ou-fan Lee called "the era of giants".[5] He started his sinological explorations in the late 1930s, at a time when research about China was still largely an exclusive discipline that attracted only a few original, unconventional minds. After 1945, when he became professor at Charles University in Prague, the broad area of China-related studies was only beginning to diversify, and many scholars of Průšek's generation, himself included, did research in several disciplines simultaneously.

Průšek is best known as a scholar who pioneered scholarship on modern Chinese literature, a field that until then had hardly been worked on in academic sinology. His early translations[6] and articles for non-specialist readers aside, he presented his first research paper dealing with modern Chinese literature in 1956 at the Ninth Junior Sinologues Conference held in Paris. It was his still well-known "Subjectivism and Individualism in Modern Chinese Literature", in which he elevated research on modern Chinese literature to an unprecedented theoretical level, brought a radically new perspective on understanding Chinese literary modernity, and began to theorise about the "lyrical tradition" of Chinese culture (Průšek 1957).

The originality of Průšek's approach, which helped pave the way for a new perspective on Chinese literary modernity beyond the prevailing paradigm of modernisation and Westernisation, was anchored in the structuralist (functionalist) theories of the Prague Linguistic Circle, namely the literary theory of Jan Mukařovský (1891–1975). Průšek joined this group during the early years of the Nazi occupation and in June 1939 presented there his research on early vernacular stories.[7] Through the Prague Linguistic Circle, Průšek also embraced the ideas of Russian formalism as interpreted by Viktor

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Wang 2014, Wang 2015), and it is becoming increasingly well-known in the Chinese speaking world (e.g. Yuan Zhe forthcoming).

5 In an interview with the former Czech underground literary journal *Revolver Revue* (Hála 1993).

6 Together with his first wife, Vlasta Novotná, who later became professor of Japanology at Charles University, he produced a collection of eight of Lu Xun's stories in Czech translation in 1937 (Lu Hsün 1937).

7 In December 1948 Průšek gave another talk for the Prague Linguistic Circle, this time on verb aspect in Chinese. On Průšek in the Prague Linguistic Circle see records in Vachek 1999, 108.

Shklovsky (1893–1984) in his book *Theory of Prose*.[8] Thus, Průšek acquired an interest in the "artistic methods and devices" of modern writers, and on this basis contemplated the affinities between the writings of Lu Xun 魯迅 (1881–1936), Yu Dafu 郁達夫 (1896–1945), the young Ding Ling 丁玲 (1904–1986), and others blending narration with lyrical elements, and contemporary avant-garde experiments breaking with the classical nineteenth-century literary forms. As a result, Průšek placed lyrical elements at the centre of his theorising on Chinese literary modernity (mainly Průšek 1957, 1964b, 1969a, 1969b).[9] "Chinese lyricism" is without a doubt Průšek's most productive idea: it has inspired original scholarship about modern Chinese literature (most recently Wang 2015) and resonates within the broader discussion held in the Chinese-speaking world about the Chinese lyrical tradition (*shuqing chuantong* 抒情傳統), starting with articles by Ch'en Shih-hsiang 陳世驤 (1912–1971) and Kao Yu-kung 高友工 (1929–2016) in the early 1970s.[10] However, I wish to dedicate this article to other, less known but equally important aspects of Průšek's scholarship.

History of the ancient world

Despite his contribution to literary studies, Průšek did not originally study literature, but history. He initially considered writing his dissertation on Byzantine contacts with the East, particularly with the nomads on the steppes of Eurasia. This focus sparked his interest in relevant Chinese-language sources. As there was no way to study Chinese language in Prague, he applied for a scholarship to study abroad, and by coincidence eventually travelled to Sweden to study with Bernhard Karlgren (1879–1978). The

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[8] The book was first published in Russian in 1925. It was translated into Czech and published in 1933 (Šklovskij 1933) by Bohumil Mathesius, with whom Průšek later collaborated on translations of Chinese poetry into Czech.

[9] Also collected in Průšek 1980a. For good summaries of Průšek's theory of Chinese lyricism, see Chan 2008, Chen & Wang 2014, and Wang 2015.

[10] Chen & Wang 2014 collect the most important Chinese-language contributions to this discussion and also include a Chinese translation of the individualism and subjectivism article. On the lyrical tradition as formulated by Ch'en Shih-hsiang, see Ch'en 1971 and Chan 2011. David Wang in his latest monograph (2015) brings new perspectives on ideas about Chinese lyricism, including Průšek's. For a critical evaluation of discussions about the Chinese lyrical tradition, see *Tsing Hua Journal of Chinese Literature* 2009.

thorough philological training he received from the Swedish scholar would form the core of his own future scholarship. Studying under Karlgren also prompted Průšek to embrace Sinology as his future research topic. (Besides Karlgren, Průšek also briefly studied classical Chinese language and history under Sinologists Gustav Haloun [1898–1951], Eduard Erkes [1891–1958], and Erich Hänisch [1880–1966] in Halle and Leipzig.)[11]

In 1932, after Průšek had defended his dissertation about the role of the Di tribes in early Chinese history (Průšek 1932), he travelled to China with the aim of collecting sources for further research about Chinese history, to improve his reading skills of ancient texts, and to seek advice from Chinese scholars. His nearly two-year-long sojourn in Beijing proved to be a transformative experience for him and stimulated his future research interests and general approach to Chinese literature.[12]

This change notwithstanding, Průšek remained a historian at heart, and also in his teaching. After he started to teach at Charles University in 1945,[13] he taught classes on Chinese and East Asian history offered to students of Sinology, Korean Studies, and Japanology, as well as to students of world history. In addition he taught seminars which included exegesis of texts "in the written language". His students remember reading masterpieces of fiction in classical Chinese (see below), but the archival material reveals the primary preoccupation of these seminars with "historical texts", including *Zuozhuan* 左傳. In the academic year 1948/49 *Zhuangzi* 莊子 is announced as the text to be read in the seminar. Only once, in the academic year 1950/51, Průšek

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[11] He also took classes on Japanese language with André Wedemeyer (1875–1958), used Japanese in his research, and can also be regarded as the co-founder of Japanology in Czechoslovakia after 1945.

[12] Průšek describes his experience in Beijing in his memoir, the poetically titled *My Sister China* (first Czech edition Průšek 1940). See also Lomová forthcoming 2022.

[13] Průšek held a position at Charles University for only eight years (1945–1953), when due to health reasons he withdrew from the university and concentrated his efforts on building up the Oriental Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences. However, he still continued teaching Chinese history and seminars for advanced students (including reading classical texts "for alumni") as an external teacher. It is little known that Průšek was also a pioneering figure in Japanology and taught reading courses on Japanese literature comprising Ihara Saikaku's (1642–1693) *Koshoku gonin onna*, fiction by modern Japanese authors Ryūnosuke Akutagawa (1892–1927) and Jun'ichirō Tanizaki (1886–1965), as well as traditional drama, both the Noh, and the comic *kyōgen.* In the first years after East Asian studies were set up at Charles University, Průšek also taught courses on Chinese and Japanese language. Later these were taught by his former students. (Information according to *Seznam přednášek* [*Book of Courses*] published for individual academic years and held in the Charles University Archive.)

announced that *Shuihu Zhuan* 水滸傳 would be read as part of his "linguistic seminar".[14]

Students who took history classes with Průšek remember how he provided them with a detailed overview of the political, economic, social, and cultural history of China, painting a single complex, vivid picture of the Chinese past. During his first year at the university, he started to lecture on the beginnings of ancient Chinese civilisation, progressing chronologically, to arrive after eight years at the Ten Kingdoms, when he abruptly stopped teaching due to health reasons. His examinations (conducted orally) were the stuff of legend. He demanded from his students such detailed knowledge about Chinese history that it would take several hours, sometimes even a whole day, before he was satisfied with the answers.[15]

In preparation for his lectures, Průšek worked on his own teaching material, partly preserved in the form of manuscript notes taken in preparation for the classes.[16] Only one slim volume of his *History of China* was published in the Czech language as course material intended for his students (Průšek 1963a). Some of his lecture notes may also have been used for a book on the Song and Yuan dynasties prepared by Průšek's former student and collaborator Augustin Palát (1923–2016) and first published in Italian translation only after Průšek's death (Prusek & Palat 1983).[17]

Průšek never abandoned his original interest in the role of nomadic tribes in early Chinese history. He continuously followed developments in this small field within Sinology, published review articles about relevant research, and eventually dedicated to this topic the last monograph published during his life, based on his 1932 dissertation (Průšek 1971). In the book titled *Chinese Statelets and the Northern Barbarians 1400-*

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[14] See *Seznam přednášek* (*Book of Courses*) published for individual academic years and held in the Charles University Archive.

[15] Personal communication, Zlata Černá. Průšek's other students remember this as well (Slupski 2006, Šejnohová 2006).

[16] The manuscripts (dated 1963) are preserved in the Archives of the Czech Academy of Sciences. See Mádlová & Palát 2011, 55.

[17] A Czech edition of the book appeared in 2001 thanks to generous support from the Taiwan-based Chiang Ching-Kuo Foundation (Palát & Průšek 2001).

300 B.C., links to the work of his teachers Karlgren and Haloun are visible, but Průšek also includes a comprehensive overview of the findings of Chinese and Soviet scholars. As in other areas of his research, Průšek provides here detailed analyses of textual evidence, asks general theoretical questions, polemicises with the existing scholarship, and formulates his own hypothesis.

The book was published shortly after Průšek's forced retirement from the Oriental Institute and was pulled from circulation in Czechoslovakia soon afterwards. Průšek was accused by the authorities of launching a veiled attack on the people of the Soviet Union by calling the ancient nomads who inhabited Central Asia "barbarians". As such the book had to be banned.[18]

Průšek's monograph received an enthusiastic review from Jacques Gernet (1973). Owen Lattimore (1974) welcomed the book because it "carries us to a point beyond which it is difficult to progress further by the searching of texts" (p. 562), and Herbert Franke (1973) praised it as "an exemplary work how to exploit maximum what can be gained from the laconic sources with the help of strong philological method" (p. 506). Wolfgang Eberhard (1975), however, did not approve of Průšek's hypothesis and criticised the lack of unity in the book, its overreliance on PRC scholarship, and its overlooking of some other research. Despite his criticism, Eberhard also admitted the importance of the book: "Yet, everybody who is working on problems of Shang and Chou times will have to read this book, and I am sure it will provoke much discussion. And discussion ultimately will lead to clarity" (p. 525). This discussion is still on-going, and Victor Mair today regards Průšek's book as "a great work for its time and still relevant" and points out that "recent findings in archaeology, genetics, linguistics, and other fields have all served to support his fundamental positions."[19]

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[18] Personal communication, Zlata Černá, June 12, 2021.

[19] E-mail communication, June 11, 2021. I further quote V. Mair from the e-mail: "In my estimation, I believe that this prescient volume has been unfairly neglected because the field of Sinology simply didn't have scholars of sufficient breadth of learning to comprehend what Průšek was doing in his book: explicating in a deeply meaningful way the nature of the interaction between the settled, Sinitic people of the Yellow River Valley and the nomadic groups of the steppe. Průšek's philology is sound and his historical investigations are thorough."

As a historian of ancient China, Průšek also produced a pioneering comparative study of Chinese and Western historiography. In 1961 he presented a paper at the International Council for Philosophy and Humanities Studies conference in Tokyo, later published in *Diogenes* (Průšek 1963b),[20] in which he compares Sima Qian's 司馬遷 *Shiji* 史記 and Herodotus' *History*. This is to my knowledge the first attempt to consider the nature of Chinese historiography through the specific formal features of its narration. Průšek explores the different narrative structures and epistemic claims of ancient Chinese and Greek historiography, which he further confronts with the narration and understanding of the values and nature of truth in Chinese belles-lettres, both traditional and modern. As he writes at the beginning of the study, his interest goes beyond different ways of writing history; through his analysis of this specific case he intends to arrive at a more general conclusion about the nature of Chinese culture, namely, to show that "the specific thought pattern, specific perception of reality, intrinsic to a specific cultural category – that which is the predominant one in the given cultural complex – influences all other categories and determines their nature" (Průšek 1970, 17).

As in his literary studies, here Průšek borrows ideas from Shklovsky and Russian avant-garde literature, and through contextualised formalistic analysis of the *Shiji* eventually arrives at a specific understanding of the individual and the community in China and in the West. Průšek frames his generalisation about Chinese collectivism in the concept of Oriental despotism much discussed in Marxist historiography of the time. He claims that this socio-economic formation was preserved in China until modern times, and raises a highly speculative opinion about some kind of natural relationship between the pre-modern social structure of "primitive communities" in the sense of Marx's description of Oriental despotism, and the easy adoption of Marxism-Leninism in the country (Průšek 1970, 34).

The article testifies to its author's spirit of theory-driven research and methodological innovation, as well as his predilection for formalist text analysis and sensitivity to philological details. Important questions are asked, including ones about methodology,

[20] Reprinted in Průšek 1970, pp. 17–34.

and original insights provided, for which the article is worth re-visiting, despite the speculative conclusions that no longer hold water in light of our current knowledge of early Chinese history, as well as of modern Chinese society and the application of Marxism-Leninism in the PRC.

"Medieval" vernacular literature

Before Průšek arrived in Beijing in late 1932, his interest in China was shaped by European imaginings of its ancient, exotic, and ageless civilisation. This is apparent in his memoir, *My Sister China*, but also in his prefaces to books of translations of Chinese poetry popular among Czech readers during World War II and afterwards.[21] At the same time, during his stay in Beijing, Průšek witnessed with fascination the process of modernisation of ancient culture and admired what he understood as the fruitful co-existence of domestic tradition and Westernisation. In Beijing he also began to share the intellectual preoccupations of contemporary Chinese scholars, with some of whom he established personal contacts, most notably Zheng Zhenduo 鄭振鐸 (1898–1958).[22]

Průšek's most exciting new discovery in Beijing was early vernacular literature, which he referred to as "medieval".[23] Considering the long period Průšek spent researching this one topic and the number of publications he dedicated to it over a long period of time, this must have been the most important area of inquiry for him.[24] Průšek de-

[21] In *My Sister China*, first published in 1940, Průšek records his sojourn in Beijing (at that time Beiping) in 1932–1934 (for English translation see Průšek 2002; in Chinese, Pu Shike 2005). On Průšek's fascination with ancient and ageless Chinese culture see also Lomová & Zádrapová 2016a and 2016b.

[22] On Průšek and Zheng Zhenduo, see Lomová forthcoming 2022.

[23] In his choice of the term *medieval* Průšek follows the Marxist historical materialism model of a sequence of socio-economic formations in which the medieval (i.e., "feudal") period precedes the modern (bourgeois, eventually followed by socialist) period. Průšek uses such terminology throughout his writings.

[24] Průšek wrote his two first research articles published in 1938 on the vernacular story (Průšek 1938a, 1938b), as well as his last article, which appeared in the year of his death (Černá 1980).

scribes how early vernacular literature attracted him with its dramatic plots, its portrayals of ordinary people and their everyday lives, and its skilful narration, all of which paint a vivid picture of the past. Průšek also witnessed performances by professional storytellers in Beijing, which reinforced his conviction about the living tradition of ancient Chinese culture.

Beginning with his first two substantial research articles published in 1938, Průšek throughout his life explored various aspects of mostly Song and Yuan *huaben* 話本 stories and some later *baihua* literature as well. At the beginning, he followed his Chinese and Japanese mentors, and used methods of source criticism to identify the genealogies of the earliest existing stories and suggest their dating. However, he soon broadened his approach, also examining the social environment in which the early vernacular stories were created and consumed, as well as their narrative structure and the stylistic devices they employed. It is important to note that Průšek understood all these aspects as interconnected and their research as mutually supporting each other in the quest to answer general questions about the genre and its place in Chinese and world literature or in the processes governing genre development over long periods of time in the most general sense.[25]

As a literary and cultural historian, Průšek emphasised objective "scientific" knowledge about large historical processes. His theoretical framework was Marxist, and he understood new literary phenomena as resulting from social developments: in the case of *huaben*, from the rise of cities during the Song and Yuan dynasties as sources of economic production, the formation of an urban class of merchants and artisans, and the creation of a related urban culture. He also emphasised the progressive nature of the urban class and its democratising potential, and spoke about vernacular genres as bringing into full flowering the creativity of underprivileged classes and being a driving force in the history of Chinese literature.

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[25] See Průšek 1939, Průšek 1967a. Průšek's other research on the topic is conveniently gathered in Průšek 1970. For a full bibliography, see Šíma & Palát 1994, which includes also his literary translations and essays on the topic in the Czech language.

In his research on early vernacular stories Průšek embraced the May Fourth paradigm of their popular (Průšek uses the word *folk*, which may sometimes be misleading) origins and interpreted them as expressions of a new literary vitality coming from the people, who in their literary production invigorated the petrified literati tradition. At the same time, he did not just copy the historical narratives of Chinese scholars, whom he very much respected. In his research on the social history of the vernacular story, he combined the study of the socio-economic environment and artistic production with his interest in narrative structures, "artistic methods", and "artistic devices". Průšek understood both aspects of the stories – social and artistic – as mutually interdependent, and explored through these their epistemic value and specific relationship to reality. In this approach he was following the theories of Prague structuralism and Russian formalism.

In 1942 Průšek published a short Czech monograph on the vernacular story in which he provided a holistic, comparative view of the Chinese "medieval" story (Průšek 1942). He developed here a complex, sophisticated view of the genre, taking into account the whole variety of both intrinsic and extrinsic aspects. He would later develop the same ideas in some of his English-language research published after the war.

After the Communist takeovers in Czechoslovakia (1948) and in China (1949) and with the start of the Cold War, Průšek took his previous research about the early vernacular story in a new, and today mostly forgotten, direction (which still resonates in his harsh 1963 review of C.T. Hsia's book). He dedicated a book-length monograph to "new literature" from the "Liberated Areas" written in accordance with Mao's Yan'an Forum dogma (Průšek 1953).[26] Here Průšek presents stories, novels, plays, and poetry written for "workers, peasants, and soldiers" and devotes particular attention to literature based on folk storytelling, that is, employing what Mao called "old forms" (*jiu xingshi* 舊形式) favoured by the masses to spread Communist propaganda.[27] In terms of fiction, Průšek extols peasant stories by Zhao Shuli 趙樹理 (1906–

[26] For a German version, see Průšek 1955.

[27] Mao Zedong's Yan'an Forum speeches were translated into Czech (for the first Czech edition, see Mao Ce-tung 1950), and so was Zhou Yang's 1949 elaboration on Mao's theory from the First Congress of Workers in Literature

1970) and novels about the Anti-Japanese War such as *Lüliang yingxiong zhuan* 呂梁英雄傳 (Story of the Lü-liang heroes) and *Xin er nü yingxiong zhuan* 新兒女英雄傳 (A New Tale of Heroic Sons and Daughters) and enthusiastically presents them as direct continuations of Song and Yuan stories and novels.[28] Průšek also presents novels written in a Westernised manner, like Ding Ling's *Taiyang zhao zai Sangganhe shang* 太陽照在桑干河上 (The Sun Shines over the Sanggan River) and Zhou Libo's 周立波 *Baofeng zhouyu* 暴風驟雨 (The Hurricane).[29] However, his main interest is in literature modelled after folk storytelling, which he presents as the creative development of a superior Chinese tradition, "a direct continuation of such masterpieces as the *Shuihu Zhuan* 水滸傳". Surprisingly, for a scholar who three years later would emphasise "subjectivism and individualism" as the driving forces in Chinese literary modernity, Průšek in this book fully approved Mao's Yan'an dogma, interpreting it as a ground-breaking theory that would bring unprecedented progress in modern Chinese literature.

It would be easy to explain away this book (among other clichés of the time, Průšek also dedicated the monograph to Stalin) as a product of what I would call early-Cold War "confusion of minds", or perhaps as the result of oppressive ideology forcing Průšek to adapt his writing to the prescribed theory of socialist realism. I believe it is not as simple as that; rather, I would suggest Průšek fell victim to his liking of grand theories, respect for Chinese literary historians' evolutionary concept of the role of popular genres in the progress toward literary modernity, belief in the continuity of ancient Chinese culture, and purely aesthetic enthusiasm for early vernacular literature as a specific type of artistic expression. Průšek supports his interpretation of the vitality

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and Art (Čou Jang 1950). Zhou Yang actually stressed the importance of the "old" (also "national") forms beyond Mao's original idea (Luo Siliang 2019). The early Czech translations prepared by Průšek's students (see below) illustrate the keen interest among Czechoslovak intellectuals in new China.

[28] Zhao Shuli's stories were used as reading materials in Chinese-language courses taught at Charles University in Prague in the late 1940s, and a selection of translations by students was published, accompanied by Průšek's extensive study of the author (Džao Šu-li 1951). One of Průšek's students translated *A New Tale of Heroic Sons and Daughters,* and the book was published with Průšek's essay about the book and its literary merit (Jüan Ťing & Kchung Ťüe 1953).

[29] Both novels were translated into Czech; Průšek wrote an Introduction for Zhou Lipo's novel (Ting Ling 1951; Džou Li-pcho 1951).

and artistic maturity of the new revolutionary literature in "national forms" (*minzu xingshi* 民族形式) with a formalistic analysis in which he demonstrates the presence of ancient narrative techniques. Continuity of tradition and its affinity to modernist forms of literary expression, which Průšek observes in the case of this literature for the masses, are on a more general level also the focus of his most cutting-edge research about Chinese literary modernity.

The study of early vernacular literature has evolved substantially since the 1960s, and newer research has departed from many of Průšek's hypotheses and conclusions.[30] In addition, I would note that modern Chinese literature developed differently from what Průšek expected from the promotion of "national forms". Glen Dudbridge in his review of a 1970 collection of Průšek's research articles, in which studies of early vernacular literature form a substantial part, perceptively observes that these are "pioneering contributions to a new field in western sinology; reread now, they belong unmistakably to a generation of research whose assumptions and procedures have more recently been tested, questioned and often found wanting" (Dudbridge 1972, p. 100). Nevertheless, Průšek's perceptive reading and his formal analysis (as much as his masterly translations into Czech) remain a lasting contribution to the study of this genre, even if his dating has been proven mistaken, the relationship between literati and "folk" authorship much more complicated, this genre's role in Chinese literary modernity not very relevant, and the whole idea of "world literature" and teleological progress in literary history abandoned.

Philology and literary translation

As mentioned, Průšek was primarily a historian, both by training and in his approach to a variety of research topics. But he was also a philologist, a man of literature, and a connoisseur of modernist literary experiments who understood language not only as a

[30] For evaluation of Průšek's pioneering yet dated contribution, see Hegel 1994, or the review of Průšek's collected studies by Goodrich 1975. Particularly critical about Průšek is Ma 1974.

medium of communication but also as a message itself. Průšek's explorations of Chinese history and his broad generalisations were at the same time inseparable from his meticulous research in primary sources involving philological work as he learnt it from the older generation of sinologists. He practiced this approach as a teacher as well. His students remember classes dedicated to reading tales in classical Chinese (Tang *chuanqi* 傳奇 and Pu Songling's 蒲松齡 *Liaozhai* 聊齋 stories), in which Průšek paid attention to very minor linguistic details, at the same time contextualising them within his detailed knowledge about material culture and providing additional historical data, and through this seemingly dry philological exercise bringing out the richness of the literary art (Słupski 2006, p. 84).[31]

Průšek's philological training and appreciation of literary qualities led him to the translation of Chinese literature. His first published translation was a selection of Lu Xun's short stories (Lu Hsün 1937), but later, with the exception of Mao Dun's 茅盾 *Ziye* 子夜 (Mao Tun 1950), he translated only traditional genres. Besides Confucius' *Lunyu* 論語 (Konfucius 1940),[32] *Sunzi bingfa* 孫子兵法 (Sun-c' 1949), and several volumes of Tang poetry prepared in collaboration with Bohumil Mathesius (all translations most probably commissioned by the publishers), Průšek translated four books of his own choosing: the already-mentioned anthology of *huaben* stories (*Podivuhodné příběhy* 1947 [1954, 1964, 1991]), Shen Fu's *Fu sheng liu ji* 浮生六記 (Šen Fu 1944 [1956]), a selection from Pu Songling's *Liaozhai zhi yi* 聊齋誌異 (Pchu Sung-ling1955 [1963, 2004]), and Liu E's 劉鶚 novel *Lao Can youji* 老殘遊記 (Liu O 1947 [1960]). Second and sometimes third and fourth editions testify to the popularity of these books.

Průšek's translation work reveals philological exactness and at the same time his indisputable literary talent. He provides his translations with copious annotations in the endnotes and explanatory essays, and each translation can also be read as an original

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[31] Zbigniew Słupski later became professor at the University of Warsaw. Taking classes with Průšek had a lasting impact on his own research. In commemoration of his teacher, he eventually published Polish translations of selections from Pu Songling (Pu Songling 2012).

[32] Průšek was not content with this translation and bemoaned the lack of secondary sources available when working on it during the war. New editions appeared long after his death (1995, 2010).

exploration of Chinese history and culture. Yet at the same time the translator pays maximum attention to the literary qualities of the work he is translating, that is, its specific narrative structure, language, and style, even the sentence cadence, and makes all possible effort to convey the unique flavour of the Chinese original. This approach is informed by his formalistic interest in meaningful "artistic devices". As a result, he never adapts his translations to the narrative conventions of European literature. While preserving all these formal features, he succeeds in writing in a captivating manner, offering his readers enjoyment of both the story and the form. Much in the spirit of the theory of his younger contemporary Jiří Levý (1969), who formulated a new theory of translation,[33] Průšek's translations are both exact and well written, in other words, a pleasure to read.

For Průšek, translation was not just a matter of providing the general public with works of Chinese literature. Translation was an integral part of Průšek's research work: it enabled him to gain a deeper understanding of the literary work he translated and simultaneously researched into. As he admitted in the foreword to his 1970 collected studies: "I also discovered that one can only say something of substance about a foreign literary work when one has translated it and so made intimate and tangible contact with its artistic structure and style" (Průšek 1970, 6). Because translation and research were inseparable, work on translations eventually led to research articles published as introductions or postfaces to his translations that were sometimes later developed into research articles published internationally.[34]

Defence of China, scientific study of literature, and polemics with C. T. Hsia

When studying Chinese literature, both early vernacular and May Fourth period modern belles-lettres, one of the questions Průšek repeatedly asked was comparative in

[33] Levý 1963 (in Czech). In German Levý 1969, in English Levý 2011.

[34] Some of these are gathered in Průšek 1970.

nature: what are the differences and commonalities between Chinese and European material? This question is already present in his 1942 Czech monograph about the vernacular story, where Průšek writes: "The study of Chinese culture is of special interest to the European. In this we can not only discover an utterly alien and distinctive culture that has developed on a different basis, generally without closer contacts with our culture, but mainly we gain here the opportunity [to acquire] new perspectives on various aspects of European culture" (Průšek 1942, 5).

Part and parcel of his comparisons and discoveries of differences to better understand ourselves was Průšek's passionate insistence on the equality of cultures and his defence of Chinese culture against Western bias that might diminish its achievements. Průšek was in principle a universalist; he subscribed to the Marxist concept of universal historical development evolving through basically the same sequence of socio-economic formations and in this process achieving the gradual (and in times of revolutions sudden) emancipation of human beings. But Průšek simultaneously insisted on the uniqueness of Chinese culture and passionately rejected any idea of Western primacy. His personal attachment to China is visible already in the title of his 1940 memoir, *My Sister China*, and his efforts to secure China a dignified position vis-à-vis the West are also present in his early popular articles about Chinese culture published in Czech magazines and newspapers in the 1930s. His innovative approach to modern Chinese literature mentioned above also involved a strong conviction about the maturity of modern Chinese literature as compared to Western modernism. And in the last article he prepared for publication and dedicated to the comparative study of the vernacular story in the Song and Yuan eras and Boccaccio's *Decameron* (Černá 1980) he even asserts in some respects the superiority of the Chinese stories over Boccaccio's anecdotes.[35]

This last article deserves attention as a well-argued case in which all Průšek's sinological concerns and his methodology are present. Průšek bases this comparative study

[35] The article was published under the name of his student Zlata Černá because Průšek was prohibited from publishing after 1970. An English version was originally published in *New Orient Bimonthly* in 1968 and republished in Průšek 1970. Citations from the article follow Průšek 1970.

on a close reading of selected Chinese and Italian stories to demonstrate that the Chinese stories were in some sense more advanced than Boccaccio's "mere anecdotes", despite their unique position in European literary history as foundational texts of the Italian Renaissance. Behind this argument we can perceive a challenge to notions of European progress and Chinese backwardness. Průšek applies the Marxist evolutionary and emancipatory perspective, together with the yardstick of "realism" as a "progressive" artistic form, to point to the more thorough, sophisticated description of everyday life in Chinese stories, including the skilful handling of the psychology of the main protagonists coming from low strata of society, unlike Boccaccio's lack of concrete settings and use of largely stock figures characterised "in the manner of commedia de l'arte" (Průšek 1970, 453).[36] This detailed, thoughtful analysis with many interesting insights serves his point that Chinese fiction from Song and Yuan dynasty cities "was in no way behind similar literary genres produced in comparable conditions in the west" (Průšek 1970, 466). He even claims that the Chinese writers of this period "seem to have foreshadowed the principles of European literary realism evolved by the nineteenth century" (Průšek 1970, 459) and speaks about the uniqueness of Chinese stories in world literature of the time. These remarks reveal the general contours of Průšek's exploration of Chinese literature, aimed at challenging the unequal position of Chinese literature in the area of "world literature", which in his time was almost exclusively occupied by masterpieces of European origin.

The article also illustrates well Průšek's "scientific approach" based on the analysis of literary devices, which eventually led to epistemological issues. His analysis simultaneously takes into account the socio-economic dimension of the production and consumption of literary work. On this basis, Průšek asks general questions and aims at formulating general laws of literary development. In the introduction to a 1961 collection of pioneering articles about mostly Republican literature, he presents the same

[36] Průšek's argument about realism in relation to the position of ordinary people in literature is strikingly similar to the core argument developed by Erich Auerbach (1892–1957) in *Mimesis*. Průšek does not mention this book among his sources, but he most certainly knew it, as the Czech translation was published in 1968, and the book was widely discussed among Czech literary historians.

complex understanding of the "scientific research of literature", starting with a close reading and aspiring to discover general laws.[37]

The same thoughts about the scientific study of literary history and the achievements of Chinese culture are reflected in Průšek's notoriously critical review of *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction* by C. T. Hsia published one year later (Průšek 1962). Reading this review today, one cannot help sympathising with C. T. Hsia, as Průšek attacks him indiscriminately as "dogmatic", "intolerant", and even "offensive to human dignity".[38] I understand this review as a product of the Cold War and perhaps also of Průšek's personal frustration given the political situation in China and the world at that time. He reproaches the Chinese-American scholar for the "satisfying of extrinsic political standards" and criticises his anti-Communist bias (while Průšek believed that his own Communist persuasion was in accordance with the objective laws of history and conformed to "scientific truth"). Průšek claims that Hsia is wrong in his evaluation of modern Chinese literature, because due to his "ideological prejudice" he does not understand the role of literature in the revolutionary process.

Průšek directs most of his criticism at Hsia for lacking objectivity and a "scientific basis for evaluation of literature". This, in Průšek's view, means the absence of a historical perspective informed by the Marxist understanding of the historical process in which "literature in its content reflects the period when it was created", which means that in time of revolution the most appropriate literature is dedicated to revolution. Due to this lack of the "correct" understanding of the historical position and role of literature, claims Průšek, Hsia "wrongly" insists that disinterested moral exploration is the true measure of literary greatness, and dismisses the work of some of the Communist writers as mere propaganda. At the same time Průšek reproaches Hsia for not paying enough attention to the "creative methods" shared by authors of a certain period in order to grasp what Průšek calls "the period style". This criticism also involves lack of admiration in C. T. Hsia's book for Průšek's favourite fiction in "national forms".

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[37] The book was published later, but the introduction is dated 1961 (Průšek 1964a).

[38] This refers to C. T. Hsia's remark about Ding Ling's personal relations.

Průšek is convinced about the relationships between the social role and artistic form of literature and the social and historical conditions in which it was created. An exploration of these connections and "objectively" describing them are things that Průšek finds missing in Hsia's work, and this, according to Průšek, prevents Hsia from seeing the "originality and maturity" of modern Chinese literature and makes him "incapable of justly evaluating the function and mission of literature in a given period, of correctly grasping and showing its historical role" (Průšek 1962, quoted from Lee 1980, p. 198). Průšek combines his criticism of Hsia's lack of understanding of the historical situatedness of literature with a personal micro-analysis of the works of several authors about whom in his opinion Hsia presents a "purely subjective" opinion. Instead, Průšek proposes what he believes is a more objective description and also presents his methodology for how to achieve such objectivity based on contextualised formal analysis.

Another source of Průšek's ire is Hsia's judgements of the literary qualities of individual Chinese authors based on comparisons with Western literary achievements. In these evaluations Hsia often finds Chinese literature to lack maturity as compared to the great works of the Western literary canon. Here Průšek's passion for historical justice for Chinese authors comes to the forefront.

Altogether Průšek's attack is not fair, and his own evaluations of modern Chinese literature include claims that are hard to justify in terms of "objectivity". The most striking examples would be his highly positive assessment of Zhao Shuli's stories or of Ding Ling's novel *The Sun Shines over the Sanggan River*, which contrast with his dismissal of the literary qualities of works by authors such as Shen Congwen 沈從文 (1902–1988) or Eileen Chang 張愛玲 (1920–1995). It is possible that due to the Cold War Průšek did not have access to Eileen Chang's work. However, the case of Shen Congwen is a riddle. Shen was Průšek's close friend during his stay in Beijing, and Průšek, as a literary connoisseur who admired modernism, must have appreciated the qualities of Shen Congwen's fiction, especially when compared to socialist realism.

This scathing review is not without merit. Průšek is in a sense right in that Hsia's book reflects his personal tastes and does not attempt to explore the history of modern Chinese fiction in its complexity. However, Průšek betrays his own claim of "objectivity"

when he does not question the simplified Marxist "scientific outlook" on the laws of history. As a result, Průšek's effort is devalued by his failure to discriminate between ideology and theoretical thinking about literature as both social practice and art in the historical process.

Hsia wrote an eloquent reply to Průšek's militant review (Hsia 1963; reprinted in Lee 1980).[39] Later, both men met during Průšek's visit to the United States and mutually acknowledged each other's genuine insight into Chinese literature.[40] Unfortunately, after the failed attempt to create democratic socialism in Czechoslovakia in 1968, Průšek no longer had the opportunity to be in direct personal contact with those conducting modern literature research in the West.

Conclusion

Jaroslav Průšek was a scholar bridging two traditions: that of his training in classical philology and rigorous positivist history, and new progressive-theory-based scholarship blending Marxism and formalism. The second approach stimulated him to ask big questions about the topics of his interest, explore them in comparative perspective, and formulate broad generalisations. His positivist training and later Marxist persuasion made him believe in "scientific truth", while exposure to Prague structuralism and Russian formalism cultivated different kinds of scientific inquiry within him.

His search for truth was universalist, but at the same time he was aware of the limits of universalism if it does not also embrace the special experience of Chinese culture. There is a certain contradiction in Průšek's universalism – while he defended the distinctness of Chinese culture and insisted on its equal position side by side with Western achievements, at the same time he unwittingly preserved Western literary values

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[39] For reflection on the polemic between Průšek and Hsia in the broader perspective of modern Chinese literature research see Lee 2017b.

[40] I heard about the meeting and reconciliation between Průšek and Hsia from C. T. Hsia himself during a conference at Columbia University in spring 2000. For C. T. Hsia's recollections of Průšek in correspondence with his brother, see Ji 2019.

as the yardstick of literary maturity. He did so in the cases of both modern Chinese literature and Song and Yuan vernacular stories. As a result, by pointing to the domestic Chinese roots of literary modernity, or to sources of more perfect realism in the early vernacular story, Průšek was not only hailing China's distinctiveness but also presenting it as the winner of an imagined race between cultures. Průšek's need to defend Chinese culture shows how his research was shaped both by serious "scientific" inquiry, as he claimed, and by his truly personal, emotional attachments. It should be emphasised that in Průšek's time China was not in the position it is today, and there is a substantial difference between Průšek's extolling of Chinese tradition against Eurocentric prejudice and today's government-sponsored propaganda touting China's greatness.

As Průšek emphasised in his studies of modern Chinese writers, one cannot escape the social and historical context of one's time. The same is true about researchers. In Průšek's case, the context he lived in and which shaped his ideas shifted from the left-leaning avant-garde in central Europe, partly inspired by Soviet Russia, to the Cold War reality of socialist Czechoslovakia and China, tempered by the harsh experiences of Nazi occupation and the war. Průšek was certainly a man of his time and place, as is revealed by his enthusiasm for literary experimentation, his admiration for exotic China, and his ideological prejudices, including his blindness to the realities of socialist China.

But despite all these limiting factors, thanks to his genius, the humanistic values he believed in, and his artistic sensitivity, Průšek attained new and lasting insights and formulated ideas that continue to play an important role in global Sinology. He did so with passion and in such a way as to open new perspectives on research in Chinese history and literature and inspire future generations of scholars. In some areas, his research is of interest only for those studying the early history of the discipline. In others, though, his innovative approach and unique perspective paved the way for further inquiry. This mainly applies to the study of the transformations Chinese literature underwent in the first half of the twentieth century, and how to deal with tradition in

the process of radical transformation, which Průšek calls "a sudden leap, when a completely new artistic structure springs into being" (Průšek 1964, quoted from Lee 1980, 77). The legacy of Jaroslav Průšek's scholarship lives on, reconfigured after the tremendous development in modern literary studies, which Průšek initiated when he published his first fundamental article on the topic in 1957. To paraphrase Leo Oufan Lee, Průšek's "ground plan" has become a spring-board to achieve a better understanding of Chinese literary modernity (Lee 2017a, 154).

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SPOTLIGHT

"Dried Mango": Taiwan's Fiercely Democratic Young Voters

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This short piece looks at the phenomenon of the "feeling of losing one's country" (nicknamed "dried mango") in Taiwan's 2020 election and how it facilitated the Democratic Progressive Party in winning re-election by securing the support of young voters (typically defined as those under thirty). Previously, the fear of a change in the political status quo was typically used by the Kuomintang as an electoral tactic to mobilise its hardcore supporters. Yet, with the threat from a more assertive China, there emerged a reversal in partisanship. Taiwan's voters under the age of thirty grew up without the experience of authoritarian rule, and they embraced democratic values more closely, which made them value political liberties more than their parents' generation.

本文探討台灣 2020 年總統大選中出現的「亡國感」(通常戲稱為「芒果乾」)，以及這股風潮如何有助於民主進步黨獲得年輕選民(通常認定是三十歲以下的年青人)的支持，最後成功連任。以前，利用政治狀況劇變帶來的憂慮通常是國民黨使用的競選策略，目的在於動員其核心支持者積極為其投票。然而，在中國更具威懾力的威脅下，亡國焦慮的出現使政黨格局產生變化。台灣三十歲以下的選民沒有經歷過威權統治，他們更珍惜民主的價值，因此也比其父母那一代更懂得政治自由之可貴。

Keywords: Taiwan, Youth, Election, China

關鍵詞：台灣、青年、選舉、中國

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One of the emerging buzzwords accompanying Taiwan's 2020 general election was the so-called "feeling of losing one's own country" (*wangguogan* 亡國感). This term was particularly popular among Taiwan's young voters, and since they were heavily influenced by an internet culture that placed a premium on creative and satirical expressions, the fashionable term was quickly substituted by the pun "dried mango" (*manguogan* 芒果乾) and went digitally viral. To be sure, *wangguogan* and *manguogan* are not exact homophones, but the word play is amusingly sarcastic and self-depreciating, using a humble snack to represent a visceral anxiety that should have been elevated and patriotic.

The following figure demonstrates the digital popularity of the term "dried mango" according to Google Trends. This webmetrics service measures the number of some online search words relative to all queries done on Google. Hence frequency on the y axis is a relative number, signifying the online interest and attention to a particular issue in comparison to all searches in a specific region and within a certain period of time. Unfortunately, *wangguogan* was not available in Google Trends, and the author had to use *manguogan* instead. This creates a potential problem of erroneously including those digital users who are genuinely interested in the preserved fruit only. Nevertheless, the data in the previous years provide a baseline to see the unusual fluctuation in the election year of 2019. In tropical Taiwan, mango is ripe for the market in early summer (June and July), and the online interest in dried mango typically surges in August, since the fruit has a very short shelf life: this is particularly noticeable in 2017 and 2018. Clearly, Taiwan's internet users' interest in "dried mango" gathered momentum on July 2019, when the charismatic Han Kuo-yu (*Han Guoyu* 韓國瑜) clinched the presidential nomination for the Kuomintang in a contested primary. The online attention lasted until January 11, 2020, the Election Day when Taiwan's voters headed for the polling booth. Interest then quickly declined, as the election resulted in a decisive victory for the incumbent Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). President Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) received an unprecedented popular vote of 8.17 million (57.1%), and her party maintained the legislative majority by taking 61 seats out of 113 in total.

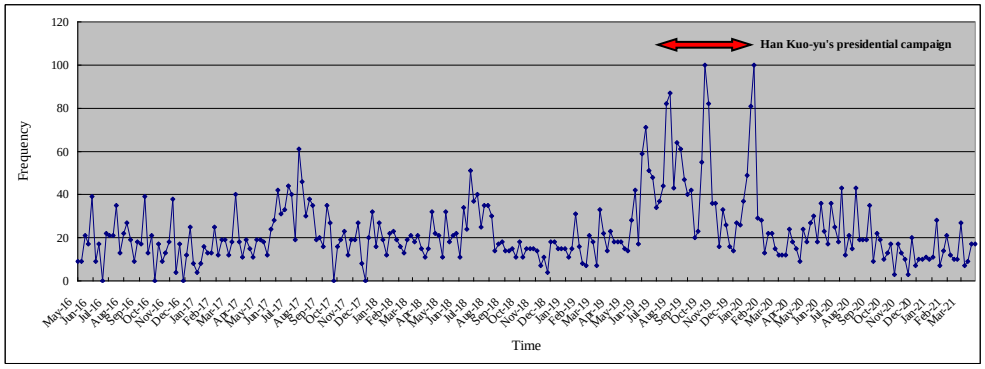

Figure 1: "Dried Mango" in Google Trends (May 2016-April 2021)[1]

What does "dried mango" mean in Taiwan's political context? The term refers to an existential anxiety that Taiwanese might have to forfeit their cherished freedom and lifestyle should voters choose a presidential candidate who was perceived to accommodate the People's Republic of China's territorial claim over the island. A post-election edited volume titled "*Counterattack against the Feeling of Losing One's Own Country*" (*wangguogan de nixi* 亡國感的逆襲) (The Alliance of Losers 2020) documented the threat from China on political, cultural, economic, and other fronts. The Kuomintang's reflection report after the election also acknowledged the fact that the DPP was effective in mobilising votes by appealing the "feeling of losing one's own country" among the youth (Kuomintang 2020).

Interestingly, "dried mango" had the opposite incarnation in previous political history. Pan-blue politicians (the KMT and their allies) were actually the pioneers in evoking the feeling of crisis in their vote drive. During the 1994 election in Taipei City, which witnessed a split among the pan-blue camp that facilitated the DPP's Chen Shui-bian (Chen Shuibian 陳水扁) winning the campaign, Jaw Shao-kong (Zhao Shaokang 趙少康), then representing a split-off party from the Kuomintang, invented the slogan "The Republic of China (ROC) will perish" (*Zhonghua Minguo jiang miewang* 中華民國

[1] The area was restricted to Taiwan only. Accessed on April 29, 2021.

將滅亡), should the pro-independence DPP represented by Chen Shui-bian win the election. Ever since then, the impending crisis of the Republic of China has become a mantra frequently used by Kuomintang candidates in major elections. The pan-blue version of "the feeling of losing one's country" is no less than a mobilisation strategy that specifically targets conservative voters with the power of negative thinking. Kuomintang politicians hope that their reluctant constituencies will eventually fall in line when they are reminded of the great stakes at risk.

DPP candidates were certainly no strangers to this convenient campaign tactic to rally hardcore supporters. A typical refrain was the claim the Kuomintang politicians would "sell off" (*chumai* 出賣) the Taiwanese to China once they were elected. However, until the 2020 election, the pan-green (the DPP and their allies') version of mobilisation by fear was seldom about the country's formal status. The difference reflects the fact that the DPP still remained a challenger, while the Kuomintang positioned itself as a defender of the status quo, at least in the public perception, even though Taiwan has witnessed three peaceful transitions of power since 2000.

Similar to the Kuomintang's formula of "the ROC's pending demise", "dried mango" appeals to the deep-seated psychological resistance against change. So why did Taiwan's two major parties trade positions, with the DPP emerging as the new defender of the status quo whereas the Kuomintang took on the mantle of a challenger? Their changing roles have a geopolitical cause as well as a demographic one.

The rise of a more powerful China and the resultant changes in the cross-strait balance have been redefining the status quo. Take the so-called "1992 Consensus" for example. That political formula, affirming that both Taiwan and the mainland belong to one China, has allowed the Kuomintang to build rapprochement with the Chinese Communist Party since 2005. Previously, Beijing looked away when Kuomintang politicians added a rider domestically that each side had its own interpretation of the formula. However, this wiggle-room is swiftly vanishing under a more assertive China. In the 2016 presidential election, while the KMT candidate upheld the 1992 Consensus as expected, the DPP's Tsai Ing-wen countered with "maintaining the status quo." In January 2019, Xi Jinping made a speech to commemorate the 40th anniversary of

the "Letter to Taiwanese Compatriots", in which he appeared to adopt a more restricted understanding by linking the 1992 Consensus to "One Country, Two Systems." Xi's toughened attitude ended up by playing into the hands of DPP leaders, who were more justified in rejecting the 1992 Consensus because it implied the Taiwanese would have to accept a Hong Kong solution.

The protests in Hong Kong, on the other hand, also made the reality of "One Country, Two Systems" more realistic and more frightening to Taiwanese voters. After the flare-up of the anti-extradition movement in June 2019 and the continuing months of street confrontations, Hong Kong became a frequent topic in the public conversation as Taiwan's electoral campaign heated up. From newspaper reports, I collected a dataset of 95 solidarity gatherings in Taiwan, from June 2019 to January 2020. These events were widespread, and there were even activities in rural Miaoli, Hualien, and Pingtung Counties. More than half of these rallies and demonstrations (49) were sponsored by students, either alone or in partnership with other NGOs (Ho 2021). Clearly, the sympathy for Hong Kong's protesters and the fear of losing Taiwan's future were mutually reinforcing, and such anxiety was particularly keenly felt by Taiwan's youth.

Prior to the 2020 election, the generational conflicts between young voters, who overwhelmingly supported the DPP, and their conservative parents, who favoured the Kuomintang candidate Han Kuo-yu, became proverbial in Taiwan. Subsequently, research was commissioned by the Central Election Commission that confirmed the mobilisation power of "dried mango". The turnout rate for voters aged from 20 to 24 and from 25 to 29 was 58.0% and 56.3% in 2016 respectively, while the figures shot up to 72.7% and 71.8% in 2020 (Juang and Hong 2021, 70).

In January 2021, the Taiwan Thinktank (*Taiwan zhiku* 台灣智庫) revealed the result of a public opinion survey, which offered an interesting glance into the mindset of Taiwan's young citizens. 82% of the respondents in their twenties agreed with the statement "voting can effectively influence politics", while the national average was 66%. 60% of them were "willing to take to the streets and join social movements to support one's political ideas", the average being 44%. Finally, 76% were in favor of the statement "social movements can promote self-realisation and social progress", which was

supported by 54% in all age groups (Taiwan Thinktank 2021). Clearly, Taiwan's young citizens enjoyed a stronger sense of political efficacy, and they tended to adopt a more favourable view toward social movements.

How can we explain such a pronounced pro-democracy attitude among young Taiwanese? They are after all the children of Taiwan's own march toward democracy. Let's take a 25-year-old citizen in 2021 as an example. She or he was born in 1996, the year which witnessed the first direction election for president. And before they entered elementary school, the DPP had become the ruling party in 2000. When they were 12, the Kuomintang returned to power, and during the presidency of Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九), Taiwan's youth movements surged, culminating in the 2014 Sunflower Movement. When student protesters were occupying the legislature, our young Taiwanese, likely to be a college freshwoman or freshman at the age of 18, was probably at the scene. In addition, Taiwanese under thirty grew up without the ideologically-loaded textbooks and curriculum at school, and they took the existence of freedom of speech, protest, and changes of the ruling party for granted. In short, they were born democrats, not tainted by the prolonged martial-law authoritarianism.

In hindsight, "dried mango" emerged because Taiwan's young citizens have come of age and become confident in asserting their political voices. In the 2020 election, this generational outpouring helped the DPP to secure another four years in power. But there is no guarantee that they will remain pan-green voters in the years to come. Young democrats are also critical and idealistic, and should the DPP incumbents fail their expectations, a mass exodus to the other camp is also a possible scenario.

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SPOTLIGHT

The Chinese Communist Party's Hybrid Interference and Germany's Increasingly Contentious China Debate (2018-21)

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The Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) ambition to neutralise independent academia at home and abroad is the conundrum at the heart of this article. Based on a review of the literature on sharp power, hybrid interference, the United Front system and the CCP's globalising censorship regime the author argues that the CCP's rule by fear has already induced self-censorship among many western academics. In the empirical part the author puts the spotlight on an increasingly contentious debate among China experts in Germany (2018-21). This expert debate on China takes place accross websites, journals, interviews, public talks, public statements of learned societies as well as oral and written testimonies of China scholars at parliamentary committees. Seen in its entirety, Germany's public China discourse reveals an unwillingness to face up to the changed political realities of Xi's hard authoritarian China. The article concludes with recommendations on how to overcome arbitrary limitations imposed by the CCP's political censorship.

本文旨在展示和分析中國共產黨（CCP）如何開始介入國內和海外的學術界使其逐漸喪失獨立性。基於對銳實力、混合干預、統戰系統和中共全球審查機制的文獻回顧，筆者認為中共的恐懼統治已讓許多西方學者自行啟動自我審查。文章實證部分聚焦 2018-2021 年間德國漢學專家就中國問題日益激烈的論爭，相關言論發表在網站、期刊上或訪談、公開演講、學術團體的公開聲明以及漢學專家在德國議會委員會做的口頭或書面證詞中。德國就中國問題的通用表述顯示，德國不願面對習近平強硬政權下中國政治現實中發生的變化。就如何對抗中共政治審查而不受其所制，筆者在文章最後提出了建議。

Keywords: Sharp power, hybrid interference, United Front System, self-censorship, expert discourse

關鍵詞：銳實力，混合干預，統戰系統，自我審查，專家話語

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On March 22, 2021 the EU, the UK, the US and Canada imposed sanctions on four Chinese officials and one Chinese entity implicated in the crimes against humanity in Xinjiang. The same day the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) retaliated with their own counter-sanctions against ten European lawmakers, two academics as well as four European entities (Reuters 2021), which included the renowned Berlin-based think tank Merics (Merics 2021). The following day the widely respected German China specialists Ohlberg and Shi-Kupfer were attacked by the CCP mouthpiece Global Times. They were labelled as 'far-right', 'anti-China' and accused of supposedly '[defaming] China's human rights record' (Global Times 2021).

The CCP's unprecedented attack on European China specialists sent shockwaves through the world of academia. Thirty European research institute directors expressed deep concern about the "targeting (of) independent researchers and civil society institutions" (Statement by European Research Institute Directors 2021). One thousand three hundred and thirty-six scholars signed a solidarity statement and "[called] on the Chinese government to revoke these unjustified sanctions and to accept that scholarship on China, like scholarship on any country, entails scrutiny of its policies, goals and actions" (Solidarity Statement 2021). Among the signatories were eighty China experts working for German universities.

As this article will show, such rare acts of defiance against the CCP's authoritarian overreach are an exception rather than the rule. Deep-seated epistemological problems in western academia in general and German academia in particular remain. Due to its strong political, economic, cultural and academic links to the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Merkel administration's pro-business approach (2005-21), Germany can serve as an important country case study. The research puzzle at the heart of this article is to what extent state and non-state agents under control of the CCP are undermining autonomy in German academia? And are there attempts under way to protect intellectual freedom from "exploitation and despoilment by those with incompatible agendas" (NED 2020)?

Drawing on Wigell's concept of hybrid interference (Wigell 2019) the author explains in the conceptual part how the CCP's globalised censorship regime aims to neutralise

independent academia at home and abroad. In the empirical part the author puts the spotlight on the increasingly contentious debate among China experts in Germany, which includes debate contributions on websites, journals, interviews, public talks, public statements of learned societies as well as oral and written testimonies of China scholars at parliamentary committees. The article concludes with recommendations on how to overcome arbitrary limitations imposed by the CCP's political censorship.

Hybrid interference

The CCP's global assault on academic freedom comes at a time of geopolitical uncertainty. Diamond has described the crisis of democracy in countries as diverse as Brazil, India, Mexico, Poland, Hungary, the Philippines, Turkey, and Venezuela as "the 'third reverse wave' of democratic breakdowns" (Diamond 2021). Such illiberal backsliding has coincided with and arguably been bolstered by the rise of assertive autocracies such as Russia and China (Myers 2021). Against this backdrop foreign influence and interference have become increasingly salient issues. Legitimate foreign influence can be understood as soft power, which Nye describes as "the ability to affect others to obtain the outcomes one wants through attraction rather than coercion or payment" (Nye 2008). Pongratz has highlighted that "China's government has mostly relied on a more traditional toolkit to exert soft power in Germany in the last decade ... [which] includes education and research cooperation, cultural exchanges and the two governments building on already extensive economic and political relations" (Pongratz 2021). Contrarily illegal interference can be illustrated with the help of the concept of sharp power, "an approach to international affairs that typically involves efforts at censorship, or the use of manipulation to sap the integrity of independent institutions" (Walker 2018a). From this vantage point culture (C), academia (A), media (M), and publishing (P)—the CAMP sectors—are particularly vulnerable (Walker 2018b) and can be considered as "democracy's soft underbelly" (Lucas 2020).

Yet neither the concept of soft or sharp power on its own can fully explain the phenomenon of CCP interference in liberal democracies. Wigell has offered a novel way to describe the challenge at hand. He coined the term *hybrid interference* which he describes as "a 'wedge strategy', namely a policy of dividing a target country or coalition, thereby weakening its counterbalancing potential" (Wigell 2019). He goes on to explain that "hybrid interference draws on a panoply of state-controlled, non-kinetic means that are concealed in order to provide the divider with official deniability and manipulate targeted actors *without elevating their threat perceptions* [emphasis added]. Three main bundles of means, in particular, are central to hybrid interference: (1) clandestine diplomacy; (2) geoeconomics; and (3) disinformation" (ibid). In order to make concealed interference measures by autocratic regimes more public the Alliance for Securing Democracy (ASD) has developed an online Authoritarian Interference Tracker. This bipartisan project of the German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF) collects publicly available data related to "five interconnected asymmetric tools – information manipulation, cyber operations, malign finance, civil society subversion, and economic coercion" (The Alliance for Securing Democracy 2021). In the case of Germany ASD has logged twelve incidents of CCP interference since 2010. They range from threats to restrict the German automobile industry should Huawei be banned from 5G infrastructure building, industrial espionage, to the use of 'friendship associations' with links to the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC) and the United Front Work Department (UFWD) to shape public opinion in Germany (Authoritarian Interference Tracker, 2021).

The CCP's United Front approach

But what explains the CCP's ambition to interfere in a liberal democracy like Germany in the first place? The need to protect the authority of the CCP at home and abroad can be traced back to its revolutionary history. According to Van Slyke the United Front methodology was developed as early as December 1935. He described it as "an

early stage development of a set of policies and techniques for gaining popular support, for isolating opponents, for expressing the communist programme in nationalist terms, and for deferring (but not forsaking) revolutionary objectives" (Van Sklyke 1970, 126). During the Yan'an rectification movement (1942-45) (van der Made 2020) Mao Zedong started Sinicizing Communism. According to Selden it was "a pivotal event in the creation of a cult of Mao and in crushing independent thought among intellectuals and party activists" (Selden 1995). Political control efforts were not only confined to China. Bowe has pointed out that the CCP's United Front (UF) approach of "uniting with lesser enemies to defeat greater ones" (Bowe 2018, 4) was instrumental in isolating political opponents at home *and* abroad.

When Xi Jinping took over the helm as General Secretary of the CCP in 2012 he reinvigorated the UF system. Under Xi highly illiberal censorship directives proliferated. Particularly noteworthy is the oral directive Seven Don't Speaks from 2013, which declared universal values, freedom of expression, civil society, civil rights, the historical mistakes of the party, the independence of the judiciary taboo topics (Bandurski 2013). The written party edict Document No. 9 published in the same year furthermore banned constitutional democracy, independent journalism and the party's history from the public discourse (ChinaFile 2013). It marked the beginning of a hard authoritarian turn of the CCP under Xi's leadership.

Under Xi the CCP has accelerated its psychological warfare against opponents of the regime. Minority groups such as Tibetans, Uyghurs, Mongolians have all been at the receiving end of CCP oppression. Chinese intellectuals—many of whom enjoyed a certain amount of licence to discuss political issues during the previous Hu Jintao era—have seen their limited autonomy further curtailed. The economist and peace activist Ilham Tohti was given a life sentence on trumped up charges of separatism. The outspoken jurist Xu Zhangrun lost his job at Tsinghua University following a scathing critique of the CCP's handling of Covid-19. And the establishment intellectual Cai Xia was deprived of her pension after referring to the CCP as a "political zombie" and Xi as a "mafia boss" (Kuo 2020).

The CCP's sharp power at home and abroad works with the help of the simultaneous use of carrots and sticks. Party-state funding for UF work has increased significantly during the Xi era. Based on official budget documents Fedasiuk has calculated that in 2019 "(nearly) $600 million (23 percent) [of $2.6 billion] was set aside for offices designed to influence foreigners and overseas Chinese communities" (Fedasiuk 2020). And in early 2021 the HKSAR government set aside HK$ 8 billion (€870 million) for national security-related work (Cheng 2021). Since the Hong Kong National Security Law includes an extraterritorial provision (Article 38) which criminalises independent research critical of the Chinese party-state at home and abroad one can safely assume that a significant portion of this funding will be used to support the central government's UF work overseas.

Psychological influence

In recent years numerous Western China specialists have been harassed, either for their critical scholarship, for publicly critiquing the CCP and its ill-guided party policies, or for both.[1] The CCP's threatening posture has led to imagined or realistic fear among members of the target audience. While not every western China expert is threatened to the same degree, the abduction of Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig (Liu 2021) has instilled considerable fear among China watchers and China practitioners alike. A survey conducted by ChinaFile revealed in June 2021 that "only 44 percent said they planned to travel [to China]—27 percent definitely and 17 percent only probably. Another 16 percent were unsure, 18 percent said they probably would not visit, and

[1] Anne-Marie Brady became a prominent victim of the CCP's intimidation tactics following the publication of her article Magic Weapons: "China's political influence activities under Xi Jinping". On March 2019 Antoine Bondaz, a China expert at the Paris-based Foundation for Strategic Research who had publicly defended French lawmaker's planned visit to Taiwan was insulted by the Chinese Embassy in France as a 'small-time thug'. On 22 March Adrian Zenz and Bjoern Jerdén were singled out by the party-state in its disproportionate counter-sanctions following the sanctions by the EU, US, UK and Canada on Chinese officials. On 26 March Jo Smith Finley was sanctioned by the Chinese party-state in retaliation for Finley publicly speaking out against the perpetration of crimes against humanity and the beginnings of a slow genocide" in Xinjiang. And since December 2019 the author and three other UK-based critics of the CCP have been the victim of a cyber bullying campaign. This non-exhaustive list shows the scale of the problem.

22 percent that they definitely would not" (ChinaFile 2021). But anxiety in the field of contemporary Chinese Studies is not a new phenomenon. In their article "Repressive Experiences among China Scholars" Greitens and Truex argued that "(the) indirect effects of repressive phenomena affect a far broader community: most China scholars believe their research to be sensitive; a majority adapt their conduct to protect themselves and others; and most express concern about potential self-censorship" (Greitens and Truex 2020). While there is considerable awareness among China experts that individual and institutional self-censorship is a problem in the field, only few attempts have been made to unpack this phenomenon in relation to the CCP's globalising censorship regime (Hamilton and Ohlberg 2020).

Dapiran has defined self-censorship as follows: "Self-censorship does not occur in isolation: it occurs within a context. We need to understand self-censorship in that context, not as an action, but as a reaction. Self-censorship is a response to an environment of fear, to implicit threats of negative consequences for acts of speech and expression that cross vague, undefined red lines. The creation of that environment of fear is the act of censorship" (Dapiran 2021). In a landmark speech in August 2017 Garnaut reminded his audience that neither under Mao nor under Xi there had been a break with Stalinism. He outlined that in 2014 Xi "[argued] for a return to the Stalinist-Maoist principle that art and literature should only exist to serve politics" (Sinocism 2019). He warned that "(the) challenge for us is that Xi's project of total ideological control does not stop at China's borders" (ibid).

Faced with the CCP's psychological influence western China scholars are mostly left to their own devices. Typical concerns relate to (1) the fear of upsetting Chinese partner organisations or Chinese funders (and thus potentially being seen as a troublemaker by their home institution); (2) the fear of putting either colleagues, family or friends in China at risk by conducting politically sensitive research; or (3) the fear of losing access to China as a result of public comments which are critical of the CCP. (4) Research on the impact of the Hong Kong National Security Law on academic freedom in the UK Higher Education sector furthermore revealed heightened

concerns among China scholars about the risks that university "courses could create for mainland PRC and Hong Kong-based students and themselves" (Hoffman 2021).

While the second concern can be a legitimate reason to engage in individual self-censorship, an overly fearful attitude also means that under such conditions China scholars are afraid to 'live in truth' (Václav Havel). Another outcome of CCP censorship is enforced silence. Any academic or public discourse which is highly critical of the CCP or its party policies consequently is seen as a dangerous act.

In August 2021 NZZ reported that a PhD student was asked by his supervisor at St Gallen University to delete a Twitter post, which was critical of the party-state's cover-up of Covid-19. The PhD supervisor reportedly expressed concerns about not being able to get a visa for China due to his social media comments (Büchenbacher 2021). While the conduct of the PhD supervisor was subsequently widely criticised on social media, such documented cases of individual self-censorship arguably only represent the tip of an iceberg.

One of the persistent problems with self-censorship is that it can not be easily proven with the help of social science research. While the problem certainly exists, it largely remains a black box phenomenon. It is also a taboo topic among China scholars. When in 2018 a call for abstracts for a workshop in Prague on "Censorship and Self-Censorship in Chinese Studies" was launched the organisers received 56 submissions. Strikingly not a *single* proposal was submitted to discuss the phenomenon of self-censorship in *western* academia. In the editorial for the inaugural issue of the Journal of European for Chinese Studies (JEACS) Klotzbücher et al had this to say: "What does it say about us and our reflectivity that not one essay was submitted on censorship and self-censorship in *our* field? How can we become more innovative if we are not aware of our position and what is missing or covered up in our academic hierarchies?" (Klotzbücher et al 2021).

Germany's increasingly contentious China debate (2018-21)

What can be observed, however, are public discourses which take place *despite* political censorship. While the CCP's threatening posture aimed to silence international critique of the Xi regime it had the opposite effect. In November 2018 the former journalist-turned-think tanker Tatlow provoked a public debate about the state of Germany's China debate which continues to this day. In an op-ed published in LibMod she critiqued German Sinologists for being "largely blind to China's expansive power politics" (Tatlow 2018). Dubbing the latter as "late Orientalists" driven by "romanticisms" she suggested that they "don't understand that a party-led China could one day become so strong, perhaps already is, that it can challenge democratic norms throughout the world, for example by interfering in an intransparent manner in open societies, changing international organizations to suit its interests, or, in the case of Taiwan, Tibet and Xinjiang, isolating entire countries and regions" (ibid).

In a response to Tatlow's op-ed Benner noticed that among senior Sinologists there was a tendency towards cultural relativism; a great appreciation for progress that China has made since Mao; that they harboured a general fear to generalise and portray the country in black and white terms; exhibited a strong dislike of the USA; and were often concerned with career incentives (Benner 2018). Arguing that "one can build a nice little empire for oneself in research cooperation with China (own translation from German, henceforth own translation)" Benner pointed out that "a prerequisite for this [was] to be on good terms with those in power (own translation)" (ibid). In another op-ed Benner criticised Confucius Institutes at western universities and called for "cutting financial ties to Party-state and Party-state-affiliated donors" (GPPi 2019). In her reply to Tatlow and Benner, Rudyak argued that "we really don't need an argument about the role of Sinologists. And certainly no quarrel among Sinologists. What we need is more China expertise (own translation)" (Rudyak 2019). Former German Ambassador to China, Stanzel warned that "the lively, fascinating landscape of Sinology can only be scraped over the comb of political effectiveness to its detriment (own translation)" (Stanzel 2019). Fulda responded that the "politicisation of academia

is the declared aim of the [CCP]. There can therefore be no apolitical research on China (own translation)" (Fulda 2019).

The LibMod debate of 2018-19 raised important questions: what is the state of Germany's China debate both past and present and what kind of China understanding and skills will be required in the future? The public debate was continued in a special issue on "China(competence)" by APuZ, an open access periodical of the German Federal Agency for Civic Education (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung 2021). The first contributor Hierse argued for a greater appreciation of the pluralistic character of China's society (Hierse 2021). Reflecting on the lost bet to integrate China into the rule based order of the West Müller-Hofstede made the case for seeing China as a systemic rival, whilst simultaneously rejecting black and white narratives. Drawing on the concept of Barmé's New Sinology he argued that as part of political education there was a need to better understand the debates of both pro- and anti-establishment Chinese intellectuals (Müller-Hofstede 2021). Rudyak defined China competence as a combination of content and linguistic competence, in particular the ability to decipher China's highly formalised political communication (Rudyak 2021). Fulda argued that a politically understood China competence can help British universities to identify and minimise reputation risks in UK-China academic cooperation (Fulda 2021a). Frenzel and Godehardt posited that China competence needed to be built at the intersection between foreign and educational policy. They argued that China competence can help to make sense of specific problems in China policy and that intercultural competence is a necessary precondition for a dialogue, in particular under the conditions of a systemic rivalry between democracies and autocracies (Frenzel and Godehardt 2021). Huang described the unresolved tension between values and interests in German and European China policy. For the post-Merkel era she predicted an "excess of values" (Werteübermaß), which could lead to greater confrontation (Huang 2021). And Damm argued that knowing and understanding Taiwan should be part of China competence, too (Damm 2021).

The special issue offered important meta-scientific reflections about the intrinsic value of China-related research. But while all contributors valued the importance of

intercultural competence no consensus was reached how to deal with the political dimension of contemporary Chinese studies. The German debate about China competence and academic cooperation with China subsequently continued in open access opinion-editorials published in China.Table. This subscription-based professional briefing was launched in January 2021 and now serves to inform German elites with a professional interest in current Chinese affairs. China scholars have also continued to actively participate in the debate about Germany's foreign and education policy in the form of written and oral testimonies for either state parliaments or the German Bundestag. The Board of the learned society German Association for Asian Studies (DGA) has also repeatedly injected itself in the debate with written public statements (DGA 2020, DGA 2021).

During the LibMod debate of 2018-19 Benner had already foreseen that Germany's China debate would become increasingly contentious. He assumed that there would be a proliferation of voices downplaying the systemic challenge posed by the CCP (Benner 2018). The development of the public debate among China experts in Germany throughout 2020-21 has proven him right. At least six public discourses can now be identified which obscure rather than illuminate how German state and society should respond to the CCP's hybrid interference. The question here is not whether these expert discourses accurately represent the state of the art of Chinese Studies in Germany. But since they are likely to shape the German public's knowledge and understanding of China they deserve greater scrutiny.

Discourse 1: Playing down valid empirical evidence of victimisation / oppression in order to appease Chinese authorities.

A particularly egregious example was the testimony of Leutner in front of the Committee on Human Rights and Humanitarian Aid of the German Bundestag in November 2020. By referring to internment camps for Uyghurs as "vocational training and further education centers" and "deradicalization centers" she adopted CCP rhetoric (Deutscher Bundestag 2020). The German journalist Kalkhof criticised her

for "reversing the perpetrator-victim relationship: according to her it is not the Uyghurs who are the victims of human rights violations - but the Chinese state (own translation)" (Kalkhof 2020). In a tweet the then incumbent Chairwoman of the DGA Fischer wrote that "Mechthild Leutner should have pointed out that she explains the Chinese official view on the issue. That is important to take into account for all further steps to be taken, even if it is not a perspective one shares. In any case, judging all Sinologists by her statement is unfair (own translation)" (Fischer 2020).

Leutner was one of thirteen signatories of a position paper by Directors of Confucius Institutes affiliated with German universities published in August 2020. This statement posited that Confucius Institutes "significantly contribute to broaden China competence and to promote in-depth knowledge about China, above all through public events (own translation)" (Konfuzius-Institut an der Freien Universität Berlin 2020). According to Heberer, one of the statement's co-signatories, this open letter was shared with more than two hundred members of the German Bundestag (Die Linke 2020). In May 2021, Leutner, who was also founding director of Germany's first CI at Free University since 2006, doubled down on her controversial testimony from November 2020 during the 66th meeting of the Committee on Science and Research of the Abgeordnetenhaus Berlin, the Berlin state parliament. She said that "I made this expertise on the basis of all available sources (...) and found that there are many inconsistencies and also factual ambiguities (...) I did exactly what I always do, namely presented a differentiated analysis (own translation)" (Abgeordnetenhaus Berlin 2021).

Discourse 2: Trivialising the significance of anti-democratic CCP edicts and/or antiliberal CCP policies.

A second discourse is the trivialisation of anti-democratic party edicts. In a public talk at a Confucius Institute in Bremen on September 2020 Schmidt-Glintzer had this to say about the role of the CCP's censorship instruction Document No 9: "China is increasingly becoming a rule maker, that is, a rule maker, and is leaving the role of the rule recipient behind. The process of change in the People's Republic of China from

being a recipient of standards to being a co-creator or even an international standard-setter is now evident in many areas. I am addressing this specifically because this is now often understood as fear-inducing news. It is perfectly normal for a culture to want to bring its own traditions into world culture and not just want to be a copy of America (own translation)" (Konfuzius-Institute Bremen 2020). He then asserted that "against this background one must understand the often cited Document No 9 and the attempts to pursue China's interests with soft power. So I think that's not a reason to be afraid, but rather exciting when we get involved in processes and study the philosophy of the Chinese tradition as well as looking at the English, the American and the French and maybe at some point also African figures of thought and get into conversation with it. So I want to leave it at this appeal (own translation)" (ibid).

What can explain Schmidt-Glintzer's willingness to trivialise Document No 9, which considers independent academia a threat to the political survival of the CCP? Roetz has explained "why parts of Chinese Studies hesitate to openly take sides with the Chinese civil rights movement" (Roetz 2016). He outlines that the "the reasons can be found above all in a syndrome of culturalistic, relativist, and exotic convictions according to which (a) the question of dissidence has to be posed as a question concerning the cultural identity of China and thus as a pre-political instead of a political question, (b) dissidence is something like a foreign body in Chinese culture, and (c) this is due to the absence of or, in contrast to the West, weak development of transcendence. Part of the syndrome is in many instances an understanding of the legitimacy of governance oriented not according to principles of participation, but, in a Hobbesian manner, to the preservation of stability. The image of a China that is opposed to dissent, a China that is addicted to harmony and devoted to order, is thereby created. This image is reminiscent of the World State in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* which likewise promotes 'stability, identity and community' and is indeed at odds with a modern democratic culture of debate (*Streitkultur*). The consequence of this view is the direct or indirect, even if rarely ever outright, partisanship in favor of the authoritarian dictatorship of the People's Republic and a form of benign lack of understanding for its critics" (ibid). Schmidt-Glintzer sugar-

coating of Document No 9 is highly problematic as it signals to the German public that the CCP's political censorship at home and abroad is not only *not a problem*, but supposedly *an opportunity* for inter-cultural dialogue. As research on China's draconian Overseas NGO Law (2017) demonstrates, the scope for dialogue between Europe and Chinese civil societies has been highly restricted and now excludes all relevant but political sensitive issues from a democratic perspective, thus deforming the dialogue and turning it into a monologue of the Chinese party-state (University of Nottingham 2021).

Discourse 3: Recommending "silent diplomacy" whilst keeping tight-lipped about obstacles to dialogue.

An op-ed for China.Table by Sandschneider from March 2021 exemplifies this third discourse. He criticised western sanctions against Chinese officials, which would only lead to "defiance and ensure that even the last remaining dialogue channel is also blocked (own translation)" (Sandschneider 2021). The author responded with his own op-ed on China.Table in April 2021 and pointed out that while Sandschneider castigated the supposed "megalomania" of all those who believed they could "manage" the rise of China, surprisingly he later called himself "China policy in the West a permanent management task (own translation)" (Fulda 2021b). The author also highlighted that Sandschneider described any criticism of the political situation in the PRC as "China bashing". Instead Sandschneider demanded "that one has to talk, negotiate, perhaps even argue with this country and its government in order to find solutions that are acceptable to all sides (own translation)" (ibid). And while his calls for dialogue may sound plausible but in fact completely ignored existing political and practical obstacles. With Document No 9 the CCP declared constitutional democracy, universal values, civil society, independent journalism and criticism of the party to be absolute taboo topics. They are taboos both in the domestic discourse and international dialogue with China. This document marked the end of the semi-liberal era under General Secretary Hu Jintao (2002-2012). Sandschneider thus failed to

address the question what possibilities for fruitful cooperation are based on mutual recognition and reciprocity or for intercultural dialogue if said dialogue systematically excludes democratic values and the speech code of the Xi discourse is binding on the Chinese side.

What is particularly perplexing is that in an interview with NZZ Standpunkte in 2019 Sandschneider himself admitted that a free and open-ended dialogue with the CCP was practically impossible. When asked about the unforgiving attitude of the CCP towards dissent Sandschneider referred to it as "a hard autocracy that uses any form of political control to maintain stability (own translation)" (NZZ Standpunkte 2019). He then elaborated that "we in the West must also be aware that there are a number of strategic goals that go a bit beyond your question now. One of them is sovereignty. Maintaining sovereignty is deeply embedded in their experience. That includes stability. And when dissidents start making strange demands, the government reacts, and it reacts sooner rather than later because it has had the experience if it has been waiting too long it can get extremely dangerous. So if you want to talk to China about dissidents and human rights, you have to know that you are dealing with a government that is actually not willing or able to compromise. This also applies to the question of sovereignty. If you want to talk with China about the South China Sea, there is no compromise from the Chinese government's point of view. This makes it sometimes extremely difficult for western governments (own translation)." (ibid) But given what Sandschneider told the NZZ interviewers in Spring 2019 the rather vague recommendation in his op-ed from Spring 2021 to "talk, negotiate, perhaps even argue with this country and its government (own translation)" (ibid) fails to convince.

Discourse 4: Prescribing academic cooperation with China without addressing the issue of access.

An example of the fourth discourse is another op-ed for China.Table from June 2021 in which Levy argued that one can not study China exclusively through the internet or by travelling to Taiwan. She underscored the need for empirical field research in

China and emphasised the need for exchanges with Chinese academics (Levy 2021). What she did not address was the question how to deal with the CCP's selective academic decoupling. Sanctioned China scholars like Smith Finley, Jerdén and Zenz can no longer conduct research in China. While the blacklisting of western scholars itself is not a new phenomenon (Business Insider, 2011) the highly public nature of the CCP sanctions nevertheless signifies a step change. Abstract calls for academic cooperation with China on their own will not solve their problem of lack of access. And in terms of the censorship of Chinese academia Levy had this to say about Chinese academics: "These may be subject to their own political and social constraints, but they are still interested in exchanging ideas with other countries and are open to new ideas, especially in times of restricted internet and media access (own translation)" (ibid). And while the value of interpersonal contacts between Chinese and western academics is indisputable, Levy did not address the fact that the CCP "has greatly restricted the number of academics and researchers allowed to physically attend conferences overseas" (Leung 2020) and that "(the) rules have now been extended to online conferences, with all applications to attend having to be submitted for approval at least 15 days before the event starts. The application should include an invitation letter and a clear agenda and participants must undertake to 'keep secrets' and not jeopardise the reputation of Chinese institutions" (ibid).

Levy's op-ed was reminiscent of the political slogan of the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) which has frequently described German-Chinese academic exchanges as a "cooperation on an equal footing" (BMBF 2021). The problem, however, lies in the fact that the actual terms of engagement have become unequal, not just for German academics keen on cooperating with their Chinese counterparts, but also for their Chinese academics who wish to do the same. Abstract calls for continued Sino-German academic collaboration which ignore the issue of access run the danger of being perceived as mere virtue signalling.

Discourse 5: Extolling the virtues of neutrality in Asian Studies and discouraging positionality.

In the statement "Beware the Polarisation" of the German Association for Asian Studies (DGA) from June 2020 the DGA board suggested that geopolitical US-China rivalry was to blame for forcing Asian scholars to take sides. They complained that "the attempt to stay neutral and contribute to understanding rather than fuelling the conflict is either interpreted as weakness or even as moral decay" (DGA 2020). Invoking the neutrality principle is highly problematic in this context as it suggests that Asian Studies scholars with a clearly defined political position (e.g. pre-scientific preference for democracy) could be considered politically partisan (e.g. seen as activists rather than dispassionate scholars). It should be noted that while the DGA ostensibly covers the entirety of Asian Studies it has a very strong China focus. Its current Chairwoman is Professor Nele Noesselt, a trained political scientist and China specialist. Her predecessor Professor Doris Fischer is a trained economist and also a China specialist. China and Covid-19 was also at the heart of the 2020 DGA board statement. Last but not least the DGA also hosts the Arbeitskreis Sozialwissenschaftliche Chinaforschung (ASC), an influential working group with close to one hundred members specialising in the empirical study of China.

The DGA board's statement echoed misguided developments in the German academic field of International Relations (IR). In his landmark essay "IB-Professionalität als Praxisferne? Ein Plädoyer für Wandel" Terhalle has critiqued the widespread anti-praxeological culture, where according to Daase the "self-image and image of others in political science professionalism [...] [implies] a proximity to theory and a distance from political practice" (Terhalle 2016). According to Murphy and Fulda the reluctance among IR specialists to engage in applied political science research is primarily related to perceived and real risks. They write "practical policy work can pose a series of risks for a scholarly career. Maintaining academic integrity and scholarly independence may be tough when conducting service in a field that is often intensely partisan" (Murphy and Fulda 2011). They further argue that "publicly taking sides may lead others to question the integrity of your scholarship, which can have potentially deleterious consequences both on and off campus. In particular, opponents may examine your scholarship closely to uncover flaws or try to discredit a

scholar's work for spurious but politically significant reasons" (ibid). It is concerning that a German learned society for Asian Studies discussed the systemic rivalry between democracies and autocracies with reference to "Cold war rhetoric and de-coupling fantasies" (DGA 2020). While the DGA board is tasked to promote the academic field of Asian Studies in Germany, it arguably exceeds its mandate by decreeing what supposedly is or isn't an acceptable position in terms of desirable goals and modalities of western China engagement.

Discourse 6: Acknowledging political censorship without offering practical and applicable solutions.

In another public comment about the state of Asian Studies in Germany from June 2021 the DGA Board issued "concern about tendencies towards self-censorship and politically motivated influence on the orientation of academic work and on the diversity of opinion in Germany (own translation)" (DGA 2021). The remedy was once again seen in counteracting "polarization tendencies (own translation)" coupled with an advocacy of "open, critical-analytical exchange and research cooperation with scientists and research institutions in Asia - and for theory-led, empirically founded research that is not politically opportune and which aligns with short-term moods, but which is committed to the principles of basic research (own translation)" (ibid).

Rather worryingly, the DGA Board again advised against applied research by suggesting that "no application-related recommendations for action should be communicated, rather it is a matter of thinking in long-term dimensions and presenting knowledge from and about the region in a systematically structured and theory-based manner (own translation)" (ibid). As outlined under Discourse 3 and 4 it is not enough to simply emphasise the normative desire for academic dialogue and cooperation. It is particularly concerning that the DGA Board has so far refrained from publicly critiquing the CCP counter-sanctions on China scholars in March 2021. Its silence runs counter its professed 'concern about tendencies towards self-censorship' and stands in great contrast to the public statement by thirty European research institute

directors. Other learned societies like the Deutsche Vereinigung für Chinastudien (DVCS) as well as the European Association for Chinese Studies (EACS) have been unequivocal in their public critique of the CCP sanctions. It is also hard to see the merits of a field of German Asian Studies which excludes socially- and politically-engaged research. If such recommendations by the DGA Board where heeded by Asian Studies scholars in Germany this would run the danger of further marginalising the field both domestically and internationally.

Quo vadis?

Seen in their entirety the six public expert discourses reveal a great reluctance to address the question how to best respond to the hard authoritarian turn under Xi Jinping. They also reveal a lack of concern for protecting the ecology of knowledge production. When individuals or learned societies participate in the public discourse they have a moral obligation to uphold academic freedom. Albert Einstein once pointed out that "(by) academic freedom I understand the right to search for truth and to publish and teach what one holds to be true. This right implies also a duty: one must not conceal any part of what one has recognized to be true" (Academe Blog 2017). Discourse participants need to avoid a situation where "professional knowledge is mismatched to the changing character of the situations of practice—the complexity, uncertainty, instability, uniqueness, and value conflicts which are increasingly perceived as central to the world of professional practice" (Schoen 1983).

In order to enhance public trust in experts commenting on current Chinese affairs discourse participants should disclose any special interests. It is in their own interest for China scholars to create transparency about consultancy work and sources of supplementary income. Media outlets which interview experts or publish their op-eds should follow the good practice of The Conversation, which requires authors to provide a disclosure statement and answer questions about potential conflicts of interests or affiliations. Learned societies have an important role to play in this process. Given its influence on the field of Chinese studies in Germany, the DGA board should

lead by example and advocate for greater transparency and accountability, e.g. by critiquing intransparent third party funding from China to German universities. The DGA could also help develop ethical guidelines for China scholars providing consultancy work for funders from autocratic countries.

Conclusion

In the conceptual part of this article the author addressed the research puzzle how the CCP is undermining autonomy in German academia. Based on a review of the literature on sharp power, hybrid interference, the UF system and the CCP's globalising censorship regime the author argued that the CCP's rule by fear has already induced self-censorship among many western academics. The Serbian writer and translator Danilo Kiš has described the corrosive nature of censorship and self-censorship in particularly captivating ways: "Whichever way you look at it, censorship is the tangible manifestation of a pathological state, the symptom of a chronic illness which develops side by side with it: self-censorship. Invisible but present, far from the eyes of the public, buried deep down in the most secret parts of the spirit, it is far more efficient than censorship. While both of them induce (or are induced?) by the same means—threats, fear blackmail—this second ill camouflages, or at any rate does not denounce, the existence of any outside restraint. The fight against censorship is open and dangerous, therefore heroic, while the battle against self-censorship is anonymous, lonely and unwitnessed, and it makes its subject feel humiliated and ashamed of collaborating" (Kiš 1986). While individual self-censorship which aims to protect family and research partners in China can be justified, a sector-wide tacit acceptance of the CCP's political censorship regime would neutralise German academia as a realm of critical inquiry.

In the empirical part the author offered a critique of the evolving China discourse in Germany. Drawing on the LibMod debate, the APuZ Special Issue on "China(competence)", as well as numerous op-eds in China.Table, public talks, media

interviews and oral testimonies submitted to parliamentary sub-committees between 2018 and 2021 an increasingly acrimonious public debate on China became visible. The six discourses revealed a general unwillingness to face up to the changed political realities of Xi's hard authoritarian China. This epistemological development is highly problematic, since in a democratic society a consensus should exist that authentic and free knowledge production is only possible if academics at German universities can research and debate current Chinese affairs free from fear or favour.

Inaction is not an option since the political and psychological costs of the CCP's censorship regime are unacceptably high. Any acceptance of CCP censorship would mean normalising the Chinese party-state. Whenever this happens there is subsequently also insufficient empathy and solidarity with the many victims of CCP rule. Acceptance of the CCP's political censorship would also lead to a denial of the values of one's own socialisation process and the lowering of one's own standards. Another impact of not mounting resistance to political censorship would be that one loses the respect of the CCP, which leads to an encouragement for even more aggressive behaviour.

None of these potential outcomes are in the enlightened interest of German academia. All China scholars—regardless of their respective world-views and ideologies—are arguably victims of the CCP's totalitarian rule. But they do not have to accept this predicament. Instead of turning their anger inwards—or worse, against each other—they can also choose to work together in order to overcome arbitrary limitations on free speech. Like-minded colleagues should raise first order questions about the intrinsic and extrinsic value of their China scholarship. A step towards emancipation from the CCP's psychological control would be a recognition that Contemporary Chinese Studies are a post-normal studies, since the field deals with issues which "[involves] risk" and is marked by an environment "where facts are uncertain, values in dispute, stakes high and decisions urgent" (Funtowicz and Ravetz 1993). This requires China scholars to begin questioning rule-stabilizing, culturally relativistic and culturally essentialist as well as anti-praxeological traditions in Chinese studies.

And to counter the six harmonizing discourses—all of which run the danger of reducing democratic resilience—there is a need for a value-based public debate about what kind of China-related knowledge and understanding is required which prevents professional deformations, defends the integrity of democratic institutions in Germany and also helps to build bridges to both 'official China' (represented by the CCP and organisations under its control) and 'unofficial China' (which includes autonomy seeking Chinese citizens and their organisations). Progress on this front will depend on the next generation of China scholars willingness to make their voice heard in the public discourse. Young China scholars should feel empowered to speak up, even if their viewpoints differ substantially from senior academics who are currently occupying positions of power in German academia.

Universities should respond to the most recent BMBF initiative to develop more independent China expertise in Germany. They should heed the advice of the Global Public Policy Institute and "apply the [Academic Freedom Index] to protect and promote academic freedom worldwide" (GPPi 2021). Fulda and Missal have argued that German universities need to engage in ethical due diligence and create greater transparency and accountability about Chinese party-state funding (Fulda and Missal 2021). It is also about time that German universities terminate their cooperation agreements with Confucius Institutes (Fulda 2021c). As Wietholz has rightly pointed out that "(in) the field of international research cooperation, we in Germany (and ideally in Europe) therefore have foreseeable complex, collaborative, professional weighing up processes with the aim of sustainable and self-confident research cooperation in a well-understood self-interest. At the beginning, however, there must be a clear definition of our own long-term interests and values (own translation)" (Wietholz 2021).

The unprincipled China policy of the former Merkel administration arguably has contributed to today's conundrum. For sixteen years the German federal government has signalled to the private sector—and by extension the CAMP sector, too— that the bottom line always trumps any other enlightened German material or ideational interests. Following the federal election in Autumn 2021 a new government should

heed the advise of Nils Schmid, the spokesperson for foreign affairs of the Social Democratic Party. In an interview with the Financial Times he argued that Germany needs "a real foreign policy for China — not just a business-oriented policy" and that there was a "need to decouple our foreign policy from the commercial interests of big business" (Solomon and Chazan 2021). Furthermore a whole-of-government task force should be established which critically examines the systemic challenge of the CCP to German state, industry and society. It should involve representatives from the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution, the Federation of German Industries, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research etc. To maximise its effectiveness this task force should come under the German Chancellery. It should be entrusted to develop suggestions for actionable counter-measures against hybrid interference from autocracies for key stakeholders on the federal and state level. This way the government could overcome the current lack or misuse of China competence in German politics, business and academia.

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BOOK REVIEW

Johann Schreck Terrentius, SJ: His European Network and the Origins of the Jesuit Library in Peking

Noël Golvers
Turnhout, Brepols, De Diversis Artibus, 2020, 648 pp.
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Over the past half century, the historiographic image of the Jesuit missionaries in China has arguably shifted from the exceptional to the normal. In the mid-20th century, they were frequently extolled as exceptionally talented "Renaissance Men" by historians such as Joseph Needham, who asserted that, "In the history of intercourse between civilisations there seems no parallel to the arrival in China in the 17th century of a group of Europeans so inspired by religious fervour as were the Jesuits, and at the same time so expert in most of those sciences which had developed with the Renaissance" (Needham and Wang 1959, 437). However, more recent prosopographic studies have cautioned us against such fascination, demonstrating instead that the great majority of China Jesuits were far less unusual, "junior members of the Society of Jesus" who "sailed to Asia in the middle of their academic formation, too soon to have given evidence of genius" (Brockey 2009, 209); and that the "Western Learning (*xixue* 西學)" the Jesuits promoted in Ming-Qing China was by no means progressive "modern" science, but the "particular scientific culture of their religious order" embedded in Jesuit college education, with Aristotelian philosophy as its uniform basis (Jami 2008, 155).

Against this backdrop, it is all the more striking to read Noël Golvers's magisterial new book on the Swiss missionary Johann Schreck Terrentius (1576-1630), who stands out as an archetypical Renaissance polymath with wide-ranging and often unorthodox intellectual interests. Born in Bingen, Terrentius's early itinerary as a "wandering scholar" brought him to no less than forty different academic sites across Europe, from Paris, Montpellier, and Rome to Rostock, Breslau, and Prague, where he frequented alchemical circles around universities and courts, and taught private courses in twelve disciplines including mathematics, meteorology, the art of memory, and exotic languages. By the time he joined the Jesuits in 1611 and departed for China in 1616, he was an established scholar and member of the prestigious Accademia dei Lincei in Rome, having shouldered high-profile scholarly projects such as the editing of the Tesoro Messicano, a New World natural history by the Spanish royal physician Francisco Hernández. His contemporaries compared him to household names of European intellectual history: a "Pliny of the Indies" (p. 516), a "second Viète" (p. 539),

and "a wondrous man, the second only after Campanella" yet capable of "much better experiments" (p. 454).

This book, however, is "not a detailed, linear biography of Terrentius", but rather an exploration of "his intellectual background and his network of learned acquaintances" (p. 12). Chapter 1 follows the three stages of Terrentius's "European tour": his early training from Freiburg to Rome (ca. 1590 to 1610); his Roman years as a scholar then as a Jesuit (1610-15); and his second pan-European journey (1616-18), ahead of his departure to China, from Rome to Lisbon through Germany and the Spanish Low Countries, during which he and the Belgian Jesuit Nicolas Trigault gathered a large number of books and instruments for the China mission. Chapter 2, "The People", reconstructs Terrentius's network, identifying all personal names mentioned in his sizable correspondence in various European archives, most importantly that with Johann Faber (1574–1629), the Papal botanist and secretary of the Accademia dei Lincei (Fondo Faber at the Biblioteca Corsiniana in Rome). Arranged in two alphabetical lists, these names include some 150 constituting Terrentius's "direct circle of acquaintances", complemented by 22 other indirect contacts. Each person's entry offers a full summary of primary sources concerning his relationship with Terrentius.

Chapter 3 moves on to a similar, item-by-item examination of the books and instruments Terrentius knew of, used, and gathered with a view to a "complete library of all Western science in China" (p. 308). They are presented in three alphabetical lists – ca. 60 authors appearing in Terrentius's correspondence with Faber; 331 books bought at the Officina Plantiniana in Antwerp, as revealed by the archives of the famous printing house; and 75 books still extant today in the National Library of Beijing bearing the inscription "Missionis Sinensis". Chapter 4 returns the focus to "the personality behind it all", analysing the "multiple competences of the polymath Terrentius" under ten headings: medicine; mineralogy; botany; mathematics; astronomy; calendar; magnetism; cryptography; linguistics; encyclopedism.

Golvers's book builds on a thorough exploration of archival sources, clearing up many misconceptions about Terrentius's career while unearthing scores of fascinating details. For instance, contrary to popular belief, we learn that it is "doubtful" Terrentius was

ever a regular student of Galileo during his years in Padua (p. 31); the latter, as a fellow Lincean, was nevertheless among the first to be informed of Terrentius's decision to join the Jesuits, and spoke of this decision as a "great loss to our Company [i.e. Accademia dei Lincei]" in favour of "the other Company [i.e. the Society of Jesus]" (p. 48–49). We learn that Terrentius did not join the Jesuits in order to go to China, but as the result of a decade-long spiritual quest, and his exact motives for later joining the China mission remain unknowable: the Jesuit archives related to his admission into the Society contain not a single mention of China, and his application letter for the mission cannot be found (pp. 49–54). Mainly focusing on Terrentius's European career, the book also offers rare glimpses into his scientific activities in China: his promise to send Chinese astronomical records to Galileo (p. 187); his now lost correspondence with Kepler (p. 206); his botanical exchanges with Jesuits in Manila, Malacca, Goa, Cochinchina, Arabia, and Ethiopia (p. 492); even a report on the post-mortem autopsy he performed in Hangzhou on his fellow Jesuit Sabatino de Ursis (p. 470).

To what extent does this wealth of new information about one individual affect our broader understanding of the Jesuits' role as cultural brokers between Europe and China? Terrentius's scholarly credentials are certainly exceptional, if not unique, among China Jesuits. Tellingly, he is the only one to have been known by a Latinate name, which Golvers interprets as indicating a "programme": "Terrentius" was both an etymological play on his German name Schreck ("fright"=> Latin "terr-or"), and a tribute to the Roman polymath Marcus Terrentius Varro (fl. 116–27), author of the first Roman encyclopaedia (pp. 517, 533). But Golvers also uses this well-documented career as a gateway into the scholarly world of Catholic Europe at the turn of the 17th century, its multi-layered geographies, its interlocking networks of patronage, collaboration, and competition, as well as the material conditions of its intellectual economy in which books, instruments, letters, and rumours all circulated. Readers can effectively read chapters 1-3 as a roadmap of European centres of learning, an address book of the Republic of Letters, and a complete library catalogue. While no other China

Jesuit's early career was as well documented as Terrentius's, this was the world they all navigated, and which they strove to extend to China.

The book also raises provocative questions about the nature of "Western Learning" with respect to its European roots, as it reveals a striking discrepancy between Terrentius's scholarly background and the legacy he ultimately left in China. According to the "final assessment" offered in the concluding chapter, Terrentius's European career was notable for his "holistic approach" to learning as well as his "unconventional convictions and practices", particularly transmutational alchemy (p. 543) – his correspondence spoke unambiguously of the philosopher's pleasure to "build a perfect body [of gold] from sulphur and mercury" (p. 456). Yet this holism seems entirely lost in translation: in the scholarship based on Chinese sources, his name appears in discrete specialised branches of the history of science, for his brief involvement in the imperial calendar reform (from 1629 till his untimely death in 1630), in connection with his one publication on mechanics (*Yuanxi qiqi tushuo* 遠西奇器圖說, 1628), and one posthumous publication on anatomy (*Taixi renshen shuogai* 泰西人身說概, 1643). While mechanics grew from a "marginal" subject in his library to the topic of Terrentius's most influential Chinese-language work (p. 439), his "whole collection of books on alchemy" left "no reported impact" in China (p. 15). Western Learning appears here both less and more than the European sciences Terrentius carried in his baggage. The chasm between these two interrelated bodies of knowledge, which historians have never before been able to measure in such detail, certainly deserves further exploration.

Thus this masterly book goes far beyond the colourful personality of Terrentius. This outstanding individual case constitutes an exceptionally contained opportunity for exploring the tensions between European input and Chinese reception, between individual inclinations and corporate agenda, and between structural conditions and contingent factors, all of which lie at the core of historical debates concerning early modern Sino-Western contact.

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BOOK REVIEW

Évolution et Civilisation en Chine: Le darwinisme dans la culture politique chinoise

Lilian Truchon
Paris, Classiques Garnier, 2020, 764 pp.
ISBN 978-2-406-08649-9

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Keywords: Darwinism; intellectual history; philosophy of science; scientific controversies

關鍵詞：達爾文主義，思想史，科學哲學，科學論爭

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The *Beagle* never reached the China Sea, but it would be difficult to claim that Charles Darwin's (1809–1882) ideas lacked impact in China. As a long stream of scholarship has been teasing out for decades, "darwinism" and "social darwinism" have been powerful intellectual forces in China ever since the end of the 19th century. Many of the most prominent Chinese thinkers and political activists of the late Qing dynasty gave space to Darwin and the issue of evolution in their reflections. And the discussion, rejection, or integration of so-called Darwinist ideas have formed a typical theme for studies concerning key modern intellectuals. However, since the publication of James Reeve Pusey's *China and Charles Darwin* in 1983, almost no scholarly work has tried to address this phenomenon from a more wide-ranging and elevated perspective. When I discovered that Lilian Truchon had dedicated a massive study—764 pages!—to this topic with his *Évolution et Civilisation en Chine: Le darwinisme dans la culture politique chinoise*, I therefore had great expectations. My hopes were, however, somewhat dashed.

The book under review is divided into two parts: the former, which is tellingly the longer, is concerned with darwinism in China at the end of the Qing dynasty—including a cascade of chapters about Yan Fu, Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao, Ma Junwu, Sun Yat-sen, Zhang Binglin, and anarchist thinkers—while the later covers in two chapters the period from the foundation of the Republic in 1912. If the book has some merits regarding its philosophical content, and offers a synthesis of an important segment of western scholarship on the topic, I must unfortunately say that it fails to provide much novelty from the general perspective of Chinese intellectual history. Its very dense chapters provide in-depth discussions of key Chinese authors' positions on biology, evolution, racism, and eugenics, but taken together they do not carve out a better and more thorough narrative about China and its relation to Charles Darwin. To clarify my statement, I should disambiguate Truchon's general project: this book is not about Darwin in China, it is a philosophical critique of how Darwin's anthropology has been confused with the doctrine of later scholars, notably Huxley and Spencer, a critique in which the Chinese corpus serves as a pretext. Though this idea is adumbrated in the

introduction and pervades the entire book, its most manifest expression can be found in the conclusion, with the following sentences:

> "We have to go back once more to what we have explored and defended throughout our work through the example of China: the illegitimacy attached to the fact of making the great naturalist responsible for any kind of sociobiology, be it liberal, conservative, or revolutionary. Unfortunately—besides the fact that it attests how wrong is the idea according to which a new translation of a work always goes beyond the previous one—the defective quality of successive Chinese translations does not seem to enable the elementary and necessary act of textual analysis, which is the only action that could cast light on Darwin's discourse with regard to civilisation." (p. 711)

Not only is China merely an "example", but it is clear that Truchon aims rather at restoring the perverted meaning of Darwin's original ideas than at clarifying what the Chinese did with or what they made of Darwin—albeit he sometimes has interesting insights regarding this matter. When the author formulates a critique of previous scholarship, and most notably Pusey's, he therefore engages less with elements or articulations missed in the Chinese corpus than with a lack of understanding in the original doctrines and the extensive variety of positions elaborated in the West. And in this regard, Truchon does an excellent job of identifying the specificities and particularities of each of the European naturalists, biologists, and scholars he summons up; to him it is pure anathema to put Darwin, Lamarck, Spencer, and Huxley into the same bag. As a consequence, this entails a perpetual denigration of labels such as "social darwinism," or in truth any other term that associates Darwin with something else. Lilian Truchon is thus applying Patrick Tort's research on the anthropology of Darwin and its conclusion that there is no "social darwinism of Darwin" to judge the Chinese corpus. But I have to wonder what is the point of criticising the Chinese for not understanding Darwin properly, when Western specialists had to await Tort's 1980s studies to rediscover the Darwinian anthropology that had been ideologically buried under Spencer's ideas. In short, despite providing many individual elements to its reader, the book does not provide a compelling general narrative.

Évolution et Civilisation en Chine is published in a book series that specialises in the history and the philosophy of science, a fact clearly justified by the long and precise explanations on the field of biology in 19th-century Europe as well as the thoroughgoing explanations of the thought systems of Western scholars. Truchon really goes to great pains to explain precisely to his readers what the original theories were about (even when they were not properly understood by the Westerners of that time), but it seems to me that he has failed to undertake the same effort on the Chinese side. Though he writes extensively on several thinkers who presented Darwin to the Chinese readership, trying to present the coherence of everyone's thought, there are not, to my eyes, many fresh discoveries regarding the topic. The book even seems from time to time to be a repetition of what has been written elsewhere. And the explanation for this is quite easy to understand: Truchon does not know or hardly knows Chinese. The bibliography actually quoted is almost devoid of any Chinese—a statement valid for both the primary sources and the secondary scholarship. The only Chinese books that one can find are in fact always quoted, translated into French, from English-language scholarship such as Pusey's book, or from documents already available in French (e.g., Yan Fu's 1895 manifestos translated in Hoang 1977). There are only a few exceptions, in the chapters on Ma Junwu and the use of darwinism in the communist era, for which he has obviously received some help. The author cannot bring new documents to the discussion because he is limited to materials that have already been made available in English or French—and there is here something odd in denouncing Pusey's lack of understanding of Darwin's ideas, when almost all the translations produced by Pusey in his book are re-translated into French here.

Lilian Truchon seems to be a very competent philosopher who has a great mastery of the western corpus associated with Darwin and his successors. However, his reading of Chinese history is a caricature: he reproduces the bygone model of a traditional culture being challenged by the novelty of the historical situation (something that may be a side effect of his being highly dependent on scholarship that is sometimes forty to sixty years old). I do not have much against specialists in western intellectual history

trying to explore the Chinese corpus—after all if sinologists endure much pain to translate Chinese materials, it is in the hope that non-sinophone colleagues will read them. But it is very troubling that a specialist in 19th-century British thought engages in such work, a work presented as historical, without being aware of the methodological predicament of his inquiry. It seems to me that, besides being unequipped to explore clearly the references to Darwin in the original sources—and perhaps one day liberate us from our too narrow reading of what only the great scholars said of Darwin, and approach it as a phenomenon that pervaded the entire Chinese society, really exploring Darwin in "Chinese political culture", to pick up on the subtitle of the book—the author takes on the issue of the transnational circulation of ideas without being aware of methodological innovation in the field: his work still harbours a culturalist if not orientalist outlook toward China.

If one wanted to sketch in a few words the general trend that characterises how intellectual history has studied the circulation of works, ideas, and concepts across borders, one could affirm roughly that the field has made its way through three stages or paradigms: diffusion, reception, and circulation. At first the issue was to take the source material as something almost sacred and consider if it was accurately received and understood abroad. Then the focus switched toward how local scholars appropriated a foreign doctrine or ideas in their own specific context to wrestle with their own specific problems. Finally, in recent years, more research has been dedicated to the exchange or the transfer in itself, bypassing in a sense both the perspective of a misunderstood producer and of an active receptor. This has notably been the case with the rise of transcultural studies, an evolution with which *Évolution et Civilisation en Chine* has not kept pace. Indeed, the book is obsessed with the issue of fidelity to the original, and keeps complaining about Darwin not being understood properly. The guiding assumption of the Chinese not understanding the genuine Darwin is even presented as a historical mistake—in his introduction, Truchon even openly asks in passing *à qui la faute?* But the fact is, as he notes himself, "neither Huxley nor Spencer understood Darwin's anthropology" (p. 82), so is it a problem that the Chinese did not either? Could it not teach us nonetheless something of what was happening in

China at that time? The answer is obviously positive, but when the author dabbles in this matter, a new methodological predicament impedes his research.

The work under review offers a blatant negation of China's having a long and complex intellectual history: Chinese thought or culture is essentialised into an imagined stagnant traditional form. Truchon reads through almost ahistorical eyes the question of what the Chinese thought of evolution before the introduction of Darwinism. Not only does he display from time to time a patronising and orientalist tone, but the Chinese conception of evolution often seems reduced to general ideas attributed to atemporal schools of thought. He also insists greatly on the weight of Xunzi's text, completely ignoring the fact that Xunzi was far from being regarded as orthodox. Xunzi may have been very important in Yan Fu's appropriation of Darwin, but that does not mean that Xunzi epitomises an essentialist Chinese attitude toward evolution. Although there are references to Chinese intellectual history, and sometimes Truchon pays attention to the context and clearly sees that "Chinese thought" is not as monolithic or stationary as it might seem, this vigilance fades away when dealing with philosophical arguments: much is reduced to stereotypical positions on the monism of Chinese thought, or Chinese not being able to distinguish a natural and a moral world.

In the end, the problem is probably that this book is not a historical investigation. It is the work of a philosopher who, faced with the case of China, tries to clarify or to give coherence to sets of ideas developed by leading Chinese scholars when they discussed the theme of evolution with regard to Darwin. Aside from some inexactness and oversimplified elements here and there, Lilian Truchon does not say anything utterly wrong; he is right in highlighting that Chinese conceptions of Darwinism rest on a confusion between what Darwin really wrote and the conceptions put forward by Herbert Spencer (1820–1903). And he sometimes gives very interesting presentations and explanations of how Chinese scholars dealt with specific issues or terminology, and very consciously draws parallels and comparison with what Darwin, Spencer, and Huxley were developing in their own systems. But I fail to see the point of identifying these family resemblances, because saying that this Chinese scholar sides with that British scholar on a specific point while opposing him on another in a pure realm of ideas

does not really reveal to us how Darwinism, or whatever you want to call this stream of discussion that took Darwin as a real or imagined departure point, fared through history in China. We are confronted with disembodied ideas discussed in a pure realm of speculation.

This book review being written for the *Journal of the European Association for Chinese Studies*, I thought that the priority was to answer the question of what scholars working on China could find in it, and not to insist on its general value in terms of philosophical discussion, for which I would not in any case be competent. Truchon's book is clearly a thoughtful response to ongoing debates in the field of epistemology and history of science in the West. I have nevertheless some doubts regarding whether it could bring much to historians working on Modern China, except perhaps to academics who have specialised in the key scholars mentioned in this text, or people looking for a synthesis for each of the authors investigated. One should praise the author for trying his best to find coherence and systematicity under the brushes of the Chinese he was studying, and he has sometimes clearly formulated some valuable insights—I was in particular really interested in his chapter on Ma Junwu, and in the last part of the book dealing with Darwin in China between 1911 and 1979, which flesh out many original elements. In a nutshell, the individual chapters of this book can be of interest, but threaded together they do not succeed in clearly setting out the historical challenges of Darwin's reception in China as a result of a deficient and outdated model of Chinese history.

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BOOK REVIEW

China und Japan. Zwei Reiche unter einem Himmel. Eine Geschichte der sino-japanischen Kulturbeziehungen

Kai Vogelsang
Stuttgart, Alfred Kröner Verlag, 2020, 528 pp.
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關鍵詞：中国历史，日本历史，中日关系，历史纠结，文化交流

In the last few decades, various approaches have been developed to transcend the traditional boundaries of a historical science that was largely oriented towards nation-states as a result of its founding in the 19th century. These include attempts at a *histoire croisée* (Werner and Zimmermann 2004), an entangled history (Li, Sun, and Gadkar-Wilcox 2019, for instance), or transnational history (with a new *Yearbook of Transnational History*) up to global history (Conrad 2016). Individual regions (Knoll and Scharf 2021), even individual villages (Kaltenbrunner 2017), up to the entire planet are interwoven, for example through global migration flows (see for instance, the series *Studies in Global Migration History*), but also by entanglements through individual commodities (Mintz 1986; Beckert 2014).

In contrast, to write an entangled history of two modern nation states, China and Japan, seems almost traditional. However, the depth of time in this presentation that goes back to the early and pre-state period and the importance of the two cultural areas that Kai Vogelsang focuses on goes far beyond the concepts of nation-state developed in China and Japan only in the last 150 years. Seldom has such an analysis of the political, economic, and, above all, cultural connections within such a large area for more than 2000 years been undertaken by a single scholar.

The motif of "two kingdoms under one sky" forms the red thread along which the "horizons" of China and Japan initially merge (pp. 37–118) – through the adoption of Chinese ideas of statehood and writing, cosmology and literature up to a "Sinicisation" of everyday life in Japan during the Tang Dynasty (7th-9th centuries CE). Afterwards, however, Vogelsang describes a "narrowing of the horizons" (pp. 119–156) both in Japan during the Heian period and in China during the Song dynasty (10th-12th centuries), partly in deliberate differentiation from the sometimes so-called "cosmopolitan" spirit (Lewis 2009) of the Tang period.

"The time of warriors and despots" (13th-18th centuries) even leads to a "lost horizon" (pp. 158–236), which, for the first time since the fighting between Tang and Japanese troops on the Korean peninsula in the 7th century, is tarnished by armed conflicts between the two empires (Mongolian attempts at a conquest of Japan in the 13th century; Japanese invasions of Korea in the Imjin War 1592 to 1598, as a continuation of the

bloody civil wars). The arrival of European seafarers from the 16th century onwards marks a new challenge which the "closed states" of the Qing emperors and the Tokugawa shoguns were trying to meet by restricting the access of foreigners.

These efforts are frustrated, under the title of "Receding Horizons", by the "onset of modernity" (pp. 238–336), after British ships in the Opium Wars (1839-1842, 1856-1860) forced China to "open up" to the "West" and an American flotilla in 1853/1854 did the same to Japan. But while Japan was undergoing a rapid "modernisation" (industrialisation, militarisation) after the Meiji reforms, the efforts of the Qing Empire remained only piecemeal until the pressure of the European imperialists was intensified by Japanese imperialism, which was even more threatening due to its geographical proximity.

This ultimately resulted in a "Broken Horizon" (pp. 337–420) in the catastrophe of the Japanese war from 1937 to 1945 against China, which could not be re-unified, as a result also of the positioning of the two states in the Cold War and the geopolitical and economic rivalry that continues to this day under the influence of intensifying nationalisms.

Vogelsang's lucid prose makes the text easy to understand even for non-specialists in Sinology or Japanology (such as this reviewer) and is a joy to read. Individual inserts on selected topics from "Language" (pp. 33–34) via "Calendar" (pp. 59–61) and "Chairs" (pp. 110-112) to "Noodles" (pp. 149–150) also allow for a diachronic view.

Language as the basis of communication is of course a recurring topic of the book; educated Japanese and Chinese, for example, conducted silent "brush conversations" (*bitan/hitsudan*) in literary Chinese up to the 20th century, alternately writing on a piece of paper and handing it back and forth (p. 34). What is astonishing, however, is the extremely limited willingness among the elites, at least for a long time until the 19th century, to learn the languages actually spoken. When the Ming Empire had to deal with the attacks by Japanese pirates, a "Japan Compendium" (*Riben kaolüe*) was created, which mainly adopted the (now outdated) knowledge from older texts, but at

least contained 350 Japanese words in a glossary. Zheng Shangong from Canton compiled a list of as many as 3,399 words after his trip to Japan in 1556 (pp. 202–204), but even with these there was hardly any full access to the idiom of the "other" side. When the novels of the Ming period became popular in Japan in the 17th century, Japanese scholars trained in classical Chinese could not read the texts written in the Chinese vernacular; only with the creation of new glossaries did these books become accessible (pp. 227–228). In view of this complex linguistic basis for exchange, it is not surprising that Vogelsang repeatedly addresses communication limits and disruptions, even in the early days of diplomatic relations, when Queen Suiko of the Yamato dynasty in 607 CE wrote a letter to Emperor Yang of the Sui Dynasty, suggesting equality between the two rulers, to the indignation of the Chinese court (pp. 41–42); this invites comparison with similar cases in the diplomatic exchanges between the rulers of Afro-Eurasia in these centuries (see Preiser-Kapeller 2018, 76–77).

Another often astonishing phenomenon is the existence of parallel developments and similar rhythms of political dynamics between the two realms. Vogelsang refers to the crises of the 14th century, which were partly initiated by the climatic transformation of the Little Ice Age in China and Japan and contributed to the end of the Kamakura shogunate in 1336 and to the downfall of the Mongolian Yuan dynasty in 1368 (pp. 192–193). Something similar can be observed for the regime changes of the 17th century: "But despite all mutual demarcation, the Qing and the Tokugawa were peculiarly similar: both were parvenus who came to power by force and who had to legitimise themselves against the elites of their country; and both were based on the same model of political legitimation: the Chinese doctrine of Confucianism" (p. 211).

Undoubtedly, until the 19th century, Chinese interest in Japanese culture was less than the other way around. Until the middle of the 19th century, even geographical works about Japan in China were based on tradition and not on current empirical knowledge about the neighbouring country (pp. 241–242). The Japanese, on the other hand, were "not picky, but by no means indiscriminate" when adopting elements of Chinese culture (p. 117). As Vogelsang shows with several examples, the import of Chinese culture into Japan "always led to its transformation, reinterpretation, and criticism (...). The

Japanese built on Chinese culture and at the same time shook its foundations" (p. 219). This process began with a stronger emphasis on independent further development of the adopted elements ("Japanese spirit and Chinese skills" [*wakon kansai*]) after China had lost its function as role model with the collapse of the Tang dynasty at the end of the 9th century (p. 136). The Chinese elites of the Song era, on the other hand, began to distance themselves from all "barbaric" influences, including those from Japan, from the 10th century onwards (p. 121). Japan therefore also preserved elements of the Tang culture (the Chinese "Middle Ages") that were later destroyed or lost in China itself (pp. 99–100), including the Chinese football game (*cuju/kemari*, p. 113), and in particular "Chinese books" (pp. 189–191). It was not until the Qing period, from the 18th century onwards, that Chinese scholars became increasingly aware that lost classics had been preserved in Japan; at the same time, the textual-criticism methods of the Japanese Confucians opened up a new approach to these texts for both sides (pp. 229–230).

Beyond the fluctuating and sometimes dwindling interest of the elites in both realms, maritime trade remained a constant of material and cultural exchange, despite restrictions or bans. In Japan, especially between 1250 and 1350, imported Chinese coins were even used for payment transactions (pp. 146–157); one could find other comparative cases, such as the wide diffusion of Arab coins in Scandinavia and Western Europe in the 8th to 10th centuries (see most recently Gruszczyński 2020). In the Qing and Edo periods, which were officially characterised by isolation, foreign trade even intensified; several thousand Chinese settled in Nagasaki, enjoying more privileges there than the Dutch (pp. 219–223). In the 17th and 18th centuries, China also still served as a source of technology transfers, such as in bridge building (pp. 224–225).

However, the new scientific methods of the Europeans created more powerful competition for Chinese knowledge traditions in Japan, for example when the dissection of a corpse in 1771 obviously refuted the anatomical speculations of Chinese medicine. "Dutch studies" (*Rangaku*) became the basis of a new science, even before Japan officially "opened" to the West (pp. 233–235; see also Marcon 2015). This was accompanied by a renewed increase in the self-perception of Japan as the actual "cultural

empire of the middle", which had an uninterrupted line of rulers and had never been subjugated from outside – in contrast to China as a "land of chaos and violence", where multiple invasions, the latest by the "barbarian" Manchus, had caused great devastation and a supposed loss of culture (pp. 234–236).

Although the defeat of China in the first Opium War (1839-1842) seemed to confirm this disregard, it generated a shock in Japan (pp. 242–243). Once again, injustices in China were discussed as part of a search for the causes for the defeat. The experiences of the Qing also motivated the Japanese government to submit to the US-Americans in 1853/1854 in order not to experience a military fiasco faced with Western weapons technology as China had done (p. 247). Vogelsang vividly describes how the journey of a Japanese delegation to Shanghai on the ship "Senzai-maru" in 1862 was all the more sobering in view of the behaviour of the Europeans there towards the "humiliated" Chinese (pp. 250–252). In order not to share the fate of the Chinese, the Japanese turned to Western knowledge and away from "Asia" (p. 266–270). This went hand in hand with an "orientalisation" of China as backward and despotic (for European models in this regard see Osterhammel 2018), which ultimately led to racist stereotypes and a "dehumanisation" of the Chinese, especially during the first Sino-Japanese war (pp. 281–284).

In turn, the successes of Japanese modernisation and expansion, even if increasingly directed against China, inspired Chinese reform efforts, with the prestige of the Japanese, as in other parts of Asia and the world, peaking after the victory over Russia in 1905. While at first the Chinese, either voluntarily or exiled by their own government, increasingly studied in Japan, and became familiar with the concepts of modern science in Japanese translations (as can be seen, for example, from the numerous relevant loan words in Chinese, p. 319), after the first Sino-Japanese war Japanese instructors (for example for the military and the police) and investors were also invited to China. Preventing the division of China among Western powers seemed to be in Japan's interest (pp. 289–321). However, this "golden decade" of Sino-Japanese cooperation, as Vogelsang calls it, ended as early as 1908, both as the enthusiasm of Chinese students in Japan dwindled due to experiences of discrimination and as a now more "Chinese

nationalist"-oriented elite focused on the dangers of Japanese imperialism (pp. 321–336). However, as Vogelsang emphasises, the idea of a Chinese nation-state was born among the Chinese circles in Japan (p. 311).

At least the Japanese presence, especially in Shanghai, would remain strong; several hundred Japanese even participated in the revolutionary movement around Sun Yat-sen, which brought about the end of the Qing imperial regime in 1911 (pp. 340–347). For the transmission of communist ideas to China, especially from 1918 onwards, Japan once again proved to be an important mediator through translations (pp. 358–360), while Chinese and Japanese artistic circles in Shanghai worked closely and fruitfully together (pp. 360–371).

A collaboration of a different kind came about when the Japanese occupiers motivated not only the last deposed emperor of the Qing, but also other conservative Chinese who were disappointed by the republic, to participate in the regime in Mǎnzhōuguó from 1932 onwards under the banner of an evocation of common Confucian values (p. 376–380). This was finally followed in 1937 by the Japanese war of aggression against the Chinese heartland with its immeasurable atrocities, discussed by Vogelsang in full (pp. 380–386).

After the Second World War, it was only from 1954 onwards that there was a rapprochement between Japan and the People's Republic of China, which were now in different world blocs. It intensified, especially economically, from 1972, with the first visit of a Japanese prime minister to China, and in 1978 resulted in the conclusion of a formal peace treaty. According to Deng Xiaoping, his visit to Japan was one of the inspirations for the programme he initiated for the modernisation and economic growth of China, which also became a success thanks to Japanese investment. For the following years up to 1992 Vogelsang speaks of a "peak period of Sino-Japanese relations", which also reached broader sections of the population, for example through Japanese mass tourism and the popularity of Japanese films in China (pp. 392–408).

After 1992, however, the economic and geopolitical rivalry between the two countries intensified in the face of the "rise" of China. The down-playing of Japanese crimes

during the war in Japanese schoolbooks and the media, or the visits by Japanese politicians to the Yasukuni shrine in Tokyo, led to an outcry among the Chinese public. At the same time, increased Chinese nationalism was supported by the Communist Party in order to increase internal cohesion of the society after the bloodily suppressed protests of 1989. On the other hand, there is still the enormous extent of economic interdependence, the mobility of millions of tourists between neighbouring countries, and the popularity of Japanese popular culture (manga, music) in China (pp. 408–418). In contrast to the sabre-rattling of modern nationalistic narratives, Vogelsang emphasises the usually exceptionally (for two neighbours) peaceful character of Sino-Japanese relations up to the 19th century (p. 238).

The last part of the book consists of an appendix, including notes to chapters (pp. 421–464), a list of primary sources (pp. 465–470) and secondary sources (pp. 471–490) as well as an index (pp. 491–504) and acknowledgements (S. 505).

Kai Vogelsang's book leaves little to be desired. Perhaps with the focus on the two great realms of China and Japan, the continued importance of Korea for the mediation of cultural exchange, even after antiquity, sometimes takes a backseat (see, for instance, Rawski 2015). The different natural and institutional preconditions of the two countries for industrialisation in the 19th century could have been highlighted in the light of more recent studies (such as Vries 2019). Overall, however, Vogelsang's book is a paradigmatic masterpiece for a complex multi-layered history of entanglements in their *longue durée*, in this case in East Asia, which hopefully will soon be translated into English as well as into Chinese and Japanese – in order to interest wider circles in the deep historical dimension of mutual networks.

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.25365/jeacs.2021.2.259-260

BOOK REVIEW

Laozi. Dao De Jing

Illustrated by C. C. Tsai. Foreword by Pico Iyer

Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2020, xvi + 167 pp.

ISBN: 9780691179773

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Keywords: Laozi, Dao De Jing, Chinese philosophy, Daoism, comic, Tsai Chih Chung

關鍵詞：老子，道德經，中國哲學，道學，漫畫，蔡志忠

Following his *Confucius, The Analects* and *Sunzi, The Art of War* published in 2018, and his *Zhuangzi, The Way of Nature* published in 2019 (reviewed in *JEACS*, vol. 1, 2020), the *Dao De Jing* is the fourth of C. C. Tsai's cartoon versions of one of China's philosophical classics, provided with a contemporary English translation and published in the series *The Illustrated Library of Chinese Classics* of Princeton University Press (his fifth, *The Ways of Zen*, was published in July 2021).

The *Dao De Jing*, a text of 81 short chapters, is the Chinese classic of which the most translations into other languages have been made. Within this multitude of over 250 different translations, C. C. Tsai's 'translation' takes a unique position, as it juxtaposes the original Chinese texts with cartoons that excel in "daoist" simplicity and persuasiveness – and in some way resemble the famous *bianwen* genre of pre-modern Chinese literature. In the present edition, the original layout of C. C. Tsai's timeless cartoons has been kept intact: the original classical Chinese text is placed in the margins of each page, and the cartoons take center stage. C. C. Tsai's colloquial Chinese (*baihua*) in the text balloons has been replaced with Brian Bruya's translation into contemporary English. The cartoon version of the *Dao De Jing* is preceded by a biography of Laozi (pp. 7-12), based on the text in Sima Qian's *Shi ji* (*Laozi Han Fei liezhuan*, lxiii).

In his Introduction to the work (pp. xi-xv), Brian Bruya briefly mentions the problems surrounding the person of Laozi and the original version of the text. In-depth knowledge of these two points that are, indeed, the subject of academic research and discussion may not be the primary concern of the lay reader; however, the brevity with which these issues are treated here leaves unused the possibility of exploring the myth-building around the person of Laozi and the importance this may have had for the appeal of his text. But, on the other hand, leaving out the mythical aspect of the work may precisely be conducive to interpreting the text for its contemporary value, an aspect that is touched upon in the Foreword by Pico Iyer (pp. ix-x).

In the same way as C. C. Tsai became one of Asia's most famous cartoonists with his editions of the Chinese classics, this Princeton University Press series also has the potential to become a point of reference for contemporary philosophical cartoons.

Journal of the European Association for Chinese Studies

List of PhDs Defended at European Institutions in 2020. *Journal of the European Association for Chinese Studies*, vol. 2 (2021): 261-278.
DOI: https://doi.org/10.25365/jeacs.2021.2.261-278

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Corps et Politique dans la Chine Contemporaine : sociologie de la souffrance parmi les anciens jeunes instruits envoyés dans les fermes militaires pendant la Révolution culturelle

Zhang, Nan 張南
Wei shijie lixin – Liao Ping de jingxue yu zhengzhi zhixue 為世界立心——廖平的經學與政治哲學

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De Marchi, Serena

Prisonscape. Literary Reconfigurations of the Real and Imagined Worlds of the Chinese Prison

Stockholm University, September 2020

http://su.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2%3A1454906&dswid=9646

Abstract:

This study focuses on the prison writings from and about modern China (from the Mao era to the present day). It builds on previous research on Chinese prison camp literature as well as on sociological and historical studies of the evolution of punishments, both within the Chinese context and from a more global perspective. Theoretically and methodologically, the subject is approached through the conceptual model of the *prisonscape.* Informed by Arjun Appadurai's theories on global interactions and by Edward Soja's notion of "thirdspace," this model is employed to explore the ways in which prison, through literature, is re-mapped as an "imagined world."

The aim of this work is twofold: on the one hand, it seeks to characterize prison writings as a global literary genre and to position Chinese prison literature within a national literary system and in relation to a "world literary space" (Casanova). On the other hand, the literary analysis aims at illuminating key aspects of the imagined world of the Chinese prison. The textual analysis is organized around two main thematic explorations that focus, in turn, on a spatial and a corporeal dimension. Through the literary investigation of carceral spaces and carceral bodies, this study ultimately aims to contribute to a deeper and broader understanding of the Chinese *prisonscape.*

Engman, Puck

Shanghai's Dispossessed: the Capitalist Problem in Socialist Transition, 1956–1981

University of Freiburg, 2020

https://freidok.uni-freiburg.de/data/169667

Abstract:

It was only with the transition to socialism that capitalists appeared in China as a state category. While university students and labor activists had introduced the concept of the bourgeoisie in the early twentieth century to make sense of society's industrial reorganization, the Chinese Communist Party's expropriation of private industrial and commercial enterprise in the 1950s elevated capitalist identity to administrative-legal status. The capitalist status became a necessity when the government took the capitalist population as a target for socialist management and transformation. For if the dispossession of the bourgeoisie had put an end to its existence as a class in the Marxist sense, the same development required the bureaucracy to be able to identify capitalists on an individual level so as to find a suitable place for them in the socialist workplace and urban society. The history of how the government worked to define and solve the problem of capitalists shows that Chinese socialism was as concerned with the differentiation from an illegitimate past as with the reorganization of economic production. This dissertation finds evidence of this process of differentiation in the political and bureaucratic practices that targeted capitalists in the city of Shanghai. It argues that the classification of capitalists was not a high-modernist project forcing local realities into rigorous and artificial categories but rather the expression of a political effort to reconcile a socialist commitment to end the social injustices of the past with the demands of industrial growth and national defense. As the first socialist government to abolish private ownership while recognizing the bourgeoisie's historical entitlement as an ally in the struggle against imperialism, the Chinese state came to organize capitalists as a population with a liminal but legitimate place within the socialist community of production. Triangulating previously unexamined sources from state archives and

research collections, the dissertation demonstrates how political and bureaucratic responses to complex issues of entitlement and belonging came together in a shaky arrangement that allowed the capitalists' inclusion in the community even as it reified their difference. Full of inherent tensions, this institutional arrangement finally broke down in the Cultural Revolution after widespread calls for more radical solutions to the capitalist problem. Without reliable support from the party leadership, however, these solutions proved no more successful than earlier policies. Only after the death of Mao did the leadership abolish the category of capitalists, closing the book on revolution and declaring the bourgeoisie a thing of the past---even as it enlisted former capitalists in its program of economic reform and opening-up.

Flatø, Hedda

Polluted Perspectives: Environmental Troubles and Popular Political Attitudes in China

University of Oslo, December 2020

Abstract:

Air pollution is purportedly a challenge to the popular standing of the Communist Party of China´s rule, especially after severe haze events in the 2010s. However, many tenets of this "environmental performance legitimacy" thesis remain assumed rather than demonstrated. There is a lack of nationally representative studies on systematic linkages between air pollution, environmental awareness and attitudes towards government across Mainland China's population. Does air pollution really matter to politically relevant attitudes among Chinese citizens?

My dissertation contributes analytical tools and empirical evidence that can enhance our understanding of what happens to citizen attitudes towards government if they "see" it through a veil of smog. First, I develop an analytical framework for assessing possible linkages between performance outcomes and politically relevant popular opinion. Second, I apply the framework in empirical studies utilizing nationally representative face-to-face survey data from 2009 and 2014 (N=2866, 2507) combined with satellite-based, fine-grained PM2.5 measures and community-level statistics.

In three articles, I show that air pollution awareness increased and spread out with the 'Airpocalypse' in China, mainly among citizens living with high PM2.5 levels and in localities that were not strongly dependent on secondary industry. Probability for expressing environmental policy preference was higher among citizens who were aware of the presence of pollution. However, I found class differences in environmental policy preference which did not have to do with differences in awareness. Air pollution was also associated with lower probability for reporting trust in sub-national governments. My research implies that people can change their minds about air pollution under certain conditions, and that air pollution mediated by subjective environmental perceptions may affect citizen attitudes towards environmental policies and political institutions.

Gîţă, Iulia Elena

Diseminarea şi receptarea contemporană a literaturii chineze în spaţiul cultural românesc din a doua jumătate a secolului al XX-lea şi până în prezent

[Dissemination and contemporary reception of Chinese literature in Romania from the second half of the 20th century until present]

University of Bucharest, February 2020

http://doctorat.unibuc.ro/events/gita-iulia-elena/

Abstract:

The thesis is situated in the field of cultural translation, being focused on the sociological aspects of the cultural transfer of Chinese literature in the Romanian space, therefore researching the translation of literature from the perspective of cultural reception. The main problem it pursues refers to the way in which the encoded socio-cultural elements of the text are rendered to offer the reader of the translation a more correct reception of the original text.

The paper is organized in four chapters, followed by bibliography and a series of appendices consisting of graphics and questionnaires for the interviews done for the better understanding of the perception of the agents involved in the transfer of culture and literature from China to Romania – translators, editors, cultural diplomats etc.

The first chapter - The theoretical framework, after a review of important theories in translation studies, makes a synthesis of the issue of cultural translation, with emphasis on the cultural reception of literary translations, as social practices strongly anchored in the cultural matrix of the original work. Reviewing the definition of cultural translation as a translation of cultural information at the level of the "other", the thesis emphasizes the various consequences of this process of transfer and representation of one culture in another culture. It emphasizes that cultural translation is not limited to textual constraints but even more to extratextual implications involved in the transfer. The thesis shows that the translated work, in its role as a cultural good that marks its recipient, the political and economic constraints that influence its reception must also

be considered. Literary translations are considered representative of the way in which they connect the paradigms of the two cultures and at the same time become ways in which different cultures build their image.

The second chapter - Soft-power and literary translation is dedicated to studies on the concept of soft power, the hypostasis of literature as a source of soft-power, with a double reference, both to Western theory and to the specific elements proposed by Chinese theorists. It is again a synthesis of specialized studies, but oriented towards the relationship with literature, with the case of the translation of Chinese literature in Romania.

The third chapter - The sociology of literary reception. The image of Chinese literature in the Romanian cultural space (1950-2018) consists in a picture of the evolution of cultural relations and within them, of the literary ones, between China and Romania, between 1950 -2018. It is an informative chapter, the result of a quantitative research, which aims to build a database. The important factors in the import, translation and dissemination of Chinese literature in Romania are pursued, as part of the power relations projected in the complex, cultural, economic and political context. The agents involved and their efficiency in the inter-relationship were targeted. An inventory of works on China translated between 1950 and 2018 was undertaken, which allowed a clearer perspective of the relations between the two cultural spaces. In order to illustrate the involvement of Chinese literature in the Romanian cultural environment, the author conducted an important case study, based on interviews, the results of which revealed the circulation of books, the role of translators and their influence on cultural relations. The cultural aspects of translation, the complex rewriting processes that involve dialogue, the mixing of cultures have always been in the centre of attention. This confirmed the complexity of the processes of cultural negotiation, of the ways of opening one cultural field in another.

Practical application of the theoretical assumptions in the first chapter, with the aim of emphasizing the role of culture in translation, the fourth chapter-Study of the translation of *culturemes* focuses on the relationship between texts in their complex linguistic and cultural-civilizational expression and studies the *culturemes*, their typology,

strategies of translation in a group of Chinese contemporary literature works translated through direct translation in Romanian. The *culturemes* can be interpreted as a specific mark of literary translations from Chinese into Romanian. In the proposed analysis, the basic idea is that in studying the cultural aspects of translation, the main tool is the specific cultural item that, distinct from the linguistic and pragmatic level, captures the cultural reference. The way the experience of the other culture is internalized and rewritten in the receiving culture is most eloquently reflected in the *culturemes*. The corpus of works selected for analysis included translations of contemporary literature, based on which a repertoire of *culturemes* was circumscribed, whose mode of transfer proved whether there is a consensus among the Romanian Sinologist translators. It was found that the translator, through his skills, is an important agent of the transfer of the literary work, who knows and respects the rules of the audience. Beyond the given examples and the interpretation of the translators' method for the rendering in Romanian of the various types of *culturemes*, this chapter pointed out several elements mentioned in the previous chapters, which thus complete the demonstration of the importance of literary translations in cultural dialogue, of their crucial role in the symbolic exchange that maintains cultural identities.

Jortay, Coraline

Pronominal Politics: (Un)Gendering Narrative and Framing Ambiguity in Chinese Literature, 1917-1937

Université libre de Bruxelles, June 2020

https://difusion.ulb.ac.be/vufind/Record/ULB-DIPOT:oai:dipot.ulb.ac.be:2013/308433/Holdings

Abstract:

The introduction of gendered third person pronouns in written Chinese in the late 1910s has been hailed as one of the seismic linguistic shifts of May Fourth (1919), a period which was rife with debates on the position of women and men in Chinese society. While research on the topic has mainly framed this event as being about linguistic progress and about "her," little attention has been paid to the specific ways in which the new pronouns were vocally opposed, quietly subverted, or leveraged by writers of the period and how this affected gender representation in literary texts, especially at a time when literature was deemed the foremost tool for the unification of the language and the education of the people.

Rather than focusing on "the invention" of a third person feminine as customary of existing scholarship, my dissertation aims to retrieve the diversity of literary uses of linguistic gender that often went hand in hand with political goals. As the introduction of a new feminine pronoun ushered in the formerly gender-inclusive third-person pronoun being rewritten as masculine, I scrutinize the works of four writers representative of both early adopters and outspoken opponents of the new pronouns: Liu Dabai 劉大白 (1880-1932), Ling Shuhua 淩叔華 (1900-1990), Zhao Yuanren 趙元任 (1892-1982), and Xiao Hong 蕭紅 (1911-1942). Together, they exemplify different generations of writers working with a variety of genres (prose, poetry, drama, translation) and a variety of linguistic and social movements. This corpus allows to uncover not only how each of them plays with linguistic and gendered norms prevalent at the time (through homophony, creation of characters, deictic shifts, etc.), but also how genre

itself impacted pronominal manipulations. These debates are contextualised against an historicization of "pronouns" as a linguistic category which came to be understood as open-ended and "lacking" gender over the course of the nineteenth century. This dissertation probes how these views paved the way for a wide variety of gendered pronouns being quickly incorporated after 1917 when the stakes moved from a specialty issue of interest to literary translators and linguists to one that involved institutionalizing the language and gender equality in general.

Beyond its contribution to the field of Republican Chinese literature, this dissertation shows how relevant Chinese literary "pronominal politics" from 1917-1937 are to contemporary debates on inclusive writing and helps (re)place sinophone literature on the map of contemporary theoretical developments in pronoun studies, historical and comparative linguistics, translation studies, and feminist literary studies, where Anglo-European canonical works tend to remain overwhelmingly the focus of inquiry.

Pan, Lifei 潘麗妃

Shiyi Miaofa lianhua jing yingyi yanjiu 什譯《妙法蓮華經》英譯研究

[A Study of the English Translations of the Chinese Buddhist Scripture Miaofa lianhua jing]

Ghent University (Joint PhD with Sichuan University), November 2020

https://biblio.ugent.be/publication/8680813/file/8680814.pdf

Abstract:

The Lotus Sutra is one of the most representative texts of Mahayana Buddhism and one of the Chinese Buddhist sutras with the largest number of translations into English. This dissertation studies these English translations from the perspective of translation history, internal (choice of words, transliteration vs. translation, syntax) and external (identity of translators, background of translators) text study, and the impact the different translations have had.

Ren, Baihua

The Water Mill: Authentication and Analysis of an Ancient Chinese Jiehua Painting

University of Glasgow, December 2020

http://theses.gla.ac.uk/81625/

Abstract:

The Water Mill, currently held in the Shanghai Museum, is a famous *jiehua* painting which for a long time was believed to have been created by the Five Dynasties artist Wei Xian. At present, most scholars hold the view that it was created around the Northern Song Dynasty (960–1127). This dissertation tries to use a sociological approach, material culture study and iconographical analysis to illustrate the painting's content, as well as research on the cultural biography of the whole handscroll, with the purpose of finding the potential artist and the time of creation. Alongside, with authentication, politics, economics and aesthetics are also discussed in the thesis to explore their effect on the development of *jiehua* and the specific theme of the water mill in the Chinese history of art.

Through the analysis of the cultural biography of *The Water Mill*, which presents a full collection history of the handscroll since the Northern Song Dynasty, its authenticity could be proved. From historical records and a residual signature, the son-in-law of the Yingzong Emperor Zhang Dunli can be established as the artist of *The Water Mill* and the painting may have been created around 1068–1100. The interpretation of the painting image supports this conclusion and the hypothesis from the cultural biography – the construction, costumes, climate, culture, military system, etc. – all reflect the characteristics of the Northern Song Dynasty. Therefore, *The Water Mill* can be seen as a representative architectural painting of the golden age of *jiehua* and an image representing Song culture. On this basis, this dissertation also researched the particular background to find the reasons why *jiehua* was popular during the 10th to 13th centuries, as well as why the water mill was a popular theme during the Song Dynasty. Further research is needed to identify faded seals in the handscroll and confirm the possibility that Zhang Dunli was the artist of *The Water Mill*.

Romero-Moreno, Aran

El concepto wenming: discurso, espacio y práctica 'civilizatoria' en Nanjing, China

[The wenming concept: 'civilization' discourse, space and practice in Nanjing, China]

Autonomous University of Barcelona, October 2020

https://www.tdx.cat/handle/10803/670797

Abstract:

In the last decades the Communist Party of China has been employing the rhetoric of *wenming* (civilization, civilized, culture) to set the moral grounds of a "new style of society" (*shu xin feng*), that is, a middle-class society. As a result, Chinese cities are filled with messages describing and prescribing the legit practice of citizenry. This research sheds a new light on the study of political terms in China, reconstructing the concept of *wenming* through the dialectic analysis of three objects: (1) urban texts (banners, advertisement and political campaigns); (2) urban spaces (gated communities, malls and other public infrastructure); (3) social interaction (face-to-face encounters and real time, practical, situations). Thus, employing the ethnographic method in the city of Nanjing, the author arrives to three main conclusions. First, that *wenming* ideology is built around the fundamental binomial: public/private. Second, that the morphology of urban spaces (specially the newly built) reproduces this same ideological schism. Third, that far from being passive objects, through social interaction, bodies impose their own practical reason of what "being civilized" means. Altogether, the *wenming* process reflects the structural changes that Chinese society is experiencing, not only since the major reforms of 1978, but since the foundation of the Republic itself.

Shi, Jing 時婧

Zhang Taiyan zaoqi Chunqiu Zuo zhuan xue yanjiu 章太炎早期春秋左傳學研究

[A Study of the Early Period of Zhang Taiyan's Studies on the "Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan"]

Ghent University (Joint PhD with the School of Classics, Renmin University of China), May 2020

https://biblio.ugent.be/publication/8662693/file/8662694.pdf

Abstract:

Zhang Taiyan, one of the most prominent and influential scholars of the late Qing and Republican period developed a new interpretation of the *Zuo Zhuan* departing from "Old Text" Confucianism and the modernization of academic research. This interpretation profoundly influenced the study of Confucianism and historiography in modern China. Focusing on three distinct stages in his reading of the *Zuo Zhuan*, this dissertation discusses Zhang Taiyan's views on "Old Text" vs. "New Text" Confucianism, the question as to whether the *Chunqiu* 春秋 (*Spring and Autumn Annals*) counts as a "classic" (*jing* 經) or a "history" (*shi* 史), the problem of whether the *Zuo Zhuan* should be seen as a historical record or a commentary on the *Chunqiu*, the relationship between the *Zuo Zhuan* and other important commentaries such as the *Gongyang zhuan* 公羊傳 and *Guliang zhuan* 穀梁傳, and Zhang's approach to different commentators on the *Zuo Zhuan* throughout the ages such as Xunzi 荀子 (3rd century BCE), Liu Xin 劉歆 (ca 50 BCE – 30 CE), Jia Kui 賈逵 (30-101), and Du Yu 杜預 (222-285).

Sun, Jiawen

Corps et Politique dans la Chine Contemporaine : sociologie de la souffrance parmi les anciens jeunes instruits envoyés dans les fermes militaires pendant la Révolution culturelle

[Body and Politics in Contemporary China: sociology of Suffering among Former Educated Youth Sent to Military Farms during the Cultural Revolution]

École des hautes études en sciences sociales (EHESS), December 2020

http://www.theses.fr/2020EHES0164

Abstract:

In this thesis, we select the educated youth (*zhiqing*) who have been sent to the military farms (*Bingtuan*) during the Cultural Revolution as our object of research. Through the analysis of their oral history, we examine the difficulties and the traumas those *zhiqing* have encountered in their life-course from the perspective of sociology of the body and medical anthropology, with the aim of finding out the social and political origins of the suffering endured by this "lost generation". Firstly, by applying the oral history research and the life-course approach, we comprehensively present the various sufferings encountered by different groups of *zhiqing*. Concerning the genre of suffering, we explore their physical pain and mental trauma. In terms of the diachronic nature of suffering, we interrogate the injuries that have occurred in the past and the psychological or physical traumas that have had lasting effects over the years. Secondly, within the theoretical framework of the sociology of value, we analyze the value crisis, the deprivation and the reconstruction of values experienced by the generation of *zhiqing*. We point out that the multiple deprivations of value suffered by the *zhiqing* during the process of social change have been exactly the social origins of their sense of "being lost". In addition, the collective narratives of the *zhiqing* about their physical pain actually reflect their hope that society and the authorities would recognize their sacrifices. Thirdly, from a historical perspective, we explain the particular concepts of body politics that the generation of *zhiqing*, generally regarded as the "Maoist New Men", has been inculcated. We examine the nationalization, the revolutionization and

the collectivization of the Chinese body in the social context of national salvation since the end of the Qing dynasty. We propose that the radicalization of the "Maoist New Men" is not the result of contingency, but of deep historical, social and political reasons. Finally, we explore the possibility of saving the historical truth from the structural amnesia. Our ambition is to write the history of the Maoist era in a broader historical and social context, and to integrate the suffering of the Chinese during this era with the universal human suffering, so that similar tragedies would never happen again. In the field of research on the social history of contemporary China, this study is of great importance. It uses the suffering of the generation of *zhiqing* as a prism to reflect the history of the transformation of Chinese society over more than half a century, presenting the physical and spiritual scars left by historical and social trauma on individuals. It is a development and complement of existing researches, generally conducted from a macro perspective, on the history of China's Down to the Countryside Movement, and links the Maoist political movements and their contemporary consequences. In this thesis, the precious voice of the "nameless nobodies" is recorded, and the possible ways of writing history are proposed to counteract the formation of the "non-event" (events that have been forcibly erased from people's memories by the authorities).

Zhang, Nan 張南

Wei shijie lixin – Liao Ping de jingxue yu zhengzhi zhixue 為世界立心——廖平的經學與政治哲學

[Reuniting Confucianism with History: the Political Philosophy of Liao Ping (1852–1932)]

Ghent University (Joint PhD with the School of Philosophy, Renmin University of China), June 2020

https://biblio.ugent.be/publication/8669567/file/8669571.pdf

Abstract:

This dissertation discusses how, going through different developmental stages, the thinking of Liao Ping can be seen as an attempt to provide an answer to the challenge posed by the introduction of Western sciences, and especially of geography, in China. The dissertation shows how Western sciences fundamentally challenged the traditional Chinese world view and incited *jingxue* to reformulate Confucianism as a doctrine that has universal value.

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- **Research papers** must display the outcomes of unpublished original research. These papers should make a substantial contribution to knowledge and understanding in the various fields of Chinese studies. Research papers undergo a double-blind peer-review, i.e. authors and reviewers remain anonymous for the whole review process. Research papers should not exceed 10,000 words in length, including an abstract and keywords in English and Chinese.

- **Spotlights** examine current trends in the field on the one hand, and recollections of historical actors in European sinology on the other hand. By analysing recent developments not available or under-represented in the news, and by challenging older sinological traditions and figures, these research essays contribute to improving the understanding of the changes affecting the Chinese world. Members of the editorial team review contributions of up to 8,000 words through a rapid and open peer-review process.

- **Book reviews**: We are particularly interested in publishing reviews of books published in languages other than English, so as to increase the visibility of some of the less frequently quoted European languages in Chinese studies. Proposals from authors, editors, publishers and potential reviewers are welcome and will be considered and assessed by the editors provided the suggested monographs fit the highest standards of academic publishing. Review articles undergo an open peer-review, i.e. members of the editorial team review the contributions. They should be no more than 3,000 words in length.

- **Translation reviews**: Generally preference will be given to reviews of translations from classical or modern Chinese into a European language that is not English. By making this our general rule we want to emphasize that translation plays a significant role in the hermeneutic process of understanding China and Chinese culture as well as draw attention to the fact that Sinology and Chinese studies in Europe must be considered a multilayered process based on a diversity of languages and academic traditions and a long an historically complex intellectual relationship between Chinese and European worlds. Review articles undergo an open peer-review, i.e. members of the editorial team review the contributions. They should be no more than 6,000 words in length.

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