The Transformation of *Guai* Imagery in China (1949-78)

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Sijing Chen

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Faculty of Arts, Design and Media, Birmingham City University

Abstract

Guai are bound up with Chinese traditional culture, and have been presented via various cultural forms, such as literature, drama, New Year print and costume. Indeed, *guai* imagery has played a significant role in the definition and development of traditional Chinese visual culture. Throughout history, *guai* visual products reflected national values, aesthetic appreciation and philosophical aspirations.

Nevertheless, in twentieth-century China, political, social and religious transitions have changed the traditional role of *guai* imagery. Particularly, from the year 1949 when the People's Republic of China was founded to 1978 when economic reform and the Open Door Policy were introduced, *guai* visual production was under Mao's artistic control nationwide, and its political functions became dominant. Traditional *guai* imagery was politically filtered and modified to satisfy both Mao and the Communist Party's political aspirations and the public aesthetic.

This research examines the transformation of *guai* imagery formally and symbolically in the Chinese aesthetic and cultural context from 1949 to 1978, and builds knowledge to evaluate and understand the production, dissemination and perception of *guai* visual products in this period. It provides a contribution to the understanding of the inherent values of *guai* and how the reinterpretation of *guai* imagery that reflects political, social and cultural values in Chinese visual art.

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Contents

Introduction

This research focuses on the evolution of *guai* in Chinese visual art throughout the twentieth century, and particularly assesses the significant changes of *guai* imagery formally and symbolically from 1949 to 1978. The study initially started several years ago when my classmates and I intended to create an animated short film about Chinese *guai*. We used to discuss the relationship between *guai*, imagination and national identity. Indeed, the imagery of *guai* referring to hybrid 'beings' has been one of the most significant motifs in Chinese visual culture; China's religious beliefs and customs, literature and art, in particular, have unbreakable and constant ties with *guai*. Similarly, studying Chinese visual culture cannot avoid the presence and impact of the imagery of *guai*.[1] Chinese people have created various *guai* imageries for thousands of years. They have their own particular images and stories. *Guai* are hybrid in visual presentation. The creation of *guai* images is indeed from literature narratives, myth and imagination. Their presence provides an insight into the Chinese way of 'visual thinking', which aroused my great interests.

Guai imagery is a living tradition. *Guai* images and stories has been constantly renewed and built by individuals and as such, these products reflect Chinese people's thoughts and aesthetics. The evolution of *guai* imagery is associated with the development of human society in China. In twentieth-century China, most visual traditions were re-examined as the country went through tremendous social and political transitions. Many of them lost their original glory. Nevertheless, *guai* imagery survived the tremendous social, political and cultural changes and was widely employed by the Communist Party from 1949 to 1978, indicating its political, cultural and historical significance.

[1] Liu Zhongyu (1997), Zhongguo jingguai wenhua (*Chinese Monster Culture*). Shanghai: Shanghai People's Publishing House, p. 2.

Guai in Chinese means literally 'strange' or 'odd' and it is also used to describe monsters or demons. In the early Chinese classical literature, *guai* referred to unusual or strange phenomena and things.[2] As noted by Li Jianguo, in his research on *guai* in literature before the Tang Dynasty (618-907 CE), the meaning of *guai* had gradually changed since the Han Dynasty (202 BCE-220 CE). Li refers to plant, animal or inanimate *guai*, with visible and fixed images.[3] Japanese scholar Miyoko Nakano, who specialises in Chinese classical literature and Chinese mythology, also confirms that Chinese *guai* have specific images beyond realistic forms.[4] In this research, *guai* is used to define visual beings originally transformed from images of animals, plants or inorganic objects, rather than from human beings.

Historically, the term *guai* could be seen everywhere in Chinese culture and was integrated into people's daily lives. People projected their own feelings, images and experiences on to *guai* imageries. *Guai* took on various symbolic meanings, which are different from the concepts of 'evil', 'demon' or 'monster' usually understood as things to be feared in the West. Chinese *guai* formed a complex system, and built a fascinating imaginative world which involved both the disturbing kind of *guai* and the auspicious kind.[5]

Research to date has concentrated more on *guai* imagery in ancient China[6] rather than placed it in the modern context and discussed the interaction between its traditional significance and the modern. I argue that the latter research should not be

[2] For example, in the second-century Chinese dictionary Shuowen jiezi (*Origin of Chinese Characters*), *guai* means "strange" and also stands for "the strange and striking thing to the public" in Lun heng (*Discourse Balance*) written in 80 CE. See Qu Shen (1999), Shuowen jiezi (*Origin of Chinese Characters*), (Duan Yucai, Modern Chinese trans.). Taibei: Hongye Culture, p. 514; Wang Chong (2010), Xinbian lun heng: Di sanjuan (*New Edition of the Discourse Balance: Volume III*), (Xiao Dengfu, Modern Chinese trans.). Taibei: Taiwan Classics Publishing House, p. 573.

[3] Li Jianguo (2005), Tang qian zhiguai xiaoshuo shi (*History of Zhiguai Stories before Tang*). Tianjing: Tianjing Education Press, pp. 14-5.

[4] Nakano, Miyoko (1989), Zhongguo de yaoguai (*Chinese Monsters*), (He B., Chinese trans.). Zhengzhou: Yellow River Literature and Arts Press, p. 16.

[5] In this respect, it is difficult to come up with a single English term to define *guai* accurately. Therefore, I employ Chinese term *guai* as a particular terminology in this thesis. Some Chinese terms are conventionally associated with *guai*. A discussion aiming to elucidate the conceptual terms is provided in the Appendix, and I also clarify the difference between guai and other similar definitions.

[6] For example, Liu (1997), op. cit.; Huntington, Rania (2003), *Alien Kind: Foxes and Late Imperial Chinese Narrative.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

ignored, and the gap of the existing scholarship in the field stimulates me to carry out this research. Thus, this research focuses on *guai* imagery in the social, political and transitional context of twentieth-century China, especially from the standpoint of visual art values from 1949 to 1978. This research also reassesses the significance of *guai* imagery within the visual culture of China and it focuses more on the formal and meaningful identity of *guai* products in the Chinese aesthetic and cultural context, rather than on a mere description of graphic transformations.

Focusing on the visual culture of *guai* in China from 1949 to 1978, I investigated three research questions:

- How was *guai* visual culture influenced by, and transformed through the social, political, religious changes during the twentieth century in China?
- What was the role of the imagery of *guai* in visual practice from 1949 to 1978?
- And how was it re-introduced, disseminated and perceived in this period?

From 1949 to 1978, *guai* in visual art was under the control of Mao Zedong's political ideology and artistic thought, which can be considered as *guai* imagery in the era of Mao. The significance of *guai* imagery surviving from, or indeed being further developed through, strict political control is central to this research.

The establishment of the People's Republic in October 1949 indicates the beginning of a new era in the history of China. As major modern Chinese art historian Michael Sullivan observes, after 1949 full control of cultural life nationwide was taken by Mao's ideology.[7] G*uai* visual art began to take on new functions for the construction of 'new China' and the promotion of Mao's thought after 1949, which can be related to the beginning of the Mao era.

In terms of the end of the era of Mao, generally it is considered to be defined by the

[7] Sullivan, Michael (1996), *Art and Artists of Twentieth-century China*. Berkeley: University of California Press, p. 128.

breakup of the Cultural Revolution in 1976. However, scholar of Chinese Art History Kathleen M. Ryor considers that the whole of Chinese visual art still continued to carry Mao's political ideology and artistic thought until 1978, when economic reform and the Open Door Policy were introduced.[8] This viewpoint was supported by Lü Peng and Yi Dan, Chinese scholars of art history. They state that in the Third Plenary Session held on December 1978, the focus of the Communist Party shifted from class struggle to the economic construction of socialist modernisation, which indicated an end to the Cultural Revolution's art concentrated on class struggles.[9] From a religious perspective on *guai*, the end of Mao's era can be linked to the religious policies also put forward in the Third Plenary Session. Chinese religious studies scholar Zhang Zhuping, argues that since that session, policies of religious freedom have been implemented and institutionalised religions have been allowed to develop.[10] In 1982, *the Constitution of the People's Republic of China (PRC)*, reaffirmed that religious freedom is a fundamental right of citizens.[11] It seems that after late 1978 the visual culture of *guai* became part of an era of relative artistic democracy in religious, social and cultural senses. But the reality might not necessarily be the same.

The thesis mainly consists of five chapters, and starts with the introduction of the research background in Chapter One. In this chapter, I firstly discuss the research methods – literature review, image collection and image analysis, and interviews – used to conduct the research and provide a brief contextual introduction to traditional *guai* imageries in dynastic China and the transformation of *guai* which had started in the earlier twentieth century.

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[8] Ryor, Kathleen M. (2001), 'Transformations', in Wu Hung (ed.), *Chinese Art at the Crossroads: Between Past and Future, Between East and West*. Hong Kong: New Art Media, pp. 21-2.

[9] Lü Peng and Yi Dan (1992), Zhongguo xiandai yishushi (*Chinese Modern Art History*). Changsha: Hunan Arts Press, p. 20.

[10] Zhang Zhuping (2009), '*Dangdai Zhongguo minjian xinyang de yanbian yu yicun luoji* (Historical Evolution and Interdependent Logic in Contemporary Chinese Folk Beliefs)', *Journal of Shenzhen University (Humanities & Social Sciences)*, No. 6, p. 89.

[11] *The Constitution of the People's Republic of China* was adopted on 4 December, 1982 by the Fifth National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China at its fifth session. See the Fifth National People's Congress of PRC (1983), *The Constitution of the People's Republic of China*. Oxford; New York: Pergamon Press, p. 32.

Based on the transformations of *guai* I identified, I have divided *guai* culture from 1949 to 1978 into four periods, each the focus of a separated chapter. In Chapter Two, I introduce the theoretical framework of visual art in the beginning of Mao's era, the early period of the People's Republic of China from 1949 to 1957. The new political and social ideology preliminarily reformed the visual art of *guai* at a theoretical rather than practical level. Chapter Three discusses the transformation of traditional *guai* imagery in practice from 1958 to 1965, in order to enrich socialist political themes in pursuing Mao's thought particularly during the Great Leap Forward Movement. In Chapter Four the extreme politicisation of *guai* is analysed during the peak of the Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1969. This chapter focuses on the interpretation of *guai* imagery, and also examines the role of production, dissemination and perception in the processes of creation for *guai* visual products. In the final chapter, I discuss the decline in the mass production process of *guai* in the early 1970s and the application of negative *guai* in the two campaigns of Criticising Lin and Confucius (1974), and Smashing the Gang of Four (1976-1977). This chapter also provides a brief overview of the resulting legacies and situation of *guai* visual culture since 1978.

According to the definition of *guai*, various creatures can be included in the *guai* system. The alternating focus on positive and negative *guai* is a characteristic of Chinese culture; indeed both were presented in visual products of the period from 1949 to 1978. For example, in the late 1950s, it was popular for artists to employ positive *guai* in propaganda art; while, artists of this period also depicted some negative *guai* in cartoons to criticise others. In fact, the application of negative *guai* was far less common than the positive. Thus, in this research, I will discuss and analyse the application of transformation of the positive *guai* into visual artefacts in the late 1950s. I will focus on the evaluation of the main application of *guai* in different periods of Chinese art history, from 1949 to 1978.

During the period from the founding of PRC in 1949 to the Third Plenary Session in 1978, *guai*'s political significance built on, and gradually replaced its original religious

tradition, which is the central concern to assess the transformation of its meaning. This research focuses on how the imagery of *guai* was re-interpreted and developed in visual practice, aiming to understand and examine the artistic imagination, aesthetic appreciation and philosophical aspirations behind the changes and how they reflect the humane, political, social and cultural values during the tremendous changes of this period of China's history. It is important to evaluate the evolution of guai imagery in Mao's era to reconstruct how *guai* might reflect current social and cultural values in contemporary visual art.

Chapter One: Research Background

G*uai* imagery has played an important role in the development of visual art in China for thousands of years. In this chapter, I provide a brief contextual background on *guai* before 1949, in order to understand the research questions and their significance. I aim to provide a basic understanding of guai in the traditional context, and discuss how *guai* imagery transformed from tradtional to more modern in early twentieth-century China.

As part of hte research background, this chapter outlines the three methods used in conducting the research – literature review, image collection and image analysis, and in-depth interviews. Thus, I will describe my methods in Section One, and will also explain how and why they were employed. In order to research the transformation of *guai* in twentieth-century China, it was necessary to establish the traditions of *guai*. The second section will provide a brief introduction of *guai* in China's dynasties. In this section, I will discuss the most popular and typical *guai* – dragon, phoenix and *qilin*. In the final section, I will discuss the transformation of the religious role of *guai* in the first half of the twentieth century. Since the early twentieth century, the period of the late Qing Dynasty, social, political, cultural and economic changes have taken place. The influence of religion and folk beliefs has gradually weakened, especially among intellectuals and traditional literati. In 1919 the May the Fourth Movement, the intellectual movement established a mainstream intellectual discourse directed against tradition and pursued 'democracy and science' for China. This provides the context in which *guai* were depicted in the first half of the twentieth century.

1.1 Methodology

In this research, the methodology is qualitative in nature. To briefly summarise, the research began with a literature review and image collection. The interviews in China were conducted after the initial period of investigation. The analysis of the visual materials and evaluation of information obtained from the in-depth interviews was based on the investigation of the fieldwork.

Literature Review

Many research and studies have proposed to explain Chinese viusal *guai* culture. Although the literature covers wide various studies, this review focuses on transition of imagery of *guai* in Chinese visual culture. There has been research on Chinese dynastic *guai* culture or a single species of *guai* throughout history. For example, there is a part of literature on the writing of, what is termed the significance of fox *guai*. This kind of materials focuses on the fox's power that constantly tests socially and culturally constructed boundaries.[1]

Building on the efforts of these studies about traditional *guai* culture, two approaches define research of the imagery of *guai*. The first approach focuses on providing a comprehensive and complete encyclopaedia of Chinese traditional *guai*, which has the tendency to be formalist. Jan Jakob Maria de Groot, a leading Dutch historian of Chinese religion, employed a taxonomic classification of *guai* based on different naturalistic characteristics, in order to research a huge amount of *guai* in Chinese traditional culture.[2] Janpanese scholar Nakano also classified *guai* into different categories, based on the different formal characteristics.[3] The second approach

[1] See, Kang, Xiaofei (2006), *The Cult of the Fox: Power, Gender and Popular Religion in Late Imperial and Modern China.* New York: Columbia University Press; Huntington, Rania (2003), *Alien Kind: Foxes and Late Imperial Chinese Narrative.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
[2] De Groot, J. J. (1964), *The Religious System of China: Volume Ⅴ*. Taipei: Literature House.
[3] Nakano, Miyoko (1989), Zhongguo de yaoguai (*Chinese Monsters*), (He B., Chinese trans.). Zhengzhou: Yellow River literature and Arts Press.

considers the social, political and cultural context, with the aim of recording the transition of *guai* imagery, as conducted by Liu Zhongyu and Xue Jingyu. Liu employs an anthropological perspective to study the imagery of *guai* related to socio-cultural studies. He believes that the basis for understanding the idea of *guai* is to understand its imagery within the social, political and religious context.[4] From the literary point, Xue states, "A monster (*guai*) is always an image, historically and culturally constructed, and constantly renewed through writing and reading."[5] She assesses the evolution of representing *guai* in classical literature from Six Dynasties (222-589 CE) to Qing Dynasty (1644-1911 CE), and delineates three periods of transformation.

The first encylopaedic approach usually focuses more on the formal characteristics of *guai*, which necessitates lots of time and energy for collecting and sorting a variety of different characteristics of Chinese *guai*. With this approach, in a limited timescale, it is hard to understand precisely the imagery of *guai*, especially the meaningful power behind formal mutation. The latter contextual approach usually aims to explore the derivation and the evolution of *guai* imagery, rather than to compile an encyclopaedia of Chinese *guai*. This requires understanding of the background of society, politics and religion which often triggers the formal change of *guai* with a particular focus on a specific period. As outlined in the research questions, this research examines not only the formal dimension of *guai*, but also the transformation of the meanings behind *guai* images in the political, social and cultural context of China in a particular period. After comparing the two approaches, I have employed the latter one considered more appropriate to conduct the study of *guai* visual culture in this research, and to explore the complex meanings of images of *guai* within a particular period from 1949 to 1978.

However, very few studies have been done to assess *guai* in the context of social, cultural and political transformations in twentieth-century China. Thus, this research

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[4] Liu Zhongyu (1997), Zhongguo jingguai wenhua (*Chinese Monster Culture*). Shanghai: Shanghai People's Publishing House, pp. 56-80.
[5] Xue Jingyu (2012), *The Magic Mirror: Representation of Monster in Chinese Classic Tales,* Ph.D. thesis, University of Southern California, p. 9.

mainly reviews opinion pieces, critical assessments, policy documents and broader published academic works relevant to *guai* visual culture in the social, cultural and political context of the twentieth-century China. First-hand and secondary materials were critically analysed to gain further information about *guai* imagery, and construct and support my arguments throughout the thesis. For example, I reviewed policies, newspaper articles, documents and academic papers associated with religion, art and culture in the early twentieth century to analyse the transformation of religious significance of *guai* in this period.

This literature search was conducted in four steps. Firstly some key words were established, and then secondly, relevant bibliographic references were extracted. For the final two steps, the researcher searched and organised the references that were relevant to the search aims, and systematically sorted them into different sets for in-depth analysis. Literature Review was ongoing throughout the whole research.

Image Collection and Visual Analysis

It is essential to collect and analyse visual materials used for research and presentation. The research focuses on the transformations of *guai* imagery in China since 1949. A large variety of visual materials needed to be collected efficiently and systematically for comparison, analysis and evaluation. The image collection was conducted from very beginning in the study.

In this research, the primary resource was gathered in mass through a variety of media popular at the time, such as: posters, including propaganda posters, cartoon posters, and big character posters; *nianhua* (New Year prints); *lianhuanhua* (illustrated story books); newspapers. The main primary sources are private collections and institutions. Poster collection mainly comes from Yang Peiming, who collected nearly 6,000 posters from the early 1920s to the 1980s, and who founded a private museum of posters in Shanghai. In the Universities Service Centre for China

Studies in Hong Kong, I collected more than 300 cartoons with *guai* images, which were published through newspapers in the early Cultural Revolution. Yang Liren who owns a century-old store of *nianhua* production and the Yangliuqing New Year Print Museum, both in Tianjin, provided me with a large number of visual materials of traditional New Year prints and new New Year prints. Picture publications, provided by libraries in China and the UK, were employed as necessary and essential secondary sources of visual materials. Some images are difficult to collect as first-hand materials because of the particularity of the media. For example, wall paintings with *guai* in Great Leap Forward Movement were depicted on walls, thus they could not be collected as first-hand materials. Photos and books that published wall paintings in that period became the critical sources to provide some materials. The National Library of China provided more than 200 picture books on posters, New Year prints and wall paintings published from 1950 to 1990. Images were identified and selected, like literature sources, and their quality, reliability and appropriateness were considered. Those images have already appeared in the public domain and were safe to be researched without any ethical implications. I have not actually collected the physical items, although I had access to them, instead relevant images were identified and copies taken for research purposes.

The image collection was conducted in three steps. Firstly, based on the research questions, identification of the scope of the visual sources was established, then primary and secondary visual sources relevant to images of *guai* throughout the twentieth century were gathered. Secondly, the images were organised and details recorded of their published time, place, art form, media, artist, theme and specific imagery of *guai* depicted. Finally, the images were systematically classified into different sets, then the visual materials were compared and preliminarily analysed, in order to select appropriate images for in-depth analysis.

According to the transformation of *guai*'s political roles, images were selected and sorted by different political movements, including the Great Leap Forward Movement,

the early period of the Cultural Revolution, the Criticising Lin and Confucius Campaign and Smashing the Gang of Four campaign. Within the same movement period, images were categorised according to the types of *guai* imageries. In the collection of *guai* images appeared during the Great Leap Forward Movement, I divided them into three categories of the *guai* imageries inheriting the traditional meanings and forms, the *guai* with new interpretations symbolically and formally while continuing the positive significance, and the images that completely transformed the traditional status of *guai*. In the set of the early Cultural Revolution, *guai* images were divided into positive 'red' *guai* and negative 'black' *guai*. In the both sets of the Criticising Lin and Confucius Campaign and Smashing the Gang of Four campaign, I sorted images into two categories – the images inheriting the types of *guai* already appeared in the early Cultural Revolution, and new *guai* images created to meet the demands of the campaigns.

The visual analysis is an important method to understand and evaluate the imagery of *guai* by supporting the whole research. It consists of a detailed content analysis[6] of *guai* imagery interpreted using an iconographic approach, in which formal analysis of style, content and media is contextualised and situated in relation to the socio-political frameworks of China in the period. The framework for visual analysis is thus based on the iconographic approach, combined with an interdisciplinary approach informed by cultural studies. According to Anne D'Alleva, a scholar of art history, the iconographic approach focuses on representational and symbolic meanings in particular motifs and images, regarding the social, cultural, religious, political and aesthetic values.[7] The iconographic approach was defined into three levels: pre-iconographic, iconographic and iconological analyses.[8] The first pre-iconographical stage focused on the basic formal analysis of the *guai* imagery. Then, according to the particular characteristics of

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[6] Bell, Phillip (2001), 'Content Analysis of Visual Images', in Theo Van Leeuwen and Carey Jewitt (eds.), *The Handbook of Visual Analysis*. London: Sage, pp. 10-34.
[7] D'Alleva, Anne (2005), *Methods & Theories of Art History*. London: Laurence King Publishing, pp. 19-20.
[8] Rose, Gillian (2001), *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Materials*. London; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, p. 144.

a *guai* image presented in a visual product, a specific type could be identified, for example, a dragon or a snake *guai*. Secondly, in the stage of iconographic analysis, I traced back to the traditional subject matter of each specific type of *guai*, and investigated its traditional symbolic meanings and artistic forms. Finally, I undertook an iconological approach to analyse the formal and meaning transformations of *guai* imagery in the twentieth century, especially from 1949 to 1978. An analysis of the symbolic meanings of the *guai* employed in the twentieth century, combined with the political and social background, was undertaken. I then conducted a comparison between its traditional form and meaning and the new interpretation, and analysed the reasons for the changes. The study could trace back to the traditional *guai*, and draw the trajectory of *guai* imagery in the twentieth century through this approach. In addition, visual culture study in this research focuses on *guai* visual productions and the culture produced by artists and audiences, and relations between these groups. It was undertaken to understand the production, dissemination and perception in the process of creation of *guai* visual products.

In-depth Interviews

In this research, semi-structured interviews were undertaken to obtain data that refers to *guai* visual culture in China since 1949, through the standpoints of practitioners and scholars. Through a generative dialogue process, I had an insight into interviewees' perspectives and experiences. A set of questions designed in the semi-structured interviews allowed me to guide and develop the interviews according to the aims of this research, and to gain the information that is specific, targeted and manageable for analysis. This method is flexible allowing me to supplement questions for in-depth discussion, or to provide new questions on a new issue relevant to my research raised during the interview.

I conducted interviews with scholars, artists and propagandists who worked on *guai* visual culture in the second half of twentieth-century China, and people experienced

with *guai* visual products. There were 20 interviewees participating in the research (please see List of Selected Interviewees). According to different aims, the participants of interviews are divided into three groups.

In the first group, I interviewed a number of scholars who focus on aesthetic philosophy and historical theory of Chinese art, studies of propaganda posters, New Year prints and cartoons, sociological studies, and Chinese folk beliefs and religious traditions. The interviews focused on questions about the influences of social, political and religious transition on Chinese *guai* visual art since 1949, and their individual perception and understanding of the different meanings of *guai* in various contexts. For example, Zhu Haichen, associate professor from the China Academy of Fine Arts focuses on the study of Chinese posters in the twentieth century. He has interviewed artists participating in poster production in the 1950s and 1960s. At that time, these artists were already 30 to 40 years old, or more. The famous artist Ha Qiongwen (1925-2012), at the age of 33, created the *guai* work of *Fighting for Producing More and Better Steel for 1959!* in 1958. Given the passage of time, it is almost impossible for such artists to be interviewed now. Zhu Haichen, as a researcher who studies posters and who has interviewed those artists, provided me with rich information about the Great Leap Forward posters with *guai* images and their creators. It is worth noting that Jin Dalu, as a sociologist, provided significant opinions about the publication of newspapers and cartoons as the only art form to depict negative *guai* visibly during the early Cultural Revolution.

Among the second group of interviewees were surviving artists and propagandists who worked in relation to *guai* in the latter half of twentieth-century China. The interview questions were mainly designed to consider the issue: how the *guai* imagery was visualised by the individual in response to the various contexts in the periods '1949-1978'. I interviewed members from two art propaganda groups, Red Brush in Shanghai Fudan University, and Red Brush in Shanghai Theatre Academy. Both groups actively participated in *guai* production in the early Cultural Revolution. The

former is an amateur group, while the latter is a group with professional art training. They offered different production experiences from amateur and professional standpoints. During that period, as audiences they also provided experiences in how they read *guai* works and then reintegrated into their own works.

Finally, a number of scholars and artists as audiences who experienced with the propaganda products of *guai*, participated in the interviews. The interviewees were born in the 1950s, and have received and read the *guai* visual products from the late 1950s to 1980s. Some of them used to be a part of the dissemination of *guai* visual products. They provided individual experiences disseminating and reading *guai* imagery. Meanwhile, they also provided the political and social background.

Some discussions were further developed by follow-up interviews. Before the interviews took place, full information on the research, its aims and purposes, was provided to interviewees, and they were invited to complete consent forms before participating in the research. After the interviews, the transcripts were sent to them for approval. In order to fully protect the participants and the researcher, in case of controversial materials and discussions raised, interviewees remained anonymous, unless additional agreement was obtained.

1. 2 The Visual Culture of *Guai* in China's Dynasties

Since the fourth century BCE, from the earliest existence of the compilation of early Chinese myth and geography, Shanhai jing (*The Classic of Mountains and Seas*)[9], *guai* culture has permeated throughout traditional Chinese visual culture and has

[9] Shang hai jing (*The Classic of Mountains and Seas*) is a record of ancient Chinese mythology, geography, plants, animals, minerals, witchcraft, religion, medicine and folklore. It records up to 195 different *guai*. See Strassberg, Richard E. (2003), *A Chinese Bestiary: Strange Creatures from the Guideways Through Mountains and Seas*. Berkeley: University of California Press; Lewis, Mark Edward (2006), *The Flood Myths of Early China*. Albany: State University of New York Press, pp. 64-72.

become an accepted part of people's lives. *Guai* imagery has its own history and its evolution and mechanism is linked to, and has exchanged with, many other cultures. Although this research focuses on *guai* imagery of twentieth century, here, it will provide a brief introduction of traditional *guai* in dynastic China. It does not mean that it will offer a comprehensive background of *guai*, instead, it will illustrate traditional *guai* through some examples, including imperial *guai*, *guai* in folk beliefs, *guai* from literature, disturbing *guai* and the most popular *guai*.

Dynastic China attached great political significance to *guai* culture. Some particular symbols of *guai* represented imperial power and religious theocracy, which were used only in special decorations and costumes by imperial families and officials. Through the monopoly of particular motifs and media, the ruling classes employed *guai* motifs in various forms, to represent their military power and wealth. The rulers of the Shang (1600-1046 BCE) and Zhou (1046-771 BCE) dynasties used *taotie* [饕餮] motifs to represent mysterious majesty, expressing their possession of political power, status and wealth.[10] The motif is usually depicted as a zoomorphic mask with symmetrical raised eyes, sharp teeth and horns (Figure 1.1).

In folk society, *guai* visual culture permeated people's life. Combined with Chinese popular beliefs, and various popular expansions and reinterpretations of traditional myths and legends, *guai* form a large and complex species. A variety of colourful, fantastic, mysterious, even monstrous images of *guai* are the products from people's cognition of the nature of life. Whilst some images of *guai* carry people's passion, hope, awe and desire for life, Chinese people also attach importance to death. *Guai* employed in burial art express fear and respect for death. A variety of fierce mythological *guai*, as tomb guardians, were employed in the burial system, such as *zhenmu shou* [镇墓兽] characterised by horns, hooves and bulging eyes, as seen

[10] See Li Song (2011), *Chinese Bronze Ware*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 95-7; Chang Kwang-chih (1983), Zhongguo qingtong shidai (*Chinese Bronze Age*). Taibei: Linking Publishing Company, p. 340; Li Zehou (1994), *The Path of Beauty: A Study of Chinese Aesthetics*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 30-1.

here (Fig 1.2), the squatting beasts that guarded tombs and were believed to hunt evil spirits.[11] One of the most important conjectures of death in China is *diyu*, generally known as Hell, the realm of judgement after death. Ox-head [牛头] and horse-face [马面] are two wardens of *guai* in Hell and dead souls may encounter them firstly upon entering the underworld.[12] For example in this drawing (Figure 1.3) the shackled dead souls are ushered through Hell by muscular figures of an ox-head and horse-face. The *guai* ox-head will be reintroduced in Chapter Four.

Unexplained paranormal phenomena, stretched out from *guai*, have greatly influenced and inspired materials and literature. A variety of outstanding literary works have been adapted and republished in various visual forms, such as illustrations and shadow plays. This not only turned *guai* into popular literary and artistic characters, to entertain children and adults alike, but also strengthened some *guai*'s position as the object of religious worship among the people. In the communion of religion, myth, art and literature, dynastic China generated extremely rich and fantastic imageries of *guai*. Sun Wukong[13] known as the Monkey King is one of the most longstanding and popular characters in Chinese literature. It is usually portrayed as a half-monkey and half-human *guai*, here shown fighting Zhu Bajie[14] with a pig head and a human body (Figure 1.4). For centuries, his imagery and stories have continued to be reinterpreted and recreated in various forms, proving the Monkey King as an irreplaceable and attractive *guai.* Later in the research, I will later show how the Monkey King *guai* was adopted and adapted during the period in question.

In dynastic China a large number of *guai* were regarded as alien, different from

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[11] See Yang Hong (2006), 'The Secular Tradition: Burial Art and Spirit Paths', in Angela Falco Howard, Li Song, Wu Hung and Yang Hong (eds.), *Chinese Sculpture*. New Haven: Yale University Press, pp. 127-8; Zhang Cheng (2014), '*Zhongguo gudai muzang chutu de zangmu shenxiang* (Chinese Ancient Burial Tomb Guardians)', *Archaeology and Cultural Relics*, No. 1, pp. 35-44.

[12] Eberhard, Wolfram (1967), *Guilt and Sin in Traditional China*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 46-55.

[13] As a main character in the Chinese classical novel *Journey to the West*, Monkey King is a stone monkey with supernatural powers. Because of havoc in Heaven, Monkey King was detained by the Buddha under the Wuzhi Mountain. Five hundred years later, he was rescued by the monk Xuanzang, and then escorts Xuanzang to India to obtain Buddhist scriptures.

[14] Zhu Bajie is another character in *Journey to the West*. After defeated by Monkey King, it also accompanies Xuanzang to retrieve Buddhist scriptures.

human. In the legend and folk tales, they endanger human life and invade human living space. Ge Hong (283-343 CE) denoted them as demonic forces, “They have no intention of benefiting mortals, but are fully capable of inflicting harm.”[15] In *Journey to the West*, a giant snake *guai* with a corner, covered with scales and tusks, engulfs humans and livestock, as can be seen fighting with the Monkey King (Figure 1.5).[16] Those ferocious *guai*, regarded as representatives of the ugly and evil, were feared and abominated by humans. They were a threat to the whole human world and were not influenced or restricted by social, cultural, political, religious and moral concepts. As De Groot points out, “They are all detrimental to the good of the world, destroy the prosperity and peace which are the highest good of man, and as a consequence, all good, beneficial government; they may thus endanger the world and the Throne.”[17] Here, that refers only to the disturbing kind of *guai*, not the auspicious. Some *guai* did not take the initiative to harm humans or destroy the rules of human society, but their appearance indicated the occurrence of disasters. For example, in *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*, a *guai* named *bibi* [獙獙] is characterised by as a fox with a pair of wings (Figure 1.6) and makes a sound like a goose; its appearance would bring a severe drought.[18] These disturbing *guai* were considered as saboteurs of the rules of human world and the balance of the nature, bringing disasters to the country and the people, therefore, they would have to be swept away. They were often not accepted and appreciated by the public and were sometimes even regarded as taboo. Thus, their visual products were far less popular than auspicious *guai*’s.

Because of the involvement of the media, the traditional *guai* culture presented diverse cultural forms. It covered fields of literature, drama, music, painting, illustration, costume, furniture, house ware, sculpture and architecture. The visual arts derived

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[15] Ge Hong (1980), Baopuzi neipian jiaoshi (*Explanation of Inner Chapters of the Master Who Embraces Simplicity*). Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, p. 76. English translation cited in von Glahn, Richard (2004), *The Sinister Way: The Divine and the Demonic in Chinese Religious Culture*. London: University of California Press, p. 88.

[16] Wu Cheng’en (1999), *Journey to the West*. Beijing: China society Publishing House, pp. 278-81.

[17] De Groot, J. J. (1964), *The Religious System of China: Volume Ⅳ*. Taipei: Literature House, p. 467.

[18] Yuan Ke (1985), Shan hai jing xiaozhu (*Explanatory Notes of the Classic of Mountains and Seas*). Shanghai: Shanghai Classics Publishing House, p. 98.

from *guai* culture have played an important role in the development of traditional Chinese visual art. The most popular mythological *guai* motifs in production, reproduction and dissemination were the dragon, phoenix and *qilin* [麒麟] often regarded as the auspicious. Through thousands of years of transition, many *guai* disappeared, but three kinds survived the historical turbulence and continued to modern times, expressing their popularity and sustainability. Therefore, although a variety of *guai* existed in dynastic China, this section focuses more closely on the three kinds of most popular *guai*, which were frequently employed in traditional visual arts, and also reinterpreted in mass movements in the twentieth century. Each is described briefly below.

In comparison with the other two *guai*, the dragon played a more significant role in traditional Chinese culture and was employed more frequently in visual products throughout the twentieth century. This legendary creature is one of China's oldest mythological *guai* and is the most significant *guai* in Chinese mythology and folklore. The imagery of the dragon is most commonly portrayed as a snake with four legs, combining with animal forms such as turtle, shrimp, fish, deer, tiger, cattle and elephant, as shown in Figure 1.7. Chinese dragons traditionally symbolise the auspicious, legitimacy, prosperity and strength, as well as good luck. For thousands of years, their symbolic meanings have been associated with imperial power, religion, folklore and nation.

In terms of imperial symbols, the dragon was usually used to identify the supreme status and powers of the emperors in dynastic China. Since Han Dynasty, the dragon has drawn attention from rulers of a country. In the historical text Shiji (*The Records of the Grand Historian*), finished around 109 BCE, Liu Bang (256-195 BCE), the founder and first emperor of the Han Dynasty, came from the peasant class. He was not descended from a noble family, but instead, according to the records, was the

offspring of a dragon and a mortal woman.[19] His strange appearance, was also labelled the explanation of "*longyan* (the appearance of a dragon)"[20]. Nakano considers that the changing relationship between the dragon and the emperor was to fit into the political and social orders for a new regime.[21] This view is supported by Guo, he states that Liu and his close associates created this mythical story, in order to raise his identity and establish authority.[22] Despite his humble background, as a son of a dragon, Liu would not be undervalued, instead people would respect and fear him as a dragon. Liu Bang as the ruler of the Han Dynasty exploited the dragon's sanctity, which made the dragon gradually combine to become the symbol of imperial power and religious theocracy.

According to the history records of Shang shu (*Classic of History*) written during the period of the Warring States (475-221 BCE), the pattern of the dragon was added to the cloth of Shun, a legendary emperor.[23] The official costume worn by the emperor, the Son of Heaven, was esteemed as a strict system and passed from generation to generation, until the end of the Qing Dynasty (1636-1911 CE). Yuan Shikai (1859-1916) attempted to be an emperor after the founding of the republic, and also restored the use of this official costume to demonstrate his identity as a new emperor for China.[24]

Following the establishment of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644 CE), were 20 years of garment reform and, based on the customs of former dynasties and habits of the Han nationality, the emperor's robe made appropriate adjustments. As a result, patterns, styles and colours were specifically defined and this became known as the "dragon

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[19] Sima Qian (2008), Shi ji (*The Records of the Grand Historian*). Changchun: Jilin People's Publishing House, p.301.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Nakano, op. cit., pp. 55-9.
[22] Guo Yuanlin (2005), '*Shi ji zhong de minjian xinyang yu hanchu sixiang* (The Folk Beliefs and Ideologies of Early Han Dynasty in the Records of the Grand Historian) ', *Chinese Folk Culture Studies*, December, pp. 194-201.
[23] Unknown (2010), Shang Shu (*Classic of History*), (Qiang Zongrong and Jiang Hao, Modern Chinese trans.). Taibei: Taiwan Shufang Press, p. 63.
[24] Wang Yarong (1987), *Chinese Folk Embroidery*. London: Thames and Hudson, p. 10.

robe".[25] By following the provisions of the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368 CE)[26], the dragon with five claws (Figure 1.8) became the emblem of an emperor, according to the order of the first Ming Emperor.[27] Meanwhile, different ranks of the upper classes were prescribed to wear ceremonial dresses decorated with different numbers of claws of the dragon.[28] The dragon robe was a significant vehicle for declaring dynastic authority. The dragon with five and four claws, combined with particular colours, was only employed by the imperial family. The combined motif of five-clawed dragons in gold colour and other imperial patterns was an exclusive emblem, for use only by the emperor. It appeared on his robe, on the imperial throne (regarded as the 'dragon throne'), the imperial seals and the emperor's banner. Indeed, dragons decorated planks, windows, pillars, stairs, beams and eaves in imperial buildings, such as at the Forbidden City in Beijing. It was a capital felony for others to privately produce or use garments and utensils with that particular dragon motif.

The particular motif of the dragon was used to visualise imperial power claiming rulership over the country. In the painting *A Portrait of the Ming Hongzhi Emperor* (Figure 1.9), dragons in different colours and sizes, accompanied with other imperial symbols, appear on the robe, throne, carpet and screen. The figure of the emperor is surrounded by a sea of dragon patterns and seems to blend with the dragon motif, presenting a high degree of symbolic significance.

The dragons, as the most important of all the mythical *guai*, were believed to be generally well-disposed and permeated the people's life in folk society. Dragons feature heavily in Chinese folklore, and are totally unlike the evil fire-breathing

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[25] Zhou Xun and Gao Chunming (1984), Zhongguo fushi wuqiannian (*5000 Years of Chinese Costumes*). Hong Kong: Commercial Press, pp. 146-8.

[26] The record in the historical text Yuan shi (*History of Yuan Dynasty*) completed in 1370 clearly shows, "prohibiting (commoners) from wearing any cloth decorated with *qilin*, phoenix, white rabbit, *lingzhi* (ganoderma), dragons with five claws and two horns, eight dragons, nine dragons, *wanshou* (living ten thousand years), *fushou* (fortune and longevity) and golden yellow." Cited in Song Lian (2004), Yuan shi: Di'erjuan (*History of Yuan Dynasty: Volume Ⅱ*). Shanghai: Chinese Dictionary Publishing House, p. 698.

[27] Zhou and Gao, op. cit., p. 148.

[28] The four-clawed dragon was usually used by other members of imperial family and several officials in high ranks, and the three-clawed dragon was for low-ranking officials and the public. Cited in Eberhard, Wolfram (1986), *A Dictionary of Chinese Symbols: Hidden Symbols in Chinese Life and Thought.* London; New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, p. 85.

creations of European myth. In China, dragons usually refer to positive symbolic meanings. The motif dragon carried people's passion, hope, awe and desire for life. Dragons were regarded as magnificent beings with supernatural powers.

Even in contemporary times, men still perform a dragon dance at Chinese New Year and other important festivals and ceremonies, in order to bring good luck. On the fifth day of the fifth lunar month, people usually hold dragon boat races to celebrate the Dragon Boat Festival. Dragon boats are long and narrow, like dragon bodies, and the boat prows are usually decorated with dragon heads (Figure 1.10). The Dragon Boat Festival was associated with the ancient rituals of sacrifice to the Dragon King.[29] In the Chinese calendar the dragon is one of twelve Chinese zodiac signs used to designate years.[30] The Azure Dragon as one of the four celestial guardians was associated with the Five Elements.[31]

The Chinese dragon is inextricably bound up with water and is the lord of all the waters including seas, rivers, lakes, and rain. Dragon kings were believed to control rainfall and are often depicted among the rain clouds in a year of drought; according to ancient records, people would invoke these dragon kings to revive the earth with rain.[32] In legends, dragon kings were stationed in different bodies of water such as wells, springs, streams, lakes and rivers, and four sea dragon kings were believed to be the rulers of the four seas.[33] In dynastic times, shrines and temples were built, usually in China's coastal and arid areas, to worship the dragon kings.[34] During a time of drought or flooding, the offering of sacrifices and the performance of other rituals

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[29] See Kingsley, Rebecca (1998), *Chinese Gods and Myths*. Edison, N.J.: Chartwell Books, p. 61; Perkins, Dorothy (2013), *Encyclopedia of China: History and Culture*. Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, p. 133.
[30] White, Suzanne (1998), *Chinese Astrology: Plain and Simple*. Boston: Charles E. Tuttle, pp. 133-59.
[31] Tom, K. S. (1989), *Echoes from Old China: Life, Legends, and Lore of the Middle Kingdom*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, p. 55.
[32] Jing Anning enumerates several ancient inscriptions and historical texts that people conducted rituals to pray for the Dragon King to bring rains. See Jing Anning (2002), *The Water God's Temple of the Guangsheng Monastery: Cosmic Function of Art, Ritual and Theater*. Leiden: Brill, pp. 70-3.
[33] Overmyer, Daniel L. (2009), *Local Religion in North China in the Twentieth Century: The Structure and Organization of Community Rituals and Beliefs*. Leiden: Brill, pp. 20-1.
[34] Little, Stephen and Eichaman, Shawn (2000), *Taoism and the Arts of China*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 68-70.

were considered as effective measures to propitiate dragon kings.

The dragon achieved associated sentiments in many contexts, so that it became powerful, as such, it affected society and state organisation effectively and profoundly. During the Qing Dynasty, the dragon motif became a national symbol in official use, which was depicted on the national flag (Figure 1.11).[35]

Depicted together with a dragon, the phoenix was often employed to identify the empress. *Fenghuang* [凤凰], generally known as the phoenix, is a kind of mythological *guai* that rules over all other birds. According to the commentary of Guo Pu (276-324 CE) in the third-century text of Er ya, the phoenix is featured with a rooster head, a swallow jaw, a snake neck, a turtle back, a fishtail, five coloured feathers and six feet tall.[36] But more often, it was depicted visually as a hybrid-being combined with characteristics of several birds, including pheasants, peacocks, mandarin ducks and swallows, as can be seen in Figure 1.12.

Feng [凤] originally referred to the males and *huang* [凰] for the females.[37] During the Shang and Zhou Dynasties (166-256 BCE), the phoenix motifs had already appeared and been used on decorated bronze wares.[38] Since then, *feng* and *huang* were depicted as separate and varied motifs. Welch finds that, interpretation of phoenixes had the differentiation between genders until the Ming Dynasty.[39] Over the following centuries, the phoenix was used to stand for the 'female' —*yin* [阴] (negative) paired with the dragon, representative of the 'male' —yang [阳] (positive). The dragon referred to the emperor, and spontaneously the phoenix came to be the symbol of the empress. Like the dragon, the phoenix motif became the emblem of females from the

[35] Sleeboom-Faulkner, Margaret (2004), *Academic Nations in China and Japan Framed in Concepts of Nature, Culture and the Universal*. London; New York: Routledge Curzon, pp. 17-29.
[36] Guo Pu (the third century CE to the fourth century CE), Er ya zhushu (*Explanatory Notes of Er ya*). Cited in Shi Yue (1986), '*Woguo guji zhong de fenghuang* (Phoenix in Ancient Books of Our Country)', *Journal of Ancient Books Collation and Studies*, No. 4, p. 18.
[37] Suhr, Elmer G. (1976), 'The Phoenix', *Folklore*, Vol. 87, No. 1, p. 30.
[38] Duan Yong (2012), *Study of Decorations on Ancient Chinese Bronze Wares*. Shanghai: Shanghai Classics Publishing House, pp. 130-3.
[39] Welch, Patricia Bjaaland (2008), *Chinese Art: A Guide to Motifs and Visual Imagery*. North Clarendon, VT: Tuttle Pub., p. 153.

imperial family, decorating their clothes, shoes, accessories and utensils. Although ceremonial dresses and crowns of empresses also employed the dragon motif, the phoenix was more commonly used. In the Ming Dynasty, the empress's coronet was called the phoenix coronet which was made of metal meshes, decorated with the phoenix motif and jewelled tassels (Figure 1.13).[40] According to the observations of Zhou Xun and Gao Chunming, since the Qin (221-207 BCE) and Han dynasties, it has been an official accessory for the grandma-empress, the empress dowager and the empress.[41] Like the dragon robe, its usage was specified by regulations, which were sacred and inviolable.

Wu Yerong considers that the symbolic meaning of the dragon and phoenix pair was extended to represent marriage, which, since the Qing Dynasty, was accepted by the public.[42] The dragon and the phoenix were commonly depicted to symbolise a harmonious and happy relationship between husband and wife in marriage, expressing *yin* and *yang* metaphor. For example, in the illustration (Figure 1.14) the two *guai* circle each other in a direct reference to the *yin-yang* symbol. Therefore, the combination of the dragon and the phoenix was popularly used to refer to the groom and the bride respectively in a wedding. 'Dragon-phoenix papers', 'dragon-phoenix cakes' and other utensils decorated with dragon and phoenix motifs were often found in weddings.[43] Nowadays, this combination is still used in Chinese weddings and is regarded as the perfect representative of a happy marriage.

The appearance of the phoenix was also said to infer the prosperity of the country.[44] Because of this, phoenix represented good fortune or the bringing of good luck. The combination of the phoenix and sun was called *danfeng chaoyang* (the scarlet

[40] Yang Shaorong (2004), *Traditional Chinese Clothing: Costumes, Adornments & Culture*. San Francisco: Long River Press, p. 9.
[41] Zhou and Gao, op. cit., p. 149.
[42] Wu Yerong (2009), '*Fenghuang zai chuantong hunyin qing'ai de yiyun jiedu* (Interpretation of Meanings of Phoenix in Traditional Marriage and Love)', *Jianghan Tribune*, No. 11, p. 79.
[43] Chavannes, Édouard (1973), *The Five Happinesses: Symbolism in Chinese Popular Art*. New York: Weatherhill, p. 100.
[44] Williams, Charles Alfred Speed (1976), *Outlines of Chinese Symbolism and Art Motives: An Alphabetical Compendium of Antique Legends and Beliefs, as Reflected in the Manners and Customs of the Chinese*. New York: Dover Publications, p. 325.

phoenix towards the sun) which could be interpreted as two symbolic meanings. Firstly, the phoenix was considered as an auspicious bird, combined with the sun which represented light. Thus, the pattern of *danfeng chaoyang* implied perfection, happiness, propitiousness and bright future.[45] Secondly, the phoenix was used to refer to excellent talent. As shown in Figure 1.15, facing the sun, the phoenix's feathers appear dazzling in the sun's rays and its beauty is visible. Here the pattern represented that the person had a good opportunity to show his talent, and would have a bright and prosperous future.[46] The phoenix was also often depicted with peonies. Together, the peony, 'the king of the flowers', symbolising wealth and honour, and the phoenix, which enjoyed the high rank in birds, represented prosperity and righteousness. *Feng chun mudan* (a phoenix crossing flower shrubs) symbolised happiness and joy (Figure 1.16).[47]

The *qilin* [麒麟] is another popular mythical *guai* in China. In various ancient records and literary works, the descriptions of the *qilin's* appearance were slightly different. Most commonly it was depicted as a hybrid creature with a deer's body, a dragon's head, a cow's tail with long hairs, fish scales, hooves and a horn (Figure 1.17). It is generally considered as a benevolent and auspicious creature. In the Shijing (*Classic of Poetry*) finished in the seventh century BCE, a poem Lin zhi zhi (*Qinlin's Toes*) highly praises its nobility and charity.[48] It occupied an important position in Confucianism, representing the Confucian idea of benevolence, often associated with Confucius.[49] In the Confucian tradition, the *qilin* was one of the Four Divine Animals, along with the dragon, phoenix and turtle.[50] Its appearance was said to indicate the presence of an outstanding and wise emperor, and as a result, the country flourished

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[45] Qu Ming'an and Ju Yueshi (2011), Zhongguo xiangzheng wenhua (*Chinese Symbolic Culture*). Shanghai: Shanghai People's Publishing House, p. 711.
[46] Pang Jin (2007), Zhongguo feng wenhua (*Chinese Phoenix Culture*). Chongqing: Chongqing Publishing House, p. 275.
[47] Duan Jianhua (1999), Zhongguo jixiang zhuangshi sheji (*Chinese Auspicious Decoration Design*). Beijing: China Light Industry Press, p. 45.
[48] Huang Zhongshen (2002), Shijing xuanzhu (*Selected Works of Classic of Poetry*). Taibei: Wu-Nan Book Inc., p. 64.
[49] Zhang Daoyi (2008), Qilin songzi kaojiu (*Study and Investigation on* Qilin *Presenting Sons*). Jinan: Shangdong Fine Art Publishing House, pp. 3-11.
[50] Ball, Katherine M. (2004), *Animal Motifs in Asian Art: An Illustrated Guide to Their Meanings and Aesthetics*. Mineola, N.Y.: Dover Publications, p. 33.

and people lived in peace.[51] It was an auspicious and prosperous omen, thus, the *qilin* motif was sometimes employed to praise the emperor.

Qilin [麒麟] is a *guai* usually associated with fertility. In a painting (Figure 1.18), a young man dressed in ancient robe rides on a *qilin* over the clouds, which is called *qilin song zi* [麒麟送子] (*qilin* presenting sons). The youth holds a lotus in his right hand and a *sheng* in the other hand. The lotus in Chinese pronounces *lian* [连], with the meaning of 'successive'.[52] *Sheng* [笙] is a Chinese reed pipe wind instrument, sharing the same pronunciation with *sheng* [生] (give birth). *Zi* [子] literally means child or son. Over thousands of years, to continue the family bloodline is still one of the most important things in Chinese people's lives. To a large extent, the purpose of marriage in dynastic China was considered to be the means by which to perpetuate families.[53] In tradition, the birth of a son usually brought greater joy than the arrival of a daughter. Commonly sons were the one who could inherit the family name, while daughters adopted their husbands' surname after marriage. Generally only sons could enter the family ancestral hall and hold ancestral rites, which were considered to be a continuation of family incense.[54] Thus, although these symbols associated with children did not explicitly indicate gender, they usually suggested a son. Thus, together *qilin song zi* infers the wish that people may continue to sire sons one after the other. *Qilin song zi* was also employed with other auspicious symbols, such as peonies, to supplement wishes and was an important theme in Chinese New Year prints. Many prints in this theme were sent as blessings to newly married couples and at New Year, posted on doors or the walls in the bedroom.[55] The motif of *qilin song zi* was also traditionally decorated on small sliver charms, clothing, porcelain and wooden windows and doors.

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[51] Perkins, op. cit., p. 407.
[52] Lust, John (1996), *Chinese Popular Prints*. Leiden; New York: E. J. Brill, p. 275.
[53] Li Yinhe (1995), Zhongguo hunyin jiating jiqi bianqian (*Chinese Marriage and Family, and Their Changes*). Ha'erbin: Heilongjiang People's Publishing House, pp. 117-21.
[54] Martin, Emily (1990), 'Gender and Ideological Differences in Representations of Life and Death', in James L. Watson and Evelyn S. Rawski (eds.), *Death Ritual in Late Imperial and Modern China*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 175-7.
[55] Knapp, Ronald G. (1999), *China's Living Houses: Folk Beliefs, Symbols, and Household Ornamentation*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, p. 131.

The dragon, phoenix and *qilin* were inextricably bound up with state organisations in China, but more importantly, they inferred the traditional family ideal for thousands of years. Examples of traditional visual *guai* have survived through their continuous 'self-adjustment', which shows the degree of their social and cultural value. In the transitionally social, political and religious context in twentieth-century China, the popularity and sustainability of *guai* would be reflected in mass movements of revolutions. The above has provided a brief introduction of the dragon, phoenix and *qilin*, conceptually and formally, in terms of tradition. This will be expanded upon and discussed in more detail in the second and third chapters.

1.3 The Pursuit of 'Democracy and Science'

At the turn of the twentieth century, important political, social and religious changes occurred in China. For Chinese art in the twentieth-century, it was one of the most complex and significant transition periods of art history. By this period, Gao Minglu says that "a pursuit of a new, modernised nation with a concomitant anti-tradition emerged in China in both the broader culture and in art".[56] Changing political and ideological realities, as well as conflicting international and local identities have transformed visual traditions and their roles. Not only the whole visual culture of China but also the tradition of *guai* imagery faced great challenges.

Since the late Qing Dynasty of the early twentieth century, the influence of religion and folk beliefs has gradually weakened. Chinese intellectuals increasingly referred to the concept of '*mixin* (superstition)' in their debates on religion. They regarded superstition as a holdover from the old culture and a major obstacle to social progress.

[56] Gao Minglu (1998), 'Toward a Transnational Modernity: An Overview of *Inside Out: New Chinese Art*', *Inside Out: New Chinese Art.* San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, p. 16.

The term *mixin*, was taken from the Japanese, in the view of Jiang Shaoyuan (1898-1983), a prominent scholar of folklore.[57] Shen Jie finds that the term *mixin* firstly appeared in an epigraph of the Tang Dynasty, where it refers to an irrational mental state, not specifically pointing to religions.[58] According to the study of Josephson, the Japanese term *meishin* appeared on a Japanese newspaper in 1877 and this term was then employed by Japanese intellectuals to refer to "errant belief".[59] In 1902, Liang Qichao (1873-1929) published a series of articles on Xinmin congbao (*Xinmin Series Newspaper*) to expound his religious ideas and introduced the word *mixin* (translated from *meishin*) to China.[60] He did not distinguish clearly between superstition and religion. According to his explanation, superstition referred to irrational religion.[61] In the following years, 'superstition' seemed to be a term to replace religion in China, and the slogan '*fan mixin* (anti superstition)' was also employed to justify and boycott religions.

From June 1902, the newspaper *Ta Kung Pao*, published a series of articles to criticise superstition and discuss the issues it raised, in order to eradicate superstition and "open up people's minds and change our people's customs".[62] Yu Zhuodai also employed the word superstition in the newspaper *Anhui Colloquial Periodical* and, in particular, considered *guai* as one of 'superstitions'.[63] The 1906 publication of Cai Yuanpei (1868-1940)'s translation of *Lectures on Mystery Studies*, supported Yu's perspective of superstition from the standpoint of science. Japanese intellectual Enryo Inoue wrote a book that aimed to explain mysterious phenomenon about ghosts,

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[57] Poon, Shuk-wah (2011), *Negotiating Religion in Modern China: State and Common People in Guangzhou, 1900-1937*. Hong kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong, p. 29.
[58] Shen Jie (2006), 'Fan mixin huayu jiqi xiandai qiyuan (*Anti-superstition Discourse and Its Modern Origin*)', Shilin (*Historical Review*), No. 2, p. 31.
[59] Josephson, Jason Ananda (2009), *The Invention of Religion in Japan*. Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, p. 184; p. 237.
[60] Nedostup, Rebecca (2013), 'The Transformation of the Concept of Religion in Chinese Modernity', in Perry Schmidt-Leukel and Joachim Gentz (eds.), *Religious Diversity in Chinese Thought*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 159-60.
[61] Liang Qichao (1984), '*Baojiao fei suo yi zun Kong lun* (Protecting the Faith is not the Way to Honour Confucius)', in Ge Maochun and Jiang Jun (eds.), Liang Qichao zhexue sixiang lunwen xuan (*Selected philosophy works of Liang Qichao*). Beijing: Peking University Press, pp. 96-97.
[62] Geng Yunzhi (2014), *An Introductory Study on China's Cultural Transformation in Recent Times*. Berlin: Springer, p. 174.
[63] Yu Zhuodai (1904), '*Xu wugui lun yanyi* (Continue to No-ghost Discussion)', Anhui suhua bao (*Anhui Colloquial Periodical*), No. 11, 1 September, p. 1.

spirits, and *guai* through a scientific perspective.[64]

Cai was not merely a translator; he was more notably, a significant educator. By translating the book *Lectures on Mystery Studies*, Cai was clearly in full agreement with Inoue. In his opinion, superstition was one of the deep maladies hindering social evolution, distorting human nature and imprisoning social wisdom.[65] In order to improve people's moral and mental standards, it was an important and necessary mission for the Chinese intellectuals to disperse the gloom of superstition through popularising rational and scientific knowledge.

From the policy of Standards of Existence and Abolishment of Gods and Temples[66] published in 1928, it seemed that the government attempted to control and weaken the religious influence of *guai*. In the policy, the government retained only a few religious beliefs, such as Buddhism and Taoism, while most of popular religion was to be abolished. Many temples of *guai*, such the Monkey King and the Fox with nine tails, were banned. Anthropologist Stephan Feuchtwang who focuses on popular religion and politics in China, also points out that since the end of Qing Dynasty, governments have authenticated and controlled the legitimation of religious activities.[67] The repression of superstition began in reform movements of the late Qing dynasty, and intensified during the Republic of China.

In order to provide context of the early twentieth century for *guai*, it is necessary to briefly introduce a general outline of a complex period in history. Since the late Qing Dynasty, powerless and weak governments failed in dealing with diplomatic and

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[64] Inoue, Enryo (1974), Yaoguai xue jiangyi (*Lecture on Mystery Studies*), (Cai Yuanpei, Chinese trans.). Taibei: Oriental Culture.

[65] Cai Yuanpei (1997), 'Lectures on mystery studies: introduction', *Collected works of Cai Yuanpei*. Hangzhou: Zhejiang Education Publishing House, p. 88. English translation cited in Wang Qing (2013), 'A Comparative Study of Religious Thought in the Work of Cai Yuanpei and Inoue Enryo', *International Inoue Enryo Research*, Vol. 1, p. 43.

[66] The Second Historical Archives of China (1994), '*Shen si cunfei biaozhun* (Standard of Existence and Abolishment of Gods and Temples)', *Republic of China History File Compilation: Volume V – Culture*. Nanjing: Jiangsu Classics Publishing House, pp. 495-506.

[67] Feuchtwang, Stephan (2001), *Popular Religion in China: The Imperial Metaphor*. Richmond; Surrey: Curzon, p. 217.

domestic problems. In particular, the failure of the First Sino-Japanese War[68], after which China entered a serious national crisis.[69] Chinese people started to explore ways to save the nation. With capitalist economic development and the spread of Western political ideology, the representatives of emerging bourgeois political forces began to board China's political arena. In 1911, a national revolution – *Xinhai* Revolution –broke out and overturned the Qing Dynasty, China's last dynasty. In the following year, the founding of the Republic of China officially ended dynastic rule lasting for two thousand years in China.[70] However, as the President of the Republic of China, Yuan Shikai and his new government still failed to resist Japan. In the meantime, he advocated developing traditional culture and attempted to restore Chinese traditional rule. Furthermore, in 1915 Yuan proposed to assume the identity of the emperor.[71] It was obviously opposed by open-minded scholars. With continuous pressure from Western and Japanese military, economic and cultural forces, Chinese intellectuals like Cai Yuanpei, Liang Qichao and Chen Duxiu, received classical educations but started to lead an anti-traditional revolt, which was known as the New Culture Movement.[72] By 1916, the year Yuan died, the traditions were on the verge of collapse. Pioneers and intellectuals urgently sought for new cultural, social, economic and political systems,[73] and began a cultural revolution by taking various Western standards as models to build a new Chinese culture.

This movement reached a peak in the May the Fourth Movement[74]. On the basis of

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[68] The First Sino-Japanese War was fought between the Qing of China and Japan from August 1894 to April 1895, primarily over control of Korea.

[69] Paine, S. C. M. (2006), *The Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895: Perceptions, Power and Primacy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 299-312.

[70] Ye Lang, Fei Zhenggang and Wang Tianyou (2007), *China: Five Thousand Years of History and Civilization*. Hong Kong: City University of Hong Kong Press, p. 116.

[71] Fu Zhengyuan (1994), *An Autocratic Tradition and Chinese politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 154.

[72] See Chen W. P. (1935), *The New Culture Movement in China*. Canberra: Australian Institute of Anatomy, pp. 2-4; Yuan Zheng (2001), 'The Status of Confucianism in Modern Chinese Education, 1901-49: A Curricular Study', in Glen Peterson, Ruth Hayhoe and Lu Yongling (eds.), *Education, Culture, and Identity in Twentieth-century China*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 204-6.

[73] Schwartz, Benjamin I. (2002), 'Themes in Intellectual History: May Fourth and After', in Merle Goldman and Leo Ou-fan Lee (eds.), *An Intellectual History of Modern China*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 97–123.

[74] In January 1919, the Paris Peace Conference decided to allow Germany to transfer the control of Shandong Province of China to Japan. On the fourth of May 1919, students in Beijing demonstrated to protest that the Chinese government had succumbed to the pressure of imperialism and was going to

anti-tradition, the May the Fourth Movement further advocated the promotion of '*minzhu yu kexue* (democracy and science)', a process of modernisation. Modernisation process firstly began in Western Europe, then spread to America and other countries around the globe; switching countries from rural societies to the urban and industrial, by the application of science, technology and rational thinking.[75] The social orders, such as sustained economic growth, specialisation of labour, increased public education, adequate sanitation and upgrading of civic facilities were commonly associated with the process of modernisation. Although traditional religious values and cultural traits had an enduring influence on shaping the development of societies, the process of modernisation typically forms governance frameworks dominated by particular principles rather than traditions.[76] China was in a struggle between modernity and tradition. However, in comparison with the powerfulness of Western countries, traditional religious beliefs and cultures were regarded as less important than modernisation by the Chinese intellectuals of this period; to pursue modernity, they attempted to replace traditional religions with other ideas.

In the process of modernisation, science and technology were considered crucial to build the wealth and power of a nation. In order to build a modern China, it seemed that the development of science was a matter of great urgency. Under the circumstances, the idea of "*kexue jiuguo* (saving the nation with science)" was strongly advocated by intellectuals and scientists.[77] On the basis of reflection on China's efforts to explore national salvation in the last hundred years, it was a progressive thought to save China from the 'mire' by science and technology, which reflected a discourse of national modernisation. In order to promote science among the public, Chen Duxiu

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agree with the resolution of the Paris Peace Conference. The movement rapidly expanded nationwide. See Chen (1935), op. cit., p. 6.

[75] Grasso, June M., Corrinm Jay P., and Kort, Michael (2009), *Modernisation and Revolution in China: From the Opium Wars to the Olympics*. New York: M. E. Sharpe, p. VIII.

[76] Inglehart, Ronald and Welzel, Christian (2005), *Modernisation, Cultural Change, and Democracy: The Human Development Sequence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 19-22.

[77] See Gao Pingshu (1985), Cai Yuanpei lun kexue yu jishu (*Cai Yuanpei's Discussion on Science and Technology*). Shijiazhuang: Hebei Science & Technology Press, p. 281; Hao Zhidong (2003), *Intellectuals at a Crossroads: the Changing Politics of China's Knowledge Workers*. Albany: State University of New York Press, p. 382; Zhu Hua (2011), '*Jindai kexue jiuguo sichao he minguo shiqi de kexue jiaoyu* (The Thought of Saving the Nation with Science in Modern Times and the Scientific Education in the Republic of China)', *Journal of Historical Science*, No. 12, pp. 131-3.

(1879-1942) advanced the assertion of "*yi kexue dai zongjiao* (replacing religion with science)". He believes that gods, ghosts and *guai* from religions were all deceptive and it was vital for the public to believe in science rather than religion.[78]

In terms of education, it was put forward that traditional religions could be replaced by art. In 1912, Cai first introduced the term *meiyu* (aesthetic education) to China from Germany.[79] On 8 April 1917, he provided a talk on Replacing Religion with Aesthetic Education at the *Shenzhou xuehui* (the Divine Land Academic Society) in Beijing. According to Cai, in the embryonic stage of the primitive society, religion referred to spontaneous Ignorant behaviours, while to the class society, religion became a tool for the ruler to deceive the public.[80] He completely denied the value of religion in China during the period of developing democracy and science. In the 1921 magazine *Young China*, he put forward a more extreme view to eliminate religion completely in China's future.[81] Wang considers that the thought of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) had a deep influence on Cai, and Kant held that aesthetics could allow humans to transcend the material and enter free noumenal world.[82] People would not be restricted to, or emphasis placed upon, interests in the real world, and could pursue spiritual demands and ideals. Compared to aesthetic freedom, religious doctrines are often limited and excluded 'heresy'.[83] As an advocate of a total aestheticism, Cai attempted to separate completely traditional religion from art, eliminating religious elements in art works. The view was partially adopted by other intellectuals, for instance, Chen Duxiu, put forward the reform of traditional opera, and stated, "do not sing ghosts and *guai*".[84] He also criticised the classical literature of gods, ghosts and

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[78] Chen Duxiu (1987), Duxiu wencun (*Works of Chen Duxiu*). Hefei: Anhui People's Publishing House, p. 91; p.154.
[79] Cai Yuanpei (1988), Cai Yuanpei quanji. Diliujuan: 1931-1935 (*Collected Works of Cai Yuanpei. Volume Ⅵ: 1931-1935*). Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, p. 54.
[80] Cai Yuanpei (1917) '*Yi meiyu dai zongjiao shuo* (Replace Religion with Aesthetic Education)', Xin qingnian (*New Youth*), No. 6, August, p. 3.
[81] Cai Yuanpei (1997), '*Guanyu zongjiao wenti de tanhua* (The Talk about the Problem of Religion)', *Collected Works of Cai Yuanpei*. Hangzhou: Zhejiang Education Publishing House, p. 380.
[82] See Wang (2013), op. cit., p. 43; Liu Kang (2000), *Aesthetics and Marxism: Chinese Aesthetic Marxists and Their Western Contemporaries*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 29-30.
[83] Cai (1917), op. cit., p. 3.
[84] Chen Duxiu (1905), '*Lun xiqu* (Discussion on the Opera)', Xin xiaoshuo (*Nouveau Roman*), No. 2, p. 2.

guai for not reflecting social reality.[85]

However, not all intellectuals underrated the value of traditional religions and *guai* culture. Cai's idea about religion was naturally resisted by religious groups. Meanwhile, scholars did not fully support his ideas at that time. For example, Wang Guowei (1877-1927), a prominent scholar contributed to the studies of ancient history, epigraphy, philology and literary theory, considered that the public could get hope and consolation from religion, thus its value could not be neglected.[86] Lu Xun (1881-1936) also affirmed values of the *guai* culture in literature and art; he used eight chapters to introduce the classical literatures of *guai* in his published book *A Brief History of Chinese Fiction*.[87] Zhong Jingwen (1903-2002) considered that this publication, generated during the May the Fourth Movement, greatly strengthened the academic status of *guai*.[88] Lu Xun encouraged artists and designers to rediscover and reconstruct traditional Chinese motifs and patterns, and create works that could reflect the thoughts of a period and inherit the spirit of China.[89] Lu himself also designed book covers and logos, inspired by the motifs from Chinese clay pottery, bronze vessels, and bas-relief stone carvings. For example, in a book cover design for Chang Hong' *Exploring the Heart* (Figure 1.19), a simplified dragon flies with a human who is upside down on clouds. A *guai* with a human body, a long tail and bird's feet and three beast *guai* with wings soar between clouds. The images of *guai* were inspired by patterns carved on a tomb in the Six Dynasties, as Lu illustrated in the book.[90] It presented a Chinese imaginative design with *guai*. Although Lu abstracted the motifs of *guai* from their ritual contexts, he did not completely deny the significance of traditional religious elements as Cai and Chen did. Lu affirmed the

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[85] Chen Duxiu (1917), '*Wenxue geming lun* (Revolution in Literature)', *New Youth*, No. 9, p. 6.
[86] Wang Guowei (2008), Wang Guowei ji (*Works of Wang Guowei*). Beijing: Chinese Social Science Press, pp. 8-10.
[87] Lu Xun (2010), Zhongguo xiaoshuo shi lun (*A Brief History of Chinese Fiction*). Nanjing: Phoenix Publishing House.
[88] Zhong Jingwen (1996), Minsu wenhua xue: genggai yu xingqi (*Folk Culture Studies: Synopsis and Rise*). Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, pp. 118-21.
[89] Minick, Scott and Ping Jiao (1990), *Chinese Graphic Design in the Twentieth Century*. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, p. 26.
[90] Lu Xun Research Center from Lu Xun Museum (1998), Lu Xun yanjiu ziliao. 18 (*Research Materials of Lu Xun. 18*). Beijing: China Federation of Literary & Art Circles Publishing House, p.152.

value of *guai* imageries on artistic expression and imagination by his own works. He also provided an approach to integrate traditional motifs, including *guai*, into graphic design, developing a strong national artistic identity.

As discussed above, the issues of religion in the early twentieth century caused great controversy among scholars. Although few were as extreme as Cai Yuanpei, most scholars agreed that the impact of religion and superstition on the public had to be weakened and the religious significance of traditional *guai* culture eliminated; instead, through the process of Modernisation, the people should be educated by science and democracy.

In the first half of the twentieth-century China, traditional *guai* culture was transformed, in order to meet the changeable political, social and cultural needs. The religious role of *guai* was undermined by degrees. Although the transformation was at first limited to intellectual classes, it was an irreversible trend of transformation the three decades later. The Mao Zedong's talks on Literature and Art at the 1942 Yan'an Forum, provided an important ideological basis for Chinese visual arts to include *guai* in later mass movements of revolution. The period of the rise of the *guai*'s political role, running from 1942 to 1948, prepared for Mao's dominant artistic control nationwide since 1949, which will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

Chapter Two: New *Guai* for 'New China'

The establishment of the new regime in 1949 marked the coming of 'new China' and referred to China under the nationwide control of the Communist Party.[1] In October 1949, Mao Zedong's art ideology influenced all aspects of culture in China. Thus, in this period of PRC, traditional imagery of *guai* was inevitably transformed to take on new functions for the construction of 'new China' and the promotion of Mao Zedong's thought. In Chapter Two, I introduce the building and development of the theoretical framework of visual art in the first period of Mao's era, from 1949 to 1957.

This chapter focuses on the reform of *guai* visual art for '*xin Zhongguo* (new China)' since 1949. The guiding principles which impacted all forms of visual arts, including *guai*, in the second half of twentieth century are discussed in the first section. The principles were provided during Mao Zedong's Talks at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art in 1942. Three popular media – new New Year print, *lianhuanhua* (illustrated story books) and newspapers – carrying *guai* images mainly transformed and were used to a great extent in the development of 'new' art for new China, which will be discussed separately in the following three sections. A series of questions will also be discussed in these three sections. How was *guai* visual art influenced by Yan'an Talks in the 1950s? How exactly did the Communist Party reform and manipulate these art media with *guai* imagery as propaganda tools to disseminate political messages? What kinds of images were employed by Communists? Which channels did Communist propagandists delivered politicised art products through? And what were the masses' reactions to these products? In brief, in order to understand the reform of visual arts, including *guai*, in line with Mao's artistic principles, a research question is raised: how did *guai* production in post-1949 China work for the masses.

[1] Renmin ribao (*People's Daily*) (1949), '*Jiu Zhongguo miewang le, xin Zhongguo dansheng le* (The Old China is Destroyed, and the New China is Born) ', *People's Daily*, 22 September.

2.1 The Continued Spirit of the Yan'an Forum

In 'new China', with respect to Chinese art, including *guai*, it has been regarded by Communists as an important and essential tool to "propaganda a nationwide mass culture"[2]. However, the artistic ideology for new China was actually established and practiced under Mao Zedong during the Yan'an years. When the Chinese Communist Party came into power, Mao Zedong's talks at the 1942 Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art became constructive in the development of Chinese arts and culture throughout the next decades. Craig Clunas considers that Mao's guiding impact on the visual arts was started by the Talks.[3] Art historian Chen Lüsheng makes the same point, saying that Chinese artists inherited the 'tradition' of Yan'an, as a political tool since 1949.[4] Thus, it is significant to give an early introduction to the Talks at the Yan'an Forum.

From 2 May to 23 May 1942, a forum was held in Yan'an by the Propaganda Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC), in order to solve existing problems that compromised the revolutionary value of literature and art. Chairman Mao Zedong gave two speeches, on the first and last day of the forum. These two speeches were then published in Jiefang ribao (*Liberation Daily*) on 19 October, 1943.[5] Mao's talks perhaps outlined the most influential and significant art theory in the history of art in twentieth-century China, inspiring and guiding the production of thousands upon thousands of works of visual arts, including *guai*, in the next decades. The guiding art theory illustrated three principles, as follows.

Firstly, the talk attempted to define the role of literature and art in support of China's revolution. They were not considered an independent practice, but instead should

[2] Ryor, Kathleen M. (2001), 'Transformations', in Wu Hung (ed.), *Chinese Art at the Crossroads: Between Past and Future, Between East and West*. Hong Kong: New Art Media, p. 21.
[3] Clunas, Craig (1997), *Art in China*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 209.
[4] Chen Lüsheng (2000), Xin Zhongguo meishu tushi: 1949-1966 (*The Art History of the People's Republic of China: 1949-1966*). Beijing: China Youth Publishing House, pp. 8-10.
[5] Mao Zedong (1943), '*Zai Yan'an wenyi zuotanhui shang de jianghua* (Talks at the Yan'an Forum on the Arts)', Jiefang ribao (*Liberation Daily*), 19 October, pp. 1-2.

serve political purposes. On the first day of the Yan'an Forum, Mao stressed the importance of artists and writers as a "cultural army" to unify and educate the people, and attack and destroy the enemies.[6] In the summary of the forum, Mao clarified further the relationship between literature and art as powerful weapons, and politics:

> In the world today all culture, all literature and art belong to definite classes and are geared to definite political lines. There is in fact no such thing as art for art's sake, art that stands above classes or art that is detached from or independent of politics. Proletarian literature and art are part of the whole proletarian revolutionary cause; they are, as Lenin said, cogs and wheels[7] in the whole revolutionary machine. Therefore, Party work in literature and art occupies a definite and assigned position in Party revolutionary work as a whole and is subordinated to the revolutionary tasks set by the Party in a given revolutionary period.[8]

Politics was the core of artistic production, rather than "beauty" or "art's sake". Mao also emphasised that political standards were always the chief criterion for judging artworks, regardless of any class society, while the aesthetic values of the works were less important.[9] Political significance had to be seen as paramount for artists and art. Artists and writers should be firm in their class position in the revolution, and they should create works of art with distinct political ideas, in order to build and shape a new image for the new socialist nation. From that point, various traditional arts were artificially ascribed a political significance. With the ideologies of Marxism and Communism, artists were firmly committed to the production of various arts including *guai*. The traditional *guai* product, as a part of Chinese visual arts, was inevitably transformed to suit the new social and ideological circumstances.

After 1949, art became a political tool, giving full play to its fighting power with its

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[6] Mao Zedong (1967), 'Talks at Yan'an Forum on the Literature and Art', *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung: Volume III*. Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, p. 69.

[7] Lenin claimed, "Literature must become part of the common cause of the proletariat, 'a cog and a screw' of one single great Social-Democratic mechanism set in motion by the entire politically conscious vanguard of the entire working class." Cited in Lenin, Vladimir Il'ich (2008), 'Party Organisation and Party Literature', *Lenin on Literature and Art*. Rockville, MD.: Wildside Press, p. 22.

[8] Mao (1967), op. cit., p. 86.

[9] Ibid, p. 89.

distinctive characters of “class” and “Communist”. In the subsequent mass movements, art and politics were always inseparable. Chen states that art not only has acted in concert with the political movements, but also has been the most intuitive form, directly visualising abstract policies in a political movement.[10] Within such a political context, *guai* visual art, through various media including posters, paper cuts, wall paintings and new New Year prints, transformed to serve for political purposes in later mass movements of revolution.

The second principle is associated with the art forms. By following the idea of Vladimir Il’ich Lenin[11], Mao proposed that proletarian art should serve the broad masses, especially workers, peasants and soldiers.[12] In other words, artworks should be accepted and understood by the public, and the political ideas it carried should be also delivered directly to them. Obviously, the art popular among the masses was often inclusive, not exclusive or elitist. In order to access to the vast majority of the Chinese people, Mao stressed, “The thoughts and feelings of our writers and artists should be fused with those of the masses of workers, peasants and soldiers.”[13] In this case, artists and writers needed to reexamine and reidentify their relationship with the public, and their artworks had to meet the public tastes as much as possible. Therefore, artists had to be familiar with the workers, peasants and soldiers, whose cause they sought to support, and develop a new artistic concept accordingly. In order to reach the masses directly and widely, Mao said:

> We should take over the rich legacy and the good tradition in literature and art that have been handed down from past ages in China and foreign countries, but the aim must still be to serve the masses of the people. Nor do we refuse to utilise the literary and artistic forms of the past, but in our hands these old forms, remolded and infused with new content, also become something revolutionary in the service of the people.[14]

[10] Chen (2000), op. cit., p.10.
[11] Mao quoted art should “serve...the millions and tens of millions of working people” from Lenin. He put forward the idea that literature should serve the public in 1905, and Mao extended this view to art. See Lenin, op. cit., p. 25.
[12] Mao (1967), op. cit., p. 76.
[13] Ibid, p. 72.
[14] Ibid, p. 76.

Tang Xiaobing, a scholar of modern and contemporary Chinese culture and society, considers that Mao's idea, promoted that culture and artistic aesthetic changed from "a Western-oriented outlook and city-centered modern imagination" pursued in the New Culture Movement, to the "old" and traditional.[15] According to Zhou Aimin, Mao sought to reform the "old forms" into the complete combination of art and politics, in order to achieve a new national art.[16] It was an affirmation and reuse of traditional art forms. In Mao's opinion, traditional art forms, like wall paintings, were actually from the workers, peasants, and soldiers[17]; they made a strong connection to the masses and could be easily accepted, disseminated and even produced by the people. For the Communist Party, traditional art forms became the media most accessible to the masses and were used to convey their political messages. These traditional forms, including New Year prints and wall paintings, indeed played significant roles in the later mass movements, which will be discussed later.

Thirdly, it is significant to focus on the art contents in Mao's talks. He mentioned "good tradition" several times during his talk and it is worth exploring the notion of 'goodness' here. In order to convey his communist ideology and to ensure that appropriate social values reached the masses, the artworks had to cater to the standard of the artistic appreciation and philosophical aspirations of workers, peasants and soldiers. Hence, "good" traditional arts had to serve effectively and efficiently, not reflecting only art forms, but more importantly, contents. Mao stressed that writers and artists had to strive to learn from the languages of the masses, which were "most vital, rich and fundamental".[18] Such language was usually traditional, and even "feudal". For this, Mao considered:

[15] Tang Xiaobing (2015), *Visual Culture in Contemporary China: Paradigms and Shifts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 26.
[16] Zhou Aimin (2005), '"Controversy on Matisse" and the Modernity of Woodcuts in Yan'an during the Revolutionary Age', Dushu (*Reading*), No. 8, p. 16.
[17] Mao (1967), op. cit., p. 78.
[18] Ibid, p. 81.

> We must take over all the fine things in our literary and artistic heritage, critically assimilate whatever is beneficial, and use them as examples when we create works out of the literary and artistic raw materials in the life of the people of our own time and place. It makes a difference whether or not we have such examples, the difference between crudeness and refinement, between roughness and polish, between a low and a high level, and between slower and faster work. Therefore, we must on no account reject the legacies of the ancients and the foreigners or refuse to learn from them, even though they are the works of the feudal or bourgeois classes.[19]

In this text, Mao employed "legacies of the ancients" instead of "good tradition". The "legacies" seem to be more ambiguous, which could refer to the good or the not good. Then, he considered some of "legacies" as "feudal" products. In 1940, Mao had already expounded his views that feudalism should be abandoned.[20] Obviously, "feudal", with a strong negative meaning, was not "good tradition". However, artists still had to inherit the 'not good', as Mao stated they were "beneficial". For Communists, "legacies of the ancients" were beneficial in order for them to effectively build the propaganda mechanism. Meanwhile, they were a beneficial way for the masses to easily receive the messages from the party, especially after the Communist Party controlled the country nationwide in 1949. Of course, it was also a beneficial way for people to show their political attitudes, through displaying or reproducing the artworks with "legacies". *Guai* imagery, through various art forms, was rooted profoundly in Chinese traditional arts, which were a part of the country's cultural and artistic heritage. For example, in New Year prints there were an abundance of *guai* imagery; in the opinion of the art critic Wang Zhaowen (1909-2004), they were nothing but feudal and superstitious products. [21] However, in the whole of Mao's talks, he did not mention "anti-superstitious" but "feudal". In other words, Mao did not clarify that *guai*, regarded as "superstitious" since the early twentieth century, could not be employed in revolutionary works of art. Furthermore, although superstition was considered as

[19] Ibid.
[20] Mao Zedong (1991), 'On New Democracy', *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung: Volume II*. Beijing: People's Publishing House, p. 686.
[21] Wang Zhaowen (1950a), '*Guanyu xuexi jiu nianhua xingshi* (On Learning from the Form of Old New Year Prints)', Meishu (*Fine Art*), No. 2, p. 25.

'anti-Marxist-Leninist and anti-Mao thought', through political filtering and modification, the traditional religious elements and imageries of *guai*, were used as "beneficial" tools, even weapons to serve for the party. Although Mao did not specifically refer to *guai*, his more general point could be applied to them. The *guai* visual art, as a part of "legacies of the ancients", transformed to build a beneficial and new system to connect the Communists and the masses in later decades.

Following the Yan'an Forum, artists and writers, in the areas under the control of Communists, supported and strived to follow Mao's guidance. It promoted the transformation of the political ideologies of artists and the politicised development of folk art. In response to his call, artists started to pay more attention to the reform of New Year prints, New Year calendars and paper-cutting.[22] During the Yan'an period, the promotion of the woodcuts advanced the revolution of new New Year prints. *Nianhua*, in Chinese, literally New Year print, is one of the most popular and significant folk arts, reflecting cultural, social and religious characteristics of rural China. Conventionally, people hang or paste New Year prints on doors, walls or windows to celebrate the coming of the Chinese lunar year. Traditional New Year prints, usually using a woodblock printing method, featured a distinctive decoration with clear lines, brilliant colours and full composition.[23] The themes covered a wide range, depicting festive customs, secular life, folk tales and myths, mainly in auspicious and joyful terms.[24] New Year prints have been popular visual consumer goods among the public. From 1942, the importance of this traditional art form gradually received the attention of art workers in Yan'an, although the earliest new New Year prints were created by Jiang Feng (1910-1982) and Wo Zha (1905-1973) in 1939.[25] Yan'an artists began to learn, improve and create New Year prints. The traditional religious elements and imageries

[22] Gao Minglu (2011), *Total Modernity and the Avant-Garde in Twentieth- Century Chinese Art*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, p. 47.
[23] Bo Songnian (2008), Zhongguo nianhua yishu shi (*The Art History of Chinese New Year Prints*). Changsha: Hunan Fine Arts Publishing House, p. 133.
[24] Wang Shucun (2002), Zhongguo nianhua shi (*The History of Chinese New Year Prints*). Beijing: Beijing Arts And Crafts Press, pp. 12-3.
[25] See Flath, James A. (2004), *Cult of Happiness: Nianhua, Art and History in Rural North China*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, pp. 135-141; Wang (2002), op. cit., p. 243; Bo, op. cit., pp. 178-81.

of *guai* employed in New Year prints started to be politically modified and *guai* imagery was artificially ascribed a political significance.

For example, in 1943, Gu Yuan (1919-1996) created a pair of new New Year prints in the traditional style of door god prints (Figure 2.1). Door god prints, one of traditional forms of New Year prints, usually depicted portraits of gods and *guai* from Chinese popular religion. People posted the prints on doors to drive away evil spirits and bad luck, protect houses and bring good fortune, longevity, wealth and auspiciousness. The artist continued its popularity by employing such popular forms on the new New Year prints. The new prints were inspired by the traditional images of '*qilin* presenting sons' (Figure 1.19). The boy in a traditional robe riding on *qilin* is replaced by a relatively modern dressed boy and girl. In Figure 2.1, the main figures hold the grain, iron and spear, representing economic production and military power, instead of the lotus and *sheng*, which had the combined meaning of continuing to sire sons. On the right and left banners at the top of the prints are written "*renxing caiwang* (a flourishing population with wealthy prosperity)" and "*jiangjiu weisheng* (attention to hygiene)". According the discussion in Chapter One, in the traditional prints *qilin*, as an auspicious *guai*, is believed to bring sons as the continuation of family blood. The new prints were employed as propaganda for the Communist Party's health education policy in the liberated areas controlled by the Party during the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945) and the Second Chinese Civil War (1945-1949). At that time, the Communists aimed to educate the masses to pay more attention to hygiene and to raise awareness of medical treatment, in order to enhance the birth rate and reduce mortality.[26] Here, with good medical conditions, *qilin* would bring healthy children – representing the future of China in the new prints – where, under the leadership of the Communist Party, the population would increase continuously, and more and more healthy people could participate in developing the economy and military forces. A girl is depicted in the new prints, showing that daughters were also expected to be born,

[26] Wang Shucheng (2006), Zhongguo weisheng shiye fazhan (*Chinese Hygiene Development*). Beijing: Traditional Chinese Medicine Ancient Books Publishing House, pp. 151-2.

and would be of equally important status as sons. *Qilin* presenting children was no longer just a wish, but could be achieved with the guidance of health policy and medical construction from the Party. The *qilin* as a traditional *guai* was employed to build a bridge between the original meaning and the new political policy, and between the Communist Party and the masses.

Although the Talks concentrated more on literature, music, drama, New Year prints, propaganda posters and sculpture, the artistic principles could also be applied to cartoons. There was a close relationship between the discussion of satirical issues during the Talks and the development of cartoons. Mao proposed, "Satire is always needed."[27] From the Yan'an years, cartoons with *guai* imagery were an offensive satire tool serving the Communists. Mao's Yan'an theories were to become the fundamental principles of cartoons since the founding of PRC.

On July 1949, the All-China Congress of Literary and Art Workers opened in Beijing, and heralded guidance to reflect Mao's artistic thought for 'new China'. 753 of the country's influential writers and artists attended this first national congress, and received the official art policy.[28] Sullivan considered that from this congress, the Communist Party aimed to obtain the support of the representatives of Chinese literary and art circles, and to clarify an art strategy for new China.[29] Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai (1898-1976), as Premier of the Government Administration Council, and Zhu De (1886-1976), as Commander-in-Chief of the People's Liberation Army, delivered speeches at the congress, fully showing the significance of the conference. During the congress, Jiang Feng, as the representative of art workers in the liberated areas, gave a speech on the art work in these regions. He summed up the past art achievements under Mao's artistic thought and stressed the continued adherence to

[27] Bi Keguan and Huang Yuanlin (1986), Zhongguo manhua shi (*Chinese Cartoon History*). Beijing: Culture & Art Publishing House, p. 204.
[28] Zou Yuejin (2002), Xin Zhongguo meishu shi: 1949-2000 (*Art History of New China: 1949-2000*). Changsha: Hunan Fine Arts Publishing House, p. 2.
[29] Sullivan, Michael (1996), *Art and artists of twentieth-century China*. Berkeley: University of California Press, p.129.

the principles from the Yan'an Talks, as a guide for future art work. According to Jiang, some popular art forms including posters, new New Year prints, *lianhuanhua* (illustrated story books) and wall paintings, have been shown to have met the needs of the Communist Party and successfully conveyed political messages to the public, proving their effectiveness.[30] In the congress, Communist propagandists also got the task of remoulding folk artists to suit the Mao's artistic ideology. Theoretical guidance to transform the visual art of *guai* to fit Mao's idea nationwide was officially established. In order to effectively implement Mao's political ideology and artistic thought, management organisations of artists were set up by the Communists. In July 1949, the all-China Federation of Literary and Arts Circles and the all-China Art Workers Association was successively founded.[31]

Mao Zedong announced the founding of PRC from atop *Tian'anmen* (Gate of Heavenly Peace) on 1 October, 1949. It was important to define the cultural development of the 'new' nation; as such, the Communist Party began to reshape the whole pattern of China's art world, and to establish an art propaganda mechanism for the new regime. With the original Yan'an principles, the Communist Party came to rely heavily on artists and propagandists for the next three decades, as they embarked on a long course of new national construction. In the thirty years following the founding, and despite the changes from the Yan'an period in China's political, cultural and social contexts, *guai* visual culture continued to follow the principles of Maoist cultural ideology from the Talks.

[30] Jiang Feng (1983), '*Jiefangqu de meishu gongzuo* (Art Work in the Liberated Areas)', Jiang Feng meishu lunji (*Collected Texts of Jiang Feng on Art*). Beijing: People's Fine Arts Publishing House, pp. 16-22.

[31] *Disici wendaihui choubeizu qicaozu* (Drafting Group of the Preparation Group for the Fourth Congress of Literary and Art Workers) (1979), Liushinian wenyi dashiji, 1919-1979 (*Sixty-year Record of Major Events in Literature and Art, 1919-1979*). Beijing: Theory and Policy Research Center of the Ministry of Culture's Literature and Art Research Institute, p. 123.

2.2 Reforming New Year Prints

By winning acceptance from the masses, and obtaining their allegiance to Communist political movements in the early 1950s, the Communist Party aimed to consolidate the political power of the newly founded government in China. Accordingly, some popular media with a wide audience drew the attention of the Communists. Three popular vehicles – New Year prints, *lianhuanhua* and newspapers – mainly carrying *guai* imagery, became an important propagandistic, educational and critical instrument for the Communist Party. Through the popular arts, the Communists intended to not only spread their political concepts among the masses, but, more importantly, mobilise people for participating in the socialist development of the country. As scholar Tang Xiaobing stated, because of the reform of art for 'new' China, it was a significant challenge for mass-produced visual art to reach audiences nationwide.[32]

In 1950s, New Year prints became the first vehicle reformed by artists in order to support national socialist construction. On 23 November 1949, Mao Zedong approved the Minister of Culture to issue the directive of The Work Instructions on New New Year Prints. This directive was delivered to the public on 27 November through the *People's Daily*. It called on various cultural departments and propaganda agencies, art educational institutions, art organisations and artists around the country to participate in new New Year print production, in order to celebrate the coming of the first lunar New Year of 'new' China:

> *Nianhua* are one of the most popular types of Chinese folk art. Under the feudal rule in the past, it was employed as a vehicle to spread feudal ideas. After Chairman Mao delivered his Talks at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art in 1942, in which he called on writers and artists in various old liberated areas began to use reformed *nianhua* with considerable success to disseminate the idea of people's democracy. New *nianhua* prints have proven to be a beloved art medium, rich in education value. With Chinese Lunar New Year fast approaching – the first since the founding of the

[32] Tang (2015), op. cit., p. 27.

> PRC – local cultural and educational organisations should look on the development and spread of *nianhua* as one of their most essential tasks during this New Year's propaganda activities. The new prints should convey the following messages: the grand victory of the Chinese people's war for liberation and the people's great revolution, the establishment of the People's Republic, the Common Program, and the recovery and progress of industrial and agricultural production.[33]

As one of the earliest official documents on art in the young PRC, the directive launched the first art movement to reform New Year prints in the art history of new China, showing their importance.[34] The directive officially affirmed the significance of New Year prints and further indicated that new New Year prints should deliver political messages instead of "feudal ideas" to the masses, in order to consolidate the new regime. This directive not only illustrated the values and themes that should be expressed in new New Year prints, but also explained how to carry out this reform movement:

> To launch a widespread *nianhua* movement, regional cultural and education agencies, and art organisations, should mobilise artists to produce new prints, letting them know that this is an important artistic undertaking with wide impact. We oppose those artists who tend to belittle the task of popularisation. Moreover, we should work with those who engage in the old *nianhua* trade and cooperate with folk artists, giving them the necessary ideological education and material assistance, and providing them with new sketches, reforming them and through them reaching a wide audience.[35]

This directive reemphasised the ideological remoulding of art workers and further established the guiding ideology of literature and art in Yan'an Talk. Artists, including folk craftsmen, were all to follow Mao's artistic direction and take part in the propaganda and construction for the new regime. In 1950, Renmin meishu (*People's*

[33] The Ministry of Culture (1949), '*Guanyu kaizhan xin nianhua gongzuo de zhishi* (The Work Instructions on New New Year Prints)', *People's Daily*, 27 November, p. 4. English transation cited in Hung Changtai (2011), *Mao's New World: Political Culture in the Early People's Republic*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, p. 182.
[34] Chen (2000), op. cit., p. 76.
[35] The Ministry of Culture (1949), op. cit. English transation cited in Hung Changtai (2000), 'Repainting China: New Year Prints (*Nianhua*) and Peasant Resistance in the Early Years of the People's Republic', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 42, No. 4, pp. 770.

Fine Arts) published an editorial Efforts to Show a New China, which required the majority of fine arts workers to throw themselves into the practice of implementing Mao's guiding ideology, to experience and grasp new images and new events.[36] In 1951, the Ministry of Culture and the General Administration of Press issued a directive of Instruction on Strengthening the Work of New Year Prints, requiring governments at all levels, publishing administration and art groups to unite and organise folk artists for political and professional art studies.[37] In response to the call, artists from Nanjing Art Troupe firstly studied policy documents, issued by the Ministry of Culture and governments in the east China region, in relation to the creation of new New Year prints, so as to deepen their understanding of political tasks.[38] In 1951, Guizhou Artists Association brought folk *nianhua* artists, painters, propagandists from troops, factories, schools and other institutions together to study political theories and discuss the creation of new New Year prints.[39] Subsequently, local governments, publishing organisations and arts groups actively implemented the spirit of the central instructions, and prompted artists to complete ideological remoulding and become "screws" of the Communist propaganda mechanism. The *nianhua* reform could be seen as a practice of remoulding artists ideologically. As Jiang Feng said, it played a decisive role in the establishment of the new art conception for artists around the country, and the implementation and consolidation of the new art educational guidelines.[40] The political transformation of professional and amateur artists made them more active in responding to the call and management of the Communist Party. For the next three decades they produced artworks including *guai* products for political needs and conveyed the political ideas to the public.

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[36] Renmin meishu (*People's Fine Arts*) (1950), '*Wei zhangxian xin Zhongguo er nuli* (Efforts to Show a New China)', *People's Fine Arts*, No. 1, p. 1.
[37] The Ministry of Culture and the General Administration of Press (1951), '*Guanyu jiaqiang nianhua gongzuo de zhishi* (Instruction on Strengthening the Work of New Year Prints)', *People's Daily*, 26 October.
[38] Zhu Keke (1950), '*Nanjing wengongtuan diyici nianhua chuangzuo de jingyan: xin nianhua chuangzuo zai tansuo zhong* (The First Experience of the Nanjing Art Troupe in the Creation of New Year Prints: New New Year Prints in the Exploration', Wenyi zazhi (*Literature and Art Magazine*), No. 2, p. 14.
[39] Cai Ruohong (1952), '*Cong nianhua pingjiang kan liangnianlai nianhua gongzuo de chengjiu* (Via New Year Print Award Assessing Achievements in those Two Years)', *People's Daily*, 5 September.
[40] Jiang Feng (1950), '*Guoli Hangzhou yizhuan tongxue chuangzuo shang de wenti* (National Hangzhou School of Art Students' Problems on Creation)', *Fine Art*, No. 5, p. 29.

The reform of New Year prints was one of the largest art movements launched by the officials in the PRC to shape a new national image and reflect the new atmosphere. After the publication of the directive, local cultural and educational institutions and art groups actively organised the work of new New Year print production. The vigorous New Year print movement rapidly expanded nationwide and soon China Artists Association held conferences in Beijing and Shanghai to mobilise the participation of artists, and discuss the contents and forms of new New Year prints.[41] Some official exhibitions on new prints were held, such as the National New Year Print Exhibition in 1950. In order to better promote new New Year print production and stimulate the enthusiasm of artists, the Ministry of Culture twice held national open competitions and presented awards for the best new prints.[42] As a result, by April 1950, over 200 artists from 26 localities created 412 new print designs with a circulation of more than seven million.[43] The production groups included not only artists in New Year prints, but also from fields of *guohua* (traditional Chinese paintings), oil paintings, woodcut, *lianhuanhua* and cartoons.

Although the New Year print was a significant and essential propaganda tool for the Communists, this rural art form was not perfect for them to employ. New Year prints originated from popular religions and were used for religious ritual activities.[44] Many of the traditional New Year prints depicted religious subjects; as Marxists, Chinese Communists insisted on atheism and resisted the so-called 'superstition and feudalism'. In 1951, based on the Instruction on Strengthening the Guidance of Shanghai Private Publishing Industry to Eliminate Poisoning Contents in Old New Year Prints issued by the Ministry of Culture, Shanghai Cultural Management Department carried out a comprehensive reform of the old prints. Through strictly

[41] See Chen Shu (1950), '*Shanghai xin nianhua yundong ji* (New New Year Print Movement in Shanghai)', *Fine Art*, No. 2, pp. 54-5; Chen (2000), op. cit., p. 78.
[42] See the Ministry of Culture (1950), '*Banfa 1950 nian xin nianhua chuangzuo jiangjin* (Award the Prizes for the 1950 New New Year Print Creation)', *Fine Art*, No. 3, p. 6; Wang Xianyue (2009), '*Xin Zhongguo chuqi xin nianhua chuangzuo de lishi he fanshi yiyi* (The Historical and Paradigm Significance of New New Year Print Creation in the early New China)', *Literature & Art Studies*, No. 7, pp. 107-8.
[43] Bo (2008), op. cit., p. 189.
[44] Wang (2002), op. cit., p. 6.

examining and rectifying private art dealers and commercial publishing companies, they banned a number of old New Year prints with "unhealthy and superstitious" contents, in order to protect the prosperity and development of new New Year prints.[45] The attack against religious prints with *guai* imagery could be seen as a battle against folk religions. More importantly, historian Hung Changtai specialising in modern Chinese cultural history, considers that the Party attempted to remould the minds of the masses by Communist ideology through New Year print reform.[46] As a consequence, the abundance of *guai* imagery in, what they called "superstitious products", seemed to be removed from the new New Year prints.

Via the educational function of New Year prints, artists presented the exhortatory materials in new New Year prints, instead of the original religious contents. The new New Year prints focused more on political subjects, rather than the traditional depiction of deities and *guai*, myth stories and scenes of dynastic life. Thus, the themes of new prints were basically limited to political figures, celebrating the victory of the Communist Party and heralding new life in the new society. Various works were conducted to show new socialist visions. Among these, four themes were depicted most frequently: the development of industrial and agricultural production; people's democratic life; leaders who were loved and respected by the masses; and the victory of the Communist Party-led wars.[47] Stylistically, on the basis of the application of the single-outline flat-colour technique in traditional prints, new New Year prints absorbed the characteristics of other art forms, reflected in the depiction of detailed figures and scenes. Influenced by the socialist realist style, the artworks are more realistic than decorative.[48]

The directive issued on 27 November 1949 also put forward that, "new New Year

[45] Compilation Committee of *Shanghai Culture and Art History* (2001), Shanghai wenhua yishu shi (*Shanghai Culture and Art History*). Shanghai: Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences Press, p. 736.
[46] Hung (2011), op. cit., pp. 194-5.
[47] Chen (2000), op. cit., pp. 79-80.
[48] Laing, Ellen Johnston (1988), *The Winking Owl: Art in the People's Republic of China*. Berkeley; London: University of California Press, p. 20.

prints should depict the working people's new, cheerful and striving life and their heroic and healthy images."[49] The new prints focused on depicting the images of peasants, workers and soldiers, instead of beauties, deities and *guai* imageries, which can be seen in a reformed example of a traditional print – *Yaoqianshu* (The Money Tree). The traditional design usually depicted a tree full of coins (Figure 2.2). Two different dragons are depicted in this traditional print: a *Shancai tongzi* (Child of Wealth) rides a dragon made by coins; another dragon is depicted in the traditional form, with a big coin. In traditional New Year prints, coins represented wealth; the dragon was the most significant auspicious *guai,* and the *qianlong* (coin dragon) usually referred to the greatest wealth and luck of all.[50] Wealth would be brought by the coin dragon. A *jubao peng* (treasure bowl), that was believed to gather these treasures, would be placed under the tree and several Children of Wealth would put the coins falling from the tree into it. The print should not simply be considered as money worship, but as an idealistic expression of yearning for prosperity and affluent life.

However, it was clear that the traditional print with deities and coin dragons was a "superstitious product", conveying "feudal ideas". It did not meet the Communist Party's propaganda policy and had to undergo the politicised transformation. In 1952 the New Year print reform team in Yangjiabang transformed the traditional print in to a new design. In the new design of *This Is the Real Money Tree*, the money tree is changed to an apple tree, and all the coins are replaced by big apples (Figure 2.3). Men and women, old and young, all gather in the fruitful apple tree, happily picking ripe apples; the dragons and the deities are replaced by industrious peasants; and the original treasure bowl is depicted as a brand-new truck filled with apples. The label on the truck says: "Mutual aid and cooperation generate great strength. Labour harvest abundant fruits." The artist employed this print to deliver an idea that the cooperation and

[49] The Ministry of Culture (1949), op. cit. English translation cited in Lu Keqin (2010), *China in New Year Paintings*. Beijing: China Intercontinental Press, p. 13.
[50] Yin Wei and Yin Feirang (2005), Zhongguo cai wenhua (*Chinese Wealth Culture*). Kunming: Yunnan People's Publishing House, p. 177.

hard work would bring a great harvest, obtaining real wealth. The new print continues the characteristic of traditional bright colours, showing peasants enjoying the fruits of their labour. It also illustrated that, under the leading of the Communist Party, peasants gained a better life in new China, and they no longer needed to place their wishes on deities or coin dragons.

Despite such a change, the reception by the public of the new New Year prints seemed not to have reached the Party's expectations. Although the Ministry of Culture claimed that the reform of New Year prints achieved fruitful results, and that the new prints were popular among the public,[51] the result was actually not as optimal as he described. Hung considers that such official rhetoric is difficult to be verified and admissible, and instead, focuses more upon the investigation of peasants' comments.[52] On the basis of his research, I conducted a further investigation in the context of this study. Articles and surveys about the new prints were published through newspapers and journals and usually included comments from the masses.[53] They often expressed their criticism about new prints from different aspects, such as new content and colours. *Fine Art* published opinions of a peasant on the new design *This Is the Real Money Tree.* The peasant did not accept the new print, and satirised that an apple tree was not worth much.[54] Meanwhile, peasants showed dissatisfaction with many new prints and refused to buy them. As Wang observed in 1957, traditional New Year prints from Yangliuqing sold more than 200,000 copies, while a large number of new New Year paintings remained as backlog in the Xinhua Bookstores.[55] As early as 1954, in relation to the poor sales situation of new prints, the report The Plan of Improving the Releasing Work of New Year Prints in 1954 had already put forward that old prints were more in line with the public aesthetic, and new prints could not

[51] The Ministry of Culture (1950), op. cit., p. 6.
[52] Hung (2011), op. cit., pp. 200-1.
[53] See, Cai Ruohong (1950), '*Guanyu xin nianhua de chuangzuo wenti* (Problem on the Creation of New New Year Prints)', *Fine Art*, No. 2, pp. 19-22; Wang (1950a), op. cit., pp. 23-6; Zhu Jinlou (1950), '*Shanghai xin nianhua zhan yu qunzhong yijian* (Shanghai New New Year Print Exhibition and Opinions of the Masses)', *Fine Art*, No. 2, pp. 39-42; Jian An (1950), '*1950 nian nianhua gongzuo de jixiang tongji* (Several Statistical Results on 1950 New New Year Prints)', *Fine Art*, No. 2, pp. 52-3.
[54] *Fine Art* (1978), Weifang nianhua yanjiu (Study on New Year Prints in Weifang), *Fine Art*, No. 1, p. 44.
[55] Wang Shucun (1957), '*Mai bu dao, mai bu diao* (Cannot Find Place to Buy, and No One Want to Buy)', *Fine Art*, No. 3, p. 46.

completely replace the old.[56] The poor sales of the new prints clearly reflected the public's opposition to the new.

I consider that the way in which people displayed New Year prints in public or private spaces can be also seen as a kind of reaction to, and understanding of, the works. The door god prints were usually posted on front and interior doors. When the doors were opened the prints reflected the owner's personal aesthetic tastes and demands. When the doors were closed, they prints could be viewed as a public statement. With the new New Year prints, it showed a personal political stance in support of the Communist policies. Meanwhile, displaying to the public can also be considered as a way to disseminate messages of visual products to others. In the new New Year print movement, many of the new prints vigorously promoted by the Communist Party were not appreciated by the public. Yang Liren, who owns a century-old store of *nianhua* production in Zhangjiawo Town of Tianjing, recalled that many peasants posted new prints on front gates, while displaying traditional prints on the walls in rooms.[57] Wang Kun, who specialises in the study of New Year prints in the twentieth century, also found that many people would firstly display new prints, but after a few days replace them with the old.[58] Although many people did not appreciate new print designs, they were still willing to display them to express their support for the Communist Party. People made the public's aesthetic and political claims separate, and they needed to meet their two demands through old and new prints. This shows that new New Year prints of this period were not fully accepted by the public.

There were several aspects which led to public dissatisfaction with the New Year prints. Firstly, the public could not recognise and understand the new content which had replaced the old in a traditional print genre. The public hung New Year prints to

[56] Xinhua Bookstore Head Office (1954), '*1954 niandu nianhua faxing gongzuo gaijin fang'an* (The Plan of Improving the Releasing Work of New Year Prints in 1954)'. Cited in Jie Ziping (2001), '*Xin nianhua 50 nian* (50 Years of New New Year Prints)', Xinwen chuban jiaoliu (*News and Publishing Exchange*), No. 2, p. 31.
[57] Interview with Yang Liren, 27 February 2016, Zhangjiawo Town, Tianjing.
[58] Interview with Wang Kun, 25 February 2016, Tianjing.

welcome the Chinese New Year and to express all kinds of wishes for the coming year. These traditional print motifs, including *guai*, had recognised symbolic significance and expressed various auspicious meanings. Traditional imageries in a print would remind people of familiar and symbolic meanings behind the images, making it easier for the masses to receive and understand the messages the prints were delivering. However, as previously discussed, in the early PRC, the Communists intended to clean away 'superstitious' elements of traditional prints, and instead create new contents. In the new designs, modern imageries and revolutionary contents, expressing new socialist messages, replaced the familiar motifs that people used to employ. The unfamiliar figures which the Communists promoted had no roots in the peasants' memories, and the substitutes for deities and *guai* imageries could usually not be accepted by the public. As a peasant criticised, "They are just humans not real Gods."[59] The absence of these old motifs cut off the public's association with symbolic, auspicious and ideal expression. Thus, for the new print of the Money Tree (Figure 2.3), the peasant was unable to relate the apple tree to the meaning of wealth and prosperity; he failed to receive and understand the messages that the print intended to convey.[60] In the 1943 door god print created by Gu Yuan, the imagery of *qilin* was retained, which acted as a direct reminder to people of the symbolic meaning of *qilin* presenting sons. In contrast to the new and unfamiliar elements, the traditional motifs, including *guai*, were often more convincing and more easily accepted by the public. Many prints which replaced old contents with new were not accepted by the public and failed to deliver messages. The second reason why the public were dissatisfied with the new prints was because they sometimes depicted war scenes, which were not in line with the aesthetic of the public, especially the peasants. These prints were considered unpropitious and unlucky, rather than expressing happiness and auspiciousness, and contrary to the idea that the public wanted to celebrate the

[59] Jin Lang (1950), '*Hangzhou de xin nianhua chuangzuo yundong* (The Creation Movement of New New Year Prints in Hangzhou)', *Fine Art*, No. 2, p. 57.
[60] Hung also analyses the traditional and new prints of *Yaoqianshu*. He puts forward the similar idea, and considers that the failure of the new print was the result of its rapid politicisation. See Hung (2011), op. cit., p. 195; p. 205.

Spring Festival.[61] Thirdly, artists could not portray the real figures of peasants and their lives. Some figures were considered to be wretched or vicious, and some were more like movie stars rather than peasants.[62] This showed that artists were not familiar with peasants and that there was a distance between them. Lastly, the colours employed in some prints were not bright enough and, as a result, those prints, usually used in the Chinese New Year, could not fully express the festive atmosphere.[63] This study however, focuses upon the evolution of *guai* imagery, therefore, it does not provide detailed analysis of the above aspects.

I argue that the main cause of these problems is the separation between the artists and the masses in the early 1950s. Mao's talks in Yan'an had already put forward that artists ought to learn from the masses. Furthermore, artists' position, thoughts and even the identity should be popularised.[64] As Mao explained, "the thoughts and feelings of our writers and artists should be fused with those of the masses of workers, peasants and soldiers".[65] As a result, the artist should become a member of the masses and understand people's perception. In this situation, in order to better complete the task of New Year print reform, the Communist reformers sought out folk artists. In 1950 and 1951, the East China Cultural Bureau twice sent New Year print teams to Yangjiabu, propagandising the Communist artistic principles and policies, helping folk artists to improve their ideological consciousness and establishing *Yangjiabu nianhua gaijin weiyuanhui* (the Yangjiabu New Year Print Reform Committee).[66] However, in the production of new New Year prints, folk artists often took on woodcut works, rather than creating new designs. According to Wang, most of the tasks of reforming New Year prints were done by professional artists, which were

[61] See Ye Youxin (1956), 'Against the Conservative View on the Public's Requirements for New Year Prints', *Fine Art*, No. 1, p. 10; Wang Kun (2013), 20 shiji Zhongguo nianhua de shanbian (*The Evolution of Chinese New Year Prints in the 20th Century*), Ph.D. thesis, Tianjing University, p. 107.
[62] See Cai (1950), op. cit., pp. 21-2; *Fine Art* (1958a), '*Qunzhong xihuan shenmeyang de nianhua* (What kind of New Year prints do people like?)', *Fine Art*, No. 4, pp. 8-9.
[63] See Lin Cheng (1956), '*Nianhua de secai* (Colours of New Year Prints)', *Fine Art*, No. 12, pp. 51-2; Hung (2011), op. cit., pp. 201-2.
[64] Gao Minglu (1993), '*Lun Mao Zedong de dazhong yishu moshi* (The Principle of Mao Zedong's Mass Art)', *21st Century*, No. 4, p. 63.
[65] Mao Zedong (1967), op. cit., p. 72.
[66] Bo (2008), op. cit., p. 198.

then printed by folk craftsmen.[67] During this period, popular products, including *guai*, were mainly created by professional artists from local cultural bureaus, art colleges and art groups. As a result of the reform of the New Year prints, artists did not really get themselves involved in the mass movement during this period, whilst the identities between artists and the masses had not been merged as Mao expected. The official over-politicised control and the excessive emphasis on political significance also caused alienation between artists and the public. In fact, it was difficult for most artists, especially those who did not serve the Party in the Yan'an period, to balance the political needs and public aesthetics. In 1956, professional artists and scholars spent almost a year discussing the reform of New Year prints in *Fine Art*. They mainly discussed how the *nianhua* reform could not only improve the ideological level, but also meet the requirements of the New Year from the viewpoint of the masses.[68]

The reform of New Year prints was not as successful as the Communist Party expected. The peasants were opposed to the new prints, and instead insisted on their familiar preferences and continued to buy traditional designs. However, as Mao said, the reform was "a long and even painful process".[69] The reform of *nianhua* was not going to succeed overnight and the artists and propagandists continued to practice in new *nianhua* in readiness for later mass revolutionary movements.

2.3 *Guai* in Reformed *Lianhuanhua*

Lianhuanhua, in Chinese, literally "serial pictures", means "illustrated story book", they

[67] Interview with Wang Kun, 25 February 2016, Tianjing.
[68] See, for example, Ye (1956), op. cit., *Fine Art*, Vol. 1; Zhu Zhangchao (1956), '*Cong chuban gongzuo tan nianhua chuangzuo de wenti* (Discussion on the Issue of New Year Print Creation from the Publishing)', *Fine Art*, No. 1; Yu Feng (1956), '*Xiang minjian nianhua xuexi* (Learning from Folk New Year Prints)', *Fine Art*, No. 3; Bo Yang (1956), '*Tan muban nianhua de youliang chuangtong* (On the Fine Tradition of Woodcut New Year Prints)', *Fine Art*, No. 5; Chen Yifan (1956), '*Kan xin jiu nianhua* (On the New and Old New Year Prints)', *Fine Art*, No. 5.
[69] Mao Zedong (1967), op. cit., p. 73.

are also called “little character’s book”, and were developed at the turn of the twentieth century. The size of the *lianhuanhua*, in which serial illustrated stories are often presented, are three by five inches, as shown in Figure 2.4. The format of *lianhuanhua* was usually designed with one illustration per page, accompanied by descriptive text appearing below. They are similar to comics, graphic novels and Japanese manga.[70]

Since the late nineteenth century, when Western printing technologies and mechanised printing equipment were introduced into China, *lianhuanhua* works could be reproduced in large numbers, with high quality at low cost, and soon became a vehicle of entertainment among the masses.[71] During the Republican period, *lianhuanhua* frequently drew their materials from popular dramas, folk tales legends, classical literature and mythological stories, such as the classical Chinese novel, *Journey to the West*. The oral and written literatures often provided *lianhuanhua* with wonderful, vivid stories and descriptions of *guai* images. An abundance of traditional *guai* imageries were depicted in *lianhuanhua* books.

By 1949, the year the People’s Republic of China was founded, *lianhuanhua* as a popular art had already attracted the attention of literary and art workers, and the reform of *lianhuanhua* was put forward. In the *People’s Daily* of 5 June 1949, Wu Lao (1923-2013), a well-known art educator in the PRC, proposed to replace old *lianhuanhua* with the new, in order to meet the new social needs. In the article, he pointed out that this form provided a good reading channel, not only for primary school students, but also for people who were illiterate or less educated, so that they could acquire knowledge.[72] Although he affirmed its significance for education, he stated that the old contents in *lianhuanhua* “poisoned the public” and called on art workers to

[70] Wong, Wendy Siuyi (2001), *Hong Kong Comics: A History of* Manhua (Cartoon). New York: Princeton Architectural Press, p. 11.
[71] Shen Kuiyi (2001), ‘Lianhuanhua and Manhua – Picture Books and Comics in Old Shanghai’, in John A. Lent (ed.), *Illustrating Asia: Comics, Humor Magazines, and Picture Books*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, p. 100.
[72] Wu Lao (1949), ‘*Yi xin xiaorenshu daiti jiu xiaorenshu* (Replace Old Little Character’s Books with the New)’, *People’s Daily*, 5 June, p. 4.

reform it.[73] By the end of 1949, *lianhuanhua* reform appeared to be officially authorised. Mao Zedong proposed the reform of *lianhuanhua* to the Ministry of Culture, and said, "*Lianhuanhua* is read by children as well as adults, illiterates as well as educated. Why not set up a publishing house to issue a series of new *lianhuanhua*?"[74] Subsequently, the Vice Minister of the Ministry of Culture Zhou Yang (1908-1989), gave instructions to set up the publishing house "Masses Pictorial Press" to manage, produce and distribute new *lianhuanhua* in 1950.[75] On 20 May 1951, at the 81st meeting of Government Administration Council, Zhou Yang stressed that the development and reform of new *lianhuanhua* and new *nianhua* were the key points of art work.[76] Thus, the *lianhuanhua* reform was officially launched. As with new *nianhua*, the official cultural organisation began to ideologically remould artists and manage subjects of new *lianhuanhua*. From 1951 to 1952, the Shanghai Municipal Cultural Bureau and the Shanghai Branch of the Art Worker's Association organised more than 200 artists to participate in educational programs, in order to improve their political consciousness and drawing techniques.[77]

As Mao said, *lianhuanhua* attracted readers of many ages. In order to promote Communist ideas and the new social atmosphere to the masses, old *lianhuanhua* had to be reformed. On 6 May 1951, an editorial of Solemnly Deal with Problems of Old Illustrated Story Books, published via the *People's Daily*, stated that feudal, pornographic, superstitious, reactionary contents in old *lianhuanhua*, which corroded and poisoned the minds of children and less educated adults, should be banned.[78] As I discussed previously, all the art forms including *lianhuanhua* had to advance the political and social aims for the new China. Subjects were mandated to shift from

[73] Ibid.
[74] Wei Hua (2009), Xin Zhongguo lianhuanhua yishu jianshi (*The Brief Art History of Illustrated Stroy Books in New China*). Beijing: Communication University of China Press, p. 17. English translation cited in Pan Lingling (2008), 'Post-Liberation History of China's *Lianhuanhua*', *International Journal of Comic Art 10*, No. 2, 15 October, p. 702.
[75] Chen (2000), op. cit., p. 255.
[76] Lü Peng (2007), *A History of Art in 20th-century China*. Beijing: Peking University Press, p. 435.
[77] Andrews, Julia F. (1994), *Painters and Politics in the People's Republic of China*, 1949-1979. Berkeley: University of California Press, p. 71.
[78] *People's Daily* (1951), '*Yanzheng chuli jiu lianhuantuhua wenti* (Solemnly Deal with Problems of Old Illustrated Story Books)', *People's Daily*, 6 May.

mythological and imaginary contents to more modern ones, conveying the Communist ideology.[79] As a result, new *lianhuanhua* focused mainly on the subjects of China's new constructions, new policies and revolutionary struggles, as well as Communist themes of the Soviet Union, rather than the old which promoted feudalism, superstition and pornography. Traditional *guai* imageries as "feudal and superstitious contents" were also cleared from the new *lianhuanhua*. According to the recollections of Li Lu, who used to be the chief of *lianhuanhua* section of Shanghai People's Publishing House, in 1952 Xinhua Bookstore, the largest bookstore chain in China, refused to sell almost all the classical themes of the *lianhuanhua,* including *guai* products.[80] This situation did not change until 1954.

In 1954, Liu Xun (1923-) as a chief editor of the journal Lianhuanhua bao (*Picture Stories*) of People's Fine Arts Publishing House, suggested that in order to understand the educational significance of classical themes:

> We should recognise that historical literature, deity and martial arts stories (such as *Investiture of the Gods*, *Journey to the West*, *The story of monk Chai Kung*, etc.), and classical literature (such as *Heroes of the Marshes*, *The Spectacles in Ancient and Modern Times*, *Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio*, *Dream of the Red Chamber*, etc.) are widely circulated for a long period of time among the Chinese people, and are loved by the masses. Many of them are excellent works of realism, they reflect the history of our country and the lives of our ancestors in varying degrees and different aspects, and create a variety of vivid images. Many of the works show our ancestors' excellent moral qualities, but also reflect to a certain extent our ancestors' hobbies, virtues and simple desires. Today working people can further understand the history of our motherland through those themes. It plays a significant role in inheriting and carrying forward our ancestors' different virtues – such as loving work, braveness, doing boldly what is righteous, diligent, humble, etc. – to be presented in different times.[81]

He argued that art workers should not "incorrectly, unilaterally, narrowly" deny all

[79] Andrews (1994), op. cit., p. 71.
[80] Li Lu (2001), '*Xin meishu chubanshe shimo* (The Beginning and the End of New Art Publishing House)', in Wang Guanqing and Li Minghai (eds.), Xin Zhongguo lianhuanhua: 50-60 niandai (*New Chinese Lianhuanhua: 50s-60s*). Shanghai: Shanghai Pictorial Press, p. 15.
[81] Liu Xun (1954), '*Lianhuanhua chuangzuo zhong de jige wenti* (Several Problems on the Creation of Illustrated Story Books)', *Fine Art*, No. 7, pp. 7-8.

traditional themes.[82] He further stated that many works of realism conveyed the correct moral ideas and ideological values, rather than the "feudal, superstitious or pornographic". In the text he mentioned that the three compilations — Fengshen yanyi (*Investiture of the Gods*), *Journey to the West* and Liaozhai zhiyi (*Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio*) — depicting various *guai* imageries, were proposed to be adapted into *lianhuanhua*. Liu Xun was not only the editor of the journal, he was more importantly, the director of the art creation department of the People's Fine Arts Publishing House. To a certain extent, his views represented the ideas of some artists, and even the views of the masses, and as such, his opinion was accepted. From 1954, some classical themes, including *guai*, reappeared to entertain audiences.

The revival of classical stories, such as *Danao tiangong* (Havoc in Heaven) from *Journey to the West*, in the mid-1950s could be seen as a transformation of traditional moralities in Chinese fables and mythology.[83] In the story of Havoc in Heaven, the Monkey King dares to resist hegemony referred to the Jade Emperor, the ruler of heaven; as shown in Figure 2.5, where the Monkey King fights with the heavenly generals and soldiers. His rebellious spirit and great ability could be linked to the resistance and victory of the Communist Party. *Huapi* (Painted Skin) from *Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio* was also published in *lianhuanhua*. Though this *guai* subject, the artworks could not reveal 'superstition' and were required to conform to the new socialist political values. But in fact, the transformation of *guai* in practice was not as clear or obvious as it was in theory.

In terms of dissemination, both official and private organisations made a contribution to delivering *lianhuanhua* with *guai* imagery to the masses. In the 1950s, the reproduction and distribution of new New Year prints, and new *lianhuanhua* with *guai*, was basically controlled by official publishing houses. Beijing and Shanghai were the two major centers of distribution. In Beijing, the publishing house Masses Pictorial

[82] Ibid, p. 7.
[83] Wang and Li, op. cit., p. 21.

Press, which merged in People's Fine Arts Publishing House in 1951, organised and controlled the distribution of new New Year prints and new *lianhuanhua*.[84] In Shanghai, the distribution of *lianhuanhua* was mainly controlled by a consortium of 190 private publishers, and was incorporated into the new publishing house New Art Press in 1952, which was later absorbed in to the Shanghai People's Fine Arts Publishing House in 1956.[85] In the 1950s, millions of *lianhuanhua* with *guai* images were produced and disseminated to the public, creating a publication boom.

Frequent exhibitions were held in capital city to delivery popular products, including *guai*, to the public. On 25 September 1954, the China Artists Association and the People's Fine Arts Publishing House in Beijing held the Exhibition of Original Works of *Lianhuanhua*. 43 sets of works were on display, including Baishe zhuan (*Madame White Snake*), which is adapted from Chinese myth and legend and depicts half-animal, half-human *guai*, as shown in Figure 2.6.[86] On 27 March 1955, the Second National Art Exhibition opened in Beijing, and new New Year prints and *lianhuanhua* were exhibited.[87] *Lianhuanhua* works with *guai* were also publised through journals. In 1951, People's Fine Arts Publishing House founded the *Picture Stories* journal to discuss *lianhuanhua* issues and publish new works, disseminating *guai* among a wide readership.[88]

In contrast to New Year prints and newspapers with cartoons, *lianhuanhua* books, which included *guai* themes, would be disseminated to the masses through rented book stalls. These *lianhuanhua* stalls attracted not only children, but also adults. The public could borrow *lianhuanhua* books for a day by paying a small amount of money, which even children could afford. In 1951, Shanghai had more than 3500 *lianhuanhua*

[84] Andrews (1994), op. cit., p. 67.
[85] Wei (2009), op. cit., p. 23-4.
[86] *Fina Art* (1954), '*Lianhuanhua yuanzuo zhanlan* (Exhibition of Original Works of illustrated story books)', *Fine Art*, No. 10, p. 51.
[87] *Fina Art* (1955), '*Renmin meishu de zhongda fazhan: Dierjie quanguo meishu zhanlanhui zai jing kaimu* (Great Development of People's Art: The Second National Art Exhibition Opens in Beijing)', *Fine Art*, No. 3, p. 7.
[88] Liu Yongsheng (2011), Xin Zhongguo lianhuanhua tushi: 1949-1999 (*The Art History of Illustrated Story Books in New China: 1949-1999*). Shanghai: Shanghai People's Fine Arts Publishing House, p. 17.

stalls, and the number of people renting books per day reached between 200,000 and 400,000.[89] On streets of many 1950's cities, children or adults could be seen gathered in front of book stalls, reading *lianhuanhua* books (Figure 2.7). The stall and readers spontaneously formed a particular reading space, like a library, in the public space. The sight of people concentrating on reading books could often attract more customers for stalls, as passersby would be curious as to what was so interesting about the books. People would exchange their opinions and discuss plots or characters from *lianhuanhua*, which meant that the space did not remain quiet. As a moving vehicle, *lianhuanhua* books carrying *guai* imageries passed from one person to another. *Lianhuanhua* including *guai* products enjoyed high popularity via book stalls.

People's consumption of *guai* products would indicate their reactions and attitudes to the changes. According to the previous discussion, peasants did not buy new New Year prints, as advocated by the Party in the early PRC. Instead, they continued to buy traditional expressions, which were more familiar to them. Reform of the New Year did not appear to be successful, as it did not meet the needs of the peasants. On the contrary, new *lianhuanhua* with *guai* imageries became saleable commodities. Once published, in June 1954, the illustrated story books of *Havoc in Heaven*, created by Chen Guangyi (1919-1991), quickly attracted the majority of readers. In little more than a year, the book sold more than one million copies, achieving new records for the printing volume of a single version since the founding of PRC.[90] As a result of this increased consumption, the revival of traditional themes in *lianhuanhua* catered greatly to the public's aesthetic. Because the *lianhuanhua Havoc in Heaven* was widely acclaimed, from 1954 to 1956 the New Art Press, and later the Shanghai People's Fine Arts Publishing House, published a series of ten volumes of illustrated story books adapted from the *Journey to the West*.[91] For many children, those

[89] Chen Sha (1952), '*Zhuyi ertong yuedu (xiaorenshu) de zhidao gongzuo* (Pay Attention to the Instructional Work of Reading Books (Illustrated Story Books) for Children)', Wenhui bao (*Weihui Daily*), 8 September, p. 7.
[90] Li (2001), op. cit., p. 15.
[91] Wang and Li, op. cit., p. 75.

lianhuanhua with *guai* were not just entertainment and educational books, but they were also considered to be important treasures in their childhood. Li Bin, an artist born in 1949, recalls that he and his friends used to collect and look after series of *lianhuanhua* books.[92] According to Fan Jingzhong, a professor of art history, who was born in 1951, children of that time considered that a *lianhuanhua* book of *Journey to the West* was worth showing off.[93] For the public, some particular imageries of *guai* in *lianhuanhua* still occupied an important position.

In the *lianhuanhua* reform of the early 1950s, the Party was eager to phase out old *lianhuanhua* with *guai* that could not serve political purposes. By remoulding the political thoughts of *lianhuanhua* artists, and establishing and controlling the publication and distribution of *lianhuanhua*, the Communist propagandists aimed to quickly shape the new political culture in the early days of PRC. However, new *lianhuanhua* in a single political theme did not completely meet the needs of the public. Beginning in 1954, with the relatively loose political standards and concepts, the Party reselected and interpreted the traditional themes including *guai*. Some particular traditional *guai* in *lianhuanhua* reentered the market, and were popular with the public. It showed that reintroducing traditional *guai* imageries became an inevitable trend in later propaganda movements.

2.4 *Guai* Cartoons as Satirical Weapons in Newspapers

In the social, political and transitional context of twentieth-century China, newspapers quickly became the main media employed by different parties to promote their political claims. In the political propaganda work of the Communist Party, newspapers were deeply valued, and occupied the core position in various propaganda vehicles. On 2

[92] Interview with Li Bin, 29 December 2014, Shanghai.
[93] Interview with Fan Jingzhong, 11 September 2014, Shanghai.

April 1948, Mao Zedong spoke to editors of *Shansi-Suiyuan Daily*, and stressed, "to give correct publicity in the newspapers to the Party's general and specific policies and to strengthen the Party's ties with the masses through the newspapers – this is an important question of principle in our Party's work which is not to be taken lightly."[94]

With the development of newspapers, the use of cartoons – mainly disseminated via newspapers – also rose rapidly. In this research, a cartoon refers to a form of illustrated art, featured in exaggerated non-realism, which is usually used for satire. In the May the Fourth Movement and the Sino-Japanese War, cartoons were frequently employed by Chinese artists to attack 'aggressors, exploiters and oppressors'.[95] Indeed, from the Yan'an years, political cartoons were an offensive tool used by the Communists. There are two obvious advantages in adopting this artistic form: firstly, cartoons often use simple, direct and easily understandable visual languages to convey information; and secondly, because of the use of the single-outline form, political cartoons could be produced in time to meet the publication deadlines of newspapers.

Since the founding of the PRC, cartoons as satirical weapons continued to play an essential role. On 13 March 1950, an article of Cartoons Should Serve People Better in the *People's Daily* commented on some inappropriate cartoon works and suggested that "cartoonists must seriously study politics and policies in order to create powerful artistic weapons that served the people."[96] This politicised view was supported by Wang Chaowen, an art theorist and art critic. He put forward a concept of "*shishi manhua* (current affairs cartoons)" via the *People's Daily* on 18 November 1950. In the text, he considered that cartoons should be closely linked with the current affairs, offer a timely response to the government's call and reflect the views of the government.[97] Before

[94] Mao Zedong (1961), 'A Talk to the Editorial Staff of the *Shansi-Suiyuan Daily'*, *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung: Volume IV*. Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, p. 242.
[95] See Bi and Huang, op. cit., pp. 41-208; Sullivan (1996), op. cit., pp. 119-25.
[96] Song Ruwen (1950), '*Manhua yao genghao de fuwu yu renmin* (Cartoons Should Serve People Better)', *People's Daily*, 13 March.
[97] Wang Zhaowen (1950b), '*Guanyu shishi manhua* (On Cartoons about Current Events)', *People's Daily*, 12 November, p. 7.

long, cartoons appeared frequently in newspapers in support of the Party's policies, especially Party-run newspapers, such as Beijing's *People's Daily* and Shanghai's *Liberation Daily*. In the 1950s, cartoon were effectively used in conjunction with a series of the Communist Party's political campaigns and policies, such as the Korean War[98], the Three-anti Campaign and Five-anti Campaign[99], Anti-Hu Feng[100] and the Anti-Rightist Movement[101].

Chinese cartoons were influenced by Soviet art for a long time. In the 1950s, Soviet cartoons were often reproduced in Chinese official newspapers and journals, such as the *People's Daily* and *Fine Art*.[102] According to Zhang Yaoning, who specialises in cartoons, these political cartoons were provided as official examples for Chinese cartoonists to study.[103] While studying the Soviet cartoons, Chinese cartoonists attempted to combine them with Chinese culture to create their own works. Since Yan'an Period, Hua Junwu (1915-2010), a famous Communist cartoonist, had already begun to use traditional opera elements, proverbs and idioms in the creation of cartoons.[104] The total population of China in 1949 was 550 million, with more than 80% of them illiterate.[105] Considering the generally low educational level of the public in the early PRC, visual languages employed in cartoons had to be familiar to most people and intuitively clear. The materials could be inspired by traditional proverbs, folk tales, and legends which were usually created by the masses. The familiar expressions and imageries including *guai* would be easier for Chinese audiences to accept, and the messages they convey would be also easier to receive and understand.

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[98] The Korea War took place between South Korea and North Korea from 1950 to 1953. The United States joined the battle to aid South Korea, and China participated to support North Korea.
[99] The Three-anti Campaign and Five-anti Campaign were movements against domestic corruption and other economic issues conducted by Mao Zedong in 1951 and 1952.
[100] In the 1950s, Anti-Hu Feng was a political campaign to criticise literary and art theorist Hu Feng and his followers.
[101] The Anti-Rightist Movement lasted from 1957 to 1959, and aimed to purge bourgeois rightist.
[102] Bi Keguan and Huang Yuanlin (1986), Zhongguo manhua shi (*Chinese Cartoon History*). Beijing: Wenhua yishu chubanshe, p. 265.
[103] Interview with Zhang Yaoning, 3 January 2015, Beijing.
[104] Bi and Huang, op. cit., p. 230.
[105] See Fairbank, John K. and McFarquhar, Roderick (1995), *Cambridge History of China: Volume 14: The People's Republic, Part 1: The Emergence of Revolutionary China 1949-1965*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 186; Asai, Kanako (1999), Dangdai Zhongguo wenmang kaocha (*Contemporary Chinese Illiteracy Study*). Beijing: Contemporary China Publishing House, p. 1.

In the 1949 article of On the People's Democratic Dictatorship, in order to eliminate domestic and foreign 'enemies', Mao Zedong stated that it was necessary to first draw a clear line between the revolutionaries and reactionaries, socialists and capitalists.[106] Under these circumstances, *guai* imagery became an effective way to attack 'enemies' became an effective way. Chinese artists portrayed images of half-animal and half-human *guai* to dehumanise and demonise the enemies. As I discussed in Chapter One, there is a clear demarcation between humans and *guai*, which cannot be crossed. Thus, this method could clearly distinguish between humans and *guai*, 'us' and 'others'.

During this period, particular visual representations were employed by artists to demonise 'enemies' as *guai*. In the early days of the PRC, the dog *guai* was frequently used in Communist propaganda art against enemies. Chinese cartoonists depicted dog *guai* most commonly in political cartoons to humiliate Chiang Kai-shek (1887-1975), the leader of the Kuomintang (Chinese Nationalist Party) and the Republic of China. The Chinese Communist Revolution was a war which raged between the Kuomintang and the Communist Party from 1945 to 1949. The Communist Party, led by Mao, achieved victory and established the PRC, while Chiang and the Kuomintang troops withdrew to Taiwan. Even before 1949 Chiang had already become the main target of criticism by Communist artists,[107] following 1949 Jiang was usually associated with '*zougou* (running dog)'. In China, the term *zougou*, literally means walking dog, which originally referred to a hunting dog, while later it is generally used to satirise a minion of the vicious. In 1949, Mao had already pointed out that *zougou* referred politically to the lackeys of the Imperialists, especially the US Imperialists, and Chiang Kai-shek was indeed the lackey.[108] In the 1950s, Jiang's image was naturally combined with the dog image in cartoons, in order to expose and criticise him as *zougou* of the American government.

[106] Mao Zedong (1961), '*Lun renmin minzhu zhuanzheng* (On the People's Democratic Dictatorship)', *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung: Volume IV*. Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, p. 415.
[107] Hung (2011), op. cit., p. 166.
[108] Mao (1961), op. cit., pp. 414-5.

In 1954, cartoonist Jiang Fan (1924-) drew a pair of cartoons, and depicted Chiang as a half-dog and half-human *guai*, in line with the article of Taiwanese Dog is Barking[109]. In the cartoon *The Protector of the Dog* (Figure 2.8), Chiang lifts the back half of his body, and his front body lies on the ground, showing a surrender gesture. He is contentedly dangling a bone his master has rewarded him. Another bone, labelled with the symbol of the dollar, is in a broken bowl. In this cartoon, Chiang's leg and tail are broken and wrapped with bandages, and he wears only one poor shoe. The cartoon criticises that Chiang and his Kuomintang are penniless and frustrated, and can only abjectly beg for master America's mercy and ask for financial aid. In another cartoon *The Protector of the Dog* (Figure 2.9), the dog *guai* Chiang is shaking his tail and licking his master's shoe with his tongue. His flattering face and undignified behaviour, show that he will do anything in order to get the continued support and protection of the masters "USA", as inscribed on the shoe. Both cartoons criticise that Chiang is a greedy and spineless leader. Artists in this period attacked Chiang as a half-human and half-dog *guai*, strengthening his ugly and distorted image in people's minds.

Another imagery of the snake *guai*, also appeared frequently in cartoon works. Snakes live in dark, humid places and are aggressive, especially the poisonous ones. They are often considered as insidious, cunning and sinister creatures in Chinese traditions.[110] The snake heart is generally used insidious people. Cartoonists depicted half-snake half-human *guai* to negatively characterise enemies. For example, in a cartoon (Figure 2.10) conducted in the Anti-Hu Feng campaign, Hu Feng (1902-1985) is shown as a *guai* with his head and a snake body. As a literary and art theorist, he was criticised as deviating from Mao Zedong's political literary and art thought.[111] He often became the target of criticism by cartoonists in the 1950s. In the cartoon (Figure 2.10), the neck of Hu, who is demonised as a snake *guai*, is grasped by a strong hand. He painfully spits

[109] Xie Tian'ao (1954), '*Taiwan de gou zai jiao* (Taiwanese Dog is Barking)', Manhua (*Cartoon*), No. 46, p. 5.
[110] Chang Jingyu (1992), '*Hanyu xiangzheng ciyu de wenhua hanyi* (The Cultural Meanings of Chinese Symbolic Words and Expression)', *Language Teaching and Linguistic Studies*, No. 4, p. 121.
[111] Karl, Rebecca E. (2010), *Mao Zedong and China in the Twentieth-Century World: A Concise History*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 87-8.

out the long snake tongue, and his face looks like twisted and hideous. The strong hand is bigger than his head, and can easily subdue him. This shows the strength of 'us', and the weakness of the enemy. In the cartoon, Hu wears a shirt with characters of "*jinbu* (progress)", but his long snake body is exposed beneath the shirt; on the snake body is written: "*Hu Feng fan geming jituan* (Hu Feng Counter-revolutionary Group)." This shows that, covered by the shirt of progress, his essence is counter-revolutionary. Hu is surrounded by books and articles which are probably written by him. This cartoon seems to satirise the fact that Hu Feng wrote articles to promote the development of literature and art, while in fact those works were against Mao's literary and art thought, and defamed revolutionary literary and artistic works. His sinister intentions and the nature of *guai* were revealed.

In the Anti-Hu Feng Campaign, Hu was sometimes placed in cartoons with Chiang Kai-shek. In the cartoon of *The Same Root* (Figure 2.11), Chiang is portrayed as a *guai* with his face and a body of a tree trunk. The broken and decaying trunk indicates the decline of Chiang. Hu Feng and scholar Hu Shi (1891-1962)[112] are presented as poisonous mushroom *guai,* both having been produced by Chiang. In the cartoon, the smiling Chiang seems to be satisfied with the fruits he cultivated – this illustrates the close relationship between the three. Hu Feng and Hu Shi were the satisfied followers of Chiang. This cartoon exposes the origin of Hu Feng as a counter-revolutionist. As an editorial published by the *People's Daily* on 10 June 1955 revealed, Hu was the "imperialist and Kuomintang secret agent".[113]

Another *guai* cartoon illustrates the relationship between the "US imperialist", Chiang and Hu Feng. In *Hu Feng's Political Background* (Figure 2.12), Zhang Leping (1910-1992) depicted a General dressed in an American uniform, referring to the US

[112] Hu Shi was the Ambassador of the Republic of China to the United States from 1938 to 1942. He went to Taiwan, following Chiang Kai-shek, and in 1957, became the president of the Academia Sinica in Taipei.

[113] Mao Zedong (1977), 'Preface and Editor's Notes to Material on the Counter-revolutionary Hu Feng Clique: Editor's Notes', *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung: Volume V*. Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, p. 179.

imperialist. In the cartoon, the cartoonist did not portray the General's face and lower body, but instead focused on his fat belly, showing the greed of the US imperialist. There is a *guai* with Hu Feng's face and a pen body in the coat pocket. Chiang was portrayed as a pistol *guai*. Here, Hu Feng and Chiang respectively represent the cultural force and military force, the two forces being held by the US imperialist. This cartoon criticised the US imperialist's attempt to "overthrow the People's Republic of China and restore imperialist and Kuomintang rule"[114], through controlling and directing Chiang and Hu.

According to the various targets of criticism, different elements would be used. Artists employed the depiction of political enemies as *guai* with non-human forms, such as brutal beasts, to expose their 'true nature' and humiliate them. The practice of *guai* in cartoons in this period provided important examples which were employed in the criticism of the later political movements.

During this period, the dissemination of *guai* cartoons relied mainly on newspapers. Many newspapers attached great importance to political cartoons with *guai*, and often published or reprinted them. From the outset, the *People's Daily* gave cartoons including *guai* images extensive coverage, using even a full page to publish cartoons as can be seen in Figure 2.13. Meanwhile, a group of cartoonists, including Hua Junwu, Fang Cheng (1918-), Mi Gu (1918-1986) and Ying Tao (1925-2012), worked for the *People's Daily*, and regularly provided cartoons to tie in with articles and news. *People's Daily*, on behalf of the official Party, is the most authoritative newspaper in the country and affected other newspapers nationwide. According to Fang Cheng, various local newspapers followed the *People's Daily* in employing cartoons including *guai*, and often reproduced works directly from the *People's Daily*.[115] *Guai* cartoons could be delivered to the masses nationwide via both official and local newspapers.

[114] Ibid.
[115] Fang Cheng (1988), '*Wangshi xiantan meishuzu* (Recall the Past of the Art Group)', in the Editorial Group of the History of the *People's Daily* (ed.), Renmin ribao huiyilu: 1948-1988 (*People's Daily Memoirs: 1948-1988*). Beijing: People's Daily Press, p. 378.

Compared with New Year prints and *lianhuanhua*, newspapers had a significant advantage of timeliness, in that newspapers were the periodic publication with the shortest publication cycle. In particular, daily newspapers could be produced and disseminated to audiences every day. *Guai* images with political messages via newspapers could be brought before the masses in the quickest way. Audiences could receive timely political information conveyed by *guai* cartoons. They could then cooperate with the newly released policies, and respond quickly to, and participate in political movements initiated by the Communist Party. In this way, the Communist Party could effectively promote and implement new policies or movements.

Guai cartoons were also disseminated via magazines and books, and were also frequently reproduced on posters and blackboards, as shown in Figure 2.14, where factory workers in Shenyang are depicting a political cartoon on the blackboard in April 1951[116]. In the 1950s, the masses often reproduced the cartoons originally published in newspapers, turing them into cartoon posters, which were then posted in factories and on streets.[117] Cartoons usually employed simple artistic techniques, which people could copy, reproduce, and even recreate. An article published on the *People's Daily* proposed that cartoon workers should provide cartoon reproduction works for the public.[118] This would not only enhance the communication between artists and the public, but through reproduction would also encourage the public to participate in the creation of cartoons including *guai*. According to Jiang Jiemeng, who used to be in a cartoon group active in the early Cultural Revolution, his creation of cartoons began with copying and reproducing cartoons including *guai* depicted by famous cartoonists.[119] Through continuous accumulation of material and practice of artistic skills, the audience could gradually transform into an artist. The understanding and perception of the people towards artworks could be presented through reproduction and recreation. Dog *guai* and

[116] Although the cartoon in this photo does not employ *guai* images, the photo is an example to show that how cartoons with *guai* imageries disseminated via the blackboard.
[117] Fang (1988), op. cit., p. 378.
[118] Gao Meng (1951), '*Yingdang zhongshi qunzhongxing de manhua fuzhi gongzuo* (Should Pay Attention to Mass Cartoon Reproduction Work)', *People's Daily*, 25 Februay.
[119] Interview with Jiang Jimeng, 26 December 2014, Shanghai.

snake *guai* used by cartoonists in the 1950s were reinterpreted and recreated by the masses in large numbers in the Cultural Revolution. It showed that the public accepted, agreed with and then took the initiative to use the application of *guai* in political cartoons. Significantly, the development of *guai* cartoons via newspapers in this period laid the foundation for its wide application in the later political revolutions.

In the 1950s, the Communist Party adopted different reform measures for three different popular media to delivery *guai* imagery. New Year prints, associated with religious sacrifice absorbed a strong religious colour. Thus, the Communist Party strived to eliminate all religious contents including *guai* in new prints. In contrast to New Year prints, the main function of *lianhuanhua* was entertainment and education. It did not show such a direct relationship with religion. Meanwhile, some traditional *guai*, such as the Monkey King, could be read with a certain political significance. This was why these *guai* reappeared in new *lianhuanhua*. *Guai* cartoons via newspapers were used as a powerful weapon to timely criticise enemies. Those negative *guai* were completely politicised images. From these it shows that during this period, the main purpose of the Communist Party was to politicise the popular arts, and make them better serve the Communist Party through reform and practice.

In the 1950s, theoretical guidance inherited Mao's artistic thoughts and political ideology which were established officially by Mao at the Yan'an Forum. In fact, it did not clarify directions on reforming visual form and content, and the extent to which they had to be worked out in practice. After the founding of the PRC, the Communist Party launched art reforms to practice Mao's artistic theory. However, the transformation of *guai* in the practice of new New Year prints was not as successful as Communists expected. They forcibly extracted *guai* imagery from new New Year prints which did not sell well as expected. Comparatively speaking, the practice of depicting *guai* in *lianhuanhua* and newspapers was more successful, attracting more readers. Although the practice was not smooth, it still provided significant experience of reforming mass art with *guai* imagery in the 1950s. As a result, it carried out Mao's

political art policies to share an ideological space with all Chinese people through propaganda art movements; it focused on the ideological reform and the transformation of identity of Chinese artists; it gradually established and improved management systems, and publishing and disseminative channels, to better advance art reforms and delivery political messages to the public. The 1950s provided mainly a theoretical and practical basis for the further development of *guai* imagery in following political movements.

Chapter Three: *Guai* in the Great Leap Forward

In 1958, Mao Zedong launched the Great Leap Forward programme, which required a large-scale mobilisation of public participation. As a result, during this period, a huge quantity of artworks associated with traditional *guai* imagery was created. Compared to the early 1950s, the imageries of *guai*, through political filters and modifications, became the main characters of artworks, and were regarded as the most significant propaganda motifs of this period.

In order to research the transformation of *guai* imagery in the Great Leap Forward, in this chapter the political and theoretical background will be investigated first. I will also discuss what role propaganda art played in the movement. In order to convey specific communist ideologies and social values directly and widely to the masses, artworks had to cater to their philosophical aspirations and standards of artistic appreciation. The masses were involved in the creation of propaganda visual products, thus, in the second section, I will focus on the questions: how did the masses participate in the visual production and through what channels? And how did they affect professional artists? The participation of the public caused a dramatic change in the application of *guai* in propaganda art, therefore, in this section I will also discuss the changes that took place between the early 1950s and the period of Great Leap Forward. Then, in the two following sections, I will focus on image analysis of *guai* imagery in visualising the Great Leap Forward. Through the analysis, I will discuss the role of *guai* imagery in the visual interpretation of the unrealistic economic task, and just how the Party manipulated propaganda arts with *guai* imagery in order to convey political messages. In this chapter, the discussion will centre on the question of how *guai* imagery was employed to construct a bridge between the Communist Party and the masses. The practice of *guai* in the Great Leap Forward Movement became a significant tested basis for the Cultural Revolution.

3.1 To Visualise the Great Leap Forward Movement

In 1958, Mao Zedong started the modernisation progamme known as '*Da yuejin* (the Great Leap Forward)' by following the Communist Party's the General Line for socialist construction – "*duokuai haosheng de jianshe shehuizhuyi* (build socialism higher, faster, better, and more economical)"[1] – which was announced at the Second Session of the Eighth Representative Conference of the Chinese Communist Party. As China's national economic plan – the First Five Year Plan (1953-1957) had made great achievements, Mao believed that the nation was ripe for the movement of Great Leap Forward.[2]

The intention of the Great Leap was to not only achieve a huge economic plan, but also to prove to the Western countries that Chinese development and economic growth would be an enormous and resounding success. Mao put forward an economic slogan, "*chaoYing ganMei* (surpass England and to catch up with America)".[3] In response to his calling, this national movement aimed to make China's rapid transformation into a modern, industrialised society. In order to facilitate this, the Party set up a series of ambitious goals and measures which required the mobilisation of mass participation.

The key task of economic development in this period was to vigorously promote the development of industry and agriculture. On 2 February 1958, an editorial published by the *People's Daily*, proposed industrial and agricultural production expansion as a great leap forward.[4] Soon, a series of measures to increase grain and steel production were released and implemented. In order to enhance the efficiency of production, the Communist Party considered it necessary to organise and control the

[1] The 'General Line' for socialist construction refers to four characters *duo, kuai, hao, sheng* (more, faster, better and more economical), and was regarded as a summary of Mao's measures for Chinese economic development. See East Asian Research Center of Harvard University (1962), *Communist China 1955-1959: Policy Documents with Analysis*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, pp. 416-8.
[2] Yao Shujie (2012), *Economic Growth, Income Distribution and Poverty Reduction in Contemporary China*. London: Routledge, p. 25.
[3] Zhang Xiaoming (2015), *Deng Xiaoping's Long War: The Military Conflict between China and Vietnam: 1979-1991*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, p. 19.
[4] *People's Daily* (1958), '*Women de xingdong kouhao: Fandui langfei, qinjian jianguo* (Our Action Slogan: Combating Waste and Building Up Our Country with Industry and Frugality)', *People's Daily*, 2 February, p. 1.

large quantity of rural labor resources and, therefore, mandatory agricultural collectivisation was introduced.[5] People's Communes were established across the country and were joined by 99 percent of the population of peasants at that time by the late autumn of 1958.[6] In August 1958, at the Politburo meeting in Beidaihe, it was decided that steel production should increase from the 5.35 million tons created in 1957, to 10.7 million tons in 1958; and backyard steel furnaces should be employed to achieve the increase.[7] To boost national steel production, the people dedicated themselves to the production of steel. In September 1958, 50 million people participated in steel production, and built more than 600,000 backyard steel furnaces.[8] Backyard steel furnaces were set up in every urban work unit,[9] and in all rural communes[10]. In the factories, farms, army units, schools and other work units, people fought in the front lines of the socialist construction.

It was presumed that the masses wanted a socialist culture to mobilise their enthusiasm in this large-scale production campaign. The Communist Party also demanded propaganda art to advocate and promote the development of such a bold economic plan. In pursuing Mao's ideal, the Party attempted to mobilise the masses, especially workers and peasants. However, as I discussed previously, in the early PRC, more than 80% of the people were illiterate; up until 1957, still nearly 60% of people were uneducated. [11] Therefore, in addition to verbal propaganda, communication with the masses via a visual vehicle became the most crucial factor. In

[5] Kueh, Y. Y. (1994), *Agricultural Instability in China, 1931-1990: Weather, Technology, and Institutions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 20; p.208.
[6] Chang, Parris (1978), *Power and Policy in China*. Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, p. 104.
[7] Lardy, R. Nicholas and Fairbank, K. John (1987), 'The Chinese Economy under Stress, 1958–1965'. In Roderick MacFarquhar (ed.), *The People's Republic, Part 1: The Emergence of Revolutionary China 1949–1965*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 367-8; Chan, Alfred L. (2001), *Mao's Crusade: Politics and Policy Implementation in China's Great Leap Forward*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 71–74.
[8] Liu Shuhan (2014), Zhongguo dangdai jingji zhengce yu shijian (*Contemporary China's Economic Policy and Practice*). Beijing: China Financial & Economic Publishing House, p. 12.
[9] Kennedy, Scott (2005), *The Business of Lobbying in China*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, p. 57.
[10] Kiely, Ray (1998), *Industrialization and Development: A Comparative Analysis*. London; Bristol: UCL Press, p. 45.
[11] Pang Song and Zheng Qian (2003), Mao Zedong shidai de Zhongguo (*China in Mao's Era*). Beijing: Chinese Communist Party History Press, pp. 94-5.

contrast to the art reform movements in the 1950s, the Great Leap Forward movement was a national mass movement. Here, it is necessary to compare the verbal and visual communications.

Verbal communication, delivering messages directly via language, is often viewed as a more important and prevalent type of communication.[12] In public media, however, visual communication often has more obvious advantages. People often receive information via visual materials more quickly than verbal communications. When people intend to deliver complex messages, a visual vehicle can often complete the dissemination more quickly. When people intend to evoke the emotions or attitudes of audiences, they often emphasise their verbal ability to stimulate the audience's imagination.[13] The power of visual imagery can trigger people's unconscious associations and reactions. For example, as I discussed in Chapter One, in the Qing Dynasty the golden dragon with five claws symbolised imperial power and strength. Also, when employed on documents, the golden dragon emphasised the importance of their contents, which could immediately attract attention from people and evoke a powerful involuntary response. Sometimes, visual symbols can summarise or simplify complex messages or ideas that are disseminated to another person or a group of people. The visual dissemination of messages can be more flexible, particularly when it is intended to deliver messages to hundreds of millions of people across the whole China. In the 1950s, the backwardness of electronics and communication technology led to a reliance on paper media for the dissemination of information. Messages in visual forms could be delivered widely and effectively to mass audiences nationwide through a variety of widespread media, including newspapers, magazines, books and posters.

Considering the generally low level of educational the public in the early PRC, visual

[12] Rocci, Andrea and Saussure, Louis de (2016), *Verbal Communication*. Berlin; Boston: De Gruyter Mouton, p, 01.
[13] Blair, J. Anthony (2004), 'The Rhetoric of Visual Arguments', in Charles A. Hill and Marguerite H. Helmers (eds.), *Defining Visual Rhetorics*. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum, p. 53.

language was popular and easy for people to understand, and accept. The dissemination of messages depended on a visual medium, in part or as a whole, so that the images could be read and understood by those who can't read text. In order to deliver messages successfully, the visual languages employed had to be familiar to, and readily understood by most people. The materials could be drawn from legends, folk tales, classical novels and traditional customs. The combination of images and texts were often more successful in delivering messages, playing the role of notification and persuasion.[14] During the Great Leap Forward Movement, thousands of visual products employed particular visual materials with political slogans to inspire the public. Visual communication played a significant role in how the masses were exposed to, and comprehended messages that were presented in this period.

Since the People's Republic of China was founded in 1949, the Communist Party widely employed visual arts to propagate political ideals and activities. Stefan R. Landsberger, a scholar and collector who focuses on Chinese propaganda posters, considers that the Communists guided and educated the masses to "believe what was considered proper to believe" via various forms including literature, poetry, songs, painting and more.[15] Propaganda arts were regarded as one of the most significant means to not only disseminate policies, but more importantly, to also present visions of the future that the Chinese Communist Party intented to acheive, especially for people who could not read. During the political mass movements of the 1950s, especially in the time of the Great Leap Forward, the Communists relied heavily on propaganda art to 'educate' the masses. In these years, propaganda art made great progress, both in form and content. *Guai* imagery, as a significant content, was depicted in various art forms to support the propaganda of Mao's thought in the wave of the movement.

[14] Kenneth, Louis Smith (2005), *Handbook of Visual Communication: Theory, Methods, and Media*. Mahwah: L. Erlbaum, p. 123.
[15] Landsberger, Stefan R. (1998), *Paint It Red: Fifty Years of Chinese Propaganda Posters*. Groninger: Groninger Museum, p. 23.

Section 3.2 A Great Leap Forward in Mass Participation

During the Great Leap Forward Movement, to deliver the ideals of Mao Zedong to the masses more widely, the Party turned to professional artists, as well as amateurs from peasants, workers and soldiers to start a nationwide propaganda movement.

On 3 March 1958, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China issued The Instruction of Anti-waste, Anti-conservative Movement, and set out the Great Leap Forward in culture.[16] In response to the call of the Party, artists and art organisations soon developed art production plans. In Beijing, 39 cartoonists proposed to create 5,800 works in 1958; 30 printmakers planned to produce 2,112 works by the year's end; 39 painters of *guohua* (traditional Chinese painting) committed to creating 5,812 works within a year.[17] Artists from Shanghai prepared for the completion of a total of 10,000 works in 1958.[18] In July that year, teachers and students from the Central Academy of Fine Arts created a total of 214 wall paintings (300 square meters) to propagate the Great Leap Forward Movement.[19] According to Zheng Lijun, from 1950 to 1957, the People's Fine Arts Publishing House published 286 kinds of posters, printing more than 16 million copies. But in 1958 and 1959, the number of propaganda posters reached 241, with a total of more than 11 million copies printed.[20]

A 'great leap forward' in artistic production can be demonstrated by the slogan, "*jiajia shige huhu hua* (every home a poem, every household a painting)"[21]. At the time, professional artists and amateurs alike produced numerous wall paintings. In Anhui

[16] The Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (1958), '*Guanyu kaizhan fanlangfei fanbaoshou yundong de zhishi* (The Instruction of Anti-waste, Anti-conservative Movement)', *People's Daily*, 3 March, p. 1.
[17] Jiang Xuewen (1958), '*Meishujie dayuejin* (The Great Leap Forward in the Art Circle)', *Fine Art*, No. 3, pp. 4-5.
[18] Ibid, p. 5.
[19] *Art Research* (1958), '*Wei zhengzhi fuwu, wei qunzhong fuwu* (Serve for Politicis and Serve for the Masses)', *Art Research*, No. 3, p. 13.
[20] Zheng Lijun (2007), Changjing yu tuxiang: 20 shiji Zhongguo zhaotie yishu (*Scene and Image: Chinese Poster Art in 20th Century*). Chongqing: Chongqing University Press, p. 182.
[21] *Fine Art* (1958b), '*Jiajia shige huhu hua* (Every Home a Poem, Every Household a Painting)', *Fine Art*, No. 8, p. 40.

Province, 250,000 wall paintings appeared in Fuyang County;[22] 105,000 in Pi County, Jiangsu Province;[23] and a total of 844,530 in Hebei Province.[24]

To convey the specific communist ideology and social values to reach the masses directly and widely, it was critically important to involve the masses in the propaganda art campaign. For the masses, the best artworks that expressed their aspirations and could be understood easily came from themselves. The peasants' participation in the propaganda was a 'deliberate creation' of the cultural army of the Communist Party.[25] Peasant art with a profound tradition in China was considered as an important force in the mass propaganda campaign. During the Great Leap Forward of 1958, the masses began to participate in artistic production in an organised manner.

There had been a polarisation between popular and elitist segments in traditional Chinese society. However, at the Yan'an Forum of 1942, Mao had already shown strong support for 'mass art'. Tang considered that the art went beyond the academy and against the prerogatives of experts, to pursue Mao's ideology of mass art.[26] Since then, the Communist Party has striven to eliminate elitism. Meanwhile, they advocated art for the masses and art produced by the masses. Following the discussion in Chapter Two, the failure of new New Year painting reform illustrated that, in the early 1950s, artists were detached from real life, and they did not understand the needs of the public. During the Great Leap Forward, based on the summation of experience, the Communists considered that it was significant and essential to enhance the interaction between artists and audiences, to dissolve the boundaries in aesthetic standards between popular and elite art. Thus, the emphasis on artist engagement with social life and labour, and on the mass participation became of utmost priority.

[22] Anhui Mass Art Museum and People's Fine Arts Publishing House (1958), Fuyang nongminhua xuanji (*Selected Works of Fuyang Peasant Paintings*). Beijing: People's Fine Arts Publishing House, p. 1.
[23] People's Fine Arts Publishing House (1958), Jiangsu Pixian nongmin bihua xuanji (*Selected Works of Peasant Paintings in Pi County, Jiangsu Province*). Beijing: People's Fine Arts Publishing House, p. 1.
[24] Hebei Provincial Bureau of Culture (1958), Hebei bihua xuan (*Selected Works of Wall Paintings in Hebei Province*). Shijiazhuang: Hebei People's Publishing House, p. 1.
[25] Sullivan, Michael (1996), *Art and Artists of Twentieth-century China*. Berkeley: University of California Press, p.147.
[26] Tang Xiaobing (2015), *Visual Culture in Contemporary China: Paradigms and Shifts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 226.

From January 1958 onwards, thousands of artists were sent to factories and the countryside to experience the hard life of workers and peasants, participating in smelting iron or agricultural production. Those artists produced wall paintings in their spare time to support the propaganda work of the Great Leap Forward movement in the countryside, to arouse the enthusiasm of the masses in both labour and learning art. The campaign of sending artists to the countryside in the Great Leap Forward Movement also attempted to reeducate the professional artists, encouraging artists to leave their studios, and engage with the masses, enhancing communication with them, and deepening their understanding of Mao Zedong's artistic thought.[27]

In 1958, artists Ye Qianyu (1907-1995), Shao Yu (1919-1992), Wu Zuoren (1908-1997) and Jiang Zhaohe (1904-1986) went to Huailai County of Hebei Province, and helped the locals paint propaganda pictures on walls. A photo records a scene of the four artists painting figures on a wall and the villagers watching their creations (Figure 3.1). It was a direct and effective way for the masses to gain access to the propaganda art. As observers they got a chance to deepen their knowledge of the creation process of visual products. They could deliver their opinions on artworks directly to the artists. However, after a closer observation on the artistic production, the audience often could not only successfully put forward opinions, and also needed to be fully involved. This stimulated enthusiasm for their participation in the production of propaganda art. According to art editor Jiang Weipu (1926-), during that period, for example, a young peasant considered that the dragon in a wall painting was not vivid enough, because the dragon had no beard, and no water under its feet. Thus, he decided that he would like to have a try and started to pick up a brush to paint.[28] For the artists, experiencing the life of peasants and workers enabled opportunities to observe and participate in agricultural labour and construction. In May 1958, students

[27] Wu Kaming (2015), *Reinventing Chinese Tradition: the Cultural Politics of Late Socialism*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, p. 40.
[28] Jiang Weipu (1959), *Rural Wall Paintings in Great Leap Forward*. Beijing: People's Fine Arts Publishing House, p. 2.

and teachers of the Central Academy of Fine Arts participated in the construction of the Ming Tombs Reservoir. They took the rest time to draw sketches at the site, and created more than 700 pieces of artwork in three days of their return to Beijing in June.[29] The artists also experienced the reception by peasants and workers to the public's aesthetic appreciations and aspirations. Those experiences and reflections could help the artists to create new artworks for the public. The relationship between artists and audiences became closer. Sending artists to rural areas and factories could be seen as an attempt to eliminate the differences between artists and the masses, and between mental work and physical labour.[30]

Art teachers and students, and professional artists, had another task in instructing and teaching peasants and workers how to paint. They aimed to transform the public identity, and encouraged the masses to participate directly in visual productions. The mass art relied heavily on the encouragement and support of local governments and cultural bodies, such as cultural centers, rural clubs and art schools.[31] For example, in July 1958, with the help of artists of the People's Fine Arts Publishing House including Wang Jiao (1917-1995), Liu Jiyou (1918-1983) and Gu Yuan, Lihe Fine Arts School, the first rural art school after the founding of PRC, was founded in Changli County, Hebei Province.[32] From the influence of Changli County, at the end of 1958 of Hu County, Shanxi Province, Chen Shiheng, a teacher from Xi'an Academy of Fine Arts, with the staff of the Cultural Center of Hu County organised the Ganyu Reservoir Site Art Training Class, and taught the locals to paint.[33] Technically, the peasants could participate in producing visual products with basic artistic skill training. While, more importantly, the peasants could realise that it was possible for them to act with an artistic status, which they could take their initiative to join the propaganda art

[29] *Art Research*, op. cit., p. 12.
[30] Sullivan (1996), op. cit., p. 147.
[31] *Fine Art* (1958c), '*Shengchan dayuejin, wenhua yishu jinjingen: Ji quanguo nongcun qunzhong wenhua yishu gongzuo huiyi* (Production has a Great Leap Forward, and Culture and Art should Closely Follow: Recording the National Rural Mass Culture and Art Work Conference)', *Fine Art*, No. 5, p. 20.
[32] Jiang Weipu (1958), '*Lihe meishu xuexiao de jianli he fazhang* (The Establishment and Development of Lihe Art Schools)', *Fine Art*, No. 12, p. 24.
[33] Wang Shenghua (2012), Xin Zhongguo de nongmin yu nongminhua yundong: Yi 1958-1976 nian Huxian wei yanjiu anli (*New China's Peasants and Peasant Painting Movement: A Case Study of Hu County from 1958 to 1976*), Ph.D. thesis, Chinese National Academy of Arts, p. 60.

campaign confidently:

> In 1958, impelled by the surging Great Leap Forward in China's industry and agriculture, the (Huxian) county set up an amateur art class on the construction site of a reservoir. Guided by Chairman Mao's revolutionary line in literature and art, a lot of ordinary peasants broke through old mental shackles as to what they could or could not do. With hands that previously had held only hoes, they took up artists' brushes and began to paint as well as farm. What they painted were the heroic deeds of the county's people in the arduous battle to conquer nature.[34]

The participation of the masses in art production could be considered an opportunity to blur the relationship between artists, disseminators and audiences practically. People could have two or three identities, and those identities could be converted. Artists would have considered themselves as audiences, and artists would learn from the masses. The masses were considered wiser and more creative than artists and were regarded as 'artists'.

During that period, the mass paintings evoked great repercussions in society. Major newspapers and journals all published works of the masses from all over the country. The journal *Fine Art* launched special issues of peasant wall paintings, workers' art and soldiers' art to discuss mass art.[35] Wang Zhaowen at that time noted that although most of the artworks of the masses were technically rough, they were filled with the "political enthusiasm of creating miracles".[36] Ge Lu (1926-) put forward the same view, and considered that this art was simple, but full of creativity and courage, with mass appeal.[37]

The public took art forms of New Year paintings, papercuts, woodcuts, cartoons, and traditional Chinese paintings, such as a traditional dragon motif with a female peasant

[34] *China Reconstructs* (1974), 'Cultural Notes: Peasant Painters of Huhsien', *China Reconstructs*, No. 1, January, p. 17.
[35] Chen Lüsheng (2000), *The Art History of the People's Republic of China. 1949-1966*. Beijing: China Youths Publishing House, p. 68.
[36] Wang Zhaowen (1958), '*Zhigao yeda de qunzhong meishu* (The Great Mass Art)', *People's Daily*, 30 August, p. 3.
[37] Ge Lu (1958), 'New Peasant Painting', *Peking Review*, No. 23, September, p. 18.

holding a sheaf of wheat and a steelmaking scene in papercut (Figure 3.2) and the classic character Monkey King catching up with a worker in cartoon (Figure 3.3). Those artworks were disseminated through propaganda brochures and books, newspapers, journals, blackboard newspapers, wall paintings, and small-scale exhibitions. With their rich life and labour experience, peasant artists used their works to celebrate their miraculous harvest and express their confidence in a brighter future, showing the spirit of the socialist Great Leap Forward.[38] These visual products placed wishes were usually exaggerated by people's unrealistic imagination, which will be discuss in detail in the next section. Artworks produced by the masses during this period were influenced and shaped by political and social factors. Fundamentally, though, these creative products including *guai* represented people's everyday lives in a natural and imaginative way.

During the Great Leap Forward, wall painting was one of most significant media for mass art. In the late 1950s, the wall paintings had the unprecedented prosperity. In terms of wall paintings in Great Leap Forward, scholars pay a great deal of attention to the participation of the masses in propaganda art, and the exaggeration of artistic expression, which will be analysis in the next section.[39] I consider that the display characteristic of the wall painting is the unneglectable and significant reason why it was popularised energetically during the Great Leap Forward. In this section, I focus more on its display which is discussed little in specific research and few in-depth studies.

As a form of dissemination, wall painting is a still vehicle. During this period, the wall

[38] Li Qun (1958), '*Nongmin zoushang le huatan* (Peasants Walk into the Art Circle)', *People's Daily*, 30 August, p. 3.
[39] See Zheng Gong (2002), Yanjin yu yundong: Zhongguo meishu de xiandaihua, 1875-1976 (*Evolution and Movement: Modernisation of Chinese Art, 1875-1976*). Nanning: Guangxi Fine Arts Publishing House, p. 304-10; Li Weiming (2005), 'Yige yu jianshe xin Zhongguo youguan de huati: dayuejin zhong de nongmin bihua yundong jianlun (*A Topic Relevant to Building A New China: Discussion on Peasant Wall Painting Movement in Great Leap Forward*)', in Guan Shanyue Art Museum (ed.), Jianshe xin Zhongguo: 20 shiji 50 niandai zhi 60 niandai zhongqi Zhongguo hua zhuanti zhan (*Chinese National Reconstruction: Exhibition of Chinese Paintings on the Special Subject from 1950s to mid-1960s*). Nanning: Guangxi Fine Arts Publishing House, p. 25-32; King, Richard; Croizier, Ralph; Watson, Scott and Zheng Shengtian (2010), *Art in turmoil: the Chinese Cultural Revolution, 1966-76*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, pp. 136-9.

paintings were usually painted on the whitewashed walls of rural houses and barns and on both sides of urban streets. Because of the nature of medium, the wall paintings could not be moved, carriable or collected, compared with visual products in other forms such as New Year prints and *lianhuanhua*. Technically, the wall paintings could not be reproduced in large numbers and could not reach the masses as widely as other popular artistic forms. In the twentieth century, wall painting was often regarded as an effective medium to implement political or social agendas and action. For example, wall paintings became an essential tool for promoting political demands in the Mexican mural movement between the 1920s and 1970s.[40] As an important propaganda vehicle employed in the Great Leap Forward Movement, I argue that it had the advantage public availability that could not be replaced.

Firstly, the masses at large would receive messages unconsciously from the wall paintings in public spaces. For other media, such as New Year prints, and newspapers with cartoons, the masses could choose what visual products they preferred. With the wall paintings, they basically accepted 'compulsively', although they could put forward their opinions. In this situation, even if they did not like the wall painting, they still inevitably saw it everyday in public. Visually, the painting continued to send the messages to the masses, exerting a direct or even imperceptible influence on them.

Secondly, because of its public appearance, it became a significant vehicle to motivate the masses to participate in art production. From production to dissemination, and then reception, the whole process of creation of visual products was public. The three stages of production, dissemination and then reception virtually proceeded together. The process of the production of wall paintings is performative. During the process of painting, artists would constantly modify their art until it was completed, indicating a

[40] See Greeley, Robin Adele (2012), 'Muralism and the State in Post-Revolution Mexico, 1920-1970', in Alejandro Anreus, Leonard Folgarait, Robin Adele Greeley (eds.), *Mexican Muralism: A Critical History*. Berkeley; London: University of California Press, pp. 13-6; Folgarait, Leonard (1998), *Mural Painting and Social Revolution in Mexico, 1920-1940*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

performance act.[41] The artist also assumed the identity of a disseminator who delivered messages through not only the finished painting, but also the execution of painting. As a public performance, the production of a wall painting with *guai* often drew people's attention. The masses would read and discuss the guai product, and even communicated with the artist directly. The reception of *guai* products was activated and carried out simultaneously with production and dissemination.

In early 1958, artists were sent to counties and factories by the Communist Party. Those artistic activities had official authorisation, supported by the local governments and organisations. For artists, their participation in the artistic activities concerning propaganda showed their political stance. For the masses, artists were no longer simply an artist, but their performance represented the official behaviour and attitude, embracing a political significance. It seemed to be proper that the masses responded positively to the call of the state. When the masses shifted their identity from audiences to artists, they became new official representatives, achieving confidence and pride. It motivated more people to join the art movement and peasant artists of all ages were actively involved. For example, the photograph shows a woman over seventy participating in producing a wall painting during the Great Leap Forward (Figure 3.4).

Thus, the wall paintings became a particular and irreplaceable medium in this period. The wall paintings and all the other media were employed by professional and amateur artists to visualise the political trends of the moment with the use of *guai* imagery. Once artworks were completed, they were reproduced and delivered through various media to great effect. Thus, during this period, *guai* visual products penetrated all sectors of society. The people surrounded by visual products including *guai* would receive political messages subconsciously.

[41] Hodder, Ian (2010), *Religion in the Emergence of Civilization: Çatalhöyük as a Case Study*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, p. 318.

During this period, paintings from professional artists were also effectively read and understood by the public. According to the previous discussion in Chapter Two, the failure of the *nianhua* reform in the early 1950s showed that a gap of concepts between artists and audiences existed, which could not reach an agreement. Thus audiences were not willing to pay for the paintings created based on artists' aesthetic appreciation and understandings. However, this situation changed during the Great Leap Forward. The separation between artists and audiences gradually reduced, not only because the public began to participate in the production of propaganda art, but the design of paintings from artists became more typical and general. According to Zhu Haichen, associate professor from the China Academy of Fine Arts with a focus on Chinese posters in the twentieth century, at that time artists tended to choose universal designs including some typical *guai* imageries such as the dragon and phoenix, which could be easily understood by, and disseminate correct messages to, the masses, considering the differences in knowledge and experience between the various sectors of society.[42] Thus during this period, audiences and artists by mutual recognition could achieve a certain balance, no longer a 'stalemate'.

I consider that two important reasons led to such a change. Firstly, collective creation by specialised artists was strongly promoted. A number of artworks were signed by art teams from large art organisations and art schools. In order to complete the tasks of the production in a short time, the Shanghai People's Fine Arts Publishing House put forward a mode of "collective research, collective creation". Yang Keyang who was in charge of the propaganda poster group described, "[collective creation] can think fast and produce more ideas. Even certain themes are difficult to visualise, through collective discussion, they will be easy to solve, and can achieve good results."[43] The paintings were the outcome of collective creation, fusing different artistic concepts. It was indeed a lack of independence and individuality, while conversely, it absorbed a certain

[42] Interview with Zhu Haichen, 18 February 2016, Shanghai.
[43] Yang Keyang (1960), Wenhui bao (*Wenhui Daily*), 13th January. Cited in Zhu Haichen (2012), Shanghai xiandai meishushi daxi, 1949-2009: 8, xuanchuanhua juan (*Shanghai Modern Fine Arts History Series, 1949-2009: Volume 8, Posters*). Shanghai: Shanghai People's Fine Arts Publishing House, pp. 99-100.

universality. Thus the paintings with universal design could communicate more effectively with audiences. Secondly, artists were sent to the factory and country, and learned from the masses. Artists communicated with the masses directly, and understood their lives more deeply. Artists would get first-hand information on the preferences of the masses. The typical colours, forms, and symbols could then be employed in their creations.

During the Great Leap Forward, visual art was charged with the promotion of industry and agriculture, instead of implying a hierarchy of taste and cultural differentiation. The participation of the masses in the production, dissemination and reception of visual products including *guai* was a significant practice for the Communists to gain acceptance and generate loyalty. The mass spontaneity in the *guai* production developed further during the Cultural Revolution.

3.3 Miracle Prosperities Brought by Dragons

The Communist Party drew an idealised blueprint for the masses, and encouraged them to participate in visualising the beautiful and optimistic blueprint together. During the huge political mass campaign of the Great Leap Forward, propaganda art became an important bridge between the Communist Party and the masses, and a huge quantity of artworks with *guai* was created to promote the development of the movement. In order to purse Mao's economic ideal, *guai* played a significant and crucial role in communications – via a visual vehicle – between the Communist Party and the masses, artists and audiences, reality and unreality.

During the Great Leap Forward, the Communists issued a series of economic targets which could not be met, especially in agriculture and industry. However, farmers and workers clearly understood the annual production of gain and steel that could actually

be achieved. In this situation, the Communists attempted to motivate the masses to pursue the unrealistic targets, via a visual vehicle. It was vital that the public could receive and understand these visual messages, thus, imagination and exaggeration became the main means of creation in paintings. Many works showed peasants' beautiful dreams, and often portrayed breathtaking and fruitful achievements that peasants could achieve through hard work and cooperation. In this period, as Landsberger states, unrealistic elements made artworks more fantastic, showing a more beautiful expression of Chinese reality.[44] The Party intended to promise a great wish to the masses, and planned to inculcate the spirit of devotion and self-sacrifice in them in order to stimulate a reliance on pure willpower and enthusiasm to overcome any resistance to increased production.

Imaginative mythological subjects were naturally appreciated; for the Chinese masses, who had not seen the modernisation of Western countries before, imagination was mainly presented through traditional Chinese cultural resources, such as fantasy novels and expression of mythical thinking.[45] This viewpoint was supported by Su Feng, who states that a large number of artworks, inspired by ancient folk myths and legends, were created to depict an ideal picture of life.[46] The ancient folk myths and legends were usually collectively held memories, and built a complete imaginative and surreal world. However, they were not completely divorced from the real world, meeting the demands of aesthetic appreciation and social orientation. *Guai*, as products of this imaginative world, had a strong surrealist and dramatic artistic expression. *Guai* with hybrid images referred to surrealist and imaginative visual beings, which usually had magic powers and were untroubled by the rules of reality and nature. It was the desire of the masses to have supernatural power like the *guai* – to be strong and create a brighter life in future.

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[44] Landsberger, op. cit., p. 23.
[45] Zou Yuejin (2005), Mao Zedong shidai meishu (*Art in the Era of Mao Zedong*). Changsha: Hunan Fine Arts Publishing House, p. 204.
[46] Su Feng (2008), *On the Interpretation of Cloud Imagery in Chinese Visual Culture*, Ph.D. thesis, Birmingham City University, pp. 191-2.

In these turbulent years, *guai* imageries were politically filtered and modified, and added to the creation of propaganda products, visualising Mao's thought. They were depicted through a variety of media, including new New Year paintings, posters, wall paintings and newspapers. The interpretations of *guai* with continued positive meanings can be divided into three types.

Firstly, inheriting the traditional meaning and form, *guai* imageries were depicted in new economic themes with political slogans. In paintings, this type of *guai* mainly retained their original meanings, however, this was appropriately extended by artists in order to match propaganda themes. The government encouraged peasants to focus more on political themes, however – according to Lü Shengzhong, an artist and professor of Chinese folk art – they were more inclined to traditional themes, including *guai* imageries representing wealth and happiness.[47] The peasant artist, being a member of the masses, understood people's perceptions and their paintings directly reflected the public's artistic appreciation and philosophical aspirations. Traditional forms and contents made a strong connection to the masses, and they were easily accepted, understood, disseminated and even produced by the people. Some of the artistic imageries and expressions provide unique insights into people's daily lives and celebrations; the expressions and motifs loved by the masses frequently stood for joy and happiness. As I discussed in Chapter One, auspicious *guai* imageries, via various popular art forms, were inextricably bound up with state organisations in China, but more importantly, they inferred the traditional family ideal, which had existed for thousands of years. Because of little changes of their meaning, dragon *guai* remained in the traditional form that the public were familiar with. When people read this traditional form, they could associate directly with its corresponding meanings.

The dragon was the most popular imagery of *guai* used by Chinese artists to propagate the Great Leap Forward Movement and is one of China's oldest mythological creatures. In dynasty periods, the application of the dragon was so wide it that pervaded every

[47] Interview with Lü Shengzhong, 10 September 2014, Beijing.

nook and corner of Chinese lives, and was involved in royal and folk art (for example, Figures 1.10 and 1.11). During the Great Leap Forward Movement, this traditional *guai* absorbed a variety of meanings. Chinese artists employed the positive meanings associated with the dragon – great power, strength, good fortune, dignity, fertility, wisdom and auspiciousness – in order to motive people.

In the theme of great production, particularly in the People's Commune, the dragon was usually depicted in a harmonious scene where people celebrated the harvest. In paintings, a dragon dance was often employed to visualise the idealistic harvest scene. The dragon dance is a form of traditional Chinese dance, and it is regularly performed during Chinese New Year. People awaiting a harvest hoped that by dancing the dragon dance it would bring good weather.[48] Meanwhile, Chinese dragons were usually believed to bring good luck, and dragon dances also held this significance for the people. In the visual products of the late 1950s, the dragon dance was employed to vividly express the great harvests and the busy festivals. In the New Year print (Figure 3.5), in order to visualise a lively celebration scene of the harvest, the artist depicted a variety of folk engaged in celebratory activities, including the lion dance, the fan dance, beating gongs and sounding drums, but in particular participating in the dragon dance. The painting absorbs the features of Chinese folk art, particularly in the use of colour, which largely employs the alternation of contrasting primary colours – for example, in comparison to the yellow barns, the blue dragon is outstanding. Under the control of the people in folk dress, the long body of the dragon is undulating and vivid, expressing people's joy. Numerous large cotton-like clouds are depicted in the background, and the dragon appears to be dancing in the sky. At the top of the painting, large numbers of corn, barns and white haversacks show a fruitful harvest; on the yellow barn, is written "*Renmin gongshe hao* (People's Commune is good)." By using bright colours and the fantastic dragon dance, the artist has clearly depicted an image full of the feeling of folk life, illustrating the great

[48] Yang Lihui and An Deming (2005), *Handbook of Chinese Mythology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 109.

success of the People's Commune. This New Year print mainly depicts a traditional harvest theme with a traditional dragon. It can be seen as a political print only because of the small characters of the slogan. But later, the transformation of *guai* would be more obvious.

The dragon, regarded as a powerful and strong mythological *guai*, was frequently employed to interpret such 'imaginative' economic tasks. In the painting (Figure 3.6), a giant dragon is surrounded by the clouds, setting an imaginative scene. Traditionally, clouds stood for good fortune and happiness,[49] and here these cloud patterns cover the picture, creating a hazy illusion. The dragon drives the clouds as vehicles, highlighting its transcendental identity. According to Su, in Chinese tradition, Taoist immortals or sacred creatures rely upon clouds to fly in the sky.[50] The clouds also recall an auspicious omen, hence the dragon with cloud imagery here constitutes a sign of happy augury, signifying the great symbolism and significance of the People's Commune. A worker, a peasant, a civil servant, a student and a soldier (from right to left), stand together on the body of the dragon, holding a big bowl – they are depicted by the artists standing on top of the supernatural dragon in order to praise their identity above that of the dragon. The bowl is filled with food and manufactured goods, whose size is extremely exaggerated by surrealistic imagination of artists, creating huge wheat and gigantic cotton. The bowl – with the saying "People's Commune" – is like a treasure bowl, producing a mass of various products. It seems that under the cooperation of the People's Communes, people would become powerful, like the dragon, and make China prosperous.

The symbolism of the dragon is also bound up with society and state organisation. Since dynastic times, the dragon as a national symbol was already adopted by the official authorities. As I mentioned previously, Mao believed that under the common efforts of all Chinese people, China's economy could surpass that of Britain and the

[49] Eberhard, Wolfram (1986), *A Dictionary of Chinese Symbols: Hidden Symbols in Chinese Life and Thought.* London; New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, p. 77.
[50] Su, op. cit., p. 130.

United States at the time. During this period, propagandists often visualised this goal by using contrast. In a poster (Figure 3.7), Chinese masses, including workers and peasants, are energetically rowing a fine huge dragon boat. In contrast, the people of Taiwan are anxiously riding a small precarious boat, as shown in the lower right. On the sails of the dragon boat, it reads "*duo, kuai, hao, sheng* (greater, faster, better, cheaper)". It shows that under the guidance of the General Line of socialist construction, the dragon boat will ride the wind and waves, and move forward constantly and rapidly. "*Jingji weiji* (economic crisis)" is written near the boat of Taiwan, suggesting that under the drag of the United States and the Kuomintang, Taiwan's ships will eventually capsize, and the people of Taiwan will live in misery. The artists also employed colour contrast. Red symbolises the good fortune and happiness of the Chinese people; here the red dragon boat represents China, carrying people towards the end of China's backwardness, turning the country into an advanced nation. In contrast, black shows the Taiwanese living in darkness under the control of America and Kuomintang.

The second type of *guai* with positive meanings was taken on a new political propaganda mission, instead of continuing with the traditional symbolic meanings. In order to express the visual messages more vividly and clearly, *guai* imageries had inevitably formal mutations.

As discussed previously, grain and steel production were two significant indicators of the development of economic construction. Mao believed that China's steel output could exceed the UK's within 15 years[51] and as such, the Party intended to increase the total output of steel in 1958 to reach a goal of 10.7 million tons, twice that of 1957. Meanwhile, the total grain output should also be increased to reach 250 billion kilograms.[52] With a strong ideological belief – in an era of backward industrialisation

[51] Cheng Shi (2006), *China's Rural Industrialization Policy: Growing Under Orders since 1949.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 56.
[52] Yang Tao (2008), 'China's Agricultural Crisis and Famine of 1959–1961: A Survey and Comparison to Soviet Famines', *Comparative Economic Studies*, Vol. 50, p. 2.

and mechanization – the Communist Party was convinced that a substantial increase in production could be achieved by relying on something else. The masses would be able to surpass limits and overcome actual production difficulties with tenacious willpower and the extreme self-confidence Communists gave them.

To mobilise willpower, a concerted visual propaganda became paramount. In order to deliver the two main economic policies widely to the masses, especially to those who could not read, it was essential to provide them with a visual presentation of the ambitious economic goals and abstract political policies of the time. Thus, the imaginative imageries of the dragon and the phoenix were widely employed to show unattainable productive forces in industry and agriculture.

In 1958, Ha Qiongwen and Qian Daxin (1922-), artists from the Shanghai People's Fine Arts Publishing House, eagerly responded to the Party's call to complete the propaganda task of promoting steel production, and created a propaganda poster named Wei 1959, shengchan gengduo genghao de gang er fendou! (*Fighting for Producing More and Better Steel for 1959!*). In this painting (Figure 3.8), a red dragon spits out plentiful molten steel; its body consists of numerous steelmaking furnaces spewing hot flames. The artists combined the images of the dragon and steel, and the dragon takes on a new symbolic meaning of steel production. In this poster, a worker and a peasant stand on the dragon's body – during the Great Leap Forward, steel-making was not considered as a specialised industrial technology, but rather a mass campaign that encouraged public participation – thus, the worker and the peasant are depicted side by side. The background employs a bright yellow colour to off-set the red steel dragon, making it more outstanding and powerful. As if seeking to emphasise the three dimensionality and vividness of the dragon, the artists depict the dragon from below, so that the large size of the dragon's body is emphasised. Extensive use of red and yellow illustrate the fiery scenes of the furnace and there is steel and fire everywhere. In this poster, the artists employed the giant steel dragon in a figurative image, visualising the booming development of steel production. As well as the new

association with steel, the artists were layering this on top of the traditional understanding of success, so the meaning is read not only as the importance and strength of growing steel production, but also as its inevitable success.

In another painting (Figure 3.9), the dragon's scales are pieces of brick, and the high humps of the dragon's back become backyard steel furnaces. In the poster, children cooperate with each other and pour all kinds of household utensils into the furnaces – the participation of children showed that the production of steel-making was indeed a mass campaign. In the poster, the dragon is like a giant steel-making furnace, consisting of a few small backyard furnaces. Woks, basins and other metal utensils became the raw materials of steelmaking, turning into the plentiful molten steel which pours from the mouth of the dragon. Here, the posters inspired and encouraged the masses to employ household utensils in the production of steel, in order to achieve stunning production goals. The hot molten steel is depicted as rushing from the mouth of the dragon to drown the enemies, in cartoon form, in the lower half of the poster. It implies that the output of China's steel production took a huge leap forward, and would soon exceed those Western countries; these countries would be overwhelmed by the mass production of steel.

Depicted together with a dragon, the phoenix was often employed to symbolise agriculture during this period. The illustration (Figure 3.10) employed the traditional theme of *danfeng chaoyang*, and depicts a phoenix that flies in the sky towards the sun. Under the phoenix, the picture shows a prosperous agricultural scene with rich fruits, rice piled into mountains and modern harvesting machines. On the sun, is written, "*Zongluxian wansui, dayuejin wansui, renmin gongshe wansui* (Long live the General Line, long live the Great Leap Forward, long live the People's Commune)." Here, the phoenix represents agricultural production, rather than talented people in its traditional meaning. The shining sun refers to the policies and production reforms issued by the Communist Party. Here, it shows that the light of the Communist Party shines on the land of China, bringing light to the people and pointing the direction for

greater agricultural production. The phoenix, associated with agricultural production, is flying to a better, more prosperous future.

In another painting (Figure 3.11), the link between phoenix and agriculture is presented more visually. The artist Yang Wenxiu (1929-) depicted two Chinese folk images, firstly, a phoenix and secondly, a little girl with a flute. The little girl is dressed in a traditional costume, and the flute she holds has a string of jade with the saying "People's Commune is good." The golden phoenix is vivid and bright against the dark green background, behind it is depicted an affluent and idealised scene, filled with a great many fruits, vegetables, lotus, fishes, poultries and livestock. The tail of phoenix gradually transforms and integrates into the rolling waves of golden grain. In this painting, the phoenix is obviously a metaphor for the grain – the phoenix flying upwards to sky, illustrates that the output of the grain would retain a trend of rapid growth. Meanwhile, as I mentioned in Chapter One, in the traditional concept, the appearance of the phoenix was also said to infer the prosperity of the country.[53] The phoenix in this painting continued this meaning; the masses would be directly associated with a cheerful prospect brought by the phoenix. Through depicting the grain phoenix, it not only visually described the great leap of grain production achieved by People's Communes, but more significantly, it triggered people's imagination of an ideal future.

It was common to mix transformed dragon and phoenix motifs with massive doses of socialist politics, presenting visualising astounding statistics on the quantity of production. The imageries of dragon and phoenix are related to religion and folklore via various visual forms, they are rooted in Chinese people's thoughts and are the Chinese public's common symbols and language. The happiness, good fortune and hope carried by the imageries could quickly be received without the need for any words – visually, they could directly and effectively communicate with the Chinese public. In dynastic Chinese culture, the dragon and phoenix symbolised a blissful and

[53] Williams, Charles Alfred Speed (1976), *Outlines of Chinese Symbolism and Art Motives: An Alphabetical Compendium of Antique Legends and Beliefs, as Reflected in the Manners and Customs of the Chinese*. New York: Dover Publications, p. 325.

harmonious marriage between husband and wife, often used in royal and wedding decorations, as I discussed in Chapter One. While, in paintings of the Great Leap Forward, the dragon and phoenix stood for the harmonious production of industry and agriculture instead of the relations of a marriage.

In the new New Year print (Figure 3.12), the artist portrayed a man and a woman, with a dragon and a phoenix depicted respectively behind them. Although the dragon and phoenix inherit the traditional forms, it is no longer a symbol of marriage. The woman in folk costume holds a hoe, showing she is a peasant; in front of her, a pot of grain and cotton is depicted. The man dresses in worker's clothing and holds a poker, demonstrating his identity as a worker; a bucket of steel with flames is placed in front of him. The forms of the dragon and phoenix are not directly combined with steel and grain in this painting, however, through the description of the figures and the decorations, the masses could receive the message that the dragon and phoenix respectively represented industry and agriculture. In another painting (Figure 3.13), the dragon and the phoenix both have formal mutation. It was more direct and obvious to demonstrate the symbolic relationship between *guai* and the economic production.

In the painting (Figure 3.12), people seem full of energy and their faces beam with joy, setting a mood of absolute optimism. Both sides of the painting are decorated with peonies, which traditionally symbolised wealth and honour. Here, it continues its traditional meaning, and thus, together they represent a prosperity which brought the harmonious and common development of industry and agriculture.

The third type of *guai* appearing in the late 1950s was actually brought from the Western concept. In this period, the famous slogan "*shehuizhuyi shi qiaoliang, gongchanzhuyi shi tiantang* (Socialism is the bridge, Communism is the paradise)"[54], shows beyond doubt the great confidence and positive anticipation towards the future of both the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese people. However, the concept of "*tiantang*

[54] Zou (2005), op. cit., p. 204.

[天堂]" indeed originated from Western culture; in the Chinese local concept, the term of paradise more literally referred to *tianting* [天庭], rather than *tiantang*. Many Chinese people believed that after death Confucian scholars, and men and women of great accomplishment or stature would become deities in *tianting*, while the majority of dead souls would arrive in hell for judgment to determine their final destinations.[55] The modern English word "*tiantang*" is developed from the previous Old English form heofon, and by about the year 1000, it was being used in reference to the Christianised 'place where God dwells'.[56] *Tiantang* usually refers to the most sacred place and the last paradise. Differing from Chinese folk religion, in most forms of Christianity, *tiantang* is understood as the home of believers in the afterlife, regardless of class or social status.[57] Here, the "communist paradise" employed by the Communist Party referred to an idealised and beautiful blueprint which was designed for the masses. In contrast to the more elitist and restricted traditional Chinese conception of *tianting*, "communist paradise" allowed the masses to enter conditionally, according to various standards, the most important of which was the correct belief of Communism. By involving the Western religious concept, the Communist Party attempted to set up a faith system in order to give the public spiritual support, so that they would not be limited by the reality.

The "communist paradise" was, therefore, directly expressed through artistic imagination. In order to 'realise' the heaven, it would be easier and more effective to add the *guai* from the Western concept to enrich the blueprint. For the masses, heaven was not an empty or virtual concept any more, instead, they could directly see a visual imagery of *guai* that would lead people into the heaven in the Western culture, since the effort was to rival and surpass the West.

In comparison with the Chinese traditional motifs, *guai* imagery originating from Western culture was more appropriate to visualise "paradise". The imagery of the horse with

[55] Tsai Wenhui (1997), 'Folk Religion and Traditional Chinese Social Order', in Lan Caifeng and David Decker (eds.), *China (the Mainland and Taiwan) in Transition: Selected Essays*. Indianapolis: University of Indianapolis Press, p. 56.
[56] Walls, Jerry L. (2002), *Heaven: The Logic of Eternal Joy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 3-4.
[57] McGrath, Alister E. (2015), *Christianity: An Introduction*. Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, p. 118.

wings was borrowed from Western mythology and employed largely in visual products of the Great Leap Forward.

Pegasus is a divine horse with wings, usually in white. This fantastic creature comes from Greek mythology, and is usually regarded as the immortal winged horse of the gods (Figure 3.14).[58] In traditional Chinese mythology, the horse-god has no wings, and to fly it depends upon auspicious clouds. During Chinese dynastic periods the horse with a pair of wings was more usual in the burial system, rather than in heaven (Figure 3.15). Therefore, I argue that the horse with wings, depicted in visual products, was borrowed from Western culture during the Great Leap Forward Movement.

As in Figure 3.16, a horse with wings is usually depicted in the upper half of the paintings, flying upwards to the sky and progressing towards a higher goal; the lower half presents a beautified view that depicts the urban landscape undergoing rapid development, or a rural landscape with a vast and endless sea of paddy fields. Artists showed an idealised earthly paradise, which indicated that China was undergoing tremendous changes, and in the future "paradise" would be achieved.

In the painting Zuguo zai yuejin (*The Motherland is Leaping*), a female peasant, a worker and a soldier – representing the whole of the Chinese masses – stand on the back of horse with wings (Figure 3.17). The worker holds a Chinese flag; associated with the text of the title, it seems that the horse with wings refers to China. The horse with wings is much bigger than the people, illustrating its great power – showing that a strong China is carrying the masses toward a brighter future. In another pair of paintings (Figure 3.16), the two pictures are completely symmetrical; on the left and right, a woman and a man respectively sit on horseback. On the left, the woman wearing a traditional Chinese folk costume, holds a bunch of wheat, but it is too bountiful to be held by the woman and the head of wheat is drawn down: the woman

[58] Boardman, John; Griffin, Jasper and Murray, Oswyn (1991), *The Oxford History of Greece and the Hellenistic World*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, p. 87.

clearly represents agriculture. In the right painting, a man wearing a worker's clothes, holds a large piece of steel, referring to industrial development. The pair of paintings represents the forefront of agriculture and industry, which is developing in leaps and bounds.

The horse with wings suggests rapid forward motion. In paintings, the horse with wings is always huge and robust, illustrating that it not only flies quickly, but also steadily. Through the horse with wings, audiences could receive and understand effectively the visual message that during the Great Leap Forward movement, the development of industry and agriculture was rapid and robust. Under its leadership, it was suggested that China's economic construction would soon catch up with and surpass the UK, and the masses would have access to the ideal "paradise".

Through fantastic *guai*, the masses vividly and idealistically depicted their everyday life and the great harvests. These artworks with *guai* came from life, but reflected a state that was higher than actual everyday life. Some works showed artists' bold and unrestricted imagination, some presented enthusiasm and power. Through various *guai* imageries, the paintings express a naive charm, and the optimistic and uplifting feeling of folk life. As the editorial department of Qinghai huabao (*Qinghai Pictorial*) commented on those paintings in 1959, "do not remain them (paintings) in today's reality, but to show a better tomorrow, inspiring people to fight for the ideal future and create a newer and more beautiful reality of the future."[59]

These artworks of *guai* always conveyed an optimistic tone; it seemed that people were motivated to fight for a better future and society. Meanwhile, in the face of a powerful reality and the pressure of heavy labour, the masses needed thrills and, as such, indulged in an imaginary reality. They attempted to make the unrealistic world fit their lives, no matter how exaggerated their imagination was.

[59] The editorial department of *Qinghai Pictorial* (1959), '*Bianzhe de hua* (The Note of the Editor)', Bihua cankao ziliao (*Reference Materials of Mural Paintings*). Xining: Qinghai People's Publishing House, p. 2.

3.4 Man Can Conquer Nature

During the Great Leap Forward, the traditional meanings of some *guai* imageries were remodelled for the sake of new economic and social orders. The aim of the transformation in the status of *guai* was to reveal the tremendous changes taking place in China during that period. Relatively, the Chinese masses' position rose in the artworks, which strengthened the people's revolutionary faith and confidence.

Associated with water power, the dragon was linked to water projects. Traditionally, dragons were inextricably linked to water, as I discussed in Chapter One; those who controlled an area of water were honoured as dragon kings. For the origins of life, water is significant and irreplaceable; river areas are the major birthplaces of human civilisation and where agricultural society develops. According to Xiang, the concept of dragon kings in Chinese culture derived from water worship,[60] which indicates that peasants respected and feared the marvellous powers of water in hydro-agricultural society. Dragon kings with dual powers not only inherited the strength of the Chinese mythological dragon, but also absorbed power from the water. More importantly, the authority of the hydraulic state of dragon kings was tacitly admitted by dynastic governments.[61] The traditional dragon kings enjoyed high status and honour for hundreds of years; in dynastic times, people prayed for rain – or the cessation of rain – by offering sacrifices to dragon kings in the event of drought or flooding.

From 1957, the government promoted the development of water projects. In June 1958, Li Baohua, as the Minister of Water and Electricity, made new plans for the situation of water conservancy construction in the Great Leap Forward.[62] He put

[60] Xiang Bosong (1999), Zhongguo shui chongbai (*Chinese Water Worship*). Shanghai: Shanghai Joint Publishing Press, p. 129.
[61] Zhao Qiguang (1989), 'Chinese Mythology in the Context of Hydraulic Society', *Asian Folklore Studies*, Vol. 48, No. 2, pp. 235-7.
[62] Wang Ruifang (2008), '*Dayuejin qijian nongtian shuili jianshe deshi wenti yanjiu pingshu* (Research Review on Advantages and Disadvantages of Farmland Water Conservancy Construction in the Great Leap Forward)', *Journal of University of Science and Technology Beijing (Social Sciences Edition)*, Vol. 24, pp. 124-5.

forward that by development of irrigation, combined with large and medium-sized water projects, the irrigated area would expand to 700 million *mu* (46.67 million hectares); and that by 1962, China could achieve 80 million hectares of paddy fields and irrigated croplands – accounting for over 70% of arable lands – so that agricultural production on irrigated farmland could be achieved and ordinary droughts eliminated. At that time, dry-land farming harvested once a year, while paddy field farming could achieve a harvest two or three times a year – the aim was to increase grain production.[63] To pursue this goal, the Communist Party vigorously promoted water projects and mobilised the masses to get involved in water conservancy construction.

Offering sacrifices was no longer regarded as an effective or acceptable measure to solve the problems of water resources. Instead, the government intended to conduct more modern and scientific water conservancy projects. However, the masses, especially the uneducated, had no understanding of these new water projects; but their lack of education did not stop the Party from educating them at the same time as mobilising them for the water projects. The masses, especially peasants, already had had experience of building and maintaining water channels and canals, digging wells and managing the distribution of water. Peasants had both a practical education and empirically based common sense, combined with a sense of the precariousness of weather and their dependence upon it, as well as a good measure of awe and wonder – represented by their reverence of dragon kings. Under this situation, it was particularly important to find an effective way to disseminate this political and economic message successfully to the masses, to motivate their participation. Thus, the dragon kings – referring to the lord of water in the traditional concept – were widely employed in the water project theme to propagate the new policy and provoke people's enthusiasm.

[63] Wu Chuanjun and Guo Huancheng (1994), Zhongguo tudi liyong (*Land Use in China*). Beijing: Science Press, pp. 259-61.

In dynastic periods, the dragon kings were one of the masters of nature, and had absolute control of all water. When they were angry, the dragon kings caused natural disasters, such as floods and droughts; they could build up giant and powerful waves to destroy everything. During that period, the dragon kings were considered sacrosanct and were feared. In the paintings of the Great Leap Forward, the dragon kings no longer enjoyed a high status. From 1949 the Communist Party intended to disseminate to the masses an idea that people are the masters of the country, and people should enjoy the highest honours and status. The Communist Party convinced the people to believe that they could overcome everything, including nature and the dragon kings.

In Figure 3.18, a man with a peasant's turban rides on the body of a dragon king – it is obvious in this painting that the peasant has a higher status than that of the dragon king. The person has conquered a powerful dragon king, and the dragon king surrenders to his forces. On a red flag is written "*ling* (command)", and the peasant with this flag of command in his hand, orders the dragon king to spit water into a lake. By controlling the dragon king, the artist delivered a message that through water conservancy projects, people could become the master of water, instead of the dragon king.

In another painting, named Suo long (*Locking the Dragon*) (Figure 3.19), the dragon king is locked with chains by a peasant. In front of the peasant, the dragon king is just like a regular captive animal; the peasant holds a sword, showing his power and domination over the dragon king. In this painting, the dragon king takes on a negative meaning, it is regarded as 'a dreg of feudalism' which had to be strictly controlled and remodelled in water conservancy construction. In the paintings, people have been given absolute power to control nature and bend the physical world to their will.

Gu Yuan, a professor of the Central Academy of Fine Arts, created this painting (Figure 3.19) on a wall in 1958, when he was sent to labour with peasants in Zunhua, Hebei

province. Due to its popularity, the wall painting was collected in *Rural Wall Paintings in Great Leap Forward*, published by People's Fine Arts Publishing House. According to the record in this pamphlet, 16,210 copies were created and the products were sold nationwide.[64] It was not only official recognition and praise of the artist, but also propaganda for the water project; the aim of the pamphlet was to be a model for the mass artists to copy and learn, in order to stimulate their imagination and creative enthusiasm. As soon as the wall painting of *Locking the Dragon* was completed by Gu, it was copied and promoted by peasant artists in several villages. Seeing this, Jiang commented, "This artwork demonstrates people become the master of the world rather than below to the forces of nature, heartening the masses, especially workers in reservoirs construction."[65] When audiences read the paintings, it seemed that they could also gain power just like the peasants in the paintings – it not only enhanced the self-confidence of the masses, but also met the people's vanity. In the Great Leap Forward, people were no longer small and weak, instead they could wield tremendous power to overcome the dragon king that they used to be afraid of. By depicting the remodelled dragon kings, the paintings inspired the masses to participate in the construction of water projects and achieve the satisfaction brought by controlling the water with their great powers.

Sun Wukong, known as the Monkey King, was also transformed in meaning to propagate economic policies. As I mentioned in Chapter One, the Monkey King is one of the most significant and popular Chinese literary characters from the novel *Journey to the West*. He was filled with fantastic colour and his imagery and story was reinterpreted in various forms for centuries.

According to the novel *Journey to the West,* the Monkey King possesses supernatural powers. He can easily lift his golden cudgel with the weight of 13,500 *jin* (7,960 kilograms). He also flies extremely quickly. In one somersault, he can fly 108,000 *li*

[64] Jiang (1959), op. cit., p. 1.
[65] Ibid, p. 3.

(21,675 kilometres). However, in the paintings of the Great Leap Forward, the Monkey King could not even lift a huge corn on the cob (Figure 3.20), and although he flies fast, he could still not catch up with the worker who is leaping forward (Figure 3.3).

Another painting (Figure 3.21) refers to an excerpt from the novel *Journey to the West*, published in the Ming Dynasty. The story of the Flaming Mountains is written in Chapter Sixty of the novel, in it the Monkey King caused havoc in Heaven. Later, he was subdued and then placed in Eight Trigrams Furnace of *Taishang laojun* (the Grand Supreme Elderly Lord) to be destroyed. However, when the furnace was reopened, the Monkey King was not burned to ashes; on the contrary, he kicked the furnace in anger. Some of the fire bricks fell from Heaven to the ground, and became the Flaming Mountains, therefore, the mountain is extremely hot all the year round. Hundreds of years later, during the journey to India to obtain Buddhist scriptures, Monk Tang Sanzang and his three disciples – the Monkey King, Zhu Bujie and Sha Wujing – were trapped in the Flaming Mountains because of its high temperature. The Princess Iron Fan, who lived in the Flaming Mountain, had a palm-leaf fan that could extinguish the fire of the Flaming Mountains. So, the Monkey King borrowed her magic fan three times and finally extinguished the fire, and the monk Tang and his three disciples were able to pass the Flaming Mountains safely.

In this painting (Figure 3.21), the Monkey King holds the palm-leaf fan, and tries to stop the raging flames and thick billowing black clouds of smoke that spring from the steel furnaces into the sky. The steel furnaces are hot like the Flaming Mountains used to be, and the Monkey King mistakes them for the Flaming Mountains and tries to stop the flames. The painting seems to show that even the Monkey King – with super powers and holding a magic palm-leaf fan – cannot quench the fire; indicating that the scale of steel furnaces is so amazing that the burning fire from within them is hotter than the Flaming Mountains, and suggesting that China's industrialisation is both an unstoppable process and that it will make China undefeatable.

The Monkey King is regarded as a great character in Chinese legend and, more importantly, an object of collective worship. When he appeared in the paintings during the Great Leap Forward, his position has changed significantly. Although he is still a main character in these paintings, the Monkey King is not as infinitely resourceful as he used to be in *Journey to the West*. Here, the myth of the Monkey King's invulnerability never existed. This legendary hero is merely a witness that observes the fighting achievement of the socialist peasants. If the Monkey King is the powerful god, in these paintings, he has been miraculously trapped by the labour of the masses – it seems that the masses are more powerful than him. The painting heralds that the new China, led by the people, would overcome the past, while the old divine *guai* would become irrelevant bystanders to a progress that does not need them.

The products of the Great Leap Forward were full of febrile imagination where people could conquer nature. The *guai* visual art closely followed the Communist ideology, and attempted to create a new myth of the era, based on rewriting the relationship between people and powerful *guai* of ancient myths. Most of *guai* imageries in the new myth, still showed a connection with Chinese visual traditions, both in terms of artistic form and meaning. However, given the main role of these political products, the meanings of the *guai* imageries underwent a significant fundamental change; it can be said that, during this period, *guai* imagery was essentially a political message.

By visualising the politically ideological discourse – such as the "communist heaven", "greater, faster, better, cheaper" and "Great Leap Forward" – the Communist Party employed *guai* imageries to design an ideal blueprint with strong values and an emotional orientation in order to communicate with the public. Based on their own interests and demands, the masses accepted the imaginative designs of artworks with *guai* imagery, and showed their understanding of the new social prospects. The visual products of *guai* intertwined with power discourse and public discourse. Artists and the masses worked together to complete an ideal world through the visual products of *guai*, they bonded together by the emotion carried in artworks, and threw

themselves into economic development. The artworks with *guai* imagery reflected the public's newly constructed self-identity, class consciousness, and their beautiful vision of the future of life and society.

Chapter Four: *Guai* in the Cultural Revolution

From 1966, a 'new' concept of *guai* was put forward in China and became widely known by the public, it was called '*niugui sheshen* (ox-demons and snake-spirits)'. It was officially published to the masses for the first time on 1 June 1966, through the editorial Sweep Away All the Ox-demons and Snake-spirits in the *People's Daily*[1]. The 'new' *guai* was completely transformed from its original imagery to the political and, from a visual perspective of *guai* imagery, it can be associated with the beginning of the Cultural Revolution.

In order to research the transformation of *guai* imagery in the early Cultural Revolution, in this chapter I will first survey the background of the Cultural Revolution and its guiding principles. I will then introduce the Smashing the Four Olds movement in 1966, in order to understand the demolishment of *guai* from the 'old world'. Which raises the question, what *guai* did not exist anymore in China? In fact, 'ox-demons and snake-spirits' as a new and black *guai* was redefined for the 'new world'. Thus, in section two I will discuss how 'ox-demons and snake-spirits' transformed from the 'Old' to the 'New'. With the reinvention of 'ox-demons and snake-spirits', a variety of *guai* were created, thus, in section three, I will focus on image analysis of representations of black *guai.* I will also discuss the evolution of *guai*'s imagery in the early Cultural Revolution; in this evolutionary process what kind of problems influenced the change of the image? Was there a standardised image? This will generate a discussion between diversification and standardisation. During this period, in contrast to 'ox-demons and snake-spirits', the personal cult of Mao was built; I will discuss the hybridity of Mao combined with Red Sun in the fourth section. I will also focus on the comparison of the black *guai* and the hybrid Mao. I am then going to analyse the production, dissemination and reception of *guai* visual products. In order to understand the generation and development of those

[1] *People's Daily* (1966a), '*Hengsao Yiqie Niugui Sheshen* (Sweep All the Ox-demon and Snake-spirit)', *People's Daily*, 1 June, p. 1.

various *guai* imageries, I will discuss the relationship between text and image. In the final section, a series of questions need to be clarified: firstly, how the power of the language and big character posters impacted on *guai* imagery; secondly, how the terms in big character posters were visualised and transformed into images; and thirdly, how cartoons signified the production of *guai* imagery visually? The disseminative vehicles will be clarified, and the mass newspapers, as the most important and essential carrier of *guai* imageries, will be analysed.

4.1 Demolishing the Old

It has been generally acknowledged that the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) was launched by Mao Zedong to combat and prevent capitalist restoration, revisionism[2] and Chinese traditional 'remnants', in order to maintain the purity of Communist ideology. Mao believed that even after the establishment of the PRC in 1949, when the CCP had attained the ruling political power over the country, an exploiting class and its representatives still existed.[3] However, for most scholars, they tend to agree that Mao's purpose was to ensure his politically dominant position, and liquidate his opponents in the Communist leadership.[4] According to Barnouin and Yu, his true intention had already emerged in the May the Sixteenth Circular,[5] issued by the Central Session of Chinese Communist Party at Mao's command on 16 May 1966.[6] Mao started the Cultural Revolution, aiming to wiping out various enemies, especially those who were so-called 'capitalists' hidden in the Party.

Before long, an organisation of Red Guards was raised by a group of middle school students on 29 May 1966, with their slogan to obey the absolute leadership of Mao Zedong's thought.[7] On 1 August 1966, Mao Zedong wrote a letter to the Red Guards, and supported their rebellion against reactionaries and 'capitalists',[8] and with his open

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[2] The term 'revisionism' refers to various ideas and theories that revise the original Marxism. It is considered as a bourgeois trend which supports Marxism on its surface, but it is actually against Marxism. Revisionism with pejorative meanings was opposed and criticised during the Cultural Revolution. See Hamilton, Richard F. (2000), *Marxism, Revisionism, and Leninism: Explication, Assessment, and Commentary*. Westport, Conn.: Praeger, p. 95; Lee Hongyung (1978), *The Politics of the Chinese Cultural Revolution: A Case Study*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 53-8.

[3] Mao Zedong (1957), Guanyu zhengque chuli renmin neibu maodun de wenti (*On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People*). Beijing: People's Publishing House, p. 15.

[4] See Ahn, Byong-joon (1976), *Chinese Politics and the Cultural Revolution: Dynamics of Policy Processes*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, p. 11; Yan Jiaqi and Gao gao (1996), *Turbulent Decade: A History of the Cultural Revolution*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, p. 7; Andrews, Julia F. (1994), *Painters and Politics in the People's Republic of China*, *1949-1979*. Berkeley: University of California Press, p. 316.

[5] The May the Sixteenth Circular was the second-highest level of classified documents among the Communist Party, and only cadres of rank 17 and above were allowed to read it. It was not made public until 17 May 1967. Cited in MacFarquhar, Roderick and Schoenhals, Michael (2006), *Mao's Last Revolution*. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University, p. 41.

[6] Barnouin, Barbara and Yu Changgen (1993), *Ten Years of Turbulence: The Chinese Cultural Revolution*. London; New York: Kegan Paul International, pp. 71-6.

[7] Tang Yingwu and Xu Guangliang (2001), Zhongguo gongchandang zhongda shishi kaocha (*Textual Research on the Historical Facts of the Communist Party of China*). Beijing: China Archives Press, p. 1958.

[8] See the writing group of *Chairman Mao's Red Guards* from Beijing 31st Middle School and the High

support, Red Guards began to appear across the nation. On 18 August 1966, Mao first met the Red Guards, who travelled from all over the country, at *Tian'anmen* Square and once again expressed his support for the their movement.[9] Wearing the armband of the Red Guards, Mao legitimised the movement, thus, the Red Guards became the main force of rebellion in the early Cultural Revolution.

The revolutionary movement of the Red Guards started from the 'demolishment'. In the May the Sixteenth Circular, it reintroduced a slogan *bupo buli* (no construction without destruction), which originated from Mao's *New Democracy*.[10] In order to make art and literary circles in line with Mao's ideology, the circular provided a clear guiding direction of 'demolishment' for the Communist Party:

> The whole Party must follow the instructions of Comrade Mao Zedong, raise the great flag of the Proletarian Cultural Revolution on high; thoroughly expose the reactionary bourgeois stand of the so-called academic authorities who oppose the Party and socialism, thoroughly criticise and repudiate reactionary bourgeois ideas in the sphere of academic work, education, journalism, literature and art and publishing, and seize the leadership in these cultural spheres.[11]

Those anti-revolutionary targets were referred to as the Four Olds, and were widely delivered to the public via the editorial Sweep Away All the Ox-demons and Snake-spirits:

> The Proletarian Cultural Revolution is going to thoroughly eliminate all the old ideas, old culture, old customs and old habits of the exploiting classes, which have corrupted the people for thousands of years, to create and construct the proletarian new idea, new culture, new customs and new habits among the masses.[12]

School Attached to Tsinghua University (1976), Mao zhuxi de hongweibing (*Chairman Mao's Red Guards*). Beijing: China Children's Press, p. 37; Jin Qiu (1999), *The Culture of Power: The Lin Biao Incident in the Cultural Revolution*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, p. 81.

[9] MacFarquhar and Schoenhals, op. cit., pp. 107-8.

[10] The Central Session of Chinese Communist Party (1967), '*Wu yiliu tongzhi* (May the Sixteenth Circular)', *People's Daily*, 17 May, p. 1.

[11] Ibid. English translation cited in Barnouin and Yu, op. cit., p. 72.

[12] *People's Daily* (1966a), op. cit., p. 1. English translation cited in Li Gucheng (1995), *A Glossary of Political Terms of the People's Republic of China*. Shatin; Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, p. 427.

The demolishment of the Four Olds became one of tasks of the Cultural Revolution in the People's Republic of China. On 8 August 1966, the Central Committee confirmed the importance of "smashing the four olds" at the 8th National Congress.[13] At a rally on 18 August, Lin Biao (1907-1971), Defence Minister, called the Red Guards to '*po sijiu* (Smash the Four Olds)'.[14] In response to his call to arms, the Red Guards – who mainly consisted of students from middle schools – took action to smash the Four Olds. In Beijing, from 19 August onwards, these young students started an unprecedented movement – the so-called 'Smashing the Four Olds'. They devastated all the "Olds" considered as being associated with Feudalism and Capitalism. The smashing movement included changing old names and apparel, cutting long hair, burning and destroying cultural relics, plundering stores and homes, and demolishing temples.[15] In the name of Smashing the Four Olds, the Red Guards had the authority to break into homes and search for the Four Olds. The Guards destroyed all the items they regarded as the Four Olds, including countless precious paintings, ancient books, utensils, ornaments and furniture.[16]

The Red Guards' assault on the Four Olds was reported via radio stations and the major national newspapers on 22 August 1966.[17] With the help of the media, the storm of Smashing the Four Olds soon swept throughout the country.

Religion was regarded by the Red Guards as part of the Four Olds, being against Marxist-Leninist and Mao's thought. The nationwide destruction of religion was rapid and thorough. All religious activities were prohibited, and almost all the religious buildings were demolished or used for other purposes – only a few survived as national

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[13] Li (1995), op. cit., p. 427

[14] Lu Xing (2004), *Rhetoric of the Chinese Cultural Revolution: The Impact on Chinese Thought, Culture, and Communication*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, pp. 61–2.

[15] See Wen Chihua and Madsen, Richard P. (1995), *The Red Mirror: Children of China's Cultural Revolution*. Boulder: Westview Press, pp. 33-4; Lu (2004), op. cit., p. 62-3; Yan and Gao, op. cit., pp. 71-4.

[16] Kort, Michael G. (1994), *China under Communism*. Brookfield, MN: Millsbrook Press, p. 123.

[17] Wang Mingxian and Yan Shanchun (2000), Xin Zhongguo meishu tushi: 1966-1976 *(The Art History of the People's Republic of China: 1966-1976*). Beijing: Chinese Youth Press, p. 3.

historic and artistic monuments.[18] For instance, Jing'an Monastery in Shanghai, with one hundred and seventy years of history, was 'looted' in this movement, and many of its icons, scriptures, religious instruments and other religious treasures were lost or destroyed.[19] Wang recorded that, in Beijing more than 200 historic buildings were demolished and removed, over 700 statues of Buddha were smashed, and almost 120 stone tablets were destroyed.[20] The picture (Figure 4.1) shows that the destruction was carried out as a public spectacle – witnessed by large crowds – which reinforced the political message.

Thus, all the religions and beliefs were 'swept away' nationwide, except communism. Obviously, this destruction of religion had a great impact on the use and acceptability of *guai* images, and thousands of *guai* imageries employed on cultural relics and artworks were destroyed. For example, in Figure 4.2, the photograph shows a Red Guard in the Temple of Confucius, Qufu, demolishing a plaque with dragon imagery. As a former propagandist in the Cultural Revolution, Yu recalled that *guai* imageries such as dragon and phoenix, were forbidden for use in propaganda products, and even the names of street and stores with the terms dragon and phoenix had to be changed.[21] Differing from the Great Leap Forward, in the early Cultural Revolution, the Communists adopted a more extreme and strict attitude to traditional *guai* imageries. Not only were the traditional meanings most of *guai* imageries renounced, but their significance as visual forms was also ignored – the traditional imageries of *guai* with original religious significance were demolished.

Through such a mass movement, involving millions of people, traditional *guai* was quickly disappearing from all forms of visual arts in China. However, the new ones were on their way.

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[18] Feuchtwang, Stephan (2001), *Popular Religion in China: The Imperial Metaphor*. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, p. 219.
[19] Yan and Gao, op. cit., p. 73.
[20] Wang and Yan, op. cit., p. 4.
[21] Interview with Yu Youhan, 12 September 2014, Shanghai.

4.2 Ox-demons and Snake-spirits

Alongside Smashing the Four Old from the "Old World", the Communists attempted to establish a "New World".[22] The editorial Sweep Away All the Ox-demons and Snake-spirits introduced 'ox-demons and snake-spirits' to the public.

The term 'ox-demons and snake-spirits', originated from Buddhist terms, without pejorative associations, which the Party reintroduced during the early Cultural Revolution. 'Ox-demons' referred to Ox-head, which was a warden of *guai* in Hell, as already shown in Figure 1.5. 'Snake-spirits' referred to the snake god, named Naga, who, in the Buddhist legend, is usually described as a human with snakes extending over his head, guarding the Buddha dharma (Figure 4.3).[23] Although they are called demons and spirits, visually speaking, they refer to *guai* which are hybrid creatures, according to the definition of *guai* clarified in Chapter One. In the Tang Dynasty, the poet Du Mu (803-852) praised poems of Li He (790-817), and considered that, "*jingxi aozhi, niugui sheshen, buzu wei qi xu huangdan huan ye* (a whale absorbing the sea, a jumping giant turtles, ox-demons and snake-spirits, their absurdity and fantasy all could not to be compared with poems of Li He)."[24] Here, the term 'ox-demons and snake-spirits' was employed to describe the hazy beauty of poems, which tends to be positive, although the *guai* are not as good as the poems of Li.

In 1966, though politically filtered and modified, this particular terminology was reinvented to meet Mao's political needs. Although it had already appeared in the May the Sixteenth Circular, the masses had access to it for the first time in the editorial Sweep Away All the Ox-demons and Snake-spirits on 1 June. The editorial was broadcast nationwide by the China National Radio, and its full text was also reprinted in major newspapers across the country. 'Ox-demons and snake-spirits' was widely

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[22] *People's Daily* (1966b), '*Women shi jiu shijie de pipanzhe* (We are the Critics of the Old World)', *People's Daily*, 8 June, p. 1.
[23] Sadakata, Akira (1997), *Buddhist Cosmology: Philosophy and Origins*. Tokyo: Kōsei Pub., p. 138.
[24] Wang Dechun (2002), Duo jiaodu yanjiu yuyan (*Multi-angle Study of Language*). Beijing: Tsinghua University Press, p. 193.

disseminated and became increasingly popular in the whole process of the Cultural Revolution.

In the editorial, Feudalism, Capitalism and Revisionism were regarded as anti-revolutionary objects that needed to be swept away.[25] One week later, the editorial of We Are the Critics of the Old World, related 'ox-demons and snake-spirits' to more specific targets,

> We criticise exploiting system and class, imperialism, revisionism, and all the landlords, rich peasants, counter-revolutionaries, bad elements and rightists. We criticise the representatives of capitalism and capitalist 'academic expert'. We criticise the capitalist historical view and various capitalist academic theories, education and journalism, and we criticise all bad plays, films and works.[26]

In this period, the meaning of 'ox-demons and snake-spirits' did not have a strict definition by the Communists, but instead referred to objects which were used as negative social images and loaded with criticism. At the beginning, it referred to reactionary academic authorities, but it soon developed to refer to *heiwulei* (black five categories)[27], including landlords, rich peasants, counter-revolutionaries, bad elements and rightists. Later 'ox-demons and snake-spirits' was mainly related to *zouzi pai* (capitalist roaders)[28], traitors and spies. In the growing struggle, people who were not liked, or those who were going to be the targets of attack by rebels and authorities, could be marked as 'ox-demons and snake-spirits'.[29] In the early phase of the Cultural Revolution, once people were identified as 'ox-demons and snake-spirits', they were forced to wear high caps and hang sign boards from their necks. Then they were paraded through the streets to expose them before the public, and finally were kept in

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[25] *People's Daily* (1966a), op. cit., p. 1.
[26] *People's Daily* (1966b), op. cit., p. 1. English translation cited in Jiang Jiehong (2010), *Red: China's Cultural Revolution*. London: Jonathan Cape, p. 5.
[27] Sullivan, Lawrence R. (2012), *Historical Dictionary of the Chinese Communist Party*. Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, p. 242.
[28] In Maoist thought, a capitalist roader referred to a person or group who tends to adopt capitalist routes in the Cultural Revolution. See Sullivan, Lawrence R. (2012), *Historical Dictionary of the Chinese Communist Party*. Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, pp. 37-8.
[29] Interview with Wang Yi, 10 September 2014, Beijing.

the '*niupeng* (cowshed)', as 'ox-demons'[30]. The 'ox-demons and snake-spirits' became a political and social terminology that people regarded in relation to their political enemies. During the early Cultural Revolution, it was recognised as core imagery, and applied as a label to enemies, these targets were then spurned and attacked by people.

New imagery of *guai* referred to the 'ox-demons and snake-spirits' as contorted, monotonous and black-coloured images. In most artworks, the 'ox-demons and snake-spirits' are depicted as two *guai*. One is combined with an ox head and a human body, the other has a snake body and a human head. In a cartoon (Figure 4.6), two *guai* with ox heads and human bodies each hold a trident, and a *guai* with a snake head and a human body holds a machete. They follow in the steps of Peng Zhen (1902-1997), who used to be a leading member of the Communist Party of China. One hand of Peng Zhen holds a shield with "*qianxian* (battlefront)" written on it, and his other hand holds a machete – it seems that Peng Zhen is leading three *guai* to the battlefield. A pair of ox-horns is depicted on Peng's head; the horns, like devil's horns, show his evil nature. It seems that the road on which he leads is actually the road to Hell. In the cartoon, three *guai* half the size of Peng Zhen, they seem small and weak. The 'ox-demons and snake-spirits' lose their magic power and, at the same time, lose their tall and stalwart images. It seems to indicate that in this battle, *guai* would eventually be overcome by people, they are too weak to resist. Such images with negative meanings were employed to demonise those 'enemies' and suggest that these ugly images were their original form. The old imagery of the 'ox-demons and snake-spirits' – as Gods with tall and colourful images – in traditional religions was also abandoned.[31]

Thus, the 'ox-demons and snake-spirits' were reinterpreted within the political

[30] *Niupeng* referred to the place used to hold cadres and intellectuals who were identified as 'ox-demons and snake-spirits'. It could be an office, a classroom, a basement, a warehouse or a temple. Cited in Li (1995), op. cit., pp. 292-3.
[31] Sun Jianyi and Chen Ning (2003), '*Niugui sheshen, niupeng ji qita* (Ox-demon and Snake-spirit, Cowshed and Others)', *Folklore Studies*, No. 2, pp. 165-71.

discourse to demonise people. For the “New World”, the Party created its own *guai* – ‘ox-demons and snake-spirits’ – which continued to be a political and visual expression of the whole country from 1966. The ‘ox-demons and snake-spirits’ were the representation of ‘black’ *guai*, ideologically and visually. Red Guards announced the prologue of *guai* visual art in terms of more exhaustive politicisation and anti-“Old” sentiment.

It is noteworthy that the new ‘ox-demons and snake-spirits’ was obviously firstly generated from the literature – the written characters gave *guai* a new political significance. Then, according to the political ideology, they were reinterpreted visually, showing a direct link between text and image.

4.3 Representations of the ‘Black’ *Guai*

With the reinvention of ‘ox-demons and snake-spirits’, a variety of ‘black’ *guai* imagery were also created. The most common method used by propagandists to satirise and attack perceived enemies in this period, was to dehumanise and demonise them as half-animal and half-human *guai*, clearly dividing the world into two antagonistic and unambiguous camps. ‘Black’ *guai* could be analysed into three categories, based on different naturalistic characteristics in visual relation to animals, plants and objects. I will discuss dog *guai*, snake *guai*, fox *guai*, wolf *guai* and plant *guai* respectively below.

The most common imagery of *guai* was combined with a dog image; *Gou* literally means a dog in China. From the very beginning of the Cultural Revolution, *dazibao* (big character posters) were used as a weapon – mainly by the Red Guards – in order to criticise. As the revolution of the Red Guards grew more intense, language employed in big character posters became more harsh and violent. During the early

Cultural Revolution, *gou* became an extremely insulting term. All its derogatory, negative connotations have been mobilised out: *Zougou* (lackey), *goutuizi* (henchman), *gouzaizi* (pup), *goutou* (dog head), *tongda luoshuigou* (relentlessly beat the dog in the water), *gou zhang renshi* (a dog counting on its master's backing), *haogou budang dao* (dog in my way), *kuangquan feiri* (a mad dog barking at the sun) – these traditional terms and phrases became the labels employed to attack 'enemies'. Those terminologies were extended and visualised by propagandists in numerous cartoon works.

In the early days of PRC, Commnist propagandists have already used the term *zougou* to criticise the lackeys of imperialists. In the Cultural Revolution, the meaning of *zougou* was extended to refer to revisionism and became associated with 'capitalist roaders', the lackeys of capitalism. During this period, once a person was given the label of '*zougou*', it would be a devastating blow to him and his family.[32] The word would directly determine his political position and social status, all his personal interests would be deprived – because he was regarded as a *guai*, with a dog's qualities, he could be only accept criticism.

During the Cultural Revolution, Liu Shaoqi (1898-1969) and Deng Xiaoping (1904-1997) were the major targets of attack. Because of the disagreement with Liu and Deng on the development of China, Mao worried that their policies would threaten his political status, particularly after the failure of the Great Leap Forward Movement, which he himself initiated.[33] On 5 August 1966, Mao wrote a short big character poster named Bombard the Headquarters: My First Big Character Poster.[34] In the poster he criticised "some leaders" who set up a "bourgeois headquarters",[35] and

[32] Interview with Li Bin, 29 December 2014, Shanghai.
[33] MacFarquhar, Roderick (1997), *The Politics of China: The Eras of Mao and Deng*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 142-145.
[34] The 11th Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China was held from 1 August, 1966 to 12 August, 1966. On 5 August, Mao wrote a big-character poster directly with pencil on Beijing ribao (*Beijing Daily*).
[35] Mao Zedong (1967), '*Paoda silingbu*: *Wo de diyizhang dazibao* (Bombard the Headquarters: My First Big Character Poster)', *People's Daily*, 5 August, p. 1.

directed it at Liu Shaoqi. Soon, Liu Shaoqi, the representative of 'capitalist roader', increasingly became 'an enemy of the people' and the target of Red Guards' criticism. Liu Shaoqi was the 'lackey of evil imperialism and revisionism', and was branded a *zougou*.

Propagandists started to produce and publish 'dog portraits' of Liu Shaoqi. His name was usually written as 'Liu the Dog' (Figure 4.5), in order to insult him. The character *qi* [奇] in his name Liu Shaoqi, was turned on its side, and become similar to the character *gou* [狗], a formal of visual pun based on the similarity between the two characters, as can be seen in my illustration (Figure 4.6).

In political cartoons, he was portrayed as a deformed *guai* of half-human, half-dog, with black colouring (Figure 4.7). Liu was usually depicted with his 'master' in cartoons; a propagandist criticised him as a '*zougou*', who obsequiously stands around the American master and obeys his orders (Figure 4.8). A foreigner with an American flag hat, referring to 'American imperialist', stands in the middle of the cartoon; his right hand holds his faithful 'dog' Chiang Kai-shek. In the early days of the PRC, the dog image appeared, with obvious intention to accuse Chiang of being a traitor and a lackey of imperialists, as I discussed in Chapter Two. Liu himself, is portrayed as a *guai* with his head and a dog body, and sits like a dog behind his master – he puts out his tongue to please his master, exposing a flattering face.

Sometimes, Liu would be placed with his 'natural enemy' in a cartoon. For example, in the Kuangquan feiri (*A Mad Dog Barking at the Sun*) (Figure 4.9), Liu stands his dog body straight, and seems to leap up at the sun. He is holding up a book with "*xiuyang* (self-cultivation)" written on its cover. Liu's book *Self-cultivation of Communists*, written in 1939, was criticised to "betray Marxist-Leninist doctrine of the dictatorship of the proletariat" in the Cultural Revolution.[36] This book not only shows his identity, but

[36] The Editorial Department of *Red Flag* magazine and Editorial Department of *People's Daily* (1967), 'Xiuyang *de yaohai shi beipan wuchanjieji zhuanzheng* (Treason to the Dictatorship of the Proletariat is the

more importantly, can be seen as proof of his guilt and is placed with Liu in the cartoon. A sun with radiating lines is placed in the upper right of the image. In the centre of the sun, is written, "*Mao zhuxi shi women xinzhong zuihong zuihong de hong taiyang* (Chairman Mao is reddest reddest sun in our hearts)." In many visual products, Mao's portrait is visually combined with a sun. Hot rays of Mao as the "reddest reddest sun" burn Liu, who attempts to roar at Mao – it seems to ridicule Liu's overconfidence. This pitiful and ugly 'dog portrait' of Liu Shaoqi was used to serve as a foil to 'Red Sun' of Mao Zedong, although the realistic portrait of Mao is indeed absent in this picture.

During this period, Chinese propagandists repeatedly and emphatically produced and disseminated dog portraits of Liu, which deepened the association of Liu and dog *guai* in people's minds. As Marlin states, repetition is the best propaganda method to cause people's consciousness.[37] Propagandists provided a visual experience to the masses by continuously and repeatedly exposing the *guai* imagery combining Liu with a dog image. Liu became the visual representation of a dog *guai*, while a dog *guai* was the implied Liu.

The snake – often used in the Cultural Revolution as a symbol of venomous ruthlessness – was another common allegorical image employed in order to dehumanise enemies. As the previous discussions in Chapter Two, in the 1950s, the snake had already been one of the most reviled images in political cartoons; here, propagandists continued the tradition, and employed the snake *guai* to identify people who they regarded as enemies.

People were often depicted in a hybrid image of half-human, half-snake. In the cartoon shown in Figure 4.10, the snake *guai* has a portrait of Liu Shaoqi attached – a pen hits on his body and brings forth a few spurting drops of liquid. People cannot tell

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Essence of the Book on *Self-Cultivation of Communists*)', *People's Daily*, 8 May, p. 1.

[37] Marlin, Randal (2013), *Propaganda and the Ethics of Persuasion*. Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, pp. 70-4.

whether it is ink or the blood of 'enemies'. The pen with blood can be considered as a derivative of a knife shape; the knife-edged tip of the pen absorbs the function of a traditional weapon of a red-tasselled spear used to attack *guai*. "The Great Cultural Revolution" is written on the pen, and gives people legitimacy and rights to attack the snake *guai*. In the cartoon, a strong hand holds the pen, however, the author did not illustrate the owner of the hand. The cartoon was published in a Red Guard newspaper, Feng lei ji (*Wind and Thunder are Stirring*), to accompany an article criticising Liu, and was not marked with any author's or group's name. In this case, there was a great possibility that this was created by a Red Guard from the newspaper editorial group. As I discussed previously, in the early Cultural Revolution, the Red Guards were indeed the main fighting force to attack black *guai*. Most of the Red Guards consists of students, hence the pens indicate their student identity and become the most common weapons used by the Red Guards in their artworks. In this way, I consider it was possible that the hand with the pen represents the identity of a Red Guard in the cartoon.

Red Guard posters, including numerous ones in woodprint, praised the power of Mao's Thoughts in fighting snake *guai.* In the poster shown in Figure 4.11, a book of Mao's writings is held up by a female revolutionary. The selected quotations from Mao were published in the 'Little Red Books', which was widely circulated among the masses during the Cultural Revolution. From 1966 to 1969, 740 million copies of the Little Red Book were printed;[38] according to Wu, in that period almost everyone had a copy, which they regarded as precious and which they read every day.[39] The Little Red Book became the most important spiritual food, and was also called a "spiritual atom bomb"[40]. Mao's quotations could be found on numerous propaganda visual products, in songs and in literature. Contrary to Liu's book, Mao's writings – with authoritative, canonical power – were holy 'bibles' that everyone believed in. The book

[38] Liu Gao and Shi Feng (1999), Xin Zhongguo chuban wushi nian jishi (*Recollections about Fifty Years of Publishing in New China*). Beijing: Xinhua Publishing House, pp. 101-3.
[39] Wu Bin (2000), Shishang Zhongguo: 20 shiji Zhongguo liuxing wenhua de bianqian (*Fashion in China: The Transitions of Chinese Popular Culture in the 20th Century*). Shenyang: Liaoning Fine Arts Publishing House, pp. 142-8.
[40] Cook, Alexander C. (2014), *Mao's Little Red Book: A Global History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-3.

of Mao's writings is at the top of the poster (Figure 4.11), showing its supreme status. The book emits light like a sun, and shines on the Red Guards, as well as the revolutionary crowd in the background, which seems to give political strength and legitimacy to revolutionaries to achieve their heroic deeds. Mao, in a green army uniform with the red armband, was followed by the Red Guards as a fashion icon – they appear in the same style heroic images in the same manner of dress, and also use a large pen as a weapon against minute 'enemies', one of whom is identified visually as a snake *guai* with a human head and a snake body. In the poster, the *guai* is too small to be easily visible, rather the images of those revolutionaries become taller and bigger in comparison compared. It seems that Mao's book absorbs unparalleled powers that can reveal the original image of the *guai*, weaken its power and even eradicate it.

The fox spirit appears frequently in Chinese *guai* cultures, usually in folklore, and people generally consider it has acquired extraordinary magic powers. Chinese fantasy stories often describe fox spirits as smart and deceptive, and they can transform into an attractive woman in order to confuse humans.[41] In term of the transformation from a fox to a human, Guo Pu explained:

> When a fox is fifty years old, it can transform itself into a woman; when a hundred years old, it becomes a beautiful female, or a spirit medium, or an adult male who has sexual intercourse with women. Such beings are able to know things at more than a thousand miles' distance; they can poison men by sorcery, or possess and bewilder them, so that they lose their memory and knowledge.[42]

The tail represents the status and magic power of a fox spirit – the older and wiser fox spirit has more tails, and can have up to nine. A thousand-year-old fox spirit assumed the form of the beguiling Su Daji and led the last Emperor of the Shang Dynasty into

[41] Hu Kun (1989), '*Zhonguo gudai hu xinyang yuanliu kao* (The Origin and Development of Fox Faith in Ancient China)', *Social Science Front*, No. 1, pp. 223-8; Kang Xiaofei (2006), *The Cult of the Fox: Power, Gender, and Popular Religion in Late Imperial and Modern China*. New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 2-3.

[42] Guo Pu (1992), Shan hai jing (*Classic of Mountains and Seas*). Changsha: Yuelu Press, p. 45. English translation cited in Kang (2006), op. cit., p. 17.

evil ways, so that he finally lost his empire and his life.[43] This tale is from the famous novel Fengshen yanyi (*The Investiture of the Gods*), which was first published in book form in sixteenth century China. In the novel, Su Daji, whilst drinking accidentally exposed her tail; Emperor Zhou saw all of this, and realised that she was actually a fox spirit.

The tail shows the nature of the fox spirit. In the process of transforming from a fox spirit to a human, the tail is the most difficult to hide, because a human does not have one. Although the *guai* acquires certain human qualities and human forms, the tail illustrates that *guai* are still not humans. Later, 'fox tail showing out' has become a proverb which means a bad man accidentally exposes his nature.

During the early Cultural Revolution, propagandists used allegorical representation as a key component in propaganda art. Thus 'fox tail showing out' was frequently used to satire and demonise 'enemies' in cartoons. As a particular representation, it vividly reflected that 'enemies' were secretive and cunning, but eventually showed their true natures. A cartoon (Figure 4.12) entitled "Wo shi yiguan geming de (*I was always Revolutionary*)!" shows two portraits of Tao Zhu in different positions – Tao was a member of the Politburo Standing Committee of the Communist Party of China, and was regarded as a capitalist roader. In terms of the left portrait, Tao bends over at his waist and looks harmless and respectful; in the right portrait, he is depicted with a fox tail and is portrayed as a coarse villain. He stands straight, and exposes his short fat body, his large belly is no longer covered by the shirt, indicating his greed. He holds up his hands and energetically claims he is revolutionary. His tail is covered by several sheets of paper, recorded on which are his 'revolutionary' deeds. It seems that Tao attempts to use his so-called 'revolutionary' deeds to hide his counter-revolutionary nature. Meanwhile, his mace – with "*pohuai wenhua dageming* (destructing the Cultural Revolution)!" written upon it – exposes his evil nature.

[43] Xu Zhonglin (1989), Fengshen yanyi (*The Investiture of the Gods*). Shanghai: Shanghai Classics Publishing House.

In another cartoon (Figure 4.13), Liu Shaoqi has already shown his fox tail, but in order to continue to hide his identity as a capitalist roader, he intends to cut it off. Although he abandons his tail, which represents the power and nature of a fox *guai*, he still could not become a human, or a real revolutionary.

A wolf often is described as a symbol of greed and cruelty in Chinese traditional culture.[44] A wolf in sheep's clothing was the most frequent terminology to visualise a wolf *guai*. A wolf in sheep's clothing is a fable written in *Aesop's Fables* – a collection of stories collected by Aesop, who was believed to live in the sixth century BCE in Ancient Greece.[45] The fable quickly spread to China and is well-known by Chinese people. The term of a wolf in sheep's clothing is used to show those playing the opposite role to their true character, which is usually evil and cruel. Drawn from the fable, the moral indicates that one's essence is eventually exposed. According to the recall of Ke, a Red Guard propagandist, during the early Cultural Revolution, a wolf in sheep's clothing was frequently employed to criticise people as 'false' Communists:[46] a person who was very gentle on the surface, dressed in the cloak of Marxism-Leninism, while in fact they were a capitalist roader. He was 'red' apparently and his heart was 'black', thus, the person was dehumanised as a wolf *guai* with a pleasant and friendly appearance like a sheep. This particular terminology later was visualised in images by propagandists.

Wang Haifeng, who used to be a member of Red Brush from Fudan University, depicted a cartoon of *A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing* (recreated in Figure 4.14)[47] to

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[44] Williams, Charles Alfred Speed (1976), *Outlines of Chinese Symbolism and Art Motives: An Alphabetical Compendium of Antique Legends and Beliefs, as Reflected in the Manners and Customs of the Chinese*. New York: Dover Publications, p. 440.
[45] Aesop and Townsend, George Fyler (1866), *The Fables of Aesop*. London: Frederick Warne And Co., pp. 21-22.
[46] Interview with Ke Guoqing, 29 December 2014, Shanghai
[47] This cartoon is recreated by the author according to the narrative. The original cartoon was depicted directly on paper, and then hung in the exhibition. Wang did not keep the cartoon and sketch. The original cartoon could not be provided here.

criticise Yang Xiguang (1915-1989)[48], and accuse him of being a hypocritical 'enemy' mingled in the revolutionary rank:

> Ostensibly, Yang seemed to be very positive, gentle and reasonable, however, in fact he was the image of a villain and his heart was very sinister. In addition, his surname is Yang [杨], the pronunciation of which in Chinese is the same as the pronunciation of the word 'sheep' (*yang* [羊]). Consequently, I thought it was the most apposite to use the element of a wolf in sheep's clothing in the cartoon. In order to meet the terminology, I depicted a full-height portrait of Yang Xiguang, who faced the viewers with a pious and pleasant look. However, behind him, his shadow presents an image of *guai* with Yang's head and a wolf body. In order to illustrate Yang's brutal nature, I deliberately painted big black paws with long sharp nails.[49]

This cartoon was created to participate in a cartoon exhibition "Cartoon Exhibition of Criticising Yang Xiguang" at the Shanghai Art Museum in 1966. The cartoon was depicted on a sheet of A0 paper and was hung in the entrance, which was prominently displayed in the exhibition hall. According to Ke, another member of Red Brush, the cartoon provoked a strong response from audiences, and they considered that the cartoon vividly revealed Yang's sinister nature.[50]

The term *ducao* literally means poisonous weeds in China. On 18 June 1957, Mao defined "*ducao* (poisonous weeds)" as distinguished from "*xianghua* (fragrant flowers)" in his speech "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People".[51] Thus 'poisonous weeds' became the label for literature and art works – including books, movies, songs and paintings – regarded as reactionist and anti-socialist. During the Cultural Revolution, in addition to the writings of Marx, Lenin and Mao Zedong, nearly all literature and art works of the past, could be criticised and identified as 'poisonous weeds'. These works were also powerful evidence to condone a reasonable attack on authors and, subsequently, these works and authors became major targets of attack in

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[48] Yang Xiguang used to be the Secretary of the Party Committee of Fudan University.
[49] Interview with Wang Haifeng, 29 December 2014, Shanghai
[50] Interview with Ke Guoqing, 29 December 2014, Shanghai
[51] Mao (1957), op. cit., pp. 24-7.

numerous campaigns and political visual products. It made the public feel sensitive and alert to any work and thought that was slightly deviated from Mao's Thoughts. Later, 'poisonous weeds' were used to brand the people who create these literature and art works. In cartoons, propagandists retained a human head, while the human body was transformed into a stem of weeds. In most of cartoons with a *guai* imagery of 'poisonous weeds', the weeds are usually eradicated by Red Guards, and are uprooted thoroughly and violently (Figure 4.15).

In a cartoon (Figure 4.16), four plant *guai* with human faces represent *heisilei* (black four categories) – landlords, rich peasants, counter-revolutionaries and rightists. In the picture, a water pot is placed beside the feet of Liu Shaoqi, showing that Liu carefully watered those plant *guai*. Meanwhile, Liu props up an umbrella for the plant *guai* and protects them from the hot sun. Under the earth, the roots of Liu and the four plant *guai* are linked together – it shows that they come down in one continuous line. Liu is the representative of those black *guai*; by protecting them, Liu is actually protecting himself.

The protecting umbrella, combined with the portrait of Liu's wife Wang Guangmei (1921-2006), forms another *guai*. The umbrella is one of the eight Buddhist symbols and corresponds to the divine spleen.[52] Here, the umbrella takes on a protecting significance and keeps away the dangers. During this period, the *guai* combined with human and umbrella was used to criticise people in the Communist leadership who used their political rights to protect counter-revolutionaries, like the black four categories.

The most common way to express black *guai* was to portray them as the 'alien', different from human. During the early Cultural Revolution, propagandists also portrayed political opponents in other non-human forms. For example, in Figure 4.17, a kangaroo *guai* with Tao Zhu's head protects and covers those small black *guai* (as his

[52] Eberhard, Wolfram (1986), *A Dictionary of Chinese Symbols: Hidden Symbols in Chinese Life and Thought.* London; New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, p. 302.

followers) by putting them into his pouch. In the cartoon shown in Figure 4.18, Liu, combined with the image of pigeon – with the meaning of peace – proposes the so-called peaceful reform, in order to protect people labelled "*fandong minzu shangceng* (the reactionary aristocracy)". Figure 4.19 depicts Peng Zhen as a spider *guai* with multiple hands, in order to criticise him for seizing power everywhere. In Figure 4.20, the locust *guai* is combined with the portrait of Liu, who – like a pest – eats and destroys sunflowers with characters of "*wengongtan* (the art troupe)".

However, these forms were employed in products far less frequently than the forms I discuss previously. Traditionally, people had already drawn a clear line between humans and *guai*, as discussed in Chapter One. In the Cultural Revolution, it became the line drawn by Mao to distinguish between 'us' and 'others', between friends and enemies, heroes and villains. The black *guai* were considered to be disturbing elements which threatened political, cultural and social orders. They were considered a disrupting agent that disrupted the balance of the world and, therefore, had to be banished from the Communist world. It seems that eliminating enemies could bring 'us' a 'safer society'. However, in fact, propagandists produced a variety of *guai* and during the early Cultural Revolution, the whole nation was suffused with all kinds of ox-demons and snake-spirits.

4.4 Mao and Sun

In contrast to the 'ox-demons and snake-spirits', revolutionary leaders and revolutionary people were raised to the altar, and held up to be the natural enemies of black *guai*. During the Smashing the Four Olds movement, as I discussed previously, almost all the temples, churches, idols and religious classics were smashed, and all religious activities were forbidden. Nevertheless, according to Liu Zhongyu, a scholar of Chinese philosophy and religion, Chinese people were psychologically dependent

on gods for thousands of years.[53] When the traditional gods, regarded as 'Four Old' were swept away, the masses need a new god to fill the vacancy. Thus, Mao, as the ruler of the country, was upgraded from a human to a new 'God', and established a personal cult. In the process of making a god, the image of Mao was given a complex symbolic meaning, combined with other imagery. So, is a hybrid of Mao a *guai*? I will discuss this question further below.

The personality cult of Mao Zedong profoundly influenced the cultural life of the PRC. The Chinese people's worship of Mao reached its peak during the early Cultural Revolution, and he was entitled "Great Leader, Great Teacher, Supreme Commander, and Great Helmsman".[54] His Little Red Book was reproduced in the millions, as I mentioned earlier, and all Chinese people were called to study and even recite Mao's writings. Both text and visual materials often used Mao Zedong's words as a preface.[55] The *zhongzi wu* (loyalty dance), a loyalty dance based on acting out the words of lyrics which glorified Mao – was also introduced during the Cultural Revolution, as shown by the Red Guards performing in Figure 4.21.[56]

On 3 November 1967, the *People's Daily* published an article of Thoroughly Establish the Absolute Authority of the Great, Supreme Commander Chairman Mao, by Yang Chengwu (1914-2004), the Acting Chief of Staff of the People's Liberation Army, and brought the extreme expression of the cult of Mao before the public:

> Chairman Mao is the very red sun that shines most brightly in our hearts. He is the great, teacher, great leader, great supreme commander and great helmsman

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[53] Interview with Liu Zhongyu, 28 December, 2014 in Shanghai.
[54] Benewick, Robert (1999), 'Icons of Power: Mao Zedong and the Cultural Revolution', in Harriet Evans and Stephanie Donald (eds.), *Picturing Power in the People's Republic of China*. Lanham, MD.: Rowman & Littlefield, p.124.
[55] See Huang Shaorong (1996), *To Rebel is Justified: A Rhetorical Study of China's Cultural Revolution Movement, 1966-1969*. Lanham: University Press of America, p. 145; Leese, Daniel (2011), *Mao Cult: Rhetoric and Ritual in China's Cultural Revolution*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, p. 64; p. 111; Slobodian, Quinn (2014), 'Badge Books and Brand Books: The Mao Bible in East and West Germany', in Alexander C. Cook (ed.), *Mao's Little Red Book: A Global History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 219.
[56] Wang Tuo (2014), *The Cultural Revolution and Overacting: Dynamics between Politics and Performance*. Lanham: Lexington Books, p. 21.

> selected by the proletariat and the revolutionary' people of China and the world in the course of their protracted revolutionary struggles. He is the authority of the world proletarian struggle in the present era. ... He has the most profound Marxist-Leninist wisdom and the richest experience in struggle. ...Chairman Mao is the greatest Marxist-Leninist, the most outstanding proletarian leader and the greatest genius of our era.[57]

During the Cultural Revolution, Mao was praised as the Red Sun with a divine figure which embodied the party, the nation and the state. His image was intertwined with the Red Sun, as in a popular song sung by Red Guards:

> The golden sun is rising over Tiananmen Square,
> The five continents and the four seas shining bright.
> When the Chairman goes past waving,
> Brilliant sunshine fills our breast . . .
> When the Chairman goes past waving,
> Countless sunflowers bloom towards the sun . . .
> Chairman Mao, Chairman Mao,
> You are the reddest red sun in our hearts.[58]

Meanwhile, the portrait images of Mao Zedong, his words and the products associated with him were ubiquitous in both public and private spaces of Chinese life.[59] According to Barmé, portraits of Mao were produced in 2.2 billion copies during the Cultural Revolution.[60] At that time, Mao as the Red Sun, with sun light radiating from his head, was frequently depicted in visual products. The design of Mao's portrait with sunrays was present everywhere, on porcelainwares, certificates, posters, badges and more (Figures 4.22, 4.23 and 4.24). They were produced via a variety of

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[57] Yang Chengwu (1967), '*Chedi shuli weida lingxiu Mao zhuxi de juedui quanwei* (Thoroughly Establish the Absolute Authority of the Great, Supreme Commander Chairman Mao)', *People's Daily*, 3 November. English translation cited in Yang Chengwu (1967), 'Thoroughly Establish the Absolute Authority of the Great, Supreme Commander Chairman Mao', *Peking Review*, No. 46, pp. 17-8.

[58] The Red Guard Representative Brigade of Capital Universities and Colleges (1969), '*Women jiandaole Mao zhuxi* (We Saw Chairman Mao)', Hongweibing gesheng (*The Voice of the Red Guards*). Beijing: The Red Guard Representative Brigade of Capital Universities and Colleges, p. 100. Engllish translation cited in Wagner, Vivian (1996), 'Song of the Red Guards: Keywords Set to Music', *Indiana East Asian Working Paper Series on Language and Politics in Modem China*, No. 10, p. 40.

[59] Lago, Francesca Dal. (2001), 'Image, Words and Violence: Cultural Revolutionary Influences on Chinese Avant-Garde Art', in Wu Hung (ed.), *Chinese Art at the Crossroads: Between Past and Future, Between East and West*. Hong Kong: New Art Limited, p. 32.

[60] Barmé, Geremie R. (1996), *Shades of Mao*. London: An East Gate Book, p. 8.

art forms, including gouache painting, woodcut, pencil and sculpture.

Mao badges were the most common vehicle carrying Mao's image. They usually presented Mao's golden or silver portrait, with radiating lines on a red background. In a round badge (Figure 4.25), the portrait of Mao is placed in the middle, all the rays protrude from his head, diffusing to the edge of the badge. In a flag-shape badge (Figure 4.26), the golden portrait of Mao is placed in the centre of a red circular halo, and radiant lights shine out from it. Here, the halo and rays forms a more realistic image of the sun, compared with the round badge. A sunflower, cotton, wheat and various vegetables are placed under the red sun, with a slogan of "*Wangwu shengzhang kao taiyang* (All living things need the sun)". Here, the red sun is used to symbolise Mao, indicating his greatness. Mao absorbed all the characteristics of the sun, including eternity, strength and the high position in the sky. Like the sun itself, Mao's light was the source of all energy, heat and light – all things, including plants, animals and people had to depend upon the Red Sun of Mao for survival. This symbolises the supreme and magical power of Mao, who could bestow life like a sun god.

In visual products, Mao is often positioned with sunflowers, symbolising his followers; because the sunflower always grows towards the sun, it is employed to symbolise people would always loyally follow and worship Chairman Mao (Figure 4.27).[61] The sunflower reinforces the hybridity of Mao's image in connection with Red Sun. The sunflowers are often combined with the character *zhong* to express loyalty to Mao. In the poster shown in Figure 4.28, the sunflowers and the character *zhong* signify the boundless loyalty to the great leader Chairman Mao, the great Mao Zedong Thought, and Chairman Mao's revolutionary line, as the slogan asserted.

Mao in a military uniform with an effulgent red sun in the background was a common image, while some artworks presented Mao with gigantic holy rays in a crowd

[61] Wang Helen (2008), *Chairman Mao Badges: Symbols and Slogans of the Cultural Revolution*. London: The British Museum Press, p. 144.

scene. Propaganda posters from the Cultural Revolution, such as the one from 1966 in Figure 4.29, repeat the popular slogan, "*Mao zhuxi shi women xinzhong de hong taiyang* (Chairman Mao is the Red Sun in our Heart)". A worker located in the main position of the poster, holds high the book of *The Selected Works of Mao Zedong*. The hybrid Mao is presented on the cover of the book, and the dazzling rays are discharged from it. The crowd behind the worker comes from all walks of life and nationalities in China; each of them put their book, with the portrait of Mao, on their chest, close to their heart. It indicated the closest relationship between Mao and all the Chinese people, and visualised the slogan mentioned above. As Wang Tuo states, "He occupies the *xin*, meaning the centre and heart of the individual".[62]

In fact, it was believed that Mao's lofty light did not only illuminate China, but shone all over the world.[63] For example, a propaganda poster (Figure 4.30), entitled "*Chairman Mao Who is the Red Sun in the Hearts of Revolutionary People of the World Has a Long Life!*" shows people with different skin-colours, who come from several different areas of the world, holding red books and wearing Mao badges, flying red flags stand behind them. At the top of the poster, is a portrait of Mao in a green uniform, surrounded by a glorious golden halo, the bright lights emanating from his head. His face is painted in a reddish, warm tone – it seems that Mao, just like the sun, is shining brightly. As the Red Sun referred to Mao, according to the former propagandist Li, the use of black in Mao's face was regarded as a slur,[64] so instead burnt sienna is used for the shadow here. In the poster, Mao's light illuminates all surfaces that face him, and the people are all bathed in his warm and dazzling light. It shows that Red Sun-Mao would lead people from all over the world towards light and truth. The hybrid image of the Red Sun conveyed a message that Mao was actually a great leader of revolution throughout the world.

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[62] Wang (2014), op. cit., p. 21.
[63] Scarlett, Zachary A. (2015), 'China's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and the Imagination of the Third World', in Samantha Christiansen and Zachary A. Scarlett (eds.), *The Third World in the Global 1960s*. New York: Berghahn, p. 49.
[64] Interview with Li Shan, 28 September, 2014 in Shanghai.

Thus, Mao was indeed a hybrid being associated with the Red Sun – ideologically and visually – during the Cultural Revolution. According to the definition of *guai*, I argue that this hybrid imagery, combining the Red Sun and Mao, could be considered as a *guai* who was set up as a saviour and the Four Greats – the Great Teacher, the Great Leader, the Great Commander, the Great Helmsman. Visually, the hybrid Mao, can be only indicative without any distortion in order to protect the sacred image of the Chairman. And yet the hybridity is reimagined by the audiences through visual presentations and literature. During the Cultural Revolution, Mao referred to the Red Sun in order to establish a supreme political position, building the single imagery of a god in all of the Chinese people's hearts. Red badges, red flags, and red books were all referred to Mao's image – visually his image was fused with the colour red. Thus, all these visual products constantly repeated and delivered one message to all Chinese people: Mao was the greatest and most brilliant Red Sun God and leader in China. The extreme frequent exposure of the visual presentations aimed to persuade the public to unconditionally follow and put faith in their bright and powerful 'red' *guai* – Mao.

According to the studies of Wang Yi, Mao as the Red Sun would be able to protect the masses from a world full of evils.[65] The affirmation of his divinity was from two sides: one from his personal cult, and the other from his ability to attack and dispel 'ox-demons and snake-spirits'. In Figure 4.31, the portrait of Mao is placed on the upper right of the cartoon. Radiating lines are discharged around the image of Mao, which forms an invisible circular halo, with Mao at the centre. It seems that Mao, like the Red Sun, is positioned high in the sky and is shining with glorious light upon the people, animals and plants beneath him. In the cartoon, a *guai* with a human head and a bat body, and two *guai* with human heads and owl bodies hurry to escape the light of Mao. Obviously, the bat and the owls are nocturnal, actively living in the darkness. The *guai* with the qualities of the bat and owls are afraid of the sun, there is nowhere for them to hide in the sun. The lights of Mao are harmful to the *guai* and the *guai* with an owl body seems to lose

[65] Wang Yi (1996), '*Wanwu shengzhang kao taiyang yu yuanshi chongbai* (The Universe Growing Relies on the Sun and the Primary Worships)', in Liu Qingfeng (ed.), Wenhua da geming: Shishi yu yanjiu (*The Cultural Revolution: Facts and Analysis*). Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, p.128.

the ability to fly, burning up in the sun – they are so weak that they have no ability to resist Mao's brilliant lights. Those *guai* are indeed 'black' and are only holed up in dark and dank corners. This image shows that Mao, like the Red Sun, is unparalleled and can easily eradicate the 'black' *guai*.

By the propaganda of visual products, through various media, the cult of Mao's personality gained unprecedented success. His followers, the Red Guards, produced a mass of red products to sanctify Mao's image. However, on the other hand, Red Guards were incited to spread fear of Mao's authority, by purging his enemies, and demonising them as 'ox-demons and snake-spirits', presenting them in black in order to serve as a foil to Red Sun of Mao. In this case, the image of Mao became more red and sacred, while the image of 'black' *guai* became constantly ugly and small. The opposition of Mao – as 'red' *guai* – against 'black' *guai* transformed visually into an opposition between red and black in political chromatography.

During this period, red represented 'good' and beauty, and black stood for 'bad' and ugliness. Through contrast with the 'ugly', people could better appreciate the beautiful, and also prove that they were beautiful and 'red' by criticising the 'black', thereby obtaining an affirmation of political identity. When Mao absorbed the same significance as the sun god, 'black' *guai* had to take the responsibility to be enlightened and criticised. The way of portraying 'enemies' as inhuman *guai* could effectively perform the functions of the ugly. The mass production of 'red' *guai* images led to the creation of 'black' *guai* products. The emotion of heroism was infinitely exaggerated, while the ugliness was also magnified. It became an extreme polarisation between the 'red' and the 'black'.

4.5 The Production of *Guai*

In the process of producing *guai* products, during the early Cultural Revolution, text took on a greater importance. As previously discussed, *guai* were basically employed and reinterpreted first in the literature.

Calligraphy, as a form of visual art that presents the charm of writing, has a long history in China. In the traditional literati art – using traditional brush, ink and paper – calligraphy was frequently combined with painting and poetry to achieve higher and richer artistic expression.[66] However, in the twentieth century, calligraphy art changed dramatically, along with other art forms. During the May Fourth Movement, the masses, particularly the students, began to use traditional brushes, ink and papers to write banners and leaflets as a means of protest and criticism.[67] In this situation, calligraphic works became a cheap and convenient vehicle to disseminate slogans and opinions.

According to scholar of Chinese politics Richard Kraus, "The reconstitution of the bond between art and politics is encapsulated in the transformation of calligraphy from a private to a public art."[68] Since the founding of PRC, *dazibao* – literally, big character poster – became the calligraphic works shaping art and politics in China. *Dazibao* are usually handwritten posters with Chinese characters, pasted up in public areas.[69] In the 1950s, Mao declared that big character posters would be used by the masses, which promoted and popularised the use of calligraphy in visual propaganda.[70] It seems that calligraphy was gradually transformed from an elitist art

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[66] Qi Gong (1991), 'The Relationship between Poetry, Calligraphy, and Painting', in Alfreda Murck and Wen C. Fong (eds.), *Words and Images: Chinese Poetry, Calligraphy, and Painting*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art Princeton and Princeton University Press, pp. 11-9.
[67] Zhang Shihong (1958), '*Cong dazibao laikan jiuxingshi de liyong he fazhang* (Examining the Use and Development of Old Forms from Big Character Posters)', Guangming ribao (*Guangming Daily*), 15 May.
[68] Kraus, Richard (1991), *Brushed with Power: Modern Politics and the Chinese Art of Calligraphy*. Berkeley: University of California Press, p. 169.
[69] Hua Sheng (1990), 'Big Character Posters in China: A Historical Survey', *Journal of Chinese Law*, No. 4, p. 234.
[70] Chang Tsongzung (2007), 'Mesmerised by Power', in Jiang Jiehong (ed.), *Burden or Legacy: From the Chinese Cultural Revolution to Contemporary Art*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, p.61.

form into a public one. In the following decades, big character posters became a popular medium, combined with demotic languages and calligraphic skills, which could be employed by all levels of society. People used this artistic, written and literary medium to express their views and question and criticise social and political issues.

Beginning with the publication of "the first Marxist-Leninist big character poster"[71] which was commended by Mao, big character posters became an important revolutionary medium in the Cultural Revolution. On 25 May 1966, Nie Yuanzi and six other persons posted a big character poster at Beijing University; it called on the people to follow Mao's leadership and clear all the counter-revolutionaries – 'ox-demons and snake-spirits':

> To all revolutionary intellectuals, now is the time to fight. Let us unite and raise high the great flag of Mao Zedong's thought. Let us unite under the leadership of the Central Party Committee and Chairman Mao. Let us expose all kinds of plots and monstrous tactics and controls. Let us annihilate all the monsters and demons (*niugui sheshen*) completely, thoroughly, and entirely; annihilate all Khruschev-like revisionists, and carry out until the end the socialist revolution![72]

This poster as a model was then widely imitated and prompted extensive discussions;[73] before long it received official affirmation. On 20 June, the *People's Daily* published an editorial of Revolutionary Big Character Posters are the Monster-revealing Mirror to Expose All the Ox-demons and Snake-spirits, and quoted Mao's words: "Big character posters are very useful new weapons".[74] Mao Zedong also affirmed the big character poster, by writing *Bombard the Headquarters* in August 1966. With official support, big character posters soon became an important medium for political

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[71] Mao (1966), op. cit., p. 1.
[72] Lu (2004), op. cit., p. 75.
[73] Barmé, Geremie R. (2012), 'History Writ Large: Big-character Posts, Red Logorrhea and the Art of Words', *Journal of Multidisciplinary International Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 3, p. 12.
[74] *People's Daily* (1966c), '*Geming de dazibao shi baolu yiqie niugui sheshen de zhaoyaojing* (Revolutionary Big Character Posters are the Monster-revealing Mirror to Expose all the Ox-demons and Snake-spirits)', *People's Daily*, 20 June, p. 1.

struggles, covering the walls of cities and spreading throughout the countryside (Figure 4.32). As the editorial stated, big character posters were indeed a powerful weapon to attack 'ox-demons and snake-spirits', and they tended to be straightforward and effective. In this revolutionary battle, the brush, as an essential and effective weapon, was wielded to attack others through the big character posters. As Xu Bing says, "At that time, you really felt the power of characters. If you wanted to kill somebody, you did it not by gun but by brush."[75] During the early period of the Cultural Revolution, the big character posters became a ubiquitous form, combining violence and written words, politics and activism.

In order to pierce enemies' vulnerable points, characters employed in big character posters were "pointed comments". A variety of traditional and particular terms were used frequently to demonise 'enemies'; the basic meanings of these words could be received directly by people, and carried particular cultural, social and political features. All of derogatory, negative connotations of these words had been mobilised out. In addition to being visualised in cartoons, as I analysed earlier, they had also been marked and designed to define and demonise people as 'ox-demons and snake-spirits' via text: '*Zougou* (lackey)', 'poisonous snake', 'a tail of a fox', 'poisonous weeds', amongst others, were all employed. Manipulation of characters continued in nonofficial cultural and political pursuits, forming a particular political language system.

In terms of the visual presence, characters expressed different meanings using particular colours, fonts, sizes, layouts and so on. In posters, the text was regularly written in black, using underscores and circles to highlight, but sometimes they were written in red to convict a person.[76] People deliberately insulted enemies by writing their names incorrectly in big character posters – the characters of their names were

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[75] Interview with Xu Bing, 21 November 2003, Manchester. Cited in Jiang Jiehong (2007), *Burden or Legacy: From the Chinese Cultural Revolution to Contemporary Art*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, p.14.
[76] Lago, op. cit., p. 36.

usually written upside down or crossed out (Figure 4.33), in order to express fierce resistance and defiance from others. This approach was also used in the headings of cartoons. Big character posters were a visual expression flooded with fear, violence, paranoia and chaos, and their excessive exposure of political languages was often visualised.

During this period, alongside big character posters, cartoons were always a popular form and were widely employed to present *guai* imagery. Students from specialised art institutions – and artists who were soldiers, farmers and workers – preferred drawing to writing. With professional training, they acquired a certain degree of artistic skill and were able to participate in creating *guai* products, visualising people as *guai* imagery in cartoons.

Chen Chudian (1944-), Lu Zhengqiu and Jiang Jimeng, three students from Shanghai Theatre Academy, considered that big character posters with less visual impact did not have enough power to criticise enemies.[77] In October 1966, they decided to set up an art propaganda group, *Hong huabi* (Red Brush), and started to use cartoons as a weapon to attack 'ox-demons and snake-spirits'. According to Jiang, although he did not write big character posters, reading them was necessary and significant during that period.[78] Firstly, a big character poster area was an information centre which provided latest news from the revolutionary frontline and the central Communist Party. Propagandists would keep up with the news and create corresponding cartoons. Secondly, many of the big character posters were imaginative and depicted various *guai* in a textual world. Although they had little to do with the facts, they could build bridges between the physical world and the illusory. The specific terms from the posters were considered as material, inspiration and even evidence by the propagandists. In a large number of 'black' *guai* products, an imagery of *guai* is a combination of two visual parts; one part is the visualisation of a specific term from the

[77] Interview with Jiang Jimeng, 26 December 2014, Shanghai.
[78] Ibid.

big character poster, and the other is a facial image of the target person, as shown in this drawing of *Grandmother Wolf,* where the figure of a wolf has the head of Tao Zhu (Figure 4.34).

In December 1966, a cartoon work of Lu Zhengqiu was published in Wenhui bao (*Wenhui Daily*).[79] At that time, the *People's Daily, Liberation Daily and Wenhui Daily*, were the three major national newspapers. In order to find the direction of the centre Communist Party, many people would read the *Wenhui Daily*, especially since it was run by Zhang Chunqiao (1917-2005).[80] It was powerfully influential and represented official volition under the control of Mao. The publication of Lu's work in this newspaper was official confirmation to use cartoons as a significant weapon of criticism. It also encouraged members of Red Brush to continue producing cartoons with *guai* imagery. In February 1967, an editorial was published in *Wenhui Daily,* to praise Red Brush.[81] It called for more propaganda groups, like Red Brush, in the literary and art circles. Suddenly, following the publication of the editorial, Red Brush became a famous group in China. They received a large number of letters from all parts of the country, asking for their cartoon works. It motivated the development of many other propaganda groups and inspired the masses to participate in producing cartoons with *guai* imagery. Meanwhile, their artworks became a model for painting *guai* imagery. Members of Red Brush usually employed brush and ink to create a *guai* imagery on a sheet of A1 paper, and directly displayed it like big character posters. Jiang recalls that some people would take out papers and pens to copy their works at that time.[82]

Another amateur art group from Fudan University, called Fudan Red Brush, was deeply influenced by Red Brush of the Shanghai Theatre Academy.[83] A large amount

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[79] Ibid.
[80] Zhang Chunqiao seen as one of Mao Zedong's full supporters was a member of the 'Gang of Four'.
[81] *Wenhui Daily* (1967), '*Chongfen fahui geming wenyi wuqi de zhandou liliang* (Give a Full Play to the Fighting Force of the Revolutionary Art Weapons)', *Wenhui Daily*, 23 February, p. 3.
[82] Interview with Jiang Jimeng, 26 December 2014, Shanghai.
[83] Interview with Ke Guoqing, 29 December 2014, Shanghai.

of cartoon leaflets produced by Red Brush of the Shanghai Theatre Academy were spread among members of Fudan Red Brush. From the description of Ke – from the Fudan Red Brush – some *guai* imageries produced by Fudan Red Brush copied or borrowed animal elements from others' works:

> In December 1966, art propaganda teams from the Fudan rebels absorbed some elements of cartoons from society, in order to hold an exhibition of "Cartoon Exhibition of Criticising Yang Xiguang". Together, before the opening of the exhibition, many students discussed how to paint Yang. Firstly, the cartoon image had to look like him, and his most obvious features had to be expressed, such as the glasses he wore; others could immediately recognise the image of Yang; some people decided to draw a pockmarked face; basically, they presented his awkward confounded appearance. Portraying Yang as a deformed *guai* of half-human, half-animal was to further vilify him. His head with a snake body indicated he was a poisonous snake *guai*. Or he was dressed in a sheep's clothing with the tail of a wolf. But in general, the lines were simple, and the colours were usually black and white. They basically used the ready-made examples or patterns to present.[84]

However, not everyone could easily write big character posters. It not only required calligraphy skills, but also needed a certain level of literary accomplishment to complete an article. Children, women, workers and peasants with less education were unable to produce big character posters. For example, Feng Jun, a young Red Guard from a Shanghai secondary school, stated that he decided to employ visual images to fight in the Cultural Revolution, because of the low quality of his text-based posters, compared to those of others.[85]

Cartoons were direct, simple and easily recognisable images, produced in single-outline, not only in order to clearly convey a viewpoint, but also to allow people to copy, reproduce and even recreate. In the process of copying or reproducing *guai*, there was an excellent opportunity to generate a new imagery of *guai*. A cartoon (Figure 4.35) titled "Xuanyang pantu de huomin zhexue (*Promote the Survival*

[84] Ibid.
[85] Interview with Feng Jun, 12 January 2015, Shanghai.

Philosophy of the Traitor)" was provided by Liaoning Fine Arts Publishing House, and published in Xin Beida (*New Peking University*) on 25 April 1967. The cartoon depicted a *guai* with a head of Liu Shaoqi and a dog body. Liu, with a black shirt, is lying on the ground like a dog. The hindquarters of the dog are locked in a cage, with his tail and back legs curled up, showing dog-like dynamics. As a dog *guai*, his 'hands' cannot hold his book – with "*Lun xiuyang* (Self-cultivation)" written on its cover – instead, he can only balance the book on his head and hold a paper with "*zibaishu* (confession)" in his mouth. The padlock in the cartoon employs the design of the Blue Sky with a White Sun on the flag, and the emblem of Kuomintang, which shows that Liu is locked in by the Kuomintang. The book of *Self-cultivation* is Liu's confession, he surrenders and is begging for mercy from the Kuomintang. On 27 May 1967 another newspaper, Hongse qingnian (*Red Youth*), published a similar cartoon (Figure 4.36). This cartoon also presents a dog *guai* locked in a cage. From the aspects of the scene and the use of the dog image, this cartoon presents almost the same image and was obviously copied from the former (Figure 4.35). When published, the cartoon (Figure 4.36) was accompanied by an article titled "Ba dapantu Kong Xiangzhen jiu chulai (*Pulling Out the Big Traitor Kong Xiangzhen*)". In order to illustrate the article properly, the propagandist made some changes: he depicted a head of Bo Yibo (1908-2007), instead of Liu's head, on a dog *guai*; the shirt of Bo becomes white; the book Lun xiuyang was written by Liu Shaoqi, therefore, the book is removed, but Bo still holds a paper of "confession". Meanwhile, another *guai* with a dog body, but the head of Kong Xiangzhen (1904-1986), is also depicted in the cartoon. The propagandist painted glasses on Kong's face to highlight his characteristic feature. Kong also lies on the ground, but different from Bo Yibo, Kong is in a black shirt. In his mouth, he holds a paper of "*Liu Shaoqi hei zhishi* (Black Directives of Liu Shaoqi)". In the process of copying from another cartoon, the propagandist made some simple changes and adjustments and, as a result, produced two new *guai*. In such a case, because of the simplification of production, the masses were able to participate in the creation of *guai* products. Indeed, the people's understanding and perception of artworks was presented through reproduction and recreation, leading to a steady flow of a variety of

new *guai* imageries.

Guai imagery in cartoons provided visual presentations for the masses. They portrayed the images of half-animal and half-human monsters to dehumanise and demonise the enemies. Visually, for the audiences, this method could clearly distinguish between the good and the bad, the red and the black. Some cartoons were inspired by the terms from big character posters and explained them visually, which was better received and understood by audiences.

Big character posters and cartoons were interrelated and interacted with each other, becoming a fertile soil for *guai*. The specific terms created visual imagery of *guai*, in which Chinese characters and cartoons, text and subtext, were engaged in a constant and complex exchange. *Guai* roved around between big character posters and cartoons, and transformed between text and image, which led to the constant production of new *guai* imageries. The combination between text and image production was presented in two ways in *guai* products.

Firstly, *guai* products provide significant examples that combine written texts directly with cartoon images. Texts and images in *guai* products not only function as providers of complementary explanations, but also tend to trigger multiple levels of meaning. For example, Figure 4.10 is a political cartoon criticising and demonising Liu Shaoqi. The written characters “the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution” in the figure indicates the time of the criticism. More importantly, the text gives people legitimacy to attack the snake *guai* – Liu. Meanwhile, the pen with the characters becomes a ‘sacred’ weapon as *shangfang baojian* (the imperial sword)[86], which given by Mao, is used by the Red Guards to execute Liu with discretionary power. Sometimes, the use of text and image has an emphatic effect. According to the previous discussion in Section 4.3, in

[86] *Shangfang baojian* (the imperial sword) is a symbol of the imperial power. The emperor would reward it to officials and endow them with discretionary powers. See Bai Hua (2008), Zhongguo gudai xingfa zhengzhi guan (*Political Concept of Ancient Chinese Penalty*). Beijing: People’s Publishing House, pp. 343-4; Guo Jian, Yao Rongtao and Wang Zhiqiang (2000), Zhongguo fazhi shi (*History of Chinese Legal System*). Shanghai: Shanghai People’s Publishing House, p. 440.

the early Culture Revolution, Red Guards frequently depicted Liu Shaoqi as a dog *guai*. His name was written from Liu Shaoqi to 'Liu the Dog' in big character posters. At that time, many propagandists consciously combined the text of 'Liu the Dog' with his dog *guai* image to widen the power of criticism. The double impact of text and image deepened the association of Liu as a dog *guai* in the public eye. This kind of combination could evoke meanings beyond the power of texts or images alone.

Another 'combination' between text and image was presented indirectly in *guai* products. Texts provided creative materials for the propagandists and various terms first appeared in the form of written words. According to my interviews with propagandists of the Cultural Revolution, 'ox-demon and snake-spirit', 'poisonous grass', 'running dogs', 'the tail of fox' and other terms were often employed in big character posters, and then presented in visual form.[87] Those terms in text were laconic and comprehensive, expressing various experiences and knowledge of people's life, culture, society and history. The beginning of the Cultural Revolution can be associated with the terms of 'ox-demon and snake-spirit', reintroduced in an editorial of 1966. The concept of 'ox-demon and snake-spirit' was reinterpreted first by text. The text provided a support of initial concepts for the image; the image then visualised, and even extended the meaning of the text. In many cases, a metaphor existed between the text and the image. It was not only a rhetoric means, but more importantly, in Liu's view, a way of thinking,[88] which provided a bridge linking text and image. Meanings of *guai* imagery in big character posters often combined with cartoons to trigger feelings and understandings which could not produced by either alone; people would consciously or unconsciously link them together.

Speaking through mass-produced images, inexpensive posters and newspapers were often considered as the efficient propaganda tool of choice. They became significant

[87] Interviews were conducted with Jiang Jiemeng, Li Bing, Ke Guoqing, Wang Haifeng and Feng Jun respectively.
[88] Liu Jianwen (2013), 'A Comparative Study of English and Chinese Animal Proverbs: From the Perspective of Metaphors', *Theory and Practice in Language Studies,* Vol. 3, No. 10, p. 1844.

vehicles to disseminate *guai* imagery. In the early years of the Cultural Revolution, official publications hardly published new cartoons. For example, according to Hou Songtao's statistics, from November 1950 to July 1953, the *People's Daily* published a total of 199 cartoons,[89] yet from1966 almost no new cartoons could be seen in the *People's Daily*. Although cartoons with *guai* imagery were not often published by the official Party at that stage, a large number of cartoons with *guai* images emerged in the Red Guard newspapers and pamphlets.

During the early Cultural Revolution, *guai* imagery was delivered through both traditional and unconventional ways. As a traditionally disseminative vehicle, a variety of art exhibitions were held nationwide from 1967 – these exhibitions mainly presented a large number of cartoons with *guai* imagery. The unconventional method could be divided into three means.

Firstly, cartoons with *guai* imagery in posters would be directly displayed in line with big character posters (Figure 4.37).[90] During the Cultural Revolution, big character posters and cartoon posters were vehicles that differed from the publication of traditional media. A few wooden boards were simply assembled together and used as a temporary wall to display big character posters and cartoons, as shown in Figure 4.38. These temporary walls could often be seen in factories, schools, universities and government units. Walls on either side of rural and urban streets were usually covered with a variety of posters;[91] these products of *guai* would be constantly updated and a new cartoon poster would cover the old. Big character posters and cartoons posters, as vehicles for irregular communication, were a common form of popularised propaganda and indicated a kind of 'democracy' from two aspects. Firstly, it gave people who did not have easy access to either the media or to printing presses more

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[89] Hou Songtao (2012), 'Cartoon and Politics: Cartoons during the Campaign of Resisting the United States and Aiding North Korea: A Focus on the People's Daily', *Journal of East China University (Philosophy and Social Sciences)*, No. 1, pp. 42-3.
[90] Although the poster in this photo does not employ *guai* images, the photo is an example to show that how cartoons with *guai* imageries displayed in the Cultural Revolution.
[91] Interview with Jin Dalu, 24 December 2014, Shanghai.

freedom and possibilities to express their political opinions in public. The broad masses were free to produce and post posters so that they could deliver their political ideas to the public. As artist Sun Liang recalls, in 1966 at the commencement of the Cultural Revolution, despite the fact that he was only 9 years old, he still had the right and freedom to post big character posters and cartoon posters to express his views.[92] This 'democratic' freedom enhanced the political status of ordinary people and increased their political superiority, which encouraged people to actively participate in producing and delivering posters with *guai*. Secondly, information delivered through posters enjoyed some degree of 'democracy'; in pursuing 'the dictatorship of the proletariat', the masses seized power from leaderships of schools, factories, governmental organisations and other work units.[93] During that period, any language could be used by the public on big character posters and cartoons to criticise 'enemies' – the publication of these posters did not need to be subject to review and approval by the Communist Party. In the meantime, posters would be produced by individuals or groups, and be posted publicly or privately overnight.[94] In order to assume little or no responsibility for the contents of posters, people would publish posters in an anonymous manner. In such cases, the issue of copyright was of no concern.

The second unconventional method was small books and leaflets with *guai* imageries which were printed to sell. However, at that time, the production of these was not in-mass.

The third and most important media to deliver *guai* imageries was the mass newspapers. Cartoons depended on paper media including books, leaflets and newspapers, the latter of which was the most flexible. Compared with static big character posters and cartoons posters, books, leaflets and newspapers appeared in both public and private areas, they were easy to carry around daily life and could be also taken away to be

[92] Interview with Sun Liang, 6 September 2014, Shanghai.
[93] Lee (1978), op. cit., pp. 157-67.
[94] Interview with Wang Mingxian, 3 January 2015, Beijing.

leafed through page by page, which it was a moving behaviour.

In the early Cultural Revolution, the mass newspapers were the most significant medium disseminating *guai* imageries. In 1967, main printing houses in cities were basically occupied by Red Guards. Most societies, schools, factories and work units had simple printing equipment and started to found their own newspaper. From 1967 to 1969, the quantity of mass newspapers published reached its peak in Chinese history.[95] Newspapers focusing on literary and art circles accounted for a certain proportion; according to the record of Wang, the masses published 31 kinds of art newspapers in Beijing and Tianjing,[96] and in Shanghai, 16 kinds of art newspapers were founded.[97] These newspapers often published full-page cartoons with *guai* imagery. The published cartoons were sometimes produced by art editors themselves, while more cartoons were reprinted from exhibitions or other art propaganda groups. The cartoons from the Red Brush of Shanghai Theatre Academy used to be published in Wenyi zhanbao (*the Battlefield Report of Literature and Art*). Other mass presses also disseminated *guai* imageries in cartoons, however, in terms of quantity and quality, they could not yet compare with the art newspapers.

During that period, some of the art newspapers, such as *The Battlefield Report of Literature,* were sold at post offices rather than through newsstands,[98] disseminating *guai* imagery nationwide. Other newspapers, especially from universities, were basically sold directly on the streets. Main printing houses were directed to publish mass presses, instead of books and magazines, and these mass newspapers became the most important channels for reading, allowing the masses to accept the latest messages from newspapers.

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[95] Jin Dalu (2011), Feichang yu zhengchang: Shanghai wenge shiqi de shehui shenghuo (*Abnormal and Normal: Shanghai Social Life during the Cultural Revolution*). Shanghai: Shanghai Lexicographical Publishing House, p. 230.
[96] Wang and Yan, op. cit., pp. 22-3.
[97] Jin (2011), op. cit., pp. 256-84.
[98] Interview with Lin Bin, 29 December 2014, Shanghai.

Between 1966 and 1976 the government did not conduct a census, and could not provide the illiteracy rate during the Cultural Revolution, but, according to the statistics of 1964, the illiteracy rate dropped to 38%.[99] In the early Cultural Revolution, more people could read than in the Great Leap Forward Movement. However, mass newspapers usually published articles accompanied with cartoons in order to get access to a wider audience, therefore, the masses were willing to buy and read them. As an audience, people showed great initiative in receiving information, and it could be seen as a way for the masses to involve themselves into this revolution.

During the early Cultural Revolution, the masses tended to have multiple identities. In the process of reproducing or copying *guai* images, people took on two important roles: artists and audiences. In many cases, three identities coincided: not only is everyone an artist and an audience, but also a disseminator. According to Jin, many small groups of just four or five people would buy various newspapers, and either directly copy from the articles and cartoons or make some edits and adjustments and then publish them in their own newspaper.[100] Such tabloid newspapers were always sold on the streets directly by the publisher. Here, these persons firstly acted as audiences, reading the images; then, based on their own understanding and perception, they reproduced or developed those *guai* products; finally, they then assumed a disseminator role, delivering information to others.

During the early Cultural Revolution, through Smashing the Four Olds movement, Communists demolished the 'old world' and built a 'new one'. *Guai* imagery was redefined for the 'new world'. The 'old' was replaced with the 'new' from two aspects: firstly, the original religious meanings were obliterated and replaced by Mao's Communism as the exclusive belief; secondly, the visual world of traditional *guai* was politically filtered and modified. The original religious significance of *guai* collapsed by degrees and was redeveloped in a political context. In that case, I consider that the

[99] Social Survey Institute of China (1990), Zhongguo guoqing baogao (*China's National Conditions Report*). Shenyang: Liaoning People's Publishing House, p. 276.
[100] Interview with Jin Dalu, 24 December 2014, Shanghai.

‘old’ *guai* was transformed into a ‘new’ one, in both form and meaning, presenting the transformation of *guai* towards politicisation, which reached its peak in this period. More importantly, it reformed a complete and balanced world of *guai*, which consisted of the ‘black’ and the ‘red’ corresponding respectively to the two opposing camps of ‘others’ and ‘us’.

Maximum of participation of the masses was the enchantment of the *guai* production in this period. Numerous cartoons with *guai* imageries were employed throughout the country by the masses in order to demonise and criticise others. A huge variety of *guai* imageries were produced and reproduced – indeed, such a mass creation of *guai* imagery has been never seen in the history of *guai* visual art. More importantly, this was an inventive process of production and dissemination which further contributed to the creation and reinterpretation of *guai* imagery, achieving Mao’s political purpose.

Chapter Five: *Guai* in the Transition

From the beginning of the 1970s, Mao Zedong started to restore the prosperity of literary and artistic production, without compromising his political art principles. Inevitably, *guai* production was also changed.

Various visual arts began to recover and rise in the 1970s, however, despite being influenced by this restoration, the production of *guai* visual art showed a downward trend. In the first section, I will analyse the three reasons which contributed to the declination of the mass production process in the creation of *guai*. Firstly, in the later Cultural Revolution, the change of the main theme of artistic activities made artists more focused on the production of other works, rather than *guai* products. The second reason is because of the lack of the main group creating *guai*, due to the fact that the urban Red Guards were sent to the countryside. And thirdly, the mass newspapers as a main medium were brought under the control of the government, which meant that the *guai* products lost their important carrier. One could question, under the circumstances at that time, were *guai* visual p roducts of any significance anymore? However, art activities to criticise those people who had a counter-revolutionary political status still continued. In this period, Mao and the Communist Party still continued to use *guai* in the previous way of half-human, half-animal to demonise 'enemies'. In the following two sections, I will analyse *guai* visual products involved in the movement of 'Criticise Lin, Criticise Confucius' and the movement of 'Smashing of the Gang of Four' respectively. In these two sections, comparing *guai* visual products of the 1970s with those of the early Cultural Revolution, a series of questions will be discussed. In the 1970s, what kinds of *guai* images continued to be employed? Were new *guai* created in line with the two movements? Since late 1978, the visual culture of *guai* came into an era of relative artistic democracy in terms of the religious, social and cultural sense; how did the *guai* imageries develop during the transitional period of the 1980s? Facing the announcement of the Open Door policy, could *guai*

production adapt to the market economy? Could it fight against the impact of foreign cultures? And also, could *guai* products face the challenges brought by new media in the 1980s? Those questions will be discussed in the fourth section. Entering the 1990s, *guai* visual art continued to seek new opportunities and new directions of development. However, this section only provides a brief introduction of *guai* imageries since 1978 and does not deal with these in as great a depth as the earlier focus on 1949-1978.

5.1 The Declination of *Guai*

As discussed previously, during the early Cultural Revolution, visual arts primarily focused on setting up the new languages and system, in order to destroy and replace the old. Under this new system, the original religious significance of *guai* was transformed by degrees and redeveloped in a political context. It presents the transformation of *guai* towards politicisation, which reached its peak in the early Cultural Revolution, from 1966 to 1969. Since 1970, under Mao's intended control, Chinese visual arts have gradually presented a new trend. Visual production of *guai* showed a downward trend. I argue that the declination of mass production process in the creation of *guai* was due to three reasons including: the change of themes; the shortage of producers; and the limitation of the disseminative vehicle.

Firstly, in the later years of the Cultural Revolution, celebrating the Communist buildings became the main theme of artistic activities, instead of depicting fierce political struggles of the early Cultural Revolution. In the early period of the Cultural Revolution, various black *guai* were shown to demonise and criticise people in cartoons. This was in marked contrast to the emblematic figure of Mao, associated with Red Sun and illustrating intense revolutionary struggles. However, Zou Yuejin considers that, since the early 1970s, Mao began to restore the prosperity of various literary and artistic productions, without compromising his political art principles.[1] Art was no longer limited to revolutionary subjects and revolutionary artistic styles. In terms of themes, Cultural Revolution propagandists seemed to focus on praising the prosperous and rapid development of Chinese Communist Party over the past decades.[2] The theme praising the heroism of peasants, workers and soldiers also drew more attention. It not only met the needs of the Communists in promoting the victory of the Revolution, but was also a way to carry out Mao's artistic guideline; that

[1] Zou Yuejin (2002), *A History of Chinese Fine Arts, 1949-2000*, Changsha: Hunan meishu chubanshe, p. 132.
[2] Andrews, Julia F. (2010), 'The Art of the Cultural Revolution', in Richard King, Ralph C. Croizier, Scott Watson and Zheng Sheng Tian (eds.), *Art in Turmoil: The Chinese Cultural Revolution, 1966-76*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, p. 30.

art should serve the masses, especially workers, peasants and soldiers. Yu Youhan and Li Bin, as Red Guard propagandists in the early Cultural Revolution, were both actively involved in creating artworks of new themes and presenting 'beautiful' images of workers, peasants and soldiers in the 1970s.[3] In fact, a huge quantity of artworks associated with these themes was created. During this period, the people regarded Chairman Mao as a great leader led the Communist Party to victory and as such still highly praised and respected him. The propagandists frequently produced *guai* products depicted the hybrid of Mao and Red Sun.

In the early Cultural Revolution, propagandists often depicted fighting scenes between small 'ugly' black *guai* and heroic Red Guards (Fig.4.11). But in the early 1970s, the 'struggle' theme in posters was replaced by the propaganda of new political and social themes, including participation in national construction and encouragement of the educated youth in the support of rural construction.[4] Jiang, from Red Brush, a famous *guai* production group of the early Cultural Revolution, recalled that this art group rarely produced cartoons with *guai* imageries in the early 1970s, instead, members devoted themselves to poster production with new themes.[5] Thus, there was little time and energy for artists to produce numerous *guai* products for the purpose of political struggles. The production of black *guai* clearly showed a downward trend, although, as I will show, there was something of a resurgence in relation to the political events of 1974.

The second reason for the declination of mass production process in the creation of *guai* was the lack of the main groups creating *guai.* On 22 December 1968, People's Daily conveyed Mao's instruction, in which he proposed that the urban students should go to the countryside to receive reeducation.[6] Millions of urban youths,

[3] Interview with Yu Youhan, 12 September 2014, Shanghai. Another interview with Li Bin, 29 December 2014, Shanghai.
[4] Gittings, John (1999), 'Excess and Enthusiasm', in Harriet Evans and Stephanie Donald (eds.), *Picturing Power in the People's Republic of China*. Lanham, MD.: Rowman & Littlefield, p. 24.
[5] Interview with Jiang Jimeng, 26 December 2014, Shanghai.
[6] *People's Daily* (1968), '*Women yeyou liangzhi shou, buzai chengshili chixianfan* (We Also Have Two Hands, and Do Not Lead an Idle Life in Cities)', *People's Daily*, 22 December, p. 1.

including a large number of middle school graduates and college students, were sent "*shangshan xiaxiang* (up to mountains and down to villages)".[7] Some of them were sent to rural areas and frontiers, where they had to participate in rural labor and support the construction of frontier areas. From 1968 to 1979, approximately 16.5 million youths were sent to countryside as a result of the movement.[8] The youth were expected to humbly accept the guidance and education from peasants in the countryside, and enthusiastically devote themselves to new countryside construction. Young artists and propagandists were naturally members of the groups sent to the villages and during this period, many artworks were conducted to reflect *shangshan xiaxiang*. Young artists including Shen Jiawei, Li Bin and Liu Borong, who used to produce Mao's portraits, other propaganda posters and cartoon works in the early Cultural Revolution, were also asked to participate in the production of artworks on *shangshan xiaxiang*, in addition to their involvement in heavy manual labor.[9] Therefore, they had few opportunities to depict cartoons with *guai* imageries.[10] These works encouraged them to pay more attention to rural constructions, rather than fierce revolutionary activities. Meanwhile, educated youths were expected to bring knowledge to the countryside, changing the rural face and driving the construction of new countryside.[11] Young propagandists, regarded as transmitters of arts, educated peasants to paint and promoted the development of their paintings.

It is generally believed that this programme was intended to solve the unemployment problem of young people in cities[12]; while some scholars consider its political

[7] Bernstein, Thomas P. (1977), *Up to the Mountains and Down to the Villages: The Transfer of Youth from Urban to Rural China*. New Haven; London: Yale University press, pp. 21-2; Yan Jiaqi and Gao gao (1996), *Turbulent Decade: A History of the Cultural Revolution*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, p. 279.

[8] Pan Mingxiao (Bonnin, Michel) (2006), '*Shanghan xiaxiang zai pingjia* (Reevaluation of Up to the Mountains and Down to the Villages)', Shehuixue yanjiu (*Sociological Research*), No. 5, p. 154.

[9] Wang Mingxian and Yan Shanchun (2000), Xin Zhongguo meishu tushi: 1966-1976 *(The Art History of the People's Republic of China: 1966-1976*). Beijing: Chinese Youth Press, p. 81.

[10] Interview with Shen Jiawei, 16 November 2016, London.

[11] *People's Daily* (1973), '*Jinyibu zuohao zhishi qingnian shangshan xiaxiang de gongzuo* (Further Improve the Work of Educated Youth Sent Up to Mountains and Down to Villages)', *People's Daily*, 7 August, p. 1.

[12] The movement sending educated youth to countryside began in the mid-1950s, in order to deal with urban unemployment. Only a small number of the urban youth was sent away before the Cultural Revoltuion. Many scholars consider that the 1968 program was still to solve the same problem. See Bernstein, op. cit., pp. 33-44; Liu Xiaomeng (1998), Zhongguo zhiqing shi: Dachao 1966-1980 (*Chinese Educated Youth History: A Tide 1966-1980*). Beijing: China Social Sciences Press, pp. 105-6; Pan

significance was an attempt to stop the intense political struggles and restore social and political order[13]. In the early Cultural Revolution, millions of students were out on strike, and participated in the rebellion, which caused great disruption. Schools were still basically closed. Under these circumstances, in order to deal with the resulting social chaos, nearly all urban teenagers were sent to participate in rural construction. Thus, in the late 1969, the urban 'Red Guard Movement' was ended.[14] The activity of sending artists to countryside in 1958 was different from the activity of "up to the mountains and down to the villages" in 1968. The former aimed to promote public participation in the Great Leap Forward movement and, as a result, boosted *guai* production. The purpose of the latter was to end civil strife. Red Guards, who used to be the main artistic group producing *guai* images, had to throw themselves into rural construction. Julia F. Andrews, a specialist in the art of modern China, considers that the Red Guards were under government control leading to a significant reduction in the production and use of cartoons.[15] As previously discussed in Chapter Four, cartoon was the main art form depicting *guai* imageries, especially the black. As a result of the decreased numbers of cartoons, along with the shortage of participants creating *guai* products, there was an inevitable decline in the production of *guai* images in the 1970s.

The third and final factor in the decline of *guai* mass production was that way in which the mass newspapers, as a main disseminative medium, were controlled by the government. In the early Cultural Revolution, the dissemination of *guai* visual images was mainly dependent on mass newspapers. Cartoons with *guai* images were particularly popular in the unofficial Red Guard newspapers. Gittings considers that cartoons were more specific and direct in criticising and attacking enemies, than the

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Yihong (2009), *Tempered in the Revolutionary Furnace: China's Youth in the Rustication Movement*. Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, pp. 45-6.

[13] See MacFarquhar, Roderick and Schoenhals, Michael (2006), *Mao's Last Revolution*. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, pp. 251-2; Gu Hongzhang and Hu Mengzhou (1996), Zhongguo zhishi qingnian shangshan xiaxiang shimo (*The Beginning and End of Chinese Educated Youth Up to Mountains and Down to Villages*). Beijing: China Procuratorate Press, pp. 94-5; Pan (2006), op. cit., pp. 157-8.

[14] MacFarquhar and Schoenhals, op. cit., p. 252.

[15] Andrews, Julia F. (1994), *Painters and Politics in the People's Republic of China*, 1949-1979. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 335-7.

official press.[16] G*uai* visual products could be spread widely and preserved effectively via mass newspapers. More importantly, it involved as many people as possible in participating actively in *guai* production. A move towards the people and a democratisation of the production of imagery increased the use of *guai*. From 1966 to 1968, the mass newspapers were at their peak, as were cartoons with *guai* images. By the end of 1968, the mass newspapers began to decline. According to Jin's research on mass newspapers in Shanghai, there were two reasons for the disappearance of mass newspapers.[17] Firstly, the supply of printing paper was inadequate to meet demand; the central government allocated Shanghai a total of 25,930 tons of paper for the year, but the actual demand reached 36,668 tons in 1968.[18] Due to the lack of paper, many tabloids stopped publication; some newspapers were merged and published in one, in order to conserve paper. Secondly, issues emerged of mass newspapers leaking state secrets, promoting anti-military feeling and of content duplication. From the end of 1967, the central and local governments started to control mass newspapers by publishing a series of laws and regulations.[19] By the 1970s, only *Wenhui Daily* and *Liberation Daily* were still published, and both of them were controlled by the Party.[20] I consider that the sending of millions of Red Guards to the countryside led to the lack of the main group to produce mass newspapers. In the 1970s, mass newspapers of real significance had a diminished existence and as a result, *Guai* products lost this important and essential medium and had to rely on other means of dissemination.

As I will demonstrate, it is a complex picture and, despite the overall downwards trend in the use of *guai*, in 1974's "Criticise Lin Biao, Criticise Confucius" Campaign and the "Smashing Gang of Four" Campaign, the production of *guai* images had a short-lived

[16] Gittings (1999), op. cit., p. 33.
[17] Jin Dalu (2011), *Abnormal and Normal: Shanghai Social Life during the Cultural Revolution*. Shanghai: Shanghai Lexicographical Publishing House, pp. 235-53.
[18] Ibid, pp. 235-9.
[19] See Gu Yangmu (2011), '*Hongweibing xiaobao xingwang lu* (Record of Red Guard Newspapers' Rise and Fall)', Wuhan Wenshi Ziliao (*Wuhan Literature and Historical Studies*), No. 9, pp. 7-8; Jin (2011), op. cit., pp. 238-45.
[20] Interview with Jin Dalu, 24 December 2014, Shanghai.

resurgence. Most cartoons with *guai* images were widely disseminated through cartoon posters and books. G*uai* images were directly depicted on A4 or A3 size papers and posted on walls or columns, like big character posters. These posters were often fixed on to a wall and were, therefore, static; however, mass newspapers, as moving media, were more flexible, and could be reproduced in great numbers and disseminated widely. A cartoon poster was not a printed material, but a hand-painted item, often showing a single example of *guai*. Because of its display, usually fixed on a wall, *guai* cartoons in posters could not reach as many audiences as the images via mass newspapers. Also cartoon posters were often difficult to preserve; according to my research on image collection, there are few well-preserved cartoon posters. Books were another important medium to deliver *guai* images; some cartoons would be selected by editors of publishing houses and be published in books as part of propaganda campaigns. These books were also used as art reference materials for amateur propagandists. G*uai* works published in books were filtered by Communists, and the types of *guai* images presented to audiences were relatively limited. It is important to recognise the more pronounced bias in the visual and historical record of *guai* from this period, as a result of official guidance. In the early Cultural Revolution, the masses had more opportunities to publish their works through mass newspapers and these delivered rich *Guai* products. Therefore, because of the lack of mass newspaper as a carrier, there were few cartoons with *guai* images that could be preserved and spread widely.

While the above reasons led to a decline in mass *guai* production, it did not mean that black *guai* products with political significance no longer existed in 1970s.

5.2 Lin Biao and Confucius

The fiercely revolutionary manner of the early Cultural Revolution had ended,

however, art activities criticising people who had a counter-revolutionary political status still continued in final few years of Cultural Revolution.[21] Cartoons were used by propagandists to attack and abuse people through hyperbole and special graphic symbols. Mao and the Communist Party still continued to employ black *guai* in the previous way of half-human, half-animal to demonise 'enemies' in the propaganda activities.

In order to analyse the visual presentation of *guai*, it is important to briefly introduce the background of *Pilin pikong* (Criticise Lin Biao, Criticise Confucius). The political campaign of Criticise Lin Biao, Criticise Confucius was launched by Mao Zedong and Jiang Qing (1914-1991) in around 1973, which lasted for almost two years. Already in 1973, the campaign of criticising Lin was combined with the attacks on Confucius (551-479 BCE), in order to prevent the so-called 'restoration and retrogression'.[22] At the beginning of the campaign, many articles were published and sparked a series of debates about the Legalism[23] and Confucianism.[24] Mao had repeatedly praised China's first emperor, Qin Shihuang (259-210 BCE), as an anti-Confucian Legalist, and even compared himself to Qin Shihuang.[25] Under the auspices of political ideology, Emperor Qin Shihuang and Legalists were highly praised as progressive representatives aiming to advance history. On the contrary, Confucius and his followers were criticised as reactionaries, attempting to set back the clock of history.

On 18 January 1974, Mao Zedong approved the document of the CPC Central Committee that forwarded the critical material Lin Biao he Kong Meng zhi dao (*Lin Biao and Confucius Road*), selected by Peking University and Tsinghua University, to

[21] Zou (2002), op. cit., p. 132.
[22] MacFarquhar, Roderick (1997), *The Politics of China: The Eras of Mao and Deng*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 286.
[23] Legalism is a classical school of Chinese philosophy advocating the rule of law as the core idea. It advocates ruling the country by law, and establishing autocratic monarchy system and centralisation of authority. Thus, in the Qin Dynasty (221-207 BCE), it became the important governance line and the ruling tool for the ruling class.
[24] Moody, Peter R. (1974), 'The New Anti-Confucian Campaign in China: The First Round', *Asian Survey*, Vol. 14, No. 4, April, pp. 307-24.
[25] See Starr, John Bryan (2016), *Continuing the Revolution: The Political Thought of Mao*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 95-6; Barnouin, Barbara and Yu Changgen (1993), *Ten years of Turbulence: The Chinese Cultural Revolution*. London: Kegan Paul International, pp. 255-6.

government and work units at all levels. The document indicated that all the units had to earnestly study the material in order to carry on the Campaign of Criticise Lin Biao and Confucius effectively.[26] By following this, much literature was produced to denounce Lin and Confucius. Classical Chinese stories with anti-Confucian themes were also published in *lianhuanhua* with *guai* images. Whilst not on the scale seen in the earlier Cultural Revolution, nonetheless, a large number of big character posters and cartoon posters with *guai* images to demonise Lin Biao and Confucius gradually began to appear on the streets of cities, and soon covered walls in factories, schools and government offices and villages. For a rural, semi-literate population, posters accompanied with cartoons attracted more attention, as can be seen in this picture where peasants are looking at the poster of Criticise Lin Biao and Confucius (Figure 5.1).

Many images of Lin Biao and Confucius were depicted as *guai* with half-human and half-animal bodies, and were accompanied by symbols for decay and death. Some works were just as violent and bloody as the cartoons in the early Cultural Revolution. Lin and Confucius were executed as evil and 'black' *guai* by people with gun, shovels or axes. In this example, a cartoon simply shows that Lin and Confucius are tortured and are flowing with blood (Figure 5.2). The cartoon depicts Lin and Confucius as snake *guai* with a human head and a snake body. Their bodies are intertwined so that it is difficult to identify them apart, suggesting that that Lin and Confucius are on the same side politically, while the attack on them should be linked together. The bayonet on the gun pierces the snake body and a lot of blood flows out from the wound. This cartoon is strikingly similar to the 1967 cartoon which showed Liu as a snake *guai* stabbed by a pen (Fig.4.10), discussed in Chapter Four. Both of the criticised targets are depicted as snake *guai*, which have been stabbed and bleeding. In figure 4.10, the weapon is a pen with the title of "the Great Cultural Revolution", this shows that this cartoon was conducted in the early Cultural Revolution.The pen with the text of

[26] The General Office of the CPC Central Committee (1974), Zhonggong zhongyang wenjian [1974] 1 hao (*No. 1 [1974] Document of the CPC Central Committee*). Beijing: The General Office of the CPC Central Committee, p. 2.

"the Great Cultural Revolution" is given the authority, as I discussed in Chapter Four, it is most probable that the hand with the pen refers to the identity of a Red Guard. In the former cartoon (Figure 5.2), the attacking weapons are not only a pen, but also a hammer, a fork and a gun. The three new weapons represent workers, peasants and soldiers respectively. The hammers and the gun are placed in the front of the screen, and appear bigger than the pen in order to emphasis their importance. It seems to show that workers, peasants and soldiers are the major force against Lin and Confucius.

In the Yan'an Talk of 1942, Mao claimed that art must serve for the masses; according to the scholar Laing's analysis, during the 1970s Chinese art under the control of Jiang Qing and her faction reaffirmed and implemented this principle.[27] Many artworks created images of workers, peasants and soldiers, for example, during the movement of Up to the Mountains and Down to the Villages.

Another cartoon (Fig. 5.3) praises workers, peasants and soldiers as the backbone of the campaign of Criticise Lin and Confucius by directly depicting their images. A peasant woman with a towel holds a shovel, a man dressed in a worker's clothes takes a pick and a soldier holds a gun with a bayonet, their clothes and weapons respectively indicate their identities. The root of a tree has a human face and a character "*kong*" is written upon its surface, "*kong*" is the surname of Confucius, and the *guai* refers to Confucius. The old, bark-like face shows the backwardness and rottenness of Confucius' thoughts, these old thoughts produce and nourish Lin Biao and his allies, depicted as poisonous mushrooms. In the cartoon, the peasant, the worker and the soldier employ their sharp weapons to eradicate the rotten roots. It illustrates a battle between the masses, and Confucius and Lin. Depicting people as plant *guai*, associated with poisonous weeds, poisonous mushrooms and dead trees that are uprooted by Red Guards, was already a common way to criticise 'enemies' in

[27] Laing, Ellen Johnston (1988), *The Winking Owl: Art in the People's Republic of China*. Berkeley; London: University of California Press, pp. 72-3.

the early Cultural Revolution. Here, the artist followed this visual language, the audience literally looks up to the peasant, the worker and the soldier, and is thus encouraged to revere and emulate them. In the cartoon, compared with the old and small *guai* of Confucius, the peasant, the worker and the soldier are obviously bigger, younger and stronger. They present tall and mighty heroic postures, elevated above the *guai*, significantly demonstrating their valor and fighting spirit.

For the Campaign of Criticise Lin Biao and Criticise Confucius, under the direction of Jiang, the writing group of the Party School of the CPC Central Committee published an article by a pseudonym Tang Xiaowen, to prove that Confucius was a false educator for all people, and his education system, in essence, provided the theoretical basis of the Revisionist educational line to Lin Biao and his party, who attempted to restore Capitalism.[28] Subsequently, more of Confucius' and Lin Biao's remarks and claims were accused of advocating slavery and restoring Capitalism, and they were considered as the 'class enemies' against the people.[29] With the criticism in text, stories of working people's anti-Confucius struggle in history were portrayed as *lianhuahua* books. Workers, peasants and soldiers frequently appeared in *guai* products as important heroic figures of the day, fighting against Lin and Confucius. With the double interpretation of the history and the present, text and image, Communist propagandists intended to intensify the contradiction between the masses and Lin and Confucius, in order to call for public support and participation in critical activities. In a tabloid issued by Shanghai People's Publishing House, different styles of fighting images of workers, peasants and soldiers with their particular weapons were depicted (Figure 5.4). They occupy the main part of pictures, they are powerful and full of indignation, enjoying the status of a judge. The newspaper issued by an official institution gave workers, peasants and soldiers rights to attack those *guai* and reaffirmed their high political and social status. They became the significant images of

[28] Tang Xiaowen (1973), '*Kongzi shi "quanmin jiaoyujia" ma?* (Confucius is an "educator for all people"?)', *People's Daily*, 27 September.
[29] The group of the Great Citicism from Peking University and Tsinghua University (1974), Lin Biao yu Kong Meng zhi dao (*Lin Biao and Confucius Road*). Nanjing: Jiangsu People's Publishing House.

the revolutionary heroes instead of Red Guards.

Meanwhile, many mass artists were involved in the visual production directly against Lin and Confucius' fallacy against labouring people.[30] A large amount of *guai* products were from workers, peasants and soldiers. According to the editor's note in the newspaper that published Figure 5.2, cartoons in the newspaper were produced by both professional artists and the amateur, by workers, peasants and soldiers.[31] As in the previous discussion, from late 1968, the urban Red Guards had been sent to the countryside and this confirms that workers, peasants and soldiers became the main producer of *guai* products, instead of Red Guards.

During the campaign, a plane was often employed in combination with Lin, and then became a new *guai*. On 13 September 1971, after a failed coup against Mao, Lin Biao and his family attempted to escape by air, however, the plane he was aboard crashed in Mongolia.[32] Propagandists depicted the accident scene relying upon speculation and imagination for the campaign. In the cartoons, Lin was demonised as a *guai*, his head combined with a damaged plane body. In the cartoon (Figure 5.5), Lin with his plane body is crashing to the ground; it bursts into flames and dense smoke swirls and billows. The plane is badly damaged due to impact and many parts fall off the airframe. Through depicting a wrecked plane *guai* with Lin's image, the propagandist criticises Lin and visualises his dramatic death in a more vivid and exaggerated way; hinting that, as a Revisionist opposed to the Party and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution,[33] this is the extremely miserable end he deserved.

Another example shows a more dramatic crash scene (Figure 5.6). A row of monstrous red waves is made up from a number of clenched fists, which rise

[30] Laing, op. cit., pp. 81-2.
[31] Hangzhou Art Group and Hangzhou Society of Painting and Calligraphy (1974), *Cartoon Reference Materials of Criticising Lin and Confucius*. Hangzhou: Hangzhou Society of Painting and Calligraphy, p. 1.
[32] He Yuhuai (2015), *Dictionary of the Political Thought of the People's Republic of China*. London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, p. 249.
[33] Yao Wenyuan (1975), On the Social Basis of The Lin Piao Anti-Party Clique, Hongqi (*Red Flag*), No. 3, p. 1.

menacingly into the sky, bearing down on a black plane *guai*. Here, the artist used a politicised colour language, as discussed in Chapter Four, the colour red represented 'us' and 'beauty', while the colour black stood for 'enemies' and 'ugliness'. Workers, peasants and soldiers were the key detachment in the critique of Lin Biao and Confucius. The red fists in this image represent 'heroic' workers, peasants and soldiers, crashing down on Lin, depcited as a black plane *guai*. Here, it highly praises powerful force of workers, peasants and soldiers; even if Lin flies into the sky, they could easily beat him down. On the plane it says, "*Fubi zibenzhuyi* (Restoring Capitalism)", the crash of the plane *guai* indicates that the restoration of Capitalism is doomed to failure. At the bottom of the plane *guai*, is a skull and a wooden tombstone almost snapped in two. The tattered tombstone reads: *Fubi nulizhidu* (Restoring Slavery). The skull refers to Confucius. These symbolic elements of the colour black, the skull and the broken tombstone imply the demise of Confucius and his slavery.

These symbols of death, often with other *guai* imageries, were used to criticise Lin and Confucius. In a cartoon (Figure 5.7), depicting many tombstones, a flag written with a character "*ru* (Confucianism)" hangs on one of the largest stones. It seems to indicate that this is the cemetery of all Confucian supporters. A black crow, symbolising bad luck in Chinese traditional culture, stands on the tombstone. . Here, the tombstones and the black crow indicate that the death of the *guai* flying towards them is coming soon. In this cartoon, Lin is depicted as a *guai* with his head and a horse body and he wears a collar with a word "*zhigui* (noblest)" around his neck. The cartoon is accompanied with an explanation:

> Confucius' successor Mencius arrogantly declared, "If all under heaven are to have peace and order, who is there but me at the present day to bring it about?"[34] Confucius and Mencius' loyal believer Lin Biao barked: "The heavenly horse flying through the skies, free and alone (*Tianma xingkong, dulai duwang*)."[35] It fully exposed the counter-revolutionary ambition of Lin Biao who attempted to usurp the

[34] English translation cited in *Peking Review* (1974), 'Carry the Struggle to Criticise Lin Piao and Confucius Through to the End', *Peking Review*, Vol. 17, No. 8, 8 February, p. 5.
[35] Ibid.

Party leadership and seise the state power, and restore the capitalism.

It shows that the image of the horse *guai* is from Lin Biao's words. Lin quoted this sentence from classical literature, wrote it on paper in 1962 and hung the paper on the wall of his bedroom,[36] illustrating Lin's appreciation of the sentence. This was what people usually criticised him for in the campaign. "*Tianma*" is from the history book of ancient China Shiji: Dawan zhuan (*Dawan Commentary Section of the Historical Records*) completed around 94 BCE, and refers to a superior breed of horses.[37] "*Tianma xingkong*" was used to praise the way in which the horse runs particularly fast, like a heavenly horse flying in the skies.[38] In this period, it was generally believed that Lin Biao compared himself to *tianma* (the heavenly horse) and considered himself to be superior, with extraordinary abilities.[39] The terms of "*dulai duwang (*free and alone*)*" and "*zhigui (*noblest*)*" written on the collar are both from the ancient Chinese text *Zhuangzi*. The original text says: "*Churu liuhe, youhu jiuzhou, dulai duwang* (A person will move in and out of the Six Realms, wander over the Nine Continents, going alone, coming alone); *Duyou zhiren, shiwei zhigui* (He may be called a Sole Possessor, and a man who is a Sole Possessor may be said to have reached the peak of eminence)."[40] At that time, two terms were interpreted as Lin's boast that he regarded himself as the noblest ruler in the world, alone and free from any restraint.[41] As the explanation accompanying the cartoon, Lin's word thoroughly exposed his nature that he wanted to be the first man superior to all the people, even Mao. In this cartoon, the artist visualised Lin's words in an ironic way, the cartoon seems to satirise that Lin Biao considered himself as a 'noblest heavenly horse', while in fact he was a 'alone' half-man

[36] The group of the Great Citicism from Peking University and Tsinghua University, op. cit., p. 6.
[37] Sun Jinji and Sun Hai (2000), Zhongguo kaogu jicheng: Disanjuan (*Chinese Archaeological Integration: Volume III*). Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou Classics Publishing House, p. 11.
[38] Ibid, pp. 13-14.
[39] See the group of the Great Citicism from Peking University and Tsinghua University, op. cit., p. 6; Tang Xiao (1974), 'The Heavenly Horse Flying in the Skies and Lin Biao's Counter-revolutionary Ambition', *Guangming Daily*, 20 March, p. 4; Feng Xiyong (1974),'*"Tianma xingkong" kaoxi* (Research and Analysis of "the Heavenly Horse Flying in the Skies")', Wenwu (*Cultural Relics*), No. 5, p. 50.
[40] Zhuangzi (2013), *The Complete Works of Zhuangzi,* (Burton Watson, English trans.). New York: Columbia University Press, p. 82.
[41] The criticism group of Chinese Department from Wuhan University (1974), '*Cong zibi tianma kan Lin Biao de langzi yexin* (From the Heavenly Horse Seeing Lin Biao's Ruthless Ambition)', *Wuhan University Journal (Philosophy & Social Science Edition)*, No. 1, p. 37.

and half-horse *guai* spurned by the masses. A pair of wings with two written characters "*tiancai* (innate genius)" is tied to the horse *guai*. In the Criticise Lin and Confucius campaign, the concept of "innate genius" was widely believed to come from apriorism advocated by Confucius, and it meant that "talents or abilities were foreordained by heaven, so that human efforts could not change what heaven had willed."[42] This theory strongly advocated personal talent and rejected the efforts of the masses. Comparing himself with the heavenly horse, Lin was naturally a faithful supporter of the genius concept.[43] In the cartoon, with the wings, the horse *guai* can fly in the air and pretend to be a real heavenly horse. It satirised that Lin Biao thought he could become the "noblest of men" with the support of the concept. This horse *guai* reminds me of the horse with wings appearing in the Great Leap Forward Movement, where the horse with wings (Fig.3.17) represented a positive, upward spirit, which would carry people flying to the "Communist paradise". On the contrary, in the cartoon, led by the Confucian 'fallacy', the horse *guai* would only fly to the death and hell.

The campaign of Criticize Lin Biao, Criticize Confucius was conducted by the authorities. Cartoon series were usually created by professional artists and were published in mass by official publishing houses, including People's Publishing House and People's Fine Art Publishing House, or art institutions. Official newspapers and magazines also had some professional works depicting *guai* imageries. Those images became important study materials, providing different types of *guai* images to amateur propagandists. In order to encourage more public participation, selected amateur cartoons would be displayed in exhibitions and reproduced in newspapers or magazines, such as Gongnongbing huabao (*Art Report for Workers, Peasants, and Soldiers*) or Gongnongbing huakan (*Art Journal for Workers, Peasants, and*

[42] Wu tianwei (1983), *Lin Biao and the Gang of Four: Contra-Confucianism in Historical and Intellectual Perspective*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, p. 27.

[43] In the early Cultural Revolution, Lin used to vigorously preach the concept of 'innate genius' and promote the cult of Mao. But later, it became a charge against him. See Teiwes, Frederick C. and Sun, Warren (1996), *The Tragedy of Lin Biao: Riding the Tiger during the Cultural Revolution, 1966-1971*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, pp. 62-3; pp. 102-50; Jin Qiu (1999), *The Culture of Power: The Lin Biao Incident in the Cultural Revolution*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp. 123-7; MacFarquhar (1997), op. cit., pp. 169-70; pp. 258-9; Wu (1983), op. cit., pp. 21-31.

Soldiers).[44] Some successful works would even be selected for inclusion in propaganda reference books on Criticise Lin and Confucius in order for more people to learn and reference. As Wang observed at that time, many people used the cartoons created by the professional as templates, and then produced their works.[45] Copying a reference was indeed a simpler and more effective way for the public to participate in the propaganda campaign. Compared with the cartoons of the early Cultural Revolution, the spontaneous creativity of the masses had disappeared and few professional art groups could participate. Instead, the masses continued to use the visual languages of early Cultural Revolution and, as a result, most of *guai* products were limited to types of *guai* available in that earlier period. In terms of some particular details, propagandists adjusted *guai* images, and even created new black *guai* images, in order to appropriately meet the demands of the campaign. The changes of the main group representing justice and the targets that were criticised in the campaign were also illustrated in *guai* products.

5.3 The Gang of Four

After Mao's death on 9 September 1976, Hua Guofeng came to power in China. Soon *Sirenbang* (the Gang of Four)[46], including Jiang Qing, Zhang Chunqiao, Yao Wenyuan (1931-2005) and Wang Hongwen (1935-1992), were arrested on 6 October 1976. Hua became PRC premier, CCP (Chinese Communist Party) Chairman, and CMC (Central Military Committee) Chairman.[47] It is generally believed that the Cultural Revolution ended at this point.[48] However, 'black' *guai* products did not retreat from the stage of political propaganda with the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976. Instead, in the

[44] Sommer, Deborah (2007), 'Images for Iconoclasts: Images of Confucius in the Cultural Revolution', *East-West Connections: Review of Asian Studies*, No. 7, p. 19.
[45] Interview with Wang Mingxian, 11 September 2014, Beijing.
[46] The Gang of Four was a poltical faction active during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), and dominated the regime in the later period of the Cultural Revolution.
[47] He, op. cit., p. 613.
[48] MacFarquhar and Schoenhals, op. cit., p. 2.

subsequent campaign of Smashing the Gang of Four, they reappeared and employed the viusal languages similar to those employed in the Cultural Revolution.

Following the arrest of the Gang of Four, the people held parades and rallies to celebrate Hua Guofeng as Chairman of CCP and the victory of Smashing the Gang of Four.[49] A propaganda campaign was launched nationwide and soon big slogans, big character posters and cartoon posters appeared spontaneously on streets of cities, in schools and in factories.[50] A lot of *guai* products demonising the Gang of Four were created. Later, some officially organised exhibitions, large and small, were held. One of the most significant exhibitions organised by the Ministry of Culture was held from 18 February 1977 to 17 April 1977 at the National Art Museum of China, with a political title of National Art Exhibition to Warmly Celebrate Appointments of Comrade Hua Guofeng as Central Party Chairman and Chairman of the Central Military Committee, and Warmly Celebrate the Great Victory of Smashing the Scheme of the Gang of Four to Usurp Party and State Power. Nearly 2,000 artworks from all over the country were exhibited and most of them presented anti-Gang images. The works mainly showed the masses' abhorrence for the Gang of Four, and praised Chairman Mao, Premier Zhou and the new chairman Hua Guofeng.[51]

During the national criticism of the Gang of Four, books were the most significant carriers disseminating *guai* images. Books compiled *guai* images from individuals, street posters, newspapers and exhibitions, and were usually printed in mass by official publishing organisations. Among them, Chu sihai manhuaji (*Cartoon Collection of Eliminating Four Pests*) was divided into two volumes published by *People's Daily* in January and March of 1977 respectively. More than 100,000 copies of the two volumes were printed and were sent free by *People's Daily* to the cultural departments

[49] Yan and Gao, op. cit., pp. 526-8.
[50] Barme, G. (1979), 'Flowers or More Weeds? - Culture in China since the Fall of the Gang of Four', *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, No. 1, January, p. 127.
[51] *Fine Art* (1977), 'National Art Exhibition to Warmly Celebrate Appointments of Comrade Hua Guofeng as Central Party Chairman and Chairman of the Central Military Committee, and Warmly Celebrate the Great Victory of Smashing the Scheme of the Gang of Four to Usurp Party and State Power, will be Opened during the Spring Festival', *Fine Art*, No. 1, p. 34.

of provinces and cities. According to the memory of Ying Tao, as a cartoonist and an editor of *People's Daily,* grass-roots levels across the country, including rural and remote areas, organised the masses in reproducing, posting and exhibiting large posters of those cartoons from the book, and these posters evoked a strong response in the viewer.[52] The book became the medium most widely delivering *guai*. As an official publication, the cartoon book with *guai* images was authoritative in term of political ideology. Naturally local governments paid great attention to it, and *guai* images in the books were also vigorously disseminated. Here, with the dual identity of a producer and a disseminator, the public assumed responsibility for production and dissemination of *guai* products. They changed the propaganda media in which *guai* appeared, shifting from books to posters, indicating that posters had advantages as media, over smaller A4 sized books. Ying did not mention the specific size of large posters, but clearly because of its larger picture, the poster was visually more conspicuous and appealing to audiences. Compared with a book, posters were often posted in public places, which allowed many people to read at the same time. Also, people could not escape *guai* posters, they were much harder to ignore than a book. During the viewing, people could exchange opinions and generate discussions about *guai* posters, enabling the public to accept and understand artworks better. In Sichuan province, the masses were organised to learn and copy these cartoons, and then produce new works.[53] Tens of thousands of cartoons including *guai* images produced by the public were posted in urban and rural areas of Sichuan.[54] In this case, the books played the same role as art reference materials in the Criticising Lin and Confucius campaign, promoting production of *guai* images from amateur artists. During the campaign, *guai* images were effectively and widely disseminated and received, and the public completed the conversion from an audience to an artist. Under official guidance, the masses realised the conversion between the three

[52] Ying Tao (1988), '*Renmin huabao manhua "Fengci yu youmo" shi ruhe chuban de* (How the Cartoon "Satire and Humor" of *People's Daily* was founded)', in the editorial group of the history of *People's Daily* (ed.), *People's Daily Memoirs: 1948-1988*. Beijing: People's Daily Press, pp. 382-3.
[53] Sichuan Public Art Museum and the editorial board of *Records of Sichuan Public Culture* (1998), Sichun sheng qunzhong wenhua zhi (*Records of Sichuan Public Culture*). Chengdun: Sichuan Public Art Museum, p. 37.
[54] Ibid, p. 261.

identities of an artist, a disseminator and an audience. It mobilised more public participation in *guai* production and promoted the propaganda activity of criticism against the Gang of Four, Which at that time, had reached a climax.

Although Chinese artists appeared to be liberated from highly politicised shackles, following the downfall of the Gang of Four, artworks at the time did not clearly reflect this kind of freedom. Zou considered that Chinese art in this period effectively used the art mode of the Cultural Revolution, and its influence on the dramatic political changes was straightforward and plain.[55] Andrews explained further that, in response to the changing political situation, artists just changed iconographic images in the continued formal and thematic way, and the art system also continued to be subject to the Party propaganda mechanism of Cultural Revolution.[56] *Guai* visual art still contained political significance; portraying enemies as black *guai* images had long been a major means of political artistic expression in the Cultural Revolution, and the campaign of Smashing the Gang of Four did not change that pattern. Shen Jiawei, as a former propagandist in the Cultural Revolution, recalls that to criticise the Gang of Four, people inherited the tradition of the Cultural Revolution and continued to use the same visual languages.[57]

During the campaign, there suddenly appeared a large group of new cartoon creators. Many cartoon artists who were previously regarded as 'ox-demons and snake-spirits' during the Cultural Revolution picked up their pens once more and turned out cartoons with 'black' *guai* images to criticise the Gang of Four. For these artists who had been politically persecuted, their ire was directed at the Gang of Four. Miao Yintang, a cartoonist active in the Smashing the Gang of Four campaign, considers that demonising the Gang in cartoon form was an outlet for artists' anger.[58] People seemed

[55] Zou (2002), op. cit., p. 153.
[56] Andrews (1994), op. cit., pp. 378-9.
[57] Interview with Shen Jiawei, 16 November 2016, London. This opinion is also supported by Ralph Croizier. See Croizier, Ralph (1983), 'The Thorny Flowers of 1979: Political Cartoons and Liberalization in China', in Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars (ed.), *China from Mao to Deng: The Politics and Economics of Socialist Development*. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe; London: Zed Press, pp. 29-38.
[58] Interview with Miao Yintang, 3 January 2015, Beijing.

to be accustomed to the mode of political criticism of the Cultural Revolution and it was natural and common to dehumanise the Gang of Four as black *guai* in the campaign.[59] In the changing political landscape, actively producing *guai* products and participating in the critical campaign became an opportunity to restore the position of those artists. In the Cultural Revolution, they had been targets of criticism and were depicted as black *guai* in cartoons. Nevertheless, in this period, they became the ones criticising others and producing *guai* images; their identities changed from inhuman enemies to artists, friends and comrades. Many of their cartoons with *guai* images were often found in official exhibitions and publications, including *Cartoon Collection of Eliminating Four Pests*. The political and social status of the artists was officially restored and affirmed and during this period, they formed an important and 'special' professional group creating *guai*.

For example, by 1966 the year the Cultural Revolution started, Zhang Leping became one of the first artists to be targeted as a 'black cartoonist' in Shanghai, and he spent the next several years suffering from the weight of political accusations.[60] In the campaign of Smashing the Gang of Four, he depicted a cartoon to demonise Yao Wenyuan as a dog *guai* (Figure 5.8). Although Zhang used to be criticised as an 'ox-demon and snake-spirit' and had even been portrayed as a *guai*, he still employed the same language to attack and insult his oppressor.

The cartoon (Figure 5.8) shows a *guai* with a head of Yao Wenyuan with a dog body, wearing a dog collar with an inkwell. The character of *Xiu* (revise) on the inkwell stands for the Revisionism and shows that Yao was a real Revisionist. As a dog *guai*, his 'hands' could not pick up the brush and he could only hold it in his mouth. On the shaft of the brush is written *Yaoji* (the belongings of Yao), which illustrates that this dog *guai* is Yao Yuanwen. The ink on the brush is from the inkwell on his neck, indicating that

[59] Cook, Alexander C. (2016), *The Cultural Revolution on Trial: Mao and the Gang of Four*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, p. 46.
[60] Wu Dingbo and Murphy, Patrick D. (1994), *Handbook of Chinese Popular Culture*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, p. 295.

Yao was a critic, and his articles played an important role in the Cultural Revolution.[61] In the cartoon, it shows that what he writes belongs to Revisionism, and his ideological root is also Revisionism. Through the cartoon, the artist refuted critical articles Yao had written in the Cultural Revolution. Zhang called Yao *Haba gou* (pug); pugs like to follow their owners and are eager to get their owners' attention[62]; it is used as a metaphor for the meek servant of the master. Here, it is to criticise Yao as a pug, fully submissive to his master. In the cartoon, he is fawning on his master by wagging his tail, although his master does not appear in the picture. Meanwhile, the hand with a bracelet, holding the dog rope, shows that his master is a female, referring to Jiang Qing, the leader of Gang of Four.

In another cartoon (Figure 5.9), the propagandist directly depicted Jiang Qing and her three dogs together. Jiang Qing, with a baton, is commanding three dogs to chorus; the three dogs of course are the other members of the Gang of Four, Zhang Chunqiao, Yao Wenyuan and Wang Hongwen, who are demonised as dog *guai* with human heads and dog bodies. They are standing upright on a bench and at the command of Jiang Qing, they sing, "*Wang* (emperor), *wang*, *wang*..." The dog's bark is similar to the pronunciation of *wang* (emperor) in Chinese. Like dogs, the three of them please their master through their barks. Jiang stands on an unstable board and says, "*Haiermen, laoliang shi zhongguo de nvwang* (Kids, momma is the queen in China)", a statement which shows Jiang's political ambition. In fact, she could only command those three dog *guai* to call her a *wang* (emperor). In the cartoon, both Jiang and her three dog *guai* are in a state of extreme imbalance, indicating their inevitable fall.

In the cartoon of *Who Says a Hen Cannot Crow*, Jiang Fan depicted Jiang Qing as a

[61] He criticised many people by pen. His article Ping xinbian lishiju 'Hai Rui baguan' (*On the New Historical Beijing Opera 'Hai Rui Dismissed from Office'*) published on November 10, 1965 is generally considered to unveil the prelude to the Cultural Revolution, setting the tone of criticism for the Cultural Revolution. See Zou Tsou (1999), *The Cultural Revolution and Post-Mao Reforms: A Historical Perspective*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. 19; Mitter, Rana (2005), *A Bitter Revolution: China's Struggle with the Modern World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 210; MacFarquhar (2004), op. cit., pp. 165-8.

[62] Belmonte, Brenda (2004), *The Pug Handbook*. New York: Barron's Educational Series Inc., p. 13.

guai with her head and a hen body (Figure 5.10). A crown is on her head, and looks like a cockscomb; the cartoon implies that the hen attempts to act as a cock by wearing a fake comb. Jiang Qing closes her eyes and raises her head, presenting her arrogance and pretentiousness. She opens her chicken mouth and says, “Oh ... woman can be an emperor.” This illustrates that Jiang Qing aims to be an emperor. The crown not only represents a fake comb, but more importantly, it is a symbol of the emperor, indicating Jiang’s ambition.

In 1966, Jiang Qing was appointed Vice-Chairman of the Central Cultural Revolution Group.[63] She became the most influential woman during the Cultural Revolution and was praised in propaganda posters as a great representative of revolutionary women (Fig. 5.11 and 5.12). The propagandists who drew her explicitly used the revolutionary iconography. Like a militant fighter, she wears a military uniform, covering her female characteristics, her hair is short and is usually hidden under a cap. This perfectly conforms to the masculine aesthetic popular in the Cultural Revolution.[64] In these posters, there is a clear borrowing of particular imageries of Mao, the red book and the background of ‘red sea’ (Figure 4.30). The imitation on the iconography seems to give her some of Mao’s power. In another poster (Figure 5.13), she is placed with other main leaders of the early Cultural Revolution, including Kang Sheng (1898-1975) as the member of the Standing Committee of the Central Political Bureau of the CPC, Zhou Enlai as the Prime Minister, Mao himself, Lin Biao as Vice Chairman and Mao’s successor at the time, and Chen Boda (1904-1989) as the private secretary to Mao (from left to right). Jiang is depicted as a young man and her posture and choice of clothing in this poster is similar to other male leaders. It is difficult to identify her as a female, minimising the difference between her and male leaders in people’s eyes. She is also easily recognised as a political leader, rather than merely Mao’s wife; in fact, unlike most of the first ladies, Jiang indeed had a substantial political power.

[63] Guillermaz, Jacques (1976), *The Chinese Communist Party in Power, 1949-1976*. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, p. 401

[64] Evans, Harriet (1999), ‘“Comrade Sisters”: Gendered Bodies and Spaces’, in Harriet Evans and Stephanie Donald (eds.), *Picturing Power in the People’s Republic of China*. Lanham, MD.: Rowman & Littlefield, pp. 63-4.

Meanwhile, however, she was critically depicted by Jiang Feng, who likened her to the hen *guai* in the cartoon (Figure 5.10), who believed she could usurp the political powers and status of China by masculine appearance.

The cartoon reminds me a Chinese idiom *pinji sichen* (a hen takes charge of crowing for the dawn). The term *pinji sichen*, originally came from the Shangshu (*Book of Documents*): *Pinji wu chen, pinji zhichen, wei jia zhi suo* (Hen does not crow at dawn; if it ever does, that shows the end of the fortune of a family).[65] The idiom is usually employed to condemn women who replace men and become the ruling power.[66] A female ruler would beguile the male rulers into giving up power and would, therefore, lead the state into chaos. Here, the cartoon carries a similar meaning to this idiom, criticising Jiang Qing's political ambition to gain supreme rights, and employing irony to depict the great chaos she brought to China.

During the campaign, a lot of *guai* products inherited the violence of the images from the early Cultural Revolution. The Gang of Four, depicted as inhuman *guai*, are usually sentenced to death in cartoons, for example, the gang *guai* were cut in half at the waist in one cartoon (Figure 5.14). Waist cutting was one of the most brutal executions of the death penalty in ancient China; this form of execution would not allow people to die immediately, but would extend the time of death, increasing the pain. Because of its cruelty, it had already been abolished in the Qing Dynasty[67], however, it was reintroduced visually during this period. In the cartoon, the Gang of Four are cut by a red hand with an axe and blood flows and splashes out of their bodies. Jiang Qing opens her mouth, spits out her snake tongue and seems to groan painfully because of the waist cutting. The snake tongue shows that Jiang is depicted

[65] Sun Xingyan (1965), Shangshu jingu wen zhushu (*Commentary on Books of Documents*). Taibei: Shangwu. English translation cited in Fong, Grace S.; Qian Nanxiu and Zurndorfer, Harriet Thelma (2004), *Beyond Tradition & Modernity: Gender, Genre, and Cosmopolitanism in Late Qing China*. Leiden; Boston: Brill, p. 77.
[66] Pang-White, Ann A. (2016), *The Bloomsbury Research Handbook of Chinese Philosophy and Gender*. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, p. 232.
[67] Chen Jianfu, Li Yuwen and Otto, Jan Michiel (2002), *Implementation of Law in the People's Republic of China*. Hague: Kluwer Law International, p. 254.

as a half-human and half-snake *guai*. In the cartoon, she occupies the dominant position of the gang and takes the other members of the gang in her arms, showing that the other three are under her wings. The cartoon portrays Wang Hongwen as a worm *guai*; Zhang Chunqiao's body is covered and only a rat-like tail is shown, clearly, he is depicted as an inhuman rat *guai*; Yao Wenyuan is a dog *guai* with his head and a dog body, his dog claw holds a black pen and writes characters of "*Fandang* (Anti-Party)" on a black paper. The materials Yao Wenyuan wrote are all criticised as anti-party and 'black', in comparison to the colour red which represented 'good' and 'correct'; here the brutal waist cutting executed by the red hand is given validity and legitimacy. Furthermore, the Gang of Four was considered as an inhuman *guai*, disrupting Chinese politics and society. It would appear that they deserved to be executed violently, a big slogan in boldface on the right of the poster says, "*Dadao Wang Hongwen, Zhang Chunqiao, Jiang Qing, Yao Wenyuan fandang jituan* (Down with the Anti-Party Group of Wang Hongwen, Zhang Chunqiao, Jiang Qing and Yao Wenyuan)!" Red crosses are on their names, which is a common critical way employed in big character posters of the early period of the Cultural Revolution, as discussed in Chapter Four.

The cartoon, depicted on a board, was displayed in a mass parade of celebrating Smashing the Gang of Four in Beijing in October 1976 (Figure 5.14). In the photo, the large poster board is carried by four adult men, and its conspicuous size ensured that it would not be submerged in the crowd and red flags. The *guai* poster board appeared in a public parade and moved in conjunction with the crowd, as such, it changed the relationship between traditional posters, space and people. The traditional posters were hung on walls or the bulletin boards, and were generally still, only reaching audiences within a certain range. Instead, the poster board moving on the streets of Beijing was more active than passive and could attract a wider audience. The *guai* product with the violent scene created a strong visual impact. In order to deliver justice, people expressed their hatred of the Gang by visual violence and imposed the sanction on, and execution of, the Gang in a simulated form as a public

spectacle. A lot of people, including adults and children, appear in the photo, most of them with a relaxed and pleasant look, actively participating in the parade. Obviously, they accept and support the punishment of the Gang *guai* by parading through the streets. With the frenetic atmosphere of the parade, the *guai* product was able to stimulate people's feelings of hatred, inciting more people to participate in the critical campaign.

Like that shown in figure 5.14, the Gang of Four were often portrayed as four different *guai* imageries and associated with '*Sihai* (Four Pests)'. In 1958, the CPC Central Committee and the Sate Council issued an instruction, and proposed that the task of eliminating Four Pests – flies, mosquitoes, rats, sparrows that ate crops and brought germs to the public – had to be completed in 10 years or less.[68] In 1960, Four Pests were redefined as mice, bugs, flies and mosquitoes.[69] In the campaign of Smashing the Gang of Four, Jiang, Wang, Yao and Zhang were regarded as Four Pests who brought calamity to the country and the people. Smashing the Gang of Four was also known as Eliminating Four Pests, which was employed in the title of *Cartoon Collection of Eliminating Four Pests*, as mentioned earlier. On 21 October 1976, Xinhua News Agency published an editorial to express excitement and determination to eliminate Four Pests.[70]

In cartoons, *guai* images of Four Pests are not limited to the animals mentioned above. For example, in a cartoon (Figure 5.15), the Gang of Four are depicted respectively as a scorpion *guai* (Zhang), a frog *guai* (Yao), a snake *guai* (Jiang) and a centipede *guai* (Wang). The Monkey King treads the snake *guai* under foot, robbing her of movement; he is holding his golden cudgel and is going to beat the Gang of Four. The image of

[68] The CPC Central Committee and the Sate Council (1958), '*Guanyu chu sihai jiang weisheng de zhishi* (Instruction of Eliminating Four Pests and Paying Attention to Hygiene)', ***People's Daily***, 13 February, p. 1.

[69] Shapiro, Judith (2004), *Mao's War against Nature: Politics and the Environment in Revolutionary China*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 88.

[70] Xinhua News Agency (1976), 'Warmly Celebrate Appointments of Comrade Hua Guofeng as Central Party Chairman and Chairman of the Central Military Committee, and Warmly Celebrate the Great Victory of Smashing the Scheme of the Gang of Four to Usurp Party and State Power', Dazhong ribao (*Dazhong Daily*), 21 October, p. 1.

the Monkey King is significantly bigger than the four *guai* and, more importantly, he occupies a high central position in the picture, indicating that he is dominant over the *guai*. In the cartoon, the Monkey King is heroic and praised as an incarnation of justice, while the Gang of Four is portrayed as negative *guai* of Four Pests, with fierce and distorted images.

Accompanying the cartoon, on the right of the picture, are two lines from Mao's poem, saying, "*Jinhou fenqi qianjunbang, yuyu chengqing wanliai.* (The gold monkey swings vigorously his fifteen thousand kilogram stick. The sky becomes crystal-clear and dust extending five thousand kilometers is removed.)" Mao wrote the poem of *Reply to Comrade Guo Moruo* in 1961, to evaluate characters in the story of *Sun Wukong (the Monkey King) Thrice Defeats the White-Boned Demon*. In the poem, he highly praised the Monkey King for his ability to illustrate truth and fighting spirit.[71] The poem gave legitimacy to the Monkey King, which made him the only positive *guai* imagery, alongside the *guai* of Mao with red sun, in the Cultural Revolution. The Monkey King's rebellious spirit made him a representative of revolutionaries in the Cultural Revolution. Red guards claimed to be the Monkey King, and Mao Zedong's thoughts were their gold cudgel.[72]

Here, the cartoon (Figure 5.15) did not show the identity of the Monkey King, while in another Monkey King product from this time (Figure 5.16), the preface explains he represents not the Red Guards, but the Chinese people. The *guai* under his gold cudgel has become the Gang of Four. In both of the cartoons above, the Monkey King is depicted in a high central position, however, in the cartoon from the Great Leap Forward Movement (Figure 3.3), the worker occupies a higher position than the Monkey King. From the diminished hero in the Great Leap Forward Movement, to the revolutionary representative in the Cultural Revolution and the campaign of Smashing

[71] Ma Jibin and He Xinhui (1994), Mao Zedong shiwen ciyu diangu cidian (*Dictionary of Words and Allusions of Mao Zedong's Poems*). Beijing: Central Party Literature Press, p. 192.
[72] The Red Guards from the High School Attached to Tsinghua University (1966), '*Wuchanjieji geming zaofan jingshen wansui* (Long Live Proletarian Revolutionary Rebellious Spirit)', *Red Flag*, No. 11, p. 27.

the Gang of Four, the transformation of his political significance can be clearly seen in visual products.

Propagandists dehumanised and demonised the enemies by portraying them in images of half-animal and half-human *guai*. It was most common method to satirise and attack their perceived enemies in this period, and clearly divided the world into two antagonistic and unambiguous camps. The contorted and ugly cartoons of Lin Biao, Confucius and the Gang of Four, therefore, became their standard public images. *Guai* visual products produced in the two movements showed some obvious continuities with early Cultural Revolution styles. *Guai* imagaries, as a part of Chinese visual arts, still contained political significance until 1978, when the policies were released in the Third Plenary Session.

5.4 Post-1978

In terms of art political function, the whole of Chinese visual art was affected by Mao's artistic ideology until 1978, when the Chinese Economic Reform and the Open Door Policy[73] were introduced. By 1979, Chinese visual arts in the Cultural Revolution were resisted by the central government, with Deng Xiaoping as its core.[74] For China, the structure of economy, art, culture and society, and indeedall aspects of Chinese life, began to transformed by Deng Xiaoping's policies: "Writers and artists must have the freedom to choose their subject matter and method of presentation based upon artistic practice and exploration. No interference in this regard can be permitted."[75] Art

[73] *Gaige kaifang* (the Chinese Economic Reform and the Open Door Policy) introduced by Deng Xiaoping is the general policy of the construction of the socialist modernisation with Chinese characteristics in the People's Republic of China since 1978. The policy proposed to keep China open to communicate with other countries, involving the opening to foreign economic and cultural influences. Cited in Liu Kang (2004), *Globalization and Cultural Trends in China*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, pp. 46-7; p. 78.

[74] Andrews, Julia F. (1998), 'The Victory of Socialist Realism: Oil Painting and the New Guohuo', in Julia F. Andrews and Shen Kuiyi (eds.), *A Century in Crisis: Modernity and Tradition in the Art of Twentieth-century China*. New York: Guggenheim Museum, p. 235.

[75] Minick, Scott and Ping Jiao (1990), *Chinese Graphic Design in the Twentieth Century*. London:

was no longer confined to serving politics only. Although artists could not be liberated entirely from political, economic and social pressures, they enjoyed more freedom in themes and styles of creation, which meant that they could express their own ideas and pursue individuality. Chinese visual arts, including *guai*, entered into a new era.

Since the Third Plenary Session[76] in 1978, China's religious freedom has gradually been implemented. In March 1982, the CPC Central Committee issued the 19th document of the Basic Viewpoints and Policies on the Religious Affairs during the Socialist Period of Our Country, respecting and promoting freedom of religious beliefs, and protecting normal religious activities.[77] Since then, China's religious ritual traditions and folk beliefs have recovered and been reshaped on a large scale. A large number of local temples and ancestral sites have been repaired or built in many areas of the country. According to anthropologist of Chinese religion Adam Yuet Chau, more than 10,000 local temples appear in Shanxi Province.[78] In Putian, Fujian Province, 2,586 village temples exist and 1,200 different idols are enshrined.[79] In these temples, idols, murals and decorations with *guai* imageries also reappear. For example, a dragon king and Lei Gong[80] – who is a *guai* with a bird-like face – are depicted in the wall painting in the Dragon King Temple of Zhouzhuang Village, Zhuolu County, Hebei Province (Figure 5.17). In the meantime, many of the traditional rituals and folk activities which used to be regarded as the Four Olds have been restored. Dragon dance and dragon boat racing events appear at festivals. So, whilst the political control and imperatives behind the use of *guai* was declining, there was at the same time increased freedom for and emphasis upon the traditional beliefs and folklore that

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Thames & Hudson Ltd, p. 67.

[76] From 18 December to 22 December 1978, the 3rd Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China was convened in Beijing. The conference issued the '*Gaige kaifang*' policy, and marked that Deng Xiaoping became supreme leader of China instead of Hua Guofeng.

[77] The CPC Central Committee (1982), '*Guanyu woguo shehuizhuyi shiqi zongjiao wenti de jiben guandian he jiben zhengce* (The Basic Viewpoints and Policies on the Religious Affairs during the Socialist Period of Our Country)'. See http://www.wutaishanfojiao.com/content-54-150-1.html [accessed on 10 December 2016].

[78] Chau, Adam Yuet (2006), *Miraculous Response: Doing Folk religion in Contemporary China*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, p. 241

[79] Dean, Kenneth (2009), '*Zhongguo dongnan difang zongjiao yishi chuantong: Dui zhongjiao dingyi he yishi lilun de tiaozhan* (Religious Ritual Traditions in Southeastern China: The Challenge of Religious Definition and Ritual Theory)', Xuehai (*Academia Bimestris*), No. 3, p. 34.

[80] Lei Gong is the Thunder God in Chinese traditional religion.

historically had used *guai*. With the support of policies, especially in the last decade of the twentieth century, a number of Chinese folklore studies were conducted, and the focus of the research value has been converted from the abolishment of superstition to the pursuing of roots of national cultures. Zhong Jingwen, leading studies on Chinese folk literature and art, considered the folk culture as the product of Chinese national spirit which needs to be collected, researched and promoted, in particular with literary and art values.[81] *Guai* culture, as a part of folk culture, has gradually drawn attention, and is considered as the representation of the national identity.

Under the circumstances, the visual culture of *guai* came into the era of relative artistic democracy in the religious, social and cultural sense. During the development of Chinese popular culture in the 1980s, New Year prints and *lianhuanhua* enjoyed high popularity as entertaining and educating materials. *Guai* imageries in New Year prints and *lianhuanhua* were also produced in mass.

With China's reform and its sense of opening up, New Year prints, which had been on the edge of extinction, were resuscitated and revalued. In the 1980s, New Year prints with classical themes and in the traditional style, which had previously been smashed as 'Four Olds', reappeared in the market; the politicised visual elements were quickly replaced by conventionally significant imageries.[82] *S*ome *guai* imageries, traditionally regarded as auspicious with various positive meanings, were put to use. The auspicious *guai*, like the dragon and the phoenix, were usually featured in prints to bring good luck and drive away the bad; this resulted in audiences being attracted once again, especially in rural areas.

The print (Figure 5.18) depicts a dragon and a phoenix carrying children in traditional costumes. As discussed in Chapter One, the dragon and the phoenix together

[81] Zhong Jingwen (1996), *Folk Culture Studies: Synopsis and Rise*. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, p. 66.
[82] Wang Kun (2013), *The Evolution of Chinese New Year Prints in the 20th Century*, Ph.D. thesis, Tianjing University, pp. 119-20.

symbolise marital harmony. The two children are immortals of *He-He* (Harmony and Union) in Chinese folk beliefs; one holds a lotus and the other holds a box of food, representing happy and satisfactory marriages and prosperous lives. The pronunciation of '*fu* (bat)' is the same as the '*fu* (blessing)' in Chinese, and five bats in the print stand for wealth, longevity, happiness, peace and offspring. The magpies at the bottom of the print represent good luck in Chinese culture. Here, the immortal figures and a variety of auspicious imageries, including *guai*, were brought together in one painting, in order to fully express wishes for marital and familial bliss, which in turn met people's demands for New Year prints in the traditional style.

According to Yang Dong's observation, around the mid-1980s, with the development of the rural economy and the strengthening of urban and rural communication, the aesthetic tendancies of rural residents were toward the urban.[83] More and more modern elements, combined with *guai* imageries, were integrated into traditional New Year prints. Those prints reflected the socialist modernisation drive and the new look of the Chinese nation in response to the call of the National Forum on Chinese New Year Prints, held by the Ministry of Culture and the Chinese Artist Association in 1982.[84] For example, a print (Figure 5.19) depicts highrise buildings in the background, accompanied by dragon imageries, which represented rapid development of modernist construction. In the foreground, the chubby child is surrounded by various auspicious symbols, including magpies, red plum trees, peonies and a pair of mandarin ducks, expressing the richness and happiness of people's lives at the time.

Some popular consumer goods of that period, including TV sets, radios and cameras often appeared in prints. A New Year print shows a truly striking combination with the trope of the dragon (Figure 5.20). In this print, the dragon imagery, as a traditional and

[83] Yang Dong (2015), '*Cong dazhong de wenhua dao dazhong wenhua: Dui 20 shiji 80 niandai Zhongguo nianhua de kaocha* (From the Culture of the Mass to the Popular Culture: An Investigation of Chinese New Year Prints in the 1980s)', *Art Observation*, No. 8, p. 107.
[84] Bo Songnian (2008), *The Art History of Chinese New Year Prints*. Changsha: Human Fine Arts Publishing House, pp. 200-1.

auspicious representative of wealth, is depicted with new commodities; this shows its commercial significance, in the sense that this sort of image attracted consumers more easily. *Guai* in New Year paintings played a different role in the early 1980s. Most *guai* imageries were employed to support the main characters, including the most desired consumer items, as can be seen in this drawing, where the dragon is a *guai* literally carrying the children, who can be seen to symbolise the future.

From the late 1970s to mid-1980s, *lianhuanhua* book was an important vehicle delivering *guai* images to both children and adults. *Lianhuanhua*, in numerous publications, were prevalent in the market from 1978 to 1985. In 1985, 3,000 titles were published and 816 million copies produced, which accounted for about one-third of total book production that year.[85]

During the Cultural Revolution, the subjects of folk legends, myths, fairy tales and classical literature were boycotted because their contents pointed to 'feudalism and revisionism'. In 1980s, they came back into public notice in *lianhuanhua*, especially those aimed at the young.[86] Traditional *guai* imageries were frequently employed from *guai* classics, including *Journey to the West* and *Investiture of the Gods*. For example, the story of the Monkey King fighting with the Bull *Guai* in Jindou Cave was depicted in *lianhuanhua* during the 1980s (Figure 5.21). A *lianhuanhua* book, published in 1982, illustrates the story of Lei Zhenzi, who is a *guai* with a bird-like face and a pair of wings in *Investiture of the Gods*, as shown on the book cover (Figure 5.22). It was similar to the *guai* production in the *lianhuanhua* of the 1950s and the early 1960s, artists simply repeated *guai* imageries from classical literature and did little work on creating new images or stories of *guai*. Although new techniques of *lianhuanhua* "bloomed with vigor and diversity"[87] in this period, I argue that the

[85] Xu Xiuming (2016), '*Zhongguo lianhuanhua: "Yishuchang" de qingxie he mishi* (Chinese *Lianhuanhua*: Skewness and Loss in "Art Field")', *National Arts*, No. 1, p. 91.
[86] Chen Minjie (2012), 'Chinese *Lian Huan Hua* and Literacy: Popular Culture Meets Youth Literature', in Leung, Cynthia B. and Ruan Jiening (eds.), *Perspectives on Teaching and Learning Chinese Literacy in China*. New York: Springer Berlin Heidelberg, p. 170.
[87] Pan Lingling (2008), 'Post-liberation History of China's *Lianhuanhua*', *International Journal of Comic Art*, Vol. 10, No. 2, p. 701.

production of *guai* imageries were stuck in the old ways of the 1950s and the early 1960s, with little innovation for new representations.

New Year prints and *lianhuanhua*, as the important vehicles of *guai*, achieved a transitory revival and soon lost their glamour in the late 1980s. I consider that they fell out of fashion from the three following aspects. Firstly, since the announcement of the Open Door policy, the structure of economy changed, leading to variations in the market rule of art. As a consequence, New Year prints and *lianhuanhua* with *guai* imageries had to face the market directly. Over the previous thirty years, professional artists had usually worked for official publishing houses and institutions, and had accepted the official methods of distribution. At that time, they paid more attention to the creation aspects rather than economic benefits. However, in the late 1980s, in order to pursue high output and high profit, many artists and publishing houses ignored the creation of character images and stories, and insead strived to produce and publish a large number of works in a short time.[88] Artists clung to traditional *guai* imageries and few new *guai* were created. Although some New Year prints showed the new idea of integrating traditional *guai* into commercial designs, these type of prints did not continue to be produced or sold.[89] The market was soon awash with poor quality *guai* products.

Secondly, from the 1980s, foreign cultures flowed into China, which immediately challenged Chinese *guai* products. Wang Wei, prominent painter of *lianhuanhua* in the early 1980s, considered that the entry of Japanese manga[90] into China, in 1984, was the significant reason for the lessened interest in *lianhuanhua*.[91] Upon entering the Chinese market, Japanese manga was immediately accepted by young audiences.

[88] The view is supported by other scholars. See, Yang (2015), op. cit., p. 109; Wan Shaojun (2012), *Studies of Chinese Lianhuanhua in 20th Century*. Nanning: Guangxi Fine Arts Publishing House, pp. 149-50; Cao Xinzhe (2002), 'The Past and Present of *Lianhuanhua* Publication in China', *Books and Information,* No. 4, p. 57.
[89] Wang (2013), op. cit., p. 121.
[90] Manga refers to Japanese comics, originated from a style of drawing in the 19th century.
[91] Interview with Wang Wei. Cited in Lent, John A. (2015), *Asian comics*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, p. 110.

With the continuing influx of new cultures, the masses, especially the youth, were no longer content with the traditional and the Chinese. They were eager for new things, new fashion, new lifestyles and new culture from the West and Japan, and manga largely met their quest for the outside world.[92] Japan also has a long history of *guai* culture; various *guai* imageries are frequently depicted in manga. Which meant that the Chinese audiences who were first to access manga were easily attracted by new *guai* and stories. Japanese manga broke down the original relationship of *lianhuanhua* with *guai* and its readers.

Thirdly, in the late 1980s, television sets were widespread and profoundly popular to the public, captivating the public's entertainment life with the new media. Although the publishers of paper products attempted to retain their audience by increasing the production of works,[93] moving images on television were obviously more novel, and gradually *guai* imageries, disseminated via paper media lost the attention of audiences.

During the 1980s, having just been liberated from the political shackles, artists tendancies were geared towards conservative designs for *guai* products. In the late 1980s, with the introduction of foreign cultures and new medium, audiences were no longer satisfied with products without creativity. New Year prints and *lianhuanhua* with *guai* imageries were unavoidably overwhelmed by the tide of the new popular culture. However, Chinese *guai* visual art did not fade out with the twilight of New Year prints and *lianhuanhua*, rather it began to seek new opportunities to develop under the challenges of the rapidly developing media and cultural globalisation.

Since the late 1980s, various *guai* imageries from other countries have appeared in illustrations, comics, animation, films and other forms and have pervaded daily lives of Chinese people. They have an important impact on the cultural life of younger

[92] Lent, op. cit., p. 199.
[93] Hong Yuan (1995), 'Revive *Lianhuanhua*', *Study on Publication and Distribution,* Vol. 4, p. 18.

generations and have become visual icons of a new era in eyes of the youth.[94] *Guai* images produced in Japan and America have already taken over the global market, and it has been a daunting task for Chinese artists to try to match the inventiveness of American and Japanese *guai* products, and to find a place among these glossy productions. Young Chinese artists, especially, constantly try to inject new ideas into creating *guai* imageries. Through reinterpretation and creation of Chinese *guai* imageries, artists aim to express their views, seek Chinese cultural identity and achieve recognition in the international circle.

In the 1970s, continuing the tradition of the early Cultural Revolution, *guai* products were utilised for political struggles, especially in the "Criticise Lin Biao, Criticise Confucius" Campaign and the "Smashing Gang of Four" Campaign. Most types of *guai* had already been created and throughout this period, propagandists adjusted these *guai* in order to apply them more effectively to campaigns, resulting in the generation of some representative *guai*, such as the plane *guai* in 1974. However, because of the changes of themes, the shortage of producers and the limitation of the disseminative vehicle, the political significance of overall *guai* production in the 1970s did not continue with the prosperity it had enjoyed in the early Cultural Revolution. Since the introduction of Open Door policy in 1978, the role of *guai* imagery has been transformed. Political functions were no longer dominant in *guai* production and *guai* visual art came into the era of relative artistic democracy in the religious, social and cultural sense. For the first time in the market economy, *guai* products, disseminated via traditional paper media, were hit by foreign *guai* products and new media. *Guai* imagery did not disappear, but continued and adapted to the new circumstances brought by new media and globalisation. It is important to note that I have only shown a few indicative examples, incorporating the period from 1978 and haven't really covered this period in the same depth as my focus on 1949-1978. *Guai* have not gone away, so assessing how they survived, changed and were appropriated during

[94] See Lu Jiang (2011), *History of Chinese and Foreign Animation*. Shanghai: Shanghai People's Fine Arts Publishing House, pp. 67-9; Macwilliams, Mark Wheeler (2008), *Japanese Visual Culture: Explorations in the World of Manga and Anime*. Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, p. 45.

turbulent times in the past might provide a more profound and comprehensive perspective to understand and reinterpret *guai* imagery in contemporary art.

Conclusion

G*uai* imagery is an indispensable part of Chinese visual culture. In previous studies, scholars mostly paid attention to the significance of *guai* culture in dynastic China. However, the twentieth century could be seen as the most complex transitional period in the history of Chinese art. In *guai*, as in all Chinese visual arts, there were collisions between the old and the new, the traditional and the modern, the East and the West. In order for future scholars to understand *guai's* inherent values and reinterpret its imagery in contemporary Chinese visual art, the evolution of *guai* in the twentieth century should not be ignored or overlooked. The purpose of the present research is not to simply provide a chronological archive of *guai* visual products of the twentieth century; instead, it concentrates on evaluating the transformation of forms and meanings of *guai* imagery.

The Evolution of *Guai* Imagery

The significance of *guai* imagery lies in that it is often situated in completely imagined worlds shaped by politics, society, culture and technology. G*uai* imagery reflects the different characteristics and needs of the times; however, the artistic imagination triggered by *guai* is not arbitrary, but is shaped by perception and artistic appreciation passed from one generation to the next. Thus, *guai* imagery is bound to assume the function of cultural and social transmission. The transformation of these fantastic or absurd *guai* imageries in Mao's era reflected changes not only in the artistic standards of the time, but also in the political reality and social state, which triggered a reflection of history. From 1949 to 1978, *guai* products could be considered as a visualised microcosm of politics, culture, society, religion and economy at the time; they provide a unique insight into this particular period. Politics, society and culture shaped *guai* production and made it a part of political and social life. Social changes also caused the transformation of *guai* imagery. It is significant therefore to evaluate the evolution

of *guai* imagery in Mao's era to reconstruct how *guai* might reflect social and cultural values in contemporary visual art.

Traditional *guai* imageries with strong religious significance were associated with 'superstition'. In the early twentieth-century China, with dramatic changes of society, culture and politics, the original religious symbols in *guai* imagery become less important, and were gradually dominated by political ideology after the Yan'an Talks in 1942. From 1949 to 1978, under Mao's political ideology and artistic thought, Communists carried the political functions of *guai* imagery to extremes.

In the early 1950s, the employment of negative *guai* combined with portraits of 'enemies' in a cartoon style showed the feasibility and effectiveness of "attacking and destroying the enemies"[1]. However, from the outset, the majority of traditional *guai* imageries were not favoured by the Communists and were even completely replaced in new New Year prints mainly used for positive propaganda. However, the failure of new New Year prints and the revival of some *guai* imageries, demonstrated the irreplaceability and significance of traditional *guai* imageries for the public. The return of those *guai* imageries became an inevitable trend in later mass movements.

In order to "unite and educate the people"[2], dragon, phoenix and other *guai* were reintroduced, and their traditional meanings were reshaped by political, economic and social needs during the Great Leap Forward Movement. In some cases, their original forms were changed to support political themes more effectively. The role of *guai* imagery was to produce the fantastic, and present the impossible as a possibility, in order to support and enrich the 'ideal' blueprint drawn by Mao. This demonstates both the popularity and adaptability of *guai* in Chinese life.

[1] According to Mao, "literature and art fit well into the whole revolutionary machine as a component part, that they operate as powerful weapons for uniting and educating the people and for attacking and destroying the enemy." Cited in Mao Zedong (1967), 'Talks at Yan'an Forum on the Literature and Art', *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung: Volume III*. Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, p. 73.
[2] Ibid.

In the Cultural Revolution, the red and black *guai* formed an extremely politicised system to redefine 'us' and 'others' by Mao and his followers – the Red Guards. The Red Guards identified political 'enemies' as demonised *guai* and visualised the repression of 'enemies'. It not only affirmed the authority of Mao, but also affirmed the role and rights of the Red Guards to defend the interests of the Cultural Revolution and maintain social 'order'. By contrasting hybrid Mao as the divine red *guai* with the black *guai*, revolutionaries conveyed a belief that Mao and his followers were superior to the black 'enemies'. However, it also indicated the continuing threat of black *guai*, even though they were presented as weak and cowering in cartoons. Red *guai* and black *guai* showed the boundary between authority and 'heresy' and also formed new aesthetic concepts of 'beauty' and 'ugliness' in the political sphere.

By the 1970s, *guai* production was on a downward trend, however, the propaganda mechanisms remained in operation until 1978. Black *guai* with iconographic changes were still employed by Communists, and reflected the continuation of Mao's political ideology, despite the fact that he died in 1976. By late 1978, the introduction of economic reform and the Open Door Policy marked the end of Mao's era and *guai* production started to present a trend of diversified development, not just for the sake of political purposes.

The Communist Party shared a political ideology with the Chinese people through politicised visual arts including *guai* imagery, as a result, *guai* visual products in various media, reflected particular political and cultural values and identities. I divided the transformation of politicised *guai* production into four periods in the era of Mao: its reformation in the 1950s, large-scale practice in the Great Leap Forward Movement, its peak in the early Cultural Revolution, and finally its weakening in the 1970s. During these periods, *guai* imagery assumed a significant role in building the interaction between the masses and the Communist Party, between the public aesthetic standards and political needs, and the 'old' and the 'new'. During the evolution of *guai* over the thirty years, the Communists and propagandists did not completely separate

its traditional significance from *guai* imagery, but redeveloped it in line with the political ideology; *guai* imagery conveyed a new kind of political aesthetics. Through three decades of transition, *guai* imagery as an example of visual traditions, survived the historical turbulence and has continued in its own way in "Chinese literary and artistic imagination" up to the present day[3]. Under stern political filtration and politicised modification, the continuity and renewal of *guai* can be identified. *Guai* are reinterpreted or created to express their deep aspirations or claims by their producers. *Guai*, including the positive and the negative, have powers that transcend human values; the powers that 'exceed' mankind itself. In the Great Leap Forward Movement, *guai* represented the highest ideals, and were able to achieve extraordinary fantasy. By contrast, in the Cultural Revolution, most of *guai* were blackened and used to brand enemies as heretics who were violently cleared as shown in Figure 5.3 where Lin and Confucius as *guai* were eradicated by violence. More importantly, they played the role of warning the public not to do something 'wrong', which would otherwise lead to a similar fate. All those fantasies or feelings originated from humans, thus *guai* imagery can be often seen as a mirror that reflects people's desires and feelings. Through understanding the evolution of *guai*, changes in the aesthetics and the aspirations of the people can be defined. By placing this period of the *guai* imagery back into Chinese history, it is associated with the permanence and renewal of humanity itself, arguably the essence of *guai* imagery that continues to this day.

Guai's Production, Dissemination and Reception in Mao's Era

To understand how *guai* were involved in political and social life in Mao's era, *guai*'s production, dissemination and reception were assessed in this research. The production of *guai* imageries was investigated through two main aspects – main groups creating them and the art forms. The shift in the main groups that created them caused changes in the visual languages and characters in *guai* products. For

[3] Xue Jingyu (2012), *The Magic Mirror: Representation of Monster in Chinese Classic Tales*, Ph.D. thesis, University of Southern California, p. 158.

example, in the movement of criticising Lin Biao and Confucius, the main group creating *guai* changed from the Red Guards to amateur artists amongst the workers, peasants and soldiers. At the sametime, the main heroic characters became the images of workers, peasants and soldiers instead of the Red Guards in the *guai* products. In the era of Mao, different art forms were used to present different themes. Oil paintings, gouache and traditional Chinese painting and other art forms were mostly employed to positively propagate messages and show praise. Enemies were only depicted in cartoon form.

In the era of Mao, the dissemination of *guai* imagery depended on a variety of media and had three different disseminative types – still vehicle, semi-moving vehicle and moving vehicle. Wall painting was a still vehicle and *guai* images in wall paintings could not be moved to other places. New Year prints and posters were semi-moving: if a print or a poster was posted on the wall, it was a still image; if the print was posted on a door, with the movement of the door, it became moving; similarly, if the poster was hung on a wood board, it also became moving with the movement of the wood board. The moving vehicles included *lianhuanhua*, newspapers, magazines, brochures and flyers. They usually needed to be leafed through page by page, which meant it was a moving behaviour, also people could carry them everywhere and pass them on to others. Through the collaboration between still, semi-moving and moving vehicles, *guai* images were able to reach wide audiences. *Guai* products became more flexible and filled both public and private space. The repetition of visual presentations via different vehicles imperceptibly enhanced the public's recognition of *guai* images and often people would unconsciously receive their messages.

There are two types of reception of *guai* – active reception and passive. In the era of Mao, many people would take the initiative to actively receive *guai* products. These people can be divided into three types. The first type is those who can be referred to as propagandists and who would collect artworks of others to study or get inspiration. Secondly, some would seek these *guai* works and the messages conveyed to clarify

changes in the political wind, to ensure their political correctness. Thirdly, there were a small number of people who took the initiative to collect *guai* products to obtain money, publishing them in their own newspapers, which were then sold on the streets. In contrast, whilst some people may not have actively wanted to see *guai* products, they filled urban and rural public space, particularly in the early Cultural Revolution. People were surrounded by spaces awash with *guai* images. Immersed in this environment, they accepted *guai* products in an unconscious, passive way.

It is significant to discuss the relationship between artists, disseminators and audiences in the process of the creation of *guai* products to comprehensively understand the transformation of *guai* imagery in the era of Mao. Following the Talk in Yan'an, when Mao proposed that art should serve the public, the relationship between artists, disseminators and audiences changed; they were no longer separated groups. With the development of mass art movements in the following three decades, the boundaries between three identities became increasingly blurred: Everyone was not only an artist, but also a disseminator, as well as an audience.

Many people had three identities at the same time and thus, the aesthetic standards of *guai* products tended to be unified or standardised. 'Standardised' visual languages made *guai* products easier to accept and be understood by the majority of people. 'Standardised' visual languages also made *guai* images simpler and more convenient for reproduction by the masses, which thus would trigger the change of identities from audiences to artists.

A framework can be built to assess *guai* visual products arising within the process cycle, revealing the potential interactions between them: production, dissemination and reception. The artists learned from audiences and produced visual products disseminated through different media. The audiences received the products and sent their reactions back to the artists. The three needed to maintain smooth communication in order for the mechanism of *guai* production to continue to operate

well. The production of new New Year paintings in the 1950s was not as successful as the Communists expected, because of the division between artists and audiences. During the Great Leap Forward Movement, artists were sent to rural areas and directly communicated with peasants who were then involved in *guai* production, promoting effective functioning of the production mechanism.

During Mao's era, the production, dissemination and reception, did not necessarily have to be carried out separately or follow a certain order. The synchronisation of dissemination and reception was the most common situation in Mao's era. The process of dissemination was often accompanied by reception. People were usually audiences first, then they became disseminators. There could also be the synchronisation of reception and production. In the early Cultural Revolution, once cartoon posters with *guai* images were posted on walls or bulletin boards in public areas, some people read and discussed, and copied the works at the same time. The reproduced works could be posted directly somewhere else, or were published via mass newspapers or leaflets. In this case, these people were both audiences and producers. They could discuss depictions with other audiences and combine their own ideas or purposes to make some adjustments, or it could produce new *guai* interpretations. If other audiences see the producer at work on, then the behaviour of this producer could be regarded as disseminating the *guai* product to the audiences. Thus, he was not only an audience and producer, but also a disseminator. The synchronised reception and production also developed into the synchronisation of all three roles. Another example where production, dissemination and reception were carried out at the same time is the public appearance of wall paintings. Wall paintings provided an opportunity for the masses to observe the whole production process. The reception of *guai* products was activated and carried out simultaneously with production and dissemination. During the era of Mao, the linkages between production, dissemination and reception were conducted flexibility, and this diversity of process patterns enhanced the interaction between artists, disseminator and audiences, facilitating the transformation between these three identities, and the use

of *guai*.

Guai in China Today

As I have revealed, the visual imagery of *guai* is a significant part of Chinese culture, and that whilst it can be adapted and repurposed for political aims, it also has a resilience in maintaining resonance through its historical iconography. My research could be built upon to consider *guai* in contemporary China and how it has both adapted to, and continues within the context of social media[4] and the globalisation of imagery, and also in the context of new censorship of visual arts.

Since the 1990s, with the development of science and technology, traditional paper media has been gradually replaced by new technology-based digital media. Currently, social media has become one of the most significant means of communication in new media, affecting every aspect of Chinese people's lives. Social media such as WeChat[5], Sina Weibo[6] and others have been growing at a tremendous rate in China. This offers not only unprecedented possibilities for technology, but also for cultural identity and creative practice. The proliferation of social media greatly impacts Chinese visual arts; it provides new opportunities and a platform for the development of Chinese *guai* visual art.

In theory, everyone has access to produce and publish their *guai* products through social media. In the past, *guai* imageries had to be repeatedly filtered and modified by

[4] Social media provides interactive network platforms that allow users to share ideas, opinions, experiences and perspectives with each other. It comprises online networks, blogs, micro-blogs, sharing sites, podcasts and widgets or apps, such as those available for mobile phones and tablet computers. See Moe, Wendy and Schweidel, David A. (2014), *Social Media Intelligence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 4; Poole, D. and Le-Phat Ho, S. (2011), *Digital Transitions and the Impact of New Technology on the Arts*. Ottawa: Canadian Public Arts Funders, p. 13.

[5] WeChat is an app with instant messaging services, launched by Tencent on January 21, 2011. It is one of the most popular messaging apps in China. As of May 2016, more than a billion accounts were created in WeChat, and 700 million active users accessed the app. Cited in Xu Xiaoge (2016), *Handbook of Research on Human Social Interaction in the Age of Mobile Devices*. Hershey: IGI Global, pp. 394-5.

[6] Sina Weibo is a social networking site with microblogging services, launched by Sina.com. As of 30 September 2016, the number of active users of Sina Weibo reached 7.5 million per day. Cited in Weibo Data Center (2016), '2016 Report of the Development of Weibo Users'. See http://data.weibo.com/report/reportDetail?id=346 [accessed on 15 May 2017].

governments, publishing houses or other institutions, and then could be produced. Often these works were modified to cater to particular needs, such as a political purpose and a level of aesthetic appreciation, representing a collective concept. However, in the early Cultural Revolution, most of the masses, especially the Red Guards, could produce and publish their *guai* products. Although the works in this period were not reviewed and screened by the government, producers still followed a common practice so as to not undermine the interests of the Cultural Revolution and Chairman Mao. Today, in a more relaxed and open art culture, artists can employ any art form and visual language to express their own ideas in works, which show personal choice rather than ideological significance.[7] That those interpretations can be generally available to the public through social media, and thus various *guai* imageries could be reinterpreted and created by individuals, enriches *guai* imageries and shows the diversity of *guai* visual culture.

In terms of dissemination, technologies of social media support large-scale communication, accessible by a global audience. The communication interval though social media can be much shorter compared to traditional media. This form of dissemination is the quickest way to reach audiences, and send and receive *guai* products. Compared with the traditional paper media mainly employed in the era of Mao, social media provides a more convenient, fast, wider, low-cost way to deliver *guai* products. For future research, in the context where social media are so highly prevalent in China, it would be interesting to examine how *guai* imageries are being disseminated and used in social media, and to explore how the medium is transforming *guai*, building broader public consciousness of *guai* visual art in future China.

However, in the face of such a rapid development of new media, the Chinese government has strengthened the supervision and management of new media. On 15

[7] Tang Xiaobing (2015), *Visual Culture in Contemporary China*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 212.

October 2014, Chairman Xi Jinping (1953-) gave a speech at the Forum on Literature and Art Work in Beijing, and outlined his art theory. It elaborated the relationship between art and the masses, and between art and the Party. Repeating some ideas already emphasised by Mao in 1942. Xi's speech serves as a reminder that arts and culture are still subject to control.[8] According to this speech, art needs to be directed by the CCP. In terms of new art forms generated under new media, Xi considers that governments have to improve policies, establish robust systems and management measures for the production and distribution of new visual forms.[9] He proposes that it is possible to strengthen the review and control of new media including social media. As new media plays a significant role in the production of contemporary *guai* visual art, potentially the production of *guai* imagery could be effected by censorship. Whilst coming from a different political position, the consequences in terms of censorship seem to be very similar to politicised examination and management of *guai* in the 1950s. As I demonstrated, then the use of *guai* in Chinese culture adapted and survived throughout a period of censorship and political change.

Meanwhile, in the speech, Xi put forward "rejuvenation" and "restoration" of Chinese culture as a significant force to achieve the China Dream.[10] It emphasises the importance of traditional culture as a significant force for national survival and development. It is essential to transform and develop traditional Chinese culture including *guai* imagery. In this respect, the speech could be considered to provide an official affirmation and support for studies on *guai* imagery. It is bound to promote the development of *guai* visual art in the next few years or even decades.

From the 4th century BC and the existence of Shan hai jing, to today, *guai* culture has survived historical turbulences and permeated throughout Chinese visual culture. In the extremes of political society, *guai* products still existed, were mass-produced and

[8] Xi Jinping (2014), 'Xi Jinping: Speech on Literature and Art Forum'. See http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2015-10/14/c_1116825558.htm [accessed on 17 December 2016].
[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid.

disseminated widely. This illustrates the vitality of *guai* imagery, and this vitality is derived from creativity. *Guai* present people's imagination in the form of text and image. They walk between fantasy, reality and Hell, and often drag the material world into the imaginative world they build. *Guai* imagery in essence, embodies a particular way of Chinese creative thinking, blending imagination and reality, the traditional and the modern, even the Oriental and the Western. The transformation of *guai* imagery from 1949 to 1978 constructed a particular and typical visual discourse reflecting Chinese life in this period. The imagery of *guai* is not still, but builds a visual continuity between the past and the present, absorbing a strong consciousness of national identity. It is a significant characteristic and should be the focus of the further research on *guai* imagery within the context of social media and new censorship.

Appendix: Background Information on Chinese Terminology of *Guai*

In Chinese religious culture, the Chinese terms *fo* [佛], *mo* [魔], *xian* [仙], *shen* [神], *gui* [鬼], *yao* [妖], *jing* [精] are traditionally associated with *guai* [怪]. Definitions of the terms used to conceptualise *guai* are so broad that it is difficult to delineate its scope from a visual and iconographic perspective. A discussion aiming to elucidate the conceptual terms is provided below. In Theravada Buddhism[1], *fo* [佛] is an honorific title of Sakyamuni, who was born in 621 BCE and attained Nirvana in 543 BCE.[2] Tradition has it that the *fo*, literally 'buddha', commonly refers to one who has become enlightened through their own efforts and insight,[3] which is a successful practice of reward, virtue and wisdom. *Mo* [魔], in Buddhism, is the demon that takes away people's lives and disrupts charity.[4] All living beings have the potential to become a *fo,* but also *a mo* according to Mahayana Buddhism[5]. The Chinese term *xian* [仙] refers to men and women who become immortal and obtain supernatural powers through special practices.[6]

When it comes to Chinese terms *gui* [鬼], *shen* [神], *yao* [妖], *jing* [精], and *guai* [怪], it seems that they all can refer vaguely to some monsters, demons or spirits, and yet there are subtle differences between them. There has been little specific research and few in-depth studies that adequately deal with the distinctions between these concepts. The concepts are discussed below, in order to clarify the definition of *guai*.

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[1] Theravada Buddhism is a branch of Buddhism that "emphasises the preeminence of the monk over the layman, the importance of purity defined as closeness to the life and teachings of Buddha Shakyamuni, and the maintenance of unbroken and proper ordination lineages that can ultimately be traced to disciples of the historical Buddha". Cited in Leidy, Denise Patry (2008), *The Art of Buddhism: An Introduction to Its History & Meaning*. Boston: Random House, p. 263.

[2] Eberhard, Wolfram (1986), *A Dictionary of Chinese Symbols: Hidden Symbols in Chinese Life and Thought.* London; New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, p.51.

[3] Morgan, Kenneth W. (1986), *The Path of the Buddha: Buddhism Interpreted by Buddhists*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, pp. 3-4.

[4] Keown, Damien (2004), *A Dictionary of Buddhism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 173.

[5] Mahayana Buddhism is one of two main popular branches of Buddhism in China. Mahayana aims to deliver all beings from torment, while Theravada Buddhism focuses on self-practice rather than enlightening others.

[6] Eberhard (1986), op. cit., p. 149.

Before the Han period (202 BCE-220 CE), the generic term *gui* [鬼] denoted various spiritual beings, including ghosts, evil spirits, spirits of ancestors, gods or deities.[7] *Gui* is indeed considered as a concept of spirits, but more importantly and commonly, it refers to people's attitudes to and understanding of death. The second-century Chinese dictionary Shuowen jiezi (*Origin of Chinese Characters*), states that people become *gui* after their death.[8] Much scholarly attention has been also directed to *gui* as a category for dealing with mortality, and its paradoxical role of both delineating and transgressing the boundaries between life and death.[9] *Gui* is clearly separated from the living world, which is the significant characteristic that makes it differ from the concepts of *yao*, *jing* and *guai*. The latter are not dead humans.

The concept of *shen* [神] is derived from *gui,* and the two share some characteristics. It is generally considered to represent the highest supernatural beings that are concrete and palpable manifestations,[10] such as souls of dead ancestors, gods of natural objects and immortals. *Shen* denotes the highest status of a religion or belief. Visually they are presented as various forms, but are usually of human appearance.

The most commonly used terms associated with *guai* are *jing* [精] and *yao* [妖]. The three characters are often combined together to form the similar terms *yaojing* [妖精], *jingguai* [精怪] and *yaoguai* [妖怪]. Strictly speaking, there are some differences between *jing* and *yao, jingguai* and *yaoguai*, however, in folk religious beliefs and customs, *jingguai* and *yaoguai* are substantially uniform or interchangeable. In Chinese literature, their concepts are completely mixed together.[11]

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[7] Poo Mu-chou (2004), 'The Concept of Ghost in Ancient Chinese Religion', in John Lagerwey (ed.), *Religion and Chinese Society*. Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, pp. 175-8.

[8] Qu Shen (1999), Shuowen jiezi (*Origin of Chinese Characters*), (Duan Yucai, Modern Chinese trans.). Taibei: Hongye Culture, p. 401.

[9] See, for example, Yu, Anthony C. (1987), '"Rest, Rest, Perturbed Spirit!" Ghosts in Traditional Chinese Prose Fiction', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 42, No. 2, pp. 397-434; Xu Hualong, (1991), Zhongguo gui wenhua (*Chinese Ghost Culture*). Shanghai: Shanghai Literature and Art Publishing House; Zeitlin, Judith T. (2006), *The Phantom Heroine: Ghosts and Gender in Seventeenth-Century Chinese Literature*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

[10] Eberhard (1986), op. cit., p. 273.

[11] In the Ming Dynasty novel *Journey to the West*, black bear spirit, spider spirit and lion *guai* are called alternately *yaoguai* or *yaojing* by Monkey King. There is no obvious difference between two concepts.

The Chinese term *jing* [精], can refer to pure substances obtained from materials. Eberhard argues that, all spirits could be generally regarded as *jing*.[12] While, Ge Hong (283-343 CE) more precisely defined *jing* as the spirits born in old objects which could change into human forms to confuse human version.[13] This is the most widely recognised definition of *jing* in later traditions. Li denotes *jing* as non-human creatures which have acquired supernatural powers and human qualities.[14]

The meaning of *yao* [妖] used to refer to omens that do not conform to the laws of nature. An early definition of *yao* from Zuozhuan (*Commentary of Zuo*), written in the late fourth century BCE, says, "When the seasons of heaven are abnormal, it becomes calamities. When the creatures of the earth are abnormal, it generates omens (*yao*)".[15] The concept of *yao* and its association with unusual and anomalous phenomena and things were accepted by Dong Zhongshu (179-104 BCE) and Wang Chong (27-97 BCE). Dong stated that the emergence of *yao* indicated the fall of the country.[16] In his book, Lun heng (*Discourse Balance*) written in 80 CE, Wang further put forward that *yaoqi* (anomalous energy) can transform into human-like forms, which can be regarded as ghosts or monsters.[17] In the Six Dynasties period (222-589 CE), the concept of *yao* began to denote anomalous creatures. According to Gan Bao (286-336 CE), those creatures as *yao*, are the result of the abnormal transformations of energy.[18] Meanwhile, in the book Soushen ji (*Search of the Supernatural*), written in the fourth century CE, many examples of *yao* were recorded, which could obtain human qualities or transform into a human shape as they aged. For example, a fox after thousands of years could transform into a young man; or a thousand-year-old

[12] Eberhard (1986), op. cit., p. 211.
[13] Ge Hong (1996), Baopuzi neipian (*Inner Chapters of the Master Who Embraces Simplicity*). Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, p. 300.
[14] Li Jianguo (2005), Tang qian zhiguai xiaoshuo shi (*History of Zhiguai Stories before Tang*). Tianjing: Tianjing Education Press, p. 14.
[15] Yang Bojun (1981), Chunqiu zuozhuan zhu (*Explanatory Notes of Commentary of Zuo*). Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, p. 763. Translated by the author, unless otherwise noted.
[16] Yan Li (2003), Dongzi Chunqiu fanlu zhushi (*Explanatory Notes of Dong Zhongshu's Luxuriant Dew of the Spring and Autumn Annals*). Ha'erbing: Heilongjiang People's Publishing House, p. 231.
[17] Shi Yongle and Wang Jingming (1993), Lun heng cidian (*Dictionary of the Discourse Balance*). Beijing: People's Publishing House, p. 573; p. 622.
[18] Gan Bao (2013), Soushen ji (*Search of the Supernatural*), (Huang Tiaoming, Modern Chinese trans.). Taibei: Wu-Nan Book Inc., pp. 413-5.

tree could eventually speak human language.[19] Based on Gan's theory, Xue defines *yao* as spiritual things of great age that have acquired human qualities or shapes.[20] This view was supported by Peng, who stated that the concept of *yao* formed in the Six Dynasties is widely acknowledged.[21] It appears that meanings of *yao* and *jing* are virtually identical. In formal terms, both of them have the ability to transform into human images, while anomalous energies discriminate *yao* from human.

A different interpretation of *yao* can be referred to an abnormal phenomenon, that does not necessarily have a spirit. However, *jing* needs a fixed entity to be a foundation and generate a spirit. For example, *fuyao* [服妖] means that by wearing the wrong clothes, people are breaking the rules of the rites,[22] which will certainly lead to disaster, but by no means infers that the clothes become a *jing*. Although *yao* and *jing* share most characteristics, not all the *yao* refer to *jing*.

Guai [怪] refer to the hybrid beings transformed from images of animals, plants or inorganic objects. Some scholars consider that spirits in 'abnormal' forms are not necessarily denoted as *guai*. Lu emphasises that dragons and phoenixes with unrealistic images are considered to be auspicious beasts, enjoying the same status as gods, and should not be rudimentarily classified as *guai*.[23] However, from the point of anthropology, Liu argues that dragons have characteristics of *guai,* according to their origin and development.[24] Nakano shows dragons with different emblematic qualities, including positive and negative.[25] In this regard, dragons seem to be a term used to define the category of specific visual beings, which could be relegated to *guai*. From a visual and artistic perspective, dragons are visual beings with hybrid images of several animals such as turtles, fish, deer, tigers, cattle, and snake, as seen in the

[19] Ibid, pp. 612-4.
[20] Xue Jingyu (2012), *The Magic Mirror: Representation of Monster in Chinese Classic Tales,* Ph.D. thesis, University of Southern California, p. 8.
[21] Peng Lei (2007), '*Lun liuchao yaoguai gainian zhi bianqian* (The Interpretation of the Alteration of the Concept of *Yaoguai* in the Six Dynasties)', *Humanities & Social Sciences Journal of Hainan University*, Vol. 25, No. 6, pp. 670-2.
[22] Liu (1997), op. cit., p. 82.
[23] Interview with Lu Shengzhong, 10 September 2014, Beijing.
[24] Liu (1997), op. cit., pp. 72-106.
[25] Nakano, op. cit., pp. 36-51.

depiction of *Dragon* (Figure 1.7), which shows the traditional form attribute to dragons.

Another characteristic of Chinese *guai* is the human versus the non-human. *Guai* are anomalous animals, plants or objects, alien to humans; however, most of *guai* in China are human-like. Some acquire certain human abilities, while others combine with parts of human forms. The Chinese concept of *guai* has a boundary that seems ambiguous whilst also clear and explicit – with humans both conceptually and formally in terms of appearance – *guai* may be seem like human, but not be human. Xue provides the same opinion of the relationship between monsters and humans, however, the concept of Chinese monsters she defined and *guai* are not exactly the same. She considers that a monster can completely transform into a human form,[26] and as such she focuses only on the essential distinction rather than the visual. *Gui*, *shen*, *jing* and *yao* are more-or-less generated from real objects or humans, in visual representations, therefore, they usually are portrayed as realistic forms. Visually, *guai* are hybrid different from other concepts.

[26] Xue (2012), op. cit., p. 19.

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Glossary

Chinese Terms

bupo buli 不破不立 no construction without destruction

Da yuejin 大跃进 the Great Leap Forward

danfeng chaoyang 丹凤朝阳 the scarlet phoenix towards the sun

dazibao 大字报 big character poster

diyu 地狱 Hell, the realm of judgement after death

ducao 毒草 poisonous weeds

duokuai haosheng de jianshe shehuizhuyi 多快好省的建设社会主义 build socialism higher, faster, better, and more economical

gan shenme, hua shenme 干什么，画什么 paint what you labour

goutou 狗头 dog head

goutuizi 狗腿子 henchman

gouzaizi 狗崽子 pup

gou zhang renshi 狗仗人势 a dog counting on its master's backing

haogou budang dao 好狗不挡道 dog in my way

He-He 和合 immortals of Harmony and Union

Heiwulei 黑五类 Black Five Categories referred to landlords, rich peasants, counter-revolutionaries, bad elements and rightists

Hu Feng fan geming jituan 胡风反革命集团 Hu Feng Counter-revolutionary Group

yi kexiu dai zongjiao 以科学代宗教 replacing religion with science

jiajia shige huhu hua 家家诗歌户户画 every home a poem, every household a painting

jiangjiu weisheng, renxing caiwang 讲究卫生，人兴财旺 attention to hygiene, and a flourishing population with wealthy prosperity

jinbu 进步 progress

jingxi aozhi, niugui sheshen, buzu wei qi xu huangdan huan ye 鲸吸鳌掷，牛鬼蛇神，不足为其虚荒诞幻也 a whale absorbing the sea, a jumping giant turtles, ox-demons and snake-spirits, their absurdity and fantasy all could not to be compared with poems of Li

He

jingji weiji 经济危机 economic crisis

jubao peng 聚宝盆 treasure bowl

kuangquan feiri 狂犬吠日 a mad dog barking at the sun)

kexue jiuguo 科学救国 saving the nation through science, which was an argument that regarded Western science and technology as the key to saving China from annihilation.

fandong minzu shangceng 反迷信 the reactionary aristocracy

fan mixin 反迷信 anti superstition

feng chun mudan 凤穿牡丹 a phoenix crossing flower shrubs

fo 佛 Buddha

fu 福 blessing

fu 蝠 bat

fubi nulizhidu 复辟奴隶制度 restoring Slavery

fubi zibenzhuyi 复辟资本主义 restoring Capitalism

fushou 福寿 fortune and longevity

guohua 国画 traditional Chinese paintings

gui 鬼 ghosts, evil spirits, spirits of ancestors or deities

jing 精 non-human creatures which have acquired supernatural powers and human qualities

Jingji weiji 经济危机 economic crisis

jubao peng 聚宝盆 treasure bowl

lian 连 successive

lianhuanhua 连环画 illustrated story books

lingzhi 灵芝 ganoderma

longyan 龙颜 the appearance of a dragon

mamian 马面 horse-face, the warden of *guai* in Hell

Mao zhuxi shi women xinzhong de hong taiyang 毛主席是我们心中的红太阳 Chairman Mao is the Red Sun in our Heart

meiyu 美育 aesthetic education

mixin 迷信 superstition

ming qi 冥器 spirit goods

minzhu yu kexue 民主与科学 democracy and science, which was the main slogan in the New Culture Movement.

mo 魔 demon

nianhua 年画 New Year print

niugui sheshen 牛鬼蛇神 ox-demons and snake-spirits

niupeng 牛棚 cowshed, referred to the place used to hold cadres and intellectuals who were identified as 'ox-demons and snake-spirits'

niutou 牛头 ox-head, the warden of *guai* in Hell

qi 气 energy

qilin song zi 麒麟送子 *qilin* presents sons

qianlong 钱龙 coin dragon

qianxian 前线 battlefront

pinji sichen 牝鸡司晨 a hen takes charge of crowing for the dawn

Po sijiu 破四旧 Demolishing the Four Olds

Renmin gongshe hao 人民公社好 People's Commune is good

ru 儒 Confucianism

Shancai tongzi 善财童子 Child of Wealth

shangfang baojian 尚方宝剑 the imperial sword

shangshan xiaxiang 上山下乡 up to the mountains and down to the villages

shehuizhuyi shi qiaoliang, gongchanzhuyi shi tiantang 社会主义是桥梁，共产主义是天堂 Socialism is the bridge, Communism is the paradise

Shenzhou xuehui 神州学会 the Divine Land Academic Society

sheng 生 give birth

sheng 笙 Chinese reed pipe wind instrument

shen 神 the highest status of a religion or belief

shishi manhua 时事漫画 current affairs cartoons

Sihai 四害 Four Pests

Sijiu 四旧 the Four Olds: old ideas, old culture, old customs and old habits

sirenbang 四人帮 Gang of Four, formed by Mao Zedong's wife Jiang Qing (1913-1991), the Shanghai Propaganda Department official Zhang Chunqiao (1917-2005), the literary critic Yao Wenyuan (1931-2005) and the Shanghai security guard Wang Hongwen (1935-1992).

Sun Wukong sanda baigujing 孙悟空三打白骨精 Sun Wukong thrice defeats the white-boned demon

taotie 饕餮 one of the four evil creatures was well-known for greediness, usually depicted as a zoomorphic mask with symmetrical raised eyes, sharp teeth and horns

Tian'anmen 天安门 the Gate of Heavenly Peace

tiancai 天才 innate genius

tianma 天马 the heavenly horse

Tianma xingkong, dulai duwang 天马行空，独来独往 The heavenly horse flying through the skies, free and alone

tiantang 天堂 heaven or paradise in Western culture

tianting 天庭 the place where Chinese deities live

tongda luoshuigou 痛打落水狗 relentlessly beat the dog in the water

wang 王 emperor

wanshou 万寿 living ten thousand years

Wangwu shengzhang kao taiyang 万物生长靠太阳 All living things need the sun

wengongtan 文工团 the art troupe

xian 仙 men and women who become immortal and obtain supernatural powers through special practices

xin Zhongguo 新中国 new China, referred to China under the nationwide control of the Communist Party since 1949

Xiuyang 修养 Self-cultivation

yang 阳 positive

Yangjiabu nianhua gaijin weiyuanhui 杨家埠年画改进委员会 the Yangjiabu New Year Print Reform Committee

yao 妖 spiritual things of great age that have acquired human qualities or shapes

Yaoji 姚记 the belongings of Yao Wenyuan

yaoqi 妖气 anomalous energy

yaoqianshu 摇钱树 the money tree

yi kexiu dai zongjiao 以科学代宗教 replacing religion with science

yin 阴 negative

zhenmu shou 镇墓兽 the squatting beasts that guarded tombs and were believed to hunt evil spirits

zhigui 至贵 noblest

zhong 忠 loyalty

zhongzi wu 忠字舞 loyalty dance

zi 子 seed, child or son

zibaishu 自白书 confession

zougou 走狗 stooge

zouzi pai 走资派 a capitalist roader referred to a person or group who tends to adopt capitalist routes in the Cultural Revolution

zongluxian wansui, dayuejin wansui, renmin gongshe wansui 总路线万岁，大跃进万岁，人民公社万岁 Long live the General Line, long live the Great Leap Forward, long live the People's Commune

Zuguo zai yuejin 祖国在跃进 *The Motherland is Leaping*

Chinese names

Bo Yibo (薄一波, 1908 - 2007), Vice Premier of the People's Republic of China from 1957 to 1966.

Cai Yuanpei (蔡元培, 1868 - 1940), a Chinese educator, esperantist, president of Peking University and founder of the Academia Sinica.

Chen Boda (陈伯达, 1904 - 1989), a secretary to Mao Zedong in the early Cultural Revolution.

Chen Chudian (陈初电, 1944 -), former member of art group Red Brush in Shanghai Theatre Academy.

Chen Duxiu (陈独秀, 1879 - 1942), a Chinese revolutionary socialist, educator, philosopher and author, who co-founded the Chinese Communist Party (with Li Dazhao 李大钊) in 1921, serving from 1921 to 1927 as its first General Secretary.

Chen Guangyi (陈光镒, 1919 - 1991), one of the most famous *lianhuanhua* artists in China.

Chiang Kai-shek (蒋介石, 1887 - 1975), the leader of the Kuomintang and the Republic of China.

Confucius (孔子, 551 - 479 BCE), a Chinese educator and philosopher, and the founder of the Confucian school.

Deng Xiaoping (邓小平, 1904 - 1997), the paramount leader of the PRC from 1978 to 1989.

Dong Zhongshu (董仲舒, 179 - 104 BCE), a Han Dynasty Chinese scholar.

Du Mu (杜牧, 803 - 852), a famous Chinese poet of the late Tang dynasty.

Fang Cheng (方成,1918 -), a Chinese cartoonist, who used to be the editor of the *People's Daily*.

Gan Bao (干宝, 286 - 336), a Chinese historian and writer, who wrote and compiled *In Search of the Supernatural*.

Ge Hong (葛洪, 283 - 343), an official during the Jìn Dynasty (265-420) who specialised in the Daoism and alchemy.

Ge Lu (葛路, 1926 -), an art critic and editor of *Fine Art* from 1953 to 1961.

Gu Yuan (古元, 1919 - 1996), a Chinese painter, printmaker, Vice Chairman of Chinese Artists Association.

Guo Pu (郭璞, 276 - 324), was a Chinese writer and scholar, and one of China's foremost commentators on ancient texts.

Ha Qiongwen (哈琼文, 1925 - 2012), China's leading poster painter, particularly in 1950s.

Jiang Feng (江丰, 1910 - 1982), a Chinese artist known for incorporating politics into his artwork, and using woodcut as his form of media.

Jiang Qing (江青, 1914 - 1991), the wife of Mao Zedong, and the head of the Gang of Four.

Jiang Shaoyuan (江绍原, 1898 - 1983), a Chinese modern folklorist and scholar of comparative religion.

Jiang Weipu (姜维朴, 1926 -), an art critic, and the President of China Association of *lianhuanhua* Research.

Jiang Zhaohe (蒋兆和, 1904 - 1986), a Chinese artist who contributed to the reform of Chinese figure painting.

Kang Sheng (康生, 1898 - 1975), the Vice Chairman of the CPC Central Committee from 1973 to 1975.

Kong Xiangzhen (孔祥祯, 1904 - 1986), served as Minister of Labor, Minister of Urban Construction and Deputy Minister of Transportation in China.

Li He (李贺, 790 - 817), a poet of the Tang Dynasty.

Liang Qichao (梁启超, 1873 - 1929), a Chinese scholar, journalist, philosopher and reformist who lived during the late Qing dynasty and early Republic.

Liu Boming (刘伯明, 1887 - 1923), a Chinese educator and philosopher. He was the first Chinese person to receive a doctor's degree in philosophy.

Liu Jiyou (刘继卣, 1918 - 1983), China's leading *lianhuanhua* artist in 1950s and 1960s.

Liu Shaoqi (刘少奇, 1898 - 1969), a Chinese revolutionary, statesman and President of the People's Republic of China from 1959 to 1968.

Liu Xun (刘迅, 1923 -), a chief editor of the journal Lianhuanhua bao (*Picture Stories*) of People's Fine Arts Publishing House in 1950s.

Lu Xun (鲁迅, 1881 - 1936), the pen name of Zhou Shuren, a leading figure of modern Chinese literature who was known as a novelist, editor, translator, literary critic, essayist and poet.

Lu Zhengqiu (陆正球), former member of art group Red Brush in Shanghai Theatre Academy.

Mao Zedong (毛泽东, 1918 - 1986), known as Chairman Mao, a Chinese communist revolutionary, poet, political theorist and founder of the PRC.

Mi Gu (米谷, 1918 - 1986), a famous Chinese cartoonist.

Peng Zhen (彭真, 1902 - 1997), a leading member of the Communist Party of China.

Qian Daxin (钱大昕, 1922 -), a famous Chinese poster painter.

Qin Shihuang (秦始皇, 259 - 210 BCE), named Ying Zheng (嬴政), the founder of the Qin dynasty and the first emperor unifying China.

Shao Yu (邵宇,1919 - 1992), a traditional Chinese painting painter, editor and publisher.

Shen Yanbing (沈雁冰, 1896 - 1981), a Chinese novelist with his pen name – Mao Dun 茅盾, cultural critic, and the Minister of Culture of People's Republic of China,

Tao Zhu (陶铸, 1908 - 1969), a member of the Politburo Standing Committee of the Communist Party of China.

Wang Chong (王充, 27 - 97 BCE), an ancient Chinese scientist and philosopher active during the Han Dynasty.

Wang Guangmei (王光美, 1921 - 2006), a respected Chinese politician, philanthropist and First Lady, the wife of Liu Shaoqi, who served as the President of the People's Republic of China from 1959 to 1968.

Wang Guowei (王国维, 1877 - 1927), a prominent scholar contributed to the studies of ancient history, epigraphy, philology and literary theory.

Wang Hongwen (王洪文, 1935 - 1992), a Chinese labour activist and politician, and a member of the Gang of Four.

Wang Jiao (王角, 1917 - 1995), a traditional Chinese painter.

Wang Weizheng (王为政, 1944 -), a Chinese painter and professor of Beijing Painting Academy.

Wang Zhaowen (王朝闻, 1909-2004), a sculptor, art theorist and art critic.

Wo Zha (沃渣, 1905 - 1973), Cheng Zhenxing(程振兴)'s pseudonym, a printmaker and the director of the Creation Department of People's Fine Arts Publishing House.

Wu Lao (吴劳, 1923 - 2013), a well-known translator and art educator in the PRC.

Wu Zuoren (吴作人, 1908 - 1997), a painter of traditional Chinese ink painting and European oil painting.

Xi Jinping (习近平, 1953 -), the current General Secretary of the Communist Party of China, President of the People's Republic of China, and Chairman of the Central Military Commission.

Yang Chengwu (杨成武, 1914 - 2004), the Deputy Chief of General Staff of the People's Liberation Army from 1954 to 1965 and 1974 to 1980.

Yang Xiguang (杨西光, 1915 - 1989), Secretary of the Party Committee of Fudan University.

Yao Wenyuan (姚文元, 1931 - 2005), a Chinese literary critic, a politician, and a member of the Gang of Four during the Cultural Revolution.

Ye Qianyu (叶浅予, 1907 - 1995), a Chinese painter and pioneering cartoon artist.

Ying Tao (英韬, 1925 - 2012), a famous Chinese cartoonist.

Yuan Shikai (袁世凯, 1859 - 1916), the first President of the Republic of China, and his short-lived attempt to restore monarchy in China, with himself as the Hongxian Emperor.

Zhang Chunqiao (张春桥, 1917 - 2005), a prominent Chinese political theorist, writer and a member of the Gang of Four during the Cultural Revolution.

Zhang Dongsun (张东荪, 1886 - 1973), a Chinese philosopher, public intellectual and political figure.

Zhang Leping (张乐平, 1910 - 1992), a Chinese cartoon artist who created the character of Sanmao (三毛).

Zhong Jingwen (钟敬文, 1903 - 2002), Chinese folk literature and folklore pioneer, known as the Father of Chinese folklore.

Zhou Enlai (周恩来, 1898 - 1976), the first Premier of the People's Republic of China, serving from October 1949 until his death in January 1976.

Zhou Zuoren (周作人, 1885 - 1967), a Chinese writer, primarily known as an essayist and a translator, and was the younger brother of Lu Xun.

Zhu De (朱德, 1886 - 1976), a Chinese general, warlord, politician, revolutionary, and one of the pioneers of the Communist Party of China.

List of Interviewees

(The following interviews were conducted by the author.)

Fang Jingzhong 范景中, professor of China Academy of Fine Arts

Feng Jun 冯军, former propagandist of the Cultural Revolution.

Jiang Jimeng 蒋寄梦, former member of the art propaganda group Red Brush from Shanghai Theatre Academy.

Jin Dalu 金大陆, professor of Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences.

Ke Guoqing 柯国庆, former member of the art propaganda group Red Brush from Shanghai Fudan University.

Li Big 李斌, former propagandist of the Cultural Revolution, contemporary artist.

Li Shan 李山, former propagandist of the Cultural Revolution, contemporary artist.

Lü Shengzhong 吕胜中, artist and professor of the Central Academy of Fine Arts.

Liu Zhongyu 刘仲宇, professor of East China Normal University.

Miao Yintang 缪印堂, art editor of magazine *Cartoon*, cartoonist.

Shen Jiawei 沈嘉蔚, former propagandist of the Cultural Revolution, contemporary artist.

Sun Liang 孙良, former propagandist of the Cultural Revolution, contemporary artist.

Wang Haifeng 王海峰, former member of the art propaganda group Red Brush in Shanghai Fudan University.

Wang Kun 王坤, Deputy Director of China Woodcut New Year Research Center, lecturer of Tianjin University.

Wang Mingxian 王明贤, art historian and critic.

Wang Yi 王毅, research fellow in China National Institute of Sociology and Science.

Yang Liren 杨立仁, owner of a century-old store of nianhua production.

Yu Youhan 余友涵, former propagandist of the Cultural Revolution, contemporary artist.

Zhang Yaoning 张耀宁, art editor of *China Daily.*

Zhu Haichen 朱海辰, associate professor from the China Academy of Fine Arts.