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**Archaism as Cultural Distinction:  
Woodblock Book Publishing  
During the Mao Era 1949 –1976**

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## Abstract

This PhD thesis examines woodblock book publishing during the radical years of Mao's life time, when thread-bound books were criticised as representing the symbol of the old literati culture by the CCP government. This very political authority paradoxically subsidised and encouraged the publication of thirteen fine woodblock books, including the unique woodblock edition of *The Communist Manifesto*. Using vast amount of both unpublished and published archival materials and personal interviews, this project analyses the production, dissemination and the circulating culture of woodblock publications during the Mao Era 1949–1976. It argues that archaism, as an essential feature of elite book culture, continued into the PRC through woodblock publishing practices and began to function as a type of *distinction* for the CCP elite group.

Classic theories of both the history of woodblock publishing and archaism see 1949 as the watershed, after which both cultural practices were discouraged by the CCP political authority. This thesis provides a new perspective in studying the continuity of Chinese book culture, amends details in woodblock production in a modern era, and discloses the complex relations between archaism and the CCP ideology as a cultural system. All these will fill the gap in research on the history of woodblock books and technology, contributing new approaches and new materials of Maoist book culture to Chinese studies as a whole.

*“During the most prosperous days when I was leading the business, we had this central stage built in our publishing house, for future celebrations and performances. It remained unused until one day in 1967, the first year of the Cultural Revolution, when I and my colleague Z, as counter-revolutionists, were punished to kneel beneath Chairman Mao’s portrait hanging high above. When the guard was away, we looked each other in the eye and laughed. I said, look, we had this built for us here, today.”*

– Mr. Zhou Guangpei

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This PhD is for all of you, and the people who love books.

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## Notes on Translation and Documentation

The translations of book titles are mostly from *The Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature*, Volume I and II (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986 and 1998). Translations of Rongbao zhai 荣宝斋 and Duoyun xuan 朵云轩 are from David Barker, *Traditional Techniques in Contemporary Chinese Printmaking* (A&C Black: London, 2005). Chinese names of traditional bookshops are translated for a better understanding of the literary implications of the names, unless the *pinyin* is generally recognised in other academic works. If unspecified, Chinese texts cited in this thesis are translated by myself.

### Abbreviations in Footnotes:

- CBSL Yuan Liang 袁亮, ed., *Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Chuban Shiliao* 中华人民共和国出版史料 1–15 [The People's Republic of China Historical Publishing Documents] (Beijing: Zhongguo shuji chubanshe, 1995–2013).
- AMCM Archival Materials of *The Communist Manifesto*

For complete information on the documents in CBSL, see Bibliography. For a full list of archival materials of AMCM, see Appendix II.

## Introduction

In the summer of 1954, the Chinese government decided to bring to a halt woodblock book publishing.<sup>1</sup> In its reply to the Southwest Press and Publication Bureau (*Xinan xinwen chuban ju*, 西南新闻出版局) on reforming woodblock trade in Sichuan, the Central Publication Administration (CPA) agreed ‘in principle’ with the following policy:

It is absolutely forbidden to let the old woodblock trade to continue as it is... Woodblock bookstores in Sichuan are required to be gradually eliminated. To avoid unemployment and dissatisfaction towards the government that may arise among the masses, we will adopt the following principles: firstly, using (the trade); secondly, assisting (the bookstores) in changing their businesses; thirdly, eliminating ‘bad books’ (from their stocks).<sup>2</sup>

The CPA also ordered Sichuan to immediately cease un-authorized publishing, but it still allowed the distribution of some of the old books that contained no anti-CCP themes. A small number – about three to five – bookstores in this region were made ‘intentionally’ exempt to publish new folk song books.

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<sup>1</sup> Woodblock printing in this research refers to the technology of printing textual and illustrated books. The Chinese term for woodblock printing is *diaoban yinshua* 雕版印刷. This should not be confused with woodcut (*banhua* 版画), which mostly refers to artwork illustrations including *nianhua* (New Year’s illustration, 年画) – traditional woodcuts as a type of folk art. The process of creating woodcut is often called printmaking (*banhua chuangzuo* 版画创作), and artists of woodcut are called printmakers (*banhuajia*, 版画家). This research works on woodblock printing as a type of printing technology, which is a widely accepted term in East Asian book history. For discussions on woodblock printing, see Cynthia Brokaw and Peter Kornicki, ‘Introduction’, in *The History of the Book in East Asia*, eds. Cynthia Brokaw and Peter Kornicki (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), pp. xiii–xxxv. For discussions on woodcut as an art, see Xiaobing Tang, *Origins of the Chinese Avant-Garde: The Modern Woodcut Movement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

<sup>2</sup> ‘Chuban Zongshu Guanyu Gaizao Muke Shuye Wenti de Tongzhi (54) Chu Ji Zi di 291 hao (1954 Nian 7 Yue 22 Ri) 出版总署关于改造木刻书业问题的通知 (54) 出机字第 291 号 (1954 年 7 月 22 日)’, in *CBSL* 6, pp. 408–410.

However, as emphasised in the reply, this should be regulated by and registered with the People's Government.<sup>3</sup>

Although the above document is the only accessible written policy on woodblock publishing in published archival materials, and it only targeted xylography businesses in Sichuan, from some public speeches made by Hu Yuzhi 胡愈之, a left-wing publisher who worked closely with the CCP before 1949, and the head of the Press and Publication Administration (*Xinwen chuban shu*, 新闻出版署) in the early 1950s, it is clear that the official attitude towards the trade as a whole was negative.<sup>4</sup> If the above policies on xylography remained the same, woodblock book publishing would be gradually 'eliminated' from the landscape of the publishing industry in the Mao Era (1949–1976), whilst a small proportion of publishers remained to produce new content designed for the working class and peasants. The aesthetics, like contemporary revolutionary woodcuts and propaganda posters, should be coherent with the 'proletarian taste', with idealised images of workers and peasants, staying in line with a Soviet-style realism.<sup>5</sup>

The reality, however, told a different story. Major literati woodblock businesses, including the Flourishing and Treasured Studio (*Rongbao zhai*, 荣宝斋, hereafter the Flourishing Studio)<sup>6</sup> and the Cloudy Studio (*Duoyun xuan*, 朵云轩),<sup>7</sup> were registered with the government as legal publishers from the early 1950s and they remained active during the entire Mao Era. Although communist texts made up over half of the 13 newly carved titles,<sup>8</sup> including a unique woodblock edition of *The Communist Manifesto*,<sup>9</sup> classical titles

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<sup>3</sup> The names of the bookstores are not specified in the document. Ibid, p. 410.

<sup>4</sup> 'Hu Yuzhi zai Quanguo Xinhua Shudian Chuban Gongzuo Huiyi Shang de Kaimuci (1949 Nian 10 Yue 3 Ri) 胡愈之在全国新华书店出版工作会议上的开幕辞 (1949年10月3日)', in *CBSL I*, pp. 248–249.

<sup>5</sup> Mao Zedong 毛泽东, 'Talk at the Yan'an Conference on Literature and Art', in *Mao Zedong's "Talk at the Yan'an Conference on Literature and Art": A Translation of the 1943 Text with Commentary*, ed. and trans. Bonnie McDougall (Ann Arbor (Michigan): Centre for Chinese Studies: University of Michigan, 1980), pp. 55–86.

<sup>6</sup> *Catalogue of Chinese Wood-block Reproductions* (Beijing: Guozi shudian, exporters and importers of books and periodicals, 1962).

<sup>7</sup> *Duoyun xuan Muban shuiyin Yishupin Mulu* 朵云轩木版水印艺术品目录 (Beijing: Zhongguo guoji shudian, 1983).

<sup>8</sup> See Appendix III, List of New Woodblock Books Published during the Mao Era.

<sup>9</sup> Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Zhonggongzhongyang Makesi Engesi Liening Sidalin Zhuzuo Bianyiju* 中共中央马克思恩格斯列宁斯大林著作编译局, ed., *Gongchandang Xuanyan* 共产党宣言 (Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua she woodblock printed, 1973).

accounted for the rest of the new titles and the vast amount of painting replicas produced by the same publishers. All the books, including the communist titles, followed the conventional design styles of fine elite thread-bound books, with almost no variation from ancient books from the Song Dynasty (960–1279 AD).<sup>10</sup> Throughout the Mao Era, countless anti-feudal culture campaigns rendered literati xylographic books the target of nationwide criticism. Although printing technology was at the same time publicised as being ‘created by the people’ in the CCP propaganda, finely woodblock printed classic titles were a symbol of elite book culture, accused of being against the interest of the working class from the 1950s by officials like Hu Yuzhi and by the Destroy the Four Olds Campaign (*Po si jiu*, 破四旧) in 1967.<sup>11</sup> Publishing *The Communist Manifesto* with woodblock in 1973 was more puzzling in that the communist canon had to be presented in the old book aesthetics for Confucian cultural elites while the country was in the midst of the manic Criticising Lin Criticising Confucius Campaign (*Pi Lin Pi Kong*, 批林批孔).<sup>12</sup> Woodblock publishing therefore existed in contradiction to its political context.

The contradictions also lie in the historical context, in which xylography was no longer the mainstream printing technology during the Mao Era. Its dominance began to decline from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, over half a century before the People’s Republic of China was founded in 1949.<sup>13</sup> Initially competing with new technologies like lithography and collotype, xylography had gradually been replaced with industrialised modern technologies, fading to small-scale private publishing for elites, many of whom were book collectors during the Republican Period (1912–1949).<sup>14</sup> As an art creation, socialist themed woodcuts had been encouraged by the CCP since before the Yan’an

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<sup>10</sup> See the section ‘Presentation: Similarities and Differences’ in Chapter One.

<sup>11</sup> Huang Yanmin 黄延敏, ‘Po si jiu Yundong de Fazhan Mailuo 破四旧运动的发展脉络’, *21 Shiji Shuangyuekan* 21世纪双月刊 137 (2013), p. 76.

<sup>12</sup> Shi Yun 史云 and Li Danhui 李丹慧, *Nanyi Jixu de Jixu Geming – Cong Pilin dao Pideng (1972–1976)* 难以继续的“继续革命”——从批林到批邓(1972–1976), vol. 8, 10 vols, Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Shi 中华人民共和国史 (Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2008), p. 307.

<sup>13</sup> Brokaw and Kornicki, ‘Introduction’, p. xxix.

<sup>14</sup> Cynthia Brokaw, ‘Commercial Woodblock Publishing in the Qing (1644–1911) and the Transition to Modern Printing Technology’, in *From Woodblocks to the Internet: Chinese Publishing and Printing Culture in Transition, circa 1800 to 2008*, eds. Cynthia Brokaw and Christopher A. Reed (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2010), pp. 44–49.

period.<sup>15</sup> With regard to books, as previously noted, the official stance towards woodblock book publishing was negative. The Mao Era woodblock books, then, were subsidised by the very CCP that was calling for their destruction, and used a printing technology that had lost its popularity for over half a century.

These contradictions make woodblock book publishing of the Mao Era a research subject worth exploring, and they raise several important questions. The first is, what was the situation of woodblock book publishing during the Mao Era? Did the production processes and organisations of practitioners change in response to the new circumstances? Secondly, how were the books consumed, and through what kind of distribution system? Thirdly, what was the mechanism behind the woodblock book trade as a whole that enabled the already outdated businesses to survive the countless anti-feudal culture campaigns? Fourth, was woodblock book publishing the only archaic practice retained from elite book culture in the Maoist publishing industry? Finally, what was the social and cultural function of the trade? Did fine woodblock book publishing continue to be a literati tradition?

Aiming at answering the above questions, considering the interactions among woodblock practitioners – including the publishers, writers, sellers and readers – this research studies the production, dissemination and circulation of woodblock publications of the Mao Era. I will argue that a crucial feature of elite book culture for Chinese literati – archaism – paradoxically continued to exist in post-1949 xylography publishing, and that it created a type of cultural ‘distinction’ for the new socialist elites, rendering xylographic books a privilege for individuals associated with political power.

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<sup>15</sup> Paul Gladstone, *Contemporary Chinese Art: A Critical History* (London: Reaktion Books, 2014), pp. 60–62.

## Historical Setting

In order to understand woodblock book publishing during the Mao Era, a thorough investigation of the landscape of the contemporary publishing industry is necessary. This is intended to situate xylographic publishing in the socialist historical context, and find its relation with the mainstream publications, related cultural policies and the political power.

## *Maoist Publishing Policies*

In governmental reports, “control” (*kongzhi*, 控制) and “efficiency” (*xiaoli*, 效率) were constantly emphasised in the publishing industry. In the first five-year plan for the publishing industry, issued in 1953, the guidance was to strengthen education on Mao Zedong’s thoughts, patriotism and science for socialist economic and cultural construction under CCP control, with careful plans to guarantee efficiency in balancing supply and demand.<sup>16</sup> In the section on specific goals, the plans doubled the printing quantity of most publications in a five-year period beginning in 1952.<sup>17</sup> Whilst the word “control” was repeated in this report and almost all policies, “efficiency” was normally indicated by encouraging achievements via raising figures and percentages. Controlling publications, both economically and politically, was set as a priority mission. The Maoist publishing industry began by competing with private businesses and dealing with a lack of materials and printing facilities. The accomplishment of the Joint State-private Ownership Movement (*Gong si he ying* 公私合营) in 1956, however, signalled the CCP’s economic monopoly of the industry, with a state-held and planned economy dominating businesses with public ownership. After 1956, not only were printing materials and technologies allocated based

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<sup>16</sup> ‘Chuban Zongshu Diyici Chuban Jianshe Wunian Jihua (Cao’an) (1953 Nian 2 Yue 7 Ri Xiuding) 出版总署第一次出版建设五年计划(草案)(1953年2月7日修订)’, in *CBSL* 5, p. 67.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 69–80.

on governmental permission, but personnel administration was also fully managed by the government.<sup>18</sup> Meanwhile, the establishment of the Xinhua Bookshop (*Xinhua shudian* 新华书店) distribution system put the dissemination of books fully under the CCP system as well.<sup>19</sup>

Political control was, as Perry Link argues, essential to CCP publishing. Similar to all other cultural fields, publishing was requested to serve the needs of the proletariat.<sup>20</sup> Even when the state-controlled businesses were competing with the at the time stronger private ownership businesses and coping with insufficient printing materials in the early 1950s, publicising Maoist and communist titles was, according to Hu Yuzhi in 1949, the most urgent task.<sup>21</sup> In line with the first five-year plan, no matter how other policies changed, from the second five-year plan of 1957 and the Great Leap Forward, to the 1971 governmental report, the focus of publishing was to be Maoist works, Marxist theories and the development of science. The political control institutionalised a censorship system over intelligentsia, as Michael Schoenhals argues, which restricted topics, methodology and expressions of knowledge.<sup>22</sup> This confined publications to communist theories, revolutionary fictions and any politically “positive” texts, whilst any texts that potentially undermined the authority were strictly prohibited.<sup>23</sup> The censorship became extreme during the Cultural Revolution, when texts were classified as “fragrant flowers and poisonous weeds” to be morally and politically evaluated by communist standards.<sup>24</sup> Although the CCP censorship was partly modelled on that of the Soviet Union, as Link pointed out, it created a more sophisticated mechanism that was

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<sup>18</sup> Shiping Hua, ed., *Chinese Political Culture, 1989–2000*, Studies on Contemporary China (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2001), p. 53.

<sup>19</sup> ‘Chuban Zongshu Guanyu Tongyi Quanguo Xinhua Shudian de Jueding (1950 Nian 3 Yue 25 Ri) 出版总署关于统一全国新华书店的决定 (1950年3月25日)’, in *CBSL 2*, pp. 107–114.

<sup>20</sup> Perry Link, *The Uses of Literature: Life in the Socialist Chinese Literary System* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000), p. 21.

<sup>21</sup> Hu Yuzhi 胡愈之, ‘Quanguo Chuban Shiye Gaikuang (Hu Yuzhi zai Quanguo Xinhua Shudian Chuban Gongzuo Huiyi Disanci Dahui Shang de Baogao) 全国出版事业概况 (胡愈之在全国新华书店出版工作会议第三次大会上的报告)’, in *CBSL 1*, pp. 254–266.

<sup>22</sup> Michael Schoenhals, *Doing Things with Words in Chinese Politics: Five Studies* (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, 1992), pp.103-126.

<sup>23</sup> ‘Chuban Zongshu Diyici Chuban Jianshe Wunian Jihua’, *CBSL 5*, pp. 67–92.

<sup>24</sup> Sun Peidong 孙沛东, ‘“Fragrant Flowers” and “Poisonous Weeds”: Cultural Censorship on Personal Reading During the Cultural Revolution’ (AAS Annual Conference 2018, Washington D.C., 23 March 2018).

combined with latent self-censoring through psychological and administrative control of authorship and content.<sup>25</sup>

Through both financial and political monopoly, the CCP propagated its ideology via the publishing industry. Maoist and other CCP ideological works constituted the majority of the 520,000 new titles that were published during the first 30 years of the PRC.<sup>26</sup> 87 publishing houses were set up, 78,000,000 volumes of Marxist and Leninist works and 237,260,000 volumes of Mao's works were published from 1949 to 1970.<sup>27</sup> Socialist revolutionary novels like *Red Crag* (*Hongyan*, 红岩) and *The Song of Youth* (*Qingchun zhige*, 青春之歌) had several million copies published.<sup>28</sup> The pursuit of efficiency through modernisation, however, did not go smoothly. A governmental report of 1957 shows that the goals set out in the first five-year plan were fulfilled, with 8,856 million volumes published, 164% the amount of 1952.<sup>29</sup> From 1959, however, the unrealistic goals of the Great Leap Forward began to require exaggerated achievements at 'leap forward' speed. The nation rushed into producing millions of copies within several days to answer the government's call, resulting in wasting materials and human resources on redundant books.<sup>30</sup> The Cultural Revolution damaged the publishing industry further by forcing publishing houses to close and by persecuting 'reactionary' editors. According to the Ministry of Culture, by the end of 1971 the number of publishing houses had been reduced to 53, with 1,355 editors,<sup>31</sup> less than one third of the 4,570 editors in 1966 before the Cultural Revolution.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Link, *The Uses of Literature*, pp. 97–103.

<sup>26</sup> Zhang Zhaokui 张召奎, *Zhongguo Chubanshi Gaiyao* 中国出版史概要 (Taiyuan: Shanxi renmin chubanshe, 1985), p. 495.

<sup>27</sup> '1966–1970 Nian Quanguo Chuban Jiben Qingkuang Ziliao (1971 Nian 5 Yue) 1966–1970 年全国出版基本情况资料 (1971 年 5 月)', in *CBSL 14*, pp. 41–54.

<sup>28</sup> 'Guanyu Woguo Chuban Shiye de Ruogan Jiben Qingkuang (1959 Nian 8 Yue 29 Ri) 关于我国出版事业的若干基本情况', in *CBSL 10*, p. 149.

<sup>29</sup> 'Wenhua bu Guanyu Jinhou Wenhua Gongzuo de Fangzhen Renwu he Gaijin Tizhi Xiafang Ganbu Wenti de Baogao (1957 Nian 11 Yue 28 Ri) 文化部关于今后文化工作的方针任务和改进体制下放干部问题的报告 (1957 年 11 月 28 日)', in *CBSL 9*, pp. 299–301.

<sup>30</sup> 'Wenhua bu Caizheng bu Guanyu Chuli Gedi Xinhua Shudian Zhixiao Cunshu de Tongzhi (60) Wen Chu Xia Zi di 300 hao, (60) Cai Wen Zi di 271 hao (1960 Nian 3 Yue 14 Ri) 文化部财政部关于处理各地新华书店滞销存书的通知 (60) 文出夏字第 300 号, (60) 财文字第 271 号 (1960 年 3 月 14 日)', in *CBSL 10*, pp. 234–236.

<sup>31</sup> '1966–1970 Nian Quanguo Chuban Jiben Qingkuang Ziliao', in *CBSL 14*, pp. 41–54.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

### *Situating Woodblock Book Publishing in the Mao Era Context*

Woodblock book publishing was not important in the blueprint of the Maoist publishing industry. In fact, during the Third National Xinhua Bookstore Publishing Conference in 1949, it was referred to by Hu Yuzhi – the governor of the later National Publication Administration – as a “naïve technology” serving the leisure tastes of the feudal literati.<sup>33</sup> This negativity came from, as Hu argues, the idea that woodblock printing was only used for gift-exchanging among a small circle of “feudal bureaucrats”, without establishing any real book commerce. Therefore, he concluded, it was not real “publishing” comparing with the modern Western publishing industry.<sup>34</sup> What was at stake, Hu noted, was engineering a new publishing industry for the new ruling power – the people – whilst accelerating the level of efficiency and production capacity.<sup>35</sup> Although in the following year Hu admitted that woodblock printing technology was a “creation of the working people”, he re-emphasised that this type of publishing was still considered to “serve feudal lords and literati”.<sup>36</sup>

The woodblock book publishing situation that Hu Yuzhi evaluated so negatively was not optimistic before the PRC. Ruptures brought by modern printing technologies made xylography gradually lose its millennium-long dominance from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>37</sup> Large woodblock businesses, such as commercial publishers in Sibao 四堡, Fujian, as Brokaw argues, ceased woodblock publishing during the 1940s.<sup>38</sup> According to Christopher Reed, the landscape of the Chinese publishing industry was reshaped by print capitalism,

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<sup>33</sup> Hu, ‘Quanguo Chuban Shiye Gaikuang’, *CBSL 1*, p. 255.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 257.

<sup>36</sup> Hu Yuzhi 胡愈之, ‘Lun Renmin Chuban Shiye Jiqi Fazhan Fangxiang (Hu Yuzhi Shuzhang zai Diyijie Quanguo Chuban Huiyi Quanti Huiyi Shang de Baogao) 论人民出版社及其发展方向 (胡愈之署长在第一届全国出版会议全体会议上的报告)’, in *CBSL 2*, pp. 515–516.

<sup>37</sup> Brokaw and Kornicki, ‘Introduction’, p. xxix.

<sup>38</sup> Cynthia Brokaw, *Commerce in Culture: The Sibao Book Trade in the Qing and Republican Periods* (Cambridge (Massachusetts) and London: Harvard University Asia Centre, 2007), p. 3.

with the establishment of a national publishing hub in Shanghai.<sup>39</sup> Adding to the impact of the long-lasting wars, most woodblock businesses faced bankruptcy in 1949.<sup>40</sup> The surviving businesses were later merged as joint public-private owned corporations during the 1950s. Among them, the Flourishing Studio, the former literati stationary shop, managed to register as a publisher and retain its brand, but many other bookstores were merged into the China Bookstore (*Zhongguo shudian*, 中国书店) group and the Ancient and Used Bookstore (*Gujiu shudian*, 古旧书店) group, gradually losing their independence.<sup>41</sup> The Cloudy Studio and Guangling Ancient Book Carving and Printing Studio (*Guangling guji keyinshe*, 广陵古籍刻印社, hereafter Guangling), however, regained their names during the early 1960s, making them independent business entities again.<sup>42</sup> All of the above businesses were registered as publishers with the state, except Jinling Scripture Carving House (*Jinling kejing chu*, 金陵刻经处), which was allowed to produce Buddhist texts without registering them as publications. Instead, these were categorised as second-hand commodities, circulating among Buddhist believers.<sup>43</sup> Traditional woodcut (*nianhua*, 年画) producers like Yangliuqing 杨柳青 and Taohuawu 桃花坞 were registered as woodcut studios instead of publishers, and Yangliuqing traditional woodcuts were sold under the name of the Flourishing Studio after 1959.<sup>44</sup> Thus, all woodblock businesses were positioned as state businesses.

In order to engineer a new culture, the socialist publishing industry was designed to serve the politics, publishing titles to cater to the needs of ‘workers,

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<sup>39</sup> Christopher A. Reed, *Gutenberg in Shanghai: Chinese Print Capitalism, 1876–1937*, Contemporary Chinese Studies, (UBC Press, 2004), p. 11.

<sup>40</sup> 孙树梅 Sun Shumei, ‘Wo suo Qinli de Rongbao zhai Muban shuiyin Fazhan Licheng 2 我所亲历的荣宝斋木版水印发展历程 (二)’, ed. Sun Zhiping 孙志萍, *Rongbao zhai* 荣宝斋, March 2012, p. 269.

<sup>41</sup> Zhou Yan 周岩, *Wo yu Zhongguo Shudian* 我与中国书店 (Shijiazhuang: Hebei jiaoyu chubanshe, 2004), pp. 6–7.

<sup>42</sup> Interview with Mao Ziliang 茅子良 conducted on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2015, and interview with Zhou Guangpei 周光培 conducted on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2015.

<sup>43</sup> Interview with Wu Yankang 武延康 conducted on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2015.

<sup>44</sup> Yangliuqing was later merged into Tianjin People’s Art Publishing (*Tianjin renmin meishu chubanshe*, 天津人民美术出版社), where their offset printed artworks were published. See *Tianjin Gongshang Shiliao Congkan Diyiji* 天津工商史料丛刊第一辑, vol. 1, 3 vols (Tianjin: Wenshi ziliao weiyuanhui, 1983), p. 53.

peasants and soldiers' (*gongnongbing*, 工农兵).<sup>45</sup> Although specific missions varied in the years following 1959, the ultimate goal of publishing remained the publicising of CCP ideology. Woodblock book publishers clearly attempted to follow this trend. Throughout the three decades of the Mao Era, publishers made endless efforts to link their publications to socialist revolutionary themes. Cultural Relic Publishing (*Wenwu chubanshe*, 文物出版社), Guangdong People Publishing (*Guangdong renmin chubanshe*, 广东人民出版社) and the Cloudy Studio, for example, published several woodblock printed editions of Chairman Mao's poems and prose.<sup>46</sup> The Flourishing Studio, as will be addressed in Chapter Two, published *Let the Hundred Flowers Bloom* (*Baihua qifang*, 百花齐放, hereafter *The Hundred Flowers*), praising both the cultural policy published in 1956 under the same name, and the Great Leap Forward of 1958.<sup>47</sup> However, as will be argued in later chapters, unlike revolutionary woodcuts that functioned as an artistic tool for educating the masses in socialist realism, woodblock books were designed in fitting with archaistic literati tastes and they were mostly inaccessible to the general public.

The subjects of the woodblock publications also remained more aligned with 'the old' side, as Hu Yuzhi described, of feudal literati interests.<sup>48</sup> In fact, woodcut artists from Yan'an were assigned to the Flourishing Studio in 1952 to create revolutionary artworks and produce New Year woodcuts in fitting with proletarian tastes. All the experiments failed, however, because of the Flourishing Studio's lack of business experience in the styles and subjects, which resulted in much higher prices compared with local competitors.<sup>49</sup> After many failed attempts to radically reform the trade, even the authority agreed to respect the speciality of the antique book trade, allowing it to keep the old

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<sup>45</sup> Link, *The Uses of Literature*, p. 129.

<sup>46</sup> Mao Zedong 毛泽东, *Maozhuxi Shici Shijiu shou* 毛主席诗词十九首 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1958). Mao Zedong 毛泽东, *Maozhuxi Shici Ershiyi Shou* 毛主席诗词二十一首 (Guangzhou: Guangdong renmin chubanshe, 1959). Mao Zedong 毛泽东, *Maozhuxi Shici Sanshijiu shou* 毛主席诗词三十九首 (Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua she, 1977).

<sup>47</sup> Guo Moruo 郭沫若 et al., *Baihua qifang* 百花齐放 (Beijing: Rongbao zhai xinji, 1961).

<sup>48</sup> Hu, 'Quanguo Chuban Shiye Gaikuang', *CBSL I*, pp. 254–266.

<sup>49</sup> Sun, 'Wo suo Qinli 2', pp.268–271 and Sun Shumei 孙树梅, 'Wo suo Qinli de Rongbao zhai Muban shuiyin Fazhan Licheng 3 我所亲历的荣宝斋木版水印发展历程 (三)', ed. Sun Zhiping 孙志萍, *Rongbao zhai* 荣宝斋, April 2012, pp. 260–262.

organisational structure and specialists during the early 1950s.<sup>50</sup> The policy, however, also emphasised that the structure had to be under the leadership of the CCP.<sup>51</sup>

While the attempt to revolutionise the subject matter was partly accepted by the authority, xylographic publishing completely failed in its goal to modernise, which aimed to improve efficiency and gain a higher degree of industrialisation. Especially during the Great Leap Forward, dramatically enhancing printing capacity became the theme of the publishing world. Not only did publishers attempt to adopt offset press technology,<sup>52</sup> but the authority also experimented with mechanising the handmade production of Xuan-paper (*xuanzhi*, 宣纸). After many attempts, these experiments also ended in failure. The fine woodblock books and literati artworks, therefore, retained their unmodernised and slow process of production.<sup>53</sup>

### ***The Redevelopment of Woodblock Printing***

Woodblock books were in fact brought back into the vision of the publishing industry due to insufficient book supplies, and the damage to historical books caused by a lack of raw materials.<sup>54</sup> Perry Link argues that the CCP government used paper allocation to control the publishing industry during the 1970s.<sup>55</sup> Under the planned economy, state-owned publishers were required to purchase printing materials with the permission of the government.<sup>56</sup> During the early years of the PRC (1949–1960), the shortage of printing materials was more serious; even the state-owned publishing industry faced the difficulty of a

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<sup>50</sup> ‘Anpai he Gaizao Gushuye: Renmin Ribao Shelun 1956 Nian 9 Yue 7 Ri 安排和改造古书业 – 人民日报社论 1956年9月7日’, in *CBSL* 8, pp. 233–235.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> Sun, ‘Wo suo Qinli 3’, p. 260.

<sup>53</sup> Liu Renqing 刘仁庆, *Guobao Xuanzhi* 国宝宣纸 (Beijing: Zhongguo tiedao chubanshe, 2009), pp.47–49. See also Chen Pengnian 陈彭年, ‘Guanyu Xuanzhi Wenti 关于宣纸问题’, *Zaozhi Gongye* 造纸工业, no. 2 (1957): pp. 24–27.

<sup>54</sup> ‘Gujiu Tushu Buying zai Renling Sunhui: Guangming Ribao Shelun 1956 Nian 10 Yue 25 Ri 古旧图书不应再任令损毁 – 光明日报社论 (1956年10月25日)’, in *CBSL* 8, pp. 256–258.

<sup>55</sup> Link, *The Uses of Literature*, p. 21.

<sup>56</sup> Interview with Mao Ziliang.

lack of raw materials and insufficient new titles for “serving the needs of the people”.<sup>57</sup> To save materials, the government encouraged small scale printing to use “both local and foreign” (*tu yang jiehe*, 土洋结合) methods in 1960, including hand-copying, mimeograph and lithography for textbooks.<sup>58</sup> Many Guangling publications before the 1960s, by this time under the Yangzhou Ancient and Used Bookstore (*Yangzhou gujiu shudian*, 扬州古旧书店), were thus mimeograph printed or even hand-copied.<sup>59</sup>

Lack of paper also caused historical books to be recycled as raw materials. In 1956, the *Guangming Daily* published an editorial, calling for the protection of rare historical books. According to the report, more than 10,000 volumes of rare books were rescued in Shanghai, narrowly avoiding being destroyed as waste paper.<sup>60</sup> From 1956 onwards, the government started to support publishers in the systematic restoring and collection of historical woodblocks and books, whilst reusing old woodblocks to publish important historical materials and gift books within a small scope. Rare historical woodblock books were protected, whilst common ones were used as supplementary resources in the book market. China Bookstore group, for example, was encouraged to collect old books for the book market.<sup>61</sup> With the goal of restoring cultural heritage, the Ancient Book Collection, Publication and Regulation Small Team (*Guji zhengli chuban guihua xiaozu*, 古籍整理出版规划小组) was founded in 1958.<sup>62</sup>

As I will explore in later chapters, xylography, rather than practical printing technology, was practiced to showcase Chinese book art as a cultural heritage.

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<sup>57</sup> ‘Guowuyuan Wenjiao Bangongshi Guanyu Baokan Shuji Yongzhi Gongying Wenti Yanzhong, Bixu Caiqu Jinji Cuoshi de Baogao (1961 Nian 3 Yue 20 Ri) 国务院文教办公室关于报刊书籍用纸供应问题严重, 必须采取紧急措施的报告 (1961 年 3 月 20 日)’, in *CBSL 11*, pp. 87–89 and ‘Wenhuabu Guanyu Jiaqiang Jihua Faxing Huanhe Dangqian Tushu Gongying Gongzuo zhong Jinzhang Zhuangkuang de Tongzhi (61) Wen Chu Hu Zi di 363 hao (1961 Nian 4 Yue 8 Ri) 文化部关于加强计划发行, 缓和当前图书供应工作中紧张状况的通知 (61) 文出胡字第 363 号 (1961 年 4 月 8 日)’, in *CBSL 11*, pp. 100–107.

<sup>58</sup> ‘Wenhuabu Guanyu Miqie Peihe Zhuyin Shizi Yundong Renzhen Zuohao Jiaocai he Zhuyin Duwu de Chuban Faxing Gongzuo de Tongzhi (60) Wen Chu Xia Zi di 646 hao (1960 Nian 5 Yue 23 Ri) 文化部关于密切配合注音识字运动认真做好教材和注音读物的出版发行工作的通知 (60) 文出夏字第 646 号 (1960 年 5 月 23 日)’, in *CBSL 10*, p. 265.

<sup>59</sup> *Gushu Banpian Mulu* 古书版片目录 (Yangzhou: Yangzhou gujiu shudian, 1978).

<sup>60</sup> ‘Anpai he Gaizao Gushuye’, *CBSL 8*, pp. 233–235.

<sup>61</sup> Zhou, *Wo yu Zhongguo Shudian*, pp. 7–8.

<sup>62</sup> ‘Qi Yanming zai Guji Zhengli Chuban Guihua Xiaozu Chenglihui Shang de Jianghua (1958 Nian 2 Yue 9 Ri) 齐燕铭在古籍整理出版规划小组成立会上的讲话 (1958 年 2 月 9 日)’, in *CBSL 9*, pp. 348–352.

The art of woodblock books was, as noted in the introduction of *The Manifesto*, considered a point of national pride and craftsmanship that reflected the Chinese people's contribution to human civilisation.<sup>63</sup> Although the themes of reviving the trade involved collecting woodblocks and books and re-developing the technology, as I will argue, policies seemed to focus more on promoting water coloured woodblock printing rather than monochrome texts. As mentioned above, hundreds of painting album reproductions and thousands of replicas of master paintings were produced during the Mao Era, whilst only 13 monochrome text titles were carved and published in the same period. Innovated from traditional coloured woodblock printing with 'assembled blocks' (*douban*, 烩版),<sup>64</sup> water-soluble woodblock printing (*Muban shuiyin*, 木版水印) was subsidised and given emphasis by the government. Different from woodcut art that was encouraged as an ideological weapon for the masses due to its efficiency and simplicity, the water-soluble woodblock printing technique concentrated on the precision of representing archaistic details of historical master paintings with a slow and laborious process.

The re-emergence of woodblock book publishing was interrupted by the Cultural Revolution. Both the Flourishing Studio and China Bookstore were attacked by Red Guards in 1967.<sup>65</sup> Surprisingly, however, although criticised during the most radical years, publishers in Beijing and Shanghai quickly recovered their businesses in 1968, when the Flourishing Studio used water-soluble woodblock printing to reproduce an oil painting entitled *Chairman Mao Goes to Anyuan* (*Maozhuxi qu Anyuan*, 毛主席去安源).<sup>66</sup> Subjects of the productions were nonetheless restricted to Chairman Mao-related artworks and socialist revolutionary-themed paintings and copybooks.<sup>67</sup> A woodblock book department established in the Cloudy Studio published four monochrome

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<sup>63</sup> AMCM, no. 25.

<sup>64</sup> Brokaw and Kornicki, 'Introduction', p. xxvi.

<sup>65</sup> 'Xiang Jiushijie Menglie Kaihuo: Yitiao Wenhuajie 向旧世界猛烈开火 – “一条文化街”', *Huanqiu Chi* 寰球赤, 10 August 1967.

<sup>66</sup> Sun Shumei 孙树梅, 'Wo suo Qinli de Rongbao zhai Muban shuiyin Fazhan Licheng 4 我所亲历的荣宝斋木版水印发展历程 (四)', ed. Sun Zhiping 孙志萍, *Rongbao zhai* 荣宝斋, June 2012, pp. 261–263.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid* and interview with Lei Zhenfang 雷振芳 conducted on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2015.

woodblock titles, including *The Manifesto* and three classic titles from 1974 to 1976.<sup>68</sup> Publishers in smaller cities, including Guangling and Jinling, on the other hand, were forced to close until the end of the Mao Era (after 1976).<sup>69</sup> By engaging with rich evidence from the interactions between writers, publishers, printers, sellers and policy makers, this research will explore the deep cultural and social purposes for reviving the woodblock trade, and analyse the different fates of the publishers during the Cultural Revolution.

### **Literature Review: Rethinking Woodblock Culture in Chinese History**

Although virtually no extant scholarship analyses woodblock book publishing during the Mao Era, many scholars, like Cynthia Brokaw and Joseph McDermott, have written extensively on xylographic culture until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. These scholarly writings are crucial to understanding the influences that pre-1949 woodblock book culture retained during the Mao Era. Both Brokaw and McDermott acknowledge that as the dominant printing technology for over a millennium from the 8<sup>th</sup> century to the 18<sup>th</sup>, thread-bound woodblock books established the image and concept of printed books, defining ‘the book’ and its hierarchy across East Asia.<sup>70</sup> During the Mao Era, the official position and the broadly spread book commerce associated with the dominance of woodblock technology might have been lost, but the legitimation and aesthetics of xylography books as ‘the Chinese book’, as I will argue, remained influential throughout the woodblock book publishing of the era.

The two scholars noted above focus on different localities and social groups. McDermott focuses more on the book culture of Chinese literati and their elite groups in the Jiangnan area, whilst Brokaw concentrates on commercial publishing for the lower classes from the hinterlands, such as Sibao 四宝 in Fujian. In his book *A Social History of Chinese Books*, McDermott analyses the

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<sup>68</sup> Interview with Zhu Junbo 祝君波 conducted on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2015.

<sup>69</sup> Interview with Zhou Guangpei and interview with Wu Yankang.

<sup>70</sup> Brokaw and Kornicki, ‘Introduction’, pp. xiii–xxxv.

intrinsic connections between woodblock books and literati culture, pointing out how literati culture influenced the production, dissemination, collection and circulation of books, and how it shaped the learning culture in China. In my opinion, McDermott points out two important conventions in literati book culture of late imperial China that broadly existed in Chinese book culture. The first is that instead of breaking barriers on disseminating knowledge, printing technology and library systems were used to limit written knowledge within literati society.<sup>71</sup> The second is that gift-giving functioned as an equally important channel as purchasing in book circulation.<sup>72</sup> As will be discussed in this thesis, the two features continued to exist in xylography book publishing during the Mao Era.

Brokaw, on the other hand, focuses on ‘ugly’ commercial woodblock books in Chinese history. In her new book chapter ‘Commercial Woodblock Publishing in the Qing (1644–1911) and the Transition to Modern Printing Technology’, Brokaw continues to pay attention to the largely ignored commercial publications.<sup>73</sup> Commercial books for common readers, Brokaw emphasises, coexisted with elite books from as early as the Song Dynasty, serving low-end market needs, and expanding the geography of printed books into hinterlands. If the elite book culture excluded common people from accessing texts, commercial publishing was, Brokaw argues, the real vehicle for conveying vernacular knowledge to Chinese societies. Covering examination materials, popular novels and practical knowledge, which elite book culture refused to accept as proper subjects, this book market, although producing coarsely carved and printed books, provided a vast amount of books to common Chinese people who were otherwise excluded from written knowledge.<sup>74</sup>

While applying Robert Darnton’s classic methodology of archival studies, both McDermott and Brokaw contextualise Danton’s theoretical model of

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<sup>71</sup> Joseph McDermott, *A Social History of the Chinese Book: Books and Literati Culture in Late Imperial China* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2006), pp. 115–147.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 84–94.

<sup>73</sup> Brokaw, ‘Commercial Woodblock Publishing in the Qing’, pp. 39–58.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

*circuit*: the life circle of a book with communications between writers, publishers, printers and sellers. Basing his theory on the Marxist circuit of capital, Darnton himself believes that this model is “universally correct” in studying book history.<sup>75</sup> McDermott, however, points out that the concept is flawed in studying elite book culture in Imperial China. Multiple factors, not only book commerce, but also cultural elements, functioned together to establish the culture.<sup>76</sup> Brokaw also argues that the history of Chinese books has been largely influenced by the complexity of Chinese characters, making fixed woodblock pages suitable for printing the more than 5,000 Chinese characters, which allowed it to maintain its dominance for centuries.<sup>77</sup> These efforts to contextualise Darnton’s theory establish methodologies for the history of Chinese books, making it clear that without the context of the French Revolution and the capitalist movements, economic force was not necessarily the key factor in the life span of a book.

Neither of the two scholars, however, explores woodblock book publishing after 1949. While McDermott finishes his observation towards the end of the Qing (1912), Brokaw’s research reaches the late 1940s, when woodblock practices could still be found among wealthy book collectors and some cultural conservatives. Brokaw also points out that publishers continued their xylographical practices into the PRC, calling for further research on the subject.<sup>78</sup> Brokaw and McDermott not only study woodblock texts, but also look into the details of xylographic practices in their social and cultural contexts. Both historical and contemporary Chinese scholars, however, have adopted different approaches. Historically, Chinese scholars mostly concentrated on bibliographical studies of fine and rare editions. The Qing scholar Ye Dehui’s 叶德辉 widely accepted classification, for instance, divides woodblock publications into ‘official printing’ (*guanke*, 官刻), ‘familial printing’ (*jiake*, 家刻, or private printing) and ‘commercial printing’ (*fangke*,

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<sup>75</sup> Robert Darnton, ‘What is the History of Books?’, *Daedalus*, 1982, p. 67.

<sup>76</sup> McDermott, *A Social History of the Chinese Book*, p. 116.

<sup>77</sup> Brokaw and Kornicki, ‘Introduction’, pp. xiii–xxxv.

<sup>78</sup> Brokaw, ‘Commercial Woodblock Publishing in the Qing’, p. 44.

坊刻), reflecting their position in the book hierarchy from top to bottom, based on historical and contemporary bibliographies.<sup>79</sup>

Contemporary Chinese scholars often apply nationalist approaches in justifying woodblock printing as the earliest printing technology that the Chinese nation contributed to human civilisation. In their works, the cultural achievements of printing technologies are evaluated based on their contribution to modernisation and national pride. In his work *History of Printing in China* (*Zhongguo yinshua shi*, 中国印刷史), for instance, Zhang Xiumin 张秀民 idealises woodblock practices as evidence of the cultural excellence of ‘Chineseness’, arguing that it is the origin of printing technology for both the East and West.<sup>80</sup> Chinese scholarship, therefore, largely neglects common commercial books due to their low printing quality and unskilful carving, whilst taking rare editions and book collections as the focus of exploring the cultural and historical importance of woodblock technology.<sup>81</sup>

Noticeably, archaism, or *fugu* (复古), is mentioned by almost all of the above scholars when discussing woodblock book cultures. Brokaw refers to woodblock practitioners in the Republican Period as “cultural conservatives” seeking to retain and revive indigenous “tradition”; Kai-wing Chow argues that re-commentating on ancient texts in the Ming (1368–1644) legitimised later archaist movements in the Qing (1644–1912);<sup>82</sup> and Ye Dehui criticises the obsession with ancient Song editions among book collectors, whilst admitting this became a fundamental evaluation criteria for book collections.<sup>83</sup> As will be argued in this research, the Mao Era woodblock book publishing, both in production and consumption, continued to be heavily influenced by archaism.

All the above academic literature focuses on the ‘woodblock era’ up to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. When it comes to modern China, scholarly writing is mostly on the drastic changes the modern printing industry brought about. Christopher

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<sup>79</sup> Ye Dehui 叶德辉, *Shulin Qinghua* 书林清话 (Shanghai: Fudan University Press, 2008), pp. 56–79.

<sup>80</sup> Zhang Xiumin 张秀民, *Zhongguo Yinshuashi* 中国印刷史 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1989), pp. 7–8.

<sup>81</sup> Brokaw, *Commerce in Culture*, pp. 3–7.

<sup>82</sup> Kai-wing Chow, ‘Writing for Success: Printing, Examinations, and Intellectual Change in Late Ming China’, *Late Imperial China*, no. 17 (1996): pp. 126–127.

<sup>83</sup> Ye, *Shulin Qinghua*, p. 234.

Reed argues in his book *Gutenberg in Shanghai: Chinese Print Capitalism 1876–1937* that printing capitalism emerged as the mechanised printing industry was gradually established in Shanghai in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>84</sup> This capitalism, Reed argues, which was fundamentally different from the book commerce in dynastic China, was associated with industrialisation, and entirely altered the landscape of publishing in China, both culturally and geographically.<sup>85</sup> The ruptures in materiality it brought to the publishing industry relocated the centre of Chinese culture from Beijing to Shanghai. At the same time, Reed notes that Chinese traditional morality was still influential in book capitalism, with Confucian convention impacting the choice of printing technology.<sup>86</sup> In the 1920s, for instance, in order to make Gutenberg’s technology an acceptable invention, he was described as the Western ascendant of the great Chinese invention of printing technology.<sup>87</sup> Reed’s work contributes significantly to understanding the drastic technical and cultural changes that modernisation and industrialisation brought to China through modern printing capitalism. However, since the focus of Reed’s book is the newly emerged print capitalism, he does not explore the changes in the woodblock trade in detail. Reed mentions that only six woodblock-related businesses registered with the Shanghai Guild of the printing industry, but he does not trace the situation further.<sup>88</sup>

Focusing on similar period to Reed, in *Knowledge Acts in Modern China: Ideas, Institutions, and Identities*, through convincing arguments about the organisation and societies of staff editors at the Commercial Press (*Shangwu yinshuguan*, 商务印书馆), Robert Culp analyses the stratification and professionalisation of the intellectual class and how Westernisation impacted the modern publishing industry.<sup>89</sup> Placing greater emphasis on historical

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<sup>84</sup> Reed, *Gutenberg in Shanghai*.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 12–15.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 180–181.

<sup>89</sup> Robert Culp, ‘Mass Production of Knowledge and the Industrialization of Mental Labor, The Rise of the Petty Intellectual’, in Robert Culp, Eddy U and Wen-hsin Yeh eds., *Knowledge Acts in Modern China: Ideas, Institutions, and Identities* (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 2016), pp. 207–241.

changes than continuities, Culp mentions that a surplus of literati were still using xylographic publishing as an alternative for them to survive, but he does not explore the phenomenon in detail.<sup>90</sup> In another book, Culp also writes about Luo Zhenyu 罗振玉 and his archaistic publishing practices, but again he does not pay any attention to woodblock printing-related activities.<sup>91</sup>

Little has been written about the period in which the woodblock trade disappeared from the main scene of the Shanghai publishing industry, how this worked during and after the Gutenberg revolution and the drastic changes experienced by the intelligentsia. Similarly, what we know about the post-1949 publishing industry is more about the mechanised publishing industry. In Perry Link's work *The Uses of Literature: Life in the Socialist Chinese Literary System*, although mainly focusing on post-Mao literature, the author analyses in-depth the continuity of the socialist controlling mechanism in the publishing industry that was established during the Mao Era. Literature, Link observes, was required to perform the social function of serving the needs of politics.<sup>92</sup> This led to a censorship system that went beyond the Soviet Union one by generating psychological fear of punishment.<sup>93</sup> Fluctuating literary polices and frequently changing standards for the book made it hard to anticipate and follow the leadership's guidance; therefore, the power of psychological control was enhanced.<sup>94</sup>

In his rather encyclopaedic work, *The Control of the Media in the People's Republic of China*, Nicolai Volland provides a thorough investigation of the mechanism of media control, with the publishing industry at its core, pointing out that the controlling mechanism was consistently associated with the propaganda sector of the CCP, and inherited from both Marxist-Leninism and the tradition of the Guomindang.<sup>95</sup> Through a post-publication mechanism

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid, p.239.

<sup>91</sup> Robert Culp, 'New Literati and the Reproduction of Antiquity: Contextualizing Luo Zhenyu and Wang Guowei', in Chia-ling Yang and Roderick Whitfield eds., *Lost Generation: Luo Zhenyu, Qing Loyalists and the Formation of Chinese Culture* (London: Saffron, 2013), pp. 96-119.

<sup>92</sup> Link, *The Uses of Literature*, p. 109.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid, p. 56.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid, p. 68.

<sup>95</sup> Nicolai Volland, 'The Control of the Media in the People's Republic of China' PhD diss, University of Heidelberg, 2003, <http://www.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/archiv/8048>, pp. 13-73.

called the “responsible editor system”, the pressure to censor was disseminated to common editors. Volland further argues that censorship during the PRC was multi-layered, not only relying on the negative approach of controlling, but also seeking psychological persuasion through mass campaigns, rendering the acceptance of propaganda motivated and voluntary.<sup>96</sup>

When analysing the publishing industry in the PRC, Volland convincingly argues that between Sanlian 三联 and Xinhua Bookstore, the CCP chose the Yan’an-originated Xinhua and made it a monolith of political legacy, although Sanlian had much more experience and expertise.<sup>97</sup> Volland further argues in another book that the publishing industry was gradually transformed from a highly competitive and market-driven industry, to a state-controlled bureaucracy during the PRC. The “cultural entrepreneurship”, which Christopher Reed defines as the active and pluralistic agency in relatively autonomous cultural production,<sup>98</sup> was gradually weakened by both the transformation of market needs and external political pressures.<sup>99</sup> At the same time, as Volland addresses in another earlier paper, the CCP strengthened its ideological control by joining the socialist camp with translated literature.<sup>100</sup> Through the case of the Wenhui Newspaper during the early 1950s, the mainland scholar Zhang Jishun 张济顺 also points out that through “thought reform” (*sixiang gaizao*, 思想改造) and re-categorising, the CCP gradually turned privately-operated newspapers into state-owned propaganda tools.<sup>101</sup>

Through their analysis of publishing politics and communist culture, the above scholars explain the social and cultural context in which woodblock books were published. However, none of them write about woodblock

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid, pp. 229-241.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid, p. 245.

<sup>98</sup> Christopher Rea, ‘Enter the Cultural Entrepreneur’, in Christopher Rea and Nicolai Volland eds., *The Business of Culture: Cultural Entrepreneurs in China and Southeast Asia, 1900-65*. (Vancouver and Toronto: UBCPress, 2015), p. 10.

<sup>99</sup> Nicolai Volland, ‘Cultural Entrepreneurship in the Twilight: The Shanghai Book Trade Association, 1945-57’, In Christopher Reed and Nicolai Volland eds., *The Business of Culture: Cultural Entrepreneurs in China and Southeast Asia, 1900-65* (Vancouver and Toronto: UBCPress, 2015), pp. 234-258.

<sup>100</sup> Nicolai Volland, ‘Translating: The Socialist State: Cultural Exchange, National Identity, and the Socialist World in the Early PRC’, in *Twentieth-Century China* 33, no. 2 (April 2008), pp. 51-72.

<sup>101</sup> Zhang Jishun 张济顺, *Yuanqu de Dushi: 1950 Niandai de Shanghai 远去的都市: 1950 年代的上海* (Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2015), pp. 135-188.

publishing during the related period. Link mentions the thread-bound *The Golden Lotus* (*Jin ping mei*, 金瓶梅), published in the 1950s on Mao's order for high officials only, which indicates differentiated attitudes towards antiquity in terms of classified publications.<sup>102</sup> Unfortunately, he only gives the book a few sentences, without exploring the topic further. Similarly, Volland provides a brief comment on “antiquarian books” in *Cultural Entrepreneurship in the Twilight*, yet only refers to it as a contrast to the drastic changes that were taking place in the modern publishing industry at the same time.<sup>103</sup> Without considering its later prosperity during the Mao Era, it seems that xylographic book publishing had disappeared from the historical narrative of modern China; therefore it is justifiably neglected by the academia.

### Importance of this Research

Thus far, as we can see from the previous section, little research has been systematically done on woodblock books published after 1949. Indeed, this is only mentioned in a few books. *The Communist Manifesto*, for example, was given a one-line introduction in a footnote in Tsien Tsuen-hsuei's work.<sup>104</sup> Two short academic articles on the books can be found in Mainland Chinese research, yet neither of the research analyses in depth the social and cultural dynamics behind the publications.<sup>105</sup> Beyond this, many brief stories about woodblock publications have been told and published in newspapers, but seldom with footnotes and academic analysis.

From extant studies we know that some historical terms continued to be crucial definitions of woodblock books, like Song edition (*songban*, 宋版), fine

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<sup>102</sup> Link, *The Use of Literature*, p. 184.

<sup>103</sup> Volland, ‘Cultural Entrepreneurship in the Twilight’, p. 239.

<sup>104</sup> Tsien Tsuen-hsuei 钱存训, *Zhongguo Shuji Zhimo ji Yinshuashi Lunwenji* 中国书籍、纸墨及印刷史论文集 (Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 1992), p. 148.

<sup>105</sup> One is written by Qin Jiahang 秦嘉杭, a bibliographical study providing statistics of woodblock books published in 2015. Another is a short essay about *The Manifesto* written by Gong Yueguo 巩曰国 listing eight features of the book. Qin Jiahang 秦嘉杭, ‘Xinzhongguo Diaoban Yinshu Yanjiu 新中国雕版印书研究’, *Daxue Tushuguan Xuebao* 大学图书馆学报, no. 33(1) (2015): pp. 101–105. Gong Yueguo 巩曰国, ‘Diaoban Yinshu shi Shang de Yige Teli 雕版印刷史上的一个特例’, *Tushuguan Jianshe* 图书馆建设 2003(6): 97.

edition (*shanben* 善本), and thread-bound book (*xianzhuangshu*, 线装书).<sup>106</sup> The Cloudy Studio publications, for instance, have been constantly referred to as new Song editions (*xin songban*, 新宋版) or new fine editions (*xinshanben*, 新善本), indicating their exceptional quality.<sup>107</sup> However, the Mao Era woodblock books can hardly fit into any of the old categories Ye Dehui coined. Subsidised by the political authority, they are obviously not commercial printing or familial printing, and they are different from dynastic official printing as well. They were not considered important channels for conveying official propaganda, nor could the scope and influence be compared with official editions in dynastic China.<sup>108</sup> Sometimes they share the same level of perfectionism as private elite publishing, while other times they are more similar to imperial editions, with unlimited attention and budgets from the political authority. The features of Mao Era xylography publications are therefore awaiting further consideration.

It is understandable that scholars have not paid much attention to these woodblock books. The books were mostly published in just a few hundred copies, making them largely unknown to the general public. Compared to the 520,000 titles published by the letterpress mechanised printing industry in the same era,<sup>109</sup> a print run of fewer than 100 titles, even adding to this the several thousand painting reproductions that were woodblock published, was rare. What is more, most of these woodblock titles had been repeatedly published before, making them unimportant content-wise.<sup>110</sup> Indeed, what drew much more attention from scholars was the significant political and cultural events happening in the publishing industry at the time of the communist regime.

However, the xylography books are unique given the continuity with conventional woodblock printing aesthetics – the designs, content arrangement

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<sup>106</sup> Cao Zhi 曹之, *Zhongguo Guji Banbenxue* 中国古籍版本学 (Wuchang: Wuhan University Press, 2015), p.40, p. 49 and p. 533.

<sup>107</sup> Peng Beng 彭蹦, ‘Dangdai Songbanshu de Gushi 当代宋版书的故事’, *Dongfang Zaobao* 东方早报, 8 September 2013.

<sup>108</sup> Xia Lixia 夏莉霞, ‘Yuandai ji Qingdai Zhongyang Guanke Bijiao Xiaokao 元代及清代中央官刻比较小考’, *Zhongguo Chubanshi* 中国出版 16 (2016): pp. 67–70.

<sup>109</sup> Zhang, *Zhongguo Chubanshi Gaiyao*, p. 495.

<sup>110</sup> See Appendix IV List of Editions of *Let the Hundred Flowers Bloom*.

and materials all follow the fine elite editions. All these factors distinguish the xylographic editions from the mass produced letterpress printed editions, with their coarse printing quality and differing aesthetics, published during the same era.<sup>111</sup> These continuities are unusual, especially given the fact that this was occurring during an era that promoted modernisation and industrialisation under radical ‘anti-feudal culture’ political ruptures. Meanwhile, these woodblock publications are clearly important cultural evidence, making it less easy to either consider publishing during the Mao Era as a communist totality against Confucian cultural conventions, or take the CCP ideology and the old literati culture as an opposite binary. They reveal hints of the disparity between cultural ruptures and continuities, indigenous technologies and imported industrialisation.

While fully agreeing that technological, educational and cultural modernisation was fundamentally transforming Chinese book culture, Brokaw suggests drawing attention to the continuities and connections between the ‘new’ and the ‘old’.

...But it is useful to put the dramatic technological, educational and cultural changes of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries into a broader context, to look at the continuities as well as the ruptures between the predominantly woodblock publishing industry and book culture of the nineteenth century and the ‘modern’ publishing industry and book culture of the twentieth.<sup>112</sup>

Following Brokaw’s suggestion, this research aims to analyse the continuity and rupture of Chinese book culture through woodblock publications during the Mao Era. The work will examine *The Communist Manifesto* (hereafter *The Manifesto*) and another 12 fine books that were newly carved and printed,<sup>113</sup> whilst also referencing the vast amount of reprinted woodblock books and

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<sup>111</sup> Comparing the 1959 edition of *The Communist Manifesto* and the woodblock version, the differences in designs, materials and page arrangements are distinct. See Chapter One, p. 47.

<sup>112</sup> Brokaw, ‘Commercial Woodblock Publishing in the Qing’, p. 40.

<sup>113</sup> Appendix III List of New Woodblock Books Published During the Mao Era.

water-coloured painting replicas of the same era. The research subjects are restricted to legal woodblock publications produced by state-owned publishers in urban areas. This is partly due to the availability of samples in library collections<sup>114</sup> and partly because the research focuses on analysing woodblock book publishing that was institutionalised by the CCP system. Newly carved titles comprise major case studies since they illustrate the entire process of woodblock publishing, including carving, printing and dissemination, whilst the carving stage is missing in reprinted historical titles from old blocks.<sup>115</sup> Meanwhile, water-soluble woodblock printing painting replicas published by the same publishers are included for their intrinsic connection with the books.<sup>116</sup> Traditional ‘new year woodcuts’ (*nianhua*, 年画) and socialist revolutionary woodcuts (*xin banhua*, 新版画) are not included among the research subjects since woodblock book publishers did not undertake these practices in their main business either before or after 1949.<sup>117</sup> Both historically and during the Mao Era, the genre of new year woodcuts and revolutionary woodcuts were taken as folk art or ‘art for the masses’, contrasting with elite books the Mao Era woodblock publishers specialised in.

## **Methodology and Theoretical Frameworks**

In this research, as noted above, I argue that what continued in the Mao Era woodblock book publishing was archaism – an essential feature of elite book culture. Archaism was in fitting with the CCP ideology culturally, and was repositioned as a type of ‘distinction’ for the CCP elites. Here, several terms in the argument need to be defined: archaism, elite book culture, the CCP ideology and ‘distinction’, which will be outlined below.

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<sup>114</sup> Neither non-official publications nor unofficial rural publications had been systematically collected by libraries.

<sup>115</sup> Most publishers kept historical woodblocks in their collections; some publishers, such as Guangling, used these woodblocks to reprint the classic titles during the Mao Era.

<sup>116</sup> The Cloudy Studio, the Flourishing Studio and Guangling all produced woodblock books as well as painting replicas.

<sup>117</sup> As will be mentioned in later sections, the Flourishing Studio pursued New Year woodcuts and revolutionary woodcut replicas for a short period, but they ceased doing so due to a lack of business experience.

‘Archaism’ is a concept borrowed from Wu Hung’s definition based on archaeological discoveries in the discipline of art history. Comparing archaism in the European context and *fugu* 复古 (recovering the past) in Chinese history, Wu argues that archaism refers to the intent of reinventing and respecting the past.<sup>118</sup> By bringing the past into the present, the concept of time vanishes as a result of archaism, and the present is retrospectively interpreted as archaic. Archaism, Wu further argues, closely aligns with Confucianism, existing in political, cultural and artistic practices.<sup>119</sup>

By ‘elite book culture’, as defined by Cynthia Brokaw, I am referring to the private publishing culture of Chinese books.<sup>120</sup> This has often been associated with elite and imperial tastes, authoritative knowledge and literati leisure, reflecting the three perfections of the literati: painting, calligraphy and poetry. This culture emphasised perfectionism in printing quality and collectability, producing and disseminating fine editions among social elites, including imperial families during the Ming and the Qing Dynasty, continued into the Republican Period in smaller scale.

Whilst archaism relates the present to the past, ideology engineers the present and the future of the PRC. In Chinese studies, ideology is mostly defined, as Timothy Cheek addresses, as an imported knowledge system.<sup>121</sup> Here I would like to take ideology as, following Clifford Geertz’s definition in the Indonesian nationalist context, a built-up cultural system for solving social strains that were caused by losing confidence in established values, or ‘tradition’. CCP ideology, following this definition, referred to the Maoist and communist theories engineered by the CCP ruling power in amending the discrepancy between modernisation and the Chinese tradition.<sup>122</sup> It declared that the working class and peasants were the new ruling class and thus the

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<sup>118</sup> Wu Hung, ‘Introduction’, in *Representing the Past: Archaism and Antiquarianism in Chinese Art and Visual Culture*, ed. Wu Hung (Chicago: The Centre for the Art of East Asia, University of Chicago Art Media Resources, 2010), p. 32.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Brokaw, ‘Commercial Woodblock Publishing in the Qing’, p. 46.

<sup>121</sup> Timothy Cheek, ‘Making Maoism: Ideology and Organization in the Yan’an Rectification Movement, 1942-1944’, in Robert Culp, Eddy U and Wen-hsin Yeh eds., *Knowledge Acts in Modern China: Ideas, Institutions, and Identities* (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 2016), p. 304.

<sup>122</sup> Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1973), pp. 193–233.

cultural system should serve their needs.<sup>123</sup> Within this cultural system, Chinese culture was publicised as created by ‘the people’. This often labelled the CCP culture as the new, while classifying historical culture as feudal and the old. The old, therefore was constantly criticised as *fugu* (复古) or *fubi* (restoration of a dethroned monarch, 复辟), a barrier to modernisation – the goal of the new.

In the conjuncture between archaism and CCP ideology (as a cultural system) is the term ‘distinction’, the core concept of Pierre Bourdieu’s sociological theory of ‘habitus’, ‘cultural capital’ and ‘distinction’. Instead of focusing only on class origin, Bourdieu argues that an individual’s aesthetic taste is shaped through combined social factors that he defines as ‘habitus’, including family history, educational background and class.<sup>124</sup> Supported by political power, individuals of the ruling class have a monopoly over not only economic, but also cultural capital, which can be exchanged, transferred and accumulated as cultural currency.<sup>125</sup> The ruling class, Bourdieu argues, uses the cultural currencies in hand to create *distinction*, thereby elevating itself above the masses both through educational institutions and intangibles such as distinguished family roots and social identities.<sup>126</sup>

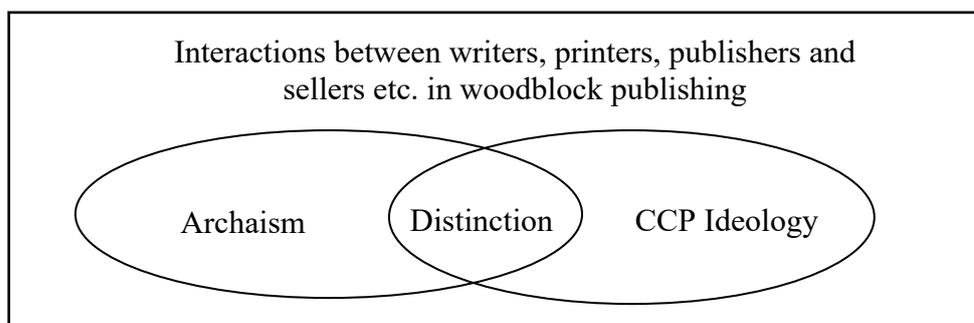


Diagram 01. The Theoretical Framework

Diagram 01 illustrates the theoretical framework of this research. Within the scope of the history of books, I study woodblock books as materials, through

<sup>123</sup> *Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Xianfa* 中华人民共和国宪法 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1954).

<sup>124</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (London, Melbourne and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984), pp. 163–165.

<sup>125</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, ed. John B. Thompson, trans. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson (Cambridge and Malden: Polity Press, 1992), p. 171.

<sup>126</sup> Bourdieu, *Distinction*, Chapter One, pp. 11–96.

the interactions between writers, printers, publishers and sellers.<sup>127</sup> Archaism, I will argue, existed among these interactions through legal xylographic practices, which are the subjects of this research. More precisely, archaism was practiced within the institutionalised CCP publishing system. Legitimised by the CCP system, archaism constituted a new type of *distinction* in book culture through association with the dominant culture that represented the CCP ideology. This methodology integrates the history of the book, art history and sociology in order to observe an ancient printing technology in a modern era.

The theoretical framework also interprets the intrinsic connections between each concept. Archaism is part of Chinese literati elite culture: it was part of the tradition. According to Wu Hung's definition, archaism respected antiquity as the authority for the present and it played an essential role in Confucian ethics.<sup>128</sup> The ideology of the CCP, on the other hand, publicised its aim to destroy "the old feudal culture", including the practice of archaism.<sup>129</sup> The fact that elite woodblock publications were subsidised, published and appreciated by a circle of politicians in the socialist system, however, indicates that they had similar archaistic tastes to the literati elites. The paradox in the co-existence of archaism and the CCP ideology (culture), therefore, is the outcome of a new cultural system in which the two cooperated and competed with each other. The intersections between the two created a type of cultural *distinction* for the new socialist elites, in which only learned men associated with political power had the privilege of accessing these 'new fine editions' (*xin shanben*, 新善本).

Here, it is important to raise the question of the applicability of Bourdieu's theory, first proposed in the context of capitalist France, where cultural production was considered to be relatively autonomous. Although cultural production in Maoist China was considered part of a communist totality, recent scholars, such as Christopher Rea and Nicolai Volland, have convincingly pointed out that autonomy did exist, at least during the early 1950s before the

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<sup>127</sup> Darnton, 'What is the History of Books?', pp. 65–83.

<sup>128</sup> Wu, 'Introduction', p. 32.

<sup>129</sup> Johnathan D. Spence, *The Search for Modern China* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1999), p. 575.

Cultural Revolution.<sup>130</sup> In the Annual Publishing Plan of 1955, for example, the primary task of the state-owned publishing industry was to continue to cooperate with private publishers, whilst gradually moving onto a complete socialist totality.<sup>131</sup> Meanwhile, the CCP elites had an established *habitus* of archaistic taste in books dating from late Qing to the early Republican Period, the period before they were influenced by radical new ideas. Although literati culture and woodblock books were extensively criticised later during the New Cultural Movement (1919), neither the radical revolutionary nor the conservative archaistic aesthetics was strictly prohibited by the Republican governments, and the debate between new and old was relatively autonomous compared with the Mao Era. It is also arguable that Bourdieu was criticising the so-called capitalist autonomy, pointing out that it is also determined by hidden power dynamics that favour capitalists, both politically and culturally. The relativity of autonomy, as Michel Hockx argues, made Bourdieu's theory applicable to studying literary field in modern China after contextualisation.<sup>132</sup>

### Questions of Continuity

My argument raises two major questions of continuity in relation to woodblock book culture. Firstly, while archaism was discouraged for the entire Mao Era, nationalism was, and somehow still is, propagated and believed to be the reason for persisting with Chinese tradition. Secondly, if archaism in book culture was practiced continuously, was it still a literati tradition during Maoist China?

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<sup>130</sup> Christopher Rea and Nicolai Volland, 'Epilogue: Beyond the age of Cultural Entrepreneurship, 1949 - present', In Christopher Reed and Nicolai Volland eds., *The Business of Culture: Cultural Entrepreneurs in China and Southeast Asia, 1900-65* (Vancouver and Toronto: UBCPress, 2015), pp. 261-263.

<sup>131</sup> '1955 Nian Chuban Shiye de Fangzhen Renwu (Cao'an) 1955 年出版事业的方针任务(草案)', in *CBSL* 6, pp. 536-540.

<sup>132</sup> Michel Hockx, 'The Literary Field and the Field of Power: The Case of Modern China', *Paragraph* 35, no. 1 (March 2012), pp. 49-65.

### *Archaism or Nationalism?*

Both the Guomindang government and the CCP authority propagated nationalism in their policies. The woodblock book publishing that was later revived by the CCP had stopped getting funding from the Guomindang government almost half a century before.<sup>133</sup> Whilst the Guomindang government abandoned xylography to modernise the nation, the official explanation offered by the CCP for the resumed subsidiary was also nationalism. Meanwhile, practitioners of woodblock publishing during the Mao Era believed that they had saved this cultural heritage from being destroyed by communist rallies for nationalism and patriotism.

The varying attitudes indicated that the above social groups had different definitions of ‘nationalism’ in relation to woodblock practices. In the communist context, this was defined as from Chinese history, but against the literati culture that served the old feudalist ruling class. Woodblock technology was, as is written in the ‘Introductory Notes’ of *The Manifesto* and most CCP governmental narratives, one of the greatest inventions to emerge from the Chinese nation, and a significant contribution from the Chinese working people to human civilisation that “influenced modern printing technology greatly”.<sup>134</sup> In the editorial of the *People’s Daily* on 3 August 1967, it was announced that woodblock technology had been controlled by the old ruling class and ‘feudal literati’ (*fengjianwenren*, 封建文人), and now it should be handed back to the people.<sup>135</sup>

However, it is worth noting that in the official narratives during the Mao Era, the printing technology that was propagated as one of the great four inventions was mostly the movable-type (*huozi yinshua*, 活字印刷) “invented” by Bi Sheng 毕升(-1051). Boasted of as the ancestor of modern Western

<sup>133</sup> Reed, *Gutenberg in Shanghai*, pp. 203–257.

<sup>134</sup> AMCM, no. 25.

<sup>135</sup> Li Hui 李辉, ‘Pintie Fengzhong Sui pian – Zhuixun Wenge Chuqi de Meishu Fengyun 拼贴风中碎片 (一) — 追寻“文革”初期的美术风云’, *Shucheng* 书城 29 (October 2018). Available at: <http://mj.lsh.usc.cuhk.edu.hk/book.aspx?cid=7&tid=5&pid=939&aid=940> [Accessed on 28 June 2018]. See also Editorial, ‘Gongnongbing yao Jianjue Zhichi Geming Xuesheng 工农兵要坚决支持革命学生’, *The People’s Daily*, 23 August 1966 and Editorial, ‘Haodehen 好得很’, *The People’s Daily*, 23 August 1966.

printing technology, however, the movable-type printing Bi invented was not mature and was not widely applied. What had dominated the Chinese book printing trade since the Tang Dynasty (618-907) was woodblock. As Jacob Eyferth argues, from the Republican Period, modern Chinese intellectuals and governments had a hostile attitude to craftsmanship, including paper-making and woodblock printing, considering these barriers to making the nation great.<sup>136</sup> The discourse of making an ancient printing technique a pioneer of modern technology, therefore, created a dilemma, as the available cultural heritage of printed books was not created by a technology that shared similarities with modern technology, which was what the CCP intended to propagate. Meanwhile, as has been mentioned above, quite a big proportion of the woodblock books were literati titles, including poems, prose selections and illustrated letter papers in fitting with literati tastes, which had little connection with the working class.<sup>137</sup>

The ambivalent official attitude to woodblock printing and historical woodblock books led to contradictory opinions. On the one hand, woodblock publishing was considered naïve and old, and finely-produced thread-bound books, Hu Yuzhi criticised, were a symbol of elite book culture, often associated with wealthy scholar-officials who became the target of criticism during the CCP system.<sup>138</sup> On the other hand, however, the historical remains of woodblocks and books, and the close link between the conceptual “printing technology” and woodblock printing, made it appropriate to consider xylography as potentially nationalist, even from a socialist perspective. Hence, the government began to support the protection of historical books in 1956 after many rare ancient books were destroyed. This was also the attitude widely accepted by the publishers.<sup>139</sup>

In 1967, the first year of the Cultural Revolution, radical youths in Beijing – often the Red Guards – attempted to differentiate the revolutionary

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<sup>136</sup> Eyferth, *Eating Rice on Bamboo Roots*, pp.108-115.

<sup>137</sup> Hu, ‘Quanguo Chuban Shiye Gaikuang’, *CBSL 1*, pp. 254–266.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>139</sup> Interview with Mao Ziliang and interview with Zhou Guangpei.

technology from the ‘reactionary’ woodblock publications that the Flourishing Studio published.<sup>140</sup> They announced that “woodblock workers” in the publishing company were revolutionary, whilst capitalist owners and “officials” behind the publications were reactionary, “secretly undermining the socialist missions” with *fubi* (restoration of a dethroned monarch, 复辟) ideas.<sup>141</sup> What irritated the Red Guards was that the classic topics and the literati tastes were supported by the political authority, which clearly breached the nationalist propaganda they received. They therefore concluded that these “black publications” were supported by the “black hands” of anti-revolutionary politicians such as Liu Shaoqi 刘少奇 and Deng Xiaoping 邓小平.<sup>142</sup>

What would have been a logical interpretation of ‘nationalist’ woodblock book publishing for the Red Guards? Since woodblock technology was publicised as being created by ‘the people’, presumably it should have served the needs of workers, peasants and soldiers, both aesthetically and content-wise.<sup>143</sup> A proletarian aesthetic, as Richard King and Jan Walls argue, was engineered as a combination of Soviet realism and Chinese folk art, presenting socialist and nationalist aesthetics respectively.<sup>144</sup> Hence, during the 1950s, the CCP government allocated Yan’an woodcut artists to the Flourishing Studio, attempting to produce revolutionary woodcuts and New Year Woodcuts.<sup>145</sup> The New Year Woodcut entitled *Welcome the Voluntary Army* (*Huanying zhiyuanjun*, 欢迎志愿军) hints at the desired presentation of nationalist woodblock production; this is in line with other propaganda woodcuts catering to proletarian tastes, whilst under a theme associated with the ‘proletarian culture’ for the working class and peasants.<sup>146</sup> However, as will be argued in

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<sup>140</sup> Gongdaihui Renmin Meishu Chubanshe Geming Zaofantuan 工代会人民美术出版社革命造反团 and Renmin Meishu Chubanshe Menshibu Linshi Geming Weiyuanhui 人民美术出版社门市部临时革命委员会, “‘Rongbao zhai’ Heimu 荣宝斋黑幕”, *Wenyi Geming* 文艺革命, 2 August 1967.

<sup>141</sup> Editorial, ‘Haodehen’.

<sup>142</sup> ‘Xiang Jiushijie Menglie Kaihuo: Yitiao Wenhuajie’.

<sup>143</sup> Gongdaihui Renmin Meishu Chubanshe Geming Zaofantuan and Renmin Meishu Chubanshe Menshibu Linshi Geming Weiyuanhui, “‘Rongbao zhai’ Heimu”.

<sup>144</sup> Richard King and Jan Walls, ‘Introduction: Vibrant Images of a Turbulent Decade’, in *Art in Turmoil: The Chinese Cultural Revolution. 1966–76*, ed. Richard King (Vancouver and Toronto: UBC Press, 2010), pp. 3–8.

<sup>145</sup> Sun, ‘Wo suo Qinli 2’, pp. 269–271.

<sup>146</sup> Sun, ‘Wo suo Qinli 3’, p. 261.

this research, all these attempts failed before the Flourishing Studio resumed its literati themes.

Whilst nationalist themes with socialist aesthetics are rarely found in woodblock book publishing from the Mao Era, archaism clearly existed in almost all publishing practices. As will be discussed, aesthetically, woodblock books strictly followed past standards of perfection. In producing text-based thread-bound books like *The Manifesto*, the utmost goal was generally to achieve the aesthetics of Song editions.<sup>147</sup> For illustrated books, the earliest printed book of this kind, the *Ten Bamboo Studio Album of Letter Papers* (*Shizhuzhai jianpu*, 十竹斋笺谱, hereafter *Ten Bamboo Studio*), was always referred to for both the subjectivity and the art style.<sup>148</sup> As will be argued in Chapters One and Two, in any case, past perfection was the standard for evaluating the quality of the books.

For woodblock book practitioners, they understood ‘nationalism’ to involve continuing the archaistic standards, preventing the historical achievements and cultural heritage from being destroyed. As Geertz argues in the Indonesian context, nationalism radicalised tensions among social groups by politicising and expanding normalised cultural patterns. In xylographic book publishing, without associating with archaism, nationalism had no aesthetic and cultural norms to follow. In my opinion, respecting the past in Mao Era woodblock book publishing became the ‘nationalism’ that woodblock practitioners pursued. Pride and feelings of cultural belonging emerged from the crisscross of time and space in archaism. Aesthetically, Song books were glorified, cherished and regarded as the highest authority, and at any point they were liable to be remembered, admired and reproduced. Culturally, ancient texts were canonised as cultural origins, both in publishing and book collecting, taken as authorities of contemporary culture.<sup>149</sup> All this questioned the logic of considering socialist nationalism the unique motivation to continue woodblock practices. Since archaism is, in my opinion, the very origin of the so called ‘nationalism’ in

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<sup>147</sup> Ye, *Shulin Qinghua*, p. 234.

<sup>148</sup> *Catalogue of Chinese Wood-block Reproductions*, preface, pp. 2–3.

<sup>149</sup> Chow, ‘Writing for Success’, pp. 139–142.

woodblock publishing, it is more accurate to consider archaism as part of the cultural psychology of preserving woodblock book publishing than to generalise every cultural activity related to indigenous practices as ‘nationalist’.

I will argue that in many ways woodblock publishing during the Mao Era was essentially archaistic. When the entire nation was focused on speeding up the economic construction with the goal of achieving modernisation, woodblock book publishing instead sought slowness to carve delicate texts and illustrations.<sup>150</sup> Ritualised calligraphic training was required to prepare carving skills, repeatedly imitating historical masterpieces with devotion to established rules.<sup>151</sup> Production teams were also organised in structures similar to printing workshops during the Republican Period, sharing more ancient conventions with Ming and Qing master-pupil systems.<sup>152</sup> Even innovations of the technology were more like *chuangjiu* (创旧), creating the feeling of antiquity, than *chuangxin* (创新), creating the new, seeking individuality beyond duplications.<sup>153</sup> As I will argue, archaism also explains the motivations of noted publishing activists like Zheng Zhenduo 郑振铎 and Guo Moruo 郭沫若 in supporting woodblock book trade. The passion for saving rare woodblock books and continuing woodblock culture was, on the one hand, nationalistic, but on the other hand, it also emerged from a persisting archaistic taste in books. All this suggests that the ‘national pride’ in woodblock publishing emerged from archaism, which breached the propagated ‘nationalism’ associated with proletarian tastes in the socialist context.

### ***Distinction versus Tradition***

Woodblock book culture, as part of the tradition, as addressed previously, had in fact been replaced over half a century before the PRC. Placing historical

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<sup>150</sup> Ibid, pp. 280–283.

<sup>151</sup> Interview with Zhu Junbo.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

<sup>153</sup> Sun Shumei 孙树梅, ‘Rongbao zhai Muban shuiyin Beihou de Gushi 2 荣宝斋木版水印背后的故事 (二)’, ed. Sun Zhiping 孙志萍, *Rongbao zhai* 荣宝斋 18 (March 2013): pp. 268–275.

significance on the technology did not change the fact that the dominance of woodblock printing in the publishing industry had long been lost.<sup>154</sup> What was left was more its symbolic value in existent historical books. Even in the Republican Period, Brokaw argues, xylography was favoured by cultural conservatives, taken as a symbol of archaistic taste among wealthy book collectors and private publishers.<sup>155</sup>

The tradition that nationalism in the Maoist context emphasised, similar to what Geertz argues, was proletarian cultural elements in Chinese history.<sup>156</sup> This mostly referred to a worker and peasant culture. However, such a tradition did not exist in either the woodblock book culture or written literature. Written history in the Chinese context was associated more with Confucian ethics and literati conventions. This is why the authoritative knowledge, as Brokaw points out, did not reflect much of the vernacular culture of the working people.<sup>157</sup> Little has been recorded about the humble books Brokaw explores and the labouring class has been given limited attention in the written history of woodblock printing. The nationalist complex of technical inventions highlighted by the CCP is seldom mentioned in historical books. Apart from *The Exploitation of the Works of Nature* (*Tiangong kaiwu*, 天工开物), few technical details and carvers were recorded in writing. The first detailed record of woodblock printing, McDermott notes, was written by a British missionary in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>158</sup> Although woodblock printing had existed for more than a millennium, its acknowledged cultural heritage was the literati books it created, instead of the technology itself, or the people who the CCP propagated as ‘inventing’ it.<sup>159</sup>

The CCP clearly did not attempt to continue the tradition of woodblock book publishing on a large scale, describing it as serving the tastes of reactionary feudal bureaucrats. As mentioned above, the government officially

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<sup>154</sup> Brokaw and Kornicki, ‘Introduction’, p. xxix.

<sup>155</sup> Brokaw, ‘Commercial Woodblock Publishing in the Qing’, pp. 44–49.

<sup>156</sup> Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, p. 245.

<sup>157</sup> Brokaw and Kornicki, ‘Introduction’, pp. xx–xxix.

<sup>158</sup> McDermott, *A Social History of the Chinese Book*, ‘Introduction’, pp. 1–9.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

declared that it did not support woodblock book publishing at the beginning of the 1950s. In deciding the fate of the woodblock book trade in Sichuan, the government allowed for the distribution of existent woodblock books, but discouraged publishing more titles.<sup>160</sup> Even after a great number of historical books were recycled as raw material to meet the growing demand for paper, the CPA emphasised the need to save books as cultural heritage, but only develop woodblock printing within a small scope.<sup>161</sup> The official attitude thus clearly attempted to divide ‘printing technology’ and ‘woodblock printing as heritage’ from ‘woodblock book publishing’.<sup>162</sup> While the former two were engineered as the crystal of the people’s wisdom, the latter gained a mixed response. Some aspects of historical woodblock books and the culture were interpreted as cultural heritage, whilst literati-related elements were criticised as a symbol of feudal culture.<sup>163</sup> However, as I will argue, the division between cultural heritage and feudal negativity was not always consistent. This was similar to other CCP policies, which, as Link described, were as unpredictable as the weather.<sup>164</sup>

Since a working class ‘tradition’ had not been written down, the CCP mission was to engineer a new tradition associated with an imaginary historical working class, whilst removing the capital T from the old tradition as it was written by the literati. The Hu Xian 户县 peasant paintings, for example, were not a tradition, but created and engineered as an art “by and for the people” during the 1950s.<sup>165</sup> Similarly, an extensive effort was made to identify and distinguish “national heritage” and “the people’s contribution” from “the feudal culture” in woodblock book culture, as such a culture of the people hardly existed.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> ‘Guanyu Gaizao Muke Shuye Wenti de Tongzhi’, *CBSL* 6, pp. 408–410.

<sup>161</sup> ‘Anpai he Gaizao Gushuye’, *CBSL* 8, pp. 233–235.

<sup>162</sup> Hu, ‘Lun Renmin Chuban Shiye Jiqi Fazhan Fangxiang’, *CBSL* 2, pp. 515–530.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>164</sup> Link, *The Uses of Literature*, p. 68.

<sup>165</sup> Ralph Croizier, ‘Hu Xian Peasant Painting: From Revolutionary Icon to Market Commodity’, in *Art in Turmoil: The Chinese Cultural Revolution. 1966–76*, ed. Richard King (Vancouver and Toronto: UBC Press, 2010), pp. 136–137.

<sup>166</sup> Hu, ‘Lun Renmin Chuban Shiye Jiqi Fazhan Fangxiang’, *CBSL* 2, pp. 515–530.

It is clear that archaism, as part of the old feudalist culture, was no longer considered to be tradition with a capital T in the newly engineered communist culture. However, the obvious archaistic features of Mao Era woodblock publications presented a dilemma when publicising archaism (or *fugu*) as anti-revolutionary. Xylographic books published by the re-developed woodblock trade needed to have some features that were culturally endorsed by the CCP, distinguishing them from the discouraged ones. These characteristics also needed to be able to alter the negative symbolic meaning of archaism to an acceptable form in the communist system. The question is: how were the literati aesthetics legitimised in a system that, at the same time, criticised it fiercely? Meanwhile, if archaism was no longer tradition, then what was it?

My approach to this topic is to study how archaism, as the old feudal tradition, was re-positioned both socio-psychologically and political-economically in the CCP cultural system. I will argue that the woodblock book trade was re-established as a type of ‘distinction’ for CCP elites. I will explore how the Joint State-private Ownership (*Gong si he ying*, 公私合营) campaign redistributed woodblocks as economic capital from private hands to state-controlled entities, and therefore transferred cultural capital of the trade to CCP elites. Endorsed by both the radicals and the moderates of the CCP elite circle, through forced donations, woodblocks and books as private cultural and economic capital were put under governmental control, under the nationalist name of historical missions for saving cultural heritage. The endorsement also revealed personal interest in antiquity from people within the system. Culturally, archaism in woodblock book publishing, I will argue, survived as a privilege. It was removed from the old tradition and repositioned as a type of ‘distinction’ that prioritised the CCP elites. Both domestically and internationally, the accessibility of woodblock publications was controlled by and for individuals with political power.<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> ‘Wenhuabu Guanyu Xinhua Shudian Jingxiao Rongbao zhai Muban shuiyin Hua de Tongzhi (60) Wen Chu Hu Zi di 1438 hao (1960 Nian 11 Yue 30 Ri) 文化部关于新华书店经销荣宝斋木版水印画的通知。(60) 文出胡字第 1438 号 (1960 年 11 月 30 日)’, in *CBSL 10*, p. 421.

I will also argue that the ‘reactionary’ (*fandong*, 反动) archaistic products became a useful part of the socialist business. Not only did historical publications provide supplementary second-hand books for the book market,<sup>168</sup> but the newly published archaistic titles earned foreign currencies for the state. The development of water-soluble woodblock technology was partly for, as I will argue, exporting to foreign countries where the communist propaganda was unwelcome or less popular, supporting the faltering economy that was boycotted by major Western countries.<sup>169</sup> To radical ‘revolutionary masses’ who aimed to crush the old culture, this might not be as appealing as anti-tradition policies, but pragmatically it worked for decision makers who faced the difficulty of a lack of financial resources to stabilise the socialist economy. Archaism, although contradicting policies targeting the masses, was certainly allowed within the privileged elite group. The consumption of archaism was relocated in the establishment of an elite book culture for, in Elizabeth Perry’s words, “the red literati” of the CCP.<sup>170</sup>

### Sources for the Research

This research will look into a vast amount of archival materials in order to construct a complete picture of Mao Era woodblock book publishing. Meanwhile, since many publishing records have been lost because of the countless political campaigns, while others are kept in scattered places without systematic management,<sup>171</sup> oral history through interviews with living woodblock practitioners and their co-workers from the later generations are also crucial resources for amending the landscape.

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<sup>168</sup> Zhou, *Wo yu Zhongguo Shudian*, pp. 7–8.

<sup>169</sup> ‘Wenhuabu Guanyu Xinhua Shudian Jingxiao Rongbao zhai Muban shuiyin Hua de Tongzhi’, *CBSL 10*, p. 421.

<sup>170</sup> Elizabeth J. Perry, ‘Red Literati: Communist Educators at Anyuan, 1921–25’, *Twentieth Century China* 32.3 (April 2007): pp. 123–160.

<sup>171</sup> Most archives in Rongbao zhai were thrown away before or during the 1980s. See interview with Lei Zhenfang.

### *Archival Materials*

In this research, both unpublished and published archival materials related to woodblock publishing will be visited. These materials, especially the unpublished ones, provide detailed first-hand historical information of Mao Era publishing activities, amending discourses that have been neglected in the written literature.

Unpublished materials constitute a significant part of this research. The most important source for this research is *The Archival Materials of the Communist Manifesto*, preserved in the woodblock printing department in the Cloudy Studio. These documents contain intact original publishing records, including editorial meeting records, a selection of experimental samples of title tags and content pages, prices of labour and materials, and name lists of participants.<sup>172</sup> Financial details in the materials are especially helpful for reconstructing the position of woodblock books in the publishing industry. Since most woodblock books were published with no price tag, and systematic selling records are missing due to numerous political campaigns, historical records of the cost of labour, materials and selling prices are crucial for estimating the actual selling prices. Although there is no information of price printed on *The Manifesto*, these details provide clues of pricing, as well as other economic, political and cultural information, which are otherwise missing in history.

While published documents can be found in libraries and public archives, unpublished ones are scattered among the collections of different publishers, auction sales and private collections, making searching for them a challenging task. These include letters exchanged between writers, publishers, printers and sellers; woodblock books exchanged as gifts; and samples of woodblock books that remained unpublished. For instance, Guangling printed the only woodblock edition of *Selected Works of Mao Zedong* (*Mao Zedong xuanji*, 毛泽东选集) before the Cultural Revolution. Due to the changing political

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<sup>172</sup> Appendix II List of Archival Materials of The Communist Manifesto.

situation, the book remained unpublished, whilst the woodblocks of the book were destroyed during the political campaign.<sup>173</sup> Unpublished letters exchanged between publishers and writers can provide important clues for disclosing unwritten discourses in public documents. A letter written by Zhang Boju 张伯驹 to the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Culture in 1956, for example, revealed that private publishers were no longer allowed to have specialised woodblock carver teams during the 1950s.<sup>174</sup> With regard to the 1950s policies, therefore, the letter proves that printing new woodblock titles was not the major task assigned to the trade.

Published archival materials and historical documents are equally crucial to this study. These include, but are not limited to, selections of historical documents related to publishing, chronicles of publishers, newsletters issued by publishing houses, catalogues of woodblock products and newspaper articles. The most important selection in this research is the 15-volume *The People's Republic of China Historical Publishing Documents* (*Zhonghua renmin gongheguo chuban shiliao*, 中华人民共和国出版史料), which covers the major available public archives, publishing documents and related policies from 1949 to 1979.<sup>175</sup> Published from 1995 to 2007, this set of books provides an overview of the PRC publishing industry, whilst containing important publishing policies related to ancient books and the woodblock book trade.

Scattered first-hand documents published during the Mao Era, including historical records, chronicles, diaries, newspaper articles, book catalogues and newsletters, also provide valuable resources for understanding woodblock book publishing and amending missing parts in publishing archives. The 1959 *Business Newsletters of the Shanghai Ancient and Used Bookstore*, for instance, published articles on how to organise a woodblock selling business.<sup>176</sup> *The*

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<sup>173</sup> Interview with Zhou Guangpei.

<sup>174</sup> Zhang Boju 张伯驹, 'Letter on Suggestions for Training Woodblock Carvers', 1956, Guji Shudian Shou Wen Shu hao (56) Gu Han Zi 180, 古籍书店收文文号 (56) 古函字 180, private collection.

<sup>175</sup> *Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Chuban Shiliao* 中华人民共和国出版史料, Volume 1–15, published by Shuji chubanshe from 1995 to 2013.

<sup>176</sup> Ding Zhixiang 丁之翔, 'Huiyu yu Zhanwang 回顾与展望', *Yewu Tongxun* 业务通讯 1 (1 January 1959): pp. 2–7.

*People's Daily* published an editorial criticising the traditional business of the Flourishing Studio in 1967, with detailed accounts and historical photos of the riot.<sup>177</sup> All these published documents provide valuable fragments of yet unrevealed details of the publishing activities, helping to re-construct the landscape of the woodblock trade.

The restrictions on both unpublished and published archival materials required full understanding. For the unpublished ones, authenticity and integrity were the most critical problems. The AMCM, for instance, is kept in the publisher's office and was fully accessible to me. However, no information indicates who organised them and what was allowed to be included in the files. Further, although some important orders from the government, such as copies of letters from Zhu Yongjia, are included, most of the documents are from the publisher's side, therefore other crucial official documents could be missing from this. Similarly, the provenance of private letters and archival materials from private collections and auctions had to be carefully checked. While the published documents, especially the CBSL, contain abundant sources, they have been heavily censored before publishing. The historical documents in CBSL, in my opinion, have to be used with reference to first-hand materials, including newspapers, personal letters, and publicly and privately kept archival materials.

### ***Interviews***

Some of the key figures in woodblock publishing during the Mao Era are still alive and their accounts of projects constitute an important part of this research as oral history. These individuals' memories can address the censored parts in published archives, whilst filling in missing information from the scattered unpublished fragments. In this research, interviews with Mao Ziliang 茅子良, Zhu Junbo 祝君波 and Zhu Yongjia 朱永嘉 were conducted to understand the

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<sup>177</sup> Editorial, 'Gongnongbing Yao Jianjue Zhichi Geming Xuesheng'.

production and publishing of *The Communist Manifesto*. Mao was the head of the woodblock book department, whilst Zhu was one of the carvers for *The Manifesto*. Both were deeply involved in publishing activity around *The Manifesto* and other woodblock books. The politician Zhu Yongjia, the mayor of Shanghai when *The Manifesto* was published, witnessed the entire decision-making process of the Big Character Book (*daziben*, 大字本) project and woodblock publications during the era. Other informants include Sun Dongping 孙东平, a major participant in the Big Character Books project in Shanghai during the 1970s;<sup>178</sup> and Zhou Guangpei 周光培, the founder and manager of Guangling during the 1950s, who experienced and managed the woodblock collecting movement, and whose memories are crucial to understanding the governmental subsidiary of the trade.<sup>179</sup>

Although the validity of personal accounts requires careful speculation, the oral history of woodblock practitioners will certainly be helpful in understanding the cultural and political context during the era, providing invaluable first-hand observations on the projects. Together with archival materials, interviews provide significant information on reconstructing the history of woodblock publishing during the Mao Era.

Each source in the research supplements and testifies to the respective restrictions on one another. Private publishing archival materials and Mao Era publications provided historical details that might have been missing from the censored information in the CBSL and other published archival materials; the CBSL, in turn, revealed what information was permitted or censored in different historical and political contexts; interviewees, as historical actors, provided memories telling stories that might remain unrevealed in the written history.

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<sup>178</sup> Interview with Sun Dongping.

<sup>179</sup> Interview with Zhou Guangpei.

## Structure of the Thesis

Although using different books as case studies, in this thesis, woodblock book publishing during the Mao Era is considered as one entity. This is because, as I will argue in the chapters, although minor alternations were occasionally made, the production, dissemination and consumption of xylographic books remained largely stable. Organised in reverse-chronological order, the thesis provides an overview of woodblock book practice and its social and cultural position in the three decades of Maoist China. In Chapter One I analyse the production of woodblock books during the 1970s. Chapter Two goes back to the 1960s and traces the dissemination of these woodblock books. In Chapter Three, I examine the political, economic and cultural position of the woodblock book trade as a whole from the early 1950s, and analyse how this trade has survived through the constant anti-feudal cultural campaigns since then. To extend the discussion further, Chapter Four looks at other archaistic practices in the publishing industry related to woodblock publishing across the three decades of the Mao Era. Chapter Five provides the theoretical summary of the thesis.

The research begins by exploring the production of xylography books. Chapter One, 'Archaistic Perfection in Production', looks at archaism in producing *The Communist Manifesto*. Through unrevealed archives and interviews with participants, this chapter examines how the book was aesthetically in line with Song fine editions, and how ritualised calligraphy and carving practices were normalised as principles of production. Whilst the production team were organised under a master-pupil system that clearly continued the conventions from the Qing and Republican Period, the management of the publisher was fully controlled by the CCP administrative system. However, as will be revealed in the chapter, the entire production process of Mao Era woodblock publishing idealised a 'traditional training' that was customised for the working class yet imitated literati conventions; even technological innovations were understood as creating a feeling of antiquity in

this trade, turning the propagated *chuangxin* (creating new, 创新) into *chuangjiu* (creating old, 创旧).

Entitled ‘The Limited Editions’, Chapter Two considers the dissemination of woodblock publications through *The Hundred Flowers*, published by the Flourishing Studio in 1961. By limiting the printing quantity of fine editions and setting up administrative barriers to restrict the audience, the Mao Era xylography books shared many similarities with elite book culture before the PRC, where ‘publishing’, instead of publicising, limited the spread of knowledge to the general public. Meanwhile, gift-exchanging was parallel to purchasing in the circulation of these elite books, which also indicated that an archaistic reader group was actively practicing elite woodblock culture. Not only exchanged in private circles, some of the finest books, as will be argued in the final section of this chapter, were presented as a type of ‘presented book’ (*jinchengben*, 进呈本) for the political authority,<sup>180</sup> following the cultural convention of scholar-officials contributing specially produced books to the imperial courts during the Ming and Qing.

Chapter Three, ‘The Woodblock Trade’, traces the genealogy of the xylography book businesses. It argues that the trade survived and developed under the protection of politician patrons from the Republican Period. The businesses were assigned to a category requiring a historical mission to preserve and save cultural heritage, which emphasised historical woodblocks as a symbol of nationalism.<sup>181</sup> In fact, the movement, together with the earlier public-private joint ownership by the authority, redistributed both the economic and intellectual capital of the trade, making it part of the socialist business.

Chapter Four considers archaistic projects that applied non-xylographic technologies, but were closely linked to woodblock printing. Entitled ‘Aesthetics, Technology and Power’, it explores the aesthetics of character styles in Zhang Boju’s ‘unofficial’ mimeograph books, and two official projects: *Book of Seal Impressions on Pig Rearing* (*Yangzhu yinpu*, 养猪印

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<sup>180</sup> Cao, *Zhongguo Guji Banbenxue*, p. 49.

<sup>181</sup> ‘Gujiu Tushu Buying zai Renling Sunhui’, *CBSL* 8, pp. 256–258.

谱)<sup>182</sup> and the Big Character Book (*daziben*, 大字本) project. For the two official ones, the former connects ancient carving art – seal engraving – with the CCP ideology, attempting to use archaic aesthetics to represent the new, the latter applies mechanised printing technology, but with an anti-modernisation approach, abandoning the efficiency of industrialisation for laborious hand-made individuality.

Chapter Five, ‘From Tradition to Distinction’, analyses the transformation of the cultural position on archaism. Through theoretical and simple quantitative analysis, this chapter argues that archaism is in some ways similar to the CCP ideology on cultural authoritarianism, hierarchical structure and the cultural position of intellectual groups. Tracing the habitus of CCP elites, it contends that archaism was transformed from tradition with a capital T, to a distinction for privileged Communist Party members.

I conclude that archaism was, and still is, one of the most important cultural mechanisms behind the woodblock trade, a continuously existing social-psychology that has been embedded in Chinese history for centuries. It was the cultural pursuit of the literati in the Song Dynasty; a stubbornly persistent treasure for archaists during the Republican Period; a privileged luxury for CCP elites during the Mao Era; and now, a national cultural heritage of a severely damaged Chinese tradition. In the process of the CCP's ideological engineering, archaism persisted as a cultural habit through social and political ruptures, representing ‘the Chineseness’ beyond modernity. It continued to be an important part of the new tradition that the political authority aimed to achieve, becoming the cultural distinction of a new elite book culture and favouring a new elite class.

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<sup>182</sup> Fang Quji 方去疾, Wu Pu 吴朴, Shan Xiaotian 单孝天, *Yangzhu Yinpu* 养猪印谱, ed. Liu Yiwen 刘一闻 (Shanghai: Shanghai wenhua chubanshe, 2014).

## Chapter One

### Archaistic Perfection in Production

At the beginning of his introduction to *From Woodblocks to the Internet*, Christopher Reed lists *The Communist Manifesto* as one of the most influential printed texts in Western history, sharing equal importance with the Bible, *Jane Eyre* and Shakespeare's plays.<sup>1</sup> In East Asia, this communist classic not only profoundly influenced the modern history of China, but was also connected to 20<sup>th</sup>-century woodblock printing technology. In 1973, a woodblock-printed and thread-bound edition of *The Communist Manifesto* (*Gongchandang xuanyan*, 共产党宣言, hereafter *The Manifesto*) was published by the Cloudy Studio (*Duoyun xuan*, 朵云轩), a publisher in Shanghai which specialised in collectible Chinese literati paintings, stationery, books and such products.<sup>2</sup> This was then, and still is, the first and only woodblock-printed edition of this classic of the communist canon in the history of the Chinese book.<sup>3</sup>

Presenting communist content via the aesthetics of fine woodblock books was paradoxical during the early 1970s. On the one hand, after China renewed diplomatic relations with the United States, the ubiquitous anti-imperialist themed proletarian art embarrassed the political authorities in front of their guests. Therefore, led by Prime Minister Zhou Enlai, from 1972 to 1974 the Government Offices Administration of the State Council organised painters to

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<sup>1</sup> Christopher A. Reed, 'Introduction', in *From Woodblocks to the Internet: Chinese Publishing and Printing Culture in Transition, circa 1800 to 2008*, eds. Cynthia Brokaw and Christopher A. Reed (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2010), pp. 1–35.

<sup>2</sup> Established in 1900, the Cloudy Studio (*Duoyun xuan*, 朵云轩) was named Dongfanghong shuhua she 东方红书画社 in 1966, and then in 1972 it changed its name to Shanghai shuhua she 上海书画社. It regained its original name in 1978. See Shanghai Difangzhi Bangongshi 上海地方志办公室, ed., *Duoyun xuan* 朵云轩, available at: <http://www.shtong.gov.cn/node2/node2245/node73148/node73154/node73181/node73815/userobject1ai86766.html> [Accessed on 28 June 2018].

<sup>3</sup> Chen Peigang 陈培刚, 'Gongchandang Xuanyan Zhong Yiwen Banben Kao' 《共产党宣言》中译文版本考, *Zhejiang Gaoxiao Tushu Qingbao Gongzuo* 浙江高校图书情报工作 4 (2005), p. 62.

create Chinese ink and brush artworks to exhibit in the hotels allocated to foreign politicians.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, this decision, together with other less radical policies, brought Zhou criticism, rendering him one of the targets of the ‘Criticising Lin Criticising Kong Criticising Minister Zhou’ (*Pi Lin Pi Kong Pi Zhougong*, 批林批孔批周公) campaign, which associated Lin Biao and Zhou Enlai with Confucianism and classified Lin, Zhou and Kong (i.e. Confucius) as counter-revolutionaries.<sup>5</sup>

Shanghai was at the height of this campaign when the Cloudy Studio was producing *The Manifesto*. The aesthetics of fine woodblock printed and thread-bound books (*shanben muke xianzhuangshu*, 善本木刻线装书) contradicted the theme of the campaign, since this was associated with Confucian literati elites, the very targets that Chairman Mao criticised. Emperor Qinshi Huangdi (259-210 BC), whom was praised as the opposite of Confucius during the campaign, has been notorious in Chinese history for burning books and burying followers of Confucianism alive (*fenshu kengru*, 焚书坑儒) in order to eliminate its influence. Five years before *Pi Lin Pi Kong*, at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution in 1966, fine woodblock books were classifiable as one of ‘the Four Olds’ (*si jiu*, 四旧), a term that referred to “old customs, old culture, old habits, and old ideas”.<sup>6</sup> *The Manifesto* was itself cited in an article published on 21 August 1966 by the *Red Flag* magazine in support of the Red Guards’ ‘Destroy the Four Olds’ (*Po si jiu*, 破四旧) campaign. This campaign was a call to “depart from tradition completely”.<sup>7</sup> Although the 1970s policies were much less radical than they were at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, the *Pi Lin Pi Kong* Campaign fuelled a resurgence of tension between literati books and propaganda. A poster published in 1974, for example, depicts a worker smashing a thread-bound copy of the *Analects* and

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<sup>4</sup> Zhonggongzhongyang Wenxian Yanjiushi 中共中央文献研究室, ed., *Zhou Enlai Nianpu (1949–1976)* Xia 周恩来年谱 (1949–1976) 下, vol. 3, 3 vols (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 2007), p. 652.

<sup>5</sup> Shi Yun 史云 and Li Danhui 李丹慧, *Nanyi Jixu de Jixu Geming – Cong Pi Lin Dao Pi Deng (1972–1976)* 难以继续的“继续革命”——从批林到批邓(1972–1976), vol. 8, 10 vols, Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Shi 中华人民共和国史 (Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2008), p. 307.

<sup>6</sup> Jonathan D. Spence, *The Search for Modern China* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1999), p. 575.

<sup>7</sup> Huang Yanmin 黄延敏, ‘Po si jiu Yundong de Fazhan Mailuo’, *21 Shiji Shuangyuekan* 21 世纪双月刊 137 (2013). p. 75.

other thread-bound books (fig. 1.1), although it is reasonable to argue that what was being criticised in the poster was more the contents of the *Analecets* than the mode of publication. However, as propaganda, the message this delivered to the public was that thread-bound books were a target to be destroyed.



Fig. 1.1 *Ruthlessly Criticise Lin Biao's "Resurrection of the Self, Restoration of the Rites", Resolutely Follow the Socialist Road!*, poster, 1974 (Landsberger Collection, no. BG E15/698, Xi'an: Shaanxi renmin chubanshe, 1974).

The choice of woodblock printing technology was uncommon during the 1970s. The Cloudy Studio was only able to recruit a few aged woodblock cutters for the project since no new cutters had been trained during the Cultural Revolution.<sup>8</sup> Even without the political ruptures, by the 1970s woodblock printing had been losing its popularity in the publishing industry for over a century.<sup>9</sup> State patronage of woodblock printing businesses ceased during the Republican Period (1912–1949) when the Guomindang (国民党, The Nationalist Party) government began to subsidise the modern printing

<sup>8</sup> AMCM no. 16.

<sup>9</sup> Cynthia Brokaw, 'Introduction', in *The History of the Book in East Asia*, eds. Cynthia Brokaw and Peter Kornicki (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), pp. xiii–xxxv.

industry.<sup>10</sup> From the 1930s onwards, the business of publishing textbooks was entrusted to seven modern publishers, including the Commercial Press. In fact, as early as 1917 there were only 6 woodblock printing companies registered in the Shanghai Booksellers' Guild, compared to 123 businesses using relatively new technologies such as lithography and mechanised printing presses.<sup>11</sup> In the first thirty years of the People's Republic of China (PRC), more than half a million new titles were published, almost all of these printed by the modern publishing industry, and the publications were of much lower printing quality compared with the carefully-designed and high-quality woodblock edition of *The Manifesto*.<sup>12</sup>

Disregarding the political and technical difficulties in 1972, according to the archival publishing documents on *The Manifesto*, the Shanghai Revolutionary Committee<sup>13</sup> asked the Cloudy Studio to set up a woodblock-printing department and to print *The Manifesto*.<sup>14</sup> As such, at a time when Confucian culture, including fine thread-bound books, was under significant and systematic attack from the government, they commissioned the printing of this key work of the communist canon in a form that belonged to the reactionary culture they were attempting to eliminate.<sup>15</sup> Added to this, *The Manifesto* was not the only woodblock book published between the 1950s and 1970s. For example, the Cloudy Studio printed three other titles during the 1970s: *Collected Commentaries on the Verses of Chu* (*Chuci jizhu*, 楚辞集注), *Chang-duan Lyrics Poetry of Jiaxuan* (*Jiaxuan changduanju*, 稼轩长短句) and *Thirty-nine Poems by Chairman Mao* (*Maozhuxi shici sanshijiu shou*, 毛主席

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<sup>10</sup> By 'modern printing industry' I mean the industrialised printing business that used large-scale printing presses, in contrast with the hand-operated woodblock-printing technique. See Christopher A. Reed, *Gutenberg in Shanghai: Chinese Print Capitalism, 1876–1937* (Vancouver, B.C.: University of British Columbia Press, 2004), p. 128.

<sup>11</sup> Reed, *Gutenberg in Shanghai*, pp. 180–181.

<sup>12</sup> Zhang Zhaokui 张召奎, *Zhongguo Chubanshi Gaiyao* 中国出版史概要 (Taiyuan: Shanxi renmin chubanshe, 1985), p. 495.

<sup>13</sup> This was what the Shanghai Municipal Government called (Shanghai Geweihui) in 1973, as it had been since the Cultural Revolution. See Shanghai Difangzhi Bangongshi 上海地方志办公室, ed., *Disan Jie: Shi Geming Weiyuanhui (1967.2–1979.12)* 第三节: 市革命委员会 (1967.2–1979.12), available at: <http://www.shtong.gov.cn/node2/node2245/node72907/node72912/node72926/node72946/userobject1ai85614.html> [Accessed on 28 June 2018].

<sup>14</sup> Zhu Junbo 祝君波, 'Shoukeben Gongchandang Xuanyan Qinli Ji' 手刻本共产党宣言亲历记, *Jiefang Ribao* 解放日报, 1 May 2014.

<sup>15</sup> Shi and Li, 'Nanyi Jixu de Jixu Geming', pp. 15–25.

诗词三十九首).<sup>16</sup> In total, 13 newly carved titles were published, whilst hundreds of painting replicas and re-printed historical woodblock titles were published in Beijing, Shanghai and Yangzhou during the Mao Era, all by state-owned publishing houses.<sup>17</sup>

Using *The Manifesto* as a case study, this chapter looks into the production of xylography books during the 1970s, exploring the reasons for the unusual mode of production, and the differences between these books and mass publications. I will argue that *The Manifesto* and other woodblock books were produced as ‘perfect books’, in which both the presentation and the production sought to attain the archaistic perfection of the ancient past in literati elite book culture. This perfectionism contrasted with mainstream publications, which were primarily designed with austere aesthetics, and produced by mechanised press printing technology.

### **Presentation: Similarities and Differences**

Comparing *The Manifesto* with contemporary publications and classic woodblock books, it reveals more similarities with the ancient books in both design and materials. Figure 1.2 and figure 1.3 compare the cover page and one internal page from *The Manifesto* with the 1959 press printed edition of the same title, one of the most widely circulated editions; figure 1.4 includes the cover page of the Song edition *An Examination of the Text in the Commentary and Annotations on Mencius* (*Mengzi zhushu jiejing*, 孟子注疏解经), and a contents page from a Song edition of *Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government* (*Zizhi tongjian*, 资治通鉴, published between 1132 and 1133),

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<sup>16</sup> Appendix III List of New Woodblock Books Published during the Mao Era.

<sup>17</sup> Buddhist titles carved by Jinling Buddhist Carving Studio are not included in the 13 titles. This is because Jinling Buddhist Carving Studio was not registered as a publisher during the Mao Era; therefore, books printed by Jinling were not listed as publications. They were circulated among believers, and did not enter the distribution system. See Appendix III List of New Woodblock Books Published during the Mao Era. See also Qin Jiahang 秦嘉杭, ‘Xinzhongguo Diaoban Yinshu Yanjiu 新中国雕版印书研究’, *Daxue Tushuguan Xuebao* 大学图书馆学报, no. 33(1) (2015): pp. 101–105.

both are among the earliest extant printed Chinese books.<sup>18</sup> It can be seen that, for the cover page, *The Manifesto* applied a distinctively different design style from the contemporary version, whilst closely resembling that of the 12<sup>th</sup> century book, exhibiting the same binding method, the same coloured and textured cover, and the same title slip design.



Fig. 1.2 Cover and one contents page in the woodblock printed *The Communist Manifesto*, 1973 (Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua she, 1973), photographed by Yuyu Yang 杨玉宇, Private collection.

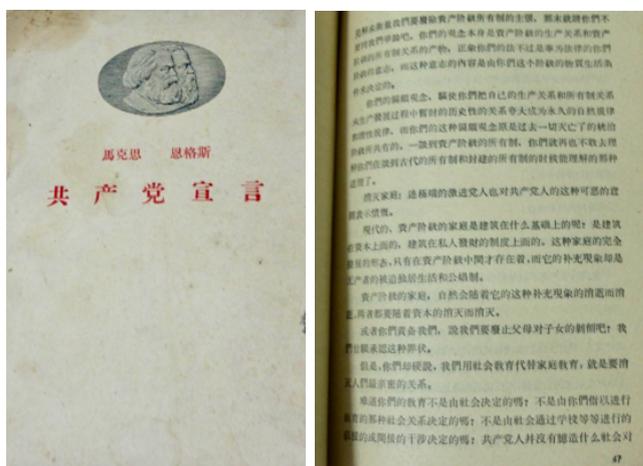


Fig. 1.3 Cover and one contents page in the press printed *The Communist Manifesto*, 1959 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1959), photographed by Chen Xiaowei 陈晓维. Private collection.

<sup>18</sup> Published in the Southern Song between 1132 and 1133, this is the earliest extant full edition of *Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government*. The reprinted edition was published by Beijing Library Publishing in 2006.

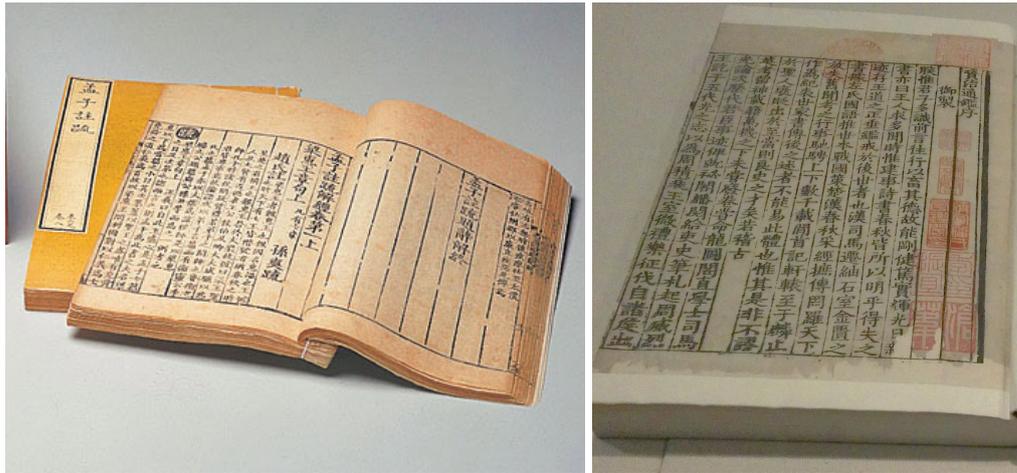


Fig. 1.4 Left: cover page and book format of the Song edition of *Text in the Commentary and Annotations on Mencius*, National Palace Museum Taipei, Available at: [https://www.npm.gov.tw/exh95/grandview/books/account\\_1\\_ch.html](https://www.npm.gov.tw/exh95/grandview/books/account_1_ch.html) [Accessed on 28 June 2018]. Right: the first page of *Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government*, woodblock-printed Song edition Date 1132. The National Library Collection, Beijing. Photographed by Shu Ge, available at: <https://cdn.shuge.org/uploads/2014/09/dianjibowuguan029.jpg> [Accessed on 28 June 2018].

The similarities between the woodblock edition of *The Manifesto* and the ancient historical classic continue on the contents pages. In both books, the contents are arranged vertically, from right to left (fig. 1.2 and fig. 1.3). The text in the press-printed modern book, on the other hand, is read from left to right horizontally, which was, and still is, the most widely accepted style for modern books in China and most countries worldwide.<sup>19</sup> The character styles in the two woodblock books are also similar. *The Manifesto* uses a specially designed character style called ‘imitation Song’ (*fangsong*, 仿宋), which uses a typeface called *songti* (宋体, the Song style) as its model. In dynastic woodblock culture, ‘Song style’ was coined as a term for printing books, although, as most bibliographers acknowledge, this was only during the Ming Dynasty, five centuries after the Song Dynasty.<sup>20</sup> This is a relatively standard character style compared with the more calligraphic types in original Song

<sup>19</sup> Horizontal arrangement (texts read from left to right) was applied in *The Science* magazine in January 1915. However, it was not until the 1950s that the government officially supported this new format. See ‘Chuban Zongshu Dangzu Guanyu Songshen “Zhubu Tuixing Shuji Zazhi Hengpai de Tongbao” de Baogao (54) Chu Dang Zi di 14 hao (1954 Nian 10 Yue 18 Ri) 出版总署党组关于送审《逐步推行书籍杂志横排的通报》的报告 (54) 出党字第 14 号 (1954 年 10 月 18 日)’, in *CBSL* 6, pp. 540–543.

<sup>20</sup> Martin J. Heijdra, ‘A Tale of Two Aesthetics: Typography versus Calligraphy in the Pre-Modern Chinese Book’, in *The Art of the Book in China: Colloquies on Art and Archaeology in Asia No. 23, Held June 13th–15th, 2005*, ed. Ming Wilson and Stacey Pierson (London: University of London, Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art, School of Oriental and African Studies, 2006), p. 20.

editions, emulating the golden age of book art. The ‘imitation Song style’ used in *The Manifesto*, although with fewer calligraphic features, nonetheless resembles the characters from the Song edition *Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government* (fig. 1.2 and fig. 1.4).

On closer observation, however, *The Manifesto* also contains some features that can only be found in modern Chinese publications. These include simplified characters, a modernised indication of paragraph breaks using indentation, and punctuation<sup>21</sup> (fig. 1.2). The communist slogan, ‘Workers of the world, unite!’ (*Quan shijie wuchanzhe, lianhe qilai!*, 全世界无产者, 联合起来!), printed in red on the first page, is another obvious feature that links this edition of *The Manifesto* with modern publishing practices during the Mao Era (fig. 1.5). Nonetheless, it could be argued that, on balance, *The Manifesto* is primarily presented in an archaistic way.

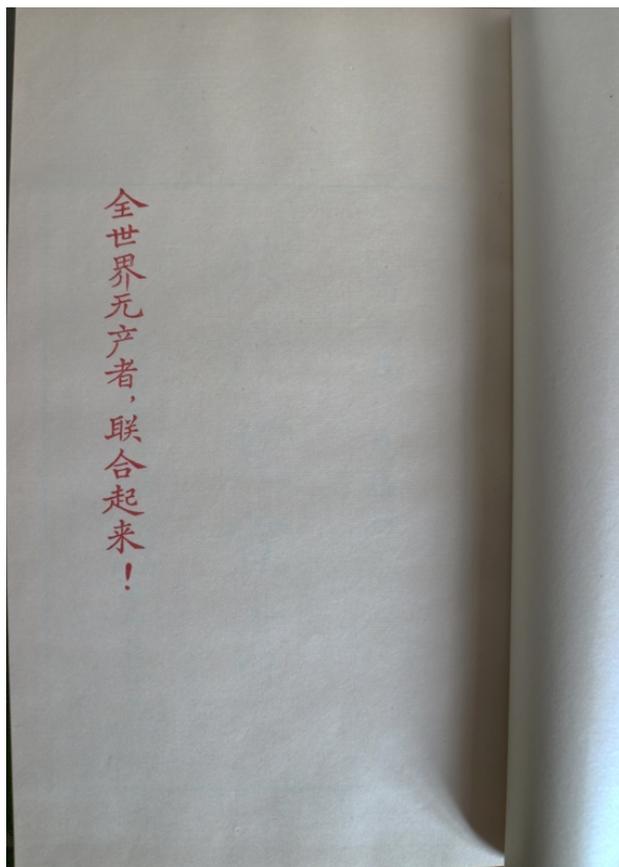


Fig. 1.5 The first page of the woodblock printed *The Communist Manifesto*, 1973 (Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua she, 1973), photographed by Yuyu Yang. Private collection.

<sup>21</sup> Chinese woodblock books applied a different system named *judou* 句读, which uses ‘。’ to mark the end of a sentence, and ‘、’ to mark the end of a clause: Qu Mianliang 瞿冕良, *Zhongguo Guji Banke Cidian* 中国古籍版刻辞典 (Jinan: Qilu shushe, 1999), p. 117.

In turning the leaves of *The Manifesto*, more archaistic design details similar to the Song book can be found on each page: the copyright pages are in Chinese colophon (*paiji*, 牌记) format (fig. 1.6);<sup>22</sup> the text is divided into columns vertically; two adjacent pages are printed on one piece of paper and page numbers are printed in the folded part and included in ‘fish tail’ marks (*yuwei*, 鱼尾);<sup>23</sup> and all the page numbers are in Chinese characters. The similarity of the covers, the binding method, the title slips, the fonts, the paper and the arrangement of the contents all suggest that *The Manifesto* was designed as an ‘old book’ rather than as an example of ‘the new’.

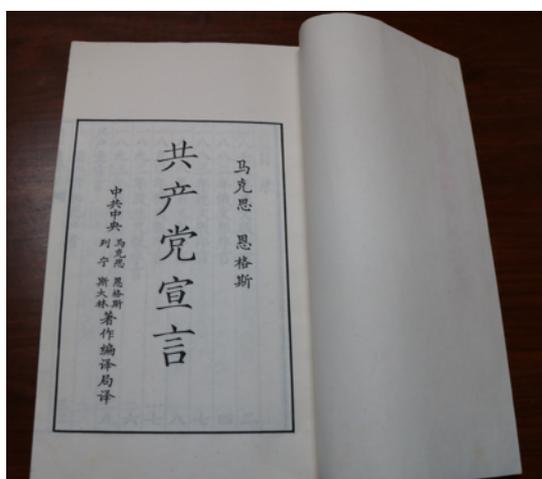


Fig. 1.6 The colophon (copyright page) of *The Communist Manifesto*, 1973 (Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua she, 1973), photographed by Yuyu Yang. Private collection.

None of above features can be found in the press-printed *The Manifesto*. Most other editions of *The Manifesto* published during the three decades of the Mao Era followed a mainstream socialist style similar to the 1959 edition. On the cover pages, there is usually a portrait of Marx at the top, with the title of the book in red underneath; at the bottom of the cover there is often the name of the publishing house, all in plain text and set on a blank white cover (fig.1.2). For example, as the most widely circulated editions, the 1964 edition look very

<sup>22</sup> Hongyan Chen, ‘A Joy to the Eye and the Mind – Books Transcribed by Celebrated Artists’, in *The Art of the Book in China: Colloquies on Art and Archaeology in Asia No. 23, Held June 13th–15th, 2005*, eds. Ming Wilson and Stacey Pierson (London WC1H 0PD: University of London, Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art, School of Oriental and African Studies, 2006), pp. 29–42.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

similar to the 1959 one in terms of design and printing materials.<sup>24</sup>

All other woodblock books published during the Mao Era also followed classical norms in line with the style of *Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government*. They all exhibit the normal features of fine woodblock printed and thread-bound books from across Chinese history from the Song Dynasty (960–1279), including a soft blue (or yellow) cover with thread stitches bound over the spine of the books; manually printed ink colour with uneven ink-marks on handmade Xuan-paper (*xuanzhi*, 宣纸); and calligraphic characters that read vertically from left to right.<sup>25</sup> *Let the Hundred Flowers Bloom* (*Baihua qifang*, 百花齐放, hereafter *The Hundred Flowers*), published in 1961, for instance, has a very similar design to the *Qing Painting Album of the Hundred Flowers Poems and Letter Papers* (*Baihuashi jianpu*, 百花诗笺谱) (fig. 1.7),<sup>26</sup> whilst *Poems by Du Fu Expressing Intent* (*Dushi yanzhi*, 杜诗言志), also published in 1961, shares distinctive similarities with the Ming edition *Selected Works of Du Gongbu* (*Du Gongbu ji*, 杜工部集)<sup>27</sup> (fig. 1.8).



Fig. 1.7 Left: a contents page of *The Hundred Flowers*, 1961 (Beijing: Rongbao zhai, 1961), photographed by Wang Haijun 王海军, Private collection.

Right: a contents page of *Baihuashi jianpu*, 1911 (Tianjin: Tianjin wenmei zhai, 1911), photographed by Chen Xiaowei. Private collection.

<sup>24</sup> Details of the editions can be found in Chen, ‘Gongchandang Xuanyan Zhong Yiwen Banben Kao’, p. 62.

<sup>25</sup> Although the paper used in the dynastic fine books listed in this chapter was of a different quality, it was all a type of Xuan-paper, the main material for books, paintings and calligraphy works in dynastic China. The modern woodblock versions, as will be addressed in the next section, used similar materials.

<sup>26</sup> Zhang Zhaoxiang 张兆祥, *Baihuashi Jianpu* 百花诗笺谱 (Tianjin: Tianjin wenmei zhai, 1911).

<sup>27</sup> Du Fu 杜甫, *Ji Qianjia Zhu Du Gongbu Shiji Ershijuan Wenji Erjuan Fulu Yijuan* 集千家注杜工部诗集二十卷文集二卷附录一卷, vol. 12 (Yujishanren 玉几山人 carve, 1536).



Fig. 1.8 Left: a contents page of Ming edition of *Du Gongbu Ji*, 1536. (Hangzhou: Xiling auction, 2014), photo from [http://www.xlysauc.com/auction5\\_det.php?ccid=665&id=80377&n=2462](http://www.xlysauc.com/auction5_det.php?ccid=665&id=80377&n=2462) [Accessed on 28 June 2018]

Right: a contents page of *Poems by Du Fu Expressing Intent*, 1961 (Yangzhou: Guangling Guji Keyinshe, 1961), photographed by Chen Xiaowei. Private collection.

## Seeking Archaistic Perfection

The physical similarities between the 1973 edition of *The Manifesto* and the 12<sup>th</sup> century Song edition of *Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government* imply that both books strove to emulate common aesthetics through the use of similar textured printing materials. Archaism explains why literati taste woodblock printing was selected to publish this communist classic: because, as I will argue, in the archaists' eyes, as a book, *The Manifesto* had to be presented in the most desirable way in Chinese history, to make it the most perfect among Chinese books. The style of the Song books that *The Manifesto* emulated has historically been, and continues to be, widely accepted as the norm for the finest books by elite literati and scholars.<sup>28</sup> The majority of fine editions in book collectors' catalogues were Song editions or close copies. In the late Ming, for instance, as Ye Dehui argues, the prominent literati Qian

<sup>28</sup> James S. Edgren, 'The Authentication and Dating of Chinese Rare Books', in *The Art of the Book in China: Colloquies on Art and Archaeology in Asia No. 23, Held June 13th–15th, 2005*, eds. Ming Wilson and Stacey Pierson (London WC1H 0PD: University of London, Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art, School of Oriental and African Studies, 2006), p. 199.

Qianyi 钱谦益 (1582–1664) and the book collector Mao Jin 毛晋 (1599–1659) were both famous for their collections of Song books. Not only did they encourage collectors to pursue old Song editions, disregarding the condition of the books, they also privately published facsimile copies of Song books.<sup>29</sup> This trend continued into the Republican Period when the book collector and publisher Xu Naichang 徐乃昌, for example, attempted the reproduction of *New Songs from the Jade Terrace* (*Yutai xinyong*, 玉台新咏) which he believed to be a rare Song edition printed in 1215, although this was later shown to be a facsimile edition published in 1633 by Zhao Jun 赵均. Considered the best example of Song imitations, Xu's edition was often mistaken for Zhao Jun's 17<sup>th</sup> century one and used as the model for a subsequent facsimile produced during the 1920s.<sup>30</sup> Since the earliest finely printed books were from this dynasty, Song editions were worshiped and reproduced as the ultimate standard of aesthetics for the following millennium.<sup>31</sup> The term 'The Song Edition' (*songban*, 宋版), was therefore taken as the standard for the best books.

This infatuation with Song books continued when *The Manifesto* was produced. Nostalgia for 'the Song elegance' in elite book culture<sup>32</sup> had a clear influence on the style direction for this communist classic. During my interview with him in 2015, Mao Ziliang 茅子良, the project manager of *The Manifesto*, noted that the aesthetic standard was to "follow those of the finest woodblock Song books, and those that reached the highest levels achieved throughout history".<sup>33</sup> This account is coherent with the publishing note inserted into *The Manifesto*, which claims that the book seeks to surpass the

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<sup>29</sup> Qian Qianyi 钱谦益, a leading learned man in the late Ming and early Qing. Qian had a book collecting building called Jiangyun lou (绛云楼), where he collected rare Song and Yuan editions. Mao Jin 毛晋 was a student of Qian Qianyi, a prominent book collector who held more than 80,000 books, of which the majority of the editions were from the Song and Yuan Dynasty. He was also famous for woodblock publishing under the name of Jiguge (汲古阁). Ye Dehui 叶德辉, *Shulin Qinghua* 书林清话 (Shanghai: Fudan University Press, 2008), p. 252.

<sup>30</sup> Edgren, 'The Authentication and Dating of Chinese Rare Books', pp. 199–200.

<sup>31</sup> Ye, *Shulin Qinghua*, pp. 251–253.

<sup>32</sup> Edgren, 'The Authentication and Dating of Chinese Rare Books', pp. 199–206.

<sup>33</sup> Interview with Mao Ziliang.

perfect Song aesthetic standard.<sup>34</sup> The efforts made to achieve this archaistic perfectionism have been widely acknowledged: *The Manifesto*, and the other three woodblock books the Cloudy Studio published during the 1970s, were and still are referred to as the ‘Contemporary Song Editions’ due to their excellent design, carving and printing.<sup>35</sup>

This quality was achieved by following the aesthetics of the finest Song books, whilst using the best historical editions as templates for design and production. Character styles, considered the most important element in a fine book, were evaluated based on whether or not they were the equivalent of, or better than, the perfect ‘Song’ style. Archival records of *The Manifesto* indicate that several Song character styles of script were used as models to be revived. Printing samples of the title slip on the cover, with many different character styles, evidences that extensive experiments were performed to ensure the best effect.<sup>36</sup> Not only scripters in the publishing house, but also prominent calligraphers such as Guo Moruo 郭沫若, were invited to write the name tag in different styles.<sup>37</sup> After comparing classical and simplified characters in Guo’s cursive style and the Song style (*songti*), a notice from the government put an end to using Guo’s calligraphy, and thus the specially designed ‘imitation Song’ (*fangsong*) style was selected for both the title slip and the content pages.<sup>38</sup> Classified into the imitation Song styles family, this style was designed by studying both characters from the typeface *songti* and original fine Song editions.<sup>39</sup> Although the ‘imitation Song style’ in *The Manifesto* standardises the *songti* font by eliminating more calligraphic and individualistic details, the many calligraphic samples suggest it was created after carefully studying the aesthetics of classic Song character styles.

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<sup>34</sup> AMCM, no. 25.

<sup>35</sup> Peng Beng 彭翮, ‘Dangdai Songban shu de Gushi 当代宋版书的故事’, *Dongfang Zaobao* 东方早报, 8 September 2013.

<sup>36</sup> AMCM, no. 1 and no. 2.

<sup>37</sup> AMCM, no. 14. See also Mao Ziliang 茅子良, *Yilin Leigao* 艺林类稿 (Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe, 2009). pp. 95–96.

<sup>38</sup> Both the title slip and content pages were scripted by Yang Minghua. AMCM, no. 16.

<sup>39</sup> Zhu, ‘Shoukeben Gongchandang Xuanyan Qinli Ji’.

Even fewer modern alterations can be spotted on the other woodblock books the Cloudy Studio published in the 1970s after *The Manifesto*. Simplified Chinese changed back to traditional characters (*fanti*, 繁体) in *Collected Commentaries on the Verses of Chu*, *Chang-duan Lyrics Poetry of Jiaxuan* and *Thirty-nine Poems by Chairman Mao*, whilst indentations and punctuation was replaced with the historical *judou* (句读) format. More calligraphic and individualised character styles were applied, scripted by noted calligraphers. As Zhu Junbo 祝君波 remembers it, scripters in the woodblock department in the Cloudy Studio applied different calligraphic styles for different titles, a greater level of individuality that also resembled fine Song books. Xu Baoxun 许宝驯, the scripter for *Collected Commentaries on the Verses of Chu*, for example, experimented with two different styles for the book, both following Song character styles from famous books.<sup>40</sup> The final scripts for *Collected Commentaries on the Verses of Chu* referred to the style of the Song Dynasty Duanping 端平 (1234–1236) edition, which was the original of the photo-printed version that Chairman Mao sent to the Japanese Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei in 1972.<sup>41</sup>

To follow and even surpass the perfect Song style, *The Manifesto* and all the woodblock books published by the Cloudy Studio also required the printing materials that were conventionally used in presenting the best-designed effects. Therefore, as Mao Ziliang recalled in the interview, not only did the books have to be woodblock printed and produced in classical thread-bound formats, but the best handmade Xuan-paper and pine-soot ink (*songyan mo*, 松烟墨) had to be chosen for a texture and visual effects similar to fine Song editions.<sup>42</sup> Discussions about choice of paper and inks comprise a significant part of the publishing archival records of *The Manifesto*. Four kinds of paper are documented as printing samples, including two different qualities of Maobian-

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<sup>40</sup> Interview with Zhu Junbo.

<sup>41</sup> Qu Yuan 屈原, Zhu Xi 朱熹 Commented, *Chuci Jizhu* 楚辞集注, woodblock printed between 1234 and 1236. (The National Library Collection, Beijing), photos available at [http://www.nlc.cn/newzqwqhg/wmsw/html/01\\_03\\_10.htm](http://www.nlc.cn/newzqwqhg/wmsw/html/01_03_10.htm) [Accessed on 28 June 2018]. For the historical event of Mao Zedong sending the photoprinted edition, see Shi and Li, 'Nanyi Jixu de Jixu Geming', p. 104.

<sup>42</sup> Interview with Mao Ziliang.

paper (*maobian zhi*, 毛边纸) made from bamboo, thin Xuan-paper *Mianlian zhi* (棉连纸) and high quality Xuan-paper *Luowen zhi* (罗纹纸). Light yellow and blue paper are suggested for the book covers, with different kinds of silk and handmade paper for the title slip in a colour and texture that matched the covers.<sup>43</sup> Manufacturers of the paper are not specified in the documents. Mao Ziliang recollected that Xuan-paper produced in An Hui and Maobian paper from Fu Jian were allocated by the Shanghai Paper Company (*Shanghai zhiye gongsi*, 上海纸业公司). Different kinds of paper were mostly selected for coherence with their aesthetic performance in woodblock printing. Handmade bamboo paper and Xuan-paper could absorb ink much faster than machine-made paper, and they had been used in xylography for centuries. Their softness and thinness were also suitable for brushing and sticking smoothly to woodblocks while printing.<sup>44</sup>

Further, Mao Ziliang also believed that only the best quality pine-soot ink made in Anhui was able to achieve the required level of excellence, with its “long history of making literati ink bars, and a legacy as the best ink provider for over a millennium”.<sup>45</sup> Zhou Guangpei 周光培, the General Manager in Guangling also remembered how the production team experimented to produce pine-soot ink with the best printing performance. The ink-making process, according to him, was long and laborious, relying on artisanship and experience, both of which was crucial to producing quality woodblock books.<sup>46</sup> Studying a pine-soot ink recipe, Ian Boyden argues that beyond the use of carbon black and animal glue, the ingredients in this recipe had nothing to do with the functionality of the inks. The inks generate fragrance, and create mystified symbolic meanings that are connected with cultural geography. Pine ash from Huangshan 黄山, in Anhui province near where Xuan-paper was made, for instance, was vital for this ink recipe, as Huangshan was culturally

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<sup>43</sup> AMCM, no. 10 and no. 16.

<sup>44</sup> Interview with Mao Ziliang.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Interview with Zhou Guangpei.

important to Chinese artists. The inks were used to, in Boyden's words, "interact with the user on sophisticated cultural levels in the imagination".<sup>47</sup>

Following this theory, both pine-soot ink and Xuan-paper were mystified for their cultural geographic and symbolic meaning in literati history, making them the perfect materials for printing *The Manifesto* and adhering to 'the Song style'. One of the essential features of fine woodblock editions, according to Ye Dehui, was that the ink colour of characters should be in sheer black, whilst being printed evenly and clearly.<sup>48</sup> The inks used in woodblock printing were mostly produced by the same producers of literati ink bars, and were also mystified for their performance. Associated with literati aesthetics, inks were often considered to create a fragrant atmosphere in calligraphy: brush and ink generate fragrance (*hanmo shengxiang*, 翰墨生香).<sup>49</sup> Coloured illustrated books such as *Master Cheng's Garden of Ink Cake* (*Chengshi moyuan*, 程氏墨苑) associated ink bars with painting and calligraphy engraving patterns, which were manufactured for the literati's studios.<sup>50</sup>

Xuan-paper also added a symbolic value due to its cultural heritage and importance for both literati tastes and its geographic origin. Only paper made in Jing county (泾县) in Anhui can legitimately be referred to as "Xuan". The Jiajiang 夹江 paper-making community in Sichuan, which Jacob Eyferth studied in his ground-breaking work, produced fine calligraphy paper for centuries, but even this could only be called *fangxuan* (仿宣, imitation Xuan) or even *jiaxuan* (夹宣 or 假宣, fake Xuan), to indicate its closeness to such excellent performance.<sup>51</sup> Within the Xuan-paper family, according to Liu Renqing 刘仁庆, 85 individually named types can be found in history, all of

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<sup>47</sup> This is cited from the original English version of Ian Boyden's art statement, which is published in Chinese. Ian Boyden, 'Liudong – Yishujia Zishu 流动-艺术家自述', in *Liudong – Boying de Yishu Shijie 流动-薄英的艺术世界* (Shanghai: Shanghai wenhua chubanshe, 2012), pp. 20–21.

<sup>48</sup> Ye, *Shulin Qinghua*, p. 136.

<sup>49</sup> For information on ink bar (ink-stick) making, see Wei Zhang, *The Four Treasures: Inside the Scholar's Studio* (San Francisco: Long River Press, 2004), pp. 9–36.

<sup>50</sup> Craig Clunas, *Art in China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 183.

<sup>51</sup> Jacob Eyferth, *Eating Rice from Bamboo Roots: The Social History of a Community of Handicraft Papermakers in Rural Sichuan, 1920-2000* (Cambridge (Massachusetts) and London: Harvard University Asia Centre, 2009), p. 165 and p. 171.

which were manufactured in Jing county and had different literati usages.<sup>52</sup> For woodblock printing, the legacy and quality of paper and ink largely determined the literati value of a book. Top quality Xuan-paper, such as Chengxintang-paper (*Chengxin tang zhi*, 澄心堂纸) and Baimian-paper (*baimian zhi*, 白棉纸)<sup>53</sup> were praised by literati and book collectors for their outstanding performance in both woodblock printing and calligraphy. Noted poets, including Ouyang Xiu 欧阳修 (1007–1072) and Mei Yaochen 梅尧臣 (1002–1060) in the Song Dynasty, wrote poems worshiping the beauty of Chengxintang paper, whilst later Ming and Qing literati considered Baimian paper to be the best material for both calligraphy and fine books.<sup>54</sup> The connection between the literati fame of the poets and Xuan-paper, therefore, added more cultural legacy to its materiality.

The choice of printing materials made by the Mao Era woodblock publishers thus continued the conventions of elite books, and sought to mark cultural distinction in the archaistic tastes of prestigious communist men of letters. *The Manifesto* used Baimian paper and the best handmade pine-soot ink for their literati reputation as much as their functionality. Their reputations bestowed mythical status on Xuan-paper and pine-soot ink, connecting them with literati leisure life, where the Three Perfections (skills in poetry, calligraphy and painting) were widely accepted evaluations of literary capacity. Paper and ink, as media of written texts and paintings, were considered two of ‘the Four Treasures of the Study’ (*wenfang sibao*, 文房四宝) in China. Versatile literati artisans in the Qing, as Dorothy Ko argues, often grasped both crafts of the Four Treasures and skills of the Three Perfections. Liu Yuan 刘源, for example, who was renowned for ink and inkstone making, served in the Kangxi Emperor’s (1654-1722) imperial court. As Ko wrote, and as I will analyse further in Chapter Two, Liu was also famous for his skill in painting

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<sup>52</sup> Liu Renqing 刘仁庆, *Guobao Xuanzhi* 国宝宣纸 (Beijing: Zhongguo tiedao chubanshe, 2009). pp. 92–110.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 149.

<sup>54</sup> Sun Dunxiu 孙敦秀, *Zhongguo Wenfangsibao* 中国文房四宝 (Guilin: Lijiang chubanshe, 2014), pp. 134–149.

the Jiangnan area, and was the illustrator of fine woodblock books.<sup>55</sup> For printing books, ink and paper were the most crucial media, determining the level of perfectionism in fine books. Thus the aesthetics of printed books, linked with literati values with regard to both artistic styles and their materiality, had been closely associated with the mystified cultural values of paper and ink for more than a millennium.<sup>56</sup>

For the modern publishing industry, however, both Xuan-paper and pine-soot ink had been unavailable from the start. This was mostly due to problems of efficiency. For example, according to the Central Publication Administration, state-held publishers disseminated 875,664,000 volumes of books in 1954.<sup>57</sup> Official records show that in 1956 710,000 tons of paper was mechanically produced nationwide.<sup>58</sup> Although Eyferth pointed out that handmade paper was still in fact dominant in many regions such as Jiajiang during the 1950s, due to economic considerations both the handmade and machine-made paper had to use affordable materials and be manufactured for modern press printing.<sup>59</sup> The handcraft of luxury Xuan-paper, however, limited its production capacity to just a few hundred tons in the same era.<sup>60</sup> Added to this, the prolonged production process took almost a year to finish. From the 1950s to 1970s, the government attempted several times to mechanise the manufacturing of Xuan-paper for elite woodblock publishing. However, all the experiments failed for technical reasons, and the material is still handmade.<sup>61</sup> The laborious and slow process made Xuan-paper unsuitable for the modern publishing industry, which aimed to rapidly legitimise and spread the CCP ideology to the public.<sup>62</sup>

The CCP publishing industry aimed at neither the quality handmade materials nor the aesthetic perfectionism of the Song style. In fact, the industry

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<sup>55</sup> Dorothy Ko, *The Social Life of Inkstones: Artisans and Scholars in Early Qing China* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2016), pp. 20-30.

<sup>56</sup> Brush, ink, paper and ink-slab have been named as 'The Four Treasures of the Study' in China since the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD. Zhang, *The Four Treasures: Inside the Scholar's Studio*, p. 2.

<sup>57</sup> '1954 Nian Chuban Gongzuo Jiben Zongjie he 1955 Nian de Fangzhen Renwu (Caogao) 1954 年出版工作基本总结和 1955 年的方针任务 (草稿)', in *CBSL* 6, p. 2.

<sup>58</sup> '1956 Nian Xinwen Chuban Yongzhi Gongbuyingqiu de Jinzhang Qingkuang (1956 Nian 5 Yue 22 Ri) 1956 年新闻出版用纸供不应求的紧张情况 (1956 年 5 月 22 日)', in *CBSL* 8, pp. 112-115.

<sup>59</sup> Eyferth, *Eating Rice from Bamboo Roots*, pp. 119-121.

<sup>60</sup> Liu, *Guobao Xuanzhi*, p. 208.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 44-49.

<sup>62</sup> '1954 Nian Chuban Gongzuo Jiben Zongjie he 1955 Nian de Fangzhen Renwu (Caogao)', *CBSL* 6, p. 2.

was constantly short of paper, especially during the 1950s.<sup>63</sup> The entire industry was in desperate need of paper and other printing materials in order to provide ‘the essential reading materials’ to the masses during the first decade of the PRC.<sup>64</sup> Aesthetic values, therefore, were sacrificed to efficiency as more books had to be produced to “promote the socialist knowledge and compete with private and illegal publications” in the 1950s.<sup>65</sup> Austere designs were applied to match both the quality of paper and ink and the proletarian aesthetics. Even in the 1970s, the paper supply was still strictly controlled by the government, both in order to censor the content and to ensure insufficient resources were carefully allocated.<sup>66</sup> Lack of materials, therefore, made aesthetic value a minimal concern in the printing industry, considering its role in propagating CCP ideology.

For *The Manifesto*, it seemed that handmade Xuan-paper and pine-soot ink were irreplaceable due to the technical limitations of woodblock printing. However, considering the archaistic nature of woodblock technology, and the high printing quality the publishers pursued, it is clear that handmade media were also chosen with a view to seeking archaistic perfection. Paper and ink, two of the Four Treasures of the literati stationery, remained important in producing *The Manifesto*. This is because all the effects that Xuan-paper and pine-soot ink created for literati paintings and calligraphy were still essential to the aesthetics of this communist classic. Compared to the woodblock trade, the modern printing industry chose materials with less symbolic cultural meaning. Printing media, including press type, paper and ink, were evaluated based on cost-efficiency, with pragmatic concerns regarding tolerable printing quality. Literati cultural values, on the other hand, were not considered in decision-making. Mystifying the handmade processes of materials, exaggerating their artistic performance, and pursuing certain products due to their cultural

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<sup>63</sup> ‘1956 Nian Xinwen Chuban Yongzhi’, *CBSL* 8, pp. 112–115.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> Hu Yuzhi 胡愈之, ‘Lun Renmin Chuban Shiye Jiqi Fazhan Fangxiang (Hu Yuzhi Shuzhang zai Diyijie Quanguo Chuban Huiyi Quanti Huiyi Shang de Baogao) 论人民出版事业及其发展方向 (胡愈之署长在第一届全国出版会议全体会议上的报告)’, in *CBSL* 2, pp. 515–530.

<sup>66</sup> Perry Link, *The Uses of Literature: Life in the Socialist Chinese Literary System* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000), p. 21.

geographical importance were all crucial features of elite book culture. This is also what Wu Hung refers to as archaism, which admires and repeats the aesthetics of the past.<sup>67</sup> Woodblock trade and the mechanised printing industry had different goals in producing books. While the modern printing industry weighted efficiency more than artistic performance, xylography looked into the cultural and literal legacy of materials to fulfil the perfect literati aesthetics.

### **Ceremonialised Production Process**

Whilst common books were coarsely printed and austere designed in vast quantity by the modern printing industry during the Mao Era, the elaborated designed *The Manifesto* and such select books were woodblock printed with archaistic perfectionism. The handmade production of these ‘new Song editions’,<sup>68</sup> I argue, was ceremonialised to reflect the mastery of an idealised past book art. Starting with the calligraphic training, through to selecting woodblocks and practicing block-cutting skills, the entire production process focused on devotion to slowness instead of efficiency, emphasising experience in craftsmanship with religious piety. Archival materials record that new carvers were recruited and trained for the woodblock book department; however, detailed training plans and processes are missing in these documents. To fill in the related historical details, I will apply the recollections of Mao Ziliang and Zhu Junbo, two practitioners who were directly involved in the entire production process of *The Manifesto*, to analyse how the workers were trained. This information was obtained from my interviews with them in 2015 and their recent publications. Although the validity and accuracy of their accounts in 2015, 42 years after the project, should certainly be reinforced with first-hand documents, as the only witnesses their memories still provide the most valuable resources for us to sketch the training process.

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<sup>67</sup> Wu Hung, ‘Introduction’, in *Representing the Past: Archaism and Antiquarianism in Chinese Art and Visual Culture*, ed. Wu Hung (Chicago: The Centre for the Art of East Asia, University of Chicago Art Media Resources, 2010), pp. 9–46.

<sup>68</sup> Peng, ‘Dangdai Songbanshu de Gushi’.

In the training programme for block cutters of *The Manifesto*, as both Mao Ziliang and Zhu Junbo noted in the interviews, calligraphy was set up as the first step and the cornerstone of all the remaining skills. The quality of block-cutting skills and understanding of the aesthetic perfection of book art, the participants believed, both came from repeatedly practicing master level calligraphy.<sup>69</sup> In the experienced trainer's eyes, in order to train young students who were literate yet had no experience in woodblock-cutting, the focus in developing carving skills was to practice the art of writing calligraphy.<sup>70</sup> According to Zhu, calligraphic training was mandatory for all new apprentices; they assigned three half days every week solely to practicing calligraphy.<sup>71</sup>

Although he entered the Cloudy Studio in mid-1973, Zhu Junbo and other young apprentices were not immediately involved in producing *The Manifesto*. Instead, they were required to practice the basic skills first. While the whole nation rushed towards a radical idealised modernisation, generally more ideologically than economically, the Cloudy Studio, as the publisher of *The Manifesto*, undertook their project patiently. The first step in learning was to practice calligraphy by imitating copybooks of the Tang Dynasty (618–907) masters. The established artists whose styles the apprentices repeatedly studied included Yan Zhenqing 颜真卿, Liu Gongquan 柳公权 and Ouyang Xun 欧阳询, all legendary historical calligraphers, whose styles have provided norms of Chinese character styles for centuries, retaining their influence to this day.<sup>72</sup>

While teaching the young workers, as a report from 10 August 1973 documents, a team of four experienced copiers and cutters spent two years for producing the 92-page *The Manifesto*.<sup>73</sup> According to Mao Ziliang, all their efforts and time was spent on rebuilding the lost tradition of woodblock-cutting training. When the Cloudy Studio established the woodblock book department for *The Manifesto*, the Destroy the Four Olds campaign of 1967 had been in place for five years. Its political influence had stopped publishers from training

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<sup>69</sup> Interview with Mao Ziliang and Interview with Zhu Junbo.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Zhu Junbo 祝君波, 'Duoyun xuan Jishi 朵云轩纪事', *Jiefang Ribao* 解放日报, 17 January 2016.

<sup>72</sup> Interview with Zhu Junbo.

<sup>73</sup> AMCM, no. 16.

new cutters ever since. This resulted, as noted in the report, in no younger generations being trained in block-cutting craftsmanship when it was requested that *The Manifesto* be published.<sup>74</sup> The few skilled scripters and block cutters found as instructors were all over 60 at the time. Therefore, as the publisher had emphasised in the Report on Training Woodblock Book Technicians earlier in May 1973, an apprentice team needed to be trained urgently, starting at the beginning.<sup>75</sup> The starting point, as the publisher believed, and Mao Ziliang and Zhu Junbo still agree on, had to be preparing calligraphic skills, the foundation of all other woodblock craftsmanship.

Calligraphic training for block cutters, however, was not necessarily included in conventional woodblock workshops during both the Ming and Qing Dynasty. Both Brokaw and McDermott argue that block cutters, even the most skilful ones, could be illiterate in written Chinese.<sup>76</sup> While Mao Ziliang emphasised sophistication, McDermott mentioned the simplicity of grasping woodblock-cutting skills. By dividing characters into parts of strokes, McDermott argues, even untrained housewives and children could be involved in family cutting businesses.<sup>77</sup> It is worth noting, however, that these arguments apply to cases not involving literati perfectionism. Once artistic excellence was involved, the crafts of woodblock text and illustration cutting skills required intensive training and practice. In either case, however, were cutters responsible for the calligraphy styles of the woodblocks they produced?

In conventional xylography productions, according to Chen Hongyan, scripters were the actual practitioners of calligraphy art, determining the final style of characters. As Chen notes, books transcribed by celebrated calligraphers had been taken as ‘treasures’ for their artistic value from as early as the Song Dynasty.<sup>78</sup> Chen does not provide evidence on whether the calligraphers cut the blocks or not. McDermott argues that it is unlikely the

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> AMCM, no. 15.

<sup>76</sup> Cynthia Brokaw, *Commerce in Culture: The Sibao Book Trade in the Qing and Republican Periods* (Cambridge (Massachusetts) and London: Harvard University Asia Center, 2007), pp. 14–15. See also Joseph McDermott, *A Social History of the Chinese Book: Books and Literati Culture in Late Imperial China* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2006), pp. 22–25.

<sup>77</sup> McDermott, *A Social History of the Chinese Book*, p. 13.

<sup>78</sup> Chen, ‘A Joy to the Eye and the Mind’, pp. 29–31.

calligraphers would practice the actual block-cutting. As a cultural norm, such physical work was considered to be low in literati culture, which knowledgeable men of letters would avoid putting their hands and names to.<sup>79</sup> By tracing scribe's manuscripts, cutters were trained to carve characters as motifs instead of text, therefore they did not have to either recognise the characters or practice calligraphy.<sup>80</sup> Cutting craftsmanship, therefore, was taken as physically representing the art of calligraphy, but it was not necessarily associated with calligraphic skills.

Emphasising calligraphic training as such, cutters were also not responsible for the calligraphic style in the woodblock books produced by the Cloudy Studio. It was still professional scribes who copied the scripts. *The Manifesto* was scripted by Yang Minghua 杨明华, who was the only professional woodblock scribe on the project, mastering the writing of reversed characters (*fanzi*, 反字) directly on woodblocks.<sup>81</sup> Xu Baoxun 许宝驯 and Li Chengxun 李成勋, the scribes for *Collected Commentaries on the Verses of Chu* and *Chang-duan Lyrics Poetry of Jiaxuan*, were both prominent calligraphers.<sup>82</sup> Occupying a quarter of the working days, the intensive calligraphic training, therefore, did not change the nature of woodblock-cutting in the trade. If calligraphic training was not functionally necessary for cutting skills, then why was it crucial to practicing calligraphy for the cutters in the Cloudy Studio?

The contemporary and woodcut artist Xu Bing 徐冰, who has also practiced woodblock textual cutting, considers calligraphic training to be more ceremonial than functional. Born into an 'intellectual' family, as Xu remembered in 2001, he started to practice calligraphy in his childhood at his father's instruction. Highlighting the importance of calligraphic training was conventional in early education within the centre of literati elitism, in which calligraphy was believed to be the foundation of achieving Chinese cultural

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<sup>79</sup> McDermott, *A Social History of the Chinese Book*, p. 39.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, p. 23.

<sup>81</sup> Interview with Zhu Junbo. See also AMCM, no. 16.

<sup>82</sup> Interview with Mao Ziliang.

essence.<sup>83</sup> The pursuit of this, Xu argues, was more related to spiritual resonance with ancient masters than creating similar handwriting styles. Remembering his early years of calligraphic training enforced by his knowledgeable father, Xu Bing interpreted the repetition of copying and practicing the calligraphic styles of ancient masters as “a religious ceremony for understanding the spirit of Buddhism and Zen”.

It seems as if I was then like the Buddhist copiers of old. They did not need to understand the meaning of each sutra that they copied. They had only to copy and recopy a lifetime’s worth of sutras to gain entrance into the next world.<sup>84</sup>

This ceremony can be seen in the calligraphic training programme for woodblock cutters in the Cloudy Studio. In 2015, Zhu Junbo, who was an apprentice on *The Manifesto* project by the 1970s, recalled the long, strict and laborious training process as not only practice, but also a ceremonial way to respect historical calligraphy masters and cultural tradition.<sup>85</sup> Celebrated woodblock scripters in the Song, literati who were calligraphically trained, also favoured the calligraphic styles of Yan Zhenqing, Liu Gongquan and Ouyang Xun, all of whom were ancient masters in their time.<sup>86</sup> The 20<sup>th</sup> century block cutters in the Cloudy Studio, as discussed above, were instructed to follow the same masters. As the working class who became, at least in name, the ruling class of the new China, therefore, the cutters now had the right to access the calligraphic skills once beyond their reach.

Echoing Xu Bing’s artistic experience, Zhu suggested that the monotonous repetition in calligraphic practices required ‘inner peace’, ritualising the repetitive daily practices in perfecting carving skills. Without this devotion to book art, Zhu concluded, it was impossible to achieve perfection in *The*

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<sup>83</sup> Xu Bing 徐冰, ‘The Living Word’, in *Words without Meaning, Meaning without Words: The Art of Xu Bing*, trans. Ann L Huss (Washington D.C., Seattle and London: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, in association with the University of Washington Press, 2001), pp. 13–20.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Zhu, ‘Duoyun xuan Jishi’.

<sup>86</sup> Chen, ‘A Joy to the Eye and the Mind’, pp. 29–31.

*Manifesto* and other ‘new Song editions’.<sup>87</sup> The practices, Zhu noted, established not only the young apprentices’ practical skills, but also spiritual adherence to the craftsmanship.<sup>88</sup> Zhu’s recollections suggest that the calligraphic training put the cutters’ cultural equality in line with the knowledgeable scribes and calligraphers. This was ‘revolutionary’ for the new working class. However, instead of engineering new proletarian principles against the old tradition, the training followed literati convention. The working class within the Cloudy Studio woodblock department were trained to achieve the essence of the Three Perfections in literati culture: calligraphy.

Calligraphy was also used in propaganda, but in different ways. It was required to serve the needs of workers, peasants and soldiers. In 1966, the Cloudy Studio published several calligraphic copybooks with images of proletariats on the cover page, whilst the contents were copied from newspaper editorials or soldiers’ dairies. In the *Ou Style Copybook – Extracted from Learning Agriculture from the Dazhai Spirit*, for instance, the cover portrays a peasant waving a hammer, whilst the contents is from the editorial of the *People’s Daily* under the same title.<sup>89</sup> The sample calligraphic style is ‘Ou style’ (*outi*, 欧体), which is named after the Tang calligrapher Ouyang Xun. However, nowhere in the book is the calligrapher’s name highlighted, as he was a symbol of literati art. Xu Bing’s calligraphic skill was also used for propaganda art, with minimal literati influence. When he was in the Beijing University Middle School, his handwriting earned him the opportunity to handwrite blackboard newsletters organised by the Red Guards. The political correctness of this job, Xu wrote, kept him safe by countering his “reactionary class origin”.<sup>90</sup>

Calligraphic training for *The Manifesto*, however, followed literati conventions, seeking accolades as the “contemporary Song edition”. The long calligraphic training was not aimed at speeding up the cutting process. Instead

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<sup>87</sup> Interview with Zhu Junbo.

<sup>88</sup> Zhu, ‘Duoyun xuan Jishi’.

<sup>89</sup> Ouyang Xun 欧阳恂, *Outi Zhongkai Zitie – Zhai zi Nongye Xue Dazhai Jingshen* 欧体中楷字帖 – 摘自农业学大寨精神 (Shanghai: Duoyun xuan, 1966).

<sup>90</sup> Britta Erickson, *Words without Meaning, Meaning without Words: The Art of Xu Bing* (Washington D.C., Seattle and London: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, in association with the University of Washington Press, 2001), pp. 22–23.

of using revolutionary themed copybooks the Cloudy Studio itself published, the training emphasised the heritage that Tang masters left by using classical calligraphic copybooks.<sup>91</sup> Zhu also remembered that the water-soluble woodblock department invited the painting masters Wu Qingxia 吴青霞 and Tang Yun 唐云 to teach brush and ink painting skills. Different from Yan'an woodcut artists such as Li Hua 李桦 and Liu Xian 刘岷,<sup>92</sup> both artists were prominent Shanghai School painters, who had little connection with proletarian themed art.<sup>93</sup> In the archaists' eyes, the newly accepted working class needed to fully understand the spirit of literati book art, grasping a rather imaginary essence of creating the perfect books that they projected onto the historical past. In a time when more practical and efficient technology was available, this philosophy was clearly deifying archaistic perfection.

This lengthy calligraphy training did not improve the efficiency of woodblock technology and it was followed with the equally slow cutting and printing processes. The Cloudy Studio reported the slow process of producing *The Manifesto* in a document in August 1973. Only one scripter and three cutters were involved in the production, as mentioned above, all of whom were over 60 years of age. Due to their advanced years and lack of text cutting experience, according to the report, these cutters were not efficient enough because of a lack of strength; they were only able to finish one block a week, and sometimes this took up to two or even three weeks.<sup>94</sup> Recruiting apprentices and training them in calligraphy, however, added more labour time to the production of fine woodblock books. The cutter's team in the Cloudy Studio, expanded to around 100 people, only produced three further titles from 1972 to 1977. According to Milne's estimation, McDermott notes, a skilful block cutter could finish a maximum of 150 characters per day during the Qing

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<sup>91</sup> Interview with Zhu Junbo.

<sup>92</sup> Julia Frances Andrews, Kuiyi Shen, Solomon R. *A Century in Crisis: Modernity and Tradition in the Art of Twentieth-century China* (New York, Guggenheim Museum, 1998), p. 6.

<sup>93</sup> Zhu, 'Duoyun xuan Jishi'.

<sup>94</sup> AMCM, no. 16.

Dynasty.<sup>95</sup> The cutters in the Cloudy Studio were slower than this. According to Mao Ziliang's recollection in the interview, a well-trained cutter in the Cloudy Studio was able to cut 70–100 characters per day. Recruiting more young cutters indeed returned the cutting process to normal levels within the trade, but it did not contribute dramatically to improving the efficiency of the technology.

Woodblock-cutting in this mechanical period, again according to the artist Xu Bing's experience, was more ceremonial than functional. As a trained printmaker, Xu first became interested in woodblock text-cutting during the 1980s. Exploring the spirit of woodblock book art, as April Liu argues, Xu radicalised the gap between the symbolic meaning of Chinese characters and their calligraphic shapes, focusing on experiencing the spirit of Zen in the repetitive and laborious cutting process.<sup>96</sup> Learning block-cutting skills from experienced woodblock cutters, Xu was impressed by the craftsmanship and the devotion to detail. Locking himself in his dormitory for months and devoting his time to block-cutting, the artist announced that he experienced absorption and 'inner peace', whilst intentionally spending his time achieving nothingness.<sup>97</sup> Comparing the cutters in the Cloudy Studio with Xu, the cultural pursuit might be different, but the intentionally prolonged cutting process remained similar. It required 'inner peace' to persist in the laborious and repetitive process, establishing a real understanding of the art of woodblock books.

Thus the core spirit of calligraphy and cutting practices, for both Xu Bing and the cutters in the Cloudy Studio, was to repeat the same task to generate a ceremonial connection with the subject. This brings the argument back to archaism, which Wu Hung interpreted as repeating and representing past cultural norms, in creating idealised and ceremonial nostalgia for the past. In producing *The Manifesto*, calligraphic training and cutting craftsmanship

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<sup>95</sup> McDermott, *A Social History of the Chinese Book*. p. 23.

<sup>96</sup> April Liu, 'The Living Word: Xu Bing and the Art of Chan Wordplay', in *Xu Bing and Contemporary Chinese Art: Cultural and Philosophical Reflections*, eds. Tsao Hsingyuan and Ames Roger T (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2011), pp. 131–133.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

showcased what the ideal communist canon should look like in China. From the Song Dynasty a millennium ago to the 1970s when *The Manifesto* was published, although woodblock technology experienced innovations and changes, the production of fine editions did not become more efficient. Rather, ancient and contemporary publishers both intentionally sought ‘slowness’ to achieve aesthetic perfectionism in producing the best books.

### **Masters and Pupils**

All the informants from the Cloudy Studio affirmed that the ceremonialised processes involved in producing *The Manifesto* were organised through a conventional master-pupil system. Although as a state-owned publisher, the Cloudy Studio was structured by the regulations of the CCP during the 1970s, the working pattern and relationship among block cutters was not that of equal comrades as in the contemporary publishing industry, but rather masters and their pupils, following the conventional pattern of trade and Confucian family ethics in a father-son hierarchy. Not just working partners, they had a closer cultural and moral relationship that bound the teachers and pupils for their lives.

The loyalty and moral order imposed upon masters and pupils, as Cynthia Brokaw argues, was the norm in commercial woodblock printing workshops in Sibao 四堡, Fujian, during the Qing Dynasty.<sup>98</sup> When studying the Zou and Ma family businesses, Brokaw found that woodblock-cutting and printing skills and knowledge were passed down the generations within families, from old masters to the younger generations.<sup>99</sup> Apprentices had to spend years following their masters, normally their fathers or uncles, who were the absolute authoritative figures. This system was mostly limited to direct family members; even relatives from an extended family relationship would sometimes be excluded from the business to secure the dominant position and unique

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<sup>98</sup> Cynthia Brokaw, ‘Commercial Publishing in Late Imperial China: The Zou and Ma Family Businesses of Sibao, Fujian’, *Late Imperial China*, no. 17 (1996), pp. 66–71.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

technological secrets.<sup>100</sup> The morality order in the master-pupil system, therefore, followed the norms of Confucian family hierarchy.

Although the restriction to family members had been broken during the Republican Period, woodblock-cutting team in the Cloudy Studio was organised under a conventional master-pupil principle that was ethically similar to the Zou and Ma family businesses. The masters, as Zhu remembered, were the patriarchal authority who instructed the apprentices in both professional skills and moral norms in the trade.<sup>101</sup> Young students like Zhu, feeling obliged to follow and respect their masters, established their professional identity through moral and lifelong loyalty to their teachers.<sup>102</sup>

Eyferth argues that in artisan communities that organise around a certain type of skill, like the paper makers' group in Jiajiang, the core skills keep the structure of the community stable against external interventions. Thus the artisan communities during the Mao Era were relatively resilient to communist ideological placement.<sup>103</sup> However, how much this conclusion can be applied to studying a group of skilled workers organised by the state-controlled publishing house in a metropolitan city requires more careful contextualisation. Evidence, as will be analysed, indicates that cutting skills and experience indeed sustained the entire production team of *The Manifesto* in the Cloudy Studio in the 1970s. Zhu Junbo, as one of the middle school students recruited by the Cloudy Studio for its book-cutting team, outlined in the interview how the cutter's team was organised:<sup>104</sup>

Although it was in the new society, the Cloudy Studio followed the old way of worshiping masters and learning skills. Every apprentice had their own master, whilst the masters considered teaching the apprentices as an honour and a responsibility... Mr Zhang Rongde 张荣德...first learned carving skills from Master Zhuang Chengzhang 庄澄章. Zhuang taught

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Zhu, 'Shoukeben Gongchandang Xuanyan Qinli Ji'.

<sup>102</sup> Zhu, 'Duoyun xuan Jishi'.

<sup>103</sup> Eyferth, *Eating Rice from Bamboo Roots*, pp. 5-18.

<sup>104</sup> Zhu, 'Duoyun xuan Jishi'.

Zhang connoisseurship, calligraphy and even classic Chinese. Zhuang had been an apprentice of painting master Wu Hufan 吴湖帆 (before he worked for the Cloudy Studio). Similarly, Wu Ou 吴飴 followed Master Fang Quji 方去疾, which was another example of ‘great masters produce great pupils’... Thinking back, there were more than 100 young people of our generation who entered the Cloudy Studio during the 1970s. (At that time), we were not able to enter universities because of the Cultural Revolution. But we entered the Cloudy Studio and learned some real skills. What is more, we learned how to manage artisanship and how to be a human being. We learned a lot there.<sup>105</sup>

Zhu’s description indicates that the master-pupil system was crucial for production training, which followed ‘the old way’. The names Zhu mentioned mostly refer to prominent literati painters, calligraphers and seal engravers who were trained in this conventional way, and remained active during the Republican Period and early PRC. What Zhu emphasises here is that the morality of the masters and their pupils in literati convention continued in the Cloudy Studio’s cutter team, where the masters’ skills were respected and adhered to. As pupils, Zhu and his peers not only inherited the cutting styles, but also the moral and emotional tie to their masters. Zhu wrote the above paragraph in 2016, 40 years after taking part in the cutter team. It is arguable that his opinions changed according to different political contexts. However, considering what was taught in the Cloudy Studio to the woodblock book and the water-soluble printing department, it is reasonable to suggest that the moral order between skilled masters and their pupils was also institutionalised in the system.

The similarity between the Cloudy Studio master-pupil system and the Qing system also suggests that the entire system relied on the masters’ craft, which made them crucial figures and the authority in the system. This could partly explain why, as McDermott points out, although there has been plenty of

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

literature about fine books and book collections in Chinese history, it is difficult to find a systematic introduction on woodblock technological details, block cutters and their organisations. The first written literature that systematically introduced the procedures of xylography in China was authored by the British missionary William Milne as late as the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Malacca, one millennium after the technology was invented.<sup>106</sup> In the woodblock trade, knowledge of cutting skills had been passed through generations by masters to pupils through close instruction and personal experience, remaining the norm from the Song Dynasty to the Ming and Qing and even into the Republican Period.<sup>107</sup>

The cutting skills of the old masters were used as the foundation when the Cloudy Studio organised its woodblock book department. The whole department relied on the experience of the elder cutters. McDermott argues that in conventional woodblock workshops, training materials could be either circulated within private workshops, or orally passed confidentially for generations from master carvers to pupils.<sup>108</sup> During the 1970s, although published teaching materials on how to understand woodcutting skills were rapidly and widely disseminated,<sup>109</sup> there were few systematic training materials available for woodblock text cutters. Therefore, finding experienced cutters became the most crucial task. Two skilful cutters, Luo Xuhao 罗旭浩 and Xia Hongtai 夏宏太, were recruited in 1972, but only one experienced scripter, Yang Minghua, was temporarily transferred from the Changjiang Letter Engraving Factory (*Changjiang kezi chang*, 长江刻字厂) to support the project.<sup>110</sup> Yang's professional scripting skill was highly appreciated in the project. Having learned the trade during the Republican Period, including the

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<sup>106</sup> McDermott, *A Social History of the Chinese Book*, pp. 11–13.

<sup>107</sup> Nagasawa Kiluya and Tanaka Shisho claimed that the master-pupil system in the carver's team became increasingly obvious in the Yuan Dynasty based on circumstantial evidence. McDermott argued that this apprenticeship could have existed as early as the Song Dynasty. *Ibid*, p. 34.

<sup>108</sup> McDermott, *A Social History of the Chinese Book*, p. 13.

<sup>109</sup> Zhang Zexian 张泽贤, *Minguo Banhua Wenjianlu* 民国版画闻见录 (Shanghai: Shanghai yuandong chubanshe, 2006), p. 384.

<sup>110</sup> The prominent calligraphers Xu Baoxun 许宝驯 and Li Chengxun 李成勋 were also recruited as scripters. However, they did not specialise in woodblock copying. Interview with Mao Ziliang and Interview with Zhu Junbo.

skill of writing reversed characters (*fanzi*, 反字), Yang was repeatedly mentioned by both Mao Ziliang and Zhu Junbo in the interviews as being considered admirable among woodblock scribes.<sup>111</sup>

On 10 August 1973, upon the accomplishment of *The Manifesto*, the Cloudy Studio (at the time under the name *Shanghai shuhua she*, 上海书画社) submitted ‘The Name List of Trainees of Woodblock Successors’ to the CCP Committee of Shanghai People’s Publishing.<sup>112</sup> In the plan, the publisher requested to recruit 47 middle school graduates for the preparation of publishing more woodblock books. The way the Cloudy Studio organised the training team, according to my informants, was to let the old masters instruct the youths as apprentices. Each training team was led by one master teaching seven to eight new cutters.<sup>113</sup> From practicing calligraphy, to experimenting with cutting skills, every step was taught and guided by the masters based on their previous experience. Not until the apprentices were fully trained were they allowed to cut the actual blocks for the books. *The Manifesto*, for example, was scripted by Yang Minghua and cut by four elder cutters, at which time six young carvers, including Zhu Junbo, had been at the Cloudy Studio for half a year and were preparing for assignments.<sup>114</sup> Without formalising training materials for standardising and spreading woodblock-cutting technology, the primary task for the masters was to train a cutter team for the publisher by engaging their professional experience. No textbooks were left, for instance, to pass on the rare skill of writing reversed characters, even after the Cloudy Studio project; neither were there any introductory materials on woodblock technology associated with the published project. The cutters’ team, therefore, very similar to the Jiajiang paper-making artisan community, worked in a master-pupil hierarchy organised around woodblock carving skills.

This master-pupil system was inherited from the Flourishing and Treasured Studio (*Rongbao zhai*, 荣宝斋, hereafter the Flourishing Studio) when the

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> AMCM, no. 16.

<sup>113</sup> Zhu, ‘Shoukeben Gongchandang Xuanyan Qinli Ji’.

<sup>114</sup> Zhu officially entered the Cloudy Studio in May 1973 and *The Manifesto* was published at the end of 1973. Interview with Zhu Junbo. See also AMCM, no. 16.

Cloudy Studio was still its Shanghai branch during the 1950s. The Flourishing Studio also relied on experienced masters rather than written textbooks. Cutter teams were led by master carvers from the Republican Period, with several young apprentices under their instruction. Xu Qingru 徐庆儒, a water-soluble woodblock printing master who joined the Cloudy Studio in 1957, had worked for the Flourishing Studio since the Republican Period.<sup>115</sup> Trained as an apprentice in the Flourishing Studio in the 1930s, Xu learnt not only cutting skills, but also art and literature from his masters.<sup>116</sup> Another cutter, Tang Jinhua 汤金虎, had his apprenticeship in Yongfaxiang Accounting Book Printing Shop (*Yong fa xiang zhangbu*, 永发祥账簿) in Shanghai during the 1930s, before he became one of the carving masters in the Cloudy Studio. 26 young apprentices were recruited for the Cloudy Studio's water-soluble woodblock carving businesses, where they called the experienced carvers *Shifu* (师傅, master).<sup>117</sup>

In the Cloudy Studio master-pupil system of the 1970s, masters did not supervise fixed pupils. This differed from the more conventional system in the Flourishing Studio, where one-to-one tutoring made the ties between masters and their pupils tighter.<sup>118</sup> Nonetheless, in both systems, the masters taught the pupils the cutting technique based on their own knowledge and skills, which, as Eyferth convincingly argues, kept the cutters' team stable. The masters had the power of knowledge and evaluation of the apprentices, empirically judging their qualifications and their potential to become formal employees in the future. The apprentices, on the other hand, were required to obey and follow the instructions of their masters.<sup>119</sup>

The government also admitted that in woodblock publishing and the related

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<sup>115</sup> Xu Yongzhen 徐永哲, 'Yisheng Xuanming – Fuqin Xu Qingru Zhiyu Rongbao zhai he Duoyun xuan 一生悬命: 父亲徐庆儒之于荣宝斋和朵云轩', *Wenhui Wang* 文汇网, 29 April 2016, available at: <http://www.whb.cn/zhuzhan/kandian/20160429/55831.html> [Accessed on 28 June 2018].

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>117</sup> Zheng Mingchuan 郑名川, 'Duoyun Yinren Zhuan – Tang Jinhua 朵云印人传—汤金虎', Blog, *Zheng Mingchuan de Boke* 郑名川的博客 (blog), 16 April 2013, available at: [http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog\\_8656c7f601019ugh.html](http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_8656c7f601019ugh.html) [Accessed on 28 June 2018].

<sup>118</sup> Xu, 'Yisheng Xuanming – Fuqin Xu Qingru Zhiyu Rongbao zhai he Duoyun xuan'.

<sup>119</sup> Zheng, 'Duoyun Yinren Zhuan – Tang Jinhua'.

book trade, expertise and knowledge were often relying heavily on experienced elder workers, and often making woodblock publishing houses structure their production team under ‘old system’. In 1956, The Ministry of Culture announced that although the leadership of the CCP was crucial to all industries, the ancient book trade should still be allowed to adhere to its tradition. This was due to, the documents continued, the business mode and speciality needed for the trade being mostly inherited from historical conventions that were difficult to modernise and standardise.<sup>120</sup> Indeed, the master-pupil system with respect to cultural masters was mentioned in nearly all interviews with the woodblock publishers from the Mao Era. For example, Zhou Guangpei remembered that in Guangling, they hired local cutting masters to teach the rural youths they had recruited. Respectfully called ‘Laoshifu’ (the old masters, 老师傅), the experienced ones had absolute authority over the apprentices.<sup>121</sup> The fact that all the woodblock publishers adopted similar master-pupil systems shows that woodblock production was allowed to be organised in a way that was coherent with the historical conventions of the trade.

However, as a state-owned business, different from the rural paper-making community in Jiajiang, the decision-making processes, including those related to publishing *The Manifesto*, remained entirely under the control of the CCP system. In the *Archival Materials of The Manifesto*, as with all other publishing houses, every report was sent out to the CCP Committee of the Shanghai People’s Publishing – the higher authority of the Cloudy Studio, with the official seal of the CCP Committee of Shanghai shuhua she (上海书画社), which was the formal name of the Cloudy Studio during the 1970s.<sup>122</sup> All informants noted that every decision in the production process required formal government approval. The CCP committees were the managing organs of the publishers. This committee was mandatory for all economic entities after 1954,

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<sup>120</sup> ‘Wenhuabu Guanyu Jiajiang dui Gushuye de Lingdao Guanli he Gaizao de Tongzhi (56) Wen Shen Ting Mi Zi di 73 hao (1956 Nian 7 Yue 7 Ri) 文化部关于加强对古书业的领导管理和改造的通知 (56) 文沈厅密字第 73 号 (1956 年 7 月 7 日)’, in *CBSL* 8, pp. 160–165.

<sup>121</sup> Interview with Zhou Guangpei.

<sup>122</sup> All the documents in AMCM related to decision-making were sent to Shanghai Municipal government by the publisher, with its official seal.

including woodblock publishing houses, when the public-private joint ownership campaign was accomplished. This meant that all organisations and social groups were regulated under a standardised administrative structure, which emphasised the absolute leadership of the CCP.<sup>123</sup> The production of *The Manifesto*, therefore, was managed by a dual system, in which a master-pupil system operated at the production level, whilst the CCP administrative system controlled the management.

Like all other industries, the party committee members were not required to have expertise on the businesses they monitored. Their task was to censor the political conformity of the trade, not the woodblock production process. Nonetheless, they had the power to make decisions on specific projects. All the official seals on the archival materials of *The Manifesto* were from the party committee. Named ‘The Party Organisation’ (*dangzuzhi*, 党组织), this controlled the party members, supervised publishing activities and monitored the class identification of individuals, reporting directly to the publisher’s higher authority. In the Maoist personnel system, practitioners in publishing houses were commonly classified in a hierarchy of leaders (*lingdao*, 领导), editors and workers, strictly following the CCP administrative policy.<sup>124</sup> Publishing activities were required to be reported to the ‘Party Organisation’ in the publishing house and thus they were closely monitored and censored by the government. Not only were contents and design styles strictly regulated, but every step in the publishing process was recorded and reported to the relevant ‘organisation’ (*zuzhi*, 组织).<sup>125</sup>

What was the position of the master-pupil system of cutters in the Cloudy Studio’s organisational structure? Although specific roles in the system changed according to different policies, the core regulations on organisational structure remained similar for the full three decades from 1956.<sup>126</sup> In

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<sup>123</sup> ‘Chuban Zongshu Dangzu Guanyu Zhengdun he Gaizao Siying Chubanye de Baogao (1954 Nian 8 Yue) 出版总署党组关于整顿和改造私营出版业的报告 (1954年8月)’, in *CBSL* 6, pp. 466–473.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>125</sup> AMCM, no. 10.

<sup>126</sup> Guo Bohu 郭伯虎, ‘Lun Xinzhongguo Ganbu Guanli Tizhi de Jianli’ 论新中国干部管理体制的建立, in *Shiji Qiao* 世纪桥, 19 (2009), pp. 147–148.

management teams of the publishing houses, the party was in the primary position, dominating decision-making most of the time.<sup>127</sup> For individuals, being ‘politically positive’ was crucial for their future careers. Before they officially entered the Cloudy Studio, Zhu Junbo and his peers were first sent to cadre school for half a year’s political training, which was the standard procedure for newly recruited employees.<sup>128</sup> However, since members of the party mostly worked on propaganda-related tasks, in making decisions about specific books, they had to accept suggestions from the production team of editors and cutters, the ones who specialised in the actual publishing business.

Therefore, for workers, the most essential aspect was to understand the related technique. This was why, when Zhu enrolled in the Cloudy Studio, his master Zhou Zhigao 周志高, although routinely instructing him and his “senior sister apprentice” Lin Yuqing 林玉晴 to be politically positive, emphasised the importance of professionalism in being a qualified employee at the Cloudy Studio. Politically, the youths were expected to join the CCP as a norm, but professionally the focus was on master-level woodblock expertise and cultural understanding of painting and calligraphic skills.<sup>129</sup>

However, when it came to decision-making, as the archival materials of *The Manifesto* indicate, politics was much more important than professional skills. In relation to the project, workers are absent from the records of the decision-making meetings. Scripters and cutters, including Yang Minghua, did attend one meeting discussing the design style of the book. Important issues were sent to the party committee for approval, whilst crucial meetings were held with the leaders and the Shanghai municipal government.<sup>130</sup> Manuscript samples with various character styles in the archival materials of *The Manifesto* indicate that many different ideas were experimented with for the book. Three different title slips stored in the archives include both simplified and classic

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<sup>127</sup> In the 1970s, this organisation was named the Revolutionary Committee, 革委会. See the official seal of the Revolutionary Committee of Shanghai renmin chubanshe in AMCM, no. 16.

<sup>128</sup> Interview with Zhu Junbo.

<sup>129</sup> Zhu, ‘Duoyun xuan Jishi’.

<sup>130</sup> AMCM, no. 10.

Chinese characters in multiple handwriting styles.<sup>131</sup> Mao Ziliang wrote, and it is also clear from the archival materials, that for both the title slip and the content, it was the local government who chose the standardised ‘imitation Song’ style, instead of Guo Moruo’s calligraphic one.<sup>132</sup>

McDermott argues that literati tradition considered block-cutting to be physical work below their status and they were, therefore, unwilling to cross over into cutting artisanship.<sup>133</sup> Ko criticises this tradition of denigration of tangible things, not only in practice but also in scholarly writing, arguing that it undermines the value of craftsmanship in Chinese history.<sup>134</sup> This explains why the importance of cutters was largely neglected in written historical resources, as cutters were people who survived by their labour (*laolizhe*, 劳力者). This also indicates that labour in the woodblock trade was not considered important in Chinese book culture. Famous cutters gained their reputation through producing fine literati books, humble artisans who served noble men of letters. Yet whilst the CCP propagated the working class as the ruling class, the block cutter team in the Cloudy Studio was structured hierarchically below both the CCP administrative system and publishing specialists such as book producers and editors. The master-pupil system remained mostly at the operational level, whilst the decision-making process was supervised and censored by the CCP committee, representatives of the political power. Although the cutters in the system were the actual practitioners producing *The Manifesto*, similar to cutting labourers in conventional woodblock trade, they were not authorised to decide on the final result in the organisational hierarchy, and they were virtually anonymous in the entire publishing process.

### **Innovations: *Chuangxin* (创新) or *Chuangjiu* (创旧)?**

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<sup>131</sup> AMCM, no. 7, no. 14 and no. 20.

<sup>132</sup> Mao, *Yilin Leigao*, pp. 95–96.

<sup>133</sup> McDermott, *A Social History of the Chinese Book*, p. 39.

<sup>134</sup> Ko, *The Social Life of Inkstones*, p. 5.

Under the administration of CCP committees, publishers were all required to closely follow the leadership of the political authority. Chairman Mao's 'Use the Past to Serve the Present' (*gu wei jin yong*, 古为今用) policy and the call for modernisation and mechanisation were the most frequently quoted policies in the woodblock trade. Therefore, although xylographic production continued to be coherent with historical precedence, the publishers undeniably attempted to either use woodblock printing to create revolutionary content, or to mechanise production tools for modernisation. Nonetheless, most of the inventions, I contend, focused on bettering woodblock artisanship with regard to archaic perfection. They were not aiming at *chuangxin* (creating the new, 创新), but instead creating artistic individuality to represent archaic perfection, which can be defined as *chuangjiu* (literally meaning 'creating old', or recreating the past, 创旧).

Use the Past to Serve the Present, as Tina Mai Chen argues, was broadly quoted among artists, historians and antiquity related industries during the Mao Era, considered the philosophical and aesthetic legitimacy of their profession. Although Mao's interpretation of the term shifted, Chen argues, it provided an authoritative interpretation of the relationship between modernisation and Chinese tradition, as well as historical achievements and contemporary CCP ideology.<sup>135</sup> This authoritative interpretation seems to suggest that woodblock tradition, as the 'ancient', is not immutable and fixed. To comply with this policy, as the communist canon, *The Manifesto* needed some modernised features to showcase the 'present'. Therefore, innovations mostly focused on problems of style, for which the Cloudy Studio 'created' technology to cut simplified Chinese characters and English alphabets. This was the first time in history, Mao Ziliang emphasised, that simplified Chinese and foreign languages were woodblock printed.<sup>136</sup> Meanwhile, for the first time, Western

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<sup>135</sup> Tina Mai Chen, 'Use the Past to Serve the Present, the Foreign to Serve China', in *Words and Their Stories: Essays on the Language of the Chinese Revolution*, ed. Ban Wang (Leiden: BRILL, 2010), pp. 208–210.

<sup>136</sup> Interview with Mao Ziliang.

paragraph styles were used in thread-bound xylographic books, for example in indicating paragraph breaks using indentation and punctuation<sup>137</sup> (fig. 1.2).

To adapt to these alternate styles, the challenge faced by designers and cutters was aesthetic rather than technological. These innovations created features that can only be found in modern Chinese publications; however, they needed to be created by referencing the best fine editions from the Song, thoughtfully balancing the modern elements and woodblock book aesthetics.<sup>138</sup> On the one hand, the goal was to make the book a new ideal of woodblock printing, which had to adhere to past perfection in established fine book aesthetics.<sup>139</sup> On the other hand, following the political requirements, classical communist elements had to be presented in the woodblock version of *The Manifesto*. The relatively standardised character style ‘imitation Song style’, the communist slogan in red on the first page, and the modern paragraph arrangements were all features answering the call of the CCP, linking this edition of *The Manifesto* to other communist classics published during the Mao Era.<sup>140</sup>

The concept of ‘use the ancient to serve the present’, however, was slightly amended in producing *The Manifesto*. Considered a ‘new Song edition’ ever since, the book reinforced the cultural superiority of the Song books. It bears, as analysed above, more archaistic features than modern ones, and is in general following the norms of fine Song book design. It is also worth noting that the choice of woodblock printing was itself archaistic, because it signalled a revival of a craft from the past. With the much more efficient and economic mechanised press printing industry to hand, laborious innovations in the scope of xylography can be taken as representative of the past – *chuangjiu* (创旧) –

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<sup>137</sup> Pre-modern Chinese books applied a different system named *judou* 句读, which uses ‘。’ to mark the end of a sentence, and ‘、’ to mark the end of a clause: Qu Mianliang 瞿冕良, *Zhongguo Guji Banke Cidian* 中国古籍版刻辞典 (Jinan: Qilu Shushe, 1999), p. 117.

<sup>138</sup> Interview with Mao Ziliang.

<sup>139</sup> AMCM, no. 25.

<sup>140</sup> Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Gongchandang Xuanyan* 共产党宣言 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1959).

instead of ‘creating new’ – *chuangxin* (创新) – in printing technology. In Zhu’s words, the woodblock trade “in general was of the old style”.<sup>141</sup>

Walter Benjamin uses “aura” to define the artistic value of original artworks that have accumulated through history. The aura of art will, he argues, abate with mass duplications, making the uniqueness and cultural meaning of the art shrink.<sup>142</sup> The duplication of art brought about by photography and cinema during the 1930s, Benjamin argues, makes the “original work” disappear, producing instead identical and duplicable copies.<sup>143</sup> Wood engraving, together with lithography, according to Benjamin, although having been crucial duplicating techniques, were merely “particular instances” compared with modern technologies in the industrialised 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>144</sup> Nonetheless, Benjamin argues that duplicating technologies aim at producing identical products, whilst artistic creations generate individuality – the aura.<sup>145</sup>

However, in a mechanical period when mass printing technologies became the norm, the existence of laborious woodblock printing no longer functioned as a duplicating technology. Rather, as indicated in the production of *The Manifesto*, it transformed into a showcase of archaic perfectionism, manifesting the art of the Chinese book. Following Benjamin’s theory, yet twisting the concept of art, I argue, the *chuangjiu* in woodblock technological ‘innovations’ aimed at creating “aura” in woodblock printed duplications. None of the *chuangjiu* projects mechanised the technology to improve efficiency. Instead, they enhanced the individuality of the books by improving archaic craftsmanship, experimenting with new techniques for perfecting archaic designs, whilst representing the subtleness of fading colours and details in the historical originals.

The *chuangjiu* practices of the Cloudy Studio began during the 1950s, when it was functioning as the Shanghai branch of the Flourishing Studio. To

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<sup>141</sup> Zhu, ‘Duoyun xuan Jishi’.

<sup>142</sup> Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (United States: Prism Key Press, 2010), p. 7.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*

stay in line with Mao's Use the Past to Serve the Present and to participate in modernising the nation, the Cloudy Studio was involved in the *chuangxin* campaigns to renovate water-soluble woodblock printing technology that the Flourishing Studio initiated.<sup>146</sup> Primarily focused on woodblock printed painting replicas, the Flourishing Studio was considered to have the best skills in 'assembled blocks' (*douban*) printing, the coloured woodblock printing technology that gained its popularity in the Ming Dynasty.<sup>147</sup> During the 1950s, the Flourishing Studio 'invented' a new technique named *Muban shuiyin* (木版水印), water-soluble woodblock printing, which significantly improved the effect of *douban*, achieving a "perfect representation that was almost equivalent to the original works".<sup>148</sup>

The key innovation of this new technique in the printing process was to add vapour when printing colours, creating natural radiation of the colours on original brush and ink paintings.<sup>149</sup> This innovation, however, did not enhance the efficiency of coloured woodblock printing; instead, it perfected colour performance in ink and brush paintings via a much more laborious process. To reproduce the delicate colours that ink brushwork created in the originals, for example, each colour required an individual woodblock and had to be printed separately. The iconic water-soluble reproduction of *The Night Banquet of Han Xizai* (*Han Xizai yeyan tu*, 韩熙载夜宴图), for instance, took more than 2,000 pieces of woodblock, 20 workers and eight years to accomplish. During the printing process, dust-free workshops were required to ensure the cleanness and accuracy of colour representations, which complicated the already sophisticated *douban* printing process.<sup>150</sup> The technological innovation, therefore, was aiming at perfectly reproducing archaistic details despite a more time-consuming and sophisticated craftsmanship. Judging by the much lower

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<sup>146</sup> Interview with Mao Ziliang.

<sup>147</sup> Brokaw and Kornicki, 'Introduction', pp. xiii–xxxv.

<sup>148</sup> Sun Shumei 孙树梅, 'Rongbao zhai Muban shuiyin Beihou de Gushi 1 荣宝斋木版水印背后的故事 (一)', ed. Sun Zhiping 孙志萍, *Rongbao zhai* 荣宝斋 7 (February 2013): pp. 274–283.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Sun Shumei 孙树梅, 'Rongbao zhai Muban shuiyin Beihou de Gushi 2 荣宝斋木版水印背后的故事 (二)', ed. Sun Zhiping 孙志萍, *Rongbao zhai* 荣宝斋 18 (March 2013): pp. 268–275.

efficiency and the much higher cost of labour, the invention of coloured woodblock printing was clearly *chuangjiu* instead of *chuangxin*.

As the Shanghai branch of the Flourishing Studio, the Cloudy Studio was also deeply involved in the *chuangjiu* movement. During the 1960s, the Cloudy Studio was required to send water-soluble woodblock printing experts to The Zhejiang Art and Art Craft Institution (*Zhejiang gongyi meiyuan*, 浙江工艺美院) in Hangzhou to assist the latter in establishing its own printing factory.<sup>151</sup> Although the mission later assigned to the institution was to print revolutionary-themed woodcut works, the experiments focused on the subtleness of colour. Well-known replicas include Pan Tianshou's 潘天寿 master painting *Mount Flowers at Yandang* (*Yandang shanhua*, 雁荡山花), a traditional ink and brush Chinese painting. Pan, a prominent old school painter, was the chancellor of the art institution by then. To show his gratitude, in 1960 he wrote a couplet in seal characters to acknowledge the “communist spirit of cooperation” among the technological cadres from the Cloudy Studio.<sup>152</sup> In this movement, although socialist themed products were published, finely represented archaistic painting albums and calligraphic works were not excluded from water-soluble woodblock replications. They were also considered proof of “the People’s wisdom in reinventing the cultural summit of woodblock technology”.<sup>153</sup> In fact, most of the iconic replicas mentioned by the Cloudy Studio and media were ink and brush paintings created by historical masters, like *Album of Flowers, Birds, Grass and Insects* by Chen Laolian (*Chen Laolian huaniao caochong ce*, 陈老莲花鸟草虫册) published in 1958.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> Ma Lihua 马丽华, ‘Feiwuzhi Wenhua Yichan Muban shuiyin Jiyi zai Meishu Yuanxiao de Chuancheng yu Fazhan 非物质文化遗产木版水印技艺在美术院校的传承与发展’, *Zhejiang dang’anju dang’an xuehui* 浙江档案局档案学会, 8 October 2015, available at: [http://www.zjda.gov.cn/art/2015/10/8/art\\_1388574\\_13135236.html](http://www.zjda.gov.cn/art/2015/10/8/art_1388574_13135236.html) [Accessed on 28 June 2018].

<sup>152</sup> Pan Tianshou 潘天寿, *Xiezuo Zhihua Shengkai, Xiezuo Zhiguo Fengshuo – Pan Tianshou Zeng Duoyun xuan Shufa Zuopin* 协作之花盛开, 协作之果丰硕 – 潘天寿赠朵云轩书法作品, 1960, paper, Duoyun xuan private collection, available at: [http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog\\_8656c7f6010138f4.html](http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_8656c7f6010138f4.html) [Accessed on 23 June 2018].

<sup>153</sup> AMCM, no. 25.

<sup>154</sup> Chen Hongshou 陈洪绶, *Chen Laolian Huaniao Caochong Ce*, 陈老莲花鸟草虫册 (Shanghai: Duoyun xuan, 1958).

The long tradition of *chuangjiu* in the Cloudy Studio thus explains why during the 1970s, the publisher enthusiastically embraced the idea of recovering woodblock book production for *The Manifesto*, with significant investment in developing labour, training and materials from scratch. In Zhu Junbo's accounts, the water-soluble woodblock printing and woodblock book department in the Cloudy Studio shared similar skills, training patterns and cultural heritage, which all reflected 'old' literati essence. Within the scope of this old aesthetics, new 'inventions' like simplified characters, English alphabets and imitating standardised typefaces were propagated as *chuangxin*, despite the fact that everything created by these efforts was labelled a 'new Song edition'.

The *chuangjiu* processes of *The Manifesto* and other woodblock products often focused on experimenting on 'new materials' that were 'shabbied' (*zuojiu*, 做旧) modern products, in order to create 'old feelings' similar to those invoked by the historical originals. Between old inks that added animal glues, and the new ones with mechanised chemical glues, both the Cloudy Studio and the Flourishing Studio preferred the old ones for their publications. To adapt the new inks, experts in the publishing firms 'innovated' the modern ink by aging it, removing the chemicals in the glues. This process was used to create effects that only the old inks were able to achieve, as they represented the natural wearing of colours on historical paintings.<sup>155</sup> Again, since no modern devices were available to fasten different colours to delicate woodblocks, anti-rheum plaster (*goupigao*, 狗皮膏) was ameliorated to stick pieces of blocks together.<sup>156</sup> None of these inventions were formalised as proven knowledge in the trade, whilst no formula was indicated in written materials either.

Even innovations that attempted to mechanise woodblock technology were aiming to achieve archaistic perfection rather than efficiency. The ink mill (*Yanmo ji*, 研墨机), for instance, was invented in a work competition among

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<sup>155</sup> 孙树梅 Sun Shumei, 'Wo suo Qinli de Rongbao zhai Muban shuiyin Fazhan Licheng 2 我所亲历的荣宝斋木版水印发展历程(二)', ed. Sun Zhiping 孙志萍, *Rongbao zhai* 荣宝斋, March 2012, pp. 270–271.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 266.

young workers in the Flourishing Studio during the 1950s and 1960s, in answer to a call for innovation from the government. Considered a mechanical invention, it was made simply by binding a stone mortar to an axis, then grinding the ink using several ink pestles rotated by a gear wheel that was manually operated (fig. 1.9).<sup>157</sup> This machine was invented to make grinding ink more efficient, and the final ink powders finer. However, the powders made by this ‘innovative machine’ were used to generate a subtler effect when representing the faded colours in court ladies’ hair in ancient paintings, creating “the feeling of the old”.<sup>158</sup>



Fig. 1.9 Yanmoji, *Wo Suoqinli de* 4, p. 282.

‘Shabbied’ ink and ‘inventions’ similar to the ink mill were still in use when *The Manifesto* was produced during the 1970s, making it clear that the *chuangjiu* spirit was inherited in the woodblock book department. It is then reasonable to argue that for innovations in woodblock book publishing, although encouraged in the name of using the old to serve the present, the ‘present’ was in fact, to a certain degree, serving the past, recreating artistic details with archaistic features in literati books and paintings.

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<sup>157</sup> Ibid, pp. 284–285.

<sup>158</sup> Sun Shumei 孙树梅, ‘Rongbao zhai Muban shuiyin Beihou de Gushi 4 荣宝斋木版水印背后的故事 (四)’, ed. Sun Zhiping 孙志萍, *Rongbao zhai* 荣宝斋 20 (May 2013): pp. 278–285.

## Conclusion

By examining the production of *The Manifesto*, it is clear that in producing woodblock books during the Mao Era, the aesthetics adhered to idealised Song editions, which had long been the norm for perfect books in elite literati culture. The choices of design styles and printing materials, the ceremonialised training and production processes, and the Confucian family order and morality in the skill-centred production teams, all made it clear that these new xylographic books were created archaistically. What is more, these decisions were being made at a time when far more efficient technology was available at a much lower cost. All the efforts to perfect the archaistic technology created physical distinctions between these books and the mass publications. Even controlled and censored by the CCP management, on balance, the final products, together with the way of producing them, were more archaistic than contemporary.

Many of the 1950s woodblock books were published during the Great Leap Forward, whilst *The Manifesto* and other woodblock books published by the Cloudy Studio were produced during the fluctuating policies in the Confucianism and Legalism Conflicts. For most of the Mao Era, modernisation and industrialisation were the focus of the Chinese nation in seeking leadership in the world. The slowed-down handmade process, the calligraphic and literati painting training, and, more importantly, the archaistic aesthetics in general, did not adhere to the above socialist themes. What audiences these books were designed for, and how they were disseminated among their reader groups will be discussed in Chapter Two.

## Chapter Two

### The Limited Editions

Chapter One argued that *The Manifesto*, and other xylographic books of the Mao Era were produced as ‘perfect books’ adhering to archaistic literati aesthetics, which was inconsistent with the mainstream propaganda and the fevered drive for modernisation. This raises the question of how these officially published archaistic books were disseminated. Who bought these books? Were the broad masses interested in them? Were the books available in bookstores? And how were the books circulated among readers?

This chapter traces the arc of the dissemination of woodblock publications back to the early 1960s, when xylographic books entered the national distribution system for the first time.<sup>1</sup> By studying a water-soluble woodblock printed (*Muban shuiyin*, 木版水印) edition of *Let the Hundred Flowers Bloom* (*Baihua qifang*, 百花齐放, hereafter *The Hundred Flowers*) published by the Flourishing Studio in 1961, I will argue that woodblock publications during the Mao Era were disseminated as limited editions among restricted elite audiences, and thus they were distinctively different from the mainstream publications of the same period. The books were also produced and exchanged as gifts among their audiences, among whom the fine editions were given as tributes to the state and CCP leaders. All these features, as I will discuss, had a precedent in literati elite book culture before the PRC.

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Wenhuabu Guanyu Xinhua Shudian Jingxiao Rongbao zhai Muban shuiyin Hua de Tongzhi (60) Wen Chu Hu Zi di 1438 hao (1960 Nian 11 Yue 30 Ri) 文化部关于新华书店经销荣宝斋木版水印画的通知 (60) 文出胡字第 1438 号 (1960 年 11 月 30 日)’, in *CBSL 10*, p. 421.

## Distribution System of Woodblock Books

When the People's Republic of China was founded in 1949, a commercialised cross-regional dissemination system had already been established among modern publishers and booksellers.<sup>2</sup> Starting from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, distribution of press-printed books in urban areas mainly relied on networks of big publishing houses, such as the Commercial Press (*Shangwu yinshuguan*, 商务印书馆, hereafter CP) and Zhonghua Book Company (*Zhonghua shuju*, 中华书局). Each publishing house controlled the whole process of disseminating their own publications, including sales strategies, sales channels and shipment.<sup>3</sup> During the Mao Era, the CCP established a monopolistic national distribution system via the Xinhua Bookstore (*Xinhua shudian*, 新华书店) network. Originally cooperating with private publishing houses, Xinhua gradually became the only legal domestic book distributor.<sup>4</sup> Meanwhile, international book transactions were also fully controlled by the government. The International Bookshop (*Guoji shudian*, 国际书店) acted as the sole agent, firstly under the administration of the Ministry of Culture during the 1950s, and then included into the Foreign Affairs Committee of the China Cultural Council from 1959.<sup>5</sup>

Before the 1960s, woodblock publications were not included in the Xinhua distribution system. Domestically, each publisher had its own self-running salesroom for exhibiting and selling its own publications and collections. Historical woodblock publications were sold through the second-hand book distribution network with other used books. China Bookstore (*Zhongguo shudian*, 中国书店), founded during the early 1950s by the government,

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<sup>2</sup> Christopher A. Reed, *Gutenberg in Shanghai: Chinese Print Capitalism, 1876–1937*, (UBC Press, 2004), pp. 213–253.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Nicolai Volland, 'The Control of the Media in the People's Republic of China' PhD diss, University of Heidelberg, 2003, <http://www.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/archiv/8048>, pp. 243-276.

<sup>5</sup> Lanjun Xu, 'Translation and Internationalism' in Alexander Cook ed. *Mao's Little Red Book*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 83.

merged most private businesses in Beijing, becoming the first official second-hand bookstore group.<sup>6</sup> As part of the network for disseminating ancient and second-hand books nationwide, China Bookstore also acted as a publisher photoprinting and reprinting historical classics.<sup>7</sup> Pre-PRC private woodblock publishers were allocated to this system. Guangling, for example, was under the name of the Yangzhou Ancient and Used Bookstore (*Yangzhou gujiu shudian*, 扬州古旧书店) during the 1950s in the system, which was printed on most of its publications during this period.

Internationally, woodblock books were exported by two state-held distributors: the International Bookshop and the Arts and Crafts Import and Export Company (*Gongyipin jinchukou zong gongsi*, 工艺品进出口总公司).<sup>8</sup> Catalogues issued by the publishers indicate that water-soluble woodblock products were indeed sold through the designed channels, targeting the planned foreign audiences. The 1961 catalogue of the Flourishing Studio's water-soluble woodblock printed products, for instance, was printed overseas in local languages, including English, Dutch and German; *The Hundred Flowers* was advertised in this, proving that the book was sold in these countries.<sup>9</sup> Distributed through the International Bookstore, products from the Cloudy Studio and the Tianjin branch of the Flourishing Studio were also advertised in the same catalogues.<sup>10</sup>

Woodblock publications officially entered the Xinhua distribution system in 1960, after the water-soluble woodblock printed products of the Flourishing Studio were accepted by the system. This signposted the beginning of the nationwide distribution of woodblock books.<sup>11</sup> *The Hundred Flowers* was published in 1961, one year after this historical moment in the trade. Designed by noted artists, including Guo Moruo 郭沫若 and Yu Fei'an 于非闇, it has been considered as the peak of water-soluble woodblock printed technology

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<sup>6</sup> Zhou Yan 周岩, *Wo yu Zhongguo Shudian* 我与中国书店 (Shijiazhuang: Hebei jiaoyu chubanshe, 2004), pp. 35–36.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85.

<sup>8</sup> Interview with Lei Zhenfang.

<sup>9</sup> *Catalogue of Chinese Wood-block Art Publications* (Beijing: The International Bookstore, 1961).

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> 'Wenhua bu Guanyu Xinhua Shudian Jingxiao Rongbao zhai Muban shuiyin Hua de Tongzhi', *CBSL 10*, p. 421.

innovated by the Flourishing Studio.

### Limited Editions

*The Hundred Flowers*, and most of the fine woodblock editions, were published as limited editions, with a printing quantity of around 200 to 500 copies. Two different editions were issued with the same contents, both with a small printing quantity of 200 and 300 copies respectively. The 200 copies of the two-volume edition were numbered for sale to indicate their rarity and collectability.<sup>12</sup> Most other woodblock books published by the Flourishing Studio were also very limited in quantity. For instance, *Selected Woodcuts of China* (*Zhongguo banhua xuan*, 中国版画选) had 500 copies printed and *Registers of the New Heroes* (*Xin yingxiong pu*, 新英雄谱) had 300 copies printed.<sup>13</sup> *The Night Banquet of Han Xizai* (*Han Xizai yeyan tu*, 韩熙载夜宴图), as mentioned in Chapter One, was, according to Lei Zhenfang 雷振芳, the manager of the Flourishing Studio from the 1970s, the most sophisticated painting replica made by the publisher; it took eight years to produce, although only 80 copies were printed.<sup>14</sup> Woodblock printed books from other publishers were also limited editions, with a maximum printing quantity of fewer than 1,000 copies.

The publishers explained that the limited printing quantity was due to the restricted printing capacity of woodblock. As Sun Shumei 孙树梅, deputy of the Flourishing Studio water-soluble woodblock printing department during the 1960s, writes, blocks for coloured illustrations would tear out after 300 copies.<sup>15</sup> More than 2,000 woodblocks were used in the production of *The Hundred Flowers*, in order to achieve the subtle colours on the delicately

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<sup>12</sup> Guo Moruo 郭沫若 et al., *Baihua qifang* 百花齐放 (Beijing: Rongbao zhai xinji, 1961), copyright page.

<sup>13</sup> Zheng Zhenduo 郑振铎, *Zhongguo Banhua Xuan* 中国版画选 (Beijing: Rongbao zhai, 1958). Gu Bingxin 顾炳鑫, *Xin Yingxiong Pu* 新英雄谱 (Beijing: Rongbao zhai, 1958).

<sup>14</sup> Interview with Lei Zhenfang.

<sup>15</sup> Sun Shumei 孙树梅, 'Rongbao zhai Muban shuiyin Beihou de Gushi 1 荣宝斋木版水印背后的故事 (一)', in Sun Zhiping 孙志萍, ed., *Rongbao zhai* 荣宝斋 17 (February 2013):p.281.

painted flowers. Once a small part of the block became damaged, Sun explains, the whole presentation would be affected since joint colours and motifs could not be printed precisely any longer.<sup>16</sup> Added to this, after printing several hundred copies, fine lines on most of the blocks would be gradually degraded, fading subtle details on the illustrations. This was not just the case in colourful blocks of illustrations; monochrome text blocks had the same problem. *The Manifesto*, as Mao Ziliang noted in the interview, was printed in a restricted amount because of similar technical impediments.<sup>17</sup>

However, estimations of the maximum capacity of woodblocks indicate that xylography printing is in fact able to produce 20 times more copies than the number of copies of *The Hundred Flowers*. As McDermott notes, in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century the British Missionary William Milne estimated that the maximum printing quantity of woodblocks, although varying dramatically, was in the range of 5,000 to 30,000 copies.<sup>18</sup> The average figure was, McDermott concludes, around 7,000 copies in the Qing woodblock publishing industry.<sup>19</sup> Only the first several hundred copies, however, could be printed clearly and faultless. As more copies were printed, printing quality gradually deteriorated, until the blocks tore out. Many popular commercial books were reprinted three to four times, in which the printing quality of the third or fourth prints became increasingly coarser.<sup>20</sup> As a result of using blocks that had been damaged by many re-prints, characters in these copies were often unclear, sometimes with parts of characters missing.<sup>21</sup> The prices of these later editions would decline dramatically compared with the first several hundred finely printed copies. The decline of woodblocks thus generated a hierarchy of quality and selling price, with the first several hundred copies at the top.

A printing quantity of 200 was nonetheless far below the estimated 7,000

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<sup>16</sup> Sun Shumei 孙树梅, 'Rongbao zhai Muban shuiyin Beihou de Gushi 4 荣宝斋木版水印背后的故事 (四)', in Sun Zhiping 孙志萍, ed., *Rongbao zhai* 荣宝斋 20 (May 2013), p.279.

<sup>17</sup> Interview with Mao Ziliang.

<sup>18</sup> Joseph McDermott, *A Social History of the Chinese Book: Books and Literati Culture in Late Imperial China* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2006), pp. 15–17.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 15–17.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 20–21.

<sup>21</sup> Cao Zhi 曹之, *Zhongguo Guji Banbenxue* 中国古籍版本学 (Wuchang: Wuhan University Press, 2015), p. 40.

copies that could be produced. Therefore, the concern in making *The Hundred Flowers* a limited edition, in my opinion, was not technological barriers, but printing it at a consistently high quality. *The Hundred Flowers*, as well as other fine editions, I argue, were intentionally designed as limited editions, making them the equivalent of the rare historical editions that were disseminated and valued in literati elite book culture. Restricting printing quantity to several hundred guaranteed their best archaic aesthetic value as fine editions, even though it would prevent the books from being disseminated to a bigger audience. The exclusivity of this made *The Hundred Flowers* collectable on a level similar to rare historical editions, which had historically been ardently yearned after by book collectors. In elite book culture, the first few hundred printed copies of a book were valued as ‘first edition and first printed’ (*chuban chushua*, 初版初刷), becoming limited editions that were appreciated and collected. The aesthetic achievement was referred to as ‘paper and ink radiant’ (*zhimo canran*, 纸墨灿然) for the clearness of the sheer black ink that contrasted with the snow white colour of the paper.<sup>22</sup> As with *The Hundred Flowers*, some of these finest books were only printed in a small number, which was far below the maximum number woodblock could produce.<sup>23</sup>

When woodblock technology was no longer applied to the commercialised book market for the spread of knowledge in the Republican Period, Cynthia Brokaw argues, its social function shrunk to cultural persistence among elites.<sup>24</sup> The cultural value of xylography, for private publishers and book collectors, was the consummate woodblock craftsmanship that created ‘perfect books’ that they cherished and sought out. Therefore, not only did woodblocks have to be masterly carved, but printing quantity was sacrificed, or even deliberately minimised, to guarantee the best printing quality and rarity. For centuries, noted book collectors, such as Qian Qianyi 钱谦益 in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and Tao Xiang 陶湘 in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, chose the best block cutters and best

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid, p. 102.

<sup>23</sup> Ye Dehui 叶德辉, *Shulin Qinghua* 书林清话 (Shanghai: Fudan University Press, 2008), p. 269.

<sup>24</sup> Cynthia Brokaw, ‘Commercial Woodblock Publishing in the Qing (1644–1911) and the Transition to Modern Printing Technology’, in *From Woodblocks to the Internet: Chinese Publishing and Printing Culture in Transition, circa 1800 to 2008*, eds. Cynthia Brokaw and Christopher A. Reed (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2010), pp. 44–49.

quality materials just to print a handful of copies with a view to either recording a rare title, or appreciating the books in their private circle.<sup>25</sup>

Similar to the collectable fine editions that literati elites produced, the printing quantity of *The Hundred Flowers* was restricted by the exquisiteness of water-soluble woodblock printing craftsmanship. To achieve this goal, the Flourishing Studio chose the best painters and calligraphers to create the manuscripts, whilst hiring master cutters and printers to provide the best printing.<sup>26</sup> The manager Hou Kai 侯恺 invited Guo Moruo, the author of the poems, to hand-copy them in his ink and brush calligraphy. The master ‘elaborate style’ (*gongbi*, 工笔) painter Yu Fei’an and his pupils Tian Shiguang 田世光 and Yu Zhizhen 俞致贞, all then renowned artists, were recommended to paint the 101 flowers. Hou initially suggested the noted ‘impressionist style’ (*xieyi*, 写意) master Qi Baishi 齐白石 for the illustrations. However, as Sun Shumei remembered, elaborate style was finally chosen for its sophistication of colours and fine lines, which was, he believed, more suitable for reflecting the craftsmanship of water-soluble woodblock printing.<sup>27</sup>

This collaboration of celebrated artists would certainly render the cost of production higher, whilst paying attention to delicate details drastically prolonged the work process of cutting and printing. Being hand-made, woodblock printing already required more skilful workers to take much longer than in the mechanised printing industry; the meticulous lines and subtle colours on the illustrations of *The Hundred Flowers* required precision in the production process. Nearly all the full-time illustrators and cutters at the Flourishing Studio, Sun Shumei recalled, were involved in the project, outlining, copying and cutting the more than 2,000 pieces of woodblock for the 101 illustrations. The last page alone, *All Flowers* (*yiqie hua*, 一切花), used

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<sup>25</sup> Wei Li 韦力, ‘Tao Xiang Sheyuan: Shouzhong Shupin, Dubu Zhuancang (Shang) 陶湘涉园: 首重书品, 独步专藏 (上)’, *Zhilanzhai* 芷兰斋, 27 April 2017, available at: <http://www.shixunwang.net/article/861329369222/> [Accessed on 28 June 2018].

<sup>26</sup> Sun Shumei 孙树梅, ‘Rongbao zhai Muban shuiyin Beihou de Gushi 1 荣宝斋木版水印背后的故事 (一)’, ed. Sun Zhiping 孙志萍, *Rongbao zhai* 荣宝斋 7 (February 2013), pp. 278–281.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 279.

more than 100 blocks.<sup>28</sup> The project began in 1958, and the book was published almost two years later.

Limited printing quantity also seemed to make the laborious carving and printing occupy an even bigger proportion of the total cost per copy, therefore resulting in a higher final selling price, which further restricted the dissemination of the book. Although no labour cost records of *The Hundred Flowers* remain, since the general price of labour remained at the same level from 1961 to 1972, a detailed record of the cost of *The Manifesto* could help with the calculation. According to this document, labour accounted for around 90% of the total cost of the 1,300 copies.<sup>29</sup> Considering the printing quantity of 200 copies and the much more sophisticated craftsmanship of water-soluble xylography, it is reasonable to assume that the cost of labour for *The Hundred Flowers* could account for an even higher proportion of the total cost. Mass produced printed editions of *The Hundred Flowers*, as a popular poetry collection of the late 1950s, were priced between 0.35 Yuan for paper cover and 1.9 Yuan for hardcover copies.<sup>30</sup> The final selling price of the woodblock version, however, was over 200 Yuan, 600 times more expensive than the cheapest edition.<sup>31</sup> If labour accounted for more than 90% of the total cost, it then became the major reason for the extremely high selling prices.

Therefore, as a limited edition, *The Hundred Flowers* was not designed for mass circulation. Rather, comparable to the fine editions of the Republican Period, its social function was to showcase craftsmanship, making it a luxury for a small group of people. Luxury limited editions of *The Great Encyclopaedia*, Robert Darnton argues in his research work, did not impact the masses before the French Revolution (1789–1799) because of their (un)availability and high prices. It was instead coarsely-made mass and pirate versions that spread the knowledge that prepared the public for the revolution.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid, p. 280.

<sup>29</sup> AMCM, no. 23.

<sup>30</sup> Appendix IV List of Editions of *Let the Hundred Flowers Bloom*.

<sup>31</sup> No price tag was printed on *The Hundred Flowers*. Because the publisher priced coloured woodblock prints by page, the 202 page *The Hundred Flower* would be around 200 yuan. Interview with Lei Zhenfang.

<sup>32</sup> Robert Darnton, *The Business of Enlightenment: A Publishing History of the 'Encyclopédie', 1775–1800* (Belknap Press, 1979), p. 6.

The CCP clearly understood the importance of the printing industry for propagating its ideology. In mass-produced editions of *The Hundred Flowers*, with the mission of disseminating the contents to the general public, both the printing quantity and quality sharply contrasted with the woodblock version. The various editions published in distinctive design styles between 1958 and 1961 were all produced with a much bigger printing amount, with a minimum of 5,000 copies.<sup>33</sup> The un-illustrated first edition of *The Hundred Flowers*, for instance, was published by the People's Daily Publishing House (*Renmin ribao chubanshe*, 人民日报出版社) within one month of a run of 50,000 copies being completed in 1958, 250 times more than the limited xylographic edition.<sup>34</sup>

50,000 copies were, nonetheless, a relatively small printing amount compared to more popular titles, often published in vast quantities during the Mao Era. *Selected Works of Mao Zedong* was one of the most frequently published, with the largest printing quantity. From 1949 to 1982, more than 300 million copies were on the market.<sup>35</sup> In 1967, after Zhou Enlai publicly announced a plan to print 80,000,000 sets of the books, the publishing industry accelerated the production and managed to print ten million more copies than requested.<sup>36</sup> Popular novels that propagated communist ideals were also printed in vast numbers. *Red Crag* (*Hongyan*, 红岩), one of the most famous novels of the period, had more than 6.8 million copies published during the Mao Era.<sup>37</sup> Other popular titles, including *The Song of Youth* (*Qingchun zhige*, 青春之歌), were issued in equally vast numbers, some of which had more than 1 million copies published in 1958.<sup>38</sup> 2,000 titles of translated Soviet novels, Nicolai Volland writes, were published from 1949 to 1954. Among these novels,

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<sup>33</sup> Appendix IV List of Editions of *Let the Hundred Flowers Bloom*.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> Fang Houshu 方厚枢, 'Mao Zedong Zhuzuo Chuban Jishi (1949–1982) 毛泽东著作出版纪事 (1949–1982年)', *Chuban Shiliao* 出版史料, no. 1 (2001), p. 70.

<sup>36</sup> Zhang Shenqu 张慎趋, 'Xinzhongguo Chengli Hou Mao Zedong Xuanji Chuban Gaikuang 新中国成立后《毛泽东选集》出版概况', *Dangshi Bolan* 党史博览, no. 11 (2008), pp. 16–17.

<sup>37</sup> Perry Link, *The Uses of Literature: Life in the Socialist Chinese Literary System* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000), p. 175.

<sup>38</sup> 'Guanyu Woguo Chuban Shiye de Ruogan Jiben Qingkuang (1959 Nian 8 Yue 29 Ri) 关于我国出版事业的若干情况', in *CBSL 10*, p. 149.

900,000 copies of *How the Steel was Tempered* were printed, whilst 1.3 million copies of *The Story of Zoya and Shura*, another popular novel, were printed from 1952 to 1953.<sup>39</sup> To make the books affordable to the masses, the printing quality was generally low and with no elaborate designs. Even for Mao's works, although editing work was carefully undertaken to avoid any misunderstandings, the coarse printing quality can hardly be compared to the limited editions of xylographic titles (fig. 2.1). When propaganda was at stake, perfectionism of presentation was clearly sacrificed.

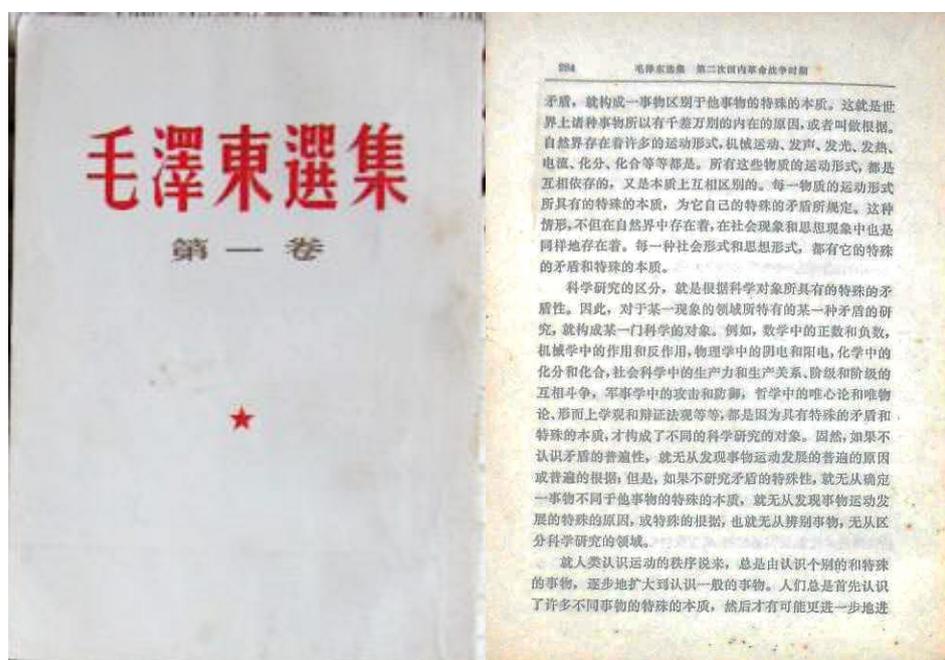


Fig. 2.1 Cover and one contents page in *Mao Zedong Xuanji*, 1967 (Shanghai: Renmin chubanshe, 1967), photographed by Yuyu Yang, Private collection.

When millions of copies were able to be produced within a very short period, it is clear that publishing limited editions was an intentional choice of the woodblock trade, prioritising quality by sacrificing print quantity, particularly given that none of these titles were printed in numbers close to the maximum capacity of woodblocks. The fact that all the 13 newly carved titles were carefully produced as limited editions<sup>40</sup> meant that perfectionism in presentation weighed far higher than the printing quantity and efficiency. This

<sup>39</sup> Nicolai Volland, 'Translating the Socialist State: Cultural Exchange, National Identity, and the Socialist World in the Early PRC', *Twentieth-Century China* 33, no. 2 (April 2008), pp. 61-63.

<sup>40</sup> Appendix III, List of New Woodblock Books Published during the Mao Era.

also indicates that woodblock publishers, while being fully aware that the small printing quantity would restrict the dissemination of the books, designed them for audiences other than the broad masses, which will be analysed in the following sections.

### **Limiting the Audience**

Not only was *The Hundred Flowers* designed as a limited edition, which already restrained its audience to 200, it was also not put on the book market for everyone. When the Ministry of Culture approved the request from Xinhua Group to sell water-soluble woodblock printing products of the Flourishing Studio in 1960, it was suggested that the dissemination be restricted to a “limited small scope”. The report advised that the products were too expensive and the contents too artistic for the masses, therefore they were not suitable for sale to the general public. The feasible audiences for the products, the document continued, were foreign guests, art institutions and experts who “had the necessity of buying the books urgently”. Meanwhile, written selling plans were required from both the Flourishing Studio and the Xinhua Group before distributing the water-soluble woodblock printed products nationwide.<sup>41</sup>

The above suggestions were in fact executed with political enforcement through a strictly regulated hierarchical selling system in all Xinhua bookstores. The 1960 governmental guidance for the Xinhua system wrote that since “different subjects suit different needs”, books were “suggested to be sold to their targeted reader groups, which were divided into academic organisations, experts, and workers etc.”<sup>42</sup> In fulfilling these ‘suggestions’, readers were strictly classified by their identities in Xinhua bookshops, in which different sections were only open to restricted audiences. Purchasing classified titles

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<sup>41</sup> ‘Wenhuaabu Guanyu Xinhua Shudian Jingxiao Rongbao zhai Muban shuiyin Hua de Tongzhi’, *CBSL 10*, p. 421.

<sup>42</sup> ‘Wei Jinyibu di Shixian Chuban Gongzuo de Jihua hua er Fendou – Hu Yuzhi Shuzhang zai Di-erjie Quanguo Chuban Xingzheng Huiyi Shang de Baogao (1952 Nian 10 Yue 25 Ri) 为进一步的实现出版工作的计划化而奋斗 – 胡愈之署长在第二届全国出版行政会议上的报告 (1952年10月25日)’, in *CBSL 4*, pp. 293–305.

required registration of the buyer's identity and work permits, whilst reference letters were needed for certain highly confidential titles. In the Wangfujing 王府井 bookstore of the Xinhua Group, for example, although some areas were opened to the general public, classified services required identification and registration. According to the writer Weiyi's 维一 recollections, after forging a reference letter from his father's working unit, he was informed in the bookstore that only individuals with references from high rank governmental organisations could enter the confidential sections. The person on his forged letter was below the required level; therefore his purchase request was rejected.<sup>43</sup>

After the Flourishing Studio entered the Xinhua distribution system in 1960, its products were among the highly restricted subjects, for which references and work permits were required to purchase them.<sup>44</sup> The restrictions were equally strict for woodblock publishers selling and exhibiting cultural products in their self-owned salesrooms. Before entering the Xinhua system, the Flourishing Studio's woodblock products were only domestically sold in their salesroom and distributed through the International Bookstore chain overseas, both of which were under the administration of the political authority. According to Lei Zhenfang's 雷振芳 recollections, original paintings were only sold to high rank officials, being displayed in a special sales room that required registration and references to enter.<sup>45</sup>

The idea of controlling the dissemination of books, however, was not just an innovation of the CCP publishing industry. In a way, it continued the elite woodblock culture of Chinese history. Having a highly select audience, as Joseph McDermott argues, elite woodblock printing did not publicise written knowledge beyond small literati circles.<sup>46</sup> Both imperial courts and literati societies, rather than intending to enlighten the masses, withheld fine

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<sup>43</sup> Weiyi 维一, 'Taoshu Zuiyi Shi Huangtang 淘书最忆是荒唐', *Erxiantang* 二闲堂 (blog), 2001, available at: <http://www.edubridge.com/stories/taoshu.htm> [Accessed on 28 June 2018].

<sup>44</sup> Interview with Lei Zhenfang.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> McDermott, *A Social History of the Chinese Book*, pp. 115–117.

woodblock books from commoners by circulating them exclusively in a highly select circle. Very often, audiences of these books were limited to the imperial family, scholar-officials and private elite literati groups.

These restrictions endowed ‘publishing’ in China with a different meaning from that in the European context. The printing industry in France, Roger Chartier argues, revolutionised the knowledge system by duplicating texts for the general public. Originating from the Latin, ‘publication’ in fact etymologically means “publicising or spreading to the public”.<sup>47</sup> Through printed books, the publishing industry prepared the masses with knowledge for the French Revolution of 1799, thus establishing a public sphere that deconstructed the protected knowledge system established by the old regime.<sup>48</sup>

The idea of controlling the accessibility of books, however, was embedded in the entire East Asian context, where ‘publishing’ was interpreted differently. Peter Kornicki argues that the word ‘publish’ was translated as ‘出版’ (*chuban* in Chinese, and *shuppan* in Japanese phonetically), which means ‘(printed) out of blocks’ in both Chinese and Japanese. This word has no intrinsic connection to conveying knowledge to the public; instead, it is more related to the printing method.<sup>49</sup> Indeed, as McDermott points out, finely printed books in elite book culture within China, instead of educating the masses, stabilised the existing political order by prioritising the accessibility of knowledge through elite circles, educational institutions and library systems.<sup>50</sup>

In the 1960 Xinhua document, the two audiences that were allowed to buy *The Hundred Flowers* and other woodblock books through the Xinhua system were foreign guests and art institutions and experts. Both were privileged within the CCP system. The first permitted audience, foreign purchasers, seemed to be beyond the political control of the CCP. Nonetheless, all of them were either allies of the CCP, or of significant importance to the communist governance. During the Mao Era, international visitors were distinguished

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<sup>47</sup> Roger Chartier, *The Cultural Origins of the French Revolution*, (London: Duke University Press, 1991), p. 44.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Peter Kornicki, ‘Manuscript, Not Print: Scribal Culture in the Edo Period’, *Journal of Japanese Studies*, no. 32 (2006), p. 24.

<sup>50</sup> McDermott, *A Social History of the Chinese Book*, pp. 115–147.

guests permitted by the political authority. Most of them were invited to attend political, cultural and economic events by the CCP government. Therefore, they were offered the privilege of buying woodblock products that contained less propaganda content from the authority. ‘Foreign friends’ who visited the Flourishing Studio in 1952, according to Hou Kai, the manager of the publisher during the 1950s and 1960s, included the attendants of the Peace Conference of the Asian Pacific Region.<sup>51</sup> Most of them were cultural celebrities from countries with no diplomatic relations with China; hence their support was highly appreciated by the CCP.<sup>52</sup> During the Mao Era, foreign politicians and celebrities who visited the Flourishing Studio include Vietnam National Chairman Hu Chi-ming, the Secretary of the United States Henry Kissinger, the Prime Minister of Cambodia Samdech Penn Nouth and Nobel Prize winners Li Zhengdao 李政道, Yang Zhenning 杨振宁 and Ding Zhaozhong 丁肇中.<sup>53</sup>

The second permitted audience was art institutions and experts. The reason for selling the books to this audience, as declared in the document, was for academic research.<sup>54</sup> Academic research, as part of the educational system, was required to serve the needs of the proletariat.<sup>55</sup> As an important ideological apparatus, educational institutions were allowed to access historical art and cultural products, mainly to criticise and reform the old culture. As records suggest, *The Hundred Flowers* was held at a library affiliated with Beijing Art Teachers’ School.<sup>56</sup> When socialist realism was the required principle for all art

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<sup>51</sup> Hou Kai 侯恺, ‘Rongbao zhai Muban shuiyin Hua: Kuizeng Guoji Youren de Zhuyao Lipin 荣宝斋木版水印画: 馈赠国际友人的主要礼品’, *Shandong Shangbao* 山东商报, 5 July 2010, available at: [http://60.216.0.164:99/html/2017-10/20/node\\_16.htm](http://60.216.0.164:99/html/2017-10/20/node_16.htm) [Accessed on 28 June 2018].

<sup>52</sup> Zhongwen Chubanshu Fuwu Zhongxin 中文出版物服务中心, *Zhonggong Zhongyao Lishi Wenxian Ziliao Huibian: Teji* 中共重要历史文献资料汇编: 特辑, Volume 47, 47 vols (Los Angeles: Zhongwen chubanshu fuwu zhongxin 中文出版物服务中心, 2006), pp. 210–213.

<sup>53</sup> Mi Jingyang 米景扬, *Wo zai Rongbao zhai Sishinian* 我在荣宝斋 40 年 (Beijing: Beijing Chubanshe, 2014), pp. 76–80.

<sup>54</sup> ‘Wenhua bu Guanyu Xinhua Shudian Jingxiao Rongbao zhai Muban shuiyin Hua de Tongzhi’, *CBSL 10*, p. 421.

<sup>55</sup> Michael Sullivan, *Art and Artists of Twentieth Century China* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1996), pp. 129–131.

<sup>56</sup> A 10-volume edition with the official seal. ‘Lot 4543. 10-volume edition of Baihua qifang’, in *Beijing Baoli 2014 Chunji Paimaihui* 北京保利 2014 春季拍卖会 (Beijing: Beijing Poly Auctions, 2014), available at: <http://www.polypm.com.cn/index.php?s=Auction/view/ppcd/art5052284543> [Accessed on 28 June 2018].

styles,<sup>57</sup> Chinese ink and brush painting, under this trend, sought to reform its techniques in adapting the required socialist style and themes in art schools and institutions.<sup>58</sup> Presenting policies with classic Chinese style, *The Hundred Flowers* was a good example of attempting to combine elaborate style painting with reformed water-soluble woodblock printing technology and revolutionary contents.

Once the books entered libraries and moved into the hands of experts, they were restricted from the general public. All library resources required work permits, whilst art experts often bought books for their institutions. This again was similar to elite book culture in the Ming and Qing context. As McDermott argues, books in private collections, academic institutes and library systems were strictly controlled as vehicles of knowledge, which only select audiences were able to access.<sup>59</sup> This is fundamentally different from the European context, as McDermott notes by quoting Roger Chartier, where in Western Europe from the 15<sup>th</sup> century onwards public libraries were accessible to most citizens, whilst private collections also often showed a willingness to share knowledge. In Chinese history, however, libraries functioned more as a barrier to knowledge, preventing books and their collections from circulating among the general public, ‘commoners’ in elites’ eyes. Both official and private libraries carefully restricted their visitors to privileged elite circles. State-held libraries in the Ming and Qing Dynasty, such as the royal library Wenyan Ge (Belvedere of Literary Profundity, 文渊阁) and Guozhi Jian (Imperial Academy, 国子监), only open to the royal family and scholar-officials, openly ruled out the public from accessing their resources.<sup>60</sup> Private libraries and collections made this restriction even narrower, mostly limiting themselves to family and friends. Even in the Republican Period, private libraries, such as Jiaye Hall (*Jiayetang*, 嘉业堂), would only open to individuals within the owner Liu Chenggan’s 刘承幹 circle or individuals who held reference letters from Liu’s

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<sup>57</sup> Julia Andrews, ‘The Art of the Cultural Revolution’, in *Art in Turmoil: The Chinese Cultural Revolution. 1966–76*, ed. Richard King (Vancouver and Toronto: UBC Press, 2010), p. 30.

<sup>58</sup> Sullivan, *Art and Artists of Twentieth Century China*, pp. 131–134.

<sup>59</sup> McDermott, *A Social History of the Chinese Book*, pp. 127–147.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 120–126.

friends.<sup>61</sup>

In the enforced Xinhua distribution system, very similar to state libraries and private collections during the Ming and Qing, fine woodblock books were excluded from the general public. It was planned that book selling would be strictly controlled by the central government through a pre-booking system. Starting from 1952, the Ministry of Culture required nationwide pre-registration for buying new publications. The plan, according to the editorial in the *People's Daily* on 30 December 1952, was to avoid a waste of printing materials, whilst providing a better service to targeted users.<sup>62</sup> This pre-booking system was institutionalised in 1959, in which the Xinhua distribution system allocated books to each bookshop based on pre-booking reports, whilst only “a small amount” of books were allowed for flexible unreserved retail.<sup>63</sup>

Books allowed to the masses in this system were propaganda themed, such as the novels mentioned above in this chapter, which were printed and distributed in large scale. At the same time, the general public were excluded from accessing all fine woodblock books. The bulletin of Xinhua Bookstore noted that water-soluble woodblock printed products were not suitable for the masses, because of the expensive prices and the specialised content. In particular when the country had insufficient resources, social and cultural resources “had to be delivered to those who need the books most urgently”.<sup>64</sup> All this indicates that although literati elite circles and old library systems did not exist any longer during the Mao Era, a new elite group associated with the CCP was prioritised in the distribution of archaic fine woodblock products.

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<sup>61</sup> Ying Changxing 应长兴 and Li Xingzhong 李兴中, eds., *Jiayetang Zhi* 嘉业堂志 (Beijing: Guojia tushuguan chubanshe, 2008), pp. 120–121.

<sup>62</sup> ‘Jinyibu Shixing Baokan Tushu de Jihua Faxing – Renmin Ribao Shelun (1952.12.30) 进一步实行报刊图书的计划发行 – 人民日报社论 (1952年12月30日)’, in *CBSL* 4, pp. 383–385.

<sup>63</sup> ‘Wenhuaabu Guanyu Banfa Tushu Jinfahuo Shixing Zhangcheng de Tongzhi (59) Wen Chu Qian Zi di 377 hao (1959.5.18) 文化部关于颁发图书进发货试行章程的通知 (59) 文出钱字第 377 号 (1959年5月18日)’, in *CBSL* 10, pp. 74–83.

<sup>64</sup> ‘Wenhuaabu Guanyu Xinhua Shudian Jingxiao Rongbao zhai Muban shuiyin Hua de Tongzhi’, p. 421.

## Gift-giving

As well as being sold as limited editions to restricted audiences, woodblock books, including *The Hundred Flowers*, comprised a major source of gifts for the government throughout the Mao era. Some of these books, I will argue, were primarily produced, not for selling, but for gift-giving. The consumption of these fine books as gifts indicates that there were social groups that continued to practice the literati gift-exchanging that had existed throughout Chinese history before the PRC, when quality woodblock books were considered archaistic cultural symbols. The difference was that during the Mao Era, both the production and consumption of gift books functioned mainly within the CCP system, where private publishing was gradually being prohibited by the political authority.

### *Produced as Official Gifts*

McDermott argues that gift-giving is a neglected yet essential cultural element in Chinese society, especially in relation to elite book culture. The Three Perfections – poetry, calligraphy and painting – as well as fine books, were often appreciated and shared as gifts in a “literati elegant gathering” (*wenren yaji*, 文人雅集).<sup>65</sup> Historically, fine woodblock books had been produced and consumed as gifts. Most private publishers during late imperial China (from 1800 to 1912), such as Tao Xiang 陶湘 and Dong Kang 董康, would frequently produce fine editions solely for the sake of gift-giving in their private circles. This rendered purchasing and gift-giving of equal importance in disseminating books.<sup>66</sup> Therefore, in the history of Chinese books, McDermott further argues, non-commercial exchanges with uncertain patterns functioned

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<sup>65</sup> Shane McCausland and Lizhong Ling, eds., *Telling Images of China: Narrative and Figure Paintings, 15th – 20th Century from the Shanghai Museum* (London: Scala Publ, 2009), p. 56.

<sup>66</sup> McDermott, *A Social History of the Chinese Book*, p. 84.

as frequently as transactions on an open book market. The role of writers, publishers, printers and sellers were often interchangeable in elite private publishing, and in many cases there were no sellers, but instead gift-senders and receivers. This also meant that books were circulated with multiple identities: they were sometimes sold as commodities, yet sometimes exchanged as presents among literati circles.<sup>67</sup>

Books were crucial national gifts for the first modern Chinese state. In 1936, in a formal ceremony, the Republican government sent a set of reprinted *The Complete Library in Four Sections* (*Siku quanshu*, 四库全书) to Lenin Library through the Soviet Union Foreign Friendship and Communication Committee.<sup>68</sup> Subsidised by the government, printing this fine book with archaistic references as important national gifts comprised, as the *World Daily* (*Shijie ribao*, 世界日报) reported on 13 August 1936, “sending them to allies as gifts, whilst publicising the history of the nation”.<sup>69</sup> Although exchanging national presents differed from personal gift-giving, the reason for woodblock publications being selected as national gifts was their popularity for gift-giving in Chinese book culture, as well as the appreciation they earned from foreign buyers.

In the Maoist context, gift-giving books was an essential practice among common people in their social lives, as well as being of great importance in propaganda. Mao’s little red books, as many scholars including Jennifer Hubbert write, became an essential wedding gift.<sup>70</sup> Following McDermott’s theory, I will argue that the literati elite convention of book gift-giving also continued during the Mao Era among CCP politicians and cultural elites, justifying fine woodblock books like *The Hundred Flowers* being selected as national and private gifts. The books were disseminated both as commodities

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid, pp. 115–116.

<sup>68</sup> Xiao Yifei 肖伊绯, ‘Sikuquanshu Zhenben Zeng Sulian “四库全书珍本” 赠苏联’, *Renmin Zhengxiebao* 人民政协报, 21 May 2015, available at: <http://dangshi.people.com.cn/n/2015/0521/c85037-27038065.html> [Accessed on 28 June 2018].

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Jennifer Hubbert, ‘(Re)collecting Mao: Memory and Fetish in Contemporary China’. *American Ethnologist* 33, no. 2 (2006), p. 183.

with price tags, and at the same time produced and exchanged as gifts. On the publishing side, *The Hundred Flowers* was designed with a traditional gift-giving theme and aesthetics. Both the subjects and the art style had proved to be popular among gift-presenters for centuries. The format of *The Hundred Flowers* is ‘album of flower’ (*huapu*, 花谱), or ‘album of letter papers’ (*jianpu*, 笺谱), in which the paintings are selected from letter papers. Both ‘album of flower’ and ‘album of letter papers’ with flower illustrations are thus essentially flower painting albums with poems.<sup>71</sup> This style has existed in Chinese book culture since the Ming Dynasty. During the first year of the Tianqi 天启 Reign (1621–1627) in the Ming Dynasty, for instance, a woodblock printed flower album entitled *Newly Carved Painting and Poem Anthology of Herbs and Flowers* (*Xinjuan caobenhua shipu*, 新镌草本花诗谱) was edited and published by Huang Fengchi 黄凤池.<sup>72</sup> Associating each flower with instructions or poems, this album of flowers closely resembles *The Hundred Flowers* in both subject matter and design style (fig. 2.2). The more recent title of a similar style was *Album of the Hundred Flowers Poems and Letter Papers* (*Baihuashi jianpu*, 百花诗笺谱), published in 1906 by The Studio of Literary Beauty (*Wenmei zhai*, 文美斋) in Tianjin, which was appreciated and shared among literati circles.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Michella Bussotti, ‘Woodcut Illustrations: A General Outline’, in *Title Graphics and Text in the Production of Technical Knowledge in China: The Warp and the Weft*, eds. Francesca Bray, Vera Dorofeeva-Lichtmann and Georges Métaillé, vol. 79, Sinica Leidensia Series (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2017), p. 464.

<sup>72</sup> Huang Fengchi 黄凤池, ‘Lot 3208 Xinjuan Caobenhua Shipu 新镌草本花诗谱, Tianqi Reign, Ming Dynasty, 1621’, in *Zhongguo Jiade 2016 Chunji Paimaihui* 中国嘉德 2016 春季拍卖 (Beijing: China Guardian, 2016).

<sup>73</sup> Zhang Zhaoxiang 张兆祥, *Baihuashi Jianpu* 百花诗笺谱 (Tianjin: Tianjin wenmei zhai, 1911).



Fig. 2.2 Peony, in the Ming woodblock printed edition of *Newly Carved Painting and Poem Anthology of Herbs and Flowers* (Beijing: China Guardian Auction, 2016, Lot 3208).

As well as acknowledging the historical references, the Flourishing Studio also chose the subjects and the style of album of letter papers for *The Hundred Flowers* based on recent successful experiences. Adhering to the gift-giving convention, private publishers had commissioned the Flourishing Studio to print album of letter papers during the Republican Period. During the 1930s, the noted book collector and book historian Zheng Zhenduo 郑振铎 obtained a rare Ming copy of *The Ten Bamboo Studio Album of Letter Papers* (*Shizhu zhai jianpu*, 十竹斋笺谱, hereafter *Ten Bamboo Studio*), the earliest extant coloured album of letter papers, for his private collection. Zheng reedited this with Lu Xun 鲁迅 and the two then commissioned the Flourishing Studio to produce a new edition of the book with improved water-colour woodblock printing technology in 1933.<sup>74</sup> Sun Shumei remembered that, similar to other commissioned gift books, most copies of *Ten Bamboo Studio* were taken by the two commissioners as gifts for their friends, making “the little amount left in the store” hardly able to meet the high demand of buying”.<sup>75</sup> In the

<sup>74</sup> Sören Edgren, ‘Chinese Rare Books and Colour Printing’, *The East Asian Library Journal* 10 (Spring 2001), p. 43.

<sup>75</sup> Sun Shumei 孙树梅, ‘Wo suo Qinli de Rongbao zhai Muban shuiyin Fazhan Licheng 1 我所亲历的荣宝斋木版水印发展历程 (一)’, ed. Sun Zhiping 孙志萍, *Rongbao zhai* 荣宝斋, February 2012, p. 250.

dissemination of this Flourishing Studio edition of *Ten Bamboo Studio*, therefore, as McDermott argues, purchasing and gift-giving became two equally important channels.

Their previous big success and high demand made the Flourishing Studio, as Sun recalled, decide to publish similar subjects to meet the needs of the market during the 1950s. By assembling painting replicas and letter papers that had already been published separately in albums, the Flourishing Studio published titles such as *A Selection of Modern National Paintings* (*Xiandai guohua xuan*, 现代国画选) and *The New Flourishing and Treasured Studio Album of Poetry and Letter Papers* (*Rongbao zhai xinji shijianpu*, 荣宝斋新记诗笺谱) in 1955.<sup>76</sup> The albums, as Hou Kai recalled in 2000, “sold extremely well” as gifts for foreign visitors and domestic cultural officials.<sup>77</sup> The popularity of these books indicates that the historical style of ‘manual of paintings’ (*huapu*, 画谱) and ‘album of letter papers’ were still a favourable format among gift-purchasers during the Mao Era. For instance, in a private collection, a copy of *The New Flourishing and Treasured Studio Album of Poetry and Letter Papers* was signed with the gift-sender’s name – Nan Hanchen 南汉宸, the first president of the People’s Bank of China – to his Japanese friend Nishida Zenzo 西田善藏 in 1961.<sup>78</sup> The sender’s calligraphic signature and the receipt’s name are written in ink and brush on the title page, following literati convention. Whether Nan Hanchen bought the copy personally, or whether he obtained the book through his governmental connections remains unknown. However, the fact that this album of letter papers was exchanged as a present proves that book gift-giving still took place during the Mao Era.

Some of the titles that the Flourishing Studio published before the PRC were officially requested by the government as national gifts in the 1950s. According to the manager Hou Kai, many albums of letter papers in a similar

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Hou, ‘Rongbao zhai Muban shuiyin Hua’.

<sup>78</sup> Inscriptions, blank page in *Rongbao zhai Xinji Shijianpu* 荣宝斋新记诗笺谱, private collection. Photos available at: <http://book.kongfz.com/1707/222308348/> [Accessed on 28 June 2018].

style to *The Hundred Flowers* were ordered by the central government as diplomatic gifts. The *Beiping Album of Letter Papers* (*Beiping jianpu*, 北平笺谱) and *Ten Bamboo Studio*, for instance, were reprinted by the Flourishing Studio and became important gifts for ‘international friends’. At the Asian Pacific Peace Conference in 1952, foreign representatives were given the two books as gifts.<sup>79</sup>

Therefore, when *The Hundred Flowers* project began in 1958, the style of album of letter papers had already proved to be popular in both selling and gift-exchange. Since private commissioners were no longer allowed after 1956, all these gift books were published and organised by the publisher, or were assigned by the government as national gifts. What made *The Hundred Flowers* different from the other album of letter papers and manual of paintings that the Flourishing Studio had published before was its communist content. The aim was to, as Hou Kai recalled, develop *The Hundred Flowers* as a showcase of how art craftsmanship of water-soluble woodblock printing was relevant to “serving the politics”.<sup>80</sup> New gift ideas were needed for the socialist era, yet the convention of gift-giving remained. The book was highly praised by political leaders like Chen Yi 陈毅. Officials such as Guo Moruo, the author, and Sa Kongliao 萨空了, the head of the People’s Art Publishing House were celebrated for its accomplishments.<sup>81</sup> It then became a successful model of water-soluble woodblock printed gifts with a modern theme. For instance, Zheng Maoda 郑茂达, a retired employee of the Flourishing Studio, writes that, according to internal documents kept in the publishing house, the book and its manuscripts were lent to the Foreign Cultural Affairs Committee (*Duiwai wenhua weiyuanhui*, 对外文化委员会) for exhibitions in Japan.<sup>82</sup> Thus, *The Hundred Flowers* was sold as commodity, but at the same time it was exchanged as a national gift.

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Sun Shumei 孙树梅, ‘Rongbao zhai Mubai shuiyin Beihou de Gushi 1’. p. 278.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, p. 281.

<sup>82</sup> Zheng Maoda 郑茂达, ‘Rongbao zhai yu Guo Moruo 荣宝斋与郭沫若’, *Rongbao zhai* 荣宝斋 25 (November 2013), p. 254.

In contrast to Robert Darnton's theory, woodblock printed national gifts were produced under political orders, omitting the crucial part of selling in a 'circuit'.<sup>83</sup> The books were mostly sent to the governmental commissioners before being presented to selected receivers. The CCP government established the Protocol Department for purchasing national gifts in the early 1950s.<sup>84</sup> During the early 1960s, as Mi Jingyang 米景扬 remembered, the Flourishing Studio was seen as one of the essential visiting 'attractions' and gift providers for important diplomats by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, and the Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries.<sup>85</sup> This appointment by the central government made woodblock books and replicas highly desired as national gifts by foreign politicians and guests who visited the publisher's shop.<sup>86</sup>

While some woodblock paintings and books were sold on book markets, important titles were exclusively produced and purchased by the government as official gifts. These gifts were designed for important political events and politicians, both domestically and internationally. Only after fulfilling their political mission was the surplus sometimes disseminated and sold to the public.<sup>87</sup>

Although modern books were certainly included among the gifts that Chairman Mao and other politicians sent to foreign politicians, woodblock publications occupied an equally important proportion. In 1972 when the Japanese Prime Minister Tanaka Kakue visited China, for instance, Mao sent him a set of thread-bound *Collected Commentaries on the Verses of Chu*, which was photoprinted from a Song edition.<sup>88</sup> This important gift-giving highlights how essential woodblock books were to national gift purchasing, and how this influenced the establishment of the woodblock department at the

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<sup>83</sup> Robert Darnton, 'What is the History of Books?', *Daedalus*, 1982, pp. 65–83.

<sup>84</sup> Ma Baofeng 马保奉, *Libin Chunqiu* 礼宾春秋 (Beijing: World Affair Press, 2007), p. 223.

<sup>85</sup> Mi, *Wo zai Rongbao zhai Sishinian*, p. 76.

<sup>86</sup> Hou, 'Rongbao zhai Muban shuiyin Hua'.

<sup>87</sup> Interview with Mao Ziliang.

<sup>88</sup> Zeng Jianhui 曾建徽, *Zhongnanhai Jishi: Zeng Jianhui Tongxun Wenji* 中南海纪事: 曾建徽通讯文集 (Beijing: Wuzhou chuanbo chubanshe, 2006), p. 80.

Cloudy Studio.<sup>89</sup> Earlier, from 1949 to the first half of 1965, according to Sun Shumei, the Flourishing Studio published 292 titles of water-soluble woodblock prints, including 42 titles of modern and ancient painting albums such as *Collected Paintings of Qi Baishi* (*Qi Baishi huaji*, 齐白石画集), 249 titles of painting replicas such as *Court Ladies Wearing Flowered Headdresses* (*Zanhua shinü tu*, 簪花仕女图) and part of *The Night Banquet of Han Xizai*.<sup>90</sup> As Sun recalled, these were mostly required by the government and sent as national gifts. In 1954, when the first Prime Minister of Burma Sao Shwe Thaik Ba U visited China, Prime Minister Zhou Enlai and General Chen Yi sent *Court Ladies Wearing Flowered Headdresses* to the important guest (fig. 2.3). Contemporary informants all confirm that woodblock books and replicas were requested as national gifts from their publishing houses.



Fig. 2.3 Zhou Enlai and Chen Yi showing a replica of *Court Ladies Wearing Flowered Headdresses* to the Prime Minister of Burma Sao Shwe Thaik Ba U in 1954. *Rongbao zhai* 荣宝斋, August 2012 (Beijing: *Rongbao zhai*, 2012), p. 275.

<sup>89</sup> Interview with Mao Ziliang.

<sup>90</sup> Sun recorded that he obtained the data from *List of Numbered Water-soluble Woodblock Printed Paintings by the Flourishing and Treasured Studio* (*Rongbao zhai Muban shuiyin hua bianhao yilanbiao*, 荣宝斋木版水印画编号一览表) from the 10<sup>th</sup> May 1965, stencil printed and edited by manager Hou Kai. See Sun Shumei 孙树梅, 'Wo suo Qinli de Rongbao zhai Muban shuiyin Fazhan Licheng 4 我所亲历的荣宝斋木版水印发展历程 (四)', ed. Sun Zhiping 孙志萍, *Rongbao zhai* 荣宝斋, June 2012, p. 265.

## *The Receiving Culture*

In national gift-exchanging, it was primarily the sending party – governmental organisations and political leaders – that decided what constituted a proper gift. For private gift-giving, however, the senders and the receivers chose gifts based on personal interest. Since most woodblock gifts, according to publishers such as Hou Kai, gained popularity in the domestic market, it is reasonable to assume that an audience existed for fine woodblock publications. This illustrates that a literati culture of gift-giving books continued as a type of cultural distinction among political and cultural elites during the Mao Era, in which those involved shared and appreciated archaistic aesthetics.

A large part of the historical records of gift-giving events of the Song Dynasty relate to gifts being imperially bestowed, but equal gift-exchanging became more common among scholar-officials in the later Ming and Qing. Largely based on duplicating rare historical copies and producing new rare editions with a focus on perfectionism through private publishing, gift-exchanging often took place within small private circles.<sup>91</sup> Since fine books were equally important to, and closely linked with the three perfections – poems, calligraphies and paintings – these were frequently exchanged for appreciation in literati leisure lives. Exchanging finely carved and printed books within a private circle was also an important way of obtaining books in dynastic China since these fine books were seldom sold on the open book market.<sup>92</sup> The above reasons made book gift-giving popular among scholar-officials. When analysing the development of printing blocks in the Ming Dynasty, contemporary writer Lu Rong 陆容 (1436–1494) recorded that all high-rank officials in the court exchanged printed books as gifts, and “some governmental organs are quite extravagant in this regard”.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> McDermott, *A Social History of the Chinese Book*, pp. 85–94.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> Lucille Chia, ‘Mashaben: Commercial Publishing in Jianyang from the Song to the Ming’, in *The Song-Yuan-Ming Transition in Chinese History*, ed. Paul Jakov Smith and Richard von Glahn (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2003), p. 304.

This type of gift-exchanging still had a place during the Mao Era, continuing the cultural convention from the Republican Period. As discussed above, fine woodblock editions published during the Republican Period were requested as gifts from commissioners such as Zheng Zhenduo and Lu Xun. Although private commissions were no longer allowed, gift-giving activities did not stop. Zheng Zhenduo, for instance, exchanged *Ten Bamboo Studio* which he and Lu commissioned, as a gift with his peers during the Mao Era. In 1956, he sent one copy of the book to his friend Wenkai 文楷, with the recipient's name and his signature written on the title page in calligraphic style with ink and brush (fig. 2.4).<sup>94</sup> The book had once been, according to the name on the seal impression on the title page, in the book collection of Shi Zhecun 施蛰存, a pioneer writer of the Republican Period.<sup>95</sup> The fact that this book had been exchanged as a gift many times indicates that the cultural convention of gift-giving still had its audience, undertaken in an almost unchanged manner, regardless of the drastic political changes.



Fig. 2.4 Zheng Zhenduo *Shizhuzhai Jianpu Qianzengben*, Shi Zhecun *Jiucang*, 1956 Nian 12 Yue 27 Ri Zeng Wenkaixiong 郑振铎十竹斋笺谱签赠本, 施蛰存旧藏, 1956年12月27日赠文楷兄', in *Poly Auctions 2013 Spring Sale* (Beijing: Poly Auctions, 2013, Lot 3190).

One of the gift-receiving audiences of *The Hundred Flowers* was CCP cultural celebrities. Although the book was published by the state-held

<sup>94</sup> 'Lot 3190 Zheng Zhenduo *Shizhuzhai Jianpu Qianzengben*, Shi Zhecun *Jiucang*, 1956 Nian 12 Yue 27 Ri Zeng Wenkaixiong 郑振铎十竹斋笺谱签赠本, 施蛰存旧藏, 1956年12月27日赠文楷兄', in *Beijing Baoli 2013 Chunji Paimaihui* 北京保利2013春季拍卖会 (Beijing: Poly Auctions, 2013).

<sup>95</sup> Bonnie S. McDougall and Kam Louie, *The Literature of China in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), p. 136.

publisher the Flourishing Studio, the group involved in its publishing and dissemination, including author Guo Moruo, participated in the project very much in the manner of private publishers. Very active culturally, Guo managed to retain a keen relationship with both the new and the old. While writing a large number of books praising the new government and CCP leaders, he was also passionate about elite woodblock publishing.<sup>96</sup> In producing *The Hundred Flowers*, Guo was the major participant who managed to make the book achieve the literati Three Perfections that was essential in gift-giving. Whilst the 101 poems he wrote for *The Hundred Flowers* were communist contents as a gift for the CCP, Guo hand copied them in his calligraphic style by ink and brush in the woodblock edition, making the presentation more suited to literati gift-giving.<sup>97</sup> Not only did he write the poems and contribute his calligraphy, he also invited Yu Fei'an and his pupils to paint the flowers in elaborated style. *The Hundred Flowers*, although it had communist contents, was therefore presented in classic Chinese style, aiming to achieve the Three Perfections in every aspect that the literati pursued. Guo also wrote poems in every preface for other editions of *The Hundred Flowers*, praising the artistic skills of the paper cut and woodcut illustrations. Again, all the poems were written in calligraphic style in ink and brush.<sup>98</sup> Both Sun Shumei and Hou Kai remembered that Guo frequently visited the Flourishing Studio, buying and exchanging books and artworks with his peers. Due to the popularity of his calligraphic works, Guo was often invited to the Flourishing Studio to sign his publications when they were bought by other clients who wanted his signature.<sup>99</sup>

Significant evidence indicates that Guo Moruo was an active figure in book gift-giving. In 1975, for instance, he sent a copy of *Thirty-seven Poems by Chairman Mao* (*Maozhuxi shici sanshiqi shou*, 毛主席诗词三十七首), one of the thread-bound editions of Mao's poems, to the Japanese politician Tokuma

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<sup>96</sup> Zheng, 'Rongbao zhai yu Guo Moruo', pp. 254–261.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid, p. 259.

<sup>98</sup> Appendix IV List of Editions of *Let the Hundred Flowers Bloom*.

<sup>99</sup> Zheng, 'Rongbao zhai yu Guo Moruo', pp. 254–261.

Utsunomiya 宇都宫德马.<sup>100</sup> Guo's gift-giving also did not just involve woodblock printed books. In 1967, he presented his work *Translated Poems by Moruo* (*Moruo yishi ji*, 沫若译诗集) to Wang Renmei 王人美, a well-known film star, with his signature on the cover.<sup>101</sup> Like Tokuma and Wang Renmei, most of the receivers were celebrities in their field. Apart from politicians, Guo also sent books as gifts to famous intellectuals, such as the historian Jian Bozan 翦伯赞<sup>102</sup> and doctor Lin Qiaozhi 林巧稚.<sup>103</sup>

Among CCP politicians, there were also a group of gift-presenters. Kang Sheng 康生, Guo's frequent collaborator in the Three Perfections, for instance, was a recipient and presenter in gift-giving conventions. Among Kang's book collection, there was one copy of the Qing edition of *Album of the Hundred Flowers Poems and Letter Papers* with his seal impression on it, which could possibly reflect his book giving activities.<sup>104</sup> As the inscriptions suggested, this copy was formally sent as a gift to Xu Shichang 徐世昌, the Great President of the Beiyang (北洋) government in 1911, the last year of the Qing Dynasty and the first year of the Republican Period. The sender Zhang Zhiyu 张志鱼, a noted painter and seal engraver, hand-copied 88 poems for each flower on the blank pages in this book in ink and brush. Zhang wrote inscriptions to contribute to the book, in similar running style calligraphy, with his seal

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<sup>100</sup> 'Lot 0217 Guo Moruo Qinbi Tizeng Yudu Gongdema Xiansheng Maozhuxi Shici Sanshiqishou Lot 0271 郭沫若亲笔题赠宇都宫德马先生《毛主席诗词三十七首》', in *Yonghao Liu zhen - Zhongguo Shuhua (2) Guanxi Meishu Jingmai Zhushihuishe 2017 Nian Chunji Paimai* 永好留真 - 中国书画 (二) 关西美術竞卖株式会社 2017 年春季拍卖会 (Osaka: Kansai Art Auction, 2007), available at: <http://auction.artron.net/paimai-art5102180271/> [Accessed on 28 June 2018].

<sup>101</sup> Guo Moruo 郭沫若, 'Lot 1386 Guo Moruo Qianzengben Moruo Yishiji 郭沫若签赠本《沫若译诗集》', in *Beijing Baoli Shi'er Zhounian Chunji Paimaihui: Yiyu Xinming - Jinian Xinwenhua Yundong 100 Zhounian Mingren Moji Wenxian Zhuanchang* 北京保利十二周年春季拍卖会: 猗欤新命 - 纪念新文化运动 100 周年名人墨迹文献专场 (Beijing: Beijing Poly Auctions, 2017), available at: <http://www.polypm.com.cn/index.php?s=PreAuction/view/ppcd/art5105101386> [Accessed on 28 June 2018].

<sup>102</sup> Guo Moruo 郭沫若, 'Lot 5756 Guo Moruo Zhi Jian Bozan Renmin Wenxue Feiye Qiantu 郭沫若致翦伯赞《人民文学》扉页题词', in *Zhongguo Jiade 2014 Qiuji Paimaihui* 中国嘉德 2014 年秋季拍卖会 (Beijing: China Guardian Auctions, 2014).

<sup>103</sup> Guo Moruo 郭沫若, 'Lot 0231 Guo Moruo Qianmingben Pingzhuang Yice Qianzeng Lin Qiaozhi 郭沫若签名本平装一册 签赠林巧稚', in *Beijing Chuanshi 2014 Chunji Paimaihui Yunyifengqing - Wenren Moji ji Yingxiang* 北京传是 2014 年春季拍卖会 云逸风清 - 文人墨迹及影像 (Beijing: Beijing Chuanshi Auctions, 2014), available at: <http://auction.artron.net/paimai-art5052860231/> [Accessed on 28 June 2018].

<sup>104</sup> Zhang Zhiyu 张志鱼, 'Lot 823 Zhang Zhiyu Tishiben Kang Sheng Jiucang Baihuashi Jianpu 张志鱼题诗本康生旧藏百花诗笺谱', in *Shanghai Boguzhai 2014 Nian Chunji Yishupin Paimaihui* 上海博古斋 2014 年春季艺术品拍卖会 (Shanghai: Boguzhai, 2014), available at: [http://pmgs.kongfz.com/detail/6\\_505829/](http://pmgs.kongfz.com/detail/6_505829/) [Accessed on 28 June 2018].

impression in the corner (fig. 2.5).<sup>105</sup> Not only did Kang Sheng collect an album of letter papers, he also sent textual books as gifts as well. In Li Shichang's 李世昌 family book collection, there is a copy of the thread-bound *Thirty-seven Poems by Chairman Mao* that Kang sent to him as a gift in the 1960s.<sup>106</sup> Similar to Zhang Zhiyu, Kang Sheng hand-copied one of the 37 poems as inscriptions to Li on the index page, using ink and brush in traditional running style, with his private seal impression in the corner (fig. 2.6).<sup>107</sup>



Fig. 2.5 Zhang Zhiyu 张志鱼, 'Lot 823. Zhang Zhiyu Tishiben Kang Sheng Jiucang Baihuashi Jianpu 张志鱼题诗本康生旧藏百花诗笺谱', in *Shanghai Boguzhai 2014 Nian Chunji Yishupin Paimaihui* 上海博古斋 2014 年春季艺术品拍卖会 (Shanghai: Boguzhai, 2014).



Fig. 2.6 Kang Sheng 康生, 'Lot 0253 Kang Sheng Caoshu Maozhuxi Shi Xianzhuangshu Feiye 康生草书《毛主席诗词三十七首》线装书扉页', in *Xiling Paimai 2014 Qiu: Jingfengtang Cang Hongse Ticao Shuhua Zhuanchang* 西泠拍卖 2014 秋季: 静风堂藏红色题材书画专场 (Hangzhou: Xiling Auctions, 2014).

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Kang Sheng 康生, 'Kang Sheng Ti Maozhuxi Shici Sanshiqishou, Wenwu Chubanshe 1963 Nian 12 Yue 康生题毛主席诗词三十七首, 文物出版社 1963 年 12 月', in *Jingfengtang Cang Shuhuaxuan Xiajuan* 静风堂藏书画选 下卷 (Changchun: Jilin meishu chubanshe, 2014), p. 96.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

From the above two examples, it is clear that not only did the subject matter and the design style of albums of letter papers continue to be produced during the Mao Era, but also the literati convention of disseminating the books as gifts remained among communist elites. Whether the Ming edition *Newly Carved Painting and Poem Anthology of Herbs and Flowers* was designed and disseminated for gift-giving needs more investigation. *Album of the Hundred Flowers Poems and Letter Papers* and *The Hundred Flowers*, however, clearly followed the archaistic presentation of their Ming predecessors, whilst being disseminated as literati gifts under communist ideology.

Gift-giving of books was common among cultural and political elites during the Mao Era. The motivations for sending fine books as presents, as McDermott notes in relation to the Qing scholar-officials, was mostly admiration, socialisation and celebration.<sup>108</sup> Elisabeth Perry refers to the early communist activists in China as “red literati”, teaching the working class with their Confucian knowledge to establish an anti-Confucius revolutionary tradition.<sup>109</sup> During the Mao Era, these ‘red literati’ still continued to be audiences of elite book culture. Despite a radical political stance, Kang and his working partners, together with many CCP politicians, were book lovers and frequent literati gift-senders. According to Wang Li’s 王力 memoir, he, Kang and ‘a group of politicians’, such as Chen Boda 陈伯达 and Tian Jiaying 田家英, frequently visited the Flourishing Studio and bought books and replicas for collecting and exchanging as gifts. The politicians were also clients of China Bookstore and other woodblock publishers, where they bought collectable ancient editions and newly photoprinted woodblock books.<sup>110</sup> For example, from Wang’s book collection, a woodblock printed novel entitled *Little Bean Shed* (*Xiaodou peng*, 小豆棚), published in 1880, was bought by Kang Sheng in the 1960s. Adding a commentary to the contents after a thorough reading, he

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<sup>108</sup> McDermott, *A Social History of the Chinese Book*, pp. 90–91.

<sup>109</sup> Elisabeth J. Perry, ‘Red Literati: Communist Educators at Anyuan, 1921–1925’, *Twentieth Century China* 32, no. 4 (April 2007): pp. 111–134.

<sup>110</sup> Wang Li 王力, *Wang Li Fansilu: Wang Li Yigao* 王力反思录: 王力遗稿 (Hong Kong: Beixing chubanshe, 2001), pp. 862–863.

then sent it to Wang Li as a gift and wrote inscriptions on the book to reflect their friendship and the joy of sharing his acquisition (fig. 2.7).<sup>111</sup>

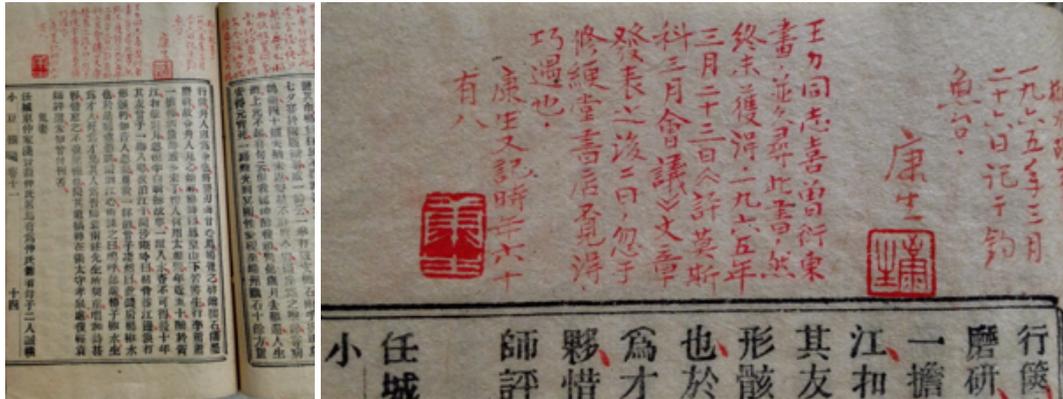


Fig. 2.7 Kang Sheng's inscriptions, in *Xiaodoupeng: Shanghai Shenbaoguan Fang Juzhenban Yin* 小豆棚: 上海申报馆仿聚珍版印. Volume 5 (Shanghai: Shanghai shenbaoguan, 1880), page 14. Private collection. Photographed by Wang Haijun.

Old scholarly men of letters who did not join the CCP were also still in the gift-giving system of woodblock books during the 1950s.<sup>112</sup> Before the anti-rightist campaign, they were active in the gift-giving circles. Buddhist activist and politician Zhao Puchu 赵朴初, for instance, sent his wife Chen Bangzhi 陈邦织 a copy of the woodblock printed *Twenty-one Poems by Chairman Mao* as a gift, signed with inscriptions and his seal impression (fig. 2.8).<sup>113</sup> Noted literati such as Xu Bangda 徐邦达, Zhang Boju 张伯驹 and Wang Shixiang 王世襄 bought books and sent them to their peers.<sup>114</sup>

<sup>111</sup> Zeng Yandong 曾衍东, *Xiaodoupeng: Shanghai Shenbaoguan Fang Juzhenban Yin* 小豆棚: 上海申报馆仿聚珍版印 (Shanghai: Shanghai shenbaoguan, 1880).

<sup>112</sup> Interview with Mao Ziliang and Interview with Lei Zhenfang.

<sup>113</sup> Zhao Puchu 赵朴初, 'Lot 2222 Zhao Puchu Tizeng Maozhuxi Shici Ershiyi Shou ji Xinfeng 赵朴初 (1907~2000) 题赠《毛主席诗词二十一首》及信封', in *Xiling Yinshe 2015 Chunji Paimaihui* 西泠印社 2015 春季拍卖会, 2015, available at: [http://www.xlysauc.com/auction5\\_det.php?id=100309&ccid=753&n=2222](http://www.xlysauc.com/auction5_det.php?id=100309&ccid=753&n=2222) [Accessed on 28 June 2018].

<sup>114</sup> Zhang Yihe 章诒和, 'Zhang Boju de Wenge Jiaodai 张伯驹的文革“交代”', in *Yanhuang Chunqiu* 炎黄春秋, no. 6 (2013), p. 77.

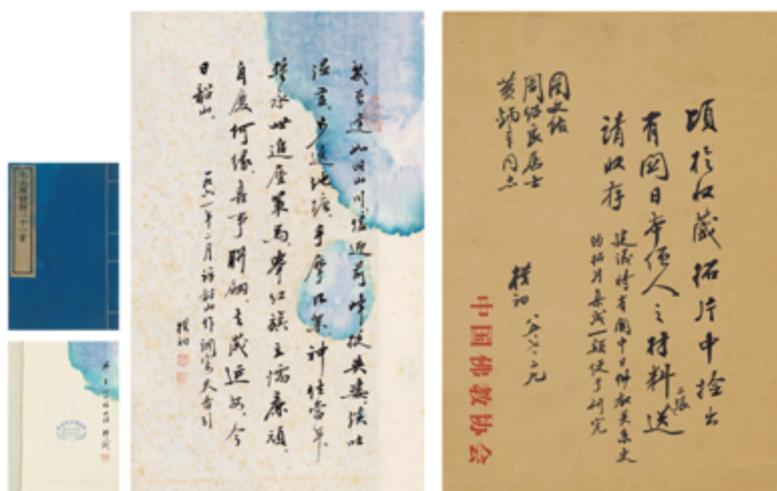


Fig. 2.8 Zhao Puchu 赵朴初, 'Lot 2222 Zhao Puchu Tizeng Maozhuxi Shici Ershiyi Shou ji Xinfeng 赵朴初 (1907~2000) 题赠《毛主席诗词二十一首》及信封', in *Xiling Yinshe 2015 Chunji Paimaihui* 西岭印社 2015 春季拍卖会, 2015. Photo available at: [http://www.xlysauc.com/auction5\\_det.php?id=100309&ccid=753&n=2222](http://www.xlysauc.com/auction5_det.php?id=100309&ccid=753&n=2222) [Accessed on 28 June 2018].

Thus, woodblock books became exchangeable social and political resources for politicians and cultural celebrities who had archaistic tastes. It is worth noting that the politicians, cultural celebrities and old school literati circles were connected and overlapping, in which radical leftists and 'reactionary' rightists frequently exchanged gifts with each other. The way they presented their gifts, according to the examples above, were also the same. Most of the time, even after the anti-rightist campaign in 1957, the two circles exchanged gifts with each other. Zhang Boju, for instance, described Chen Yi as "a friend" in private letters, whom he sent books to and wrote poems for.<sup>115</sup> According to Hou Kai's recollections, Kang Sheng and Guo Moruo frequently came to join literati gatherings during the 1950s and sometimes they met Zhang Boju there attending the same activity.<sup>116</sup> Once an individual was politically excluded from the system, the gift-giving and gathering would not include them. However, gift-giving as a whole was not interrupted by the countless political campaigns.

<sup>115</sup> Zhang Boju 张伯驹, 'Lot.1632 Zhang Boju Huiyi Chen Yi Yuanshuai Shougao 张伯驹《回忆陈毅元帅》手稿', in *Beijing Baoli 2016 Chunji Paimaihui: Gujin - Jindai Mingren Shuzha Shouji Xiace* 北京保利 2016 春季拍卖会 > 古锦 - 近现代名人书札手迹 下册 (Beijing: Poly Auctions, 2016).

<sup>116</sup> Zheng, 'Rongbao zhai yu Guo Moruo', p. 255.

## Gifts for the CCP and the State: A Type of ‘Presented Book’

The power relations between gift presenters and receivers were not always equal. Whilst gift-giving among literati circles was mostly a way of sharing or making a display of artistic skills and acquisitions, presenting fine editions as a type of ‘presented book’ (*Jincheng ben*, 进呈本) to the court was another common gift-giving practice during the Ming and Qing Dynasty.<sup>117</sup> Compared with *Liu Yuan Respectfully Painted Lingyange* (*Liu Yuan jinghui Lingyange*, 刘源敬绘凌烟阁, hereafter *Lingyange*),<sup>118</sup> in my opinion, *The Hundred Flowers* and such books were primarily produced as gifts for the political authority, bearing similarities to the historical presented book *Lingyange*.

In both the Ming and Qing Dynasty, presented book was one of the major sources for the royal court to obtain books from provincial scholar-officials. There were two different kinds of presented books: rare historical editions and perfectly printed contemporary gift books. Rare historical editions contributed to the official knowledge system in terms of providing books that were beyond the collections of imperial libraries. The *Complete Library in Four Sections*, for instance, was edited largely based on historical editions among presented books contributed by scholar-officials, including minister Wang Ruzao 汪入藻 and Ji Yun 纪昀, Qianlong Emperor’s (reign 1735–1796) teacher.<sup>119</sup> While the majority of presented books were rare historical editions, contemporarily produced gift books also frequently appeared in the presented books that provincial officials presented to the court, mostly to the emperors and their royal families to please the political authority. *Lingyange* was one of this kind, which was subsidised by the scholar-official Tong Pengnian 佟彭年 during the

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<sup>117</sup> Cao, *Zhongguo Guji Banbenxue*, p. 49.

<sup>118</sup> Anne Burkus-Chasson, ‘Visual Hermeneutics and the Act of Turning the Leaf: A Genealogy of Liu Yuan’s *Lingyan Ge*’, in *Printing and Book Culture in Late Imperial China*, eds. Cynthia Brokaw and Kai-wing Chow (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015), p. 371.

<sup>119</sup> Liu Pujiang 刘浦江, ‘Sikuquanshu Chuci Jincheng Cunmu Zaitan – Jiantan Sikuquanshu Zongmu de Zaoqi Bianzuanshi 《四库全书初次进呈存目》再探 – 兼谈《四库全书总目》的早期编纂史’, *Journal of Chinese Literature and History*, no. 3 (2014), p. 297.

Kangxi Reign (1661–1722).<sup>120</sup> This is the type of presented books that shares most similarities with the Mao Era gift books such as *The Hundred Flowers*.

The first similarity between *Lingyange* and *The Hundred Flowers* is that both books were designed for political leaders, praising their glory by linking them with historically wise kings. Built in the Tang Dynasty (618–907) on the order of the Emperor Taizong 太宗 (598–649), the architecture of *Lingyange* was designed to commemorate loyalists who fought for the emperor's reign, yet had been forgotten by the emperor himself and the royal court. Portraits of the 24 heroes were painted on the walls in *Lingyange*, associated with poems praising their glory.<sup>121</sup>

As a presented book, the book *Lingyange* drew an analogy between the legendary Emperor Taizong of the Tang and Kangxi Emperor of the Qing. During the period when the book was produced, as Maxwell Hearn argues, Kangxi Emperor had two major concerns: the legitimacy of his rule as a non-Han emperor, and the stability of the minority groups in North China.<sup>122</sup> Offering *Lingyange* to the ruler was designed to, as Tong writes in the preface, equate Kangxi Emperor's glorious rule with that of the greatest Han Emperor Taizong from the greatest period. The presenters, patron Tong Pengnian and painter Liu Yuan – who was, as mentioned in Chapter Two, a versatile ink and inkstone maker who later served the imperial court, indicate their loyalty through telling the story of the Tang loyalists.<sup>123</sup> The many prefaces written by Tong and other cultural celebrities all praise the Kangxi Emperor as a ruler equal to Emperor Taizong.

In *The Hundred Flowers*, the 101 poems are written to praise the Let the Hundred Flowers Bloom, and Let the Hundred Schools Contend policy (*Baihua qifang Baijia zhengming*, 百花齐放 百家争鸣, here after the Double

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<sup>120</sup> Burkus-Chasson, 'Visual Hermeneutics and the Act of Turning the Leaf', p. 171.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Maxwell K. Hearn, 'Art Creates History: Wang Hui and the Kangxi Emperor's Southern Inspection Tour', in *Landscapes Clear and Radiant: The Art of Wang Hui (1632–1717)*, by Wen C. Fong, Chin-Sung Chang and Maxwell K. Hearn, ed. Maxwell K. Hearn (New York, New Haven and London: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Yale University Press, 2008), pp. 129–132.

<sup>123</sup> Tong Pengnian 佟彭年, 'Preface', in *Lingyange Tu (Yingyin)* 凌烟阁图 (影印) (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2016). See also Dorothy Ko, *The Social Life of Inkstones: Artisans and Scholars in Early Qing China* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2016), pp. 20–30.

Hundred policy) and the Great Leap Forward.<sup>124</sup> Guo named his poems after the policy, but the ‘hundred-flower poem’ style (*baihuashi*, 百花诗) had also been a frequent topic and style for Ming and Qing literati when praising beauty or virtues. The policy itself was also an often-used metaphor in literature. As the first part of the policy, the term ‘100 flowers’ is a popular phrase in classic poems that use 100 flowers to represent the co-existence of different art schools and abundant artworks.<sup>125</sup> The second part of the sentence, ‘Let the Hundred Schools Contend’, draws the attention back to the pre-Qin era (before 221 BC), when different philosophical schools co-existed and contended with each other. The period has been considered the best political atmosphere in Chinese history, when dissenting opinions against political authorities were encouraged without oppression.<sup>126</sup> The Double Hundred policy, therefore, indicated its legitimacy through this historical reference.

In the preface and afterword of *The Hundred Flowers*, Guo Moruo also eulogises the ruling power by referring to it as the ‘east wind’ (*dongfeng*, 东风). As an analogy for authoritative figures in Chinese literary history, ‘east wind’ referred to political leaders and heads of families. For instance, the Song poet Lu You 陆游 used ‘east wind’ in his poem *Phoenix Pin* (*Chai tou feng*, 钗头凤) as a reference to his mother, who, empowered by Confucian filial piety, had the authority to decide on the poet’s marriage.<sup>127</sup> East wind as a metaphor was still broadly used during the Mao Era. As the highest political leader, Mao was constantly praised as the east wind and the Red Sun of the East in his lifetime. Although Guo Moruo does not explicate that the ‘east wind’ he

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<sup>124</sup> Maxwell K. Hearn, ‘Art Creates History: Wang Hui and the Kangxi Emperor’s Southern Inspection Tour’, in *Landscapes Clear and Radiant: The Art of Wang Hui (1632–1717)*, by Wen C. Fong, Chin-Sung Chang and Maxwell K. Hearn, ed. Maxwell K. Hearn (New York, New Haven and London: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Yale University Press, 2008), pp. 129–185, preface.

<sup>125</sup> Li Ruzhen 李汝珍 and Zhang Youhe 张友鹤, *Jinghuayuan* 镜花缘 (Beijing: Renmin wenzue chubanshe, 1955).

<sup>126</sup> In *Hanshu Yiwenzhi* 汉书艺文志, *Baijia* 百家 (The Hundred Schools) was listed as a category for the first time in history. See Ban Gu 班固 (25–220), *Ershisi Shi Yanjiu Ziliao Congkan – Hanshu Yiwenzhi Zhushi Huibian* 二十四史研究资料丛刊 – 汉书艺文志注释汇编, ed. Chen Guoqing 陈国庆 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983).

<sup>127</sup> Poem translated by the author of this paper. Ronald Egan, ‘The Northern Song (1020–1126)’ in *The Cambridge History of Chinese Literature*, eds. Kang-I Sun Chang and Stephen Owen (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 457.

mentions in the poems is Mao himself, he clearly links the term with the leader's policies.

The second similarity is that, as presented gifts, both books were not aiming to convey knowledge to the general public, since the contents had been repeatedly published over centuries. Lingyange, as Julia Murray writes, was built one millennium before the book was produced. In the Tang Dynasty, Emperor Taizong instructed the painter Yan Liben 阎立本 to paint the 24 heroes.<sup>128</sup> The legacy of the great painting, adding to the fact that the site of Lingyange had existed there for more than 1,000 years, made the story of the heroes familiar to audiences when the Qing version of *Lingyange* was produced. The topic was more often used as an analogy for retrospective glory, which connected the contemporary Qing Emperors to the historical great king Emperor Taizong, praising the wisdom of the current political leader.

Similarly, when the woodblock edition of *The Hundred Flowers* was produced, the poems had already been published nine times by different publishers with different printing media and artworks.<sup>129</sup> The woodblock edition was not aiming to disseminate the repeatedly published content, but to redesign the book to emphasise the legacy of Mao and his policies. Hou Kai outlined the motivation for publishing the title as “to associate the business with revolutionary romantic poems written by an influential cultural and political figure – Guo Moruo”.<sup>130</sup> This idea was endorsed by Guo Moruo, whilst the publishing was subsidised by the state and, according to Lei Zhenfang's recollection, partly designed as a tribute to the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the CCP.<sup>131</sup>

The third similarity is that both books adapted artistic styles that were both historically and contemporarily authoritative to prove the legitimacy of the presenters. In creating the paintings in *Lingyange*, Liu Yuan followed the style of Chen Laolian 陈老莲, a legendary illustrator from the Ming Dynasty. Chen's style of illustrating figures was considered one of the best, building on

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<sup>128</sup> Julia K. Murray, *Mirror of Morality: Chinese Narrative Illustration and Confucian Ideology* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007), p. 52.

<sup>129</sup> Appendix IV List of Editions of *Let the Hundred Flowers Bloom*.

<sup>130</sup> Sun Shumei 孙树梅, 'Rongbao zhai Muban shuiyin Beihou de Gushi 1', p. 278.

<sup>131</sup> Interview with Lei Zhenfang.

the artistic heritage of legendary painter Wu Daozi 吴道子 from the Tang Dynasty.<sup>132</sup> With Yan Liben's master painting, and following Chen Laolian's style, as he wrote in the preface, Liu Yuan carefully drew the heroes with his 'mythical' painting skills. With these historical references, as written in the many other prefaces by celebrities at the time, Liu's paintings and Zhu Gui's 朱圭 carving reached a high level of perfection, considered a masterpiece of illustrated books that reached the highest level in Chinese book culture.<sup>133</sup>

For *The Hundred Flowers*, elaborate style (*gongbi*) was endorsed and preferred by both the official side and the participants in the publishing house due to its connection with imperial heritage. Used as the major art style for royal courts since the Southern Song, it was created and favoured by Emperor Huizong 徽宗 (1082–1135), the legendary artist ruler.<sup>134</sup> Although *The Hundred Flowers* was published during the communist era, it selected archaistic painting styles that could link the book to the highest level of court painting in the past. Reputed artists were also recruited to guarantee the mastery of archaistic styles. The painter of the Qing *Lingyange*, Liu Yuan, his talent in art was appreciated in the Kangxi period.<sup>135</sup> For *The Hundred Flowers*, Guo Moruo, Yu Fei'an, Tian Shiguang and Yu Zhizhen were all noted artists during the period, proving the high artistic standard of the book.

Who were these gift books presented to? In both the Ming and Qing Dynasty, receivers of this type of presented books had been the emperor and the royal family. The perfectly illustrated, carved and printed *Lingyange* was designed for presentation to Kangxi Emperor and the royal family. No record specified whether Kangxi Emperor saw the book or not. However, considering the promotion of both Liu Yuan and Zhu Gui as court artisans after the book

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<sup>132</sup> Lisa Claypool, 'Painting Manuals and Gendered Modernity in Republican Era Shanghai', in *Visualizing Beauty: Gender and Ideology in Modern East Asia*, ed. Aida Yuen Wong (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2012), p. 27.

<sup>133</sup> *Lingyange Tu (Yingyin)*, preface.

<sup>134</sup> Wendan Li, *Chinese Writing and Calligraphy* (Hawaii: University of Hawai'i Press, 2010), p. 138.

<sup>135</sup> *Zhongguo Meishujia Renming Cidian* 中国美术家人名辞典 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1981), p. 1325.

was published,<sup>136</sup> it is reasonable to assume that *Lingyange* was indeed known by the imperial court.

During the Mao Era, receivers of presented books could be the highest leader and his elite group, central and local governments, and those attending important political ceremonies. In 1962, one year after the two-volume *The Hundred Flowers* was published, the Flourishing Studio began to reuse the flower illustrations for another book entitled *The Flourishing Studio Manual of Paintings* (*Rongbao zhai huapu*, 荣宝斋画谱). Sun Shumei recalled that the publisher presented this book to Chen Yi, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Vice Prime Minister, when he visited the Flourishing Studio with Wang Kunlun 王昆仑, the vice mayor of Beijing. Impressed by the artistic excellence and the outstanding craftsmanship, Chen Yi agreed to write a preface for the book.<sup>137</sup>

Producing gift books as ‘presented books’ involved large-scale projects. To achieve perfection, a vast amount of work was needed in the designing, carving and printing. Presenters risked spending large amounts in vain if the books they published were not selected by the court. Once successfully presented, however, the reward for such presented books could pay back much more than the presenters’ efforts. The rewards varied for different projects and different requests, but they would mostly lead to presenters and participants gaining political, cultural and economic opportunities that were otherwise unavailable to them. Patron Tong Pengnian, a high-ranking scholar-official, used *Lingyange* to express his loyalty to Kangxi Emperor, seeking a political opportunity to stabilise his position in the Qing bureaucratic system. The illustrator Liu Yuan became Assistant Minister of Ministry of Construction (*gongbu shilang*, 工部侍郎) shortly after the book was published, in charge of designing art crafts for the imperial court;<sup>138</sup> the carver Zhu Gui entered the imperial carving workshop, later becoming the chief carver there.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Burkus-Chasson, ‘Visual Hermeneutics and the Act of Turning the Leaf’, p. 383.

<sup>137</sup> Sun, ‘Rongbao zhai Muban shuiyin Beihou de Gushi 1’, p. 282.

<sup>138</sup> *Zhongguo Meishujia Renming Cidian*, p. 1325.

<sup>139</sup> Burkus-Chasson, ‘Visual Hermeneutics and the Act of Turning the Leaf’, p. 381.

Presenting *The Hundred Flowers* also created political opportunities and economic benefits for both the publishing house and individual participants. For the Flourishing Studio, the publisher, presenting *The Hundred Flowers* to the authority increased the possibility of gaining more business from the government. From 1958, the year when *The Hundred Flowers* project was initiated,<sup>140</sup> the Flourishing Studio began to obtain more opportunities to represent its products as official art crafts of the nation on important occasions, both internationally and domestically. Supported by the Ministry of Culture, the publisher also held a painting workshop in the Peace Painting Store (*Heping huadian*, 和平画店) in support of the Great Leap Forward in 1958.<sup>141</sup> During the two-year publishing process, the Flourishing Studio won a special golden prize in Leipzig Book Exhibition in 1959 for its water-soluble woodblock technique.<sup>142</sup> Culturally, water-soluble woodblock printing was taken as a cultural essence of the nation, whilst the Flourishing Studio legitimised its leading position by disseminating the technique. Five water-soluble woodblock printing bases were officially established in 1959, for which the Flourishing Studio was established as the authoritative organisation for sending experts in instructing people in water-soluble woodblock printing technology and skills.<sup>143</sup>

What was more crucial to the Flourishing Studio was its official acceptance by the Xinhua distribution system in 1960, which expanded the publisher's business from one city – Beijing – to the entire country.<sup>144</sup> No record shows that the Flourishing Studio obtained this crucial opportunity directly through presenting *The Hundred Flowers* to the state. However, considering that the book was the most crucial task for the publisher between 1958 and 1960, it is

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<sup>140</sup> The water-soluble woodblock edition of *The Hundred Flowers* was first published in 1961. According to Tian Shiguang's Art Chronicle, he started the task in 1958. Jiang Lu 蒋路, *Zhongyang Wenshi Yanjiuguan Guanyuan Zhuanlue* 中央文史研究馆馆员传略 (Beijing: Zhongyang wenshi yanjiuguan, 1996), pp. 285–287.

<sup>141</sup> 'Wenhuabu Chubanjū Chuban Tongxun Fabiao Yizu Wenzhang, Fanying Beijing, Shanghai Chubanjie "Dayuejin" de Qingkuang (1958 Nian 8 Yue 4 Ri) 文化部出版局《出版通讯》发表一组文章, 反映北京, 上海出版界“大跃进”的情况 (1958年8月4日)', in *CBSL* 9, pp. 482–505.

<sup>142</sup> Fan Muhan 范慕韩, *Zhongguo Yinshua Jindaishi: Chugao* 中国印刷近代史: 初稿 (Beijing: Yinshua gongye chubanshe, 1995), p. 37.

<sup>143</sup> Interview with Mao Ziliang.

<sup>144</sup> 'Wenhuabu Guanyu Xinhua Shudian Jingxiao Rongbao zhai Muban shuiyin Hua de Tongzhi', *CBSL* 10, p. 421.

reasonable to assume that the publication of *The Hundred Flowers* played an important role in convincing the Ministry of Culture to make this decision.<sup>145</sup>

All the participants benefited from the project. Guo Moruo, the author, stabilised his literary and political position, although not solely through the *The Hundred Flowers* poems; the popularity of the work, the official appraisal in the *People's Daily*, and the repeated publishing in different art forms within a short period, all indicate the importance of the poems to Guo's career. Guo remained safe through the turmoil of the anti-rightist campaign and later the Cultural Revolution, partly relying on the many odes he had written to the CCP and the state, such as *The Hundred Flowers*. The illustrators created paintings as national gifts for Chairman Mao on important diplomatic occasions. The three painters, collaborating with Chen Banding 陈半丁, created a large painting entitled *Remain Long Green as Pine and Cypress* (*Songbai changqing*, 松柏常青), which was taken to Moscow by Chairman Mao as a national present to celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Soviet Union Communist Party.<sup>146</sup>

Nearly all the newly carved woodblock titles were initiated by gift-presenters who sought political and economic benefits. The woodblock *Nineteen Poems by Chairman Mao* (*Maozhuxi shici shijiu shou*, 毛主席诗词十九首) published in 1958 by the Cultural Relics Publishing House (*Wenwu chubanshe*, 文物出版社), for instance, was assigned to the publisher as a political task. As the supervisor of the project, Kang Sheng wrote the name tag of the book in ink and brush in his running calligraphic style to show his respect to the leader and appreciation for the old-style poems. As *Guangming Daily* reported in 1964, Mao was pleased with this woodblock edition, referring to it as “an elegant master carving” and he wrote a commentary on the copy he bought.<sup>147</sup> In 1959, to celebrate the superior leader's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday, the ‘literati’

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<sup>145</sup> Sun, ‘Rongbao zhai Muban shuiyin Beihou de Gushi 1’, pp. 278–279.

<sup>146</sup> Jiang, *Zhongyang Wenshi Yanjiuguan Guanyuan Zhuanlue*, pp. 285–287.

<sup>147</sup> ‘Minzu Chuantong Keyin Zhuangzhen Yishu de Yicai – Ji Songbanshu Ziti Ben de Maozhuxi Shici Shi Zenyang Zhizuo de 民族传统刻印装帧艺术的异彩 – 集宋版书字体本的《毛主席诗词》是怎样制作的’, *Guangming Ribao* 光明日报, 8 January 1964.

mayor of Guangzhou, Zhu Guang 朱光, hand copied *Twenty-one Poems by Chairman Mao* (*Maozhuxi shici ershiyi shou*, 毛主席诗词二十一首) and requested it be woodblock printed. The book was printed in red, blue and black ink, following the convention of making fine woodblock editions for literati in the Qing and Republican Period.<sup>148</sup> With all these efforts, when the book was published it resembled historical books presented to imperial courts, despite the fact that the CCP claimed to have created a proletarian society. While publications were supposed to serve the needs of the people,<sup>149</sup> presenters of woodblock books sought attention from political elites. In publishing archaic books, the real motivation was to associate the participants or businesses with power, to gain political, cultural or economic benefits from the central power.

## Conclusion

The handful of newly carved xylographic books published during the Mao Era were finely produced, disseminated both as commodities and gifts. In some ways, however, the key to dissemination was limiting accessibility.<sup>150</sup> Both domestically and internationally, the books were sold through controlled channels. The audience was strictly limited by the pre-registration selling system, in which only individuals and organisations with political permission were allowed to purchase the books.<sup>151</sup> Limiting the printing quantity led to high selling prices, putting in place economic barriers for common purchasers. All these limitations were intentional on the part of the publishers and done

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<sup>148</sup> Qin Jiahang 秦嘉杭, 'Xinzhongguo Diaoban Yinshu Yanjiu 新中国雕版印书研究', *Daxue Tushuguan Xuebao* 大学图书馆学报, no. 33(1) (2015): pp. 101–105. See also Lot 0985, '1959 Nian Guangdong Renmin Chubanshe Muke Lanyinben Maozhuxi Shici Ershiyi Shou 1959 年广东人民出版社木刻蓝印本《毛主席诗词二十一首》', *Guangdong Chongzheng 2016 Qiuji Paimai* 广东崇正2016秋季拍卖 (Guangzhou: Guangdong Chongzheng, 2016).

<sup>149</sup> Hu Yuzhi 胡愈之, 'Quanguo Chuban Shiye Gaikuang (Hu Yuzhi zai Quanguo Xinhua Shudian Chuban Gongzuo Huiyi Disanci Dahui Shang de Baogao) 全国出版事业概况 (胡愈之在全国新华书店出版工作会议第三次大会上的报告)', in *CBSL 1*, pp. 257–259.

<sup>150</sup> 'Wenhuabu Guanyu Xinhua Shudian Jingxiao Rongbao zhai Muban shuiyin Hua de Tongzhi', *CBSL 10*, p.421.

<sup>151</sup> 'Jinyibu Shixing Baokan Tushu de Jihua Faxing', *CBSL 4*, pp. 383–385.

under the instructions of the government.<sup>152</sup>

The woodblock books were not just distributed as commodities with a public price tag, they were also produced for gift-exchanging, sharing similarities with literati elite book culture in Ming and Qing China. As a crucial part of literati leisure life, this gift-exchanging system was active during the Mao Era, continuing the popularity of the Three Perfections in elite social lives. High-ranking politicians and CCP intellectuals were sending books as presents to old school literati in the same circle, although their political identities were publicised as opposing such a practice.

Gift-exchanging was common in the public sphere as well. Most of the books were produced as national gifts for foreign politicians and important guests under the political order. In order to gain the opportunity to be chosen as gift providers, woodblock publishers produced some of the books as tributes to the CCP and the state, making the xylographic books similar to dynastic ‘presented books’. Politicians such as Kang Sheng and Guo Moruo were themselves involved in the publishing activities, both with a view to gaining political resources for Chairman Mao, and to pursue their personal literati interests. Although there was no longer a dynastic royal family, the politicians, state-held publishers and the highest leader created a demand-supply chain for presented books. All of this was restricted to an elite circle that was endorsed by the CCP.

All the above indicates archaistic similarities between the Mao Era woodblock productions and elite book culture. Together with the archaistic production process, the facts around the woodblock publications lead us to ask: what was the woodblock publishing trade like during the Mao Era? Why was this archaistic trade able to survive the frequent political campaigns against ‘feudal culture’, including finely-produced thread-bound books?<sup>153</sup> In order to

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<sup>152</sup> ‘Jinyibu di Shixing Jihua Faxing (Di-erjie Quanguo Chuban Xingzheng Huiyi Faxingzu de Zhongxin Fayan) (1952 Nian 10 Yue) 进一步地实行计划发行 (第二届全国出版行政会议发行组的中心发言) 1952年10月’, in *CBSL* 4, pp. 290–308.

<sup>153</sup> Denise Y. Ho, ‘Revolutionizing Antiquity: The Shanghai Cultural Bureaucracy in the Cultural Revolution, 1966–1968’, *The China Quarterly* 207 (September 2011), p. 691.

investigate these questions, the following chapter will discuss the genealogy and the mission of the woodblock trade during the Mao Era.

## Chapter Three

### The Woodblock Book Trade

Books like *The Hundred Flowers*, according to my interviewees, led to a “golden age” for the Flourishing Studio, the Cloudy Studio and many other woodblock publishers from the 1950s to the 1960s,<sup>1</sup> in contrast to the difficult times of the late 1940s, when almost all these publishers faced severe financial problems. In Beijing, for example, the depleted private woodblock printing business brought bookstores like the Studio of Literary Model (*Wenkai zhai*, 文楷斋) to the brink of closure. In the 1940s, the Flourishing Studio, by this time a seller of literati stationery, painting replicas and original artworks, was heavily in debt with almost no commissions and buyers remaining because of the faltering economy. Invited to do so by the Flourishing Studio, the writer Zheng Li 郑理 wrote the history of the Flourishing Studio in his book *Rongbao zhai in Three Hundred Years’ Time* based on interviews and internal documents. Zheng wrote that after failing to get public funding to resolve the financial crisis, Wang Renshan 王仁山, the manager of the Flourishing Studio, arranged to sell the properties of the business to Beijing Normal University in 1950.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, in Shanghai, the old business under the name the Cloudy Studio, as Zhang Ailing 张爱玲 mentions in her novel *The Golden Cangue* (*Jinsuo ji*, 金锁记),<sup>3</sup> was almost bankrupt after many years of war.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Sun Shumei 孙树梅, ‘Wo suo Qinli de Rongbao zhai Muban shuiyin Fazhan Licheng 3 我所亲历的荣宝斋木版水印发展历程 (三)’, ed. Sun Zhiping 孙志萍, *Rongbao zhai* 荣宝斋, April 2012, p. 265.

<sup>2</sup> Zheng Li 郑理, *Rongbao zhai Sanbainian Jian* 荣宝斋三百年间 (Beijing: Beijing yanshan chubanshe, 1992), p. 93.

<sup>3</sup> Eileen Chang, ‘The Golden Cangue’, in *Love in a Fallen City*, trans. Eileen Chang and Karen S. Kingsbury (New York: New York Review Books, 2017), p. 171.

<sup>4</sup> Mao Ziliang 茅子良, *Yilin Leigao* 艺林类稿 (Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe, 2009), pp. 133–140.

Even before the crisis, the woodblock book trade as a whole had faced two major problems. The first problem was modernisation: woodblock technology had been superseded by the mechanised printing industry that offered radically improved efficiency, cost and printing capacity.<sup>5</sup> As Christopher Reed argues, the woodblock trade almost disappeared from the landscape of the Chinese publishing industry, with only a handful of active businesses scattered in places like Shanghai, Beijing and Chengdu.<sup>6</sup> The second problem was a lack of government patronage. The abolishment of the imperial examination in 1905 fundamentally cut off the connection between the woodblock trade and the educational apparatus, whilst the Republican government had a knock-on effect of delegitimising the industry by giving its contract for the production of textbooks to modern publishing companies.<sup>7</sup>

The late 1940s financial crisis was triggered by long-lasting wars spanning more than a decade. In 1948, following the eight-year Sino-Japanese war and a three-year civil war between the CCP and the Guomindang, the woodblock businesses were in an increasingly difficult situation nationwide.<sup>8</sup> When the whole country was impoverished by the economic and political instability, the need for luxury books and literati entertainment cultural products reduced drastically. The Flourishing Studio in Beijing, the Cloudy Studio in Shanghai,<sup>9</sup> and Jinling Scripture Carving House in Nanjing<sup>10</sup> lost most of their clients, facing the fate of being shut down.

What changed the fate of the woodblock trade during the Mao Era was, I argue, patronage from CCP elites via their political influence. By acquiring personal help from CCP politicians and cultural celebrities, woodblock publishers obtained state patronage by merging with joint-ownership

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<sup>5</sup> Cynthia Brokaw and Peter Kornicki, 'Introduction', in *The History of the Book in East Asia*, eds. Cynthia Brokaw and Peter Kornicki (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), p. xxix.

<sup>6</sup> Christopher A. Reed, *Gutenberg in Shanghai: Chinese Print Capitalism, 1876–1937*, Contemporary Chinese Studies, (UBC Press, 2004), pp. 180–181.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 203–257.

<sup>8</sup> Sun Shumei 孙树梅, 'Wo suo Qinli de Rongbao zhai Muban shuiyin Fazhan Licheng 2 我所亲历的荣宝斋木版水印发展历程 (二)', ed. Sun Zhiping 孙志萍, *Rongbao zhai* 荣宝斋, March 2012, p. 269.

<sup>9</sup> In the 1950s, Duoyun xuan was the Shanghai branch of Rongbao zhai. Interview with Mao Ziliang.

<sup>10</sup> Xiao Yongming 肖永明, 'Liubu Jingjiao Lirentian – Jinling Kejingchu 140 Nian Sanji 流布经教利人天—金陵刻经处 140 年散记', *Fojiao Wenhua* 佛教文化, no. 5 (2006), pp. 16–27.

companies through the State-private Joint Ownership Movement.<sup>11</sup> The woodblock book trade was preserved and developed through this patronage, yet, as I will argue, its ownership of both economic and cultural capital changed fundamentally, whilst the social function of the trade also altered under the planned socialist economy.

### **Merging into a State-owned Business under Patronage of Politicians**

For woodblock publishers, like all other businesses, the 1950s Joint State-private Ownership Movement was the watershed that entirely changed their fate. By inputting state capital and enforcing CCP administrative management in joint ownership companies, the government began to politically control all businesses, whilst gradually devolving private ownerships into the planned socialist economy.<sup>12</sup> For some industries, privately owned capital was drawn away from previous owners by the CCP government and the economic achievement of some famous brands was damaged by the inexperienced anti-capitalist plans.<sup>13</sup> For the woodblock book trade, however, while major publishing houses were shut down or merged into state-owned businesses without independent trademarks, literati stationary shops like the Flourishing Studio obtained state patronage by registering as publishing houses under their original names, and thus they were able to survive and prosper in the CCP system. Such opportunities, in my opinion, were largely found through individual patrons who held significant political and cultural power within the CCP system. By analysing one such patron – Zheng Zhenduo 郑振铎 – and his publishing activities, this section looks at how personal patronage was undertaken during the Mao Era in the name of the state, and how the patrons supported the woodblock book trade by providing resources. Although such

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<sup>11</sup> Lin Yunhui 林蕴晖, *Xiang Shehuizhuyi Guodu – Zhongguo Jingji yu Shehui de Zhuanxing (1953–1955)* 向社会主义过渡 – 中国经济与社会的转型 (1953–1955), vol. 2, 10 vols, Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Shi 中华人民共和国史 (Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2008), pp. 126–132.

<sup>12</sup> Lin, *Xiang Shehuizhuyi Guodu*, pp. 126–132.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 133.

resources included their private collections and art skills, most emerged via public resources they could obtain through their official positions.

Robert Darnton argues that both personal and governmental patronage were crucial to the French publishing industry in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, especially when knowledge was controlled by the old regime.<sup>14</sup> Since the publishing industry functioned as an ideological apparatus, Darnton postulates, states would subsidise the publishing industry and strictly censor the contents of books in order to fully control knowledge dissemination and its economic resources.<sup>15</sup>

Governmental patronage had long been important in the history of Chinese books. Joseph McDermott argues that in the Chinese context, funding from both royal courts and private book collectors played an essential role for elite book culture during both the Ming and Qing Dynasty.<sup>16</sup> Again using *The Complete Library in Four Sections* (*Siku quanshu*, 四库全书) as an example, it was the Qianlong Emperor's Court (reigned 1735–1796) that subsidised the editing of the book in 1773, allowing it to become the biggest book collection in Chinese history. Without government funding, it would have been impossible to edit 36,381 volumes of books in nine years.<sup>17</sup> Losing state patronage accelerated the decline of the woodblock book trade during the Republican Period when the governmental subsidising of xylographic textbooks ceased. Profoundly affected by the modernised publishing industry, the once dominant technology shrunk to a private publishing practice in which rare book lovers personally financed woodblock printing for private publications.<sup>18</sup>

Like most of the patrons of the woodblock book trade, Zheng Zhenduo's patronage can be traced back to the Republican Period, when he was a frequent

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<sup>14</sup> Robert Darnton, Daniel Roche, and New York Public Library, eds., *Revolution in Print: The Press in France, 1775–1800* (Berkeley: University of California Press in collaboration with the New York Public Library, 1989), pp. 90–95.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Joseph McDermott, *A Social History of the Chinese Book: Books and Literati Culture in Late Imperial China* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2006), p. 46.

<sup>17</sup> Nicolas Standaert, *The Intercultural Weaving of Historical Texts – Chinese and European Stories about Emperor Ku and His Concubines* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2016), p. 84.

<sup>18</sup> Cynthia Brokaw, 'Commercial Woodblock Publishing in the Qing (1644–1911) and the Transition to Modern Printing Technology', in *From Woodblocks to the Internet: Chinese Publishing and Printing Culture in Transition, circa 1800 to 2008*, eds. Cynthia Brokaw and Christopher A. Reed (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2010), pp. 44–49.

client of the Flourishing Studio and other woodblock businesses. In the New Cultural Movement of the 1920s, Zheng Zhenduo, Lu Xun 鲁迅 and Guo Moruo, were among those who passionately promoted new ideas. At the same time, although largely unnoticed by the general public after 1949, these left-wing cultural celebrities were also patrons of classic woodblock printed books. As mentioned in Chapter Two, Lu Xun, the prominent writer who endorsed revolutionary theories, collaborated with Zheng Zhenduo to reprint the *Ten Bamboo Studio Album of Letter Papers* (*Shizhuzhai jianpu*, 十竹斋笺谱, hereafter *Ten Bamboo Studio*) in 1933, based on the rare Ming edition Zheng later contributed to the Flourishing Studio during the Mao Era.<sup>19</sup> In the same year, as noted in the preface, they also co-edited and published the *Beiping Album of Letter Papers* (*Beiping jianpu*, 北平笺谱). The two noted intellectuals frequently collected and preserved rare historical letter papers with finely painted motifs, later compiling them into an ‘album of letter papers’ (*jianpu*, 笺谱) and they commissioned the Flourishing Studio to re-carve and woodblock-print them.<sup>20</sup> Lu Xun was widely publicised by the CCP government as a woodcut activist during the Mao Era, since he passionately promoted revolutionary woodcut art in Soviet Union styles. In 1936, for instance, he edited and published *The Selection of Woodblock Prints of Kaethe Kollwitz* in Chinese.<sup>21</sup> Many of the Yan’an woodcut artists, such as Liu Xian 刘岷, were influenced and inspired by his introduction to woodcut arts.<sup>22</sup> Lu Xun’s role as an important contributor and protector of traditional Chinese letter papers, however, was somehow neglected in the CCP propaganda.

In fact, Zheng Zhenduo and Lu Xun, along with the majority of left-wing intellectuals, retained many literati habits, such as writing letters on handmade

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<sup>19</sup> Sören Edgren, ‘Chinese Rare Books and Colour Printing’, *The East Asian Library Journal* 10 (Spring 2001), p. 43.

<sup>20</sup> Lu Xun 鲁迅 and Zheng Zhenduo 郑振铎, ‘Beiping Jianpu Xu 北平笺谱序’, in *Beiping Jianpu* 北平笺谱, eds. Lu Xun 鲁迅 and Zheng Zhenduo 郑振铎 (Beijing: Rongbao zhai, 1933).

<sup>21</sup> Lu Xun 鲁迅, ed. *Kaisui Kelehuzhi Banhua Xuanji* 凯绥·珂勒惠支版画选集 (Shanghai: Sanxian shuwu, 1936).

<sup>22</sup> Julia Frances Andrews, Kuiyi Shen, and Jonathan D. Spence, *A Century in Crisis: Modernity and Tradition in the Art of Twentieth-Century China* (New York: Guggenheim Museum: Distributed by Harry N. Abrams, 1998), p. 217.

paper in calligraphy by brush, and exchanging poems and books among their circle of peers. Zheng wrote most of his letters and reports in brush and ink. Similarly, most of Lu Xun's radical articles were written in the same old Chinese way.<sup>23</sup> Whilst Zheng Zhenduo and Lu Xun were actively collecting and reproducing rare letter papers in the 1930s, old school literati elites practiced similar archaistic publishing. Privately funded 'familial printing' (*jiake*, 家刻) was still popular in elite book culture, persisting as an important source of literati gifts.<sup>24</sup> As Meng Xianjun 孟宪均 wrote, Liu Chenggan 刘承幹, the owner of the Jiaye Hall (*Jiaye tang*, 嘉业堂) book collection, organised the carving and publishing of a series of books containing 187 Song, Ming and Qing titles in the 20 years following 1913. Private book collectors, including Tao Xiang and Dong Kang, hired specialists from workshops such as the Studio of Literary Model in Beijing for their fine woodblock books.<sup>25</sup> During the 1920s, when private commissions were at their peak, the Studio of Literary Model had more than 300 skilful carvers and the publisher was renowned for scripting and carving Song style characters.<sup>26</sup> Lu Xun, a radical evolutionist, was also among the many private commissioners. He paid 60 silver dollars to commission Jinling Scripture Carving House to carve *Sutra of the One Hundred Parables* (*Bai yu jing*, 百喻经) for his late mother's birthday in 1914, to show his filial piety.<sup>27</sup>

Lu Xun died in 1936, but Zheng Zhenduo and a great number of other patrons, lived into the PRC. Many of these patrons, by this time CCP elites and politicians, were better known to the public as communist intellectuals who

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<sup>23</sup> Lu Xun 鲁迅 and Lu Xun Shougao Quanjì Bianweihui 鲁迅手稿全集编委会, *Lu Xun Shougao Quanjì* 鲁迅手稿全集 (Beijing: Beijing tushuguan chubanshe, 2000).

<sup>24</sup> Brokaw, 'Commercial Woodblock Publishing in the Qing', pp. 44–45.

<sup>25</sup> Meng Xianjun 孟宪均, 'Fulu (Er) Minguo Yilai Cangshujia Juyu 附录(二)民国以来藏书家刻书举隅', in *Zhirun Moxiang Hua Guji* 纸润墨香话古籍, by Chen Pingao 陈品高 and Meng Xianjun 孟宪均, (Beijing: Xueyuan chubanshe, 2009), pp. 246–283.

<sup>26</sup> The Studio of Literary Model (Wenkaizhai) was later merged into China Bookstore group during the PRC. See Tian Geng 田耕, *Beijingshi Difangzhi Bianzuan Weiyuanhui* 北京市地方志编纂委员会 and *Beijingshi Xinwen Chubanshe* 北京市新闻出版局, eds., *Beijingzhi: Chubanzhi* 北京志: 出版志 (Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 2005), pp. 60–61.

<sup>27</sup> David E. Pollard, *The True Story of Lu Xun* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002), p. 46.

promoted new culture,<sup>28</sup> whilst avoiding being labelled as feudal literati.<sup>29</sup> The old woodblock businesses they had used to frequent, however, was now facing a potential decline. The chance of survival largely relied on gaining state funds by registering as publishing houses; yet to obtain the funds woodblock publishers needed references from individuals in power.<sup>30</sup> The old patrons who were politically influential, like Zheng Zhenduo, therefore, became crucial to the trade.

Although Zheng offered to help as an individual patron, he also had to support the woodblock trade by utilising public resources, because the CCP planned economy ruled out private patronage in publishing. Similar to the old regime in France, as Darnton argues, the CCP also emphasised controlling all political, economic and cultural resources in the publishing industry.<sup>31</sup> During the first few years of the PRC, the state-held publishers were competing with private businesses to win the right to publicise knowledge to the masses. At the same time, the Joint State-private Ownership Movement was being embarked upon by the government, aiming to accelerate the control of the entire industry. Thus, as Perry Link argues, publishing in the Mao Era was primarily “for politics”, and it was closely censored by the state.<sup>32</sup> Indeed, in the *Bulletin of Enhancing Administration of Xinhua Bookstore*, the Ministry of Culture announced that the purpose of joint ownership in the publishing industry was to “enhance the leadership of the party”.<sup>33</sup> This enhancement included both

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<sup>28</sup> Leo Ou-fan Lee, *Lu Xun and His Legacy* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1985), p. 3.

<sup>29</sup> For instance, Zheng Zhenduo described his family background as that of “a clerk family” (*wenyuan*, 文员) in his biography. However, as his son remembered after the Cultural Revolution, Zheng Zhenduo’s father had been a scholar official. See Zheng Zhenduo 郑振铎, ‘Zheng Zhenduo Xiaozhuan 郑振铎小传’, *Jinyang Xuekan* 晋阳学刊, no. 2 (1984), inside front cover; and Jin Hui 金辉, ‘Zheng Erkang: Yi Xianfu Zheng Zhenduo zai Wenzhou 郑尔康: 忆先父郑振铎在温州’, *Wenzhou Dushibao* 温州都市报, 23 September 2015.

<sup>30</sup> ‘Wenhua bu Guanyu Jiaqiang dui Gushuye de Lingdao Guanli he Gaizao de Tongzhi (56) Wen Shen Ting Mi Zi di 73 hao (1956 Nian 7 Yue 7 Ri) 文化部关于加强对古书业的领导管理和改造的通知 (56) 文沈厅密字第 73 号 (1956 年 7 月 7 日)’, in *CBSL* 8, pp. 160–165.

<sup>31</sup> ‘Wenhua bu Guanyu Jiaqiang dui Minjian he Siying Wenhua Shiye Qiye Lingdao Guanli he Shehuizhuyi Gaizao Gei Guowuyuan de Qingshi Baogao Zhaiyao (1956 Nian 7 Yue) 文化部关于加强对民间和私营文化事业企业领导管理和社会主义改造给国务院的请示报告 摘要 (1956 年 7 月)’, in *CBSL* 8, pp. 202–210.

<sup>32</sup> Perry Link, *The Uses of Literature: Life in the Socialist Chinese Literary System* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000), pp. 63–68.

<sup>33</sup> ‘Wenhua bu Guanyu Jiaqiang dui Xinhua Shudian Lingdao de Tongzhi (55) Wen Ting Qian Mi Zi di 88 hao (1955 Nian 4 Yue 11 Ri) 文化部关于加强对新华书店领导的通知, (55) 文厅钱密字第 88 号, 1955 年 4 月 11 日’, in *CBSL* 7, pp. 93–104.

ideological control over the publishers, and redistribution of private cultural and economic capital. However, as I will argue, for private woodblock businesses that faced financial difficulties, such as the Flourishing Studio, this was an opportunity to survive by being incorporated into joint-owned publishing houses that had both independent trademarks and guaranteed government subsidies.

Zheng Zhenduo was one of the decision-makers involved in establishing the China Bookstore group, which merged and managed all private second-hand bookstores and most of the woodblock book businesses in Beijing from the 1950s on. In 1952, Zheng, along with Qi Yanming 齐燕铭, Zhang Youyu 张友渔 and Wu Han 吴晗, proposed establishing a state-controlled Beijing China Bookstore under the administration of Beijing Municipal Bureau of Culture and Beijing Municipal Cultural Heritage Committee.<sup>34</sup> By 1956, 101 booksellers had been merged into 87 public-private joint businesses under the China Bookstore group. In 1958, based on several prominent private businesses, such as the Fragrance Radiating Chamber (*Laixun ge*, 来薰阁), the Studio of Profundity and Elegance (*Suiya zhai*, 邃雅斋) and the Hall of Literary Excellence (*Wenkui tang*, 文奎堂), the 87 bookstores were further reorganised into 25, all still under the management of China Bookstore.<sup>35</sup>

As an established literati stationery shop from the late Qing, the Flourishing Studio was not a woodblock book publishing business before 1949. The main business involved selling literati stationery, such as Xuan-paper, ink and brushes, as well as collecting and selling original paintings and replica artworks. During the Mao Era, however, only publishing houses were allowed to print and publicise texts and images. When most of the major woodblock book businesses were closed or reconfigured by the PRC government during the early 1950s, for businesses like the Flourishing Studio that desperately sought opportunities to survive, old clients and patrons like Zheng Zhenduo guaranteed their chance to obtain governmental support, both politically and

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<sup>34</sup> Zhou Yan 周岩, *Wo yu Zhongguo Shudian* 我与中国书店 (Shijiazhuang: Hebei jiaoyu chubanshe, 2004), p. 5.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 6–7.

economically.<sup>36</sup> As a book collector and an important publisher, Zheng was appointed the Vice Minister of Culture and the Director General of the Cultural Relics Bureau during the early 1950s.<sup>37</sup> With help from Qi Yanming, another patron of antiquity and the head of the State Publishing Bureau, in 1952 Zheng encouraged the central government to accept the Flourishing Studio as a joint state-private business with its original trademark.<sup>38</sup> The suggestion was appealing to the Flourishing Studio, especially since the government guaranteed subsidies and profits for the private owners during the early years.<sup>39</sup> In order to run the old business, the Flourishing Studio was therefore registered as a publishing house with their patrons' help, legitimising the business in producing and selling books and painting replicas.<sup>40</sup>

The patrons not only helped the woodblock publishers to register with the CCP system, they also provided personal resources for them to develop their businesses. During the early 1950s, as mentioned above, in order to support the Flourishing Studio business, Zheng Zhenduo lent them his Ming edition of *Ten Bamboo Studio* to republish. By using his political and cultural influence, he introduced important governmental clients to the Flourishing Studio, thereby providing a sustainable protection network for the publishing house.<sup>41</sup> All such patronage was undertaken with registered publishing houses who obtained their budgets from the political authority and thus had gained permission for their publishing activities.

Being accepted as a joint business indeed saved woodblock businesses. As Hou Kai 侯愷 wrote, the Flourishing Studio gained immediate financial and administrative support from the government. When reproducing *Court Ladies Wearing Flowered Headdresses* (*Zanhua shini tu*, 簪花仕女图) by Zhou Fang

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<sup>36</sup> Sun Shumei 孙树梅, 'Rongbao zhai Muban shuiyin Beihou de Gushi 1 荣宝斋木版水印背后的故事 (一)', ed. Sun Zhiping 孙志萍, *Rongbao zhai* 荣宝斋 7 (February 2013), pp. 274–277.

<sup>37</sup> Zedong Mao, Michael Y. M. Kau, and John K. Leung, *The Writings of Mao Zedong, 1949–1976* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1986), p. 225.

<sup>38</sup> Zheng, *Rongbao zhai Sanbainian Jian*, pp. 101–102.

<sup>39</sup> 'Wenhuabu Guanyu Jiaqiangu dui Gushuyue de Lingdao Guanli he Gaizao de Tongzhi', pp. 160–165.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Zheng, *Rongbao zhai Sanbainian Jian*, pp. 121–123.

周昉 of the Tang Dynasty (618–907),<sup>42</sup> for instance, the publisher obtained special permission from the central government to purchase Xuan-paper from The Anhui Jing County Xuan-paper Factory (*Anhui jingxian xuanzhi chang*, 安徽泾县宣纸厂). Later, as Hou Kai recalled, the government even appropriated public funds to recover handmade ink and paper businesses, just for the water-soluble woodblock printing (*Muban shuiyin*, 木版水印) business of the Flourishing Studio.<sup>43</sup> Previously an almost bankrupt private company, the Flourishing Studio was thus ‘saved’ by political and financial resources from the state.<sup>44</sup>

Although the subsidies were obtained through governmental organisations, Zheng Zhenduo’s personal interest clearly influenced the state patronage. In his private life, Zheng was, according to his diary, a frequent customer of private bookstores and antique shops, visiting whenever he had time. On 17 December 1956, for example, after lending the original copy of *Ten Bamboo Studio* to the Flourishing Studio, Zheng wrote in his diary that he bought rare historical books from the Fragrance Radiating Chamber, the Studio of Profundity and Elegance and the Prosperous and Exalting Bookstore (*Fujin shushe*, 富晋书社), all branches of China Bookstore that had previously been private bookshops.<sup>45</sup> He then met his publisher friends from the Cultural Relics Publishing House (*Wenwu chubanshe*, 文物出版社) for dinner. This dinner party was very like a conventional Chinese literati ‘elegant gathering’, where Zheng shared his acquisitions with friends who had a common interest in rare books.<sup>46</sup>

Alongside the openly announced patronage through official paths, Zheng Zhenduo might also have had private commissions with the publishers in place. Among the books the Flourishing Studio published, there are a number of titles that were arguably personally subsidised by Zheng Zhenduo. The Flourishing

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<sup>42</sup> Zhou Fang 周昉, *Zanhua Shinü Tu*, 簪花仕女图 (Beijing: Rongbao zhai, 1956).

<sup>43</sup> Hou Kai 侯恺, ‘Rongbao zhai Muban shuiyin Hua: Kuizeng Guoji Youren de Zhuyao Lipin 荣宝斋木版水印画: 馈赠国际友人的主要礼品’, *Shandong Shangbao* 山东商报, 5 July 2010, available at: [http://60.216.0.164:99/html/2017-10/20/node\\_16.htm](http://60.216.0.164:99/html/2017-10/20/node_16.htm). Hou, 2010 [Accessed on 28 June 2018].

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> Zheng Zhenduo 郑振铎, *Zheng Zhenduo Riji Quanbian* 郑振铎日记全编 (Taiyuan: Shanxi guji chubanshe, 2006), p. 479.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

Studio published two different editions of *Ten Bamboo Studio* in 1952, based on the Ming edition in Zheng's private collection. However, only the one with Zheng's preface is known to the wider public. On 15 December 2015, Zheng Mingchuan 郑名川, currently the head of the woodblock department at the Cloudy Studio, showed me the two different editions of *Ten Bamboo Studio* and pointed out the differences between them. In the unlisted edition, some letter papers are also different from the official version. This evidence alludes to the possibility that Zheng continued to privately commission books in the PRC, as he had done during the Republican Period, when private commissions were allowed.<sup>47</sup>

Zheng was not the only influential intellectual and cultural official who continued to support the woodblock book trade. Others followed a similar path, possibly both due to personal interest and a sense of responsibility to preserve cultural heritage. Guo Moruo, for instance, was another major patron of the businesses. Famous for his calligraphy, Guo was asked to write shop signs for almost all woodblock publishers. The Flourishing Studio, China Bookstore and many of the branches of China Bookstore continue to use the signs Guo wrote.<sup>48</sup> Guo's calligraphic works were also frequently seen in title tags of woodblock books. Not only did he hand copy *The Hundred Flowers* poems for the Flourishing Studio, he was also invited by the Cloudy Studio to write the title tag for *The Manifesto* in the 1970s.<sup>49</sup>

Politicians with higher positions that were associated with more power in the system, like Chen Yi and Kang Sheng, also used their influence to subsidise the trade. Chen Yi was well known as a friend of the antique industry and a noted man of letters. He was also, as mentioned in Chapter Two, a patron of the water-soluble woodblock printing business of the Flourishing Studio.<sup>50</sup> With his and Zhou Enlai's support, painting replicas and woodblock books became

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<sup>47</sup> Hu Zhengyan 胡正言, *Shizhuzhai Jianpu* 十竹斋笺谱 (Beijing: Rongbao zhai, 1952).

<sup>48</sup> Zheng Maoda 郑茂达, 'Rongbao zhai yu Guo Moruo 荣宝斋与郭沫若', *Rongbao zhai* 荣宝斋 25 (November 2013), pp. 254–261.

<sup>49</sup> However, the publisher eventually chose another name tag for the book. AMCM, no. 17 and no. 18.

<sup>50</sup> Mi Jingyang 米景扬, *Wo zai Rongbao zhai Sishinian* 我在荣宝斋 40 年 (Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 2014), pp. 76–80.

national gifts.<sup>51</sup> In his earlier years in Shandong, Kang Sheng had been a noted antique lover and book collector.<sup>52</sup> During the Mao Era, Kang frequently visited most of the woodblock publishing houses, as both a purchaser and a patron. In 1961, he suggested the Cloudy Studio regain its shop name, making it an independent business again.<sup>53</sup> Like his collaborator Guo Moruo, Kang also wrote name tags for books (fig. 3.1),<sup>54</sup> as well as supervising the production of woodblock books such as *Thirty-seven Poems by Chairman Mao (Maozhuxi shici sanshiqi shou, 毛主席诗词三十七首)*.<sup>55</sup> Although politically notorious, according to recollections by my informants, Kang was often referred to by woodblock publishers from the Flourishing Studio and China Bookstore as “Elder Kang” (*Kanglao, 康老*) and this practice continues today.<sup>56</sup>

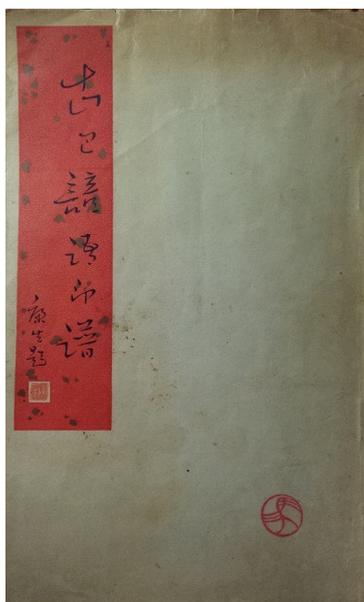


Fig. 3.1 Title slip by Kang Sheng, in Fang Quji 方去疾, Wu Pu 吴朴 and Shan Xiaotian 单孝天 carve, *Guba Yanyu Yinpu 古巴谚语印谱*, (Beijing: Zhaohua meishu chubanshe, 1964). Photo available at: <http://dajia.qq.com/original/category/zxz20160303.html> [Accessed on 28 June 2018].

<sup>51</sup> According to the interviewees, although Zhou Enlai supported the woodblock businesses, he never visited the publishing houses.

<sup>52</sup> John Byron and Robert Pack, *The Claws of the Dragon – Kang Sheng – The Evil Genius Behind Mao and His Legacy of Terror in People’s China* (New York, London, Toronto, Tokyo, Sydney and Singapore: Simon and Schuster, 1992, pp. 35–48.

<sup>53</sup> Interview with Mao Ziliang.

<sup>54</sup> Fang Quji 方去疾, Wu Pu 吴朴 and Shan Xiaotian 单孝天 carve, *Guba Yanyu Yinpu 古巴谚语印谱*, (Beijing: Zhaohua meishu chubanshe, 1964), cover page.

<sup>55</sup> Feng Xigang 冯锡刚, ‘Kang Sheng yu Mao Zedong Shici 康生与毛泽东诗词’, *Suibi 随笔*, no. 6 (2008), p. 43. See also ‘Minzu Chuantong Keyin Zhuangzhen Yishu de Yicai – Ji Songbanshu Ziti Ben de Maozhuxi Shici Shi Zhenyang Zhizuo de 民族传统刻印装帧艺术的异彩 – 集宋版书字体本的《毛主席诗词》是怎样制作的’, *Guangming Ribao 光明日报*, 8 January 1964.

<sup>56</sup> Interview with Lei Zhenfang.

While many woodblock book businesses disappeared, or lost their independence within the Maoist publishing industry, the ones with patronage from politicians and celebrities, some of which had not even specialised in book publishing before the PRC, survived and were authorised to publish fine woodblock books in the CCP system.<sup>57</sup> The patrons were able to retain their interest in archaistic books through utilising government resources to subsidise their favourite woodblock businesses. The motivation for this could certainly be nationalist and patriotic. However, it is clear that without their pre-existing interest in archaistic cultural products, they would not have chosen to place the woodblock trade under their protection.

### **Historical Missions: In the Name of Nationalism**

One of the problems with subsidising the woodblock book trade by using governmental resources was the obvious archaistic literati taste for the products. The CCP ideology publicised that all cultural activities must serve the needs of the proletariat, the new ruling class, which included working class and peasants.<sup>58</sup> This was the social group that had been excluded from accessing elite woodblock books before the PRC. Meanwhile, fine xylographic books also failed to achieve the modernisation goals that the nation had been eagerly pursuing. The political choice between retaining an archaistic trade and destroying the old feudal culture was reconciled, in my opinion, by rendering the woodblock book trade a historical mission to preserve cultural heritage: the outdated woodblock technology was subtly linked to the invention of ‘printing technology’, whilst old woodblocks and historical books were idealised as the Chinese nation’s contribution to human civilisation.

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<sup>57</sup> For example, only 11 bookstores, such as the Studio of Profundity and Elegance (*Suiyazhai*), retained their name when the 180 private bookstores merged into the China Bookstore Group. The famous carving business of the Studio of Literary Model (*Wenkaizhai*), for example, lost its original name after being merged.

<sup>58</sup> Mao Zedong 毛泽东, ‘Talks at the Yan’an Conference on Literature and Art’, in *Mao Zedong’s “Talk at the Yan’an Conference on Literature and Art”: A Translation of the 1943 Text with Commentary*, ed. and trans. Bonnie McDougall (Ann Arbor (Michigan): Centre for Chinese Studies: University of Michigan, 1980), pp. 55–86.

Although fine woodblock books had been favoured by literati elites for centuries, framing printing technology as a historical contribution to human civilisation was new, associated with the emergence of modern China as a national state. The term “Four Great Inventions” (*Sida faming*, 四大发明) of the Chinese nation was originally coined by Joseph Edkins in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>59</sup> Printing was crystallised as one of the four inventions from the 1940s, after Joseph Needham highlighted the concept in his book *Science and Civilisation in China*.<sup>60</sup> However, although xylography had been the dominant printing technology in Chinese history, movable types invented by Bi Sheng 毕升 were highlighted more in the official 20<sup>th</sup> century discourses of making printing the national contribution to human civilisation, since this was closer to modern technology from the West.<sup>61</sup> Starting with the Guomindang government, printing has since been considered a national legacy of the Chinese civilisation.

However, since the movable type as a technique was not mature, it had not been widely used in printed Chinese books. What remained in the 20<sup>th</sup> century were predominantly woodblock and xylographic books, among which the best ones were fine editions for literati elites. These historical remains were the only ‘cultural heritage’ created by the ‘printing technology’ – woodblock printing – that the Chinese nation had created and widely applied. The above dilemma created by the nationalist discourse in modern China partly explains, as I will analyse in this chapter, why the CCP discouraged woodblock book publishing and limited the trade to within a small scope, yet it generally protected historical woodblocks and books as cultural heritage. Nationalism thus paradoxically became the official reason for discouraging woodblock publishing, yet at the same time, retaining the historical woodblock products as the only available ‘cultural heritage’ that ‘printing technology’ created during the Maoist period.

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<sup>59</sup> Joseph Edkins, *The Religious Condition of the Chinese: With Observations on the Prospects of Christian Conversion amongst that People* (London: Routledge, Warnes & Routledge, 1859), p. 2.

<sup>60</sup> Joseph Needham, *Physics*. In *Science and Civilisation in China Physics and Physical Technology*, by Joseph Needham; Vol. 4 Pt. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), p. 290.

<sup>61</sup> One of the examples of this narrative can be found in Liu Guojun 刘国钧, *Zhongguo de Yinshua 中国的印刷* (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1960), pp. 26-28.

In the interviews, most woodblock practitioners legitimated their activities by announcing that they took part in inheriting and developing the printing heritage with national pride. However, was ‘nationalism’ the sole reason for the government retaining the woodblock trade with the selected elite publishers? Further, why did this very ‘nationalism’ prohibit most of the book publishers on the broader market, whilst it protected the literati elite books associated with antiquity, the very symbols of ‘feudal culture’? Looking in detail at the interviews, various motivations were mentioned as to why individual practitioners – including CCP politicians – undertook woodblock publishing during the Mao Era. These include historical responsibility to preserve the cultural heritage, utilising woodblocks and books as a supplement to the modern publishing industry, and personal interest in archaic books. These factors, although generally in line with a rather conceptual ‘nationalism’, were more often the real and primary motives.

As with many other Maoist cultural policies, the woodblock trade was granted three tasks under the grand title of saving historical heritage as a nationalist mission. These tasks were: collecting old books; collecting and restoring historical woodblocks and re-printing historical classics from these blocks; and developing and refining woodblock technology, including innovating water-soluble woodblock printing techniques and carving new books. Three kinds of cultural capital were re-distributed through the above missions: historical woodblocks; historical rare books; and intellectual properties of woodblock printing technology. As I will argue, the ambivalent attitude towards printing technology left the woodblock trade with a space in which to exist. Meanwhile, what was crucial to the government was that, as cultural and economic capital, woodblock resources were redistributed into state ownership from private hands.

## *Historical Woodblocks and Books*

Two missions were valued in particular: organising the collection and restoration of historical books and preserving woodblocks by establishing new businesses. The China Bookstore group is a prime example of the two prioritised missions. Established in 1952, it was the state-owned second hand bookstore group for replacing and managing private businesses in Beijing. During the joint ownership campaign, it merged most major local woodblock book printers and sellers.<sup>62</sup> However, according to Zhou Yan 周岩, the former manager of China Bookstore, the historical mission assigned to the group was not to develop and retrieve technology, but to collect and reprint old books using the existing historical woodblocks owned by the private bookshops.<sup>63</sup> In February 1958, the National Ancient Book Collection, Publication and Regulation Small Team (*Quanguo guji zhengli chuban guihua xiaozu*, 全国古籍整理出版规划小组, hereafter National Ancient Book Small Team) was established, an organisation aiming to manage, re-edit and re-classify ancient texts. Zheng Zhenduo was among the 19 members of the committee, whilst Qi Yanming was the head of the association.<sup>64</sup> Meanwhile, in order to rescue the historical heritage and put more books on the market, the China Bookstore was encouraged to collect old books and re-print ancient editions in large numbers.<sup>65</sup>

Required by the National Ancient Book Small Team, from 1955 China Bookstore was tasked with collecting ancient editions. Rare historical books were rescued from paper factories, escaping the fate of being recycled for printing material.<sup>66</sup> According to the manager Zhou Yan, 111 second-hand

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<sup>62</sup> Zhou, *Wo yu Zhongguo Shudian*, pp. 4–7.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 7–9.

<sup>64</sup> ‘Zhongyang Xuanchuanbu Guanyu Guji Zhengli Chuban Guihua Xiaozu de Zhuyao Renwu he Zucheng Renyuan Mingdan xiang Zhonggongzhongyang Shujichu de Qingshi Baogao (1958 Nian 2 Yue 7 Ri) 中央宣传部关于古籍整理出版规划小组的主要任务和组成人员名单向中共中央书记处的请示报告 (1958年2月7日)’, in *CBSL* 9, p. 347.

<sup>65</sup> Zhou, *Wo yu Zhongguo shudian*, p. 7.

<sup>66</sup> ‘Gujiu Tushu Buying zai Renling Sunhui: Guangming Ribao Shelun (1956 Nian 10 Yue 25 Ri) 古旧图书不应再任令损毁 – 光明日报社论 (1956年10月25日)’, in *CBSL* 8, pp. 256–258.

bookstores in the China Bookstore group achieved a revenue of more than one million Yuan in 1956, signalling a ‘golden age’ of the trade. The mission of China Bookstore later shifted to re-printing historical classics from 1958 to the early 1960s. During this period, the publisher re-printed classical titles using the two million pieces of old woodblocks obtained from the private bookstores that had merged into it.<sup>67</sup>

Second-hand and historical books were not just considered cultural heritage during the 1950s. According to Zhou Yan, due to a lack of paper and other printing materials, one of the most important tasks of the second-hand book trade was to serve as a supplement to the publishing industry, which had an insufficient capacity to meet the growing needs of readers nationwide.<sup>68</sup> In the *Business Newsletters of The Shanghai Ancient and Used Bookstore* (*Shanghai gujiu shudian*, 上海古旧书店) in January 1959, the editorial preface claimed that the mission of the trade was “under the leadership of the Party, for preserving and carrying forward national cultural heritage, to collect revolutionary documents and trade second-hand books, for serving politics, (socialist) production, workers, peasants and soldiers, academic research, and socialist constructions.”<sup>69</sup> More practically, the function of the trade was, as addressed in the same newsletter, to reuse second-hand book resources in order to save governmental publishing funding for new books.<sup>70</sup>

China Bookstore was one of the publishers permitted to restore and collect historical woodblocks. This was another crucial historical mission for the Ancient and Used Bookstore system, since historical woodblocks were publicised as evidence of the capacity of the people to innovate.<sup>71</sup> For China Bookstore, however, this practice was already part of the old business of the private publishing houses under its administration. During the early 1950s, private businesses that merged into China Bookstore, such as the Studio of

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<sup>67</sup> Zhou, *Wo yu Zhongguo Shudian*, p. 6.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>69</sup> Shanghai Gujiu Shudian 上海古旧书店, ‘Yewu Tongxun 业务通讯’, ed., Shanghai Gujiu Shudian 上海古旧书店, *Yewu Tongxun 业务通讯*, 1 January 1959, p. 1.

<sup>70</sup> Yang Weiyuan 杨渭元, ‘Gujiu Shuye de Zuoyong 古旧书业的作用’, ed., Shanghai Gujiu Shudian 上海古旧书店编印, *Yewu Tongxun 业务通讯*, 1 January 1959, p. 10.

<sup>71</sup> Zhou, *Wo yu Zhongguo Shudian*, p. 1.

Literary Model, still possessed old blocks and occasionally they reprinted books with the blocks as another source of income.<sup>72</sup> However, before merging with the public entity, some of the publishers did not have the capacity to restore woodblocks due to a lack of financial support. Some of the woodblocks in the possession of the Studio of Literary Model, for example, had been kept in the abandoned Fayuan Temple (*Fayuan si*, 法源寺) where the publisher was located before the PRC. During the 1950s, this Buddhist temple was converted into dormitories for workers. The carver Zi Ruiheng 訾瑞恒 lived there before being ‘discovered’ by Chen Yuan 陈垣, who was looking for skilled block cutters and printers to reprint his book *Block Printed Series of Liyun Studio* (*Liyun shuwu congke*, 励耘书屋丛刻).<sup>73</sup> Later, with Zheng Zhenduo’s assistance, whilst being permitted and funded by the government, China Bookstore obtained the woodblocks preserved in Fayuan Temple, preventing them from being destroyed as heating fuel.<sup>74</sup>

What did woodblocks and historical books mean to woodblock publishers in pre-1949 Chinese history? Commercial publishers in Sibao 四堡 in the Qing Dynasty, as Cynthia Brokaw argues, considered woodblocks crucial capital for profit. Possession of blocks provided control of knowledge, since most books were by that time published with woodblocks by private hands. Not only did this access make publishing new books more efficient, it also enhanced the publishers’ competitiveness by providing monopolies within the book market.<sup>75</sup> For these reasons, preserving historical woodblocks became a tradition in Chinese history, both in commercial and elite book culture.

For both official and elite publishing, the quality and quantity of old woodblocks were the two most important standards for evaluating a book collection. Old woodblocks can be reused to print more copies, even after

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Liu Naihe 刘乃和, ‘Cong Liyun Shuwu Congke Shuodao Zhonghua Shuju: Chen Yuan Shengqian Zhuzuo de Chuban Qingkuang 从《励耘书屋丛刻》说到中华书局: 陈垣生前著作的出版情况’, in *Huiyi Zhonghua Shuju* 回忆中华书局, ed., Zhonghua Shuju Bianjibu 中华书局编辑部 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001), pp. 47–49.

<sup>74</sup> Interview with Ma Jiannong 马建农.

<sup>75</sup> Cynthia Brokaw, ‘Commercial Publishing in Late Imperial China: The Zou and Ma Family Businesses of Sibao, Fujian’, *Late Imperial China*, no. 17 (1996), p. 60.

centuries, making them inheritable assets for generations.<sup>76</sup> A large number of Ming and Qing editions were re-printed using old woodblocks from private collections. The noted private book collection The Mao Family's House of Imbibing from the Ancients (*Maoshi jigu ge*, 毛氏汲古阁) in the Chongzhen 崇禎 Reign (1628–1644) of the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), for instance, collected some of the woodblocks for *Collection of Rare Texts* (*Mi ce hui han*, 秘册汇函), edited by Hu Zhenheng 胡震亨 in the Wanli 万历 Reign (1573–1620), reprinting the title after half a century.<sup>77</sup> The importance of woodblocks also made the Qing court pay significant attention to controlling them. While editing *The Complete Library in Four Sections*, the Qianlong Emperor ordered the destruction of woodblocks containing anti-Qing themes. The titles destroyed were listed as *Proscribed Books in all Categories* (*Siku jinshu*, 四库禁书).<sup>78</sup> During the Republican Period, Dong Kang hired skilled carvers to reproduce books he had brought back from Japan, making his books the finest editions of the Republican Period.<sup>79</sup> The exclusiveness of the woodblocks he produced clearly contributed to this accolade. These practices throughout imperial and modern China support the idea that woodblocks were crucial capital within the woodblock book trade, both economically and culturally.

The CCP mission to collect and preserve woodblocks ultimately converted books and woodblocks as capital from private to state-owned property. Once the woodblock trade was absorbed and controlled by the government, the private possessions of the businesses, both material and intellectual, became public resources. With official endorsement, historical remains such as woodblocks could be identified as evidence and cultural property of the people's wisdom. Although most of the blocks and books were in fact produced for literati titles, propaganda avoided linking these activities with feudal culture, instead focusing on publicising the public ownership of this

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<sup>76</sup> McDermott, *A Social History of the Chinese Book*, p. 46.

<sup>77</sup> He Mingxing 何明星, *Zhushu yu Zongzu: Qingren Wenji Bianke Fangshi de Shehuixue Kaocha* 著述与宗族: 清人文集编刻方式的社会学考察 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007), p. 147.

<sup>78</sup> Standaert, *The Intercultural Weaving of Historical Texts*, p. 84.

<sup>79</sup> Lin Qingzhang 林庆彰, Wang Qingxin 王清信, and Ye Chunfang 叶纯芳, eds., *Jindai Zhongguo Zhishifenzi zai Riben* 近代中国知识分子在日本 (Taipei: Wanjuanlou tushu gufen youxian gongsi, 1992), pp. 14–18.

private property. Once in the hands of the people, announced the *People's Daily*, ancient books functioned positively for socialist economic and cultural construction.<sup>80</sup> Especially when Mao published his theory on 'Use the Past to Serve the Present' (*gu wei jin yong*, 古为今用),<sup>81</sup> woodblock practitioners found an authoritative political philosophy to preserve the woodblock trade and its properties. If the publishers had doubts about the CCP's policies on literati culture, they at least had one thing in common: they both justified the removal of woodblock capital from private hands to the 'public'.

If China Bookstore practiced Use the Past to Serve the Present by preserving the woodblocks in the hands of the amalgamated private businesses, Guangling went further by actively collecting historical woodblocks nationwide.<sup>82</sup> In the 1950s, Guangling operated under the name of Yangzhou Ancient and Used Bookstore. The private businesses merged into it also possessed woodblocks from the Republican Period. In 1960, supported by the local government, Guangling obtained permission to establish a national woodblock preservation centre. According to the manager Zhou Guangpei 周光培, and based on records of the publishing house, Guangling collected more than 200,000 blocks from cities such as Beijing, Hangzhou and Nanjing. The only collection that they failed to obtain was owned by Jinling Scripture Carving House in Nanjing. As a Buddhist text printer, Jinling had retained its old blocks and historical woodblocks since its establishment.<sup>83</sup>

This mission to collect woodblocks for the state was largely done by obtaining woodblocks from private collections. One of the major resources of Guangling's collection had once belonged to Jiaye Hall's private library. In 1960, when Guangling obtained the blocks, the private collection had been

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<sup>80</sup> 'Anpai he Gaizao Gushuye: Renmin Ribao Shelun 1956 Nian 9 Yue 7 Ri 安排和改造古书业 – 人民日报社论 1956年9月7日', in *CBSL* 8, pp. 233–235.

<sup>81</sup> 'Wenhua bu Guanyu Jiaqiang dui Minjian he Siying Wenhua Shiye Qiye Lingdao Guanli he Shehuizhuyi Gaizao Gei Guowuyuan de Qingshi Baogao', *CBSL* 8, pp. 202–210. See also Jonathan Unger, ed., *Using the Past to Serve the Present: Historiography and Politics in Contemporary China*, Contemporary China Papers (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1993), p. 29.

<sup>82</sup> Fan Muhan 范慕韩, *Zhongguo Yinshua Jindaishi: Chugao* 中国印刷近代史: 初稿 (Beijing: Yinshua gongye chubanshe, 1995), p. 28.

<sup>83</sup> Interview with Zhou Guangpei.

donated to Zhejiang Library.<sup>84</sup> The donation was, however, forced rather than voluntary. In 1956, a letter written by Liu Chenggan, the owner of Jiaye Hall, appealed to the government for the return of additional copies of certain titles from his collection, as they did not contribute any historical value to the state-owned library. The local Jiaxing 嘉兴 government rejected his proposal, warning that the request could be taken as counter-revolutionary.<sup>85</sup> After Guangling obtained the woodblocks, according to Zhou Guangpei, Liu's family's request that their assets be returned was also rejected.<sup>86</sup> The issue remained unresolved until Liu's death in 1958. In 1979, his spouse's appeal to return the books was also rejected by the government.<sup>87</sup>

Thus, through these collection and re-distribution practices, woodblocks and historical books, as both cultural and economic capital, were fully controlled by the CCP. This contributed to the fulfilment of the goal to build a planned state-owned economy. It also facilitated historical heritage, as the CCP propaganda repeatedly emphasised, to 'return to the people' who were politically represented by the CCP.

### ***Monochrome Text-based New Titles***

For the mission of carving new woodblock titles, the state had different attitudes towards monochrome textbooks and water-soluble woodblock printed replicas. During the three decades of the Mao Era, only 12 new monochrome titles were carved and published,<sup>88</sup> whilst thousands of water-soluble woodblock printed books and paintings were produced. Compared to collecting blocks, the scope of carving and printing new text-based titles was clearly not

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<sup>84</sup> Ying Changxing 应长兴 and Li Xingzhong 李兴中, eds., 'Zhejiang Shengli Tushuguan/Shengli Jiaxing Tushuguan Jiayetang Cangshu Guanlichu Tiaoli 浙江省立图书馆/省立嘉兴图书馆嘉业堂藏书管理处条例', in *Jiayetang Zhi* 嘉业堂志 (Beijing: Guojia tushuguan chubanshe, 2008), p. 328.

<sup>85</sup> Ying Changxing 应长兴 and Li Xingzhong 李兴中, eds., 'Dashiji 大事记', in *Jiayetang Zhi* 嘉业堂志 (Beijing: Guojia tushuguan chubanshe, 2008), p. 32.

<sup>86</sup> Interview with Zhou Guangpei.

<sup>87</sup> Ying and Li, 'Dashiji', pp. 36–37.

<sup>88</sup> Among them, 11 titles were officially published. *Selected Chairman Mao's Works* was printed but remained unpublished by Guangling. Interview with Zhou Guangpei.

equally emphasised by the CCP. For example, no new xylographic titles can be found in the records of the China Bookstore group. From the 1950s to the late 1960s, according to Zhou Yan, China Bookstore and Guangling gathered more than one million old woodblocks.<sup>89</sup> Hundreds of woodblock titles were reprinted using these collections during the three decades, yet only a handful of newly carved non-illustrated books were published.<sup>90</sup>

Among the publishers, Guangling undertook the most remarkable textual woodblock printing practices in the name of Yangzhou Ancient and Used Bookstore. With no governmental funding, the publishing house organised scribes to hand copy classics, and printed books by mimeograph during the early 1950s.<sup>91</sup> The laborious task of publishing was, as manager Zhou Guangpei stated, designed to “maintain the commissioners and keep the old business going”. However, Zhou added, if the task had any historical importance, it was to “rescue and preserve historical heritage”.<sup>92</sup> After gaining independence under the name Guangling Ancient Book Carving and Printing Studio in 1960, the publisher reprinted more than 50 titles using the woodblocks they had collected. Among them, only four titles were newly carved in this same period. These included three classical titles re-carved to reproduce historical woodblocks that had been damaged, and *Poems by Du Fu Expressing Intent* (*Dushi yanzhi*, 杜诗言志), based on manuscripts the publisher discovered in Taizhou 泰州 in 1952.<sup>93</sup> Even these four titles were only made possible, however, with special permission granted by the central government due to their status as vital to woodblock carving.

Apart from the above four titles published by Guangling during the 1960s, other newly carved non-illustrated woodblock titles were mostly commissioned for special occasions or by important politicians. Mao’s poem collections, for example, were all customised for Chairman Mao either by politicians such as Kang Sheng and Zhu Wen, or by the central government under political orders.

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<sup>89</sup> Zhou, *Wo yu Zhongguo Shudian*, p. 28.

<sup>90</sup> *Gushu Banpian Mulu* 古书版片目录 (Yangzhou: Yangzhou guji shudian, 1978).

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

Among these editions, the 1958 and 1959 woodblock printed *Poems by Chairman Mao* published by the Cultural Relics Publishing House were both created by hiring carvers who worked for private woodblock carving businesses that had merged into China Bookstore.<sup>94</sup> China Bookstore, on the other hand, while managing a carver's team of more than 100 skilled workers, did not carve any woodblock titles during the Mao Era. Neither was the group involved in the 1960s water-soluble woodblock printing technique innovations. Training carvers and re-organising woodblock printing was not, as the Rare Book Publishing House (*Guji chubanshe*, 古籍出版社) noted in a reply to Zhang Boju's letter in 1956, among their assigned missions. Although the publisher was indeed "using woodblocks to publish titles", they had enough historical titles in good condition for the printing business. Their skilled workers were tasked, the publisher added, to maintain and repair damaged old woodblocks.<sup>95</sup> It is clear that for all the publishers had woodblock cutter teams, amending historical woodblocks and reprinting books was a more important mission than carving new titles, which was coherent with the public stance of discouraging woodblock publishing. However, woodblock publishing was allowed and supported for elite groups, especially Mao's distinguished political circle.

### **The Socialist Business: Antiquity for Foreign Currency**

Compared to developing woodblock carving and printing skills for non-illustrated books, water-soluble woodblock printing technology for fine illustrations gained far wider official support throughout the Mao Era. The majority of newly carved woodblock titles were of this kind, including illustrated books, letter papers, and painting and calligraphy replicas. Statistics indicate that from the 1950s to 1965, the Flourishing Studio produced 144 old

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<sup>94</sup> Zhou, *Wo yu Zhongguo Shudian*, p. 86.

<sup>95</sup> Zhang Boju 张伯驹, 'Letter on Suggestions for Training Woodblock Carvers', *Guji Shudian Shou Wen Shu hao* (56) *Gu Han Zi* 180 古籍书店收文数号 (56) 古函字 180, 1956. Private collection.

master painting replicas and 14 volumes of ancient painting albums, 105 pieces of contemporary ‘national painting’ (*guohua*, 国画) replicas, and 28 volumes of national painting albums. Altogether, the publisher produced over 1,000 pages of water-coloured woodblock illustrations.<sup>96</sup> As previously noted, instead of just restoring the old technology, the government encouraged and subsidised nationwide innovation and development of the technique.

In terms of efficiency and cost, water-soluble woodblock printing techniques were even more laborious and expensive than printing monochrome texts. If woodblock textual printing was denied, or at least less emphasised as a source of national pride, then why did the government pay significant attention to coloured illustrations? By examining the social and political context of the Mao Era, I argue that water-soluble woodblock printed products were used as crucial cultural capital to represent “Chineseness” in the CCP diplomatic relations and export businesses, in which xylography was valued more as craftsmanship for its delicate artistic performance.

Before the 1970s, most of the world had severed diplomatic relations with the PRC due to its communist ideology. Boycotted by Western countries after the Korean War (1950–1953), the CCP needed alternative export revenues to maintain friendships with other socialist countries whilst promoting its culture to the world.<sup>97</sup> After breaking with the Soviet Union in 1961, exporting mainly targeted Western countries, where communism was unwelcome. Obviously, China would need cultural products representing the nation that were acceptable to these non-communist cultures.<sup>98</sup> The planned socialist economy, still in its primary stage, could also be stabilised by revenue generated from exporting cultural products to the rest of the world.

Thus, what was able to represent China culturally during the Mao Era? According to statistics from Shanghai Importing and Exporting Company, one

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<sup>96</sup> Sun Shumei 孙树梅, ‘Wo suo Qinli de Rongbao zhai Muban shuiyin Fazhan Licheng 4 我所亲历的荣宝斋木版水印发展历程 (四)’, ed. Sun Zhiping 孙志萍, *Rongbao zhai* 荣宝斋, June 2012, p. 258.

<sup>97</sup> Kjeld Erik Broedsgaard and Bertel Heurlin, *China’s Place in Global Geopolitics: Domestic, Regional and International Challenges*. (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2013), p. 62.

<sup>98</sup> ‘Wenhuabu Dangzu Guanyu Guoji Shudian Shukan Jinchukou Wenti de Baogao 1956 Nian 4 Yue 13 Ri (56) Wen Dang Zi di 38 hao 文化部党组关于国际书店书刊进出口问题的报告 1956年4月13日 (56) 文档字第38号’, in *CBSL* 8, p. 72.

of the international distributors of water-soluble woodblock printed products, traditional Chinese art crafts occupied a significant proportion of the export income during the Maoist period. For example, the 22 million US dollars of income made in 1964 was all from Western capitalist countries; this income included sales of literati stationery, antiques and porcelain wares. The ‘Po si jiu’ (Anti Four Olds) movement of 1967, according to the report, stimulated foreign purchasers to buy these products, creating a surprising increase in exporting revenue in the three years from 1967 to 1969, reaching 33.79 million, 44.17 million and 51.98 million respectively.<sup>99</sup> The carver Sun Shumei also noted that Socialist and Maoist themed water-soluble woodblock printed products, although being constantly propagated, did not attract domestic buyers, and were only occasionally purchased by foreign visitors.<sup>100</sup> Imported Soviet-style propaganda art, even in other socialist countries, was not identified as indigenous Chinese art by foreign audiences. Traditional artworks, on the other hand, drew more interest due to their “Chineseness”.<sup>101</sup>

Pierre Bourdieu argues that the symbolic power of culture is a type of capital that can be exchanged as currency. This capital, however, functions through the “legitimate appearance of philosophical, religious, and legal (etc.) taxonomies”.<sup>102</sup> Accumulated over a long period in history, this power equals power acquired by force, through proven cultural authority and heritage. Bourdieu adds that only when a cultural capital is recognisable to social groups with shared knowledge and history will its symbolic power work as exchangeable cultural currency.<sup>103</sup> Following Bourdieu’s theory, woodblock products can then be taken as cultural capital of China that represent “Chineseness” in non-Chinese international contexts. This cultural capital had

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<sup>99</sup> Shanghai Duiwai Jingji Maoyizhi Bianzuan Weiyuanhui 上海对外经济贸易志编纂委员会, ed., ‘Shanghaigang Linian Chukou Waixiao Gongyipin Ziliao 上海港历年出口外销工艺品资料’, in *Shanghai Duiwai Jingji Maoyizhi Disanjuan Chukou Shangpin Maoyi* 上海对外经济贸易志第三卷 出口商品贸易 (Shanghai: Shanghai shehui kexueyuan chubanshe, 2001), available at: <http://www.shtong.gov.cn/node2/node2245/node74728/node74733/node74922/node74936/userobject1ai89662.html> [Accessed on 28 June 2018].

<sup>100</sup> Sun, ‘Wo suo Qinli de Rongbao zhai Muban shuiyin Fazhan Licheng 3’, p. 262.

<sup>101</sup> Shanghai Duiwai Jingji Maoyizhi Bianzuan Weiyuanhui, ‘Shanghaigang Linian Chukou Waixiao Gongyipin Ziliao’.

<sup>102</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, ed. John B. Thompson, trans. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson (Cambridge and Malden: Polity Press, 1992), p. 170.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

been accumulated in a cross-cultural context over centuries, through historical cultural interactions, communications and exchanges among nations. Woodblock artworks, together with other widely accepted Chinese crafts, were legitimated cultural capital beyond the PRC boarder, even when they were criticised by the domestic authority.<sup>104</sup> Therefore, to represent China culturally and generate foreign currency, the political authority chose to sell archaistic books to further its socialist business globally. Even for building ‘friendships’ with socialist countries, the xylographic products were more popular among foreign audiences than Soviet-styled propaganda art.<sup>105</sup>

Meanwhile, the CCP legacy was only established through its political enforcement domestically. Its legitimacy of rule had been reinforced through cultural movements and political force, making the symbolic power of communist propaganda art somehow recognisable to domestic audiences who accepted, or feared disagreeing with, the power of the party. The political enforcement also undermined and restricted the dissemination of art that suited the literati taste. Outside the socialist China, however, propaganda products were not recognised as an exchangeable cultural currency. Archaistic art crafts like water-soluble woodblock printed products, on the other hand, continued to be saleable to international buyers aesthetically and culturally, making them willing to purchase the products as souvenirs or decorative arts.<sup>106</sup>

The diplomatic and exporting importance of archaistic art crafts gave woodblock publishers a proper function as important manufactures of cultural products and gifts. Thus, the governmental subsidies could be put in place to provide sustainable supplies for international liaisons and foreign currency as economic contributions. This gave politicians good reason for their patronage of xylography. During the 1960s, when discussing the Flourishing Studio, for instance, Zhou Enlai noted that “if the business could restore Chinese cultural

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<sup>104</sup> Hou, ‘Rongbao zhai Muban shuiyin Hua’.

<sup>105</sup> ‘Wenhuabu Dangzu Guanyu Guoji Shudian Shukan Jinchukou Wenti de Baogao (56)’, p. 71.

<sup>106</sup> Hou, ‘Rongbao zhai Muban shuiyin Hua’.

heritage and at the same time earn foreign currency for the country, I do not see any point not to keep it (in the socialist economy)".<sup>107</sup>

Interviewees in this research all noted that their books and products were sold internationally to earn foreign currency for the country.<sup>108</sup> Historical records also indicate that exportation was a major task assigned to the publishers. According to the records of the China International Bookstore, from the 1950s to the 1960s, before the Cultural Revolution, the company was commissioned to sell nearly all the water-soluble woodblock printed books and paintings from the Flourishing Studio.<sup>109</sup> In a 1965 pamphlet for woodblock paintings of the Flourishing Studio published by the International Bookstore, Yuan Jiang's 袁江 (1443–?) painting *Fording in Autumn* (*Qiu she tu*, 秋涉图) and Qi Baishi's *A Study of Grass and Insects* (*Gong xi caochong tu*, 工细草虫图) were advertised in both Chinese and English, targeting English speaking and overseas Chinese audiences (fig. 3.2). Meanwhile, the International Bookstore also organised overseas sales of woodblock products from the Cloudy Studio in Shanghai, traditional New Year Woodcuts from Yangliuqing 杨柳青 in Tianjin,<sup>110</sup> and peasant woodcuts from Zhejiang Art Academy in Hangzhou. The products were sold in Japan, Western Europe, Northern America, the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries.<sup>111</sup> Government funds were allocated to organise export business for the woodblock publishers.

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<sup>107</sup> *Wenshi Ziliao Xuanbian Diliuji* 文史资料选编第六辑 (Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 1980), p. 194.

<sup>108</sup> In interviews with the Cloudy Studio, Rongbao zhai and Guangling, all three managers mentioned that their woodblock-printed books earned foreign currency for the government.

<sup>109</sup> 'Wenhua bu Guanyu wei Shiyong dui Sulian de Shukan Chukou Gongzuo Xi Youguan Fangmian Jiaqiang dui Guoji Shudian de Peihe yu Xiezuo de Tongzhi (55) Chu Fa Zi di 32 hao (1955 Nian 11 Yue 24 Ri) 文化部关于为适应对苏联的书刊出口工作希有关方面加强对国际书店的配合与协助的通知 (55) 出发字第 32 号 (1955 年 11 月 24 日)', in *CBSL* 7, pp. 369–370.

<sup>110</sup> Traditional woodcuts nianhua 年画 produced by Yangliuqing were sold overseas under the trademark of Rongbao zhai.

<sup>111</sup> Zhongguo Guoji Tushu Maoyi Jituan Gongsi 中国国际图书贸易集团公司, 'Zhongguo Guoji Tushu Maoyi Zonggongsi: Dazao Juyou Guoji Yingxiangli de Wenhua Gudan Qiye 中国国际图书贸易总公司: 打造具有国际影响力的文化骨干企业' (Zhongguo guoji tushu maoyi jituan gongsi, 1 December 2009), available at: <http://www.cibtc.com.cn/gtweb/upload/news/dt2009120101.html> [Accessed on 28 June 2018].

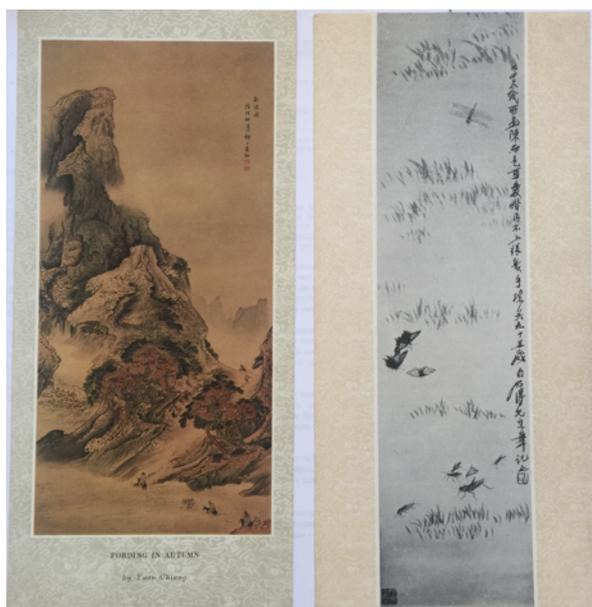


Fig. 3.2 Left: Yuan Jiang 袁江's painting entitled *Fording in Autumn* (*Qiushetu*, 秋涉图)  
 Right: Qi Baishi's *A Study of Grass and Insects* (*Gong xi caochong tu*, 工细草虫图), advertisement of painting replicas produced by the Flourishing Studio, 1965. (Beijing: Rongbao zhai, 1965). Photographed by Yuyu Yang.

The high demand for pictorial art from foreign audiences also explains why water-soluble woodblock printed illustrations and paintings were prioritised over monochrome texts. Compared with Chinese texts, especially classics, paintings are more universally understood by non-Chinese speakers. According to Hou Kai, letter papers with colourful motifs were very popular among foreign clients who visited the Flourishing Studio, therefore the publisher decided to publish more book compilations of them.<sup>112</sup> During the 1950s, through China International Bookstore, water-soluble woodblock painting albums such as *Collected Paintings of Qi Baishi* and *Ten Bamboo Studio* were sold in many countries with prefaces in local languages, such as English, French and German.<sup>113</sup>

To focus on printing monochrome texts, woodblock technology was almost abandoned before the modern mechanised printing industry. Domestically, since the technology as a whole failed the industrial modernisation goals of pursuing efficiency and industrialisation, it was no longer practical to produce

<sup>112</sup> Hou, 'Rongbao zhai Muban shuiyin Hua'.

<sup>113</sup> *Catalogue of Chinese Wood-block Art Publications* (Beijing: The International Bookstore, 1961).

vast numbers of texts for the readership.<sup>114</sup> For illustrations, however, water-soluble woodblock printing represented details of the subtle colours in Chinese paintings and calligraphy works better than mechanised technology in the 1950s.<sup>115</sup> This was increasingly obvious when replicating historical masterpieces, such as *Lady Guoguo on a Spring Outing* (*Guoguo furen youchun tu*, 虢国夫人游春图) from the Tang Dynasty, in which many of the artistic details could not be represented by mechanised technologies. For example, uneven and faded ink colours with gradations created by ink and brush on this painting had more sophisticated subtlety than the printing machines of the 1950s could capture. Stains and marks left on the paintings over the centuries also created an atmosphere of antiquity, but this was unable to be fully replicated by the printing machines.<sup>116</sup> The craftsmanship of water-soluble woodblock printing, with its delicate small pieces of block, on the other hand, was innovated to represent all these details almost perfectly.

Therefore, for the state, in retaining woodblock cultural heritage and serving domestic demands of text-based books, as the Rare Book Store (*Guji shudian*, 古籍书店) replied to Zhang Boju in 1956, plenty of historical resources in their collections could be reused.<sup>117</sup> It was more efficient and profitable to use extant woodblocks as capital than to invest in carving and printing new titles. The historical woodblocks were kept more as samples of cultural heritage and past glory of the nation, and the outdated technology was used only for amending important historical books or producing books for selected CCP elites.<sup>118</sup> Water-soluble woodblock printing, on the other hand, benefited the government both economically and culturally in foreign affairs, therefore it matched the CCP policies better.

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<sup>114</sup> Stuart R. Schram, *The Thought of Mao Tse-Tung*, Contemporary China Institute Publications (Cambridge [Cambridgeshire]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 109–111.

<sup>115</sup> Sun, 'Rongbao zhai Muban shuiyin Beihou de Gushi 1', p. 277.

<sup>116</sup> Sun Shumei 孙树梅, 'Rongbao zhai Muban shuiyin Beihou de Gushi 2 荣宝斋木版水印背后的故事 (二)', ed. Sun Zhiping 孙志萍, *Rongbao zhai* 荣宝斋 18 (March 2013), pp. 268–273.

<sup>117</sup> Zhang, 'Letter on Suggestions of Training Woodblock Carvers'.

<sup>118</sup> 'Zhengwuyuan wei Guiding Guji Zhengui Wenwu Tushu ji Xiyou Shengwu Baohu Banfa Ling, Zheng Wen Dong Zi di 13 hao (1950 Nian 5 Yue 24 Ri) 政务院为规定古迹珍贵文物图书及稀有生物保护办法令, 政文董字第 13 号 (1950 年 5 月 24 日)', in *CBSL* 2, pp. 265–266.

## *Expos: Exhibiting Chineseness*

One important way of promoting Chinese goods to foreign markets was to attend international exhibitions hosted in countries where the communist government was welcomed. Although mainly publicised domestically as “exhibiting the cultural and economic achievements of the great Chinese People”, the real motivation for attending the expositions was, quoting Prime Minister Zhou Enlai in 1957, “selling Chinese products to other countries to earn foreign currency”.<sup>119</sup> After US dollars became the major currency of international transactions, China not only attended expositions in socialist countries, but some Western European ones as well. From 1951, the Chinese government organised exhibitions in various countries and regions, including Czech Republic, East Germany, Syria, France, Japan, Hong Kong, Austria and Italy.<sup>120</sup>

Domestic exhibitions of the Maoist period, Denise Ho argues, focused on materialising the CCP ideology.<sup>121</sup> In order to publicise ideological concepts that were abstract to the masses, Ho points out, exhibitions often attached political interpretations to objects in order to make the ideological narrative explicit.<sup>122</sup> Internationally, however, materials were, to a certain degree, used to conceptualise a recognisable ‘Chineseness’ for foreign audiences. Unlike the domestic propaganda, cultural products presented to foreign audiences were less politically-oriented, including traditionally designed porcelain ware, jade ornaments and folklore arts.<sup>123</sup> As noted above, archaism became part of the officially endorsed Chineseness that was exhibited overseas, and among the many archaistic cultural products, water-soluble woodblock printed publications were often highlighted. In the 1956 Paris Exposition, for instance,

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<sup>119</sup> Zhonggongzhongyang Wenxian Yanjiushi 中共中央文献研究室, ed., *Zhou Enlai Nianpu (1949–1976) Zhong* 周恩来年谱 (1949–1976) 中, vol. 2, 3 vols (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 2007), p. 42.

<sup>120</sup> Sun Jing 孙晶, ‘Zhang Ding yu Duiwai Zhanlan 张汀与对外展览’, *Zhuangshi Zazhi* 装饰杂志, 28 October 2010, available at: <http://www.izhsh.com.cn/doc/10/694.html> [Accessed on 28 June 2018].

<sup>121</sup> Ho, *Curating Revolution*, pp. 60–97.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>123</sup> Shanghai Duiwai Jingji Maoyizhi Bianzuan Weiyuanhui, ‘Shanghaigang Linian Chukou Waixiao Gongyipin Ziliao’.

the painting hanging on the major exhibiting wall was a water-soluble woodblock printed section of the *Court Ladies Wearing Flowered Headdresses* produced by the Flourishing Studio (fig. 3.3).<sup>124</sup>



Fig. 3.3 Left: Interior of the 1956 Paris Expo China exhibition hall. Photo available at: [http://zhangding.artron.net/photo\\_detail\\_10011?cyear=1956](http://zhangding.artron.net/photo_detail_10011?cyear=1956) [Accessed on 28 June 2018]. Right: Printed section of *Court Ladies Wearing Flowered Headdresses*, 1956. (Beijing: Rongbao zhai, 1956). Photo available at: <http://www.hosane.com/auction/detail/p15120439> [Accessed on 28 June 2018].

In fact, water-soluble woodblock printing craftsmanship retained an essential role in the 175 expos China attended before the Cultural Revolution. The technique won the Flourishing Studio a special golden prize at the 1959 Leipzig International Exhibition, the most valued overseas exhibition in China at that time. From 1951, two years after the PRC was founded, China began to promote its agricultural, industrial and cultural achievements in Leipzig every year.<sup>125</sup> In the catalogue of the 1959 expo, a woodblock replica of Guo Moruo's painting 'Message of Peace' (*Heping de yinxun*, 和平的音讯), produced by the Flourishing Studio, won another special award at the Leipzig Book Fair in the same year.<sup>126</sup> Nineteen Chinese books won prizes at the fair, including woodblock new year prints from Yangliuqing.<sup>127</sup> These prizes and exhibitions

<sup>124</sup> Zhou Fan 周昉, *Zanhua Shinü Tu Jubu San* 簪花仕女图局部三 (Beijing: Rongbao zhai, 1956).

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> *Ideeller Wettbewerb für Buchgestalter: 'Das schönste Gedicht', Verzeichnis* (Leipzig: Internationale Buchkunstausstellung Leipzig 1959, 1959), p. 11.

<sup>127</sup> Li Lei 李蕾, 'Wang Shucun: Nianhua Yishengyuan 王树村: 年画一生缘', *Guangming Ribao* 光明日报, 20 February 2009.

clearly elevated woodblock products and their “Chineseness”. Echoing the exhibitions, the advertisements for the Flourishing Studio’s products made by the International Bookstore also emphasised the style created by Chinese ink and brush.<sup>128</sup>

The design styles of the China exhibiting halls also acknowledged archaism as the symbol of China, imitating the architectural styles of the Ming and Qing royal palaces. Zhang Ding 张仃, the chief designer of the Chinese exhibition hall in the Paris Expo 1956 and most of the Leipzig exhibitions, stated his design philosophy as “to present the great Chinese architectural aesthetics and tradition”.<sup>129</sup> Indeed, most of the exhibition halls he designed were in a style similar to the Forbidden City and other imperial architecture of the Qing Dynasty. Comparing the 1951 Leipzig hall and the 1956 Paris hall to Tian’an Men 天安门, the architectural similarities in structure, colour and style are clear.

The archaistic arts, however, also had to be in line with the CCP ideology that propagated ‘historical positivity’. Zhang recalled in 2011 that he met Picasso in Paris and sent him a woodblock printed *Collected Paintings of Qi Baishi* published by the Flourishing Studio. The gift he initially prepared was a pair of Door God (*menshen*, 门神) woodcuts in traditional Chinese style. However, he was not allowed to give them to Picasso, since a female cadre in the delegation classified the artworks as “negative traditional Chinese cultural products that publicise feudal superstition”.<sup>130</sup> Zhang Ding might have wanted to show Picasso his understanding of Chineseness, but he did not realise that mythical Chinese customs from the past were against the communist atheist ideology.

Even when the economic goal was to gain profit from capitalist countries, and when archaism was the more suitable aesthetic option by which to achieve

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<sup>128</sup> *Catalogue of Chinese Wood-block Art Publications* (Beijing: The International Bookstore, 1961), pp. 2–3.

<sup>129</sup> Zhang Ding 张仃, ‘Fangtanlu: Wo yu Gongyi Meishu 访谈录: 我与工艺美术’, in *Zhang Ding Wenji* 张仃文集, ed. Lei Ziren 雷子人 (Jinan: Shandong meishu chubanshe, 2011), pp. 336–337.

<sup>130</sup> Li Zhaozhong 李兆中 and Gugong Bowuyuan 故宫博物院, eds., ‘Tongjia Zhiyuan: Zhang Ding yu Bijiasuo 通家之缘: 张仃与毕加索’, in *Dajia Tan Zhang Ding* 大家谈张仃 (Beijing: Zijincheng chubanshe, 2009), p. 428.

this goal, the ideological battle between communism and feudal tradition, the Chinese nation and Western enemies was never put aside. When selling woodblock products to Western countries, the CCP sought opportunities to publicise their ideology. Sun Shumei recalled that when shipping woodblock products to “Western imperialist countries” during the 1960s, CCP propaganda materials were confidentially inserted into packages of traditional art pieces to promote “anti-imperial ideological battles” in the West.<sup>131</sup>

However, the reverse-revolution of CCP ideology towards the West did not convince non-socialist audiences politically and culturally. During the 1970s, three decades after the PRC was founded, the CCP regime was still unwelcome in most of the world. Internationally, proletarian propaganda art did not replace artworks created by ink and brush. The latter was still more saleable as the symbol of Chineseness.<sup>132</sup> Isolated from the world, China sought its way back into the international community. Although radical campaigns were still publicising anti-Confucius themes domestically, the government started to reconnect with Western countries. In 1972, the American President Richard Nixon visited China after 25 years of severed diplomatic relations, which was taken as “a historical week that changed the world history”.<sup>133</sup> At this historical moment, as mentioned above, the omnipresent portraits of Mao and anti-imperialist propaganda arts embarrassed the Chinese government. The instruction from Prime Minister Zhou Enlai with regard to decorating hotels where foreign politicians would stay with traditional paintings indicated that Chinese antiquity as the tradition again became the option for promoting Chinese culture to the world.<sup>134</sup> Zhou also noted that more traditionally designed art crafts and national paintings were to be exported to international markets. Instead of winning the international battle, it seemed that China had finally compromised, changing its attitude towards antiquity and showing it to

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<sup>131</sup> Sun, ‘Wo suo Qinli 4’, pp. 264–265.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid, p. 265.

<sup>133</sup> K. A. Hamilton, ‘A “Week That Changed the World”: Britain and Nixon's China Visit of 21–28 February 1972’, *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 15, no. 1 (2004), pp. 117–135.

<sup>134</sup> Zhongwen Chubanshu Fuwu Zhongxin 中文出版物服务中心, ed., *Zhonggong Zhongyao Lishi Wenxian Ziliao Huibian: Wenge Lishi Ziliao ji Pingjia Zhuanjì 138–139* 中共重要历史文献资料汇编: ‘文革’历史资料及评价专辑 138–139 (Los Angeles: Zhongwen chubanshu fuwu zhongxin, 2010), p. 249.

the West as the country's cultural essence. As a result of this, Zhou was associated with Confucianism and criticised in the Criticising Lin Criticising Confucius Campaign for a short period, but he retained his position after the peak of the campaign.<sup>135</sup>

Zhou Enlai's encouragement of the industry, Chen Yi's endorsement of the businesses, and the many patrons among the CCP elites, all created opportunities for the woodblock trade to survive. Meanwhile, the diplomatic and exporting importance certainly kept the businesses running with a relatively sustainable financial income. The survival strategies of woodblock publishers, therefore, as I will discuss, mostly focused on how to tighten connections with political power so as to remain in the system and survive the fluctuating political campaigns.

### **Indirectly Serving the People**

Although woodblock businesses were protected by politicians, and thus given the opportunity to be profitable within the planned economy, the constant campaigns against feudal culture made it difficult to explain its existence to the radical 'revolutionary masses'.<sup>136</sup> The literati aesthetics of woodblock publications and the limited elite audience clearly contradicted the CCP's anti-feudal stance. Solely making an economic contribution was insufficient to legitimise any business during the Mao Era, and exporting artworks to capitalist countries was not what the CCP aimed to propagate domestically. Following Mao Zedong's Yan'an talk, as Perry Link addresses, all art and literary creations were required to "serve politics".<sup>137</sup> However, the policies changed so rapidly that Link compares them with weather in their

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<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Gongdaihui Renmin Meishu Chubanshe Geming Zaofantuan 工代会人民美术出版社革命造反团 and Renmin Meishu Chubanshe Menshibu Linshi Geming Weiyuanhui 人民美术出版社门市部临时革命委员会, "Rongbao zhai" Heimu 荣宝斋黑幕', *Wenyi Geming* 文艺革命, 2 August 1967.

<sup>137</sup> Link, *The Uses of Literature*, p. 169.

changeability.<sup>138</sup> When policies were relatively tolerant, under their patron's protection woodblock publishers were able to maintain a stable business. When facing radical criticism, however, their patrons were sometimes unable to provide help, especially when their political positions were put at risk.

This was the main reason why the manager Hou Kai at the Flourishing Studio developed the theory of “indirectly serving the working class”. Hou Kai recalled in 2015 that his theory contained two elements. The first is to interpret the woodblock business as harmless to the working class. Although the products were not designed to suit working class tastes, Hou argues, they were not against the working class either. Secondly, although the products might not be appreciated by workers, peasants and soldiers, they were sold overseas and earned foreign currencies, therefore they served the socialist economy that belonged to the proletariat.<sup>139</sup> Hou Kai's interpretation of the Flourishing Studio's business was in line with statesman Zhou Yang's 周扬 theory.<sup>140</sup> As the Vice Minister of the Ministry of Propaganda, Zhou coined the indirect coordination theory in 1959, suggesting that artistic creations serving no specific policies should also be encouraged, since the people also needed some relaxed culture other than propaganda. He then classified art as good, harmless and harmful, emphasising that arts such as landscape paintings and dramas like *The Peony Pavilion: The Interrupted Dream in the Garden* (*Youyuan jingmeng*, 游园惊梦) belong to the ‘harmless’ category. They were, he further emphasised, “harmless for politics, and even positive for daily lives”.<sup>141</sup> Although Zhou's theories were heavily criticised later during the Cultural Revolution,<sup>142</sup> they represented official approval of traditional businesses, including the woodblock book trade, before 1966.

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid, p. 68.

<sup>139</sup> Liu Hongqing 刘红庆, ‘Minjian Gugong Dazhangmen Hou Kai Renquqingzai’ 民间故宫大掌门侯凯人去情在, in *Zhongguo Qingnianbao* 中国青年报, 16 February 2015.

<sup>140</sup> Julia Frances Andrews, *Painters and Politics in the People's Republic of China, 1949–1979* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), pp. 119–121.

<sup>141</sup> Zheng Jiqiao 郑季翘, ‘Chedi Qingsuan Zhou Yang Fandang Fanshehuizhuyi de Zuixing 彻底清算周扬反党反社会主义的罪行’, *Renmin Ribao* 人民日报, 6 August 1966.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

Another part of Hou Kai's theory was that, as Zheng Li notes Hou's colleagues recalled, "a business serving the country and its leadership cannot be a counter-revolutionary one".<sup>143</sup> In 1956, as the Flourishing Studio was obtaining the opportunity to merge as a public-private joint company, "serving politics and the working class" was gradually becoming the utmost goal of all trades in China. As the manager on the government side, Hou Kai also aimed to reform the business to create more 'revolutionary' projects from the start.<sup>144</sup> The archaistic nature of the business, however, made him realise that literati art had to be preserved as the major source of income. To protect the business from being ruined by radical political forces, he attempted to associate it with cultural policies, high ranking CCP officials, and the highest political leader: Chairman Mao.<sup>145</sup> *The Hundred Flowers* project was initiated by Hou, since he sensed it was an opportunity to make the traditional business connect with a popular revolutionary theme, whilst associated with Guo Moruo, "the revolutionary romantic poet" of the PRC.<sup>146</sup>

The book, as noted in Chapter Two, was a big success and gained the Flourishing Studio a reputation as a master in water-soluble woodblock printed illustrations, gaining the publishing house more opportunities to be appointed as a national gift manufacturer. Painting replicas such as *Court Ladies Wearing Flowered Headdresses* were presented at international conferences, and were sent to foreign leaders as national gifts. These gifts drew attention from politicians such as Zhou Enlai and Chen Yi, providing the publisher more political protection.<sup>147</sup> As Sun Shumei summarised, the most important strategy of the Flourishing Studio was to maintain good relations with cultural officials (*wenhua guanyuan*, 文化官员) to ensure protection and resources.<sup>148</sup> Hou Kai

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<sup>143</sup> Zheng, *Rongbao zhai Sanbainian Jian*, pp. 234–235.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 236.

<sup>145</sup> Hou 'Rongbao zhai Muban shuiyin Hua'.

<sup>146</sup> Sun, 'Rongbao zhai Muban shuiyin Beihou de Gushi 1', p. 278.

<sup>147</sup> Mi Jingyang 米景扬, *Wo zai Rongbao zhai Sishinian* 我在荣宝斋 40 年. (Beijing: Beijing Chubanshe, 2014), p. 80 and p. 149.

<sup>148</sup> Sun, 'Wo suo Qinli 3', pp. 262–266.

called the cultural officials “representatives of the people”. Therefore, serving their needs, he argued, equalled serving the needs of the masses.<sup>149</sup>

It is worth reminding ourselves that the Flourishing Studio also attempted to directly convert its business to serve the proletariats before they finally decided to choose political leaders as their target users. Sun Shumei’s memories from 2010 and internal documents detail this development of the business. In 1953, after the Yan’an woodcut experts joined the Flourishing Studio, the publisher experimented with revolutionary themed new year woodcuts. They had to price their much smaller woodcuts at the same price as locally produced ones because of the high cost and the New Year Woodcuts they produced with ‘literati elegance’ had less bold colouring than the folk versions. Aiming to sell in rural areas, the experiment failed since no peasants wanted to pay the same price for “a much smaller one with gloomy colours”.<sup>150</sup> After this failure, the Flourishing Studio again tried collotype and press printing during the 1950s. However, all attempts turned out to be unsuccessful, until they switched back to the literati business they were familiar with.<sup>151</sup> Therefore, although publishing propaganda themes such as in *The Hundred Flowers* and *Registers of the New Heroes* (*Xin yingxiong pu*, 新英雄谱), the publishing house mainly focused on apolitical titles before the Cultural Revolution. From the 1950s, the majority of the 1,000 woodblock paintings the Flourishing Studio published were classical Chinese paintings, calligraphies and art educational books.<sup>152</sup> Hou Kai stated clearly that he was using the propaganda works to protect the major business in order to “guarantee the tradition from our great ancestors being passed generation after generation”.<sup>153</sup>

Other woodblock publishers clearly adopted similar strategies. Apart from *The Manifesto*, for example, the Cloudy Studio published a large number of classical titles of calligraphy copy books, painting albums and replicas. This was sometimes at the request of politicians such as Yao Wenyuan who had

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<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Sun, ‘Wo suo Qinli 2’, pp. 270–271.

<sup>151</sup> Sun, ‘Wo suo Qinli 3’, pp. 260–262.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid, p. 258.

<sup>153</sup> Hou, ‘Rongbao zhai Muban shuiyin Hua’.

archaistic tastes and sometimes based on considerations of assisting old school artists, collaborators in the old business, to survive in the Maoist Era with otherwise no income.<sup>154</sup> From the 1950s to the 1960s, water-soluble woodblock printed letter papers produced by the Cloudy Studio were popular among people who still wrote letters in ink and brush.<sup>155</sup> The business model of woodblock publishing was more or less to use politically correct projects as protection for their original businesses. In 1961, the Cloudy Studio published a woodblock replica of Kang Sheng's painting *Lotus in Ink* (*Mohe tu*, 墨荷图). The painting was also published in *Beijing Evening* (*Beijing wanbao*, 北京晚报), together with an article written by Deng Tuo 邓拓 for his *Evening Talks at Yanshan* (*Yanshan yehua*, 燕山夜话) series.<sup>156</sup> In the same period, the publisher put many replicas of noted Shanghai School painters like Lu Yanshao 陆俨少 and Wu Changshuo 吴昌硕 on the market.<sup>157</sup>

When the Destroy the Four Olds campaign commenced, however, the hardest period for the woodblock book trade began. During the Cultural Revolution, the contribution to export was no longer a politically correct reason for existence for the radical 'revolutionary masses'. Meanwhile, the historical mission of heritage preservation could hardly prevent the xylographic businesses from being criticised as the symbol of the old, when nearly all Chinese traditions were targets to destroy.<sup>158</sup> Especially when protectors such as Zhou Yang were also facing criticism, the indirect theory could no longer fully secure woodblock businesses.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> Interview with Mao Ziliang.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid. See also Mao, *Yilin Leigao*, pp. 152–154.

<sup>156</sup> Lu Chishui 鲁赤水, 'He Hua 荷花', *Beijing Wanbao* 北京晚报, 29 July 1962 and Ma Nancun 马南邨, 'Yanshan Yehua: Yifu Mohe 燕山夜话: 一幅墨荷', *Beijing Wanbao* 北京晚报, 29 July 1962. Lu Chishui 鲁赤水 was Kangsheng's pen name, and Ma Nancun 马南邨 was Deng Tuo's 邓拓 pen name.

<sup>157</sup> *Duoyun xuan Muban shuiyin Yishupin Mulu* 朵云轩木版水印艺术品目录. (Beijing: Zhongguo guoji shudian, 1983).

<sup>158</sup> Huang Yanmin 黄延敏, 'Po si jiu Yundong de Fazhan Mailuo' 破四旧运动的发展脉络, *21 Shiji Shuangyuekan* 21世纪双月刊 137 (2013), p. 75.

<sup>159</sup> Zheng, 'Chedi Qingsuan Zhou Yang Fandang Fanshehuizhuyi de Zuixing'.

## During the Cultural Revolution

Since cultural elites were the very target of the Cultural Revolution, most of the woodblock businesses were affected by radical campaigns at its peak in 1967.<sup>160</sup> Although the central government partly controlled the situation for a period, its political power was weaker in smaller cities beyond Beijing and Shanghai.<sup>161</sup> This directly affected the fate of the woodblock publishers. The closer the businesses were in their connection to the central power, in my opinion, the more political protection they obtained, and the less they were affected by the political campaigns.

Being closer to the central power also put more political pressure on the publishers, however. For the CCP, even today, Beijing and Shanghai are two of the most important cities in China. Beijing has been the capital city, where the central government has been located, whilst Shanghai has been the economic hub of the nation from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards.<sup>162</sup> This certainly necessitated more political engagement for the publishers in the two cities. Therefore, more politics-related titles were published by woodblock publishing houses in these two cities than in smaller cities. For example, *The Hundred Flowers* was published to praise the Let the Hundred Flowers Bloom and Let the Hundred Schools Contend, and the Great Leap Forward policies.<sup>163</sup> The *Registers of Paintings of New Heroes*, published in 1960 by the Flourishing Studio was designed to publicise socialist heroes, although being presented in a style similar to Chen Hongshou's 陈洪绶 (1598–1652) depiction of the Liangshan Rebellions.<sup>164</sup> The publisher also had political assignments to print greeting cards for Mao, menus for national banquets, and national gifts for

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<sup>160</sup> ‘Xiang Jiushijie Menglie Kaihuo: Yitiao Wenhuajie 向旧世界猛烈开火—“一条文化街”’, *Huanqiu Chi* 寰球赤, 10 August 1967.

<sup>161</sup> Bu Weihua 卜伟华, *Zalan Jiushijie – Wenhua dageming de Dongluan yu Haojie (1966–1968)* 砸烂旧世界—文化大革命的动乱与浩劫(1966–1968), vol. 6, 10 vols, Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Shi 中华人民共和国史 (Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2008), pp. 526–528.

<sup>162</sup> Wen-Hsin Yeh, *Shanghai Splendor: Economic Sentiments and the Making of Modern China, 1843–1949* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), pp. 1–2.

<sup>163</sup> Guo Moruo 郭沫若 et al., *Baihua qifang* 百花齐放 (Beijing: Rongbao zhai xinji, 1961), preface.

<sup>164</sup> Tamara Heimarck Bentley and Hongshou Chen, *The Figurative Works of Chen Hongshou (1599–1652): Authentic Voices/Expanding Markets*, Visual Culture in Early Modernity (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), pp. 1–2.

important occasions.<sup>165</sup> In Shanghai, the Cloudy Studio woodblock printed artworks were created by ‘communist comrades’ in the CCP system, such as Kang Sheng and Chen Yi.<sup>166</sup> In smaller cities like Nanjing and Yangzhou, publishers certainly had more freedom to publish more traditional titles. All the texts carved and re-printed in Jingling, for instance, were Buddhist classics.<sup>167</sup> Similarly, the four newly carved titles Guangling published and the 50 titles reprinted are local documents and literature.<sup>168</sup>

However, although more strictly controlled, being closely connected with the central government also provided more support from high rank politicians. The geographic advantage of being in the capital city meant that publishers in Beijing were provided with a useful connection to central governors. China Bookstore, the Flourishing Studio and the Cloudy Studio were taken as not only providers of archaistic cultural products, but also a local ‘cultural back garden’.<sup>169</sup> Frequent visitors, such as Kang Sheng, Zheng Zhenduo, Tian Jiaying, Deng Tuo and Guo Moruo, clearly brought the publishers more business opportunities and political protection. The significant number of artists and politicians dwelling in Shanghai also made the Cloudy Studio a place for ‘cultural gatherings’ of politicians such as Chen Yi.<sup>170</sup> These kinds of personal linkages can hardly be found in Guangling and Jinling. Although gaining some opportunities when the politicians visited the cities, the publishers did not share the convenience of being local to the politicians, therefore they obtained much less protection, both politically and financially.<sup>171</sup>

Political protection became more important to the woodblock book trade when the Cultural Revolution commenced. In the name of ‘the great proletariat’, the radical political campaign soon swept the entire country, aiming to destroy all old culture as ‘anti-revolutionary’ forces. Former Cultural Minister Zhou Yang was criticised by Mao as being a sympathiser with

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<sup>165</sup> Sun, ‘Wo suo Qinli 4’, p. 264.

<sup>166</sup> Interview with Mao Ziliang.

<sup>167</sup> Interview with Wu Yankang.

<sup>168</sup> Liu Yongming 刘永明, manuscript of a list of the woodblock publications of Guangling by memory, 2016.

<sup>169</sup> Sun, ‘Wo suo Qinli 3’, p. 264.

<sup>170</sup> Interview with Mao Ziliang.

<sup>171</sup> Interview with Zhou Guangpei.

capitalist aesthetics and values. He was then put in prison as a class enemy.<sup>172</sup> Young radicals divided into the Red Guards, rebel factions and many smaller political groups. While punishing reactionary authorities, they battled against each other in many cities.<sup>173</sup>

As symbols of the old culture, woodblock publishers were under attack from the Red Guards in Beijing. For a period in 1967, China Bookstore and the Flourishing Studio were forced to close. On 2 August 1967, *Literary and Art Revolution* (*Wenyi geming*, 文艺革命) published a full-page article titled *The Dark Scene of the Flourishing and Treasured Studio* (*Rongbao zhai heimu*, 荣宝斋黑幕). Edited by the Worker's Representative of the Rebellious Fraction and Temporary Revolutionary Committee in the People's Art Publishing House, the article criticised the Flourishing Studio as being a place for politicians such as Deng Tuo and Qi Yanming to steal state property for their personal interests.<sup>174</sup>

Eight days later, the Red Guard newspaper *Global Red* (*Huanqiu chi*, 寰球赤) published another article entitled *Fire Fiercely against the Old World – a Cultural Street*, attacking all businesses on the Liulichang 琉璃厂 Street, where the Flourishing Studio, China Bookstore and its major branches were located. Calling the Mayor of Beijing Peng Zhen 彭真 'Heister Peng' (*Pengzei*, 彭贼), the article accused woodblock publishers of being the 'black sites' of Liu Shaoqi 刘少奇 and Deng Xiaoping's 邓小平 anti-revolutionary and capitalist schemes. One of the crimes China Bookstore had committed, the article claimed, was that the publisher kept a secret counter where high-ranking officials could buy erotic novels and paintings that corrupted communist cadres and expanded Liu and Deng's "frenzied anti-CCP attacks".<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> Hongqi Zazhi Bianjibu 《红旗》杂志编辑部, 'Wuchanjieji Wenhua dageming de Zhinanzhen – Chongxin Fabiao Zai Yan'an Wenyi Zuotanhui Shang de Jianghua Anyu 无产阶级文化大革命的指南针 – 重新发表《在延安文艺座谈会上的讲话》按语', no. 9 (1 July 1966), pp. 25–27.

<sup>173</sup> Bu, *Zalan Jiushijie*, pp. 204–229.

<sup>174</sup> Gongdaihui Renmin Meishu Chubanshe Geming Zaofantuan and Renmin Meishu Chubanshe Menshibu Linshi Geming Weiyuanhui, 'Rongbao zhai Heimu'.

<sup>175</sup> 'Xiang Jiushijie Menglie Kaihuo: Yitiao Wenhua jie'.

On 23 August, the *People's Daily* published two unprecedented editorials, supporting radical rallies of young students starting from 20 August. Affected by this, the Flourishing Studio was forced to abandon its shop sign, renamed the Second Retail Department of the People's Art Publishing House (*Renmin meishu chubanshe di-er menshibu*, 人民美术出版社第二门市部) (fig. 3.4).<sup>176</sup> China Bookstore also shut down its business due to the attacks.<sup>177</sup> In Shanghai, the Cloudy Studio was renamed the Red East Calligraphy and Painting Studio (*Dongfanghong shuhua she*, 东方红书画社) in answering the request of the Red Guards.<sup>178</sup>



Fig. 3.4 Red Guards attacked Rongbao zhai on 20 August 1967. (*Shucheng* 书城, issue 29, no. 10, 2008.10), photo available at: <http://mjlsh.usc.cuhk.edu.hk/book.aspx?cid=7&tid=5&pid=939&aid=940> [Accessed on 28 June 2018].

Publishers in Beijing and Shanghai, although being attacked, were re-opened soon after the first radical months of the Cultural Revolution. After the anarchic fighting was controlled by the central government in 1968, the close connections between woodblock publishers and politicians again saved the woodblock trade. When challenged by the radical campaigners during the Cultural Revolution, Hou Kai defended the Flourishing Studio by asking how a publisher that produced artworks for the greatest leader Chairman Mao and made greeting cards for him could be against the revolution.<sup>179</sup> In 1968, the

<sup>176</sup> Li Hui 李辉, 'Pintie Fengzhong Suipian 1 拼贴风中碎片一', *Shucheng* 书城, issue 29, no. 10, October 2008, available at: <http://mjlsh.usc.cuhk.edu.hk/book.aspx?cid=7&tid=5&pid=939&aid=940> [Accessed on 28 June 2018].

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>178</sup> Mao, *Yilin Leigao*, p. 154.

<sup>179</sup> Zheng, *Rongbao zhai Sanbainian Jian*, pp. 234–235.

Flourishing Studio woodblock printed an oil painting entitled *Chairman Mao goes to Anyuan* (*Maozhuxi qu anyuan*, 毛主席去安源),<sup>180</sup> proving that the business had by this time re-opened. China Bookstore also published *Theories of Ci Poetry in Ancient and Modern Times* (*Gujin cihua*, 古今词话) in 1969, reprinted based on a Kangxi edition.<sup>181</sup>

If loose political connections with the central power had somehow given Guangling and Jingling freedom before, it created fatal problems for the publishers during the radical Cultural Revolution. The lack of political protection caused the two publishing houses in Yangzhou and Nanjing to close in 1967. Both Guangling and Jinling were not re-opened until the end of the 1970s. The publishing houses, as Zhou Guangpei recalled, were criticised as “capitalist black stores”, whilst the managers were labelled as “black shop owners” (*Heidian zhanggui*, 黑店掌柜).<sup>182</sup> The businesses were soon forced to shut down and their employees were sent to rural areas for ‘remoulding’. Some of them were even put in prison, and the woodblocks in their collections were burned or destroyed by the Red Guards unless protected by politicians. These protected ones were kept and sealed in storage until the 1980s.<sup>183</sup>

During the interview in 2015 Zhou recollected that, in 1966, as the manager in Guangling, he felt threatened by the radical local campaigns, which made them decide to woodblock print *Selected Works of Mao Zedong* (*Mao Zedong xuanji*, 毛泽东选集) for political protection. Carved and printed in 1966, Zhou and his colleague took this newly printed book to Beijing, dedicating it to the central government to “avoid being criticised and harmed”. After staying in Zhongnanhai 中南海, where the central government was, for more than three months, they were persuaded to leave by an official there. He promised them that manic fighting had stopped and everything was again under control by the government in the capital. The situation in Yangzhou, however, was chaotic beyond the expectations of the central government. As soon as Zhou and his

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<sup>180</sup> Liu Chunhua 刘春华, *Maozhuxi Qu Anyuan* 毛主席去安源, woodblock printed. (Beijing: Rongbao zhai, 1968).

<sup>181</sup> Shen Xiong 沈雄 ed. *Gujin Cihua* 古今词话, photoprinted. (Beijing: Zhongguo shudian, 1969).

<sup>182</sup> Interview with Zhou Guangpei, interview with Wu Yankang.

<sup>183</sup> Interview with Zhou Guangpei.

colleague arrived at Yangzhou railway station, they were arrested by Red Guards. Guangling was shut down, whilst Zhou was criticised and sent to a rural area to do farming work until the 1980s.<sup>184</sup> The only woodblock printed edition of the *Selected Works of Mao Zedong* remained unpublished. The woodblocks were later destroyed during the Cultural Revolution.<sup>185</sup>

Woodblock publishers in Beijing and Shanghai survived during the Cultural Revolution. While Jinling and Guangling were shut down, the Flourishing Studio and the Cloudy Studio quickly reopened in 1967. What fundamentally changed, however, was their publishing titles. From 1967 to the late 1970s, the Flourishing Studio mostly published propaganda titles that were politically correct. Their major publications included replicas of Mao's calligraphy works, woodblock printed Mao portraits, and propaganda posters.<sup>186</sup> Similarly, the Cloudy Studio published a large number of copybooks and products related to Mao. The only less politically oriented titles published during the Cultural Revolution before Mao's death were the woodblock books that the Cloudy Studio produced during the 1970s. However, as will be discussed in the following chapter, all the books were produced as part of a bigger project for Chairman Mao. In 1976, following Mao's death, the Cloudy Studio printed *Thirty-nine Poems by Chairman Mao*, one of four new woodblock books, and sent it to Memorial Hall as a gift.<sup>187</sup> After 1978, both publishers started to publish non-political themed titles again, whilst Jinling and Guangling re-opened in 1978 and 1982 respectively.

## Conclusion

Although the woodblock book trade was under official protection and deemed in need of preservation as historical cultural heritage, individual patrons clearly

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<sup>184</sup> Ibid.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid.

<sup>186</sup> Interview with Lei Zhenfang.

<sup>187</sup> According to the archival materials of *The Manifesto*, the planned fourth title was *The Great Tang Dynasty Record of the Western Regions (Datang xiyuji, 大唐西域记)*. AMCM, no. 4.

used their political influence to gain this title for the endangered xylographic businesses that they favoured. The government indeed used archaistic cultural products for diplomatic and international trading, but what kind of products could be involved largely relied on which producers were legitimated in the system. Without the patrons, it would have been impossible for woodblock businesses to register as legal publishing houses, considering how many other similar bookstores were bankrupt, shut down and merged into state-held organisations without their original trade names. Since these patrons had supported the publishers since the Republican Period, their archaistic interests helped xylography to survive once they had political power in the state apparatus.

No matter that printing technology was for a time publicised as the people's invention, the aesthetics of elite books was what allowed the craftsmanship to be valued and appreciated for centuries. Most specific tasks of the trade, although in the name of "use the past to serve the present", related to the old, such as collecting and preserving old woodblocks and re-printing historical books. Newly developed techniques concentrated on innovating water-soluble woodblock technology, with a view to exhibiting and exporting to foreign countries, again reflecting traditional Chinese culture beyond the Chinese territory. This explains why woodblock publishers followed the theory of "indirectly serving the working class" and printed titles related to Mao and high rank governors, protecting their old business of printing classical books and art replicas. The importance of being connected with the central power also increased when the Cultural Revolution swept the nation. The instability of the political situation made the differences between central cities and periphery areas more pronounced, thus differentiating the fate of the woodblock publishers.

## Chapter Four

### Aesthetics, Technology and Power

In the previous chapters we have analysed three questions about elite woodblock publishing during the Mao Era: who were the elites, what aesthetics were the books following and how were the books consumed and transacted? The elites, quoting the archival materials of *The Manifesto*, were “central senior officials and foreign guests”.<sup>1</sup> Aesthetically, the books follow the design norms of literati fine books and illustrations in achieving perfection equal to the level of the Song editions. Especially for publications in book format, the aesthetics are in line with historical Chinese thread-bound books (*xianzhuangshu*, 线装书).<sup>2</sup> Communist elites consumed these new fine books and regulated their transactions in a similar way to Chinese literati before the socialist regime.

One question therefore naturally follows on from the above: was woodblock printing the only technology for presenting archaic aesthetics of thread-bound books during the Mao Era? According to the available publication data, thread-bound books were certainly published with other relatively newer printing technologies during the period. For example, Perry Link mentions a thread-bound edition of *The Golden Lotus* (*Jin ping mei*, 金瓶梅) published during the 1950s, which was photoprinted from a Ming woodblock edition.<sup>3</sup> In fact, as mentioned in previous chapters, other thread-bound books were published with various technologies, including lithography, collotype and mimeograph. Among the thread-bound editions of Chairman

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<sup>1</sup> AMCM, no. 5.

<sup>2</sup> See the section including physical descriptions of *The Communist Manifesto* and other Mao Era woodblock books in Chapter One.

<sup>3</sup> Perry Link, *The Uses of Literature: Life in the Socialist Chinese Literary System* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000), p. 184.

Mao's poem collections, for example, as well as the 1958 woodblock printed edition of *Nineteen Poems by Chairman Mao*, the Cultural Relics Publishing House published another collotype edition of *Thirty-seven Poems by Chairman Mao* in 1963, finely printed in red, blue and black ink.<sup>4</sup> Some of the Guangling thread-bound books during the early 1950s were mimeograph,<sup>5</sup> whilst a lithography edition of *Eloquent Traces of Song Lyrics Poetry* (*Ningsong cihen*, 佞宋词痕), authored by Wu Hufan 吴湖帆, was published in thread-bound design in 1954.<sup>6</sup> The thread-bound design of these books indicates that, like woodblock publishing, archaism might have existed through varied printing technologies. It is thus worth exploring whether the aesthetic standard, the production and consumption and the culture around these publications were archaistic. The reasons for choosing varied printing technologies for thread-bound designs also require exploration: why did the producers give up woodblock printing, and what features did they prefer in the alternative technology? Further, if woodblock book publishing continued to be for CCP elites, what was the target reader group of non-xylography thread-bound books?

By considering character styles and aesthetic variables in relatively fixed norms of fine thread-bound book design and materiality, this chapter discusses the relation between aesthetics, printing technology and power. Extending the discussion to varied printing technologies that could have practiced archaistic book aesthetics, the focus is on understanding how crucial power was in accessing suitable technologies that affected archaistic perfectionism in thread-bound books during the Mao Era. By analysing both private and authorised publishing practices, I will argue that archaistic perfection of book aesthetics could only be fulfilled through accessible technologies that were allocated by the state. Thus, although archaistic attempts were still frequent in publishing during the Mao Era, only works produced for CCP cultural celebrities achieved the archaistic perfection of historical elite book culture.

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<sup>4</sup> 'Minzu Chuantong Keyin Zhuangzhen Yishu de Yicai – Ji Songbanshu Ziti Ben de Maozhuxi Shici Shi Zenyang Zhizuo de 民族传统刻印装帧艺术的异彩 – 集宋版书字体本的《毛主席诗词》是怎样制作的', *Guangming Ribao* 光明日报, 8 January 1964.

<sup>5</sup> Mimeograph material, *Gushu Banpian Mulu* 古书版片目录 (Yangzhou: Yangzhou gujiu shudian, 1978).

<sup>6</sup> Wu Hufan 吴湖帆, *Ningsong Cihen* 佞宋词痕 (Shanghai: Meijing shuwu 梅景书屋, 1954).

The case studies in this chapter are Zhang Boju's mimeograph books: *Congbi Catalogue of Calligraphy and Paintings* (*Congbi shuhualu*, 丛碧书画录, hereafter *Congbi Catalogue*), *Spring Outing Society Brief Essays* (*Chunyou suotan*, 春游琐谈), *Book of Seal Impressions on Pig Rearing* (*Yangzhu yinpu*, 养猪印谱, hereafter *Pig Rearing*)<sup>7</sup> and the Big Character Books (*daziben*, 大字本).<sup>8</sup> Mimeograph, seal engraving and mechanised press printing were chosen, or needed to be chosen accordingly, in the above publishing activities. All of these are thread-bound books that were published, or that people attempted to publish through connections with woodblock publishing, yet all of them finally moved to different technologies for various reasons.

## Character Styles and Thread-bound Book Aesthetics

The three projects all had strong connections with archaistic character styles. The mimeograph *Congbi Catalogue* chose a less detailed character style to match the simple duplicating technology;<sup>9</sup> *Pig Rearing* was a showcase of how seal engraving art – the most ancient art practice for characters – accommodated literati elegance with the propaganda on pig rearing during the Great Leap Forward;<sup>10</sup> Big Character Books were named for their choice of large characters.<sup>11</sup> All three kinds of books are thread-bound; yet their visual effects vary.<sup>12</sup> Different character styles and printing technologies were applied with different quality printing materials. In the mimeograph *Congbi Catalogue*,

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<sup>7</sup> Fang Quji 方去疾, Wu Pu 吴朴, Shan Xiaotian 单孝天, *Yangzhu Yinpu* 养猪印谱, ed. Liu Yiwen 刘一闻 (Shanghai: Shanghai wenhua chubanshe, 2014).

<sup>8</sup> Fang Houshu 方厚枢, 'Wei Mao Zedong Yinzhi Dazi Xianzhuangshu 为毛泽东印制大字线装书', *Chuban Kexue* 出版科学, no. 4 (2005), available at: [http://www.cbkx.com/2005-4/785\\_2.shtml](http://www.cbkx.com/2005-4/785_2.shtml) [Accessed on 28 June 2018].

<sup>9</sup> Cai Zhenxiang 蔡振翔, 'Zhang Boju de Congbi Shuhualu Youyin Xianzhuang Chubanben 张伯驹的《丛碧书画录》油印线装初版本', *Cangshu Bao* 藏书报, 27 May 2013.

<sup>10</sup> Wei Shaochang 魏绍昌, 'Bianhouji 编后记', in Fang Quji 方去疾, Wu Pu 吴朴, Shan Xiaotian 单孝天, *Yangzhu Yinpu* 养猪印谱, ed. Liu Yiwen 刘一闻 (Shanghai: Shanghai wenhua chubanshe, 2014), p. 226.

<sup>11</sup> Fang, 'Wei Mao Zedong Yinzhi Dazi Xianzhuangshu'.

<sup>12</sup> Although *Book of Seal Impressions on Pig Rearing* remained unpublished until 2014, the proposed design style was thread-bound during the 1960s. See Liu Yiwen 刘一闻, 'Yangzhu Yinpu Jiyi 养猪印谱记忆' in Fang Quji 方去疾, Wu Pu 吴朴, Shan Xiaotian 单孝天, *Yangzhu Yinpu* 养猪印谱, ed. Liu Yiwen 刘一闻 (Shanghai: Shanghai wenhua chubanshe, 2014), p. 246.

although the characters were designed as Song style, the thin and identical strokes of characters on machine-made paper removed calligraphic details in fine woodblock editions (fig. 4.1). For *Pig Rearing*, the main body of the contents pages is seal impressions with picturised characters, which were pre-designed to match the aesthetics of the seals (fig. 4.2). Its pages were designed by arranging these seal impressions to be visually harmonious. The Big Character Books use a relatively standardised style in unusually large size, finely printed on top quality Yukou-paper (*yukou zhi*, 玉扣紙) or customised Xuan-paper (fig. 4.3).

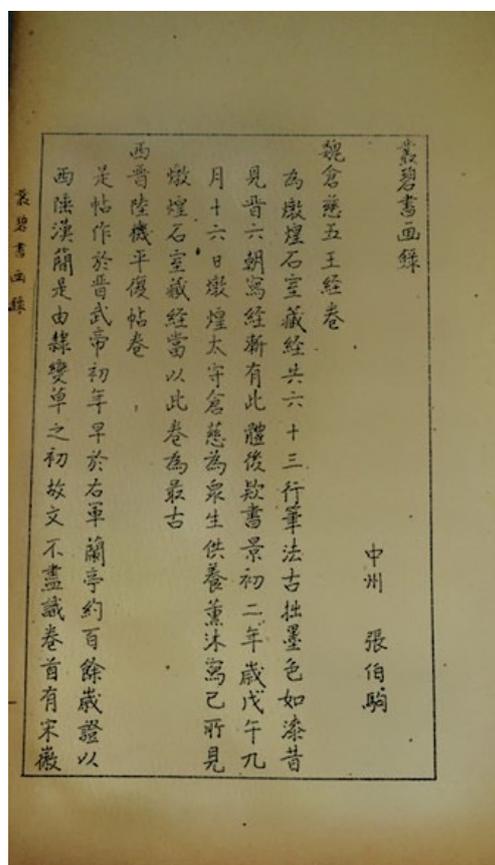


Fig. 4.1 The first page of *Congbi Catalogue*, mimeograph printed and privately circulated around 1960, Zhang Boju 张伯驹, private collection. Photographed by Chen Xiaowei.



Fig. 4.2 Contents page, the two seals read ‘Yangzhu haochu duodehen 养猪好处多的很 [Pig-rearing has many benefits]’ (above) and ‘Renmin ribao 1959 nian 11 yue 11 ri shelun 人民日报 1959 年 11 月 11 日社论 [The People’s Daily Editorial 11 November 1959]’ (below). Engraved by Fang Quji 方去疾, in Fang Quji 方去疾, Wu Pu 吴朴 and Shan Xiaotian 单孝天, Liu Yiwen 刘一闻, ed., *Yangzhu Yinpu* 养猪印谱 (Shanghai: Shanghai wenhua chubanshe, 2014), p. 19.

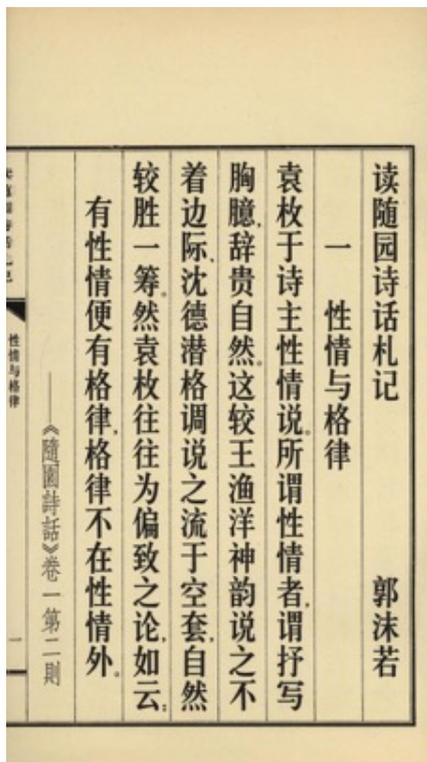


Fig. 4.3 Contents page, Big Character Book edition, Guo Moruo 郭沫若, *Du Suiyuan Shihua Zhaji* 读随园诗话札记 [On Suiyuan Poetry Discussions] (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe: 1974), p. 1, photo available at: <https://kknews.cc/culture/gz6n49.html> [Accessed on 28 June 2018].

Historically, character styles were crucial in the aesthetics of thread-bound books, especially in fine Song editions that favoured calligraphic features.<sup>13</sup> The transformation of character style in thread-bound books through the centuries, as Martin Heijdra points out, was mostly related to the debate on whether to retain or remove the calligraphic characteristics of characters in books. The less calligraphic Artisan style (*jiangti*, 匠体) was considered to have less aesthetic value during the Song Dynasty, therefore it wasn't accepted for centuries despite the fact that it made carving texts much more efficient.<sup>14</sup> However, as Heijdra argues, Artisan style created what he calls “typography aesthetics of books”. While calligraphy created individuality for characters on book pages, the less calligraphic typography aesthetics of the Artisan style, Heijdra emphasises, considered a book as a whole visual system that contains not only characters, but also content arrangement, illustrations and the impact of designs on different printing materials.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, character styles with less calligraphic individuality did not jeopardise the aesthetic value of thread-bound books, but simply appropriated characters as a part of book pages.

Heijdra only mentions that, historically, debates on calligraphy and typography had a certain social context, but he does not explore what these social and political reasons were, and how they influenced the aesthetics of books.<sup>16</sup> Neither does he analyse the technological influences on the performance of design in the final products: books. Especially when varied printing technologies were used in thread-bound books in the mechanical period following the 19<sup>th</sup> century, technical performance had to be considered to make the desired aesthetics physically recognisable, be this calligraphy or typography. Further to Heijdra's theory in relation to the above two considerations, character styles in the three kinds of books that this chapter

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<sup>13</sup> Hongyan Chen, 'A Joy to the Eye and the Mind – Books Transcribed by Celebrated Artists', in *The Art of the Book in China: Colloquies on Art and Archaeology in Asia No. 23, Held June 13th–15th, 2005*, eds. Ming Wilson and Stacey Pierson (London WC1H 0PD: University of London, Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art, School of Oriental and African Studies, 2006), pp. 29–42.

<sup>14</sup> Martin J. Heijdra, 'A Tale of Two Aesthetics: Typography versus Calligraphy in the Pre-Modern Chinese Book', in *The Art of the Book in China: Colloquies on Art and Archaeology in Asia No. 23, Held June 13th–15th, 2005*, eds. Ming Wilson and Stacey Pierson (London WC1H 0PD: University of London, Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art, School of Oriental and African Studies, 2006), pp. 15–28.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

looks at were designed differently for the most achievable aesthetic performance, which was restricted by the available printing technologies and their related printing materials. The accessibility of resources, however, was controlled by state power, which played a crucial role in fulfilling the design aesthetics. Calligraphic, epigraphic or typographic styles were chosen to pursue aesthetic perfection; yet the final effect was restrained and affected by social factors that were determined by the power dynamics of the Mao Era.

### Old Style Literati

Fine woodblock thread-bound books, as has been argued, were a cultural symbol of the Chinese literati. The xylographic culture was a tradition of the literati elites long before the PRC.<sup>17</sup> If the finest woodblock books were published for CCP elites, however, what happened to the old school literati elites who were the major force of private woodblock publishing during the Republican Period, and who retained a literati convention that was irrelevant to, or even criticised by, the CCP ideology? Zhang Boju 张伯驹, one of the notable private book publishers and collectors of the Republican Period, was still active during the Mao Era. Comparing Zhang's published materials, as will be done in this section, his privately published books all have distinctive archaistic features, yet the woodblock books he printed before the PRC are of much finer printing quality and use better materials than the mimeograph ones published after 1949.

The books that Zhang published before the PRC, such as *Congbi Lyrics Poetry* (*Congbi ci*, 丛碧词), are all woodblock printed thread-bound books of top quality. *Congbi Lyrics Poetry* uses characters from the *fangsong* style (imitation Song, 仿宋) family, which is, as Heijdra classifies, a type of typographic aesthetics that Zhang carefully chose for his book in order that it

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<sup>17</sup> Cynthia Brokaw, 'Commercial Woodblock Publishing in the Qing (1644–1911) and the Transition to Modern Printing Technology', in *From Woodblocks to the Internet: Chinese Publishing and Printing Culture in Transition, circa 1800 to 2008*, eds. Cynthia Brokaw and Christopher A. Reed (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2010), pp. 45–46.

could be considered a classic fine woodblock book. The technical factors have also been thoughtfully considered: the characters are elegantly scripted and carved, printed in black, red and blue on luxury Xuan-paper (fig. 4.4). The famous writer Deng Yunxiang 邓云乡 recalls how graceful the book looked:

This book is printed on Baimian paper (*baimian zhi*, 白棉纸, a type of top quality Xuan-paper), carved in *fangsong* style with big characters. In the bibliographers' words, this (book) is (a masterpiece) with a black frame (*heikou*, 黑口), double fish tail (*shuang yuwei*, 双尾鱼), ten-row per page (*yeshihang*, 页十行), eighteen-character per row (*hang shi ba zi*, 行十八字), eggshell blue paper book cover (*ciqing zhi shuyi*, 瓷青纸书衣), and double-string thick silky thread bound (*shuanggu cu sixian zhuangding*, 双股粗丝线装订).<sup>18</sup> On the title page Fu Zengxiang 傅增湘, courtesy name Double Mirror Studio Master (*shuangjianlou zhu*, 双鉴楼主), wrote the three characters of '丛碧词' (*Congbi ci*, Congbi Lyrics Poetry). The calligraphy is exceptionally tidy and elegant, which style follows Su (苏) style, yet with subtle references to Yan Lugong 颜鲁公<sup>19</sup>... The book was carved in 1938 during the Fall of Beiping 北平 (1937) ... This book is very pretty, with an antique atmosphere and aroma. It was printed as a gift with a small printing amount. Now it is even rarer in circulation. It was lucky that I encountered it in a second-hand bookstore.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> All the above are terms for design norms in top quality woodblock printed and thread-bound books.

<sup>19</sup> Su style (*suzi*, 苏字) refers to the calligraphic style of Su Shi 苏轼. Lugong 鲁公 is the courtesy name of Yan Zhenqing 颜真卿 (709–784), an iconic calligrapher from the Tang Dynasty (618–907), whose style has been named Yan Style (*yanti*, 颜体), one of the most learnt and imitated character styles in Chinese history. See Amy McNair, 'Letters as Calligraphy Exemplars: The Long and Eventful Life of Yan Zhenqing's (709–785) Imperial Commissioner Liu Letter', in *A History of Chinese Letters and Epistolary Culture*, ed. Antje Richter, Handbook of Oriental Studies. Section Four, China 31 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2015), pp. 53–96.

<sup>20</sup> Deng Yunxiang 邓云乡, 'Congbi Ci 丛碧词', in *Wenhua Gucheng Jiushi* 文化古城旧事 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2015), p. 300. Also see the quotation in Wang Xing 王星, 'Zhang Boju: Liushui Yifen Chun Yiban 张伯驹: 流水一分春一半', *Sanlian Shenghuo Zhoukan* 三联生活周刊, no. 787 (26 May 2014): pp. 66–87.

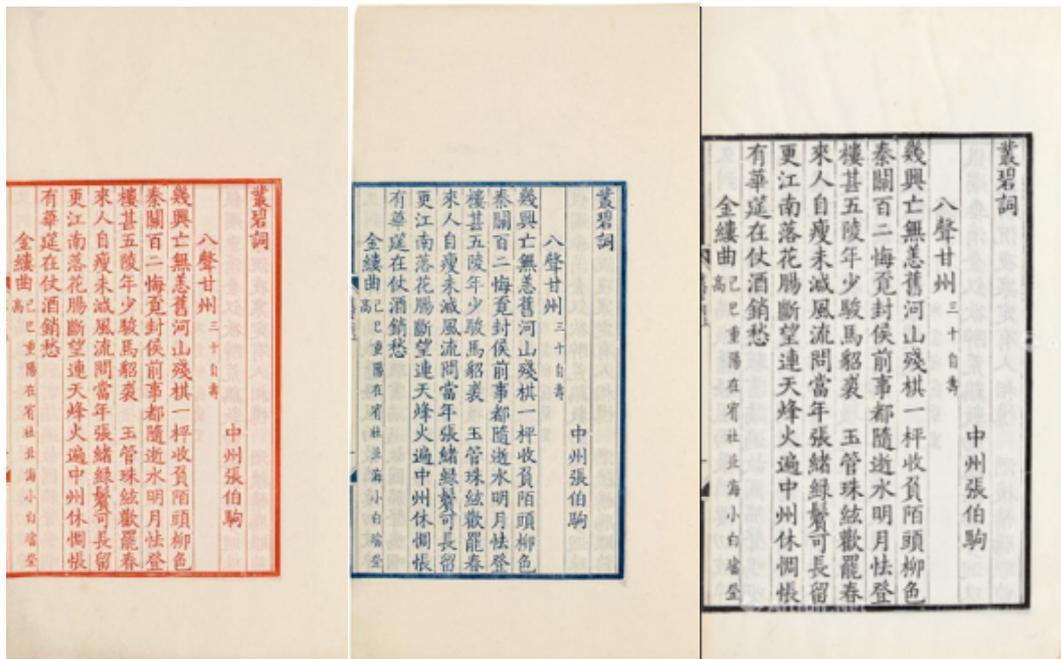


Fig. 4.4 Contents page of *Congbi Lyrics Poetry*, printed in red, blue and black. Photos available at: <https://auction.artron.net/paimai-art93540006/>, <http://auction.artron.net/paimai-art0071941013/> and <https://auction.artron.net/paimai-art93540007/> [Accessed on 28 June 2018].

*Congbi Lyrics Poetry*, therefore, was skilfully carved and printed as an elite book when Zhang was culturally distinguished and financially secure, and when literati private publishing was a trend among wealthy Chinese.<sup>21</sup> By this time, similar to the other Chide Zhang, Kang Sheng in Shandong,<sup>22</sup> Zhang Boju was well known to the public as one of the ‘Four Chides’ (*si gongzi*, 四公子) in Beijing, all of whom were from distinguished political backgrounds, and were famous for their literature, art and interest in antiquity.<sup>23</sup> *Congbi Lyrics Poetry* was considered one of the finest books, achieving excellence equal to that of the classic fine books published by Tao Xiang and Dong Kang, the two notable private woodblock publishers of the Republican Period that Zhang Boju admired.<sup>24</sup> As one of the most well-known literati elites of the Republican Period, Zhang’s fame and wealth, along with his powerful family background, guaranteed that his private publications would be among the top in fine elite

<sup>21</sup> Chen Xiaowei 陈晓维, *Haoshu Zhitu 好书之徒* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2012), pp. 175–182.

<sup>22</sup> John Byron and Robert Pack, *The Claws of the Dragon – Kang Sheng – The Evil Genius Behind Mao and His Legacy of Terror in People’s China* (New York, London, Toronto, Tokyo, Sydney and Singapore: Simon and Schuster, 1992), pp. 35–48.

<sup>23</sup> Lou Yudong 楼宇栋 and Zheng Zhong 郑重, *Zhang Boju 张伯驹*, Zhongguo Wenbo Mingjia Huazhuan (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2008), p. 2.

<sup>24</sup> Zhang Boju 张伯驹, ‘Letter of Suggestions on Training Woodblock Carvers’, *Guji Shudian Shou Wen Shu hao* (56) *Gu Han Zi* 180 古籍书店收文数号 (56) 古函字 180, 1956, private collection.

books.

Most of Zhang's private publications after 1949, on the other hand, were mimeograph, such as *Congbi Catalogue* and *Spring-outing Society Brief Essays*. *Congbi Catalogue* was privately published in the 1960s by mimeograph, when Zhang was no longer wealthy and was being increasingly excluded from the elite circle.<sup>25</sup> It is clear from the character style and design of the book that Zhang Boju had not stopped pursuing aesthetic perfection in thread-bound books. Similar to the great Song celebrity scribes,<sup>26</sup> all his books used carefully designed 'Song style' (*songti*, 宋体) characters, elegantly hand-copied by professionals. Archaistic aesthetics for making "decent presentations coherent to the Song, Ming and Qing finest books" were still the utmost consideration.<sup>27</sup> Although now using much coarser printing quality, all Zhang's private publications continued to be thread-bound, with a carefully designed cover page and contents arrangements, adhering to classic thread-bound book design principles (fig. 4.1, 4.3 and 4.4). Like *Congbi Lyrics Poetry*, the two books named after Zhang's literati studio clearly used the archaistic designs and styles he favoured. In order to remain consistent with historical thread-bound books, the 62-page mimeograph *Congbi Catalogue* is designed with features like a light blue cover and vertical content arrangement, all of which the finely printed woodblock *Congbi Lyrics Poetry* adhered to.

No matter how carefully designed, however, mimeograph could hardly produce high quality books similar to finest woodblock ones. Both named after Zhang's literati studio, the printing quality of *Congbi Lyrics Poetry* and *Congbi Catalogue* are distinctly different (fig.4.1 and 4.4). The mimeograph *Congbi Catalogue* was printed on machine-made paper and has redundant ink marks, since stains of ink oil are common on printed pages from the rolling mimeograph machine. Although carefully designed and scripted, the characters in the book have no calligraphic details, whilst the strokes are weak and

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<sup>25</sup> Zhang Yihe 章诒和, 'Zhang Boju de Wenge Jiaodai 张伯驹的文革“交代”', in *Yanhuang Chunqiu* 炎黄春秋, no. 6 (2013), p. 77.

<sup>26</sup> Chen, 'A Joy to the Eye and the Mind', pp. 29–42.

<sup>27</sup> Cai, 'Zhang Boju de Congbi Shuhualu'.

sometimes unclear (fig. 4.1). This is because it is almost impossible to carve flawless characters with sophisticated calligraphic details on thin stencils with sharp steel pointed pens. As Zhou Ziyuan 周子元, a mimeograph practitioner, recalled, the layer of wax also makes it difficult to keep the stencil crystal clear, let alone precisely presenting any detailed calligraphic features of characters.<sup>28</sup> Alterations had to be made to the Song style to match the rough quality of mimeograph duplicating technology and materials that were low quality. On the pages of *Congbi Catalogue*, for instance, stiff turns are exaggerated in characters where the calligraphic strokes are needed (fig. 4.1). This is because the delicate details that Xuan-paper could perfectly reproduce were impossible to print on hard machine-made paper. Reducing calligraphic details might have made typography an alternative aesthetics for books with adequate printing technology and materials, but mimeograph and inadequate materials only made it hard for *Congbi Catalogue* and *Spring-outing Society Brief Essays* to achieve the “ink and paper radiant” standard for finest woodblock books that Ye Dehui outlined.<sup>29</sup>

Aesthetically, Zhang clearly preferred fine woodblock printing. As a noted private woodblock practitioner, Zhang Boju showed his passion and concern for xylography book publishing by providing his insight and suggestions to the new government. A set of letters and documents from a private collection shows that on 5 September 1956 he wrote to Beijing Municipal Bureau of Culture suggesting they revive woodblock printing technology.

From the end of 1954 I started to commission my lyrics poetry to Dazhong Publishing House (*Dazhong chubanshe*, 大众出版社), but they only just finished printing it now... the style of the book is not artistic. Poems and lyrics are arts, therefore the design and style should look decent. This problem reminded me of woodblock printing. In the past there were Song, Yuan, Ming, Qing Imperial and Private (fine) editions, which made woodblock books a historical and artistic heritage. This also

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<sup>28</sup> Zhou Ziyuan 周子元, ‘Keban Youyin de Jiayi 刻版油印的记忆’, *Yantai Wanbao* 烟台晚报, 6 September 2017.

<sup>29</sup> Ye Dehui 叶德辉, *Shulin Qinghua* 书林清话 (Shanghai: Fudan University Press, 2008), p. 135.

made the study of editions (of woodblock books) a specialised research field... Several decades ago in the Republican Period there were still private woodblock printing practices, such as Fu Zengxiang and Dong Kang. After the liberation, however, the technique was gone... My opinion is that since woodblock books existed in all the past dynasties, this craftsmanship should not become extinct in the socialist period. I suggest reorganising the workers as soon as possible (to recover the technique) ...<sup>30</sup>

This letter was forwarded to Rare Book Publishing House (*Guji chubanshe*, 古籍出版社). The suggestion received a negative response from the publisher, who had much more important political tasks to consider. In the feedback, the publisher replied that they were indeed using historical woodblocks to print books. However, since the blocks they used were mostly intact, or had only very minor parts missing, there was no need to hire woodblock carvers to carve new books. Meanwhile, the publisher wrote, reorganising a carver team was not the business of the Rare Book Publishing House, therefore the suggestion “would not be considered”.<sup>31</sup>

The publisher’s reply to Zhang was in line with policies in the publishing industry at the time. Governmental control over publications, as Perry Link points out, involved both censorship of the contents of books and allocating printing materials such as paper.<sup>32</sup> It is clear that printing technologies were also controlled by the state. The public stance during the early 1950s was to discourage woodblock publishing. Not only did Hu Yuzhi publicly evaluate woodblock publishing negatively on behalf of the Press and Publication Administration, the central government also explicitly instructed the

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<sup>30</sup> Zhang, ‘Letter of Suggestions on Training Woodblock Carvers’.

<sup>31</sup> Guji Shudian 古籍书店, ‘Reply to Zhang Boju’s 张伯驹 Letter of Suggestions on Training Woodblock Carvers’, *Guji Shudian Shou Wen Shu hao (56) Gu Han Zi 180* 古籍书店收文数号 (56) 古函字 180, 1956, private collection.

<sup>32</sup> Link, *The Uses of Literature*, p. 21.

elimination of unofficial woodblock publishing in Sichuan in 1952.<sup>33</sup> When Zhao Boju wrote the letter in 1956, the radical attitude towards xylography had eased after many historical books were destroyed under the above policies.<sup>34</sup> The Ancient Book Collection, Publication and Regulation Small Team was later founded in 1958, calling for the collection of woodblocks and books from privately owned accessions.<sup>35</sup> Although it remains unknown whether Zhang's suggestion was forwarded to the central government, he was clearly among many individuals who suggested rescuing woodblock book heritage.

The consideration of whether or not to recover woodblock printing was ongoing during the 1950s. Woodblock cutters were organised to repair historical woodblocks for important classic books. For example, *Collected Printings of Liyun Study* (*Liyun shuwu congke*, 励耘书屋丛刻) compiled by Chen Yuan 陈垣, and *Selected Trifles from Dunhuang* (*Dunhuang duosuo*, 敦煌掇琐) by Liu Bannong 刘半农 were considered important historical studies, therefore their woodblock editions were published by amending damaged blocks and re-carving the missing ones.<sup>36</sup> Apart from these historically significant research books, however, only important gift books were allowed to be published using woodblock printing. In 1958, for instance, two years after Zhang Boju was rejected by the Rare Book Publishing House, a woodblock printed *Nineteen Poems by Chairman Mao* was published by the Cultural Relics Publishing House.<sup>37</sup>

Nonetheless, woodblock printing was no longer available for politically insignificant publications. Politically and culturally marginalised, the literati leisure subjects of Zhang's books were not among the legitimated important contents. The only duplicating technology that Zhang Boju could access for his

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<sup>33</sup> 'Chuban Zongshu Guanyu Gaizao Muke Shuye Wenti de Tongzhi (54) Chu Ji Zi di 291 hao (1954 Nian 7 Yue 22 Ri) 出版总署关于改造木刻书业问题的通知' (54) 出机字第 291 号 (1954 年 7 月 22 日)', in *CBSL* 6, pp. 408–410.

<sup>34</sup> 'Gujiu Tushu Buying zai Renling Sunhui: Guangming Ribao Shelun (1956 Nian 10 Yue 25 Ri) 古旧图书不应再任令损毁 – 光明日报社论 (1956 年 10 月 25 日)', in *CBSL* 8, pp. 256–258.

<sup>35</sup> 'Qi Yanming zai Guji Zhengli Chuban Guihua Xiaozu Chenglihui Shang de Jianghua (1958 Nian 2 Yue 9 Ri) 齐燕铭在古籍整理出版规划小组成立会上的讲话', in *CBSL* 9, pp. 348–352.

<sup>36</sup> Liu Bannong 刘半农, *Dunhuang Duosuo* 敦煌掇琐 (Beijing: Zhongguo kaogu yanjiusuo bianjishi, 1957).

<sup>37</sup> Mao Zedong 毛泽东, *Maozhuxi Shici Shijiu shou* 毛主席诗词十九首 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1958).

private publishing was mimeograph, which was allowed and encouraged for small-scale duplications when printing factories and materials were insufficient. In 1960, the Ministry of Culture encouraged the masses to hand-copy or stencil print “insignificant” books such as teaching materials and newsletters, with a view to “saving limited resource of paper and printing machines for politically important books.”<sup>38</sup> Mimeograph thus became popular for informal duplicating for those who were unable to find their work a publisher. Before gaining state patronage, even the Yangzhou-based woodblock publisher Guangling printed more than 50 titles with mimeograph.<sup>39</sup> The 1959 *Business Newsletters of The Shanghai Ancient and Used Bookstore* was also stencil printed (fig. 4.5).

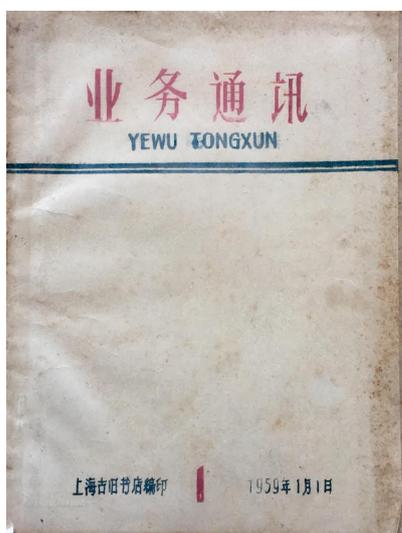


Fig. 4.5 Cover page, mimeograph, *Yewu Tongxun* 业务通讯 [Business Newsletters] (Shanghai: Shanghai gujiu shudian, 1959). Photographed by Yuyu Yang.

In the Republican Period, when the CCP was ‘underground’, many communist publications, such as *Our Own* (*Women de*, 我们的), had also been printed with mimeograph.<sup>40</sup> Due to the cheapness and the portable nature of the mimeograph machine, it was more suited to quick and informal duplications

<sup>38</sup> ‘Wenhua bu Guanyu Miqie Peihe Zhuyin Shizi Yundong Renzhen Zuohao Jiaocai he Zhuyin Duwu de Chuban Faxing Gongzuo de Tongzhi (60) Wen Chu Xia Zi di 646 hao (1960 Nian 5 Yue 23 Ri) 文化部关于密切配合注音识字运动认真做好教材和注音读物的出版发行工作的通知 (60) 文出夏字第 646 号 (1960 年 5 月 23 日)’, in *CBSL 10*, pp. 264–265.

<sup>39</sup> *Gushu Banpian Mulu*.

<sup>40</sup> Shakhara Rahav, *The Rise of Political Intellectuals in Modern China: May Fourth Societies and the Roots of Mass-party Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 97.

than books that require quality presentation. To the old school literati who continued archaistic publishing, however, the cultural comfortableness of publishing top quality books was entirely lost in mimeograph. In these literati mimeographs, calligraphy or typography was still carefully designed, as Heijdra argues, in relation to the aesthetics of the whole book.<sup>41</sup> Even with the crude printing method and rough materials, as is the case with *Congbi Catalogue*, scribes copied the texts with great care in elegant handwriting. However, it is hard to achieve the aesthetics of a perfect thread-bound woodblock book without mature printing technology, skilful cutters and fine paper and ink.

The once literati elite now unwillingly applied grassroots duplicating methods like mimeograph and hand-copying. Zhang's old friend Wang Shixiang 王世襄, also a noted antique and book collector, complained that mimeograph was not suitable for fine books fitting literati tastes.<sup>42</sup> During the 1970s, Wang hand-copied his work *Brief Essays on Bamboo Carving (Kezhu xiaoyan, 刻竹小言)* and sent the copies to his friends who had previously received a mimeograph edition he had printed. According to Wang Shixiang, this was done to amend his reputation, which he believed had been ruined by the rough quality of the stencil-printed edition.<sup>43</sup> Both Zhang and Wang were reluctant to choose either mimeograph or hand-copying when they were kept away from the legitimacy of perfecting woodblock printing as a way of presenting their archaistic tastes. Private literati mimeograph books, no longer bearing exceptional elite features, thus lost their cultural distinction.

Although most old school men of letters were patriotic, and they cautiously restrained their activities to private circles, their literati tastes were still constantly classified as dissonant with the CCP proletarian culture. During the Mao Era, like many other old school knowledgeable individuals, Zhang Boju wanted to welcome the new government based on nationalist and Confucian

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<sup>41</sup> Heijdra, 'A Tale of Two Aesthetics', pp. 15–28.

<sup>42</sup> Wang Shixiang 王世襄, 'Yu Boju Xiansheng Jiaowang Sanwushi 与伯驹先生交往三五事', in *Huiyi Zhang Boju 回忆张伯驹*, ed., Zhang Boju Pan Su Wenxian Zhengli Bianji Weiyuanhui 张伯驹潘素文献整理编辑委员会 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2013), p. 66.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

loyalty. He had gained his reputation as a patriot during the Republican Period after purchasing national treasures for the country with his own money from Japanese invaders.<sup>44</sup> In 1956, at a dinner party for fundraising that Zheng Zhenduo hosted on behalf of the Ministry of Culture, Zhang Boju and his wife Pan Su 潘素 donated eight pieces of historically significant artworks to the nation, including *Spring Outing* (*Youchun tu*, 游春图) by Zhan Ziqian 展子虔 (531–604) and *Letter on Recovering from Illness* (*Pingfu tie*, 平复帖) by Lu Ji 陆机 (261–303). As Zhang’s family collection shows, the couple received a written commendation, handwritten and issued by Shen Yanbing 沈雁冰, the Culture Minister at the time, for the generous donation that “converted the private to the public” (*hua si wei gong*, 化私为公). Both *Spring Outing* and *Letter on Recovering from Illness* became important treasures in the Palace Museum, and Zhang Boju’s cultural importance as a generous nationalist was praised by Chairman Mao.<sup>45</sup> Zhang’s cultural fame gained him important friends with political power. For example, due to their shared interest in antiquity and chess playing, Zhang became close with Chen Yi, the mayor of Shanghai and a prestigious CCP general.<sup>46</sup>

However, Zhang’s literati tastes made him dissent with the new CCP culture. Not only the publishing of thread-bound editions of *Spring-outing Society Brief Essays* and *Congbi Catalogue*, but also the cultural activities related to the publications, adhered to old literati norms, which were what Hu Yuzhi referred to as symbols of “feudal scholar-official culture” during the 1950s.<sup>47</sup> The articles in *Spring-outing Society Brief Essays* were written by 13 authors, most of whom were Zhang’s close friends who were famous in classic Chinese literature and art.<sup>48</sup> The themes of the essays are literati leisure lives, including antique collecting, epigraphy, artistic skills and old style poems.

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<sup>44</sup> Lou and Zheng, *Zhang Boju*, pp. 69–80.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103.

<sup>46</sup> Zhang Boju 张伯驹, ‘Lot 1632 Zhang Boju Huiyi Chen Yi Yuanshuai Shougao 张伯驹《回忆陈毅元帅》手稿’, in *Beijing Baoli 2016 Chunji Paimaihui: Gujin – Jindai Mingren Shuzha Shouji Xiace* 北京保利2016春季拍卖会: 古锦 – 近现代名人书札手迹 下册 (Beijing: Poly Auctions, 2016).

<sup>47</sup> ‘Hu Yuzhi zai Quanguo Xinhua Shudian Chuban Gongzuo Huiyi Shang de Kaimuci (1949 Nian 10 Yue 3 Ri) 胡愈之在全国新华书店出版工作会议上的开幕辞 (1949年10月3日)’, in *CBSL I*, pp. 248–249.

<sup>48</sup> Zhang Boju 张伯驹, ed., *Chunyou Suotan* 春游琐谈 (Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou guji chubanshe, 1984), preface.

According to Zhang's preface, the 'Spring-outing Society' was another literati name for his studio, partly because he had obtained the painting *Spring Outing*, and partly because he was exiled from Beijing to Changchun 长春 when the book was compiled. 'Chunyou' and 'Changchun' both contain the character '春' (*chun*, spring), making this an important part of his life experience.<sup>49</sup> Distinct from proletarian tastes, another of Zhang's mimeographs, *Congbi Catalogue*, records his most precious private antique collection, treasuring and remembering his passion for antiquity. All these interests related him to "tastes of feudal literati leisure life".<sup>50</sup>

What got Zhang into particular difficulty was his interest in traditional drama. As a lover of Beijing Opera, Zhang subsidised and organised traditional drama performances including *Ma Siyuan* 马思远, to be performed in 1956. Central government political leaders, including the Head of the Communist Party's Organisation Department Deng Xiaoping 邓小平, Marshal Nie Rongzhen 聂荣臻 and the Mayor of Beijing Peng Zhen 彭真, were invited to the show. The political leaders remained silent throughout the performance; they were offended by its 'vulgar' plot about the immoral widow Ma who murders her husband and conceals her adultery. This was exactly what the CCP defined as "negative feudal culture".<sup>51</sup> The play, *Ma Siyuan*, was soon criticized as "bad drama" in the anti-rightist campaign due to its erotic and violent plots that contained no communist positivity. As the organiser of the show, Zhang Boju was classified as the first rightist in the drama circle in 1957.<sup>52</sup>

Although Zhang had been publicised as an important patriot who had made a historical contribution to the nation, his literati tastes and genteel family history distanced him from the CCP culture. The generous donations did not save Zhang Boju from his fate, and neither did the friendship Zhang had established with communist politicians save him from being labelled a rightist.

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Hu, 'Hu Yuzhi zai Quanguo Xinhua Shudian Chuban Gongzuo Huiyi Shang de Kaimuci', *CBSL 1*, pp. 248–249.

<sup>51</sup> Lou and Zheng, *Zhang Boju*, p. 113.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, pp. 110–117.

His friend Chen Yi sympathetically showed his personal disagreement with the decision, yet was unable to help Zhang escape the rightist label. To protect Zhang Boju, Chen helped to transfer his work to the Changchun Museum to avoid further political assaults and persecutions.<sup>53</sup> In the less politically sensitive city of Changchun, by using mimeograph and keeping the dissemination to within a small circle, Zhang Boju continued his publishing activities until the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, when he publicly criticised Jiang Qing 江青, Mao's wife, whereby Zhang lost his job at Changchun and was exiled to a rural area until the late 1970s.<sup>54</sup>

While Zhang Boju published his works by mimeograph with regrettable imperfections, in 1953, the noted painter, book collector and private publisher Wu Hufan 吴湖帆 managed to privately publish his poem anthology *Eloquent Traces of Song Lyrics* in high quality with lithography, as he had been doing every year since the 1940s.<sup>55</sup> Similar to Zhang, Wu also adhered to both his literati loyalty and nationalism. After 1949, at the age of 55, persuaded by his cousin Huang Yanpei 黄炎培, the Vice Premier of the State Council, Wu decided to remain in the PRC as a non-CCP member cultural symbol.<sup>56</sup> After *Eloquent Traces of Song Lyrics* was published, through his old friend Ye Gongchuo 叶恭绰, Wu sent the book to Chairman Mao and Prime Minister Zhou Enlai to show his respect for the leaders of the new China. In return, Mao sent back a photoprinted poem selection of his own soon after.<sup>57</sup> This was, however, the last time Wu managed to get his anthology published. Gift-exchanging with political leaders did not stop him from being criticised. In the class struggle (*jieji douzheng*, 阶级斗争) that the Maoist political power encouraged, the 'old cultural authority' like Wu Hufan were suspected of dissenting with the new ruling power, even when they were willing to cooperate. As a private literati publisher whose tastes failed to line up with

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid, pp. 120–123.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, p. 217.

<sup>55</sup> Wu, *Ningsong Cihen*, preface.

<sup>56</sup> Dai Xiaojing 戴小京, *Wu Hufan Zhuanlue* 吴湖帆传略 (Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe, 1988), pp. 87–88.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, p. 90.

those of the people, Wu became one of those being attacked by endless political campaigns. In 1957, for publishing *Eloquent Traces of Song Lyrics*, a book full of nostalgia for ‘feudal literati’ tastes, Wu was inspected and nearly classified as a rightist. His son Wu Shu’ou 吴述欧 was branded a rightist after he ghost-wrote self-criticism and a confession to the political authority for his father. In the first year of the Cultural Revolution, Wu Hufan died in hospital after being repeatedly criticised and humiliated.<sup>58</sup>

Legitimation of private elite publishing, therefore, was withheld by the CCP, with ruthless attacks on those who disobeyed. Socially, better printing technology and materials were beyond reach. Archaistic character styles had to be adjusted to match the available economic technology and printing materials. Although non-communist literati did not abandon their cultural pursuits, which had become irrelevant to the new ideology, the governmental restrictions made their publications lose superiority in book culture, sacrificing aesthetic value due to low quality technologies and materials. The limitations of mimeograph printing reduced their cultural influence to a minimal level, undermining the power of literati culture and its aesthetic influence when competing with new elite woodblock books with archaistic perfection. By intermittently marginalising and censoring old literati and their books, the newly established CCP book culture attempted to lay claim to the distinction that had long belonged to the ‘old cultural authorities’ for its elite group.

### **Epigraphists in the System**

Cases of old school literati like Zhang Boju make it clear that private elite publishing was discouraged, or even politically and culturally prohibited during the Mao Era. Individuals who worked in the publishing industry in antiquity and literati subjects, in fear of being prosecuted, or out of enthusiasm to gain

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<sup>58</sup> Huang Song 黄松, ‘Wu Hufan Wenxian Zhan: Shouci Pilu Qi Gou Shengshantu Zhixi yu Luomo Lishi Zhibei 吴湖帆文献展: 首次披露其购《剩山图》之喜与落寞离世之悲’, *Pengpai Xinwen* 澎湃新闻, 26 August 2017, available at: [http://www.thepaper.cn/newsDetail\\_forward\\_1774495](http://www.thepaper.cn/newsDetail_forward_1774495) [Accessed on 28 June 2018].

recognition in the new CCP culture, sought ways of aligning their publishing activities to the communist ideology. The epigraphists who compiled *Book of Seal Impressions on Pig Rearing* in the late 1950s are an example of such individuals. *Yinpu* (Book of Seal Impressions, 印谱) is the book format of seal engraving, the most ancient art of characters.<sup>59</sup> The authors, Fang Quji 方去疾, Shan Xiaotian 单晓天 and Wu Pu 吴朴, divided seal impressions for pig rearing into four sections: ‘Editorial Section’ (*Shelun pian*, 社论篇), ‘Quotation Section’ (*Yulu pian*, 语录篇), ‘Improved Breed Section’ (*Liangzhong pian*, 良种篇) and ‘Treasure Section’ (*Baozang pian*, 宝藏篇), all lauding the value of pigs and pig rearing and thus following the Great Leap Forward propaganda.<sup>60</sup> Very different from classic texts of seals, which were normally required to be poetic and elegant, the epigraphists decided to reform this ‘old’ rule by justifying propaganda of pigs and pig rearing as a proper subject for the art of seal engraving.<sup>61</sup>

Frequently referred to as the most ancient calligraphic art, seal engraving has been considered the earliest art practice with characters, making it a crucial part of the cultural life of the elites.<sup>62</sup> Epigraphists in the Qing Dynasty, for example, announced character styles on ancient seals to be the origin of calligraphy, and they admired calligraphy works that imitate character styles on old tablets. Originating from rubbings of steles, seal impressions were as important as calligraphy in books and artworks, endowing paintings and calligraphic artworks with individual identities.<sup>63</sup> Often pressed on artworks and books, the subjects of seals were mostly literati leisure lives, their pen names, names of literati studios and sentences from classic poems. The importance of seal art made the epigraphic study of character styles of seals a

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<sup>59</sup> Dorothy Perkins, *Encyclopedia of China: History and Culture*. (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2013), p. 444.

<sup>60</sup> Liu Yiwen 刘一闻, ‘Yangzhu Yinpu Jiyi’ 养猪印谱记忆, in Fang Quji 方去疾, Wu Pu 吴朴, Shan Xiaotian 单晓天, *Yangzhu Yinpu* 养猪印谱, ed. Liu Yiwen 刘一闻 (Shanghai: Shanghai wenhua chubanshe, 2014), pp. 231–247.

<sup>61</sup> Guo Moruo 郭沫若, ‘Xushi’ 序诗, in Fang Quji 方去疾, Wu Pu 吴朴, Shan Xiaotian 单晓天, *Yangzhu Yinpu* 养猪印谱, ed. Liu Yiwen 刘一闻 (Shanghai: Shanghai wenhua chubanshe, 2014).

<sup>62</sup> Yu-ho Tseng, *A History of Chinese Calligraphy* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1993), pp. 97–115.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

major field of literati learning during the Ming and Qing.<sup>64</sup> Seal engravers were considered important artists, believed to have mastered the essence of calligraphy. Many prominent calligraphers, such as Jin Nong 金农, were praised for their ‘epigraphic feel’ handwriting.<sup>65</sup>

Publishing *yinpu* – a book of seal impressions – connects epigraphy with book aesthetics, which is another art that is closely related to character styles. Although requiring different visual effects from textual books, the aesthetics of *yinpu* relate closely to characters that are picturised in the seals. Due to the fact that seal impressions are an essential part of paintings and calligraphies as literati signatures, *yinpu* was also a favourable category of literati elite book culture. *Book of Ancient Seals (Jigu yinpu, 集古印谱)* was among the earliest recorded seal impression collections, edited by the prominent poet Jiang Kui 姜夔 (1155–1221) in the Song Dynasty.<sup>66</sup> A woodblock-printed Ming edition of *Book of Ancient Seals of the Gu Family (Gushi jigu yinpu, 顾氏集古印谱)*, published in 1572, is the earliest existing *yinpu*, with more than 1,000 seals from the editor’s family collection. Both of the above books have the character ‘古’ (*gu*, ancient) in their names, reminding readers of their connection with the archaistic origin of seals. Practices of producing *yinpu* continued into the Qing Dynasty and Republican Period, when many cultural celebrities such as Chen Jieqi 陈介祺 and Wu Changshuo 吴昌硕 published collections of their own works.<sup>67</sup>

The authors of *Pig Rearing*, noted seal engravers Fang Quji, Shan Xiaotian and Wu Pu – courtesy name Putang 朴堂 – were among such epigraphists who were devoted to archaism and created literati seals for elites during the Mao Era. As members of Xiling Seal Society (*Xiling yinshe, 西泠印社*), most of

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Lucie B. Olivová, ed., *Lifestyle and Entertainment in Yangzhou*, Studies in Asian Topics 44 (Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2009), p. 410.

<sup>66</sup> Cai Yaoqing 蔡耀庆, *Mingdai Yinxue Fazhan Yinsu yu Biaoxian zhi Yanjiu* 明代印学发展因素与表现之研究 (Taipei: Guoli lishi bowuguan, 2007), p. 105.

<sup>67</sup> Liu Jiang 刘江, *Zhongguo Yinzhang Yishushi* 中国印章艺术史, Volume 2 (Hangzhou: Xiling yinshe chubanshe, 2005), p. 468.

their artworks adhered to literati tradition.<sup>68</sup> As noted artists, they created a large number of literati seals in similar styles to their Qing Dynasty predecessors. The aesthetics of their seal engraving pursued feelings of antiquity, as Mao Ziliang, one of the publishers of *The Manifesto* and a collaborator with Fang Quji, commented, balancing the boldness and strength of stone carving with the elegance of literati character styles.<sup>69</sup> ‘Impressionistic Style of Yaoweng’ (*yaoweng xieyi*, 药翁写意), engraved by Fang Quji, for example, was created for the prominent Shanghai School painter Tang Yun 唐云 in Wei tablet style (*weibei ti*, 魏碑体), an ancient calligraphic style that was first applied on steles (fig. 4.6).<sup>70</sup>



Fig. 4.6 *Yaoweng xieyi*, engraved by Fang Quji. Wang Chongren 王崇人 ed. *Zhongguo Shuhua Yishu Cidian Zhuanke Juan* 中国书画艺术辞典·篆刻卷 (Xi'an: Shaanxi renmin meishu chubanshe, 2002). Photo available at: <http://61.134.53.202:81/refbook/PrintDetail.aspx?db=CRFD&recid=R2006072250000221> [Accessed on 28 June 2018].

As a close collaborator, Fang worked for the Cloudy Studio as a connoisseur of antique seals, a calligrapher and an editor from 1954. Similar to the woodblock book publishers, the three epigraphists had connections with CCP elites before initiating *Pig Rearing*. Wu Pu, one of the epigraphists of *Pig Rearing*, carved private book collecting seals for Chairman Mao (fig. 4.7).<sup>71</sup> Wu was not the only artist who engraved seals for political leaders. At the same time Mao had many other personal seals engraved by noted artists, such as Fu Baoshi 傅抱石, Deng Sanmu 邓散木 and Qi Baishi 齐白石.<sup>72</sup> Kang Sheng was among the many other CCP leaders who collected books and he often used

<sup>68</sup> Wei Haoben 魏皓奔, *Xiling Yinshe* 西泠印社 (Hangzhou: Hangzhou chubanshe, 2005), p. 5.

<sup>69</sup> Mao Ziliang 茅子良, *Yilin Leigao* 艺林类稿 (Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe, 2009), pp. 179–189.

<sup>70</sup> Yaoweng is one of Tang Yun's courtesy names. *Ibid.*, pp. 269–272.

<sup>71</sup> Shang Tong 尚同, *Mao Zedong yu Shanghai Minzhu Renshi* 毛泽东与上海民主人士 (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 2004), p. 127.

<sup>72</sup> Yu Jianming 俞剑明, 'Mao Zedong de Yinzhang 毛泽东的印章', *Zhejiang Ribao* 浙江日报, 11 October 2013.

‘Returned to the Public’ (*guigong*, 归公), engraved by Fu Dayou 傅大卣, along with other private seals, on collectable books he obtained (fig. 4.8).<sup>73</sup> What Mao Zedong and Kang Sheng did was the norm for most book collectors and publishers in Chinese history: they all had private seals for book collecting. Referred to as book collecting seals (*cangshu zhang*, 藏书章), the text on these was mostly names of their literati studios, their printing workshops, or their book collections.<sup>74</sup> Book collecting seals were important to collectors and publishers because they reflected cultural identity in collecting and publishing activities. Once a book was stamped with a private seal, the suggestion was that it was a private possession with a named owner, at present and in the future, making the owner part of the history of this book.



Fig. 4.7 *Maoshi cangshu*, engraved by Wu Pu, 1963. Photo available at: <https://kknews.cc/culture/6155bv3.html> [Accessed on 28 June 2018].



Fig. 4.8 *Guigong*, engraved by Fu Dayou, 1950s–1960s. Photo available at: <http://www.difangwenge.org/read.php?tid=14436> [Accessed on 28 June 2018].

Not only did epigraphists create literati seals for CCP politicians, they also made an effort to reform seal arts in response to the new ideology. This often included two opposite processes: revolutionising the art of seals and making

<sup>73</sup> Joseph Esherick, Paul Pickowicz and Andrew G. Walder, eds., *The Chinese Cultural Revolution as History*, Studies of the Walter H. Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2006), p. 76.

<sup>74</sup> Tseng, *A History of Chinese Calligraphy*, pp. 97–115.

this a permitted vehicle for serving the needs of the people, with political reference to Mao's 'Use the Past to Serve the Present';<sup>75</sup> and also, more subtly, making communist contents not only politically authoritative, but also culturally convincing to both the knowledgeable elites and proletariats, which, in my opinion, comprises archaising revolutionary texts. In *Pig Rearing*, it can be seen that, on the one hand, the attempt was to legitimise archaistic seal-carving art in promoting Great Leap Forward propaganda. On the other hand, the artists also aimed to reconcile CCP political campaign themes, including pig rearing, with ancient seal art for literati.

The connection between books of seal impressions and archaistic literati activities is obvious, whilst the book style had little relevance to proletarian art that was publicised as serving the needs of workers, peasants and soldiers who had no access to literati seals. This explains why *yinpu* – books of seal impressions – published during the early 1950s were still mostly literati contents associated with 'revolutionary' activists. In 1956, for example, in commemorating Lu Xun, the three authors of *Pig Rearing* were involved in engraving and publishing seal impressions of his pennames, entitled *Book of Seal Impressions of Lu Xun's Pennames* (*Lu Xun biming yinpu*, 鲁迅笔名印谱).<sup>76</sup> Lu Xun was officially considered a pioneer revolutionist and nationalist by the CCP, thus endowing the archaistic book of seal impressions with a proper socialist link. However, his pennames were mostly classic courtesy names for men of letters, such as 'Xunxing' (swift walking, 迅行) and 'Yuming' (my motto, 余铭), which were acceptable literati contents for seal engraving arts.<sup>77</sup>

In *Pig Rearing*, the authors further aimed to link ancient aesthetics not just to revolutionary literati, but to real proletarian contents. According to the epigraphists, this was intended to legitimise the ancient art of seal carving as a

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<sup>75</sup> Tina Mai Chen, Use the Past to Serve the Present; the Foreign to Serve China, in *Words and their Stories: Essays on the Language of the Chinese Revolution*, ed., Ban Wang (Leiden: BRILL, 2010), pp. 208–210.

<sup>76</sup> Mao Ziliang 茅子良, Diyibu Lu Xun Biming Yinpu 第一部鲁迅笔名印谱, *Renminwang* 人民网, 24 January 2007, available at: <http://book.people.com.cn/GB/69368/5321270.html> [Accessed on 28 June 2018].

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

suitable style for ‘revolutionary propaganda’ subjects.<sup>78</sup> Before *Pig Rearing*, the three epigraphists had successfully collaborated in creating seals for the Cuban Revolution (1953–1959), compiling and publishing *Book of Seal Impressions of Cuban Revolutionary Proverbs* (*Guba geming yanyu yinpu*, 古巴革命谚语印谱, hereafter *Cuban Revolutionary Proverbs*) in 1958.<sup>79</sup> Like *Pig Rearing*, according to the authors, *Cuban Revolutionary Proverbs* echoed Chairman Mao’s policy of Use the Past to Serve the Present, making seal engraving, the most ancient art practice, serve the needs of the people. The editor of *Cuban Revolutionary Proverbs* and *Pig Rearing*, Wei Shaochang 魏绍昌, noted in a 1961 article that the book was intended to “support the anti-imperial struggles of Latin-American People”. Wei justified their reasons for publishing revolutionary contents with seal impressions:

Seal engraving is an ancient art practice in our nation’s tradition. I want to find something new from the old, using the small square (of seals) to serve the real needs of class struggle, thus making the ancient serve the present. I posted both the collections to Elder Guo (*Guolao*, 郭老, referring to Guo Moruo) after finishing editing, whilst inviting him to hand copy the title tag (in calligraphy for *Pig Rearing*) and write prefaces for the books. Elder Guo promptly posted back the title tag he wrote, with a long poem for the preface, encouraging our new experimental artworks with great passion.<sup>80</sup>

Guo Moruo, the noted author and consultant on *The Hundred Flowers*, wrote a preface for both books of seal impressions at the request of the editor Wei Shaochang, defending the contents of revolutionary proverbs and proletarian pig rearing.<sup>81</sup> Kang Sheng, who wrote the title tag for *Thirty-seven Poems by Chairman Mao*, wrote the title tag in ink and brush in calligraphy for *Cuban*

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<sup>78</sup> Wei, ‘Bianhouji’, p. 226.

<sup>79</sup> Liu, *Zhongguo Yinzhang Yishushi*, p. 578.

<sup>80</sup> Wei Shaochang 魏绍昌, ‘Guanyu Yangzhu Yinpu 关于《养猪印谱》’, *Lishi Ziliao: Dayuejin* 历史资料: 大跃进, available at: [http://blog.boxun.com/hero/dayuejin/2\\_1.shtml](http://blog.boxun.com/hero/dayuejin/2_1.shtml) [Accessed on 28 June 2018].

<sup>81</sup> Wei, ‘Guanyu Yangzhu Yinpu’.

*Revolutionary Proverbs*.<sup>82</sup> These two woodblock book enthusiasts and their political and cultural influence ensured the legitimacy of both the art genre and the subjects, making the projects safe by ensuring political consent.

The above efforts to rationalise propaganda in seal art suggest that these new contents were outside the “cultural comfortableness” that literati conventions maintained in seal art. To make their art convincing to their archaic peers, and possibly to themselves as well, the authors made an effort to legitimise propaganda contents as proper literati subjects for books of seal impressions. In the case of *Book of Seal Impressions of Lu Xun’s Pennames*, although bearing a revolutionary name, the book was easily accepted by men of letters and CCP intellectuals, since Lu Xun was a noted literatus with established revolutionary fame, and his pennames followed the literati norm of courtesy names. Some topics from the Great Leap Forward, however, lacked legitimacy in Chinese literary tradition. Pig rearing, for example, was a problematic subject. Pigs and pig rearing became subjects in the Great Leap Forward literature when dramatic agricultural achievement was considered crucial to the nation surpassing imperialist hegemony. In the radical years of the campaign from 1958, pig rearing was promoted as a top political mission, which made pigs, the symbol of socialist achievement, no longer inferior animals, but a respectable subject to praise.<sup>83</sup> As an important theme in propaganda, not only in the agricultural but also in the cultural field, much literature and artwork was devoted to the praise of pigs and pig-rearers as heroes. Posters were required to draw pigs as subjects (fig. 4.9), and poems with pig rearing themes were written by writers such as Guo Moruo.<sup>84</sup> Pig rearing became so important that it appeared in every magazine, even those with subjects unrelated to agriculture. *Cultural Relic References* (*Wenwu cankao ziliao*, 文物参考资料), a magazine specialising in archaeology, for instance, published an article entitled ‘Serve the Pig Rearing Cause’ in 1958,

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<sup>82</sup> Zhang Xiaozhou 张晓舟, ‘Chifan Shi Weile Huozhe, Huozhe Bush Weile Chifan 吃饭是为了活着, 活着不是为了吃饭’, *Tengxun Dajia* 腾讯大家, 3 March 2016, available at: <http://dajia.qq.com/original/category/zxz20160303.html> [Accessed on 28 June 2018].

<sup>83</sup> Ma Deliang 马德良, ‘Yangzhu Dayuejin 养猪大跃进’, in *Zhongguo Nongken* 中国农垦 3 (1958), p. 41.

<sup>84</sup> Wei, ‘Guanyu Yangzhu Yinpu’.

followed by an article on museum construction.<sup>85</sup>

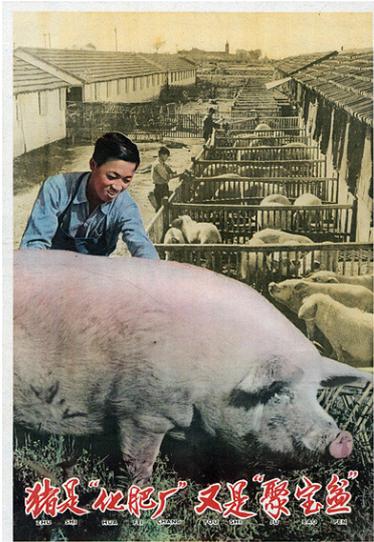


Fig. 4.9 Pigs are "fertilizer factories" as well as "treasure bowls", poster, 1959. (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1959, call number: PC-1959-002). Private collection. Photo available at: <https://chinese posters.net/posters/pc-1959-002.php> [Accessed on 28 June 2018].

The dry and blunt vernacular language of pigs and pig rearing propaganda, however, was not favoured texts on seals in Chinese literary and art history. Romanticised village scenes with chickens and dogs making sounds could be themes in poems, creating a feeling of warmth of ideal rural lives and escaping Confucian political duties. Factual descriptions of agricultural activities, however, were considered unsuitable for high culture. Due to this literary tradition, while some artists would probably have been against the idea of including pig rearing propaganda in classic art fields like poems and seals, the omniscient pig rearing themed literature and artworks certainly impacted artists like Guo Moruo, who embraced CCP propaganda with equal enthusiasm. In his serial articles for the *People's Daily*, Guo mentions that the poem he wrote for *Pig Rearing* was criticised as "not serious" by other poets, and so he defends himself with an elegantly written passage in classic Chinese: "Some other new poets criticised my poem (for *Pig Rearing*) for lack of decency. However, I wrote the poem in great seriousness. It seems that the importance of the pig still needs to be publicised even today."<sup>86</sup> Due to their significance to the socialist

<sup>85</sup> 'Wei Fazhan Yangzhu Shiye Fuwu 为发展养猪事业服务', in *Wenwu Cankao Ziliao* 文物参考资料 7 (1958), p. 5.

<sup>86</sup> Guo Moruo 郭沫若, 'Songtang Yangzhu 讼堂养猪', *Renmin Ribao* 人民日报, Du Suiyuan Shihua Zhaji 读随园诗话札记, no. 70 (1 July 1962).

economy, pigs should be, Guo further addresses, taken even more seriously as a literary subject.<sup>87</sup>

The three authors of *Pig Rearing* interpreted the language of Great Leap Forward propaganda as realistic and conforming to socialist aesthetics.<sup>88</sup> Although the epigraphists all have classical Chinese names, thus indicating their background of literati taste, they nonetheless selected direct and pragmatic style texts for *Pig Rearing*, with almost no literary elaboration. For example, the text in figure 4.10 reads, “Industrious men would not keep dirty pigs; lazy men would not raise fat pigs” (*ren qin zhu bu zang, ren lan zhu bu pang*, 人勤猪不脏, 人懒猪不胖);<sup>89</sup> and on figure 4.11 the text is “One ton of pork can be exchanged for five tons of steel” (*yidun zhurou ke huan wudun gang*, 一吨猪肉可换五吨钢);<sup>90</sup> and on figure 4.12, “There are no pigs that cannot be raised well; there are only men who cannot raise pigs well” (*meiyou yang buhao de zhu, zhiyou yang buhao zhu de ren* 没有养不好的猪, 只有养不好猪的人).<sup>91</sup> The texts were designed with the aim of using ancient seal art to praise the Great Leap Forward, and to make pigs and pig-rearers a legitimate subject for seal engraving.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Wei, ‘Bianhouji’, pp. 225–230.

<sup>89</sup> Fang Quji 方去疾, ‘Ren Qin Zhu bu Zang, Ren Lan Zhu bu Pang 人勤猪不脏, 人懒猪不胖’, in Fang Quji 方去疾, Wu Pu 吴朴, Shan Xiaotian 单孝天, *Yangzhu Yinpu* 养猪印谱, ed. Liu Yiwen 刘一闻 (Shanghai: Shanghai wenhua chubanshe, 2014), p. 102.

<sup>90</sup> Wu Pu 吴朴, ‘Yidun Zhurou ke Huan Wudun Gang 一吨猪肉可换五吨钢’, in Fang Quji 方去疾, Wu Pu 吴朴, Shan Xiaotian 单孝天, *Yangzhu Yinpu* 养猪印谱, ed. Liu Yiwen 刘一闻 (Shanghai: Shanghai wenhua chubanshe, 2014), p. 150.

<sup>91</sup> Wu Pu 吴朴, ‘Meiyou Yang Buhao de Zhu, Zhiyou Yang Buhao Zhu de Ren 没有养不好的猪, 只有养不好猪的人’ in Fang Quji 方去疾, Wu Pu 吴朴, Shan Xiaotian 单孝天, *Yangzhu Yinpu* 养猪印谱, ed. Liu Yiwen 刘一闻 (Shanghai: Shanghai wenhua chubanshe, 2014), p. 104.

<sup>92</sup> Guo, ‘Xushi’.



Fig. 4.10 Above: Industrious men would not keep dirty pigs. Below: lazy men would not raise fat pigs, engraved by Fang Quji, 1950s. *Book of Seal Impressions on Pig Rearing*. (Shanghai: Shanghai wenhua chubanshe, 2014), p. 102. Photographed by Yuyu Yang.

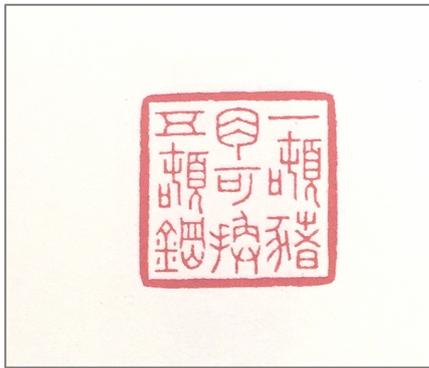


Fig. 4.11 One ton of pork can be exchanged for five tons of steel, engraved by Wu Pu, 1950s. *Book of Seal Impressions on Pig Rearing*. (Shanghai: Shanghai wenhua chubanshe, 2014), p. 150. Photographed by Yuyua Yang.



Fig. 4.12 Above: There are no pigs that cannot be raised well; Below: there are only men who cannot raise pigs well, engraved by Wu Pu, 1950s. *Book of Seal Impressions on Pig Rearing*. (Shanghai: Shanghai wenhua chubanshe, 2014), p. 104. Photographed by Yuyu Yang.

The process of engraving the seals for pig rearing, however, was not completed soon enough before the Great Leap Forward failed in its unrealistic mission. Since pig rearing soon lost its popularity, the book of seal impressions lost its propaganda value before it was even published. The exaggerated focus on pig rearing even became comical after the manic political movement ended. Although some of the seals were exhibited during the Mao Era, the book remained unpublished until 2014.<sup>93</sup> Nonetheless, the epigraphists' attempts to establish cultural legitimacy for seal engraving art had been supported by the government. Fang Quji reformed seal scripts with simplified Chinese characters during the 1970s, managing to publish three volumes of *Book of New Seal Impressions* (*Xin yinpu*, 新印谱).<sup>94</sup> Books associated with policies that lasted longer than that of pig rearing, such as *Cuban Revolutionary Proverbs*, were eventually published and circulated publicly, attesting to the collaboration between archaism and the CCP ideology. Although in limited scope, the ancient art of seal engraving could be encouraged and practiced with official endorsement within the CCP system. Considering the coarsely produced literati mimeographs that were not granted woodblock printing resources, power dynamics clearly affected the cultural influence of art practices, retaining and developing archaism for communist elites.

### **The Paramount Leader's Taste**

When old literati were struggling to acquire proper printing technologies, and epigraphists were revolutionising seal arts, the publishing of fine thread-bound books for the paramount leader was guaranteed. Named for the extra-large characters used in the books, the Big Character Book project was planned and conducted by the central government, and published within a highly restricted

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<sup>93</sup> Fang, Wu and Shan, *Yangzhu Yinpu*.

<sup>94</sup> Liu Yiwen 刘一闻, 'Jianhuazi Yineng Ruyin, Yi Fang Quji yu Xinyinpu Ersanshi 简化字亦能入印, 忆方去疾与《新印谱》二三事', *Penpai Xinwen* 澎湃新闻, 28 July 2017, available at: <http://www.sanglianju.com/news/show.php?itemid=1072> [Accessed on 28 June 2018].

political circle around Chairman Mao.<sup>95</sup> Although these Big Character Books were press-type printed, as will be discussed in this section, the principle in designing the character style was to convey archaistic thread-bound book aesthetics through modern technology.

The term ‘big character book’ was not a new concept when these books were published. Historically, books with extra-large characters had been called ‘big character books’ and the Mao Era ones were following this convention.<sup>96</sup> Starting with *The Complete Works of Lu Xun* (*Lu Xun quanji*, 鲁迅全集) published by People’s Literature Publishing House, 129 titles were published from 1972 until Mao’s death in 1976. The titles cover classic history books, including *The Twenty-four Histories* (*Ershisi shi*, 二十四史); classic poem selections and novels such as *Lyrics Poetry by Jiaxuan*; translated foreign literature such as *The Arabian Nights* (*Yiqian ling yiye*, 一千零一夜); social science such as *A Brief History of Chinese Philosophy* (*Jianming zhongguo zhhexueshi*, 简明中国哲学史); and science, including *On the Origin of Species* (*Wuzhong Qiyuan*, 物种起源).<sup>97</sup>

All the books, no matter whether they were classic or modern, were thread-bound, principally following the design norms of historical thread-bound books. Even scientific subjects related to the newest discoveries followed the same archaistic designs. The text in most of the contents pages are vertically arranged and framed, divided by thin lines, as in the woodblock printed *The Manifesto* (fig. 1.2). The only horizontally arranged text is in *Elementary Particles: A Short History of Some Discoveries in Atomic Physics* (*Jiben lizi faxian jianshi*, 基本粒子发现简史) written by Yang Zhenning 杨振宁 in 1962. However, the cover of the book is designed in classic style with a calligraphic nametag, which is again, identical to the majority of thread-bound books (fig.

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<sup>95</sup> Fang, ‘Wei Mao Zedong Yinzi Dazi Xianzhuangshu’.

<sup>96</sup> Cao Zhi 曹之, *Zhongguo Guji Banbenxue* 中国古籍版本学 (Wuchang: Wuhan University Press, 2015), p. 45.

<sup>97</sup> Xu Zhongyuan 徐中远, *Mao Zedong Wannian Dushu Jishi* 毛泽东晚年读书纪实 (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 2012), pp. 496–500.

4.13).<sup>98</sup> All this indicates that the design principle in the Big Character Books bore some connection with classical Chinese books.

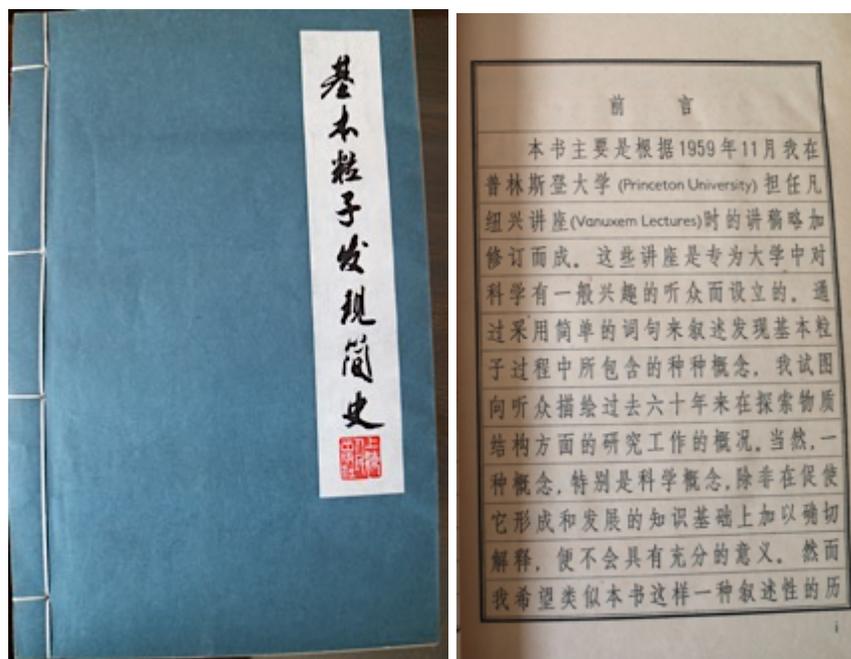


Fig. 4.13 Cover page and contents page, Big Character edition, *Jiben Lizi Faxian Jianshi*, 1972–1976. Photographed by Yuyu Yang. Private collection.

Since the archival materials of the Big Character Books are not available to the public, the publishing process in this research is reconstructed based on interviews with people who participated in the project and their recollections. Unlike the woodblock printed historical books, the Mao Era Big Character Books were printed by mechanised typography, in a character style named ‘new Mu style’ (*xin muti*, 新牟体) that had been specially designed for the project.<sup>99</sup> What was similar to the woodblock books was, as Meng Zhaoheng 孟昭恒, a former member of the Office of Chairman Mao’s Works remembered, that new Mu style was required to match both thread-bound book aesthetics and features of press printing. Normal types were, Meng explained, too small for Chairman Mao, and the character styles and stroke structures were incoherent with the archaistic thread-bound feel. Neither Song style nor black

<sup>98</sup> Yang Zhenning 杨振宁, *Jiben Lizi Faxian Jianshi* 基本粒子发现简史 (Beijing: Renmin wenzue chubanshe, 1973).

<sup>99</sup> Meng Zhaoheng 孟昭恒, ‘Naxienian Wei Mao Zedong Fuwu Guode Mimi Xiaozu 那些年为毛泽东服务过的秘密小组’, *Renmin Wang* 人民网, 3 April 2015, available at: <http://history.people.com.cn/n/2015/0403/c395229-26796801.html> [Accessed on 28 June 2018].

style (*heiti*, 黑体), the two most popular fonts for the publishing industry, were considered suitable for Big Character Books. In the former, the horizontal strokes are too thin and the vertical ones too strong, whilst the latter looks clumsy in thread-bound text arrangements.<sup>100</sup> Therefore, new Mu style was created, following Heijdra's theory of typography aesthetics, to coordinate the mechanised printing effects with thread-bound book style, and to achieve a harmonised archaistic visual effect.

The essential requirement of character design was to have 'Song references' in the character style. Designers from Beijing, Shanghai and Hubei were gathered by the government to create a new character style that perfectly aligned thread-bound pages with modern press printing. The designers submitted different styles based on Song style, and eventually the new Mu style designed by the Movable Type Department of Shanghai Printing Research Institute was selected.<sup>101</sup> New Mu style won the final selection, Meng Zhaozheng recalled, because it was similar to long Song style (*changsongti*, 长宋体), and looked "aesthetically perfect" on the Big Character Book pages. Meng further noted that the style also fitted the press printing machine well, avoiding unclarity in crossing the joints of strokes, as frequently happened with other styles. Appreciated by the highest leader, the font was then used in all the Big Character Books.<sup>102</sup>

Therefore, although the new Mu style followed a typography aesthetic instead of the more ancient calligraphic one, it was designed, similar to standardised Artisan styles (*jiangti*), with archaistic consideration of achieving perfect thread-bound book aesthetics.<sup>103</sup> This consideration made other popular character fonts unsuitable for Big Character Books. During the 1970s, quotations from Chairman Mao and Highest Guidance for Propaganda published by the central government used size three Mu style. Mu Zidong 牟紫东, the designer of Mu style, was also among the designers selected for the Big

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Heijdra, 'A Tale of Two Aesthetics', pp. 15–28.

Character Book project.<sup>104</sup> However, although Mu style was widely used as the official character style for important political publications, according to Chen Qirui 陈其瑞, it looked “uncomfortable” when applied on Big Character Books.<sup>105</sup> What was missing from the old Mu style was archaistic coherence with historical character styles in classic thread-bound books. The new Mu style, although designed similar to Mu style and still named after Mu Zidong, was adjusted with reference to the family of Song character styles to match the archaistic designs of Big Character Books.

All the above efforts were made, according to Fang Houshu 方厚枢, the former head of Chairman Mao’s Work Office, with a view to satisfying the paramount leader’s aesthetic preference in woodblock printed books, since Mao liked the lighter weight and bigger characters of classic thread-bound books.<sup>106</sup> During the 1970s, however, as Mao Ziliang stated, it was difficult to find skilful carvers for woodblock book publishing after the Cultural Revolution, when training and practice of the trade had virtually ceased for a decade. Where it came to making metal types, on the other hand, sufficient labourers were ready, which made the process much quicker than carving new woodblocks.<sup>107</sup> Therefore, type-press machines were customised to achieve similar effects to woodblock books, providing a relatively realistic alternative. The woodblock book department in the Cloudy Studio, as addressed above, was established to experiment with the technology in order to be able to satisfy the paramount leader. Since a carver’s team needed to be trained for almost two years just to carve the 92-page *The Manifesto*, before sufficient labour was guaranteed, the department remained as a backup solution for the Big Character Books project.<sup>108</sup>

The use of mechanised printing technology in the Big Character Books project, therefore, was not aiming at efficiency, but achieving similar effects to

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<sup>104</sup> Gen Huo 亘火, ‘Daziben Hushang Miyin Shimo 大字本沪上秘印始末’, *Dang’an Chunqiu* 档案春秋, no. 4 (2015): pp. 4–8.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Fang, ‘Wei Mao Zedong Yinzhi Dazi Xianzhuangshu’.

<sup>107</sup> Interview with Mao Ziliang.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

elite woodblock books. Designing a non-standardised character style – the new Mu style – solely for the project meant the typefaces would be customised, and possibly used only once. In a comparison with woodblock printing, mechanised typography was generally chosen in the publishing industry for its efficiency and lower cost due to mass-scale production. Although using metal types, however, the printing technology for Big Character Books was not a common ‘typography’. Instead, all the metal types mimicked the woodblock books that Mao favoured. Sun Dongping 孙东平, who participated in the Shanghai branch of the Big Character Books project, remembered that Shanghai Font Moulding Factory (*Shanghai zimo chang*, 上海字模厂) was assigned to design and cast special types for all the four factories for the project.<sup>109</sup> More similar to historical metal movable types,<sup>110</sup> all the types were handmade and only used for the Big Character Books project.<sup>111</sup> The typefaces were also cast to print fewer than 100 copies per title, dramatically raising the cost of labour and material per copy.<sup>112</sup> Considering the thread-bound design, the discussion about character styles and printing materials was how to achieve woodblock printed effects; perfection was required in every process instead of efficiency. A relatively modern technology, therefore, was applied as a substitute for archaic woodblock technology. The ultimate goal, however, be the method old or new, was to make the books connected with fine historical thread-bound books for elites.

To achieve the best performance, various materials were chosen to suit both the archaic thread-bound features, and the alterations that press printing aesthetics created. The press printing machine required much stronger paper than woodblock printing as the pressure of the press would destroy the soft

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<sup>109</sup> Zhongxin Zhishi Wenhua 中信知是文化, ‘Jiemi Xinzhongguo “Tegongshu” 揭秘新中国 “特供书”’, *Meiri Toutiao* 每日头条, 8 July 2016, available at: <https://kknews.cc/culture/gz6n49.html> [Accessed on 28 June 2018].

<sup>110</sup> Kai-wing Chow, *Publishing, Culture and Power in Early Modern China* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2004), p. 71.

<sup>111</sup> Interview with Sun Dongping.

<sup>112</sup> Interview with Zhu Yongjia.

hand-made Xuan-paper.<sup>113</sup> Therefore, Yukou-paper became an option due to its lightness and strength. Although common Yukou-paper was cheaper in general than best quality Xuan-paper, the one selected for Big Character Books was customised to top quality for the project. Meanwhile, specially made Xuan-paper with a much harder texture and more modern design was also experimented with for the project.<sup>114</sup> When Xinhua Printing Factory imported a renowned printing machine from Germany,<sup>115</sup> tailored Xuan-paper was also successfully made in Anhui. This special Xuan-paper, Meng recalled, was as light as the normal version, but much stronger than usual, thus achieving the requirements of the mechanised printing of Big Character Books.<sup>116</sup> All the above indicates that aesthetic concerns outweighed efficiency in this process, complicating mechanised technology due to archaistic taste in books.

Luxuriously tailored Yukou-paper and Xuan-paper, handmade typefaces for mechanised printing, and mass-scale production lines producing fewer than 100 copies were all archaistic alterations made for the paramount leader, Chairman Mao. As the new cultural icon, Mao's interests were considered the highest guidance for both the masses and the elite circle. In 1972, Yao Wenyuan was criticised by Mao for not being good at calligraphy. As Zhu Yongjia recalled when I interviewed him in 2018, through him Yao instructed the Cloudy Studio to publish more copybooks for practicing. During the process, Yao mentioned that Mao's eyesight had deteriorated, and therefore he needed books with bigger characters. According to Zhu, this was the initial stage of the Big Character Books project.<sup>117</sup> However, Xu Zhongyuan 徐中远, Mao's private librarian, tells this a different way in his memoir published in 2012. According to him, as early as 1970, Mao's eyesight was poor. Therefore, Xu and his colleagues suggested printing Big Character Books for Mao. This was rejected by the highest leader at that time because he considered it too

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<sup>113</sup> Huang Zhiwei 黄志伟, 'Shiyin yu Guji 石印与古籍', in *Zhanwang yu Huigu – Shanghai Tushuguan Qingzhu Jianguo Sawu Zhounian Wenji* 展望与回顾 – 上海图书馆庆祝建国卅五周年文集, ed., Shanghai Tushuguan 上海图书馆 (Shanghai: Shanghai tushuguan, 1984), pp. 105–108.

<sup>114</sup> Zhongxin Zhishi Wenhua, 'Jiemi Xinzhongguo "Tegongshu"'.  
<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Meng, 'Naxienian Wei Mao Zedong Fuwu Guode Mimi Xiaozu'.

<sup>117</sup> Interview with Zhu Yongjia.

expensive to embark on such a vast project for just one person. However, as Mao's health was getting worse, he eventually accepted the suggestion in 1972. Mao also wanted light-weight books due to his health condition, which was why the weight of the paper was a crucial consideration in the project.<sup>118</sup>

No matter who was the initiator, the Big Character Books project was considered one of the most politically important projects. All my informants mentioned that Zhu Yongjia and his team were assigned the task of collating historical titles, whilst the Cloudy Studio was involved in preparing woodblock book printing.<sup>119</sup> The Big Character Book project was given institutional priority by the distinguished CCP elite group, and the whole system worked towards Mao's cultural needs, disregarding the discrepancy between archaism and its anti-feudal propaganda. The State Council of China was assigned to administrate the project and set it up as an official and confidential political mission with top priority.<sup>120</sup> All the decisions were issued as urgent political orders from the central government. As Fang Houshu remembered, in 1972, Wu De 吴德, the Cultural Minister at the time, gave the order directly to The Publishing Window (*chuban kou*, 出版口) to set up the project. To meet the special requirements, a committee with experts from the publishing industry was organised under the administration of Chairman Mao's Work Office.<sup>121</sup> All 129 titles were selected from Mao's favourite books, covering various subjects, including history, science, literature and even jokes. According to Mao's chronicle from 1972–1976, he instructed “related individuals” to commentate 83 books that were later published as Big Character Books. Although the chronicle does not specify the names of the individuals, the records indicate that Mao himself chose all the titles.<sup>122</sup> Zhu Yongjia also noted in the interview that the “related individuals” referred to himself and historians from Fudan

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<sup>118</sup> Xu, *Mao Zedong Wannian Dushu Jishi*, pp. 364–370.

<sup>119</sup> Peng Beng 彭翀, ‘Dangdai Songbanshu de Gushi 当代宋版书的故事’, *Dongfang Zaobao* 东方早报, 8 September 2013. The resource for the article was provided by Mao Ziliang in the interview with him.

<sup>120</sup> Fang, ‘Wei Mao Zedong Yinzhi Dazi Xianzhuangshu’.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>122</sup> Mao's Chronicle 1972–1976. Pang Xianzhi 逢先知 and Feng Hui 冯惠, eds., *Mao Zedong Nianpu 1949–1976 Diliujuan* 毛泽东年谱 1949–1976 第六卷, vol. 3, 6 vols (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 2013), pp. 422–653.

University, and Mao personally chose the book titles for them to commentate.<sup>123</sup>

The political importance of this project is also indicated by the confidential process. Unlike the woodblock books, the Big Character Books project was unknown to the masses. Sun Dongping recalled that four new printing factories were built promptly solely for the project. Established in Beijing, Tianjin and Shanghai, all the factories were named Xinhua Printing Factory, and each of them was assigned to print different titles. Employees were strictly instructed to keep the project confidential.<sup>124</sup> One of the reasons for doing so, Sun Dongping remembered, was to keep the public from becoming aware of Mao's health condition.<sup>125</sup> Meng Zhaoheng also notes that the political background of the workers in the Beijing factories was carefully censored, and all participants were required to sign a confidentiality agreement. These were, as Meng addresses, institutionalised regulations for top political tasks during the Mao Era.<sup>126</sup>

The exclusiveness of Big Character Books exhausted social resources for pleasing the paramount leader. Despite the four classified factories, 30,000 customised types, the imported printing machine from Germany, 2,500 workers and countless meetings held during the four years from 1972 to 1976 before Mao's death, no more than 100 copies were produced for each title.<sup>127</sup> Sun Dongping remembered that the Big Character Book project cost millions, setting up new factories, casting the types and bringing new machines to Shanghai.<sup>128</sup> Fang Houshu estimated that the cost of producing special types was four to six times more expensive than the common ones. Adding the extremely small printing amount to the vast cost of printing facilities and labour, the price of a Big Character Book, although not for the public book market, would have been above 500 Yuan per copy.<sup>129</sup> The luxury woodblock

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<sup>123</sup> Interview with Zhu Yongjia.

<sup>124</sup> Interview with Sun Dongping.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Fang, 'Wei Mao Zedong Yinzhi Dazi Xianzhuangshu'.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Interview with Sun Dongping.

<sup>129</sup> Fang, 'Wei Mao Zedong Yinzhi Dazi Xianzhuangshu'.

edition of *The Hundred Flowers* was priced at 200 Yuan, 600 times more expensive than an edition for the masses. A Big Character Book raised this figure to 1,500. Woodblock is not necessarily less efficient than metal type press printing, particularly when the expensive imported printing machines and luxury printing materials are not used for mass production.

More strictly controlled than elite woodblock books, Big Character Books were published for elites among elites. In the first two years, most of the early titles were only distributed to Mao and the Mao Office. Only top leaders within the central power were given the books at the beginning. Even members of the Politics Bureau were excluded before the audience later expanded during the Conflicts between Confucianism and Legalism (*Rufa douzheng*, 儒法斗争) in 1973.<sup>130</sup> To prepare the politicians with some knowledge of the history of Confucian and legalist thought, 24 of the titles were photoprinted from fine historical editions, since making customised typography was too slow to match the political needs.<sup>131</sup> Communist comrades within the highest power circle were thus educated with luxuriously printed historical texts with new commentaries in order to prepare them for a forthcoming campaign attacking Confucianism. Re-commentating on historical texts was allocated an essential role by Chairman Mao as a warm-up to the expected conflicts. This ironically resembles archaists in the Ming Dynasty, as Kai-wing Chow argues, who re-commented on the five classics in order to legitimate new ideas in imperial examinations. To do so, the Ming precursors had to visit classics without Song commentaries, rendering the texts they interpreted old enough to be authoritative.<sup>132</sup> The making of CCP cultural currency was thus strikingly similar to the actions of these Ming archaists. According to Zhu Yongjia, Mao instructed him to punctuate, annotate and reprint historical titles, including historical classics such as *Records of the Grand Historian* (*Shiji*, 史记, or *Taishigong shu*, 太史公书) and *Book of Han* (*Hanshu*, 汉书), argumentations

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<sup>130</sup> Viren Murthy and Axel Schneider, eds., *The Challenge of Linear Time: Nationhood and the Politics of History in East Asia*, Leiden Series in Comparative Historiography, vol. 7 (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2014), p. 165.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>132</sup> Kai-wing Chow, 'Writing for Success: Printing, Examinations and Intellectual Change in Late Ming China', *Late Imperial China*, no. 17 (1996): pp. 120–157.

and prose, as well as classical poems.<sup>133</sup> All these titles with their new commentaries were published as Big Character Books, with the most authoritative evaluations on historical classics.

To further education in the essential principles of Conflicts between Confucianism and Legalism, and in order to publish the CCP cultural principles to the general public, writing teams were organised under Mao's instruction. Scholars and writers who were recruited into the teams were famous historians, including Feng Youlan 冯友兰 and Zhou Yiliang 周一良 in Beijing, and Zhu Yongjia and Yu Qiuyu 余秋雨 in Shanghai.<sup>134</sup> They extended the re-evaluation of history by writing more communist texts and commentaries of historical classics.<sup>135</sup> Administrated by the central government, the two writing teams re-evaluated historical events such as the Self-strengthening Movement (*Yangwu yundong*, 洋务运动) (1861–1895) and re-commentated on historical figures such as Wu Zetian 武则天(624–705) and, most importantly, Confucius. All the articles were officially supported and required to be published in important newspapers and academic journals.<sup>136</sup> While thread-bound books with big characters were designed for the top authorities, announcements on demolishing Confucianism in Chinese history were repeatedly publicised to the general public.

Within the circle of the central power, however, efforts to retain the thread-bound design style for Big Character Books almost equalled the concern about interpreting the CCP ideology and Maoism to the masses. The project made it clear that archaistic book aesthetics were favoured by the political elites and legitimised in theorising ideological conflict. When woodblock printing was unavailable and not openly encouraged, modern technology was tailored to achieve similar effects, at the price of sacrificing the efficiency that the

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<sup>133</sup> Interview with Zhu Yongjia. See also: Zhu Yongjia 朱永嘉 and Zhu Shaojun 朱绍钧, eds., 'Zhu Yongjia: Wannian Mao Zedong Chongdu Guwen Neimu 朱永嘉: 晚年毛泽东重读古文内幕', 13 November 2011, available at: <http://hk.apple.nextmedia.com/supplement/apple/art/20111113/15795373> [Accessed on 28 June 2018].

<sup>134</sup> Interview with Zhu Yongjia.

<sup>135</sup> Yiliang Zhou and Joshua A. Fogel, *Just a Scholar: The Memoirs of Zhou Yiliang (1913–2001)* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2014), p. 73.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*

campaign for modernisation and industrialisation strove towards. As one of the most important book projects for political leaders, the fact that Big Character Books adapted archaic aesthetics meant that archaism was essential for new elite books during the Mao Era.

## Conclusion

By looking at different aesthetics for character styles with varied printing technologies in literati mimeograph, *Book of Seal Impressions* and archaised mechanical press printing, it is clear that archaism, as an aesthetic standard, broadly existed in elite book culture during the Mao Era, and was not restricted to woodblock printing technology. Informal duplicating techniques such as mimeograph were used by old literati for private archaic publishing when all the formal and more proper printing technologies became unavailable. The art of epigraphy and related book aesthetics, the most ancient character styles, were used to propagate the Great Leap Forward in *Pig Rearing*. For the paramount leader, modern printing machines and technology were archaised to fulfil the goal of printing copies as similar as possible to woodblock books, with unlimited budgets and resources.

Archaism, reminiscent of and reproducing the past,<sup>137</sup> thus resurged in book culture of the Mao Era, with complex books being published with the highest aesthetic standards from the past, be these xylographic or not. Different character styles were carefully designed for the books mentioned in this chapter, all seeking harmonious visual effects with an unchanged design style of book: the classic thread-bound format. The disappointment of old school literati in their mimeographs, the enthusiasm of epigraphists for their revolutionary seal texts, and the satisfaction of the paramount leader in his Big Character Books, all depended on the level of perfection in the thread-bound books in their hands.

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<sup>137</sup> Wu Hung, 'Introduction', in *Representing the Past: Archaism and Antiquarianism in Chinese Art and Visual Culture*, ed. Wu Hung (Chicago: The Centre for the Art of East Asia, University of Chicago Art Media Resources, 2010), pp. 9–46.

However, the level of archaistic perfection was controlled by the CCP, which monopolised the availability of technologies and related facilities and materials to achieve desirable book designs. When projects were undertaken in the CCP system, archaistic tastes were fully funded and supported with allocated supplies. This gave projects like *Pig Rearing* limited but official space in the system. In particular, when the books were for the political leaders, like the Big Character Books, endless efforts and vast resources were used to make them achieve the highest level of luxury. In terms of printing quality and presentation, fine books published for the paramount leader and cultural celebrities with socialist power equalled or even surpassed the elite literati books of history, making the archaistic books a cultural distinction for a new CCP elite group.

The extent to which the printing technology was crucial to aesthetic performance became explicit when the necessary requirements were unavailable. Old school literati elites like Zhang Boju were only able to produce coarsely printed mimeographs like *Congbi Catalogue*. Their cultural authority in literati literary and art tradition predetermined their destiny to be criticised and eliminated from the system. Texts created for their leisure lives, including poetry, prose on antique connoisseurship and drama were discouraged as feudal culture. Making their publications coarsely and sparsely produced also undermined the symbolic power of the products as legitimate elite books. Fine woodblock editions, on the other hand, were controlled by the political authority. The new woodblock culture did not leave space for the old literati dismissed by the CCP ideology, who had lost any socialist reason for existing. While the CCP elite enjoyed the archaistic products as their cultural capital, old cultural authorities were gradually excluded from formal publishing, pursuing their archaistic interests with roughly duplicated mimeographs.

## Chapter Five

### From Tradition to Distinction

The fluctuating attitude towards antiquity from the CCP has not only confused modern readers, indeed it was questioned and repeatedly rebelled against by Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution.<sup>1</sup> To radical youths at the time, it was reactionary politicians who supported the fine woodblock publications. Woodblock publishers divided politicians into two groups: moderate and radical. They generally believed that the moderate group protected Chinese tradition from destruction. Prime Minister Zhou Enlai, for example, is often taken as the driving force of the moderate group, mentioned in almost all interviews as the saviour of the woodblock trade and antiquity during the Cultural Revolution.<sup>2</sup> The radical group, represented by Jiang Qing 江青, are considered criminals who were against Chinese tradition.<sup>3</sup>

Despite the above, however, historical documents indicate that there were many cases where the radical groups also protected Chinese cultural tradition. Qi Benyu 戚本禹, for instance, was one of the core members of the Central Cultural Revolution Small Group, which has been considered responsible for most of the radical rallies during the first year of the Cultural Revolution.<sup>4</sup> During a meeting with Qi in 1967, the representatives of China Bookstore expressed their concern about selling historical thread-bound books, since the masses fought radically against “old cultural products”, causing few customers to dare to buy antique books. Instead of standing in line with the Red Guards,

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Xiang Jiushijie Menglie Kaihuo: Yitiao Wenhuaqie 向旧世界猛烈开火 – “一条文化街”’, *Huanqiu Chi* 寰球赤, 10 August 1967.

<sup>2</sup> See the interviews with Mao Ziliang, interview with Zhou Guangpei and interview with Wu Yankang.

<sup>3</sup> Richard King and Jan Walls, ‘Introduction: Vibrant Images of a Turbulent Decade’, in *Art in Turmoil: The Chinese Cultural Revolution, 1966–76*, ed. Richard King (Vancouver and Toronto: UBC Press, 2010), pp. 4–6.

<sup>4</sup> Bu Weihua 卜伟华, *Zalan Jiushijie – Wenhua dageming de Dongluan yu Haojie (1966–1968)* 砸烂旧世界 – 文化大革命的动乱与浩劫(1966–1968), vol. 6, 10 vols, *Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Shi* 中华人民共和国史 (Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2008), pp. 116–119.

as he did at the start of the Cultural Revolution, Qi encouraged the bookstore to continue collecting and selling second-hand books, announcing that he himself would buy their old books.<sup>5</sup> The encouragement, however, was unable to stop the Cultural Revolution violence, which was also supported by the CCP, and on many occasions by Qi himself.<sup>6</sup>

Tracing archaistic tastes in xylographic books, the previous chapters analysed archaism in the production and dissemination of woodblock books, and in the mechanism of the entire woodblock trade during the Mao Era. Archaistic tastes in woodblock book culture, as demonstrated by many of the examples in this work were, on the one hand, publicised as heterogeneous to proletarian aesthetics, yet, on the other hand, they were officially subsidised regardless of ideological conflicts.<sup>7</sup> The two features, archaism and CCP ideology, interweaved in the interactions between participants, and were, paradoxically, both presented distinctively in the same final products. The ubiquitous support of archaistic elite books and antiquity among CCP officials indicates that as two distinct features within the new woodblock culture, possible homogeneities existed between archaism and the CCP ideology, which made the CCP's endorsement of archaistic woodblock practices in fitting with its logic.

## **Homogeneities Between Archaism and CCP Ideologies**

The paradox that archaism and the CCP ideology endowed upon woodblock culture reflected the cultural struggle that had been debated amongst knowledgeable Chinese elites since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. After China was defeated

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<sup>5</sup> Denise Y. Ho, 'Revolutionizing Antiquity: The Shanghai Cultural Bureaucracy in the Cultural Revolution, 1966–1968', *The China Quarterly* 207 (September 2011), pp. 687–705.

<sup>6</sup> Qi Benyu 戚本禹, 'Qi Benyu zai Jinian Mao Zedong "Zai Yan'an Wenyi Zuotanhui Shang de Jianghua" Fabiao Ershiwu Zhounian Dahui Shang de Jianghua, 1967.5.23, 戚本禹在纪念毛泽东"在延安文艺座谈会上的讲话"发表二十五周年大会上的讲话, 1967. 5.23', in *Zhongyang Wenge Xiaozu de Ganjiang Qi Benyu yu Wenge (II)* 中央文革小组的干将戚本禹与文革 (II), ed. Yuehan Xixifusi 约翰 西西弗斯 (Taipei: Xixifusi Wenhua, 2016), pp. 213–226.

<sup>7</sup> Rudolf Wagner, *Inside a Service Trade: Studies in Contemporary Chinese Prose* (Cambridge (Massachusetts) and London: Harvard University Press, 1992), pp. 11–16.

by major capitalist countries, “modern Western thoughts”, although frequently idealised by Chinese elites, were considered solutions to the nation being invaded and oppressed by the “Western imperialist powers”, who were, interestingly, the creators of the modern Western thoughts.<sup>8</sup> This caused a negative evaluation of Chinese art and crafts among the urban intelligentsia in modern China after the May Fourth Movement. In the Yan’an period, Richard Kraus argues, the clash between cosmopolitan culture and the northwest masses left young professional artists from eastern cities hesitant about greater populism for the rural masses.<sup>9</sup> In reconciling the above problems, Mao’s Yan’an talk in 1942 legitimated a proletarian culture that was “created by and to serve the needs of the people”.<sup>10</sup> This talk became the doctrine of art creation during the PRC. Noticeably, once this new ideology was engineered, there was no space for urban literati elites and their cultural and leisure lives, both in reality and in the superstructure. Many of these elites, including Zheng Zhenduo, Guo Moruo and Zhang Boju, however, were active in the major cities during the PRC. Archaism, as an essential part of this elite culture, was largely criticised as an element of Chinese tradition that targeted and reinforced the power of oppressing classes, since it represented an idealised past to contemporary literati elites. To discourage literati tradition, the CCP frequently associated archaism or *fugu* with *fubi* (复辟, restoration), which aimed to recover the past – the old society (*jiu shehui*, 旧社会);<sup>11</sup> this was considered a drawback to the progress of modernisation. The proletarian culture, on the other hand, represented an enlightening force for the nation’s future. Therefore, although Chairman Mao encouraged proletarian artists to learn from tradition

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<sup>8</sup> Theodore Hutners, *Bringing the World Home: Appropriating the West in Late Qing and Early Republican China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2005), pp. 1–43.

<sup>9</sup> Richard Curt Kraus, *The Party and the Arts in China: The New Politics of Culture* (Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2010), pp. 151-153.

<sup>10</sup> Mao Zedong 毛泽东, “Talks at the Yan’an Conference on Literature and Art”, by Mao Zedong’, in *Mao Zedong’s “Talks at the Yan’an Conference on Literature and Art”: A Translation of the 1943 Text with Commentary*, ed. and trans. Bonnie S. McDougall (Ann Arbor (Michigan): Centre for Chinese Studies: University of Michigan, 1980), pp. 55–86.

<sup>11</sup> Editorial, ‘Haodehen 好得很’, *Renmin Ribao* 人民日报, 23 August 1966.

and “even foreign art” in 1952,<sup>12</sup> archaism was not recognised as part of the positive side of tradition. Particularly in propaganda for radical campaigns, almost all possible connections between archaism and the CCP ideology were eliminated or denied. This denial was obvious, especially in the Destroy the Four Olds campaign (*Po si jiu*, 破四旧), where the heterogeneity of the two was repeatedly publicised.<sup>13</sup>

From the preceding discussion, however, it is clear that archaistic taste in woodblock publications was supported and encouraged by the CCP ruling power. These seemingly paradoxical postures, I argue, were caused by intrinsic homogeneities between archaism and the CCP ideology. Here, I take ideology not so much as a system of knowledge, but, using Geertz’s definition, as an idealised cultural system designed to solve social strain. This is mostly planned and engineered by importing a set of ideas to formulate a new value system when literati elite traditions fail to support the society. However, although cultural frustrations remove the comfort of aligning with tradition, the “instinctiveness” of the old conventions among policy makers and their elite groups makes the newly established ideologies inevitably borrow elements from the very traditions they destroy. Therefore, although ideology and tradition were mostly designed as heterogeneous in the Indonesian national state, in Geertz’s analysis, the two systems often became homogeneous in cultural practices.<sup>14</sup>

Following Geertz’s argument, the new woodblock culture of the Mao Era can be seen as a combination of archaism from traditional elite book culture and the CCP ideology that was engineered to solve the social failure of the old culture in modernising the nation. However, since archaism in book aesthetics was “the cultural instinct” of the CCP elites,<sup>15</sup> the ideology that the CCP designed, although attempting to deny an elite culture entailing archaism in an

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<sup>12</sup> Ralph Croizier, ‘Hu Xian Peasant Painting: From Revolutionary Icon to Market Commodity’, in *Art in Turmoil: The Chinese Cultural Revolution, 1966–76*, ed. Richard King (Vancouver and Toronto: UBC Press, 2010), pp. 136–166.

<sup>13</sup> Huang Yanmin 黄延敏, ‘Po si jiu Yundong de Fazhan Mailuo’ 破四旧运动的发展脉络, *21 Shiji Shuangyuekan* 21 世纪双月刊 137 (2013), pp. 71–82.

<sup>14</sup> Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1973), pp. 193–233.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

idealised socialism, “instinctively” embedded archaism within itself. The latent homogeneities between archaism and the CCP ideology, I argue, were caused by what I refer to as cultural authoritarianism, through the creation of a cultural authority adhering to a hierarchical structure, whilst positioning intellectuals as subordinates to the CCP.

### ***Cultural Authoritarianism***

In the context of elite book culture, finely carved and printed woodblock books were seen as symbols of Confucian essence. This, according to the CCP propaganda of proletarian art, would undoubtedly be a target for destruction in the anti-feudalism campaigns. However, despite the public stance of eliminating feudal scholar-official culture, deep within both archaism and CCP ideology, there is a cultural authoritarianism that idolises an absolute authority. The difference is that archaism had a moment in the ancient past as an unchallengeable authority, while the CCP aimed to establish its own cultural idols by developing the art of the people, creating myths for socialist leaders, and using Chinese history in favour of the new ruling class.

Cultural authoritarianism was clearly embedded in archaistic practices within elite book culture. When examining the printing history of examination materials, Kai-wing Chow identified a cultural obeisance to ancient authority in archaist movements in Chinese book culture.<sup>16</sup> To bring new ideas, including Buddhism, into commentaries of the Four Classics, the Archaist School (*Guwen pai*, 古文派) in Jiajing’s 嘉靖 reign (1522–1566) consulted Han (206 BC–220 AD) and pre-Han texts that had been neglected by authoritative commentators from the Song Dynasty. Chow further argues that their citation of the Han philology could have inspired the philological movement in the Mid Qing (Qing Dynasty 1644–1912). Therefore, in order to embrace new ideas,

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<sup>16</sup> Kai-wing Chow, ‘Writing for Success: Printing, Examinations, and Intellectual Change in Late Ming China’, *Late Imperial China*, no. 17 (1996), pp. 120–157.

and to challenge relatively recent authorities, such as Zhu Xi 朱熹 in the Song Dynasty, archaists in later dynasties sought the highest cultural authority from the ancient past, as the ultimate power that could be followed.<sup>17</sup>

On the archaistic side of woodblock publishing, practitioners in Mao Era xylographic publishing respected and obeyed ancient cultural idols in the same manner as their predecessors, in every aspect of interaction among writers, publishers, printers, book sellers and readers. If the Archaist Schools in the Ming and Qing Dynasty consulted the ancient origin of the texts they re-interpreted with new commentaries, the PRC publishers followed the aesthetic standards of the most ancient printed books recorded historically – the Song editions. As addressed in the previous chapters, all the xylographic books adhered to the Song aesthetics, with no political force being enacted upon the participants. Therefore, in order to maintain coherency with the authoritative ancient culture, when planning *Let the Hundred Flower Bloom*, not only were the paintings desirably illustrated in elaborate style (*gongbi*) – the “ancient and elegant” (*guya*, 古雅) style beloved by Emperor Huizong in the Song Dynasty – the texts also had to be specially handwritten by the author, Guo Moruo, in calligraphic style using ink and brush. Therefore, in the publishing practices of *The Communist Manifesto*, the archaistic inclinations required that the book uphold the Song standard, being carved to closely resemble Song books. The carvers had to be educated in imitating calligraphy styles from the Tang and the Song masters, commencing their task with ritual piety towards the remote past. Whether the Song books were indeed the best was irrelevant; the authority stood by antiquity, rendering this the unchallengeable cultural standard for fine books. Undoubtedly, innovations and improvement in woodblock skills had been made, but only within the boundary of “representing the ancient past more perfectly”.<sup>18</sup> The care taken not to breach these principles was as important as that given to the current political power, which made archaistic pursuit the most critical feature in the whole process. In Wu Hung’s theory of archaism, he

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid, pp. 140–141.

<sup>18</sup> Interview with Mao Ziliang.

also emphasised that the past in the eyes of archaists is detached from the concept of time, and what is at stake is an antiquity that creates a timeless authority.<sup>19</sup>

Although the past glories that archaism idolised seemed to be heterogeneous to the CCP ideology, the pursuit of an absolute cultural and political authority was homogenous. The difference was that this cultural authority was designed to belong to the people in the CCP system. Since the majority of the Chinese population during the Mao Era was identified by the CCP as peasants, Ralph Croizier argues that the people's art would be largely peasant art. Together with a working class in urban China that was largely "created" by the government, proletarian art was said to serve the needs of workers, peasants and soldiers. To legitimise the proletarian art, the CCP desired art not just "for the people", but also "from the people".<sup>20</sup> However, Croizier further argued that there was very little "peasant art" tradition in villages such as Hu Xian before "bourgeois intellectuals" like Chen Shiheng taught local farmers how to paint.<sup>21</sup> Julia Andrews also pointed out that many of the 'gong nong bing' (workers, peasants and soldiers, 工农兵) paintings published during the Cultural Revolution were in fact created or "corrected" by professional artists from urban areas during the Up to the Mountains, Down to the Countryside Campaign of the late 1960s.<sup>22</sup>

Therefore, even in the proletarian art, the actual creators were often those criticised as "following the old". The engineers of the CCP ideology in Yan'an, as Elizabeth Perry argues, were mostly "red literati" who were educated through the old system. Similarly, Soviet realism, which was broadly accepted in art institutes in big cities and had been publicised since the Yan'an period, was taught by an intellectual class that frequently faced criticism. In establishing its cultural authority, the CCP government redefined what art was

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<sup>19</sup> Wu Hung, 'Introduction', in *Representing the Past: Archaism and Antiquarianism in Chinese Art and Visual Culture*, ed. Wu Hung (Chicago: The Centre for the Art of East Asia, University of Chicago Art Media Resources, 2010), pp. 9–46.

<sup>20</sup> Ralph Croizier, 'Hu Xian Peasant Painting', p. 137.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 136–146.

<sup>22</sup> Julia Andrews, 'The Art of the Cultural Revolution', in *Art in Turmoil: The Chinese Cultural Revolution. 1966–76*, ed. Richard King (Vancouver and Toronto: UBC Press, 2010), pp. 46–50.

and regulated art creation to within communist subjects, yet such a proletarian art was virtually non-existent in Chinese history.<sup>23</sup> It is thus understandable that what existed in artworks, as well as fine woodblock books, was inevitably traditional.

Underpinning the CCP art guidance, the real cultural idol in the CCP ideology was arguably Mao, the supreme political leader. The Yan'an talk was re-interpreted, re-enforced, and repeatedly studied in a manner similar to the way the dynastic and Republican archaists treated the Han canons.<sup>24</sup> Mao was sanctified as the symbol of both political and cultural authority. In the CCP propaganda, Chairman Mao was publicised as representing the interests of the new 'ruling class' – workers and peasants. As a political authority, he was mythicised as the saviour who emancipated the nation, through his magical military strategies, "Directing military with miraculous skills" (*Maozhuxi yongbing zhen ru shen*, 毛主席用兵真如神).<sup>25</sup> As a cultural idol, the leader's versatility as an old-style poet and calligrapher was also exaggerated to an extreme. Not only did he himself indicate in his poems that he surpassed the historical wise kings, both militarily and literarily, but the whole nation quoted his phrases as guidance for their political, cultural and even domestic lives.<sup>26</sup> Obedience to the highest political leader was strictly required, while protests were harshly punished, both by the state apparatus and the masses of believers.<sup>27</sup>

Cultural authoritarianism made archaism and CCP ideology intergrowth in xylographic publishing activities. The newly carved fine woodblock titles, while following archaic aesthetics, clearly worshiped Mao as the supreme cultural idol. Nearly all significant decisions related to the books could find

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<sup>23</sup> King and Walls, 'Introduction: Vibrant Images of a Turbulent Decade', pp. 5–6.

<sup>24</sup> Bonnie S. McDougall, 'Appendix 2: Some Major Editions of The "Talks"', in *Mao Zedong's "Talk at the Yan'an Conference on Literature and Art": A Translation of the 1943 Text with Commentary*, ed. Bonnie S. McDougall (Ann Arbor (Michigan): Centre for Chinese Studies: University of Michigan, 1980), pp. 105–107.

<sup>25</sup> Yuan Zhou Enlai Zongli Jingwei Renyuan 原周恩来总理警卫人员, 'Zai Jing'ai de Zhouzongli Shenbian Gongzuo de Rizi 在敬爱的周总理身边工作的日子', in *Jing'ai de Zhouzongli Women Yongyuan Huainian Nin 敬爱的周总理我们永远怀念您*, vol. 3 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1977), pp. 69–87.

<sup>26</sup> Christopher A. Reed, 'Introduction', in *From Woodblocks to the Internet: Chinese Publishing and Printing Culture in Transition, circa 1800 to 2008*, eds. Cynthia Brokaw and Christopher A. Reed (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2010), p. 6.

<sup>27</sup> Bu, *Zalan Jiushijie*, p. 795.

their connection to Mao. *The Hundred Flower*, for example, was written to praise Mao's policies.<sup>28</sup> Calligraphic copybooks published by the Cloudy Studio seem irrelevant to Mao, but, as discussed in Chapter Four, the reason for publishing these was because the politician Yao Wenyuan had been publicly criticised by Mao for his poor calligraphy. If it was not for Yao worrying about his political career, he would not have asked the Cloudy Studio, through Zhu Yongjia, the mayor of Shanghai, to publish more copybooks for practice, providing an opportunity for the publisher to produce relatively apolitical books.<sup>29</sup> Similarly, as analysed above, because Yao mentioned that Mao's eyesight had deteriorated and that he might need books with larger characters, that the woodblock book department was established as part of the Big Character Book project launched in 1972.<sup>30</sup> Although factories had already been set up solely for printing books for Mao, the Cloudy Studio was instructed to organise a woodblock-printing department since the highest leader appreciated xylographic books more.<sup>31</sup> *The Manifesto* was an experiment to test whether the publisher was capable of longer-term woodblock printing tasks. The three other xylographic titles published by the Cloudy Studio were also connected to Mao. According to Long Yusheng 龙榆生, *Chang-duan Lyrics Poetry of Jiaxuan* and *Collected Commentaries on the Verses of Chu* were Mao's favourite books.<sup>32</sup> In fact, most of the xylographic publications, from books and classic painting replicas, to greeting cards, were printed for Chairman Mao and his elite group, showing great respect to the political leaders. The present power, according to Mao's theory of 'Use the Past to Serve the Present', therefore, had to be respected and obeyed by the already vanished past. Mao clearly wanted to be respected as the supreme ruler, both historically and contemporarily. In his poem *To the Tune of Qinyuanchun: Snow* (*Qinyuanchun: xue*, 沁园春: 雪), in answering the old school poet Liu

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<sup>28</sup> Guo Moruo 郭沫若 et al., *Baihua qifang* 百花齐放 (Beijing: Rongbao zhai xinji, 1961), preface.

<sup>29</sup> Interview with Zhu Yongjia.

<sup>30</sup> Peng Beng 彭璐, 'Dangdai Songbanshu de Gushi 当代宋版书的故事', *Dongfang Zaobao* 东方早报, 8 September 2013.

<sup>31</sup> Interview with Sun Dongping.

<sup>32</sup> Zhang Hui 张晖, *Long Yusheng Xiansheng Nianpu* 龙榆生先生年谱 (Shanghai: Xuelin chubanshe, 2001), p. 221.

Yazi 柳亚子, he indicated that he had surpassed all the great historical emperors, from the Emperor Qin Shi Huang (258 BC–210 BC) to the Tang Emperor Taizong 唐太宗 (598–649).<sup>33</sup> This poem was broadly distributed before and during the PRC, accepted by Chinese people as one of the best old-style poems.

Thus in woodblock publishing, the CCP legitimised its dominance through both archaist cultural heritage and newly established CCP idolism, by reconciling and repositioning traditional values in new cultural dynamics. In the process of applying a cultural essence that was classified as “scholar-official tradition”, archaism in elite xylographic publishing endorsed the current cultural authority, while embedding anti-establishment historical artistic values. In neither system, however, were different political and cultural opinions encouraged or heard when they intruded on the ruling power.<sup>34</sup>

### *Adhering to a Hierarchy*

One of the distinctive features of authoritarianism is that it always adheres to a hierarchy. In the cultural authoritarianism that both archaism and the CCP ideology endorsed, there was a hierarchical structure, both in the final products and in organising the production activities. The archaistic side of Mao Era woodblock publishing followed the cultural convention of the Ming and Qing, when a hierarchy of books had been established, as Cynthia Brokaw argues, by two almost parallel yet somehow exclusive book cultures: the elite book culture and a commercial book culture.<sup>35</sup> The differentiated quality of carving and printing materials between literati elites and commercial book culture created a

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<sup>33</sup> Zhou Yonglin 周永林, *Qinyuanchun Xue Kaozheng* 沁园春·雪考证 (Chongqing: Chongqing difangshi ziliao zu, 1983), pp. 6–7.

<sup>34</sup> The *Baihua qifang* policies seemed to encourage different opinions. However, in the following year, Mao started the Anti-Rightist Campaign, announcing that the previous policies were “drawing a snake out of its hole”. See Mao Zedong 毛泽东, ‘Wenhui bao zai Yige Shijian Nei de Zichan Jieji Fangxiang 文汇报在一个时间内的资产阶级方向’, *Renmin Ribao* 人民日报, 14 June 1957.

<sup>35</sup> Cynthia Brokaw, *Commerce in Culture: The Sibao Book Trade in the Qing and Republican Periods* (Cambridge (Massachusetts) and London: Harvard University Asia Center, 2007), pp. 4–7.

hierarchy in which fine editions, together with their distinguished consumers, occupied the dominant position. The mass audience, excluded from elite book culture, accessed cheaper and coarser books from commercial publishing.

The decline of woodblock printing technology from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards meant that commercial woodblock productions almost disappeared from the book market during the Republican period.<sup>36</sup> However, Brokaw argues that when large-scale woodblock publishing was replaced by the more efficient and cost-effective printing industry in the 1920s, elite xylographic books were still published and circulated within literati circles, mostly for private gift-giving and small scale selling.<sup>37</sup> Thus, xylography publishing existed, and, as Brokaw further points out, with attempts to maintain Chinese tradition in opposition to modernisation and privately publishing finely carved titles to suit archaistic tastes. Although new technologies such as coloured lithography gave book collectors an alternative in the pursuit of outstanding printing effects, the limited dissemination of woodblock books and the perfection involved in carving and printing certainly kept elite xylographic titles at the top of a hierarchical structure in printing quality, price and rareness.<sup>38</sup> At the same time, although mass-produced woodblock publications had been gradually replaced, firstly by lithographic books, then the mechanised press printing industry, the commercial market as a whole remained at the bottom of the new hierarchy.

As was discussed in Chapter Two, the CCP system retained a similar book hierarchy by classifying the audience through administration, in which woodblock publications were positioned as a privilege for elite readers. Whilst most xylographic publications continued to be finely produced with very limited copies, common books continued to target mass readers. The difference was that common books conveyed mostly CCP ideological messages and propaganda in the post 1949 hierarchy. Woodblock publications, which were publicly criticised, contradictorily remained at the top level, serving the archaistic tastes of an elite group with the outdated technology.

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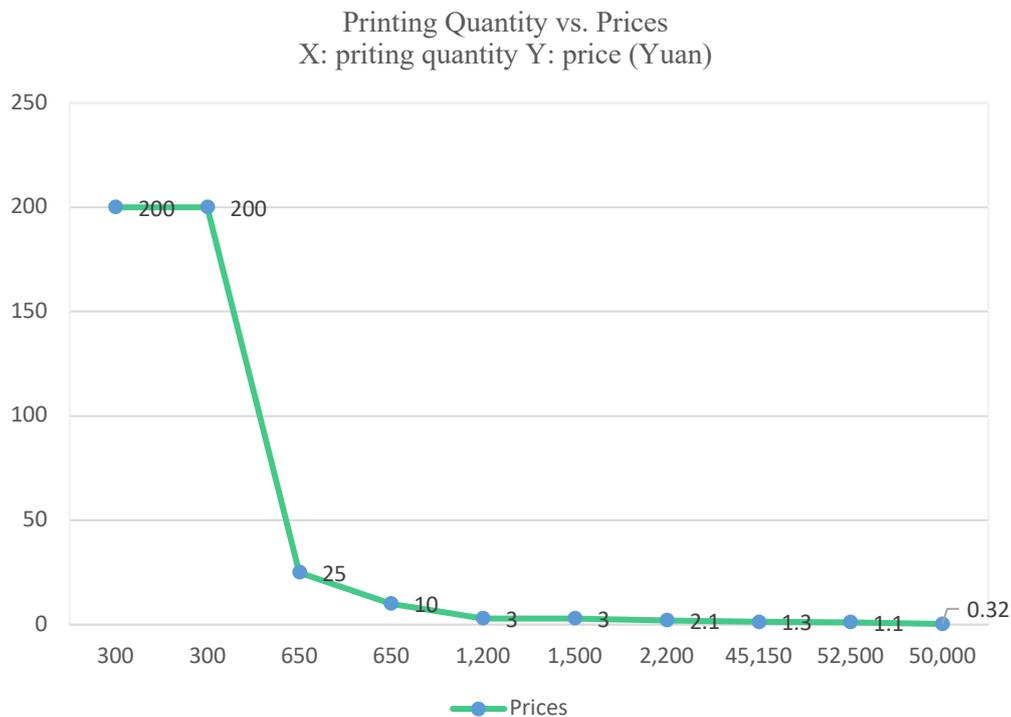
<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, pp. 40–42.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, p. 45.

The CCP announced that the socialist missions of the publishing industry, according to policies from the central government in 1950, were modernisation, efficiency, and political propaganda.<sup>39</sup> Sacrificing quality for quantity, coarsely printed cheap copies were published for the masses in vast quantities. However, different editions of *The Hundred Flowers* poems written by Guo Moruo, as shown in chart one, indicate that mass editions were at the bottom of a hierarchical structure of price and printing quality, in which the state-controlled publishing industry clearly cooperated with the archaic woodblock trade in creating the new hierarchy.

Chart One



Although hierarchy (等级, *dengji*) was publicised as another heterogeneity between archaism and the CCP ideology, the CCP itself endorsed and encouraged archaist woodblock titles to be prioritised for this hierarchy. In the planned socialist economy, without official permission from the government, the xylographic trade would have received no financial and political resources.

<sup>39</sup> ‘Guanyu Woguo Chuban Shiye de Ruogan Jiben Qingkuang (1959 Nian 8 Yue 29 Ri) 关于我国出版事业的若干情况 (1959年8月29日)’, in *CBSL 10*, pp. 146–152.

The Flourishing Studio, for instance, purchased Xuan-paper and inks by obtaining special permission from the central government. According to Hou Kai, the Propaganda Department of the CPC Central Committee and China National Light Industrial Products Department even provided financial and technical support for re-establishing the production of Xuan-paper for the publisher from the 1950s.<sup>40</sup> By using top quality hand-made materials, archaistic xylographic books achieved perfect printing quality, making them the most expensive among all publications. For example, although both *The Hundred Flowers* and *The Manifesto* were published many times during the PRC, their woodblock editions were far more expensive. The mass-produced editions were hundreds of times cheaper, sitting at the bottom of the hierarchy.<sup>41</sup> Published by state-held modern publishers, mass editions of *The Manifesto* clearly focused more on content than design. They were generally printed in rough quality with austere designs and economical materials. The woodblock edition, on the other hand, was finely carved and produced using high quality materials, which has led to the book being praised as the “new Song edition” ever since.<sup>42</sup>

The homogeneity of hierarchy between archaism and CCP ideology can also be seen in the administration structures of the publishers. On the archaistic side, apprenticeship was key to the production teams, managed under Confucian patriarchal hierarchy. The woodblock production team in the Cloudy Studio, as addressed in Chapter One, was hierarchically structured as a master-pupil system,<sup>43</sup> with conscious similarity in the xylographic trade to the Ming and Qing. By studying local gazetteers and documents, Cynthia Brokaw argues that in the rural area of Fujian, printing workshops restricted apprenticeship to relatives, coherent with Confucian family ethics.<sup>44</sup> The reason that few written

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<sup>40</sup> Hou Kai 侯恺, ‘Rongbao zhai Muban shuiyin Hua: Kuizeng Guoji Youren de Zhuyao Lipin 荣宝斋木版水印画: 馈赠国际友人的主要礼品’, *Shandong Shangbao* 山东商报, 5 July 2010, available at: [http://60.216.0.164:99/html/2017-10/20/node\\_16.htm](http://60.216.0.164:99/html/2017-10/20/node_16.htm) [Accessed on 28 June 2018].

<sup>41</sup> Appendix IV List of Editions of *Let the Hundred Flowers Bloom*.

<sup>42</sup> Interview with Zhu Junbo.

<sup>43</sup> Zhu Junbo 祝君波, ‘Shoukeben Gongchandang Xuanyan Qinli Ji 手刻本共产党宣言亲历记’, *Jiefang Ribao* 解放日报, 1 May 2014, available at: [http://newspaper.jfdaily.com/jfrb/html/2014-05/01/content\\_1164069.htm](http://newspaper.jfdaily.com/jfrb/html/2014-05/01/content_1164069.htm) [Accessed on 28 June 2018].

<sup>44</sup> Brokaw, *Commerce in Culture*, pp. 21–23.

records of carvers' teams can be found in historical literature, as Joseph McDermott addressed, is partly because the labouring class was at the bottom of the Confucian social hierarchy, whilst Chinese written history was in the hands of literati, who considered labourers' works as inferior.<sup>45</sup>

On the governmental side, similar to Confucian hierarchy, the personnel administration during the Mao Era institutionalised a hierarchy to restrict mobility between different social classes. The grand communist classification labelled individuals as cadres, workers and peasants, and residential registration 'Hukou' (户口) fixed everyone's identities to the roles they were born into.<sup>46</sup> Once an individual was positioned in the system, it was very difficult for them to change their social labels and move upwards. The CCP administrative system did not eliminate the hierarchy that put the labouring classes at the bottom. Although announcing that proletariats were the real owners and creators of Chinese culture and history,<sup>47</sup> the reality was that a more rigid hierarchical structure was established, in which workers and peasants did not share the same rights as cadres, who were much better paid and had much higher social status. The cadre system further divided its members hierarchically into more than 20 different levels, with the political leaders at the top.<sup>48</sup> The working class was excluded from this system, labelled 'workers' and allocated to a separate system from cadres.<sup>49</sup> The most desirable promotion for workers was 'tigan' (promoted into the cadre system, 提干), while in the cadre system, the desire was always to be promoted into management, therefore to reach a higher level within the system.<sup>50</sup> Only cadres could enter leadership groups, the 'lingdao banzi' (领导班子). Often referred to as the "old big brother workers" (*gongren lao dage*, 工人老大哥), the

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<sup>45</sup> Joseph McDermott, *A Social History of the Chinese Book: Books and Literati Culture in Late Imperial China* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2006), p. 39.

<sup>46</sup> Fei-Ling Wang, *Organizing Through Division and Exclusion: China's Hukou System* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2005), pp. 86–112.

<sup>47</sup> Mao, "Talks at the Yan'an Conference on Literature and Art", pp. 63–64.

<sup>48</sup> Guo Bohu 郭伯虎, 'Lun Xinhongguo Ganbu Guanli Tizhi de Jianli' 论新中国干部管理体制的建立', *Shiji Qiao* 世纪桥, no. 19 (2010): pp. 147–148.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> Yu Jianrong 于建嵘, *Zhongguo Gongren Jieji Zhuangkuang: Anyuan Shilu* 中国工人阶级状况: 安源实录 (Toronto: Mingjing chubanshe, 2006), p. 183.

working class was respected with words but put aside both politically and financially.<sup>51</sup> The structure kept the proletariats at the bottom of this social hierarchy, with nearly no social mobility.

Under this system, in the woodblock trade, CCP leaders, management teams, common cadres and workers comprised the administrative hierarchy. Writers and editors were classified as cadres, while carvers were labelled as workers.<sup>52</sup> Only ‘lingdao’ (leaders) with cadre identities attended decision-making meetings. For *The Manifesto*, Chairman Mao was the sole audience that needed to be pleased. The initiators of the project – Yao Wenyuan and Zhu Yongjia – were high-ranking officials in the political hierarchy, who had the power to endorse woodblock books, even as the government required the common people to rally against the old feudal culture. As documents in the archival materials record, Mao Ziliang 茅子良 and other editors obtained their cadre identity in the system, making them eligible to participate in the decision-making process. Personnel administration, including considering whether Mao Ziliang should be full-time in woodblock publishing and which carvers could remain in the Cloudy Studio, all reported to the higher authority for decisions.<sup>53</sup> No decisions were directly made by workers and carvers associated with *The Manifesto*. They were ‘represented’ by cadres and individuals in power, without real opportunities to express their ideas in the CCP system.<sup>54</sup> This highly hierarchical social structure was in line with cultural authoritarianism, which is contradictory to the CCP propaganda that comprised proletariats, but was homogeneous with the ideals of archaism.

By situating the production team at the bottom of the system, the CCP restricted archaic practices within the executive level and minimised its cultural influence by censoring the voices of practitioners through meetings. The attendants at decision-making meetings for *The Manifesto*, for instance,

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<sup>51</sup> Liu Zhuohong 刘卓红, *Xiandaihua Jianshe Zhuti: Dangdai Zhongguo Gongren Jieji Diwei Yanjiu* 现代化建设主体: 当代中国工人阶级地位研究 (Guangzhou: Guangdong renmin chubanshe, 2000), p. 244.

<sup>52</sup> Guo, ‘Lun Xinzhongguo Ganbu Guanli Tizhi de Jianli’.

<sup>53</sup> AMCM, no. 5.

<sup>54</sup> Apart from the names of carvers listed in AMCM, no workers’ opinions of the book have been identified in decision-making.

were all cadres and officials. Thus, the publishing was controlled by the CCP personnel administrative system and it served political leaders' interests, be these archaistic or communist.<sup>55</sup> The CCP administrative system in the publishing houses, although announcing that it was seeking equality for proletariats, established a more rigid hierarchy with less social mobility, thus it institutionalised the working class in the woodblock trade, with this “ruling class of the new society” at the bottom of the hierarchy politically, culturally and financially.

### *Self-positioning under Confucian Political Ethics*

Although the CCP ideology is in fact homogenous with archaism in many ways, antiquity was not officially praised. As in the woodblock trade, archaistic books like *The Manifesto* were mostly given a nationalist name, legitimised as cultural heritage. For individuals, however, being publicly labelled as an archaist (*fugu zhuyi zhe*, 复古主义者) during the Mao Era signalled the end of a normal life. During almost all the radical anti-feudal culture campaigns, people who were persecuted had been accused somehow as archaists.<sup>56</sup> Noted writers who committed suicide under political pressure during the Cultural Revolution, including Lao She, Deng Tuo 邓拓, and many others, were criticised for being antique lovers, although at the same time, they both were communist enthusiasts who praised the CCP unreservedly.<sup>57</sup> Nonetheless, as a social group, intellectuals somehow stayed loyal to the party leadership without serious protest until they were deprived of personal dignities and, sometimes, as in Lao She and Deng Tuo's case, even their lives. The ones who were temporarily safe, including Guo Moruo, however, mostly worked with the CCP

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<sup>55</sup> AMCM, no. 5.

<sup>56</sup> Gongdaihui Renmin Meishu Chubanshe Geming Zaofantuan 工代会人民美术出版社革命造反团 and Renmin Meishu Chubanshe Menshibu Linshi Geming Weiyuanhui 人民美术出版社门市部临时革命委员会, “‘Rongbao zhai’ Heimu 荣宝斋黑幕”, *Wenyi Geming* 文艺革命, 2 August 1967.

<sup>57</sup> Laoshe 老舍, ‘Baihua qifang de Chuntian 百花齐放的春天’, in *Laoshe Wenji* 老舍文集, vol. 14 (Beijing: Renmin wenzue chubanshe, 1980), p. 354.

obediently, until they were removed from their positions.

The reception of cultural authoritarianism brings us to Confucian loyalty among the Chinese literati. The political ethics of accepting Mao as the cultural idol and following the socialist hierarchy was, I argue, although contradicting the CCP propaganda, the very Confucian philosophy that archaism followed. Archaism not only absorbed literati leisure lives, it was a crucial belief to their political life. Once its identity as ‘the sons of Heaven’ (*tianzi*, 天子) was proved through representing and respecting past cultural authorities, as Wu Hung argues, the ruling class in Confucian power dynamics legitimised their legacy of power.<sup>58</sup> As the masters of the kings, the political ethics of literati, unlike the critical role of intellectuals in the West, was to cooperate and obey the emperors in order to achieve a harmonious society under a benevolent rule. Men of letters, therefore, were ethically encouraged to obtain their social status as scholar-officials, gaining cultural fame and accumulating wealth. Therefore, being loyal to the political authority was encouraged, instead of criticised, as the moral duty of Chinese learned men from as early as the Han Dynasty, after Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 prioritised Confucianism over other schools of thought.<sup>59</sup>

Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of positioning can be used to analyse both the political philosophy of literati culture and the mentality of archaists in the woodblock trade during the Mao Era. Bourdieu argues that in order to stabilise and enhance their own power, social groups and individuals attempt to position themselves close to the centre of a power-relation. Therefore, he notes, no matter how these groups and people claim to protest or to support the political power, instead of seeking emancipation for the oppressed class, they are in fact part of the forces that strengthen the current ruling order.<sup>60</sup> This theory can be used in studying the Confucian ethics, whereby the ultimate life goal of the literati was to serve the wise kings as scholar-officials. Through serving the

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<sup>58</sup> Wu Hung, ‘Introduction’, pp. 31–32.

<sup>59</sup> Xinzhong Yao, *An Introduction to Confucianism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 83.

<sup>60</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *On Television* (New York, N.Y.: New Press, 1999), pp. 39–67.

rulers, ‘the sons of Heaven’, Confucian literati believed that they contributed to the society, ‘the earth under Heaven’ (*tianxia*, 天下), and the people as ‘sons of the kings’ (*zimin*, 子民). Therefore, for Chinese men of letters, positioning themselves close to the centre of power was encouraged by the culture, rather than criticised. In Confucian philosophy, systematic cooperation between the intellectual group and the political authority was indeed the norm.<sup>61</sup>

Archaism was a crucial part of elite book culture in spreading Confucian ethics. During the Song Dynasty, as Hilde de Weerdts addresses, literati groups served as one of the essential channels for disseminating official documents for the imperial court.<sup>62</sup> For archaists, reading and writing had the sole social function of achieving a position in the dynastic bureaucracy through imperial exams. Academic excellence was required to gain official identity (*xue er you ze shi*, 学而优则仕), through the study of Confucian classics from the ancient past. Since imperial examination was the only method of upward social mobility, in the publishing industry, as Chow argues, the widely published classics with different commentaries were mostly examination materials targeted at scholars eagerly seeking any possible hints about their coming tests.<sup>63</sup> The feeling of being part of the political power continued even after the imperial examination system was abrogated. New publishers during the Republican Period, such as the Commercial Press and Zhonghua Book Company, continued to organise the publishing of textbooks and enlightenment texts for ‘saving the nation’, in which a great number of intellectuals publicised their political ideals about assisting the ruling power.<sup>64</sup> In a convention where books were taken as tools for expressing political ideals, following Bourdieu’s theory, Chinese learned men who were involved in elite book culture, including writers, commentators, publishers and readers, positioned themselves closer to the ruling power via their publishing activities.

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<sup>61</sup> Yao, *An Introduction to Confucianism*, p. 83.

<sup>62</sup> Hilde de Weerdts (2006), ‘Byways in the Imperial Chinese Information Order: The Dissemination and Commercial Publication of State Documents’, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Societies*, 66, pp. 145–186.

<sup>63</sup> Chow, ‘Writing for Success’, pp. 120–157.

<sup>64</sup> Michael Hill, *Lin Shu, Inc: The Making of an Icon in Modern China*, Global Asias (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 163–171.

The CCP, although publicly announcing its posture against archaism, demanded and encouraged similar loyalty and obedience from intellectuals. Archaists in the xylographic projects, in my opinion, both adhered to Confucian morality and answered the call from the CCP, continuing to be subordinate to the power and aiming to be accepted as part of the new culture. In the Mao Era woodblock book trade, the positioning close to the ruling power was, if not more enhanced, homogenous with the previous periods. Writers and artists passionately embraced the CCP policies in their publications. From Guo Moruo's *The Hundred Flowers* poems, to painting replicas praising the socialist achievements created by Fu Baoshi 傅抱石<sup>65</sup>, many of the woodblock literature and artworks were odes to the new ruling power. Not only were the CCP intellectuals, old school men of letters also “harboured the real spring” that brought by the new communist government.<sup>66</sup> Liu Yazhi 柳亚子, for instance, passionately collaborated with Chairman Mao to create old style poems, praising the leader as the one who saved the nation.<sup>67</sup> Thinking themselves part of ‘the people’ and the respectful knowledgeable class, men of letters clearly intended to position themselves as part of the political power.

As argued in Chapter Three, xylographic publishers also tried to align their businesses with the political power for protection, which was again in line with both Confucian ethics and the CCP ideology. The 1950s joint state-private business movement fundamentally institutionalised woodblock publishing as a registered trade that was financially and politically bound up with the ruling power. From gaining support from politicians such as Kang Sheng, to obtaining permission to buy printing materials and collect woodblocks nationwide, all achievements were due to positively aligning the organisation with the state, maintaining the otherwise ‘counter-revolutionary’ business within the CCP system. In the most radical years of the Cultural Revolution, when archaistic publishing was criticised and prohibited to the greatest degree, woodblock

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<sup>65</sup> Zheng Maoda 郑茂达, ‘Fu Baoshi yu Rongbao zhai 傅抱石与荣宝斋’, *Rongbao zhai* 荣宝斋, no. 6 (June 2006): pp. 266–277.

<sup>66</sup> Laoshe, ‘Baihua qifang de Chuntian’, p. 354.

<sup>67</sup> Zhou, *Qinyuanchun Xue Kaozheng*, pp. 6–7.

publishers printed products related to the highest leader in order to be politically correct. This positioning, however, was not criticised by society. Instead, it was supported by the social value system as “serving the great need of the people”, whilst being endorsed by the general public as ethically positive. Since it was homogeneous to the Confucian morality that archaists adhered to, loyalty to the ruling power was mostly agreed upon by both the new and the old in the woodblock publishing trade.

Even when facing rallies and persecutions, most of the archaists in the woodblock trade believed that the moderate force in the CCP power group could save them. Instead of criticising the CCP system, most victims believed that they were being wronged by evils in the party, and the benevolent rulers would eventually vindicate them. Many of the publishers mentioned that when the Red Guards were destroying their historical woodblocks, Zhou Enlai called upon the leader to stop, thus saving cultural heritage from being ruined during the Cultural Revolution. The belief that a “good force” existed in the CCP and it was fighting the “evil force” showed the archaists’ endorsement of the CCP’s rule when it “indeed served the people and the nation”.<sup>68</sup> The highest leader was always flawless; sometimes he might be deceived by malicious masters, thus making forgivable mistakes.

Shelley Drake Hawks argues that the artist Shi Lu 石鲁 was virtually the only one who challenged Mao’s authority after being persecuted. As a loyalist, Shi Lu’s famous painting of Mao was criticised in the 1950s as to “paint black on the great authority”.<sup>69</sup> Tortured until he started to be mentally unstable, Shi Lu eventually rescinded his worship of Mao, questioning the leader’s theory and motivation for endorsing Emperor Qin Shi Huang.<sup>70</sup> In his poems, Shi clearly expressed his disappointment in Mao’s betrayal of the communist ideal, whilst repeatedly addressing his loyalty to the leader when he was a respectful leader. Comparing himself with Qu Yuan 屈原 (340–278 BC), Shi indicated

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<sup>68</sup> Interview with Mao Ziliang.

<sup>69</sup> Shelley Drake Hawks, ‘Summoning Confucius: Inside Shi Lu’s Imagination’, in *Art in Turmoil: The Chinese Cultural Revolution, 1966–76*, ed. Richard King (Vancouver and Toronto: UBC Press, 2010), pp. 58–90.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

that his wish to have a wise ruler never ceased.<sup>71</sup>

Those involved in xylographic publishing, from Guo Moruo to Lao She, had similar wishes to Shi Lu. Like many tragic Confucian men of letters, they never really challenged the privilege of the political leadership, instead waiting to assist a benevolent ruler for the general good. By positioning themselves in the system, most archaists fulfilled their social responsibility of preserving and protecting the cultural heritage in their own hands, whilst ignoring the damage that CCP ideology did to the greater picture of Chinese culture.

### ***Habitus: Tracing the Genealogy of Archaism***

While communism accelerated the modernisation of the country, archaism remained an essential part in the superstructure of rebuilding cultural confidence out of nationalism. This paradox, in my opinion, similar to what Geertz argues in the Indonesian context, exists when a nation attempts to regain the cultural comfort that has been lost in the process of modernisation.<sup>72</sup> The endorsement and persistence of archaism revealed that participants in xylographic publishing, especially the individuals in power, did not intend to destroy the old “feudal culture” (*fengjian wenhua*, 封建文化) as publicised. Why did this intention of protecting archaism persist, and how was archaism so profoundly influenced CCP intellectuals and politicians? By following Bourdieu’s theory, I argue that as human agents, the power group had both value systems imbedded in their *habitus*, making the CCP ideology, as a cultural system, homogenous to archaism in many ways. The interest in archaistic books can be seen as determined by the *habitus* that the human agents came from, where their aesthetic tastes were formulated.<sup>73</sup> Considering Bourdieu’s theory, the reason that archaism was implanted in woodblock book

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, pp. 193–233.

<sup>73</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (London, Melbourne and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), pp. 163–165.

culture was because the CCP ruling class was educated in an archaistic way; its members had a family history that connected to Confucian ethics, considering archaistic elite book culture their essential cultural capital.<sup>74</sup> In their *habitus*, they were later deeply influenced by communism at an early stage of their education, making it equally important to archaism in their choices and tastes.

In both Maoist and Soviet Union interpretations of Marxism, class origin is the unique factor in determining the social, cultural and political features of an individual or social group.<sup>75</sup> Therefore, as Mao constantly emphasised, class divisions were the primary mission for re-constructing society. A class-based recognition of individuals and social groups, therefore, became the sole theme for political movements identifying “comrades” and “enemies”.<sup>76</sup> Bourdieu argues, however, that multiple factors function together to shape a social identity. These can include the *habitus* of where individuals come from, their educational background, their family ties, and of course, their class origin. All these aspects, Bourdieu argues, influence an individual or a social group in choosing their route in society.<sup>77</sup> In terms of aesthetics, according to Bourdieu, the aesthetic tastes of an individual can be traced from a sophisticated network in *habitus*, interlacing with educational background and family history.<sup>78</sup> Following Bourdieu’s theory, this section studies Kang Sheng, Zhu Junbo and Mao Zedong’s history of taste, representing the 1950s–60s woodblock projects, participants of the 1970s, and the political and cultural authority behind the archaistic woodblock trade respectively. The argument is that archaistic pursuit can be traced from their *habitus* through the history of taste, based on both their educational background and family history.

As is addressed in Chapter Three, Kang Sheng was a patron, customer and initiator of the woodblock printed books during the Mao Era. He directly instructed, organised and subsidised important woodblock titles, including

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Pang Xianzhi 逢先知 and Feng Hui 冯蕙, eds., *Mao Zedong Nianpu 1949–1976 Disanjuan* 毛泽东年谱 1949–1976 第三卷, vol. 3, 6 vols (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 2013), p. 217.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Bourdieu, *Distinction*, pp. 163–165.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

*Nineteen Poems by Chairman Mao*.<sup>79</sup> Like a great number of CCP political leaders, including Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai, Kang received Confucian traditional education during his early years. Born into a distinguished Confucian family, Kang Sheng was educated in home schools, where he was trained to master skills of poetry, calligraphy and painting. In his early life, he was called Childe Zhang, because of his fame for mastering the three perfections – ‘poetry, calligraphy and painting’ (*shi shu hua*, 诗书画) – the crucial elements of being literati talents in dynastic China.<sup>80</sup> During the Mao Era, as well as one of the top political leaders, Kang was considered a connoisseur of Chinese antiquity, and a master of calligraphy, painting and seal engraving. He was one of the most important clients of China Bookstore, the Flourishing Studio and the Cloudy Studio. His archaistic tastes can also be seen from his support of the Cultural Relic Publishing, where a great number of thread-bound books were published under his protection and political support.<sup>81</sup>

Similar to Kang Sheng, a large number of Cultural Revolution policy-makers, such as Chen Boda 陈伯达, Yao Wenyuan and Zhu Yongjia, had all received archaistic education from their early age. As was mentioned above, even in the most radically Central Cultural Revolution Committee, members like Wang Li and Qi Benyu were antique and thread-bound book lovers. Wang received his early education in a home school in Jiangsu, where his father taught classics as a teacher.<sup>82</sup> Similarly, Qi had been taught to recite The Four Books and Five Classics (*sishu wujing*, 四书五经) by his grandfather, a Qing Dynasty ‘xiuca’ (秀才, the primary degree in the imperial examinations), since he was four years old.<sup>83</sup> In these home schools, Confucian ethics were the moral standard. Only Chinese classics were taught to pupils, whilst archaistic tastes for art and literature were appreciated.

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<sup>79</sup> John Byron and Robert Pack, *The Claws of the Dragon – Kang Sheng – The Evil Genius Behind Mao and His Legacy of Terror in People’s China* (New York, London, Toronto, Tokyo, Sydney and Singapore: Simon & Schuster, 1992), pp. 35–48.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Wang Li 王力, *Wang Li Fansilu: Wang Li Yigao* 王力反思录: 王力遗稿 (Hong Kong: Beixing chubanshe, 2001), p. 857.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Qi Benyu 戚本禹, *Qi Benyu Huiyilu* 戚本禹回忆录 (Beijing: Zhongguo wenge lishi chubanshe, 2016), xiezi 楔子.

Not only the decision-makers, but also active writers and editors of the woodblock books during the 1950s were educated in classic Chinese ways. Guo Moruo and Zheng Zhenduo, important patrons and producers of many woodblock books, were famous in both the new and old cultural camps, yet they received Confucian home school education during their childhood. Guo's first education was from his mother, who taught him to recite classic Chinese poems from the age of four.<sup>84</sup> From six to fourteen, Guo was educated in home school before he went to a modern style school in 1905.<sup>85</sup> Similarly, although Zheng described his family as “petty bourgeois class” during the 1950s,<sup>86</sup> his son, Zheng Erkang 郑尔康, revealed in an interview in 2015 that the family in fact had scholar-official heritage dating back to the 10<sup>th</sup> century. His grandmother sent him to a local home school to “read the Four Books and Five Classics” before he went to Yongjia First Secondary School at the age of twelve.<sup>87</sup> If all the participants of the 1950s generation had an archaistic educational background with an established history of archaistic tastes, it is reasonable to assume that they still appreciated archaism consciously or subconsciously in socialist China, even though they were later influenced by modernisation and communism.

Unlike the active individuals of the 1950s, Zhu Junbo came from the new generation, born during the PRC when the political and cultural context had changed to a socialist one. Primary education no longer taught Chinese classics and most schools were shut down during the Cultural Revolution. Zhu was recruited into the Cloudy Studio as a middle school graduate in 1972, a short while after the peak of the Cultural Revolution. He began his career as an apprentice, training as a carver alongside another 100 youths. Associated with Chairman Mao's interests, woodblock book publishing in the Cloudy Studio

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<sup>84</sup> Guo Moruo 郭沫若, *Feigengji: Ruhe Yanjiu Shige yu Wenyi* 沸羹集: 如何研究诗歌与文艺, vol. 19, Guo Moruo Quanjì 郭沫若全集 (Beijing: Renmin wenzue chubanshe, 1992), pp. 427–428.

<sup>85</sup> Gong Jimin 龚济民 and Fang Rennian 方仁念, *Guo Moruo Nianpu (Shang)* 郭沫若年谱 (上) (Tianjin: Tianjin renmin chubanshe, 1982), pp. 4–12.

<sup>86</sup> Zheng Zhenduo 郑振铎, ‘Zheng Zhenduo Xiaozhuan 郑振铎小传’, *Jinyang Xuekan* 晋阳学刊, no. 2 (1984): inside front cover.

<sup>87</sup> Jin Hui 金辉, ‘Zheng Erkang: Yi Xianfu Zheng Zhenduo zai Wenzhou 郑尔康: 忆先父郑振铎在温州’, *Wenzhou Dushibao* 温州都市报, 23 September 2015.

was justified as the Chinese contribution to human civilisation. With this official approval, Zhu remembered how important the recruitment was for him and his peers, compensating for the education they missed during the Cultural Revolution.

During the early 70s, I and a lot of young people did not have opportunities to enter universities because of the Cultural Revolution. There were more than one hundred of our youths in the project. We took literature courses, learnt calligraphy and carving skills. The Cloudy Studio was more like a university than a working place for us. We were educated to understand Chinese traditional culture.<sup>88</sup>

Both Zhu's recollections and the publishing documents of *The Manifesto* therefore indicate that in the educational system inside the Cloudy Studio what was taught was old culture, which somehow resembled home schools before the PRC. The technology was from the old days and what was appreciated in the publishing house was archaic artworks. Zhu was promoted to the Shanghai Press Publish Bureau after carving *The Manifesto* and he continues to practice carving and calligraphy to this day.<sup>89</sup> Zhu concluded that the Cultural Revolution deprived his generation of the right to be educated, but the Cloudy Studio gave him a chance to gain a skill and prepared him for his future career. If Zhu was not educated and trained in an archaic way in his early life, presumably he would not have had the opportunity to work in a *fugu* (复古) styled organisation within the CCP system, becoming an important figure in the publishing industry. The training can be taken as a postponed enlightenment that shaped his archaic tastes in his field, preparing him with knowledge and skills in the field of antiquity.

During the three decades of the Mao Era, therefore, the key figures in woodblock publishing obtained their archaic interest through systematic education and social interaction in their *habitus*. Since most of the books were either dedicated to Mao, or published at his request, as the recipient, his tastes

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<sup>88</sup> Interview with Zhu Junbo.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

are worth studying. The highest authority in the CCP and the engineer of the new Maoist culture, Mao was sent to a family school in his home town and he learnt Confucian classics there.<sup>90</sup> Throughout his lifetime he loved to read thread-bound books. Although in 1956 he encouraged writers to write folk songs instead of old poems, he did not write a single poem in the new style. He said of himself that he “knows more old-style poems” in a letter to Chen Yi.<sup>91</sup> For his entire life, Mao only wrote poems in classical Chinese, using brush and ink in calligraphic style, and quoting Chinese classics frequently in the poems and essays he wrote. Mao often described himself as an old man, encouraging young people to start “new cultural revolutions”.<sup>92</sup>

Mao influenced many participants in the woodblock trade. Based on the fact that Yao Wenyuan required the Cloudy Studio to publish calligraphy copybooks about mastering literati skills just because he was criticised by Mao for his limited abilities, as Zhu Yongjia remembers, it is clear that this skill was essential in Mao’s political circle.<sup>93</sup> It is worth mentioning that Yao Wenyuan’s father, Yao Pengzi 姚篷子, was a member of the League of Left-wing Writers (*Zuoyi zuojia lianmeng*, 左翼作家联盟) in the Republican Period and also educated as a man of letters in his primary days.<sup>94</sup> Zhu Yongjia was promoted as the mayor of Shanghai during the 1970s and he later re-commented historical classics for Mao.<sup>95</sup> Following Mao’s archaistic interests, decision-makers in the CCP system clearly endorsed literati aesthetics when publishing woodblock books for the highest leader.

Doubtlessly, the CCP elites obtained their socialist ideals through enlightenment of the New Culture Movement and the long-lasting socialist revolution, receiving political guidance from the Soviet Union. Before the new communist tastes emerged, however, their archaistic tastes were embedded due

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<sup>90</sup> Chunhou Zhang and C. Edwin Vaughan, *Mao Zedong as Poet and Revolutionary Leader: Social and Historical Perspectives* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2002), p. 6.

<sup>91</sup> Xie Mian 谢冕 and Hong Zicheng 洪子诚, eds., *Zhongguo Dangdai Wenxue Shiliao Xuan 1948–1975* 中国当代文学史料选, 1948–1975 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1995), p. 627.

<sup>92</sup> Pang and Feng, *Mao Zedong Nianpu 1949–1976 Disanjuan*, pp. 248–250.

<sup>93</sup> Interview with Zhu Yongjia.

<sup>94</sup> Shi Yun 史云, *Zhang Chunqiao Yao Wenyuan Sizhuan – Zizhuan Riji Gongci* 张春桥姚文元私传—自传日记 供词 (Hong Kong: Sanlian shudian (Xianggang) youxian gongsi, 2012), pp. 166–168.

<sup>95</sup> Interview with Zhu Yongjia.

to their primary education, which was equally crucial in forming their tastes. As a pioneer of vernacular literature, Guo Moruo was also a prominent calligrapher and old-style poet. Kang Sheng was a major theorist of the CCP, but at the same time an antique connoisseur. Mao was the initiator of countless radical political campaigns that aimed to eliminate the old; yet he was also a classic literature and antique book lover. The archaistic tastes of the political authority might not have been publicised to the masses, but they were certainly critical to the survival of elite woodblock publishing.

### **From Tradition to Distinction**

The *habitus* of the CCP ruling power illustrates why there were intrinsic connections between archaism and the CCP ideology. The CCP political leaders were educated in the old educational system in their early years, in which scholar-officials possessed and appreciated finely printed books. Their primary education, therefore, was similar to that of the subordinated intellectuals who were accused of being ‘old reactionary academic authorities’ (*jiu fandong xueshu quanwei*, 旧反动学术权威). The masses, including the radical Red Guards, publicised as the owners of the new socialist culture, were encouraged to destroy this feudal culture.<sup>96</sup> However, what the propaganda did not explicate was that the ruling power intentionally protected part of the tradition by putting it under the name of the people.<sup>97</sup> This protection was intended to keep the tradition within a privileged elite group. By applying Bourdieu’s theory, I contend that woodblock-related books were taken as cultural capital in formulating a new distinction<sup>98</sup> in which archaism was no longer the tradition, but part of this distinction involved only a privileged group within the CCP system having the right to create, interpret and appreciate the

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<sup>96</sup> The *People’s Daily* published an editorial on August 23<sup>rd</sup> 1967, officially claimed to support “revolutionary students” for destroying the Four Olds. *Renmin Ribao* 人民日报, 23 August 1967.

<sup>97</sup> Ho, ‘Revolutionizing Antiquity’, pp. 693–694.

<sup>98</sup> Bourdieu, *Distinction*, pp. 293–305.

new elite book culture. With cultural and economic capital in hand, the distinction was achieved through setting barriers in price, rareness and accessibility. Through this new elite book culture, differentiated cultural messages were delivered to different social groups, with classified texts and aesthetics. The aim of the countless anti-tradition political campaigns was to re-establish and create a new order, in which woodblock-related capital and intellectual properties were deprived of old cultural authority, whilst being transferred to the hands of the people.

As Bourdieu argues, the ruling class in capitalist societies accumulate their cultural capital through educational institutions and media, via books, television programmes and newspapers, creating cultural *distinctions* over the masses.<sup>99</sup> This cultural *distinction*, Bourdieu analyses, historically gained its legitimacy through accumulated cultural currency, and in contemporary society it does so through institutional control over cultural resources.<sup>100</sup> By applying Bourdieu's theory, it can be seen that in China, archaistic woodblock books reflected the legitimated tastes of the knowledgeable upper-class literati of earlier times, part of the cultural capital that social elites used to position themselves vis-à-vis the masses.<sup>101</sup> Although politically the Guomindang (Nationalist Party) and later the Communist Party seized power from the former dynastic ruling class, the leading groups of both parties shared some aspects of cultural capital with the dynastic ruling class. These included archaistic tastes, the classical language and literati art, which were all rooted in a non-socialist past.<sup>102</sup> Although Marxism encouraged a rejection of tradition, it did not provide any cultural interpretations or solutions to the Chinese aesthetics of the book. This lack of ideological guidance sometimes made the definition of the old problematic. It also meant that the CCP had to find cultural distinction in its own historical context where the old dominated China. Therefore, to them, anything in the Chinese cultural heritage that Marxist

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid, pp. 9–24.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid, p. 337.

<sup>101</sup> Brokaw, 'Commercial Woodblock Publishing in the Qing', p. 45.

<sup>102</sup> If we look at the major leaders of both parties, such as Sun Yat-sen, Chiang Kai-shek and Mao Zedong, and their elite political groups, many of them were educated in pre-modern style private home-schools in their childhood and were not only politicians but also calligraphers and poets in classical Chinese styles.

ideology or the Soviet Union did not take issue with could either be the old or, if necessary, the new. This interpretation of old and new by the authorities largely depended upon whether or not the object was qualified to be part of the symbolic capital of the Communist Party, and whether it was able to enhance cultural distinctiveness.

Due to its obvious Communist content, *The Manifesto* clearly matched the above guidelines. However, historical Chinese classical works were much more problematic. For example, what social class did the author of *The Verses of Chu* (*Chuci*, 楚辞), Qu Yuan, a poet who lived around 300 BC, belong to?<sup>103</sup> How could one legitimately classify Xin Qiji (1140–1207), the Song Dynasty romantic poet, as a revolutionary writer?<sup>104</sup> At this point, a Marxist reclassification of ancient writers and texts with new nationalist identities was instigated, following Mao's call for "use the past to serve the present".<sup>105</sup> Qu Yuan was depicted as a patriotic poet who was opposed to the feudal lords and tried to protect the unification of the country.<sup>106</sup> Xin Qiji, a loyalist poet at the Song court, who also wrote a great number of love poems and depicted the luxurious lives of the nobility, was labelled a patriotic poet who fought for the unification of Chinese territory.<sup>107</sup> By rendering historical figures proletarian and endowing them with patriotic motivations, classic literature and art created a millennium ago were made to be coherent with the CCP ideology. Thus, the CCP forged its cultural legitimacy by allying historical symbolic capital.

In the book market, the distinction worked through placing woodblock books at the top of a hierarchical book culture defined by differentiated prices and rareness. Appendix IV lists all the different editions of *The Hundred*

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<sup>103</sup> Qu Yuan 屈原 (ca340–278 BCE), the first writer whose name is identified in the history of Chinese literature: Kang-I Sun Chang and Stephen Owen, eds., *The Cambridge History of Chinese Literature* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 78.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 178.

<sup>105</sup> Mao Zedong 毛泽东, '1964 Nian 9 Yue 27 Ri Zhi Lu Dingyi' 1964年9月27日致陆定一, in *Mao Zedong Shuxin Xuanji* 毛泽东书信选集 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1983), p. 598.

<sup>106</sup> In *Qu Yuan*, a play written by Guo Moruo, the poet was depicted from Guo's 'revolutionary' perspective: Wang Wenying 王文英, 'Lishiju Zhenshixing Xintan 历史剧真实性新探', in *Shanghai Shehuikexueyuan Xueshu Jikan* 上海社会科学院学术季刊, 3 (1986), pp. 150–159.

<sup>107</sup> Zhu Lixia 朱丽霞, '20 Shiji Xin Qiji Yanjiu de Huigu yu Sisuo 20世纪辛弃疾研究的回顾与思索', in *Wenxue Pinglun* 文学评论 3 (2007), pp. 199–204.

*Flowers* published in the first three decades of the PRC.<sup>108</sup> Chart One indicates that the average price of mass editions was in the range of 0.30–1.00 Yuan, whilst this was 19–200 Yuan for woodblock printed editions. The average price per page for the cheapest editions was 0.003 Yuan; for the finest xylographic versions this price was 0.5 Yuan for the monochrome ones, and 2.00 Yuan for the water-coloured.<sup>109</sup> The finest editions, therefore, were 600 times more expensive than the mass editions.<sup>110</sup> These extremely high prices lead to a question of affordability. The average salary in 1958 for a junior worker was only around 30 Yuan. For a clerk, such as a typist, it was around 38–66 Yuan.<sup>111</sup> Therefore, it would take a worker almost seven years to buy a fine woodblock edition, without taking into account any other living costs of the 1950s. Individuals who earned more than 200 Yuan were cadres above level 11, prominent professors and high ranking CCP officials.<sup>112</sup> These were the people with political and cultural power in the PRC. The number of prints, just 200 to 300 copies, also indicates that the books were intended to be disseminated to a very small group. The high prices and small printing numbers, therefore, render the artistic features of the finest editions a privilege of CCP elites.

In the hierarchy, the distinction between elite xylographic books and their modern editions is much more distinctive than that among the modern editions, both in price and rareness. Chart Two indicates the price range of the titles without finest editions. Although a hierarchical structure can still be seen between the cheapest plain text editions and hard cover special ones, the contrast is less obvious than the dramatic gap between the woodblock editions and mass-produced ones. By setting price barriers, fine woodblock books, publicised as being counter to the art of the people, were kept as a cultural

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<sup>108</sup> Some titles were only published in woodblock print, such as *Thirty-nine Poems by Chairman Mao* and *Poems by Du Fu Expressing Intent*. However, similar contents can be found under slightly different titles that were mass produced.

<sup>109</sup> Appendix IV List of Editions of *Let the Hundred Flowers Bloom*.

<sup>110</sup> The Big Character Books, as discussed in Chapter Four, would be even more expensive if put on the market. The statistics here excludes the books since they were not sold publicly.

<sup>111</sup> ‘Guowuyuan 1956 Nian Zhiding de 24 Ji Ganbu Gongzi Biaozhun 国务院 1956 年制定的 24 级干部工资标准’, in *Xiandai Renshi Guanli* 现代人事管理, (Beijing: Zhongguo renshi chubanshe, 1997), pp. 155–161.

<sup>112</sup> ‘Guanyu 1956 Nian Quanguo Gaodeng Xuexiao Jiaozhigong Gongzi Pingding he Tiaozheng de Tongzhi 关于 1956 年全国高等学校教职工工资评定和调整的通知’, in *Zhongguo Jiaoyu Nianjian 1949–1981* 中国教育年鉴 1949–1981, (Beijing: Zhongguo dabaike quanshu chubanshe, 1984), p. 97.

distinction for CCP elites. For the general public, again as Brokaw argues, woodblock publishing as a vehicle of knowledge had been marginalised for over a century.<sup>113</sup> However, as a privileged craftsmanship, it was preserved during the Mao Era. If the technology was largely used by private publishers in small scale during the Republican Period,<sup>114</sup> it was kept from old cultural authorities, controlled by the CCP – the new power. Domestically, the fact that only high ranking CCP politicians and cultural celebrities within the system could afford the woodblock books revealed that woodblock printing was kept as symbolic capital beyond the reach of the people – working class and peasants. By publicising printing technology as a symbol of the Chinese contribution to human civilisation, although the CCP discouraged woodblock publishing, fine woodblock books, as the otherwise non-existent cultural remains of this invention, gained a proper socialist name: an “essence of the people’s culture”. This made the government a legitimate cultural authority to possess woodblock related culture capital since the CCP announced itself as the representative of the people.<sup>115</sup> Laborious technological details that had been abandoned by the Republican governments were redeemed in their glory for CCP elites during the PRC, whilst the *chuangjiu* (recreating the past, 创旧) innovations were publicised as “crystals of wisdom of the people”.<sup>116</sup>

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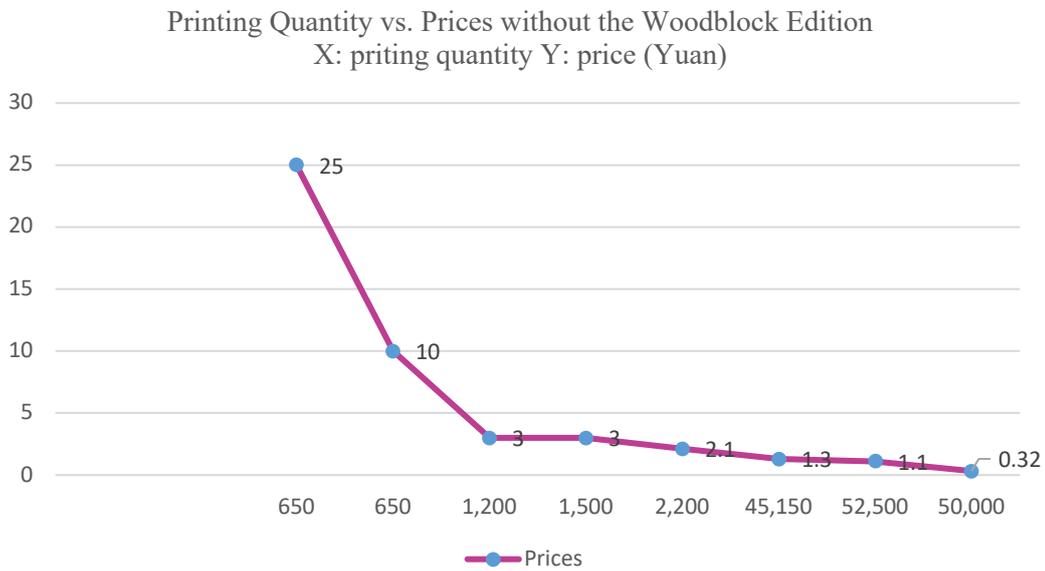
<sup>113</sup> Brokaw, ‘Commercial Woodblock Publishing in the Qing’, pp. 39–41.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 44–45.

<sup>115</sup> ‘Xiang Jiushijie Menglie Kaihuo: Yitiao Wenhua’.

<sup>116</sup> Zhang Xiumin 张秀民, *Zhongguo Yinshuashi* 中国印刷史 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1989), p. 14.

Chart Two



The CCP also secured their distinction via administrative reinforcement. As discussed in Chapter Two, audiences who were allowed to buy woodblock publications were foreign guests and experts, two distinguished social groups that belonged to the state diplomatic and educational apparatus respectively. At the same time, the publications were required “not to expand too much for the masses, and within a limited scope”.<sup>117</sup> In the publishing documents, the guidance from Zhu Yongjia, the mayor of Shanghai, notes explicitly that *The Manifesto* and the other three titles were published for political leaders and foreign guests.<sup>118</sup> Many subjects were classified during the Mao Era, for various reasons, as benefiting political elites only. For example, as the editor Yang Muzhi 杨牧之 recalled, Mao instructed the People’s Literature Publishing House (*Renmin wenxue chubanshe*, 人民文学出版社) to re-print *The Golden Lotus* in the 1950s, but the only permitted audience was married male governors with high ranks above the provincial level. The book was classified as unsuitable for general circulation owing to its erotic contents. To

<sup>117</sup> ‘Wenhuabu Guanyu Xinhua Shudian Jingxiao Rongbao zhai Muban shuiyin Hua de Tongzhi (60) Wen Chu Hu Zi di 1438 hao (1960 Nian 11 Yue 30 Ri) 文化部关于新华书店经销荣宝斋木版水印画的通知. (60) 文出胡字第 1438 号 (1960 年 11 月 30 日)’, in *CBSL 10*, p. 421.

<sup>118</sup> AMCM, no. 5.

buy the book, an identity card was required and the sellers were required to record the names of the purchasers.<sup>119</sup> Through both economic and political control, tradition as cultural capital was re-established for CCP elites as part of the *distinctions* of the new culture.

So how was this *distinction* legitimised and interpreted to the masses? When delivering ideological messages, in my opinion, the CCP publicised different cultural messages to its elite group from the general public through woodblock editions. In the finest woodblock titles that only CCP elites could afford far fewer propaganda messages were delivered than in the mass-produced ones. The xylographic ones were designed differently, with less propaganda in para-texts such as preface and afterword. Designs and illustrations in *The Hundred Flowers*, for instance, instead of representing the Great Leap Forward propaganda like most of the artworks did in the same era, mostly represent archaic styles. Propaganda texts in mass-produced editions were eliminated in the finest woodblock edition of the title, and court painting elaborate style in dynastic China was selected for representing the flowers. Meanwhile, the album contained no Great Leap Forward visual symbols, as in posters of similar theme published during the same era did. In the postscripts Guo wrote for the Flourishing Studio edition, he quoted the *Book of Yi* (*Yijing*, 易经) to explain his choice of 101 flowers.

The 101 resembles symbols of Gua (卦) in the *Book of Yi*. The symbols mean endlessly circulating Qi (气). The indication is that changes are eternity, it begins and ends constantly.<sup>120</sup>

This paragraph also appeared in other editions, but as a footnote in an inconspicuous corner.<sup>121</sup> In the woodblock version, however, it was added to

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<sup>119</sup> Perry Link briefly mentioned this edition of *The Golden Lotus* in his book *The Use of Literature*. Perry Link, *The Uses of Literature: Life in the Socialist Chinese Literary System* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000), p. 184. See also Yang Muzhi 杨牧之, 'Chuban Shi Shang de Yiduan Gushi—Jin ping mei, Chatailai Furen de Qingren Chuban Faxing de Ganxiang 出版史上的一段故事—《金瓶梅》《查泰莱夫人的情人》出版发行的感想', in *Zhonghua Dushubao* 中华读书报, 30 October 2013.

<sup>120</sup> Guo et al., *Baihua qifang*, afterword.

the postscript as the final paragraph. Similarly, socialist para-texts were removed from other xylographic titles, where the designs followed historical thread-bound books. In *The Manifesto*, the editorial preface, including Marxist interpretations of printing technology, was printed on a separate sheet, presumably to keep the style of the book coherent with historical thread-bound books.<sup>122</sup> In almost all the other xylographic books, no contemporary prefaces or postscripts can be found.

For the general public, it can be seen from the archives that, at least superficially, a Marxist conception of socialism was the theoretical and methodological blueprint used in the publishing industry during the Mao Era.<sup>123</sup> This blueprint, moulded by the interpretation of the CCP, was used in art creation and evaluation of historical literature based on whether or not it served to accelerate the development of socially productive forces and the needs of the people. Although the main focus of the government was on more pragmatic issues during the 1950s, such as how to finance the publishing industry and compete with private publishers, extant publishing archives indicate that publishing the ‘right’ and ‘essential’ themes was still the primary goal, and these themes mainly referred to Marxist and Maoist texts.<sup>124</sup> As the central powers grew in strength, enhanced political control was exercised over every aspect of the publishing industry.<sup>125</sup> In mass-produced books of the 1960s and 70s, political messages were always printed on title pages as slogans, or delivered in the preface or afterword. This was to legitimise the positive messages supposedly contained in these classical works. Sometimes the titles were required to quote sentences from Chairman Mao’s works as the “highest guidance” (*zuigaozhishi*, 最高指示).<sup>126</sup> However, because these made the same

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<sup>121</sup> Guo Moruo 郭沫若, *Baihua qifang* 百花齐放 (Beijing: Renming ribao chubanshe, 1958), afterword.

<sup>122</sup> AMCM, no. 25.

<sup>123</sup> ‘Hu Yuzhi zai Quanguo Xinhua Shudian Chuban Gongzuo Huiyi Shang de Kaimuci (1949 Nian 10 Yue 3 Ri) 胡愈之在全国新华书店出版工作会议上的开幕辞 (1949年10月3日)’, in *CBSL 1*, pp. 248–249.

<sup>124</sup> Hu Yuzhi 胡愈之, ‘Quanguo Chuban Shiye Gaikuang (Hu Yuzhi zai Quanguo Xinhua Shudian Chuban Gongzuo Huiyi Disanci Dahui Shang de Baogao) 全国出版事业概况 (胡愈之在全国新华书店出版工作会议第三次大会上的报告)’, in *CBSL 1*, pp. 254–266.

<sup>125</sup> Link, *The Uses of Literature*, p. 109.

<sup>126</sup> Ku-ch’eng Li, *A Glossary of Political Terms of the People’s Republic of China* (Shatin, N.T., Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1995), p. 603.

repetitive points in a wide range of books, they were largely ignored by readers and later became a communist cliché.

Whilst the xylographic *The Hundred Flowers* was published before the Destroy the Four Olds campaign, when ‘old culture’ was not yet the primary target to destroy, *The Manifesto* and other xylographic publications of the Cloudy Studio were clearly published after the movement when Confucian culture, including thread-bound books, was being publicised to the masses as reactionary. However, as discussed above, since the books were subsidised by the state and were intended to please Chairman Mao, as a privilege they were not only allowed, but encouraged, by the ruling power. Therefore, through constant and radical cultural ‘revolution’, the CCP was aiming at not only creating a political system, but also a new cultural order, where elites as insiders could enjoy a feeling of being distinct, irrespective of whether this was based on archaism or socialism. Outside the circle, antiquity was abrogated and prohibited, disgraced as “feudal culture”. Thus archaism became a privilege for the elite group, and it was beyond the reach of the people, both financially and politically.

This new *distinction* was not peacefully achieved; it deprived capitals of the old cultural authorities, both economically and culturally. Economically, the public-private joint ownership campaign eventually excluded private businesses from the planned economy, whilst occupying their capital, including woodblocks, historical books and their business heritage. During the Mao Era, not everyone was allowed to enjoy and interpret the old culture if it was abrogated officially.<sup>127</sup> Woodblock printed books were one of the archaistic trades that were allowed by the government, but only within a privileged circle. Keeping tradition amongst distinguished elites, the CCP thus enhanced their cultural *distinction* by turning Chinese antiquity into their privileged cultural capital.

If the new cultural order endorsed most archaistic values and encouraged the publishing of old books, it was contradictory that the CCP frequently held

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<sup>127</sup> Huang, ‘Po si jiu Yundong de Fazhan Mailuo’, p. 72.

political campaigns to devalue archaism, Confucianism and antiquity. My contention is that tradition was never the real target of these countless campaigns. What was at the stake was who had the power of interpreting the culture. Thus, what the CCP ideology aimed at was controlling both the socialist culture and the tradition, and combining them to create their own cultural capital. The political and cultural campaigns related to book culture were intended to deprive the old cultural authority of symbolic capital, while reinterpreting and reclassifying old culture as proper socialist types when tradition was needed in the new system. Appreciating and studying archaic books was encouraged if the persons gained a proper identity within the CCP system, as this label rendered them the capacity of being immunised from the “harmful tradition of feudalism”.<sup>128</sup>

Therefore, through countless political campaigns, a new CCP elite book culture was established. This book culture did not exclude Chinese elite books. Instead, it prioritised elements in both the modern book industry and the archaic woodblock trade that distinguished the new ruling class. By recognising the finest standards of historical woodblock books, it created “new Song editions” for the political power. It further emphasised redefining and reclassifying the history, connecting the artistic practices to the wisdom of the labouring people.<sup>129</sup> The finest woodblock editions, however, as discussed, were mostly produced for the pleasure of a small audience, and considered official gifts, a symbol of the nation, luxuriously made for distinguished foreign ‘friends’ and CCP elites.<sup>130</sup> The new book culture made it very clear that only the ruling class had the privilege of processing and appreciating the books. These books also indicate that the CCP alone controlled the power of enunciation in Chinese society, and used this power to legitimate itself as the only representative of Chinese culture. The real aim of the political engagement

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<sup>128</sup> In *Rongbao zhai Heimū*, after criticising the “old” for almost the entire page, the authors emphasised in the last paragraph that only “revolutionary woodblock workers” could create real water-coloured woodblock arts for the people. See Gongdaihui Renmin Meishu Chubanshe Geming Zaofantuan and Renmin Meishu Chubanshe Menshibu Linshi Geming Weiyuanhui, “‘Rongbao zhai’ Heimū”.

<sup>129</sup> AMCM, no. 25.

<sup>130</sup> Hou, ‘Rongbao zhai de Muban shuiyin Hua’.

of Destroy the Four Olds was to eliminate the enunciation power of non-CCP forces historically, politically and even physically.<sup>131</sup>

It is arguable that participants in xylographic publishing did protest the CCP by creating artworks that breached the propaganda. However, the protests never opposed the privilege of power. Instead, as long as their cultural identities were legitimised in the system by the government, the knowledgeable individuals or social groups were contented with governmental endeavours to keep or even enhance their privilege over the cultural products they produced. Therefore, they converted themselves, as well as their artworks, to part of this privilege. Archaism, although having lost its place as the tradition, became the *distinction* for the ruling power.

## Conclusion

Focused on homogeneities between archaism and CCP ideology, this chapter discloses the mechanism of the woodblock trade behind the seeming paradox of old and new. Without these homogeneities, even practitioners of woodblock printing could hardly tell why the old had to be used to present the new. The books were published not for the general public, but for the appreciation of learned men within the Chinese power elite. They are rare because they were made for a small group in society who controlled power, both politically and economically.

This kind of privilege in respect of knowledge was not, however, an invention of the PRC. Rather, it was embedded in archaism itself. It was the CCP hierarchy that validated this archaism, thereby leaving space for it to survive. Although frequently disparaged in political campaigns, archaism survived hierarchically at the top level of the new book culture. The contents,

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<sup>131</sup> In the ‘Zhongguo Gongchandang Zhongyang Weiyuanhui Guanyu Wuchanjieji Wenhudageming de Jueding 中国共产党中央委员会关于无产阶级文化大革命的决定’ published on August 8<sup>th</sup>, 1966, the first bullet announced that the campaign aimed at eliminating capitalist *fubi* (复辟, restoration) schemes, which attempted to use the Four Olds, including old ideas and old culture, to corrupt the masses and recover their exploiting positions. See Huang, ‘Po si jiu Yundong de Fazhan Mailuo’, p. 73.

the design of the books, and the high printing quality, were all legitimised, appreciated and subsidised by central political figures. The existence of these books was not a secret, but their archaicising style was interpreted as the art of the people, not as an aspect of literati aesthetics, but a proof of the people's wisdom and Chinese originality in technology.<sup>132</sup> However, in fact, they were artefacts for the CCP leaders and their social elite group to enjoy. They were also a natural outcome of the ingrained tastes of these elites, who retained their historical heritage whilst simultaneously attempting to create a cultural distinction from the masses.

As books, the newly carved woodblock-printed titles in the Mao Era might not seem to be important since many previous versions were available at much cheaper prices. However, in cultural terms, this is an essential part of the story of how the CCP both cooperated and competed with archaism. It demonstrates how privileged book culture was legitimised. It also indicates how the aesthetics of the old and the new combined and clashed with each other. *The Manifesto* and the other woodblock printed books reveal that archaism and CCP ideology, although considered ideologically opposed, coexisted in the same society in a subtle and more complicated manner than the grand classification might suggest.

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<sup>132</sup> AMCM, no. 25.

## Conclusion

On the face of it, woodblock publications of the Mao Era presented an elite book culture that remained almost unchanged from the previous period. Even the communist text *The Manifesto* was meticulously presented via thread-bound book aesthetics inherited from the ancient past. These books were given and received as gifts with inscriptions written in ink and brush in the elegant calligraphy styles of Kang Sheng, Guo Moruo and their contemporaries, to be respectfully passed from hand to hand in private circles.<sup>1</sup> All seemed intact in these scenes, except that the human figures were wearing communist cadre costumes.<sup>2</sup> Shifting our gaze, however, the omnipresent red flags, communist slogans and posters announced drastic changes in the world beyond. Noted men of letters who had once owned fine books, such as Zhang Boju and Wu Hufan, could be found paraded as criminals on the streets in major cities, with big signs hanging around their necks, indicating their ‘reactionary’ identities.<sup>3</sup> The survivors worked cautiously within the system in a state of fear.<sup>4</sup>

In this research, I attempted to decipher the curious prosperity of fine woodblock book publishing within the anti-feudal context of the Mao Era. Xylography, I argue, indeed continued to exist in the communist context, retaining its archaistic features in elite book culture. It was, however, no longer the tradition of the literati class. Nor was it utilised for the working class. From

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<sup>1</sup> Wang Li, *Wang Li Fansilu: Wang Li Yigao* 王力反思录: 王力遗稿 (Hong Kong: Beixing chubanshe, 2001), pp. 856–866.

<sup>2</sup> Sun Shumei 孙树梅, ‘Wo suo Qinli de Rongbao zhai Muban shuiyin Fazhan Licheng 5 我所亲历的荣宝斋木版水印发展历程 (五)’, ed. Sun Zhiping 孙志萍, *Rongbao zhai* 荣宝斋, August 2012, p. 275.

<sup>3</sup> Jin Chunming 金春明, Huang Yuchong 黄裕冲 and Chang Huimin 常惠民, *Wenge Shiqi Guaishi Guaiyu* 文革时期怪事怪语 (Beijing: Qiushi chubanshe, 1989), p. 227.

<sup>4</sup> Qi Benyu 戚本禹, ‘Qi Benyu zai Jinian Mao Zedong “Zai Yan’an Wenyi Zuotanhui Shang de Jianghua” Fabiao Ershiwu Zhounian Dahui Shang de Jianghua, 1967.5.23, 戚本禹在纪念毛泽东 “在延安文艺座谈会上的讲话” 发表二十五周年大会上的讲话, 1967. 5.23’, in *Zhongyang Wenge Xiaozu de Ganjiang Qi Benyu Yu Wenge (II)* 中央文革小组的干将戚本禹与文革 (II), ed. Yuehan Xixifusi 约翰 西西弗斯 (Taipei: Xixifusi wenhua, 2016), pp. 209–224.

the production to the dissemination and the circulating culture, archaism was only encouraged in the publishing industry when it collided with the CCP, being economically and culturally beneficial for its elite group.<sup>5</sup>

Without being a form of cultural ‘distinction’, *The Manifesto*, and all the fine woodblock books, were unable to achieve the archaistic perfection the publishers pursued. The woodblock department in the Cloudy Studio was set up, according to Zhu Yongjia, as a subsidiary of the Big Character Books project as a response to Mao Zedong’s interest in thread-bound books.<sup>6</sup> All printing materials and personnel would have been inaccessible without governmental permission. Once politically secured, however, there was a strong inclination to retain the archaistic features of thread-bound books in the projects. Although balancing between politics and thread-bound aesthetics, *The Manifesto* was perfected to achieve standards comparable to fine Song editions.<sup>7</sup> In the case of woodblock books, political elements were largely archaised in coherence with the aesthetics. Calligraphy training was implemented for cutters, the newly emerged working class, as the most crucial skill for carving. This practice was not the norm in woodblock workshops before the PRC, although it was a routine practice for the literati.<sup>8</sup> Even the technical innovations aimed at ‘*chuangjiu*’ (recreating the past, 创旧), twisting the concept of modernisation in achieving archaistic visual effects.<sup>9</sup> The past, therefore, was idealised and practiced through archaists’ projections. All was archaism, but this had to be within the system and supervised by the CCP.

The dissemination of the books, although again sharing archaistic features with elite book culture, was fully controlled by the state, and it benefited the leisure lives of CCP elites. Many of the books were produced as national gifts, all with limited printing quantities in a range between 200 and 1,000. On the book market under the planned economy, xylography books and other publications (for example, painting replicas) were designed to be sold only to

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<sup>5</sup> See the argument on archaism as *distinction* in Chapter Five.

<sup>6</sup> Interview with Zhu Yongjia.

<sup>7</sup> Interview with Mao Ziliang.

<sup>8</sup> See the section on calligraphic training in Chapter One.

<sup>9</sup> See the section on *Chuangjiu* in Chapter One.

politicians, foreign guests, academic institutions and experts.<sup>10</sup> The above audiences were all considered distinguished social groups in the CCP system. Among CCP elites, the books, together with historical thread-bound books, were circulated as personal gifts and private acquisitions for book collections. Important books were published as tributes to the state and the CCP leaders. Although bearing many similarities to elite book culture in the Ming and Qing, therefore, communist cadre identity was required to both buy and circulate woodblock books.<sup>11</sup>

The official explanation for government endorsement of archaic woodblock publishing associated xylography with nationalism. Indeed, many of the individual publishers also believed that woodblock books and craftsmanship were important cultural heritage for the nation.<sup>12</sup> However, considering that many of the discussions about producing and disseminating woodblock books related to achieving archaic perfection, it is arguable that archaism was the real force for woodblock practitioners persisting with their taste.<sup>13</sup> Nationalism was generally used to justify the existence of archaism to a public that was being encouraged to rebel against tradition. The patriotic link also legitimised the removal of capital from private hands. Books and woodblocks were ‘donated’ from private collections such as Jiaye Hall (嘉业堂) library under political pressure, either by implication or by open threats.<sup>14</sup> During the Public-private Joint Ownership Movement, private woodblock publishing houses were merged into state-held businesses. All this comprised, as I argue in this work, systematic re-distribution of economic and cultural capital.

Apart from being used to publish books for elites, the re-distributed capital was at the same time utilised to earn foreign currency, allowing the state-held

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<sup>10</sup> ‘Wenhuaabu Guanyu Xinhua Shudian Jingxiao Rongbao zhai Muban shuiyin Hua de Tongzhi (60) Wen Chu Hu Zi di 1438 hao (1960 Nian 11 Yue 30 Ri) 文化部关于新华书店经销荣宝斋木版水印画的通知。(60) 文出胡字第 1438 号 (1960 年 11 月 30 日)’, in *CBSL 10*, p. 421.

<sup>11</sup> See the section on gift-giving and presented books in Chapter Two.

<sup>12</sup> Interview with Zhou Guangpei and interview with Mao Ziliang.

<sup>13</sup> Zhu Junbo 祝君波, ‘Duoyun xuan Jishi 朵云轩纪事’, *Jiefang Ribao* 解放日报, 17 January 2016.

<sup>14</sup> Ying Changxing 应长兴 and Li Xingzhong 李兴中, eds., ‘Dashiji 大事记’, in *Jiayetang Zhi* 嘉业堂志 (Beijing: Guojia tushuguan chubanshe, 2008), pp. 36–37. See also Lou Yudong 楼宇栋 and Zheng Zhong 郑重, *Zhang Boju* 张伯驹, *Zhongguo Wenbo Mingjia Huazhuan* (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2008), p. 103.

woodblock book publishing to benefit the socialist economy.<sup>15</sup> Policies on woodblock publications differed from the domestic to the international market. The domestically dismissed archaic publications were exported to foreign countries both as commodities and as symbols of Chinese culture, especially to countries where communism was unpopular or prohibited. The many exhibitions the CCP government organised overseas were in fact promotions for water-soluble woodblock printing and other crafts.<sup>16</sup> These contradictory policies incapacitated the proletarian masses, who had been encouraged to demolish archaism, in understanding the cultural protection of woodblock publishing. During the Cultural Revolution, publishers such as the Flourishing and Treasured Studio and China Bookstore were attacked by the ‘revolutionary youth’ for continuing to produce ‘reactionary’ archaic artworks, yet they were protected and recovered by the authority soon after in major cities, although with even more limited subjects.<sup>17</sup> Publishers in Nanjing and Yangzhou, however, were forced to close due to weaker connections with the central government.<sup>18</sup>

The sincerity of the high rank officials and publishers in retaining elite woodblock book publishing makes it difficult to conclude that the paradox in the policies was intended to deceive the masses. As I argue above, although publicly in denial, the CCP ideology borrowed many ideas from literati tradition, in which archaism was one of the essences of literati tradition. Geertz argues that ideologies were intentionally designed to solve the tension when tradition, which he interpreted as “cultural comfortableness”, lost confidence. However, since ideologies are created from extant cultural conventions, they inevitably share similarities with tradition.<sup>19</sup> This theory explains why the CCP ideology was attempting to rally the literati tradition, at the same time, as

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<sup>15</sup> Yuan Zhou Enlai Zongli Jingwei Renyuan 原周恩来总理警卫人员, ‘Zai Jing’ai de Zhouzongli Shenbian Gongzuo de Rizi 在敬爱的周总理身边工作的日子’, in *Jing’ai de Zhouzongli Women Yongyuan Huainian Nin 敬爱的周总理我们永远怀念您*, vol. 3 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1977), pp. 69–87.

<sup>16</sup> Sun Jing 孙晶, ‘Zhang Ding yu Duiwai Zhanlan 张仃与对外展览’, *Zhuangshi Zazhi 装饰杂志*, 28 October 2010, available at: [http://www.izhsh.com.cn/doc/10/0\\_694.html](http://www.izhsh.com.cn/doc/10/0_694.html) [Accessed on 28 June 2018].

<sup>17</sup> Editorial, ‘Haodehen 好得很’, *Renmin Ribao 人民日报*, 23 August 1966.

<sup>18</sup> Interview with Zhou Guangpei.

<sup>19</sup> Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1973), pp. 193–233.

Elizabeth Perry defines, that the creators of this ideology were actually “red literati” who in fact used their Confucian knowledge to undermine Confucianism.<sup>20</sup> From woodblock publishing, it can be seen that archaism and the CCP ideology are homogeneous, representing two sides of one cultural entity, in pursuing cultural authoritarianism. Archaistic taste had been the tradition of CCP political leaders when they were trained in Confucian ethics; now it became their cultural ‘distinction’ within the communist political framework. For the publishers, being loyal to the ruling power was part of their ethics, which required them to fulfil their social responsibility as masters of the wise king. Even when they were exiled from the system, or even had they never been accepted by the CCP system, they were morally obliged to be faithful to the CCP and the state.<sup>21</sup>

Other thread-bound books related to woodblock publishing, but applying varied technologies, indicated that archaism existed broadly in the publishing industry during the Mao Era. The strong inclination to retain archaic aesthetics in these thread-bound books, the wish to archaize revolutionary themes in matching ancient seal scripts, and, at the same time, as Denise Ho argues, the attempts to revolutionise antiquity in order to legitimise tradition to serve the CCP ideology,<sup>22</sup> all prove the existence of archaism. These projects also reflect the essentiality of communist protection. Archaists who were not within the system, like Zhang Boju and Wu Hufan, although not actively rebelling against the CCP, were unbearable to the ruling power as convincing cultural icons. This is not to say, however, that all publishers as individuals adhered to the CCP ideology. Rather, the social reality alerted them to the necessity of cooperating with the power group. There were also serious apolitical motivations for xylography practices. Book lovers such as Zheng Zhenduo and Zhang Boju and publishers such as Mao Ziliang, Zhou Guangpei and Zhu Junbo all had a passion for continuing woodblock culture as a heritage.

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<sup>20</sup> Elizabeth J. Perry, ‘Red Literati: Communist Educators at Anyuan, 1921–1925’, *Twentieth Century China* 32, no. 4 (April 2007): pp. 111–134.

<sup>21</sup> Shelley Drake Hawks, ‘Summoning Confucius: Inside Shi Lu’s Imagination’, in *Art in Turmoil: The Chinese Cultural Revolution, 1966–76*, ed. Richard King (Vancouver and Toronto: UBC Press, 2010), pp. 58–90.

<sup>22</sup> Denise Y. Ho, ‘Revolutionizing Antiquity: The Shanghai Cultural Bureaucracy in the Cultural Revolution, 1966–1968’, *The China Quarterly* 207 (September 2011): pp. 687–705.

Many efforts were also being made by people to preserve historical documents, artworks and antiques. Cooperating with the CCP system, even reluctantly, indeed saved millions of ancient books and blocks from being destroyed.<sup>23</sup> Without remaining within the system, archaists, including those who produced *The Manifesto*, would not have been able to retain the seeds for the future recovery of woodblock printing in contemporary China.

Those involved in xylography, including both the publishers and the readers, interpreted the Mao Era woodblock book publishing in various ways. Lena Henningsen argues that reading is a positive process that involves creativity as well as social activity.<sup>24</sup> Following Henningsen's theory, positively reading messages conveyed by woodblock books, not just the texts, but also non-textual hints veiled in the materiality and aesthetics of the books, established varied understandings of the controlled information. The reception of the archaistic aesthetic message, including character styles, handmade paper and ink, and the archaistic designs of the thread-bound books, could all establish dissenting tastes against the propagated socialist realism. Through information that interwove with both socialist and traditionalist aesthetics, as Barbara Mittler argues, the 'cultural memory' of the publishers convinced them to choose archaistic perfection in literati elite woodblock books, either consciously or subconsciously.<sup>25</sup> Their persistence on thread-bound book art indicates that archaism was more convincing than imported socialist realism to certain readers and book lovers.

However, although compromises indeed kept woodblock printing and other cultural heritage from being completely destroyed, the cost was still heavy. Being propagated as a drawback to the nation, archaism as a value system of Chinese tradition was severely undermined.<sup>26</sup> The enunciation power of non-

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<sup>23</sup> Zhou Yan 周岩, *Wo yu Zhongguo Shudian* 我与中国书店 (Shijiazhuang: Hebei jiaoyu chubanshe, 2004), p. 5, 7 and 45.

<sup>24</sup> Lena Henningsen, 'Crime, Love and Science: Continuity and Change in Hand-copied Entertainment Fiction (Shouchaoben) from the Cultural Revolution', in *Transforming Book Culture in China, 1600–2016*, eds. Daria Berg and Giorgio Strafella, Kodex 6 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2016), pp. 101–119.

<sup>25</sup> Barbara Mittler, *A Continuous Revolution: Making Sense of Cultural Revolution Culture*, Harvard East Asian Monographs (Harvard University Press, 2012), pp. 3–32.

<sup>26</sup> Huang Yanmin 黄延敏, 'Po si jiu Yundong de Fazhan Mailuo 破四旧运动的发展脉络', *21 Shiji Shuangyuekan* 21世纪双月刊 137 (2013), pp. 71–82.

communist men of letters was severely weakened through CCP propaganda, alienating the masses from the cultural comfort that a continuous value system might have offered. The compromises therefore in fact assisted in the establishment of communist privilege. The re-allocated historical woodblocks, books and antiques were controlled by the state and were kept away from the general masses by strict political censorship. If the majority of Chinese population once had a chance of learning Chinese elite culture, they were told to destroy art and written knowledge from the past, instead of appreciating and actually owning it.<sup>27</sup> After many class struggle campaigns, however, the ‘grassroots’ working class and peasants remained at the bottom of the new social and cultural hierarchy.

The post-Maoist re-evaluation of the Cultural Revolution and recovery of archaism proved the critical reception of propaganda, disclosing how severely cultural consistency had been interrupted. A strong wish to both obtain Western knowledge and persist with archaism was revived among educated Chinese people (mostly city dwellers) after Mao’s death. Prohibited for decades, the introduction of ‘new thoughts’ from abroad and the re-introduction of indigenous ideas led to a boom in publishing and reading new titles during the 1980s.<sup>28</sup> The persisting archaic practices of the Mao Era prepared for a resurgence of woodblock publishing nationwide. For example, China Bookstore systematically reprinted woodblock books with the historical blocks they had kept.<sup>29</sup> Guangling and Jinling also resumed their woodblock book publishing from the late 1970s.<sup>30</sup> The Cloudy Studio and the Flourishing Studio continued their water-soluble woodblock printing businesses without the restrictions of the Cultural Revolution. The biggest change was that all publications became open to the general public with much less political barriers. Those who had been labelled rightists since the 1950s were eventually excused

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Perry Link, *The Uses of Literature: Life in the Socialist Chinese Literary System* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000), pp. 6–7.

<sup>29</sup> Zhou, *Wo yu Zhongguo Shudian*, p. 28 and 85.

<sup>30</sup> Interview with Zhou Guangpei and interview with Wu Yankang.

from the stigma,<sup>31</sup> which meant they were again able to purchase the books and antiques they adored. Nonetheless, as it had been before 1949, woodblock books were no longer a mainstream vehicle for conveying knowledge to the masses. Xylography faced its old opponents: modernisation and industrialisation. Its printing quantity, although amounting to more than a few hundred, did not exceed 5,000. Common readers went for cheaper modern alternatives of the same titles, whilst the woodblock ones were mostly kept for bibliographical studies and thread-bound book lovers. The Cloudy Studio ultimately ceased printing woodblock books after Mao's death due to the lack of purchasers.<sup>32</sup> All the modern informants emphasised the importance of governmental funds for retaining woodblock publishing as a cultural heritage.

Most of the state-owned publishers of post-Mao Era woodblock artworks and books emphasised the continuity of 5,000 years' history in China, which was officially announced as having been interrupted by the Cultural Revolution, and the countless political campaigns of the Mao Era. These publishers more or less avoided mentioning the woodblock publishing activities of the Mao Era, especially through the ten years of the Cultural Revolution. No detailed information on *The Hundred Flowers* and *The Manifesto*, for instance, could be found on the official websites and introductions to the relevant publishers.<sup>33</sup> In 1981, the Cultural Revolution was officially announced as historical turmoil, and related politicians were arrested as criminals.<sup>34</sup> Associating with the radical force now became a new taboo, with potential political risks. Meanwhile, claims about private possessions that were confiscated by the state raised ownership disputes between the descents of book collectors and state-owned publishers. It was claimed by Liu Chenggan's spouse and son, for example,

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<sup>31</sup> Zhonggongzhongyang Dangshi Yanjiushi 中共中央党史研究室, ed., *Zhongguo Gongchandang Xinshiqi Lishi Dashiji: 1978.12–2008.3* 中国共产党新时期历史大事记: 1978.12–2008.3 (Beijing: Zhonggong dangshi chubanshe, 2009), pp. 16–17.

<sup>32</sup> Interview with Mao Ziliang.

<sup>33</sup> In the history of the Flourishing and Treasured Studio on its official website, *The Hundred Flowers* is not mentioned; see <http://www.Rongbaozhai.cn/index.php?m=content&c=index&a=show&catid=3&id=74> [Accessed on 28 June 2018]. This is the same for *The Manifesto*; see <http://58.246.91.142/dyxgl/index.php/archives/160/> [Accessed on 28 June 2018].

<sup>34</sup> Roderick MacFarquhar, ed., *The People's Republic; 2: Revolutions within the Chinese Revolution: 1966–1982*, vol. 15, *The Cambridge History of China*, eds. Denis Twitchett and John K. Fairbank (Cambridge; New York; Port Chester; Melbourne; Sydney: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 391.

that blocks from the acquisitions during the 1960s were forced donations.<sup>35</sup> The noises made by these ‘leftover problems’ from the Maoist period have been kept silent if they create disharmony in contemporary policies.

What truly recovered woodblock technology and later culture was, very similar to what Cynthia Brokaw discusses with regard to the Republican Period, wealthy collectors and governmental subsidiaries. Archaism regained its glory in private publishing at a dazzling speed once the political risks eased. When personal publishing was again allowed from the 1990s, woodblock publishers such as Guangling and the Flourishing Studio started to accept private commissions for producing private books, customised literati stationery and antique conservations.<sup>36</sup> Jinling carved and printed Buddhist texts were commissioned by believers, and Guangling printed woodblock imprints and books for collectors such as Wei Li 韦力.<sup>37</sup> A private edition of *Poems by Lady Yuxuanji of the Tang* (*Tangnülang yuxuanji shi*, 唐女郎鱼玄机诗), of which 200 copies were printed in red in 2014, were sold to celebrate the 10-year anniversary of the Bookstore of the Humbly Attired (*Buyi shuju*, 布衣书局), a renowned second-hand bookstore.<sup>38</sup>

The rise of antique auctions in the 1990s revived the book collecting tradition in China, making it a major category in sales. Historical rare editions and woodblock painting replicas have gradually become valuable.<sup>39</sup> The unsold stocks of woodblock books in the Cloudy Studio have become precious; *Collected Commentaries on the Verses of Chu* were sold for more than 100,000 Yuan in 2016.<sup>40</sup> Private libraries (*cangshulou*, 藏书楼), such as The Iris and

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<sup>35</sup> Ying and Li, ‘Dashiji’, pp. 9–43.

<sup>36</sup> Interview with Lei Zhenfang and interview with Wu Yankang.

<sup>37</sup> Interview with Liu Yongming 刘永明. See also: Jing Jing 晶晶, ‘Wei Li Cangshu 韦力藏书’, in *Jiade Tongxun* 嘉德通讯 2010, issue 3, p. 73.

<sup>38</sup> Sanshi Niandai 三十年代\*, ‘Buyi Xinshu Tangnülang Yuxuanji Shi 布衣新书《唐女郎鱼玄机诗》’, 23 April 2014, available at: <http://www.booyee.com.cn/bbs/thread.jsp?threadid=1163643&forumid=0> [Accessed on 28 June 2018]. \*Sanshi Niandai is the username of the owner of Bookstore of the Humbly Attired, Hu Bin 胡彬.

<sup>39</sup> Yi Yun 伊芸, ‘Tuo Xiaotang: Yibenshu Jiazhi 25 Tao Siheyuan! Zhongguo Zuigui de Shu Beihou You Zenyang de Gushi? 拓晓堂: 一本书价值 25 套四合院! 中国最贵的书背后有怎样的故事?’ *Meiri Toutiao* 每日头条, 12 April 2018, available at: <https://kknews.cc/culture/ymegnqn.html> [Accessed on 28 June 2018]. See also Tuo Xiaotang 拓晓堂, *Jiade Qinli: Guji Paimai Fengyunlu* 嘉德亲历: 古籍拍卖风云录 (Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe, 2018).

<sup>40</sup> Shanghai Boguzhai 上海博古斋, ‘Duoyun xuan Gongxuan Yin Xianliangben Chuci Jizhu Ba Juan Houyu Liu Juan 朵云轩贡宣印限量本《楚辞集注》八卷《后语》六卷’, *Shanghai Boguzhai 2016 Nian Chunji Yishupin*

Orchid Studio (*Zhilanzhai*, 芷兰斋) owned by Wei Li, follow the old literati style of buildings with a literary studio name.<sup>41</sup> A privately funded library, Confucius Library of Miscellaneous Books (*Kongfuzi zashuguan*, 孔夫子杂书馆), opened with pre-registration in 2015, sharing its more than 200,000 rare and second-hand books with the general public.<sup>42</sup>

For the government, woodblock heritage has become ideologically important again in the 21<sup>st</sup> century China, as the rapidly growing political and economic power seeks cultural references. Water-soluble woodblock printing is encouraged and subsidised as intangible heritage. The Flourishing Studio, the Cloudy Studio and Guangling have all obtained official recognition as models of this intangible heritage. To highlight the long history of the nation, public funds have been generously given to the recreation of artistic, literary and historical classics.<sup>43</sup> Although still mentioning Marxism and Maoism, the propaganda for the 21<sup>st</sup> century China is now “combining ‘red culture’, Chinese tradition and ‘advanced elements in the West’”.<sup>44</sup> The new situation has revived Chinese heritage to rebuild cultural confidence. The nation, now economically powerful, seeks to regain its glory in recreating tradition with a capital T.

Archaism is among the essentials for rejuvenating tradition. In 2017, *The Exploitation of the Works of Nature* (*Tiangong kaiwu*, 天工开物), the Ming encyclopaedia that contains the earliest record of the woodblock printing process, was re-created in handscroll format, printed with the water-soluble

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*Paimaihui* 上海博古斋 2016 年春季艺术品拍卖会, 3 July 2016, Lot 1572. Available at: <http://www.shbgz.com/AuctionBid/detail.aspx?auctionId=437080> [Accessed on 28 June 2018].

<sup>41</sup> Phoenix New Media, ‘Cangshujia Wei Li he Tade Zhilanzhai 藏书家韦力和他的芷兰斋’, Video Clip of Interview, 23 May 2017, available at: [http://v.ifeng.com/video\\_7323398.shtml](http://v.ifeng.com/video_7323398.shtml) [Accessed on 28 June 2018]. See also Wang Hongliang 王鸿谅, ‘Wei Li: “Buheshiyi” de Changshuren 韦力: “不合时宜”的藏书人’, *Sanlian Shenghuo Zhoukan* 三联生活周刊, issue 6, 5 February 2007, p. 72.

<sup>42</sup> Tian Tian 田甜, ‘Gao Xiaosong de “Shi he Yuanfang”’, Weici, Ta Yashang Ziji Qianbansheng Jilei de Renmai he Ziyuan 高晓松的“诗和远方”, 为此, 他押上自己前半生积累的人脉和资源’, *Zhongguo Qiyejia* 中国企业家, 22 May 2018, available at: <http://www.iceo.com.cn/com2013/2018/0522/303309.shtml> [Accessed on 28 June 2018]. See also ‘Zashuguan Duiwai Kaifang, Guanzhang Gao Xiaosong: Yishuhuiyou 杂书馆对外开放 馆长高晓松: 以书会友’, *Zashuguan* 杂书馆, 29 November 2015, available at: <http://www.zashuguan.cn/dongtai/55.html> [Accessed on 28 June 2018].

<sup>43</sup> Guojia Tushuguan Chubanshe 国家图书馆出版社, ‘Zhonghua Chuantong Wenhua Baibu Jingdian Ronghuo Dishisan Jie Wenjin Tushujiang 《中华传统文化百部经典》荣获第十三届天津图书奖’, *Xinwen Zhongxin* 新闻中心, 24 May 2018, available at: <http://www.nlcpres.com/NewsView.aspx?IId=262> [Accessed on 28 June 2018].

<sup>44</sup> Interview with Zhu Junbo.

woodblock printing technique.<sup>45</sup> Created by artists Chen Haiyan 陈海燕, Cao Xiaoyang 曹晓阳, Tong Biao 佟飏, Zhang Xiaofeng 张晓锋 and their students, the project was intended for an event entitled Five Thousand Years History: Art Creation Engineering Project on Chinese History and Civilisation, which was organised and funded by the state.<sup>46</sup> The project was based on the Ming book *The Exploitation of the Works of Nature*, whilst the printing technique referred to the descriptions in the book. The artwork was displayed in a woodblock workshop so the audience could practice the actual process of xylography. An original Ming edition of *The Exploitation of the Works of Nature* was also exhibited in comparison with the newly produced one.<sup>47</sup> Together with drafts of drawings of the artwork, the woodblocks and related documents, the exhibition presented an example of archaism in terms of contemplating and comparing the past and the present in one scenario. Very similar to *The Manifesto*, *The Hundred Flowers* and all the Mao Era woodblock publications, the 2017 edition of *The Exploitation of the Works of Nature* pursued archaistic perfection by referring to and repeating the glory that the book as an ancient classic established, yet at the same time it was produced with a governmental subsidy, and answered, or at least associated with, the CCP ideology. If following Maoism was what woodblock practitioners did, now they fulfil the “China dream”. The project focuses on, quoting one of the curators, “rediscovering technological and historical contributions of the Chinese nation, whilst representing and rethinking woodblock printing culture during that cause”.<sup>48</sup>

The governmental support and passionate woodblock practitioners indicate that archaism still persists in Chinese culture, although with communist stamps. Classic theories of woodblock technology consider xylography as pre-modern, declining after newer printing technologies were invented, and almost

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<sup>45</sup> Yi Nan 亦南, ‘Tiangong kaiwu, Dongfang jibai 天工开物 东方既白’, *Guangming Ribao* 光明日报, 2 July 2017.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

disappearing once mechanised printing became prevalent.<sup>49</sup> The resurgence of woodblock technology in the time of the internet therefore, is making us rethink the relation between political power, knowledge making, printing technology and readership. In a highly digitalised period, when printing as a whole is disappearing, and when printed books are no longer the only vehicle for disseminating knowledge and reading, it is reasonable to assume that the functionality of woodblock technology, both technologically and culturally, will also be fundamentally altered. Rediscovering discourses and practices of woodblock publication after 1949, therefore, is important for understanding the whole picture of Chinese book culture, and even human civilisation as a whole as a result of printing and reading practices, as physical books are transforming into virtuality. Reading, although never done just through printed books with text,<sup>50</sup> could now be associated more with varied media including sounds, visuality and tactility.

For understanding the contemporary and future development of woodblock printing and archaism as a whole, more research needs to be done on the history of woodblock book publishing during the PRC, which is still an almost undiscovered area of exploration. The situation of unofficial woodblock printing during the Maoist period remains unknown. According to Brokaw's research, it is possible that woodblock practices continued in Sichuan after 1949.<sup>51</sup> Since no legal woodblock publisher was established in rural areas, my research has excluded the broad rural China, where almost no official publications could be found. Few related documents and publications could be found in library collections, making field study a vast undertaking. The difficulties, however, also demonstrate the urgency of the research: the potential witnesses and materials are disappearing with time. Even in urban

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<sup>49</sup> Cynthia Brokaw and Peter Kornicki, 'Introduction', in *The History of the Book in East Asia*, eds. Cynthia Brokaw and Peter Kornicki (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), pp. xiii–xxxv.

<sup>50</sup> Francesca Orsini and Katherine Butler Schofield, *Tellings and Texts: Music, Literature and Performance in North India* (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2015).

<sup>51</sup> Cynthia Brokaw, 'Commercial Woodblock Publishing in the Qing (1644–1911) and the Transition to Modern Printing Technology', in *From Woodblocks to the Internet: Chinese Publishing and Printing Culture in Transition, circa 1800 to 2008*, eds. Cynthia Brokaw and Christopher A. Reed (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2010), p. 44.

areas, many unregistered woodblock book publishing practices were beyond the scope of this research, which could be a research subject for future studies.

Woodblock printing after Mao's death is another subject worth further speculation, especially after private publishing was again allowed. Several issues, in my opinion, are fundamental to understanding the mechanism of post-Mao xylography in China. The first is the transformation in the politics and functionality of woodblock publishing. The second is the changes of organisation and ownership in the xylography trade, as a gradually re-opened and commercialised book market emerged. The third is how archaism in book culture recovered in the world of antique collecting, where wealthy book collectors purchase and possess woodblock books, and thus possibly influence woodblock book culture.

Finally, it is important to understand the remarkable archaist currents created by vast *fugu* (archaistic, 复古) projects that are non-governmentally subsidised in contemporary China.<sup>52</sup> The continuity of archaism in the superstructure of the state may contribute to understanding current cultural policies that emphasise differences between China and 'the West'.<sup>53</sup> The non-governmental 'renaissance' of archaism, then, is crucial to understanding attempts to establish a new type of cultural 'distinction' that combined nationalism, elitism, archaism and capitalism. In my opinion, these together could offer an interpretation of what 'Socialism with Chinese Characteristics' (有中国特色的社会主义, *you zhongguo tese de Shehuizhuyi*) as an ideology has been propagating. Having experienced industrialisation, modernisation and globalisation, which mostly originated from the West, the persistence of archaism reminds the audience of the importance of Chineseness to a powerful future China state.

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<sup>52</sup> Zhang Nan 张楠, 'Minjian Wenhua Chuancheng Shifan Jidi Wenhua Xiangmu Tuijiehui Huobao: Nanjing Fugu Xinwanfa Cheng Qiangshouhuo 民间文化传承示范基地文化项目推介会火爆: 南京复古新玩法成抢手货', *Yangzi Wanbao* 扬子晚报, 30 September 2016, available at: [http://epaper.yzwb.net/html\\_t/2016-09/30/content\\_308813.htm?div=-1](http://epaper.yzwb.net/html_t/2016-09/30/content_308813.htm?div=-1) [Accessed on 28 June 2018].

<sup>53</sup> Sun Jiayan 孙家言, 'Zhongxifang Guojia de Genben Chayi Jueding Zhongguo Buneng Zou Xifang Daolu 中西方国家的根本差异决定中国不能走西方道路', *Hongqi Wengao* 红旗文稿, 25 January 2017, available at: <http://theory.people.com.cn/n1/2017/0124/c143843-29046612.html> [Accessed on 28 June 2018].

In 2014, *Book of Seal Impressions on Pig Rearing*, the once abandoned Great Leap Forward-themed book, was eventually published.<sup>54</sup> It is now considered, according to *Xinmin Evening News*, as “a peculiar case from a peculiar period”.<sup>55</sup> The book was published by referring to thread-bound book design, as the editor Liu Yiwen 刘一闻 emphasises in the epilogue, respecting historical aesthetics.<sup>56</sup> To modern eyes, this curious combination of ancient art and socialist agricultural propaganda is unique due to its peculiarity and artistic value.<sup>57</sup> Coincidentally or not, in 2016, the Flourishing Studio announced the re-publishing of the water-soluble woodblock printed edition of *The Hundred Flowers*, for similar reasons.<sup>58</sup> The once avoided topics of the past two decades are now reappearing in a nostalgia for the past, a past that mixes ancient seal engraving art from two millennia ago, woodblock book aesthetics established during the Great Song Dynasty, and radical communist passions and crimes. The many moments of the transient present will soon become the past for future archaists to represent and repeat in idealised and timeless glory. The beauty of books and the peculiarity of historical events will be repeatedly appreciated or laughed at, with the sorrow forgotten and the blood fading.

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<sup>54</sup> Fang Quji 方去疾, Wu Pu 吴朴, Shan Xiaotian 单孝天, *Yangzhu Yinpu* 养猪印谱, ed. Liu Yiwen 刘一闻 (Shanghai: Shanghai wenhua chubanshe, 2014).

<sup>55</sup> Yue Mengrong 乐梦融, ‘Shoubu yi Jiantizi Ruyin Qishu, Quanmian Fanying Dangshi Shehui Shenghuo: Yangzhu Yinpu, Chenfeng Banshiji Zhongjian Tianri 首部以简体字入印奇书 全面反映当时社会生活: 养猪印谱 尘封半世纪终见天日’, *Xinmin Wanbao* 新民晚报, 5 February 2015.

<sup>56</sup> Liu Yiwen 刘一闻, ‘Yangzhu Yinpu Jiyi 养猪印谱记忆’ in Fang Quji 方去疾, Wu Pu 吴朴, Shan Xiaotian 单孝天, *Yangzhu Yinpu* 养猪印谱, ed. Liu Yiwen 刘一闻 (Shanghai: Shanghai wenhua chubanshe, 2014), p. 246.

<sup>57</sup> *Xinmin Wanbao Gongzhonghao* 新民晚报公众号, ‘Yangzhu Xuanchuanhua Buxiqi, Ni Jianguo “Yangzhu Yinpu” Ma? 养猪宣传画不稀奇,你见过“养猪印谱”吗?’, *Weixin Yuedu* 微信悦读, 5 February 2015, available at: <http://news.weihd.net/detail.php?id=104218&ModPagespeed=noscript> [Accessed on 28 June 2018].

<sup>58</sup> Rongbao zhai Meishuguan 荣宝斋美术馆, ‘Rongbao zhai Cangpin Xiliezhan Baihua qifang Bufen, 荣宝斋藏品系列展《百花齐放》部分’, *Rongbao zhai Cangzhan* 荣宝斋藏展, 2 December 2016, available at: <http://www.Rongbaozhai.cn/index.php?m=content&c=index&a=show&catid=141&id=8> [Accessed on 28 June 2018].

## Appendix I

### *List of Interviewees (name in alphabetical order)*

Name		Date of Interview
Lei Zhenfang 雷振芳	An employee during the 1970s, and the general manager after 1980s, at the Flourishing and Treasured Studio	3 December 2015
Liu Yongming 刘永明	The general manager of Guangling Ancient Book Carving and Printing Studio after the 1970s	21 October 2015
Mao Ziliang 茅子良	The head of the woodblock book department during the 1970s	8 December 2015
Ma Jiannong 马建农	Chief editor and book historian at China Bookstore	2 December 2015
Sun Dongping 孙东平	One of the executors of the Big Character Book project in Shanghai during the 1970s	7 December 2015
Zheng Li 郑理	The author of <i>Rongbao zhai Sanbainian Jian</i> 荣宝斋三百年间 [The Three Hundred Years of the Flourishing and Treasured Studio]. The book was based on interviews with key figures in the Flourishing and Treasured Studio	2 December 2015
Zheng Mingchuan 郑名川	The head of the woodblock department in the Cloudy Studio	20 October 2015
Zhou Guangpei 周光培	The general manager of Guangling Ancient Book Carving and Printing Studio between the 1950s and the late 1960s	9 December 2015
Zhu Junbo 祝君波	One of the woodblock cutters of the woodblock books published by the Cloudy Studio	7 December 2015
Zhu Yongjia 朱永嘉	The Major of Shanghai during the Cultural Revolution, the conductor of the Big Character Book project	11 January 2018
Wu Yankang 武延康	Senior researcher at Jinling Scripture Carving House	20 October 2015

## Appendix II

### List of Archival Materials of *The Communist Manifesto* \*

Abbreviated as AMCM in footnotes.

- No. 1. Muke Banben shu Zuotanhui 木刻版本书座谈会 [The Rap Session of Woodblock Printed Books]. 12 February 1973. 1 page.
- No. 2. Memo of The Rap Session of Woodblock Printed Books. 12 February 1973. 3 pages.
- No. 3. Yiju 1971 Nian 12 Yue Shanghai Dijici Yinshua ben Zhipai Tichu Jige Wenti 依据 1971 年 12 月上海第 9 次印刷本直排提出几个问题 [Several Questions on Content Arrangement in Style of the Ninth Edition (of *The Communist Manifesto*) Published in Shanghai December 1971]. Leaflet, 2 pages.
- No. 4. Memo of Meeting on 14 February 1973. 2 pages.
- No. 5. Guanyu Keyin Gongchandang Xuanyan Huibao hui Jiyao: Zhu Yongjia Tongzhi de Zhishi, 关于刻印《共产党宣言》汇报会纪要: 朱永嘉同志的指示 [Memo of the Reporting Meeting on Woodblock Printing *The Communist Manifesto*: The Instructions from Comrade Zhu Yongjia]. 14 February 1973. 3 pages.
- No. 6. Printing Sample of the First Sentence in *The Communist Manifesto*. 5 pages.
- No. 7. Calligraphy Samples of Different Character Styles. 2 pages.
- No. 8. Photos of the Final Product of *The Communist Manifesto*. Cover page and 2 contents pages. 2 photos.
- No. 9. Huiyi Jiyao: Guanyu Jiaxuan Ci ji Gongchandang Xuanyan Ruogan Wenti de Taolun. 会议纪要: 关于稼轩词及共产党宣言若干问题的讨论 [Memo of Meeting on Several Questions of *Jiaxuan Lyrics Poetry* and *The Communist Manifesto*]. Date unspecified. 2 pages.
- No. 10. Shang Hua (73) Shu Zi di 46 hao Guanyu Muke Banben shu Gongchandang Xuanyan de Shike Qingkuang Qingshi Huibao 上画(73)书字第 46 号 关于木刻版本书《共产党宣言》的试刻情况请示汇报 [Shang Hua (73) Book No. 46, The Report on the Carving Trial of the Woodblock Printed *The Communist Manifesto*]. 19 April 1973. 2 pages.
- No. 11. Zhonggong Shanghai Shiwei, Shanghaishi Geweihui Bangongshi Chaogaodan: Guanyu Chouzu Muke Banben shu ji Youguan Wenti de Qingshi Baogao 中共上海市委, 上海市革委会办公室抄告单 关于筹组木刻版本书及有关问题的请示报告 [Copy of the (Reply) from Shanghai Municipal Chinese Communist Party Committee and Shanghai Revolution Committee Office: The Report on Organising Woodblock Book Project and Related Issues]. Copied on 9 March 1973. 1 page.
- No. 12. Yao Wen Yuan Pishi Zhu Yongjia de Qingshi (Chaojian) 姚文元批示朱永嘉的请示 (抄件) [Copy of Yao Wen Yuan's Instruction on Replying to Zhu Yongjia's Report]. Copied on 25 April 1973. 1 page.

- No. 13. Shanghai Shuhua she Gei Guo Moruo de Quxin 上海书画社给郭沫若的去信 [Letter to Guo Moruo from Shanghai Shuhua she]. 7 May 1973. 1 page.
- No. 14. Guo Moruo Ti Gongchandang Xuanyan Tiqian 郭沫若题共产党宣言题签 [Name Tags of *The Communist Manifesto* Handwritten by Guo Moruo in ink and brush]. Date unspecified. 3 pieces.
- No. 15. Shang Hua (73) Shu Zi di 53 hao: Guanyu Peixun Muke Banben shu Jiyi Renyuan de Qingshi Baogao 上画 (73) 书字第 53 号: 关于培训木刻版本书技艺人员的请示报告 [Shang Hua (73) Book No. 53: The Report on Training Woodblock Book Technicians]. 9 May 1973. 3 pages.
- No. 16. Shang Hua (73) Muban Zi 72 hao: Guanyu Peixun Mubanshu Jiebanren de Mingdan Baogao 上画 (73) 木版字 72 号 关于培训木板书接班人的名单报告 [Shang Hua (73) Woodblock No. 72: Report on the Name List of Trainees of Woodblock Successors]. 10 August 1973. 3 pages.
- No. 17. Notice on not using the name tag written by Guo Moruo. 11 August 1973. 1 page.
- No. 18. Report on Different Name Tags. 10 October (year not specified). 1 page.
- No. 19. Shouxie Gongchandang Xuanyan Paiji 手写共产党宣言牌记 [Handwritten Colophon of *The Communist Manifesto*]. 1 page.
- No. 20. Gongchandang Xuanyan Tiqian Jianfanti Xieyang yu Zhaopian 共产党宣言题签简繁体写样与照片 [Samples and Photos of Name Tags of *The Communist Manifesto* in Simplified and Classic Chinese]. 3 pages.
- No. 21. Names and Quantity of Paper Used for Contents Pages and the Cover Page. 1 page.
- No. 22. Guanyu Liuyong Changjiang Kezi chang Kegong de Baogao yiji Shouxiegao 关于留用长江刻字厂刻工的报告以及手写稿 [Report on Remaining Cutters from the Changjiang Letter Engraving Factory and Manuscript on the Same Content]. 6 November 1973. 3 pages.
- No. 23. Banben shu Gongchandang Xuanyan Chengben Hesuan 版本书《共产党宣言》成本核算 [Account of Cost of Woodblock Edition of *The Communist Manifesto*]. 18 December 1973. 1 page.
- No. 24. Banben shu Gongchandang Xuanyan Chengben Hesuan 版本书《共产党宣言》成本核算 [Account of Cost of Woodblock Edition of *The Communist Manifesto*]. 23 November 1973. 1 page.
- No. 25. Chuban Shuoming 出版说明 [Introductory Notes]. November 1973. 1 page.
- No. 26. Gongchandang Xuanyan Mubanshu Zengyang Danwei 《共产党宣言》木版书赠样单位 [List of Receivers of Sample Books of the Woodblock Edition of *The Communist Manifesto*]. 2 April 1974. 2 pages
- No. 27. Song Banben Yangshu Danwei Taolun (Shouxie) 送版本样书单位讨论(手写) [Manuscript of Discussion on Receivers of Sample Books]. Date unspecified. 1 page.
- No. 28. Zengyue Shuliang yu Danwei 赠阅数量与单位 [Quantity and Names of Receivers.]. Date unspecified. 2 pages.

\*The materials are currently kept in the woodblock department of the Cloudy Studio.

## Appendix III

### List of New Woodblock Books Published during the Mao Era\*

	Year	Title	Author	Publisher
1	1958	<i>Nineteen Poems by Chairman Mao</i> ( <i>Maozhuxi shici shijiu shou</i> , 毛主席诗词十九首)	Mao Zedong 毛泽东	Wenwu chubanshe
2	1959	<i>Twenty-one Poems by Chairman Mao</i> ( <i>Maozhuxi shici ershiyi shou</i> , 毛主席诗词二十一首)	Mao Zedong 毛泽东	Guangdong renmin chubanshe
3	1959	<i>Completed Illustrations of Figures in the Water Margin</i> ( <i>Shuihu renwu quantu</i> , 水浒人物全图)	Chen Hongshou 陈洪绶	Duoyun xuan
4	1958	<i>Registers of the New Heroes</i> ( <i>Xin yingxiong pu</i> 新英雄谱)	Gu Bingxin 顾炳鑫	Rongbao zhai
5	1961	<i>Let the Hundred Flowers Bloom</i> ( <i>Baihua qifang</i> , 百花齐放)	Gu Moruo 郭沫若	Rongbao zhai
6	1960	<i>Manuscripts of the History of the Xianfeng and Tongzhi Reign Discovered in Guangling</i> ( <i>Xiantong guangling shigao</i> , 咸同广陵史稿)		Guangling
7	1960	<i>A Brief Record of the Divine Defeat of the Japanese in the Jiajing Reign</i> ( <i>Jiajing pingwo qiyi jilue</i> , 嘉靖平倭祇役纪略)	Zhao Wenua 赵文华	Guangling
8	1960	<i>Gazetteers of the Yangzhou Barracks</i> ( <i>Yangzhou ying zhi</i> , 扬州营志)	Chen Shuzu 陈述祖 Zheng Yutang 郑余堂 Li Beishan 李北山	Guangling
9	1963	<i>Poems by Du Fu Expressing Intent</i> ( <i>Dushi yanzhi</i> , 杜诗言志)	Du Fu 杜甫	Guangling
10	1973	<i>The Communist Manifesto</i> ( <i>Gongchandang xuanyan</i> , 共产党宣言)	Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels	Shanghai shuhua she**
11	1974	<i>Chang-duan Lyrics Poetry of Jiaxuan</i> ( <i>Jiaxuan changduanju</i> , 稼轩长短句)	Xin Qiji 辛弃疾	Shanghai shuhua she
12	1977	<i>Thirty-nine Poems by Chairman Mao</i> ( <i>Maozhuxi shici sanshijiu shou</i> , 毛主席诗词三十九首) (The book was sent to Chairman Mao Memorial Hall as a gift in 1976. The publishing date on the colophon is 1977.)	Mao Zedong 毛泽东	Shanghai shuhua she
13	1979	<i>Collected Commentaries on the Verses of Chu</i> ( <i>Chuci jizhu</i> , 楚辞集注) (The book was planned as part of the 1973 woodblock project in the Cloudy Studio. The publishing date on the colophon is 1979.)	Qu Yuan 屈原	Shanghai shuhua she

\* Books published with pre-1949 historical woodblocks, and painting albums of water-soluble woodblock replicas are not included in this list.

\*\* Shanghai shuhua she was the name of the Cloudy Studio during the 1970s.

## Appendix IV

### List of Editions of *Let the Hundred Flowers Bloom*

Title	Year	Quantity of Illustrations	Price	Printing Quantity	Publisher
Baihua qifang 百花齐放	1958.7.	12 Woodcuts	0.32	50,000	Renmin ribao chubanshe
Baihua qifang Muke chatu ben 百花齐放木刻插图本	1959.4	101 Woodcuts	1.1	52,500 hardcover: 2,500	Renmin ribao chubanshe
Baihua qifang tuji 百花齐放图集	1959.4	101 Papercuts	25	650	Jiangsu wenyi chubanshe
	1959.11	Second print	10	651–1,650	
Baihua qifang 百花齐放	1959.8	101 Woodcuts	1.3	45,150 hardcover: 8,150	Shanghai wenyi chubanshe
Baihua qifang jianzhi ji 百花齐放剪纸集	1959.9	101 Papercuts	3	1,200	Yangzhou renmin chubanshe
	1959.12	Second print	3	2,500	
	1960.1	Second edition	2.1	2,200	
	1960.1	Special edition in hardwood box	-*	100	
Baihua qifang 百花齐放	1960	101 Water- coloured woodblock Gongbi painting replicas	200+**	10-volume, 300 copies	Rongbao zhai
	1961.1		200+**	2-volume, 300 copies	Rongbao zhai

\*There is no price tag on the 100 special copies with a hardwood box and mother-of-pearl inlaid pattern. Considering the printing quantity and materials, it is reasonable to assume that the selling price was much higher, or it was printed as special gifts.

\*\*Estimation based on the price of one piece of water-coloured painting replica at the same size of the illustrations in *The Hundred Flowers*, time the 202 pages of flower illustrations and calligraphy work.

## Glossary

- The Iris and Orchid Studio  
Album of Flowers, Birds, Grass and Insects by  
Chen Laolian  
Album of Letter Papers  
Album of the Hundred Flowers Poems and Letter Papers  
The Arabian Nights  
Artisan style  
Baimian Paper  
Bamboo Paper  
Beiping Album of Letter Papers  
Big Character Book  
Black Style  
Book of Ancient Seals  
Book of Ancient Seals of the Gu Family  
Book Collecting Seal  
Book of Han  
Book of New Seal Impressions  
Book of Seal Impressions of Cuban Revolutionary  
Proverbs  
Book of Seal Impressions of Lu Xun's Pennames  
Book of Seal Impressions on Pig Rearing  
Bookstore of the Humbly Attired  
Brief Essays on Bamboo Carving  
A Brief History of Chinese Philosophy  
Chang-duan Lyrics Poetry of Jiaxuan  
Chairman Mao goes to Anyuan  
The Cloudy Studio  
Collected Paintings of Qi Baishi  
Collected Printings of Liyun Study  
Collection of Rare Texts  
Colophon  
The Complete Library in Four Sections  
The Complete Works of Lu Xun  
Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government  
Confucius Library of Miscellaneous Books  
Congbi Catalogue of Calligraphy and Paintings  
Congbi Lyrics Poetry  
Court Ladies Wearing Flowered Headdresses  
The Cultural Relics Publishing House  
*zhilan zhai* 芷兰斋  
*Chen Laolian huaniao caochong ce*  
陈老莲花鸟草虫册  
*jianpu* 笺谱  
*baihuashi jianpu* 百花诗笺谱  
*yiqian ling yiye* 一千零一夜  
*jiangti* 匠体  
*baimian zhi* 白棉纸  
*zhuzhi* 竹纸  
*beiping jianpu* 北平笺谱  
*daziben* 大字本  
*heiti* 黑体  
*jigu yinpu* 集古印谱  
*gushi jigu yinpu* 顾氏集古印谱  
*cangshu zhang* 藏书章  
*hanshu* 汉书  
*xinyinpu* 新印谱  
*guba geming yanyu yinpu* 古巴革命谚语印谱  
  
*Lu Xun biming yinpu* 鲁迅笔名印谱  
*yangzhu yinpu* 养猪印谱  
*buyi shuju* 布衣书局  
*kezhu xiaoyan* 刻竹小言  
*jianming zhongguo zhexueshi* 简明中国哲学史  
*jiaxuan changduanju* 稼轩长短句  
*maozhuxi qu anyuan* 毛主席去安源  
*Duoyun xuan* 朵云轩  
*Qi Baishi huaji* 齐白石画集  
*liyun shuwu congke* 励耘书屋丛刻  
*mi ce hui han* 秘册汇函  
*paiji* 牌记  
*siku quanshu* 四库全书  
*Lu Xun quanji* 鲁迅全集  
*zizhi tongjian* 资治通鉴  
*kongfuzi zashuguan* 孔夫子杂书馆  
*congbi shuhua lu* 丛碧书画录  
*congbi ci* 丛碧词  
*zanhua shinü tu* 簪花仕女图  
*wenwu chubanshe* 文物出版社

- Cultural Relic References  
 Elementary Particles: A Short History of Some Discoveries in Atomic Physics  
 Eloquent Traces of Song Lyrics Poetry  
 Evening Talks at Yanshan  
 An Examination of the Text in the Commentary and Annotations on Mencius  
 The Exploitation of the Works of Nature  
 Fayuan Temple  
 Fine Edition  
 Fish Tail  
 The Flourishing and Treasured Studio  
 Fording in Autumn  
 Four Great Inventions  
 The Fragrance Radiating Chamber  
 The Golden Cangue  
 Guangling Ancient Book Carving and Printing Studio  
 Impressionistic Style of Yaoweng  
 Ink Mill  
 Joint State-Private Ownership  
 Lady Guoguo on a Spring Outing  
 Let the Hundred Flowers Bloom, and Let the Hundred Schools Contend policy  
 Letter paper  
 Letter on Recovering from Illness  
 The Studio of Literary Beauty  
 The Hall of Literary Excellence  
 The Studio of Literary Model  
 Literati Elegant Gathering  
 Long Song Style  
 Lotus in Ink  
 Luowen Paper  
 Jiaye Hall  
 Jinling Scripture Carving House  
 Manual of Calligraphy and Paintings  
 Album of Flowers  
 Manual of Paintings  
 Mount Flowers at Yandang  
 The Mao Family's House of Imbibing from the Ancients  
 New Mu Style  
 New Year Woodcut  
 Newly Carved Painting and Poem Anthology of Herbs and Flowers  
 On the Origin of Species  
 The Peony Pavilion: The Interrupted Dream in the Garden  
 Pine-soot Ink  
 Poems by Du Fu Expressing Intent
- wenwu cankao ziliao* 文物参考资料  
*jiben lizi faxian jianshi* 基本粒子发现简史
- ningsong cihen* 佞宋词痕  
*yanshan yehua* 燕山夜话  
*mengzi zhushu jiejing* 孟子注疏解经
- tiangong kaiwu* 天工开物  
*fayuan si* 法源寺  
*shanben* 善本  
*yuwei* 鱼尾  
*Rongbao zhai* 荣宝斋  
*qiu she tu* 秋涉图  
*sida faming* 四大发明  
*laixun ge* 来薰阁  
*jinsuoji* 金锁记  
*guangling guji keyin she* 广陵古籍刻印社  
*yaoweng xieyi* 药翁写意  
*yanmo ji* 研墨机  
*gong si he ying* 公私合营  
*guoguo furen youchun tu* 虢国夫人游春图  
*Baihua qifang, baijia zhengming*  
 百花齐放, 百家争鸣  
*jianzhi* 笺纸  
*pingfu tie* 平复帖  
*wenmei zhai* 文美斋  
*wenkui tang* 文奎堂  
*wenkai zhai* 文楷斋  
*wenren yaji* 文人雅集  
*changsongti* 长宋体  
*mo he tu* 墨荷图  
*luowen zhi* 罗纹纸  
*jiaye tang* 嘉业堂  
*Jinling kejingchu* 金陵刻经处  
*shuhuapu* 书画谱  
*huapu* 花谱  
*huapu* 画谱  
*yandang shanhua* 雁荡山花  
*maoshi jigu ge* 毛氏汲古阁  
*xin muti* 新牟体  
*nianhua* 年画  
*xinjuan caobenhua shipu* 新镌草本花诗谱
- wuzhong qi yuan* 物种起源  
*youyuan jingmeng* 游园惊梦  
*songyan mo* 松烟墨  
*dushi yanzhi* 杜诗言志

Poems by Lady Yuxuanji of the Tang	<i>tangnulang yuxuanji shi</i> 唐女郎鱼玄机诗
Phoenix Pin	<i>chai tou feng</i> 钗头凤
Private libraries	<i>cangshulou</i> 藏书楼
The Studio of Profundity and Elegance	<i>suiya zhai</i> 邃雅斋
Proscribed Books in all Categories	<i>siku jinshu</i> 四库禁书
The Prosperous and Exalting Bookstore	<i>fujin shushe</i> 富晋书社
Rare book Store	<i>guji shudian</i> 古籍书店
Records of the Grand Historian	<i>shiji</i> 史记, or <i>taishigong shu</i> 太史公书
Registers of the New Heroes	<i>xin yingxiong pu</i> 新英雄谱
Remain Long Green as Pine and Cypress	<i>songbai changqing</i> 松柏常青
Selected Trifles from Dunhuang	<i>dunhuang duosuo</i> 敦煌掇琐
Selected Woodcuts of China	<i>zhongguo banhua xuan</i> 中国版画选
Self-strengthening Movement	<i>yangwu yundong</i> 洋务运动
Song Edition	<i>songban</i> 宋版
The Song Style	<i>songti</i> 宋体
The Twenty-four Histories	<i>ershisi shi</i> 二十四史
Spring Outing Society Brief Essays	<i>chunyou suotan</i> 春游琐谈
A Study of Grass and Insects	<i>gongxi caochong tu</i> 工细草虫图
Sutra of the One Hundred Parables	<i>bai yu jing</i> 百喻经
Ten Bamboo Studio Album of Letter Papers	<i>shizhuzhai jianpu</i> 十竹斋笺谱
Thirty-seven Poems by Chairman Mao	<i>maozhuxi shici sanshiqi shou</i> 毛主席诗词三十七首
Thread-bound Book	<i>xianzhuangshu</i> 线装书
Use the Past to Serve the Present	<i>Gu wei jin yong</i> 古为今用
Water-Soluble Woodblock Printing	<i>Muban shuiyin</i> 木版水印
Wei Tablet Style	<i>weibei ti</i> 魏碑体
Woodblock Printing	<i>diaoban yinshua</i> 雕版印刷
Woodcut	<i>banhua</i> 版画
Xiling Seal Society	<i>xiling yinshe</i> 西泠印社
Xuan-paper	<i>xuanzhi</i> 宣纸
Yukou-paper	<i>yukou zhi</i> 玉扣纸

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