

"FRIENDS AND FOES ON THE BATTLEFIELD":  
A STUDY OF CHINESE AND U.S. YOUTH LITERATURE  
ABOUT THE SINO-JAPANESE WAR (1937-1945)

BY

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DISSERTATION

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## **Abstract**

In order to understand how postwar generations' understanding of the history of World War II has been shaped by the information sources made available to them, this dissertation examines the representation of the Sino-Japanese War (1937-45)—fought between Imperial Japan and China, with U.S. as the latter's major military ally—in youth literature published in mainland China and the United States from 1937 through 2007.

The study is based on a sociopolitical analysis of the historical context in which Chinese and American youth literature about ethnic Chinese experiences during the Second World War was produced; a content analysis of 360 titles of illustrated popular reading materials in Chinese; and a literary and visual analysis of important works of youth literature in both countries. Those who obtained the opportunity to “tell” the war history, which part of it they told, and how they told it were all highly politicized. In China, the subject matter and main themes of war stories served the shifting agendas and needs that might or might not be shared among different political and interest groups, from the war years, through the establishment of the Communist regime in 1949, to the post-Mao era after 1976. Further comparison between public literary sources about the war and Chinese private memories of it suggest a chasm between the ruling Party's master narrative and the way individuals remember their own experiences during the years of 1937-45. In the United States, the narrative space for ethnic Chinese wartime experiences expanded or contracted in a racialized society that perpetuated Asian Americans' alien identity. The result was a dearth of information that could help ethnic Chinese youth to understand their ancestors' role during the war and, in the larger American society, amnesia about a military conflict with ongoing political, economic, and social ramifications.

To victims of Japan's biological warfare  
at Yunhe County, Zhejiang Province, China,  
and to the memory of my grandmother,  
XU Lannü (徐兰女, 1925-1997)

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July 7, 2011  
(The seventy-fourth anniversary of the Marco Polo Bridge Incident  
and the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War [1937-45])

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# Chapter 1. Introduction

## Prelude: “Plague-pits is good eatin’ ”

In his Web blog entry dated October 7, 2010, Neil Gaiman, author of the Newbery-winning title *The Graveyard Book* (2008), quoted a passage from a Chinese reader’s message to him:

[O]ne sentence in *Graveyard Book* said “mass graves is a good place for munching a meal”. [I]t is insulting to Chinese!

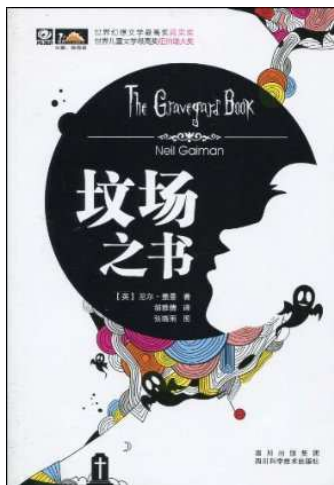
I know you are just for fun, but I cannot bear it! (as cited in Gaiman, 2010)

Gaiman quoted further communications between him and the reader, and showed the process of how both reached the revelation that the source of “insult,” or offense, came not from Gaiman’s original English text, but from a word choice in the Chinese translation of his book, published as *Fen Chang Zhi Shu* [坟场之书] in China in 2010. The last quote, written seemingly in a beginner’s English, from that reader says,

By now I know it is translator's fault, not of yours....

"Plague pits is good eating" in Chinese that I translate means “鼠疫坑很好吃” is not insulting. [A]nd the translation in the book that the translator wrote “万人坑很好吃” is insulting (as cited in Gaiman, 2010)

**Figure 1.1: Cover Image of the Chinese Translation of *The Graveyard Book***



*Fen Chang Zhi Shu* [坟场之书]

Chengdu: Sichuan Ke Xue Ji Shu Chu Ban She, 2010

Most Westerners will require some explanation of Chinese language, history, and culture to fully understand what caused this peacefully resolved conflict. From Gaiman’s book, the word “plague-pits” in “ ‘Plague-pits is good eatin’,’ said the Emperor of China” (2008, p. 84) is translated into “wan ren keng [万人坑]”, literally meaning “ten-thousand people’s pit.”<sup>1</sup> The lure and danger of adopting this translation are both strong. “Ten-thousand people’s pit” is a colloquial term in Chinese and semantically a good match for “Plague-pits.” The term has been found in an ancient text “Jiashen Zaji” [甲申雜記], written by WANG Gong in the Song Dynasty (A.D. 960-1127), to refer to massive graves for people who die in a famine, thus “ten-thousand people’s pit” makes a more colloquial choice than “shu yi keng” [鼠疫坑, or plague-pit], a made-up word combination in Chinese.

However, 900 years after Wang’s time, “ten-thousand people’s pit” is no longer a neutral noun, but in certain contexts can be a politically and emotionally charged term, thanks to the history of Japanese colonization and military aggression during the first half of the 20th century in China. Though not its only usage in contemporary China, the term is frequently used to refer to the massive pits, discovered in various parts of China, prepared by the Japanese colonizers and army for Chinese forced labor (coal miners, in particular) and victims of massacres, including those who were buried alive. Any ghoulish humor in “ten-thousand people’s pits is good eatin’ ” can be lost to a Chinese audience. In the case of the anonymous Chinese reader who took the trouble to send an electronic message to Neil Gaiman and exchange information and opinions with him back and forth, he or she was greatly offended—imagine how a Western audience would feel about a ghostly joke like “Auschwitz is perfect for partying.”

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise specified, all translations from Chinese to English are mine.

Neil Gaiman's "plague-pits" snippet, a common footnote to cultural barriers to humor, is one of the numerous expressions and incidents, appearing in and outside media, that suggest how physical wounds and psychological trauma resulting from the Sino-Japanese military conflicts remain raw and sensitive in contemporary Chinese conscience. In modern Chinese history, these conflicts were bracketed by two major wars occurring half a century apart. The 51 years, 1 month, and 1 day from August 1, 1894, when the first Sino-Japanese War (1894-95) between Meiji Japan and the Qing Dynasty China was declared, to September 2, 1945, when Imperial Japan surrendered in the second Sino-Japanese War (1937-45), witnessed a Chinese history that was punctuated by Japan's economic exploitation, military aggression, territorial appropriation, cultural colonization, and inhumane treatment of Chinese soldiers and civilians.

Gaiman's "plague-pits" story is a mild event, involving respectful exchanges of words and reaching mutual understanding in the end. Other incidents regarding China-Japan history that caught media attention were not so peaceful. At the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in April 2006, a "Visualizing Cultures" course that used propaganda images (produced by Japan during the first Sino-Japanese War) as teaching materials triggered angry protests by Chinese students, citing a lack of "cultural sensitivity" as one of the reasons, and escalated into an anti-Japan outbreak that spread far beyond the MIT community (See details of the incident in Zhang and Han, 2006; Dower and Miyagawa, 2006; Perdue, 2006; Hockfield, 2006). Another recent example demonstrates a deeply held distrust between China and Japan. In September 2010, when a giant panda, loaned by China to Oji Zoo in Kobe, western Japan, died in surgery—during a tense diplomatic row over the disputed island of Senkaku/Diaoyu (in Japanese and Chinese respectively) as well as many anti-Japan rallies in Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen, and Hong

Kong—the Chinese government sent a forensic team to investigate the panda’s death (“Experts investigate,” 2010).

Each of these incidents gives us a sketchy view of the cultural legacy of the Sino-Japanese conflict in contemporary China, the way that history is remembered, and possible issues in that memory. The Gaiman and MIT event also suggest a different memory of that history in the United States, China’s major ally during the (second) Sino-Japanese War (1937-45).<sup>1</sup> Eye-catching news coverage, however, does not offer a full understanding of these questions. Such an understanding becomes all the more significant as the increasing migration of populations and ease of communication in the Internet era can facilitate swift exposure of deeply ingrained misunderstandings and biases previously confined within the boundaries of the nation state, create more opportunities for clashes of disputing voices across the physical world and cyberspace, and require a re-examination of the standard of “cultural sensitivity.” Not all of the conflicts close in a respectful tone and mutual understanding.

In order to contribute to a better understanding of such public expressions and incidents, particularly the sources of information that both construct and partially manifest public memory of the Sino-Japanese conflict, this dissertation studies the representation of the Sino-Japanese War—the climax of 51 years’ antagonistic status between China and Japan—in information sources produced for young people of two countries: China and the United States.

### **The Sino-Japanese War (1937-45)**

Considered by historian Van Slyke as “the true beginning of the Second World War” (2001), the Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945) was fought against Japan by three allied forces—the

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<sup>1</sup> Thereafter referred to as the Sino-Japanese War.

Chinese Nationalist army led by CHIANG Kai-shek<sup>1</sup>, guerrillas and the Eighth Route Army commanded by the Chinese Communist Party, and military aid provided by the United States<sup>2</sup>. Following the Pearl Harbor attack in December 1941, the Sino-Japanese War was merged into the Pacific War of World War II. Within two months or so, Japan swiftly invaded Malaya, Thailand, the Philippines, Burma, Hong Kong, and Singapore. By the time World War II was ended by the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, in 1945, the immense theatre of the Pacific War had stretched from the Aleutian Islands in north Pacific to tropical Fiji and New Caledonia, from Java in the Netherlands East Indies to Hawaii and Midway in the central Pacific (summarized from Van Slyke, 2001b; Palmowski, 2003; and Spector, 2001). I have limited the subject of my study to the eight-year Sino-Japanese War, but as mentioned earlier, Japan's aggression on China was not confined to World War II. The first Sino-Japanese War (1894-95) saw the Lüshun Massacre (or the "Port Arthur" Massacre) in November, 1894, of defenseless civilians after the port city in today's Liaoning Province fell<sup>3</sup>, and the colonization of Taiwan by Japan for half a century until World War II ended. The outbreak of the second Sino-Japanese War in 1937 was an unsurprising follow-up of Japan's occupation of northeast China since 1931, which saw the Pingdingshan Massacre in September, 1932, of 3,000 village residents

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<sup>1</sup> In China, family names appear before the given name. When I mention Chinese names—except for those who have Westernized their names—I will follow the Chinese sequence but, in order to reduce confusion, will capitalize the family name.

<sup>2</sup> In 1941, volunteer pilots and maintenance staff were recruited from the US Army and Navy and sent to China to form the American Volunteer Group. Known as the "Flying Tigers," the AVG fought the Japanese in China and in the Burma campaign. The USA also assisted China with pilot training and planes to rebuild a Chinese air force. Both the AVG and the China Air Task Force were commanded by General Claire L. Chennault, a US Army officer, from 1941 to July 1945 (Van Slyke, 2001b; "Chennault, Maj-General Claire L.," 2001).

<sup>3</sup> One source provided an estimated death toll of 200,000 (See Sun, 1994).

including women and children (Young, 2005, p. 338) and which sent hundreds of thousands of Manchurian residents who lost their home to Japanese colonizers wandering throughout China.

### **Impact on Mainland Chinese**

British historian M.R.D. Foot stated that “[World War II] ranks, with population pressure and climate change, among the principal factors that shape our everyday lives” (2005, p. v). For Chinese people, the far-reaching impact of the Sino-Japanese War is beyond measure. The impact is still felt today, more keenly by some people than by others. The impact will continue into the future, and researchers as well as the public are concerned about how the legacy of this war may influence life and East Asia tomorrow.

In terms of casualties, China lost soldiers and civilians in the millions through battles, air raids, and mass atrocities. The death toll has posed a hard question for historians. Different sources have provided widely varied figures, and “recent recalculation of war-related deaths throughout China” has revealed a heavier toll (Millett, 2005). An early figure of total casualties provided by Lloyd Eastman in 1984 was 3,211,419 (as cited in Van Slyke, 2001). Compiling from multiple sources dated from 1969 to 1993, *Encyclopedia of World War II* suggested 4.2 million (Osborne, 2005, p. 301, calculated from Table 1) as the total number of battle deaths, wounded, missing in action, and civilian dead in China during WWII. As an example from the other end of the gamut, Palmowski (2003) ranks China second, after the USSR, in death toll among participating countries, stating that 6.4 million soldiers and around six million civilians were killed in China.

War crimes committed by the Japanese army in China and other Asian countries—currently the best-publicized of these crimes are the Nanjing Massacre, “comfort women” (sexual enslavement of Asian women from Korea, mainland China, Taiwan, the Philippines, Indonesia

and other areas), and Japanese biological warfare<sup>1</sup> (1932-1945)—not only wiped out a large number of POWs and civilians, but also left many survivors dealing with physical pain, disability, emotional trauma, poverty, and social discrimination for the rest of their lives. (See Chang, 1997 and Yang, 1999 for the history of and debates on the Nanjing Massacre; see Yoshimi, 2000 and Chen, 2005b for the history of Asian "comfort women" during World War II, their postwar experiences, and the present condition of 26 Chinese survivors; see Harris, 2002 and Chen, 2005a for the history of biological warfare in China and the postwar experiences of some of its survivors.)

The Nanjing Massacre of 1937-38, the most notorious mass slaughter of Chinese by the Japanese army, appalled the world not only by its death toll of hundreds of thousands of civilians and POWs, but also by its apparent involvement of unnecessary, "joyful or at least indifferent murder" (Maier, 2000, p. viii). When Chinese American journalist Iris Chang visited the city in 1995 to collect oral testimonies of the war crime, she found most of the survivors living in crushing poverty, never having received any financial compensation from Japan (Chang, 1997, p. 182-183).

Of all Asian countries, former "comfort women" from South Korea have received more scholarly attention than others. Statistical data, testimonial narratives, and ethnographic analysis showed an abnormally high rate of celibacy among Korean survivors, which was attributed to the weighty shamefulness in a culture that privileges premarital sexual purity, and a high rate of sterility, which was associated with sexually transmitted diseases and forced abortions (Soh, 2006). Studies of "comfort women" from China exist mainly in Chinese, and English-language

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<sup>1</sup> "Biological warfare" and "germ warfare" are found to have been used interchangeably. "Biological warfare" appears mostly in scholarly works, and "germ warfare" tends to appear in news articles.



publications with a focus on this topic are hard to locate. Su's investigation of Chinese "comfort women" since 1993 found half of those who got married remained childless. He estimated that sex slaves for Japanese troops totaled no less than 400,000—twice as much as the figure most frequently quoted in English media, and half of them were Chinese women (Su, 2000).

As of 2002, historical researchers in China had estimated that Japanese biological warfare killed approximately 580,000 people, a preliminary accounting that may continue to grow as investigations of the crime deepen (Barenblatt, 2004, p. xii-xiii). One of the sad consequences of biological warfare is the way it has haunted areas of China occupied or attacked by Japan during wartime. In Ningbo, Zhejiang province, where the diseases of bubonic plague, cholera, and typhus were first purposely unleashed in the summer and fall of 1940, outbreaks of the plague occurred as late as 1959, and casualties were high during each eruption (Harris, 2002, pp. 101-103). In August 2003, which was more than six years after China and Japan had started discussing the issue of cleaning up the remains of chemical and biological warfare arsenals left behind in China, mustard-gas bombs abandoned by the Japanese army were unearthed in a construction site in Qiqihar, Heilongjiang Province of China, and claimed one more life and injured 43 residents (Lam, 2003; Tyler, 1997).

In terms of political consequence of the Sino-Japanese War, World War II saw a growing friendship between American and Chinese people. U.S. aid was sent to China, secretly at first, to help with fighting Japan even before the U.S. was plunged into the world war by the Pearl Harbor attack. (Whether the friendship survived the postwar years is a separate topic that my study will examine.) The Chinese Communist Party expanded its membership and power during the war years (cited in Van Slyke, 2001), defeated Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist Party in the

subsequent civil war (1946-1949), and became the ruling party of the current Chinese government.

### **Impact on Chinese Immigrants to U.S.**

The Sino-Japanese War was significant to Chinese immigrants residing in the U.S. at the time. It brought changes to race relations in the U.S. and “opened the door to expectations of further improvements in the status of the Chinese in America” (Lai, 1997). Before World War II, Chinese immigrants in America had been subjected to not only violent racist attacks but also a series of punitive laws and regulations. The Naturalization Act passed in 1870 limited American citizenship to “White persons and persons of African descent,” barring Asians from U.S. citizenship. The infamous Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 suspended immigration of Chinese laborers, making Chinese people the target of “the first legislative act to single out a race of people as undesirable immigrants” (Krenn, 2006, p. 55).

The social exclusion and racial discrimination they suffered in the U.S. partly explained why Chinese sojourners never “felt at home in America” (Yu, 2001, p. 134) but strongly identified with their ancestral land—China—now under foreign aggression. In Lai’s (1997) fascinating account of the many ways in which the Chinese community in the United States supported China’s resistance to Japanese aggression, we learn that ethnic Chinese in the U.S. protested the Japanese aggression in China, raised substantial funds for the war and relief effort, and served in World War II.

Indeed, from this “bachelors’ society” a much higher proportion of eligible men were inducted than from the general American population.<sup>1</sup> Many Chinese Americans, like the Portland-born fighter pilot Arthur Tin Chin, would serve in the Pacific and China-Burma-India theaters fighting against the Japanese. Meanwhile, as Song (2002) argued in his study of the New York Chinese community, Chinese immigrants also took the opportunity to pursue their dual identity as Chinese Americans during the war years.

In order to combat Japanese war propaganda and accusations of U.S. prejudice against Asians, it became necessary for the American government, after being plunged into the Pacific War, to repeal the Chinese Exclusion laws. The effort of the Chinese community in the repeal movement not only helped bring an end to the discriminatory legislation and hence made Chinese aliens eligible for naturalization, but the process itself was also meaningful in that it comprised Chinese participation in American politics and mainstream activities.

Following the repeal in 1943, and essentially after the landmark 1965 Immigration Act, the previously stagnant flow of immigrants from China moved again. The new influx of Chinese immigrants would be people who had lived through the Sino-Japanese War or children and grandchildren of those who had been part of the turmoil.

### **Postwar Legacies**

The legacy of the Pacific War has repeatedly disturbed international relationships between Japan and other Asian countries, and occasionally escalates into crises. Unlike Germany, which,

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<sup>1</sup> According to Peffer’s (1999) study, the Page Law, a federal statute enacted in 1875, made it difficult for Chinese women to enter the United States, to the satisfaction of American capitalists who could continue keeping Chinese males as the cheapest laborers by saving the payment for family support. The gender imbalance in Chinese communities was maintained until the middle of the 20th century.

since the Luxemburg Treaty of 1952, has been paying reparation money both to Israel and to Jewish organizations (Gilbert, 2001), the Japanese government has paid close to nothing to victims of Japanese war atrocities. For years longer than the duration of the Sino-Japanese War, elderly ex-“comfort women” in South Korea, Taiwan, Mainland China, and other countries, Chinese biological warfare victims who were still suffering from incurable diseases such as anthrax infection—caught through bacteria spread by the Japanese army during World War II—and civilian survivors of various massacres, have sued the Japanese government for official apology and compensation, mostly to no avail (See, for example, Nan, 2005, p. 103-112; Japanese High Court rulings reported by CNN.com in “Japan court rules against ‘comfort women,’ ” 2001, and by BBC News in “Japan court rejects germ warfare case,” 2002). Victims were outraged by these rejections. To the broader Chinese and Asian public, the refusal to make public apology and to pay reparation money was hardly a convincing message that the Japanese government had “fully shown remorse for its wartime brutality” (“Japan court rejects germ war compensation,” 2005).

Some other gestures made by the Japanese government, widely publicized across Asian media, reinforced this impression. During the past decade or two, thanks to the accelerated global flow of information, East Asian countries were increasingly alerted to the Japanese Ministry of Education’s censorship of school textbooks concerning Imperial Japan’s wartime responsibilities and atrocities (Morris-Suzuki & Rimmer, 2002). The most controversial of the textbooks, written by a group of nationalist and revisionist historians called the Japan Society for History Textbook Reform, caused South Korea to recall its ambassador for nine days in 2001 in protest (“Japan history texts,” 2005). After Japan approved a set of new school history text books in spring 2005, the same year when Japan planned to obtain a permanent membership of the

United Nations Security Council, China saw its biggest anti-Japan protests, accompanied with violent actions, since the two countries had re-established relations in 1972. More than 30 million people were reported as having signed an online petition to keep Japan off the permanent seat. In the midst of the chaos, the Chinese government declared that Japan did not have the moral qualifications to become a permanent member, thus effectively thwarting Japan's efforts to attain that status (“Japan history texts,” 2005; Kahn, 2005). News of Japanese Prime Ministers’ visits to the Yasukuni Shrine in downtown Tokyo, which honors Japan’s 2.5 million war dead, including convicted Class A war criminals, was no longer merely national headlines but an issue of international impact. The former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi visited the shrine annually during the time he was in office (2001-06). Singapore, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Australia all condemned his visits, and each time the damage to Japan’s relations with China and South Korea worsened. The day after Koizumi's fifth visit, in a special year of 2005 that marked the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II, China cancelled a planned visit by Japanese Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura, which had been scheduled for the same week. By Koizumi's last year in office, China and South Korea refused to talk with him (“China cancels,” 2005; Onishi, 2006). In March 2007, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe denied the military’s role in coercing Asian women into serving as sex slaves for the Japanese army during World War II and said that Japan would not apologize for that, which comment stirred fresh anger and drew official protests from Mainland China, Taiwan, South Korea and the Philippines (Onishi, 2007).

In terms of influence on cultural life, the Second World War was, in Van Slyke’s words, “a defining experience for hundreds of millions of Chinese” (2001). Writers and artists were profoundly influenced by their wartime experiences. Those who barely survived under the extreme material shortage, poverty, censorship, and danger, heroically produced a surprisingly

large volume of writing, drama, and graphic material, mostly for popular consumption (Van Slyke, 2001). A significant amount of these materials related to the war itself. Driven by a mixed feeling of shame, anger, sadness, and apprehension, Chinese writers and artists had, since the Japanese occupation of northeast China, produced works on war themes that resonated deeply with the populace. In 1935, two years before total war broke out, TIAN Han, a poet and playwright, and NIE Er, a composer, wrote “March of the Volunteers” as the theme song of a patriotic film about resisting Japan’s colonization of northeast China. A popular song during the Sino-Japanese War, it was chosen as the national anthem of the People’s Republic of China (1949- ). Admittedly, the informational value of the lyric of the song is limited. Until informed of the context of this musical march, young people may not be able to guess what the lyrics mean by “the Chinese nation faces its greatest peril” or which “enemy” is referred to in “braving the enemy's gunfire” (official English translation from “National Anthem,” 2005). The national anthem, along with many other popular songs, movies, and works of literature, nonetheless illustrates how the Sino-Japanese War has been woven into modern Chinese popular culture. After World War II, the Sino-Japanese conflicts and war experiences continued to permeate cultural products in all formats, touching generations of people. The history has prevailed in written text, art, music, opera, radio, television, and film. It has been printed on stamps, etched onto granite monuments in parks, and, since the 1990s, reenacted in virtual battles in computer games.

Libraries were among the most vulnerable cultural institutions during the Sino-Japanese War. The Japanese troops destroyed an estimated 2,000 libraries with over 10,000,000 volumes during the first two years of the eight-year war, and they plundered many priceless and irreplaceable collections (Lin, 1998). In 1937, the National Beijing Library managed to rescue some 30,000

volumes of rare books and manuscripts by shipping them to the American Library of Congress for safekeeping (cited in Lee, 1998). "Peking Man," the priceless fossil of homo erectus dated to about 300,000 B.C., was among the treasures that were selected for safekeeping. Unfortunately, in 1941, when the Japanese were about to attack Beijing, the fossil disappeared after being packed for shipment to the USA (Darvill, 2002). Its mysterious disappearance remains a huge loss to science research and has been described in novels, movies, and television shows.

### **The Historiography of the Sino-Japanese War**

Partly affected by the nature of academic inquiry, historians will never reach a complete consensus of any historical events. In Foot's (2001) words about diversity of views about World War II, "historians are no more likely to take a single view now than combatants were then." Daqing Yang further declares that "historical research is not about producing consensus" (1999, p. 862). However, scholarly dissent over Sino-Japanese War history has been aggravated by politics and issues of national identity. To this day, evidence abounds that historians and intellectuals from different parts of the world face huge barriers to dialogues in pursuit of a truthful reconstruction of certain historical events. In one example provided by James C. Hsiung, when he tried negotiating access to the archives in Taiwan for a book project on Sino-Japanese War history, the key gatekeeper to the archives demanded the removal of two scholars on his team, opining that they were too "uncontrollable," meaning not pro-Nationalist Party (1992, p. x).

On a more optimistic note, Yang (1999) argues that the trend toward historiographical convergence over an event as controversial and challenging as the Rape of Nanjing "is likely to continue, if slowly and unevenly" (p. 862). The publication of *The Nanjing Massacre in History and Historiography* (2000), contributed by American, Japanese, and Chinese historians—though all were trained in American higher education institutions—is a concrete example of scholarly

dialogues on that topic. In his study of public memory of the Sino-Japanese War in mainland China, Coble (2007) showed how Chinese scholarship since the 1980s, though still fraught with politics and nationalism, is nonetheless embracing a widened range of topics and correcting some of the past biases and omissions.

It is this trend toward a “slow and uneven” convergence over Sino-Japanese War history that has helped me conduct my research on young people’s information sources. Although conflicts of opinion always exist, in the English and Chinese historical literature I consulted, the converging accounts of the same historical event, scholarship contributed by an international team, and historiographical studies that shed light on the causes of disagreement gave me a relatively stable basis to examine the information sources prepared for young people.

### **Research Questions**

This study seeks to understand, in two of the countries fighting on the same side of the Sino-Japanese War, what information sources have been produced by adults to pass on the memory of war to younger generations. The focus of the study is non-curriculum youth literature dated from 1937 through 2007, published in China and in the U.S. This genre, long existent in both countries before the introduction of multimedia and digital media, is a particularly useful choice for a study of historical patterns and international comparisons. In studying Chinese information sources, I also include a second source—oral family narrative—to supplement our understanding of officially available publications in China with private sources in individual families.

Questions that I will examine include the quantity and availability of youth literature about the Sino-Japanese War, their quality measured by historical accuracy, child appeal, and age appropriateness. I will also trace the patterns of changes over the span of 70 years, consider explanations of these changes, and search for the differences and similarities in Chinese and



American youth literature in their treatment of Sino-Japanese War history. Discussions of methodology and background sources are incorporated into each chapter.

## **Chapter 2. Chinese Youth Literature: An Overview**

This chapter chronicles the birth and development of Chinese youth literature within the dynamic social, political, and cultural context of modern China. As Zipes (2006) has reminded us, researchers must recognize the “complex historical transformation” that children’s literature has gone through and avoid “simplistic assumptions about its role and meaning in different cultures throughout the world” (p. xxix). In order to help an English-speaking audience understand how youth literature published in mainland China represents Sino-Japanese War history, we must be aware of the different developmental status of youth literature in the United States and in China. Since the beginning of youth literature as a distinct publishing stream in the early years of the 20th century, the United States has grown into a world leader in the production, marketing, and research of youth literature. Compared with Western European countries and the U.S., in mainland China youth literature has a shorter history. Its progress has suffered from inactivity and setbacks, but nonetheless includes memorable titles and characters that have become household names and that have entertained Chinese youth for generations. An overview of the history of Chinese youth literature will not only keep us abreast of the context of the Chinese works to be examined in this study, but also highlight some of the concepts, standards, and assumptions widely understood in American youth literature research but not readily applicable to Chinese juvenile works.

Although I fully agree with Zipes’ (2006) statement that children’s literature “is practically indefinable, limitless in its scope, and daunting in its achievements” (p. xxix), I use the term “Chinese youth literature” to loosely refer to non-curriculum reading materials published in

China and primarily intended for and read by two age groups—children and young adults<sup>1</sup>. This introduction contains three parts. The first part is a chronological overview of Chinese youth literature. The second part focuses on the format of *lianhuanhua*, which is popular pictorial reading material enjoyed by Chinese youth for most of the 20th century. The intricate relationship between *lianhuanhua* and what is strictly defined as youth literature in China will be explained in the third part.

### **The Historical Transformation of Chinese Youth Literature**

Scholars of Chinese youth literature generally concur that literature published specifically for young readers did not take solid shape in China until the early 20th century. Prior to the introduction of youth literature in modern China, young learners had access to primers such as *Qian Zi Wen* [千字文, Thousand character classic] (6th century) and *San Zi Jing* [三字经, Three character classic] (13th century) for literacy and moral instruction; for amusement children made do with “what they could cull from the popular literature and entertainment” (Scott, 1980, p. 109) intended for a general audience. The most prominent example of cross-age cultural consumption would be *Xi You Ji* [西游记, Journey to the west] (16th century). Considered one of the four major Chinese classical novels, *Journey to the West* is a tale about a magic monkey’s adventurous pilgrimage to India to obtain Buddhist scriptures. Like the folktales that the Grimm brothers recorded from German oral culture and later adapted into fairy tales suitable for children, *Journey* originated from folklore. The story and its numerous adaptations and performances have captured the imagination of Chinese people for hundreds of years through oral storytelling, text

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<sup>1</sup> In Chinese language the distinction between children’s and young adult literature is not always acknowledged. The term *ertong wenxue* (literarily meaning “children’s literature”) is often inclusive of trade publications for all underage readers, whereas in English “youth literature” seems a more accurate term for the purpose.

and illustrations, puppet plays, operas—and, since the 20th century—movies, anime, and television series. Although enjoyed by all ages in China, *Journey* has remained the favorite of generations of young people, thanks, perhaps, to its strong fantasy elements. Like Cinderella, the well-known story of the Monkey King, as well as other Chinese folktales, myths, and legends, has supplied youth literature with an inexhaustible source of reprints, retellings, fractured adaptations, and inspirations for original creations. It is worth noting that after Chinese authors started creating literature for children in the early 20th century, Chinese youth still shared a great deal of popular reading materials with adults—a phenomenon to be elaborated in the next section on *lianhuanhua*.

A heavy Western influence was characteristic of youth literature available in China, even before the birth of native Chinese works. An English-Chinese bilingual version of *Aesop's Fables* was published in 1840 in the late Qing Dynasty, apparently for children for their language training (Farquhar, 1999, p. 20). Following China's defeat in the First Opium War (1839-42) with the British, China was forced to open treaty ports to foreign trade and to accept unequal treaties, which allowed Western missionaries to “flood in” and establish modern movable type printing presses (Zhang, Pang, & Zheng, 1999). By 1876<sup>1</sup>, the Brooklyn, New York-based Foreign Sunday-school Association reportedly had sponsored a child's paper in China, written in the “Mandarin dialect” and described as “a good family paper for grown-up children” (“The Sunday School,” 1876, p. 6). Despite its Christian background, *The Child Paper* covered a wide range of topics and stories in addition to the Bible. The illustrations that accompanied the monthly publication, until it was discontinued in 1915, are considered the earliest fine art

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<sup>1</sup> Sources vary on the exact year when *The Child Paper* was launched, but generally give a date between 1874 and 1876 (See, for example, Shen, 2002, p. 82).

produced specifically for young people in China (Xu, 2004). In 1908 the popular *Tong Hua* [童话, Fairy tales] series edited by SUN Yuxiu (孙毓修)—the first children’s literature series in China—appeared and featured many more works translated from Western countries than adaptations from Chinese historical stories (Zhu, 2000, p. 27-28).

The patriotic May Fourth Movement of 1919 provided a major impetus to the development of indigenous Chinese youth literature. Initially a mass protest in Beijing against the unequal Treaty of Versailles after World War I, the event stimulated a New Culture Movement that was directed at “using some Western ideas to strengthen Chinese culture itself” (Palmowski, 2008). Farquhar (1999) has traced how youth literature flourished as progressive Chinese intellectuals came to embrace changed concepts of childhood, education, and reading. The discovery of childhood as a stage with its own special characteristics and needs, contrasting with the traditional view of children as immature adults, and the notion of a child-centered education, which was disseminated in China through John Dewey’s 1919-20 lecture tour, provided the rationale for a distinct children’s literature in easily accessible vernacular language—as opposed to the antiquated language found in classical Confucian canons taught to children (Farquhar, 1999, Chapter 1).

From the very beginning Chinese youth literature has been placed firmly within the education field, being regarded as “one of the educational tools for children” (*Ertong*, 1990, p. 12; Wang, 2000, p. 576) and even “life’s first textbooks” (Jiang, 2005, p. 190), whether the subject of acculturation is literacy, humanities, science, aesthetics, morality, or political ideology. ZHOU Zuoren (周作人, 1885-1967), a translator and theorist of youth literature and one of the earliest advocates for a body of literature specifically for Chinese children, delivered a highly influential lecture in an experimental Peking Conte School in October 1920. In his talk, Zhou

coined the phrase “er tong de wen xue<sup>1</sup>” (children’s literature) and, addressing teachers, he detailed some guidelines for choosing age-appropriate and interesting “teaching materials” from poetry, fables, fairy tales, nature stories, realistic stories, and other genres for the literature education of the age groups 3-6 (kindergarten), 6-10 (lower primary school), and 10-15 (upper primary and middle school) (Zhou, 1920).

Another of Zhou’s main ideas, which would later be misinterpreted and vehemently condemned in Communist China, shows that Zhou was not reducing children’s literature to a dry didactic instrument. Espousing a child-centered approach, Zhou (1920) argued that literature used as teaching materials in primary schools and the teaching of that literature must first “be for children” (para. 2); and benefits to children—including the cultivation of interest in reading, intelligence, and imagination—should be a secondary concern, although Zhou seemed confident that these would be the natural “side effects” of providing children with literature. While his notion of “for children” is open to interpretations, Zhou took issue with the tendency of forcing “ideas or behaviors” (para. 2) upon children through literature regardless of their developmental needs, contending that it was wasteful of children’s time and harmful to child life. Unfortunately, some of the ideologies that Zhou (1920) considered unsuitable for children’s literature, such as “improper hero worship and patriotism” (para. 18), would dominate works produced in Red China, contributing to the unpopularity of Zhou’s theory.

Researchers generally have divided the history of Chinese youth literature into several time periods (see, for example, Chen, 2006; Tang, 2006): 1) from the May Fourth Movement of 1919 to the establishment of Communist China in 1949; 2) the first seventeen years of new China from

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<sup>1</sup> Later the phrase would be shortened into “er tong wen xue,” omitting the character “de” which forms the possessive case but retaining the meaning “children’s literature” all the same.

1949 to 1966; 3) the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976; and 4) from the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976 to the 1989 crackdown on protesters in Tiananmen Square. The most recent, or fifth, period runs from the 1990s to the present day. Some scholars identify finer dividing points within each time period. In her historical study of Chinese children's literature, Farquhar (1999) further differentiated the first period (1919-49) into the years prior to the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in 1937 and the subsequent war periods of 1937-49. These major segments, punctuated by significant events in modern Chinese history, suggest the intimate relationship between Chinese youth literature and the historical, political, and cultural dynamics in China.

### **From 1919 to 1949**

Produced during the New Culture Movement that grew out of the May Fourth protest, writer and educator YE Shengtao's (叶圣陶, 1894-1988) collection of fairy tales—*Dao Cao Ren* [稻草人, A scarecrow] (1923)—and BING Xin's (冰心, 1900-1999) letters to young readers (1923-26) are widely recognized as two pioneer works of children's literature by Chinese writers. These early explorations in an unfamiliar literary genre were associated with the expansion of publication venues for youth literature. *Ertong Shijie* [儿童世界, Children's world], launched by the Shanghai-based Commercial Press in 1922, was the first Chinese magazine dedicated to children (Zhu, 2000, p. 180). Its editor ZHENG Zhenduo invited Ye, who had worked as a primary school teacher, to contribute to the magazine, and thus started Ye's career as a writer of children's literature. BING Xin started her *Ji Xiaoduzhe* [寄小读者, Letters to young readers] the day after she learned about a newly opened column—"Children's World"—in the *Morning Post*, where the letters were serialized (Bing, 1923). Addressed to "little friends," her 29 letters recorded Bing's fond or melancholy childhood memories, journey to the United State, student

life at Wellesley College, and homesickness. Another children's magazine *Xiaopengyou* [小朋友, Little friends], launched in Shanghai in 1922, has enjoyed an amazing longevity and remains active today.

This formative period of Chinese youth literature was disrupted by the Sino-Japanese War (1937-45), in large part because the Japanese had taken over the publishing centers on the eastern coast (Farquhar, 1999, p. 7). Almost all Shanghai-based children's magazines were forced to discontinue, including *Little Friends*, which finally resumed publication in 1945 in the wartime capital city of Chongqing in Southwest China (Ertong, 1990, p. 205; "Changchang," 2006). Both warfare and Japanese censorship posed threats to the personal safety of Chinese literati. Initially, the Shanghai International Settlement—areas controlled by Western powers—sheltered authors and publishers who chose to stay and did not retreat to the west, but the situation deteriorated after the Pearl Harbor attack on December 7, 1941. *Shaonian Duwu* [少年读物, Readings for youth], one of the major progressive juvenile magazines that took refuge in the Shanghai International Settlement, was closed by the Japanese occupation force in 1942, and its editor LU Li died in prison (Wang, 2000, p. 82-83). SU Su's juvenile fiction *Hanjian de Erzi* [汉奸的儿子, Traitor's son] features a boy who discovers the horrifying fact that his father is serving the Japanese enemy. First published in September 1941, the book appeared under a subtler title *Cheche de Erzi* [车车的儿子, Cheche's son] in order not to offend Japanese authorities. However, in the wake of the Pearl Harbor attack the publisher Shaonian Chubanshe (The adolescence press) was stripped of the last thin layer of protection, and it secretly destroyed all the copies of *Cheche's Son* ("Shaonian," [194?]).

Paradoxically, the war also enriched Chinese youth literature. The military conflict between China and Imperial Japan, soldier and civilian heroes who resisted the Japanese aggression,



choices between loyalty and betrayal, struggles for survival, daily encounters with death, and family separation and reunion were and continue to be among the life dramas common in times of war. Thus the eight-year Sino-Japanese War not only shaped the content of youth literature produced during the war, but also continued to inspire Chinese writers and artists and became the setting of some of the canonical titles of postwar Chinese youth literature. Wang's (2000) comprehensive overview of wartime Chinese youth literature confirms that the dominant topic was war, and the dominant theme was patriotism.

The one dozen or so issues of *Little Friends*, dated between the outbreak of full-scale war on July 7, 1937 and its publishing cessation, well illustrate the impact of the war on the subject matter of youth literature. Starting from Issue No. 768, published on July 15, 1937, war-related news pieces, informational texts, stories, children's own written responses to the current warfare, and photos of the Chinese military were increasingly present in the magazine. Even the craft section taught children to make a toy soldier (Fang, 1937, p. 24-25). Patriotic education for young readers was the prevalent agenda of these texts, which helped youth make sense of the war, urged them to share the nation's concern, and mobilized them to contribute what they could to the war effort. In the short story "Qing Ni Buyao Jiao'ao" [请你不要骄傲, Please do not be smug] (Du, 1937), an elder cousin, using a map of Nationalist China, teaches the younger one—as well as readers of the magazine—how much land China has lost to Japan following the annexation of Manchuria in 1931. The bigger boy does a good job of translating what could have been an abstract concept into transparent ideas: the lost territory is equivalent to one sixth of China's total area, seven times the size of the Sichuan Province, six times the size of Imperial Japan, and so forth. Ending with the smaller boy vowing to defeat the enemy and defend the land, the story is followed by five reading comprehension questions. It is laudable that the magazine

also included an illustrated text on safety tips during an air raid (Wei, 1937, p. 13-14), although survival skills received much less attention than war mobilization in these issues.

Some of the most memorable characters in Chinese youth literature were created during the war: the stories featuring WANG Erxiao, Yulai, and Haiwa, quick-thinking and dauntless young boys whose acts of heroism include rescuing an underground resistance fighter, delivering an urgent military message, and tricking Japanese troops into the Chinese ambush. Their stories became classic texts for primary schools in post-1949 China<sup>1</sup>, ensuring that generations of Chinese youth were familiar with these household names.

### **From 1949 to 1966**

After the Communist victory in the Chinese civil war (1946-49) and the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in October 1949, youth literature enjoyed what was hailed as its first “golden age,” characterized by fast growth in the quantity of publications for youth, a wide variety of formats and genres in youth literature, an increasing number of children's authors, and the establishment of two publishing houses for juvenile literature, as well as magazines and newspapers for different age groups of young people (*Ertong*, 1990, p. 220-235; Wang, 2000, p. 162-168).

An editorial entitled “Greatly Increase the Creation, Publication, and Distribution of Reading Materials for Youth,” which appeared in *People's Daily*, the official organ of the CCP, on September 16, 1955, was widely credited for having boosted the production of Chinese youth literature in the 1950s. The editorial opens by stating that “[g]ood reading materials for children and adolescents are a forceful tool for the Communist education of youth,” and further elaborates

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<sup>1</sup> Despite the death of the young hero, a simplified and illustrated version of Erxiao's story appears in a current Chinese language textbook for first grade students (Beijing, China: People's Education Press, 2001).

the two significant functions of these age-appropriate publications: first, “literature and science reading materials” are part of young people’s extra-curricular education, supplementing their formal schooling; second, those graduates who have either joined the labor force or are learning through self-study rely upon youth reading materials and other publications as the main source of knowledge (Renmin Ribao, 1955/1989, p. 9-11). While the editorial calls for institutional support (which did materialize thereafter) from the authors society, publishers, and bookstores to address the inadequate quantity, low quality, and lack of diversity in youth literature, its designation of youth literature as tool for Communist education was a clear indication of the increasing ideological control over reading materials for youth.

The most important title produced during the first seventeen years of the PRC is arguably *Xiao Bing ZHANG Ga* [小兵张嘎, Little soldier CHANG Ka-tse] (1962) by XU Guangyao, one of the Sino-Japanese War stories that have made the list of best Chinese youth literature of all time. Ka-tse, a teenage orphan boy, is allowed to join a team of underground Communist fighters after his grandmother—his only guardian—is killed by the Japanese. Under the strict discipline of a loving Commander, Ka-tse grows into a worthy and mature member of the army. Like the classical Canadian juvenile fiction *Anne of Green Gables* (1908) by L. M. Montgomery, Xu’s novel is peppered with the amusing scrapes into which a cheerful, daring, yet often stubborn boy gets. More analysis of this classic title will follow in the next chapter.

The touted golden age withered quickly. Even before the Cultural Revolution was launched in 1966, political commotion plagued Communist China. The Anti-Rightist Campaign of 1957 targeted intellectuals in particular, and many writers and artists were among the “rightists” whose reputations were tarnished and whose voices in the public media were lost. In his memoir XU Guangyao revealed that writing the stories of a saucy Ka-tse was therapeutic for him when he

was visited by suicidal thoughts while waiting for his verdict in early 1958. Xu finished the draft the same year, shortly before he was accused of being a “rightist,” sent to a labor camp to be punished with other political outcasts, and survived (Xu, 2001). Regardless of Xu’s exceptional case, the overall effect of the Anti-Rightist Campaign on youth literature in China was harmful. Children’s authors were either silenced, or could publish only didactic, formulaic, contrived stories that echoed whatever political doctrines were being propagated by the Party (Wang, 2000, p. 168-72).

### **From 1966 to 1976**

The Cultural Revolution was devastating to Chinese youth literature, as it was to virtually every aspect of Chinese society (Farquhar, 1999; Wang, 2000). Radical changes took place in China’s schooling system, affecting the life course of millions of Chinese youth. The purpose and means of education were redefined, and even subverted. MAO Zedong had declared the dual standards of “red and expert” for the working class—“redness” referring to ideological and political orthodoxy, and “expert” meaning mastery of secular knowledge in science and technology—and seemingly treated both criteria as equally important (Mao, 1958/1993). Over time, however, “redness” was increasingly emphasized over professional competence. For young students a political subscription to the Maoist doctrine was promoted through required participation in manual labor. According to Zhou (2004), over seventeen million urban youth—mostly graduates from middle and high school and constituting “about one-third of the children of the Cultural Revolution”—were sent to labor in rural areas between 1967 and 1978 (p. 125), typically in the name of receiving re-education from “the poor peasants,” in Mao’s words (as cited p. 124). For older youth the admission of college students was largely based on politically oriented admission criteria, rather than on academic credentials.

In Jiang's (2005) unflattering words, the ten-year Cultural Revolution was "a tragic era witnessing the near demise of children's literature in China" (p. 51). Particularly during the first five years of the turmoil, not only were there few new publications for readers of all age groups, but old works were banned on ideological grounds and even destroyed in fire and in wastepaper mills (Ho, 2006). Aside from an irregularly issued children's magazine *Hong Xiao Bing* [红小兵, Little Red Guards], and a small number of illustrated storybooks which were adaptations of Party-approved plays and biographical stories of Maoist role models, youth reading materials were scarce and even dictionaries were unavailable for elementary school children to purchase (Fang, 1999, p. 13). CHEN Danyan, a Beijing-born children's author who was eight years old at the onset of the Cultural Revolution, recalled that as a young person she "longed to read books, but there were no real books to be had" (Chen, 2006, p. 15).

Censorship relaxed slightly in the second half of the Cultural Revolution, and publication resumed on a restricted scale after 1970 (Zhang, 1999; Yuan, 2001). The one major work of juvenile fiction produced in this time period was *Shanshan de Hongxing* [闪闪的红星, Sparkling red star] (1972) by LI Xintian. The novel, reaching a print run of three million the first year, immediately received significant approval from a *People's Daily* article by HAN Zuoli, a high official of the Beijing Education Bureau, who praised it as "good teaching material for children's education" (Li, 2005, para. 3). *Sparkling Red Star* was serialized in radio nationally, and its movie adaptation, released in 1974, was an instant hit.

*Red Star* spans from 1934 to 1949 and portrays the maturation of a peasant boy, PAN Dongzi, during the social and political turmoil in which he becomes involved. It is an eloquently told story set in the clear-cut dichotomous world—that was the typical fictional world in Chinese Communist revolutionary literature—where evil and virtue strictly follow the class and party line.

Wealthy characters (landlords, rich businessmen) and those serving the Nationalist government (police chief, Nationalist army officers and soldiers) are without exception cruel hatchet men, greedy exploiters, and despicable national traitors. All poor people selflessly help each other, including strangers, at the cost of their own safety, and support the Communist revolution with loyalty. Even the morals of child characters are solely determined by their family background: the children of rich men are snobbish bullies and selfish nuisances, and children of poor people are all gentle and kind to each other and form lasting friendships. Whereas evil and virtue, rewards and punishments are common dichotomies in folktales, *Red Star* equates evil with “class enemies” and members of the CCP’s political rivals, and virtue with lower class people who are Communist sympathizers. *Red Star* is representative of the folktale-style characterization found in reading materials intended for adults and youth alike during the Cultural Revolution.

### **From 1976 to 1989**

This time period begins with Mao’s death in 1976, and DENG Xiaoping’s rise to power that helped steer the nation from class struggle to economic development. It ends in 1989 with the crackdown on the Tiananmen Square protests. These years are considered a new “golden age” for Chinese youth literature thanks to a number of factors. First, after what was metaphorically referred to as a ten-year “starvation” for the mind of both adults and youth, the fervor demonstrated by Chinese book buyers at the beginning of the post-Mao era was unprecedented. This was virtually a seller’s market for books, except that China was running a planned economy, not a market economy.

Second, DENG Xiaoping restored the academic merit-based college entrance exam system in 1977, once again turning academic excellence into a ticket to upward social mobility. The Compulsory Education Law of the People’s Republic of China, which took effect July 1, 1986,

also required that all children who have reached the age of six or seven be enrolled in school and receive compulsory education for nine years, “regardless of sex, nationality or race”

(“Compulsory,” 1986/2005). These national policies and legislation changes were conducive to an increased literacy rate among the younger generation, and were likely to encourage the use of books as a source of knowledge and an aid to better learning outcomes.

Third, the production of youth literature benefited from a relatively tolerant political climate and direct administrative support. Researchers credit the 1978 National Forum on Publishing for Youth—organized by China’s National Publishing Administration, Department of Education, Department of Culture, and other central government agencies—with supporting the enrichment of youth reading materials and with helping “emancipate the thoughts” of children’s publishers and editors from the ultra-Left constraints of the Cultural Revolution (Fang, 1999, p. 14; Wang, 2000, p. 176-7).

The Party never foregoes ideological control of any cultural artifacts, but the bout of liberalism of the 1980s did have a noticeable impact upon the subject matter and theme of Chinese youth literature. DING Ahu’s short story “Jinye Yue’er Ming” [今夜月儿明, The bright moonlight tonight] (1984), published in the Shanghai-based magazine *Shaonian Wenyi* [少年文艺, Literature and art for adolescents], marked the birth of Chinese young adult fiction. Ding treats a crush that a middle school girl has on a boy as an understandable feeling, but a feeling that is inappropriate for her age and needs to be resolved. Still, the story aroused a storm of controversy because teenagers’ sexuality had been a taboo topic in Chinese youth literature.

Finally, there was a great influx of translated youth literature in the 1980s. Previously, Communist countries, particularly the Soviet Union, were the dominant source of foreign

publications introduced to China. After DENG Xiaoping's "Open Door" policy, a large number of books published in Western developed countries and Japan were translated into Chinese.

Imported youth literature enriched the choices of Chinese young readers and served as a window to diverse cultures of the world, as well as to common experiences that unite human beings across racial, ethnic, national, and ideological differences.

### **From the 1990s Onward**

Chinese youth literature did not fare well in the 1990s but has grown in sales after the turn of the century. Indications of the initial inactivity were manifold and interrelated. As researchers and publishers have noted, in the 1990s the print run of most youth literature titles dropped drastically (to a meager 5,000 or even fewer) and sold poorly; some high-quality works could not be published because bookstores did not place enough orders; publishers' heavy reliance upon reprints of canonical and translated titles in the public domain resulted in the dominance of a small number of essentially the same works in the book market; new authors decreased; and well-known children's authors stopped writing for youth, or stopped literary creation altogether (Jiang, 2005; Wang, 2000, p. 177; Li, 2003, p. 96; Tang, 2006, p. 22; Sun, 2008, p. 10).

Researchers, journalists, and educators have cited many factors to explain the dispirited 1990s Chinese youth literature. Under the market economy introduced in 1992, Chinese publishing, once purely state-owned and subsidized by the government, now struggled for survival, transforming children's editors from midwives for literary products to bottom-line-driven businessmen (Jiang, 2005, p. 41). Competition from foreign imports of popular reading materials, such as Japanese comic books, and from new media, such as television and video games (the ownership of TV Sets per 1000 people leapt from 5.1 in 1980 to 155.2 in 1990 to 292.0 in 1999) (*Dianshiji*, 2001), was frequently blamed for drawing children's interest away



from native Chinese youth literature. After China implemented its first copyright law in 1991 and joined the Berne Convention and Universal Copyright Convention in 1992, the cost for legally publishing foreign titles rose in China, motivating the repetitive printing of such familiar collections as those by Hans Christian Andersen and the Grimm Brothers until the situation improved in the late 1990s. Rarely discussed is how the freedom to create Chinese youth literature might have been affected by the Tiananmen Square protests of 1989, still a taboo topic in mainland China, and the subsequent tightened thought control.

Ironically, another factor that is accused of being seriously responsible for a declining youth literature industry is China's education system. Since the late 1980s, the pressure for students to achieve academic success has mounted, a pressure that translated into intensive test preparation in and after school and resulted in multiple ramifications. Numerous surveys and reports blame heavy coursework and test pressure for eating away children's reading time, and frequently list it as the primary reason "why today's kids don't read" (Chen, 2006, p. 451). While it is debatable whether or not young people read at all, depending on the definition of "reading" (popular genres, including kung fu novels, romance novels, and the rampant pirated comic books, as well as online texts are frequently dismissed by adults), high-stakes standardized testing clearly has influenced publishing for youth. As Jiang (2005, p. 41) and Lin (2003, p. 104-5) point out, the high profit of study aids, "how-to" guides on Chinese composition, and test preparation materials, has been a big attraction to children's publishers, and their market seems to remain strong despite continuous education reforms intent upon reducing the pressure of entrance exams at all school levels.

The decade since 2000 has seen a major growth of picture books, enriched by a new influx of translated titles. Unlike students in Grade 6 and higher, younger Chinese children can now

engage in reading as a bigger part of their leisure life<sup>1</sup>. Needless to say, the educational value of engaging books for pre-literate and beginning readers can be more intuitively understood by China's emerging middle-class parents, which are the best educated generation of fathers and mothers in Chinese history. In fact, a few amateur parent-reviewers have become the most active advocates for children's reading, particularly promoting picture books (Chen, 2008).

Publishers and researchers also credit the popularity of the *Harry Potter* series, which appeared in China in 2000, for having inaugurated an upward trend in the Chinese youth literature industry. Since 2005, native Chinese works, the best-known being female writer YANG Hongying's series such as *Tao Qi Bao MA Xiaotiao* [淘气包马小跳, The mischievous boy MA Xiaotiao], have made increasing gains in market share and competed with foreign titles as equal rivals (Sun, 2008, p. 10).

### ***Lianhuanhua*: Popular Culture Meets Youth Literature**

An overview of Chinese youth literature is incomplete without introducing *lianhuanhua* (连环画, hereafter LHH), a unique type of Chinese publication which partially overlaps with children's and young adult reading material. This section traces the trajectory of Chinese LHH in the 20th century, a turbulent time period when China transformed from a semi-colonial feudal dynasty to a Communist state embracing market economy and capitalism. In a country dominated by an illiterate population until the latter half of the 20th century, the content, format,

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Anderson, a Professor in Educational Psychology at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, who led literacy research and reading promotion programs in China, told me that Chinese parents' resistance to children's leisure reading could be felt as soon as children started the first grade (R. Anderson, personal communication, August 25, 2010).

readership, and perceived functions of LHH shifted as China underwent drastic political, social, and cultural changes.

From the early 20th century to the mid-1980s, LHH was arguably the most popular format of literature read by generations of Chinese young people. It is a tricky business to define the connotation and scope of the term. Literally meaning “linked images” or “serial pictures” in Chinese, LHH has been used as a loose umbrella term for nearly all books with sequential narrative images on every page, including but not limited to illustrated story books, comic books, picture books, and movie spin-offs, which are created from movie stills with accompanying captions. In addition to books, illustrated stories of varying length and comic strips are also published or serialized in newspapers and magazines, the most influential one specializing in this format being *Lianhuanhua Bao* created in 1951. LHH may or may not be reprinted in books, depending on the popularity of the works and the significance of the creators. The focus of my study is on LHH available in book form.

There is a great diversity in format, page size, and text-image layout among LHH works produced from different time periods. In its heyday LHH typically appeared palm-sized, measuring about 4 by 5 inches, and the length of each volume varied from a dozen pages to over a hundred. The great majority of LHH were illustrated story books, printed in black and white, usually with one image on every page and short text on the top, bottom, or right side of the page. Some applied conversation balloons within the illustrations (Figure 2.1). After 1990 when native LHH works lost their market to foreign imports of comic books, the earlier palm-sized booklets all but retired, except for some titles with a limited print run for LHH connoisseurs and nostalgic fans. The subcategories of *man hua* books (漫画书, equivalent to what are commonly known as comic books, manga, and graphic novels in the United States) and picture books (by the latest

fashion also known as *huiben*, a term borrowed from the Japanese word 絵本) have been increasingly aligned with format standards familiar in Japan and Western countries. However, as of now LHH is still a widely accepted inclusive term for these visual narrative publications. I will use LHH in this broad sense in my study.

**Figure 2.1: *Lianhuanhua* and Sample Pages**

(1)



A typical palm-sized *lianhuanhua*.

(2)



*Xiaobing Zhang Ga* [小兵张嘎, Little soldier Chang Ka-tse] / by XU Guangyao (徐光耀); adapted by HU Yingxi (胡映西); illustrated by ZHANG Pincao (张品操).

New 1st ed.

Shanghai, China: Shanghai Renmin Chubanshe, 1972.

4. 奶奶“哦”了声。她叮嘱小嘎子说，部队上的消息没错。鬼子真是要“扫荡”了，以后放哨得加倍留神啊！

Figure 2.1 (cont.)

(3)



10. 大春乐滋滋地回家去了。喜儿关上房门，坐在炕上，放稳了镜子，一边唱歌，一边打开布包，拿出她爹给买的红头绳、发网和大春给的红绒花，心里说不出的快活。她梳好头，动手煎窗花。煎出

*Baimao Nü* [白毛女, The white-haired girl] / text by FANG Yiqun (方轶群); illustrated by HUA Sanchuan (华三川).

Shanghai, China: Shaonian Ertong Chubanshe, 1964.

LHH works with colorful illustrations were rare and much less affordable before 1985 in China.

(4)



*Haidi Migong Fumie Ji* [海底迷宫覆灭记, The destruction of the labyrinth on the seafloor] / by WANG Peikun (王培埜).

Shijiazhuang, China: Hebei Meishu Chubanshe, 1984.

There is much to understand about how the seed of LHH germinated in the colonial city of Shanghai by the end of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). Chinese-language scholarship tends to stress the continuity of the LHH format—from illustrations found in age-old Buddhist murals, Confucian biographical texts, and popular novels—and downplays Western influences.

According to this scholarship, LHH was inspired by illustrated news stories first appearing in Shanghai in the late 19th century, then took the shape of booklets in the 1910s, and started to

develop in earnest after 1920<sup>1</sup> (Huang, Wang, & Li, 1999; Jie, 2004). The earliest LHH was dominated by traditional opera stories and adaptations of pre-20th century Chinese popular literature, particularly supernatural and kung fu stories (Huang, Wang, & Li, 1999; Aying, 1957). The format obtained its formal name in 1925, when the Shanghai-based publisher Shi Jie Shu Ju [The World Book] issued the first of a series of illustrated booklets and named them *lianhuan tuhua* (later shortened to *lianhuanhua*) (Gu, 1999). According to Shen (2001), at almost the same time that these pictorial story booklets took shape, periodicals in Shanghai started carrying comic strips, the artistic style and satirical or humorous content of which showed signs of emulating Western comics and cartoons. Comic strips published or reprinted in book format remained a small portion of indigenous Chinese LHH output, but still attracted noteworthy artists and titles.

Although LHH appealed to young readers from day one, it did not originate as youth literature. Hoping to reach the widest possible audience, the World Book Company printed on the cover of its *lianhuan tuhua* series “Nannü laoyou, yule daguan” (男女老幼 娱乐大观), roughly meaning “For the entertainment of men and women, young and old” (Figure 2.2). Gradually, the LHH market segmented into broad audience groups. In their introduction to major LHH artists during the 1930s and 1940s in Shanghai, which remained the center for the LHH publishing industry in China, Wang and Li (1999) note that QIAN Xiaodai’s (钱笑呆, 1912-1965) illustration of female characters from traditional opera stories won him a large number of housewife readers; CHEN Guangyi’s (陈光镒, 1919-1991) funny LHH stories, often featuring young protagonists, attracted child readers the most and gained national fame; and the works of

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<sup>1</sup> The early history of how LHH came into being between the turn of the 20th century and the 1920s is still murky, and researchers have provided inconsistent title and date information, making slightly different claims. I have decided to make my statements broad enough to accommodate most researchers’ findings.

two other artists, SHEN Manyun (沈曼云, 1911-1978) and ZHAO Hongben (赵宏本, 1915-2000), focusing on kung fu and hero stories, appealed to both adult and young audiences.

**Figure 2.2: Cover Image of an Early *Lianhuanhua* Title**



*The Records of the Three Kingdoms* (Shanghai: Shi Jie Shu Ju, 1927. 2nd ed.).

Reprinted in *Old Lianhuanhua* (Wang & Li, 1999).

The eight characters on the top—"Nannü laoyou, yule daguan"—roughly means "for the entertainment of men and women, young and old."

**Figure 2.3: A *Lianhuanhua* Rental Stall**



An open-air LHH rental stall which attracts patrons from toddler to adult, male and female. It also sells tobacco.

Date and location unknown.

Source of image:

<http://news.folkw.com/>

Fuke\_Files/2006-12-29/lhh/lian15.jpg

School-age children and young adults soon formed the largest patron group of LHH, according to surveys and observations of rental bookstalls, the main venue where readers obtained the booklets (For example, Mao, 1932/1989 and Fang, 1999 about Shanghai in the early 1930s and 1950s respectively; *Zhonggong Zhongyang*, 1955/2004, a survey of LHH and rental outlets in eight major cities). This explained why in the dialects of many regions LHH were misleadingly called kids' books. The dual audience for this format, however, persisted. Italian

author Gino Nebiolo witnessed the popularity of LHH among Chinese grown-ups during the Cultural Revolution. Traveling in China on a night train, every passenger, including Nebiolo, received LHH along with hot tea from the stewardess, and he observed his companions—workers, petty officials, and peasants—“all completely absorbed in their reading” (1973, p. viii) (Figure 2.3).

The dual audience could be attributed to two factors that fed each other. First, LHH as a popular reading material was compatible with the characteristics and needs of readers from a wide age range. Second, publishers and interest groups that saw LHH as a medium for mass communication, in pursuing profits or their political agendas, were sensitive to the preferences of the market. China’s illiteracy rate was estimated to be 85-90% of the total population at the turn of the 20th century. That figure remained virtually unchanged for fifty years, until the Communist Party took over China in 1949 and through mass literacy campaigns reversed that rate to 15.88% in 1990 and 6.72% in 2000 (Ross, 2005). LHH, with its rich illustrations and brief texts as well as cheap rental fees, became the most accessible and affordable format of popular culture when other visual media, such as television and movies, either did not exist or were not widely available. A 1950 survey of rental stalls in Beijing finds that movie spin-offs were housewife patrons’ favorite LHH because they could not afford going to the theatre (Bai, 1950). Children’s author XU Guangyao, born into a poor family in 1925 and reared in rural Hebei Province where print materials were scarce, fondly recalls LHH as a great source of entertainment in his childhood. Despite being unable to read well, his peasant father could tell a few LHH stories to mesmerize the boy and his sister (Xu, 2001). As we shall see, the Nationalist government, the CCP, and intellectuals all tried using the format of LHH to communicate political messages to the poorly educated public, achieving varying degrees of success.



## From the 1920s to 1937: The Growth of LHH

The development of LHH falls into five periods. The first period from the 1920s to the eve of the Sino-Japanese War (1937-45) saw the gradual convergence of page size and layout in LHH, the adoption of conversation balloons (said to be influenced by the first Chinese sound film released circa 1930), the prevalence of renting rather than selling LHH, and the increase of LHH illustrators (Aying, 1957). After 1928, the print run of each title rose rapidly from a few hundred to around 2,000, and Shanghai publishers managed to extend their distribution network to inland China and Southeast Asia (Huang, Wang, & Li, 1999).

Not only were LHH publications ephemeral like many other popular culture artifacts, but also works published before 1949 are hard to locate because of repeated purging campaigns of the CCP. One of the Chinese intellectuals who paid early attention to the popular LHH and left us with precious historical records was MAO Dun (1896-1981), a novelist and cultural critic.

Numerous small bookstalls are densely stationed like sentries in the streets and alleys of Shanghai...Whoever spends two coppers can sit on that stool, renting and reading 20 to 30 booklets; if you are a "regular," it is even possible that you may rent 40 to 50.

These booklets are the so-called "*lian huan tu hua* novels." These small bookstalls have virtually become the most popular mobile libraries for the public of Shanghai, and are also the most powerful and widespread tool for "the education of the populace." (Mao, 1932/1989, p. 650)

The majority of LHH readers that Mao witnessed were youth between ten and sixteen years old across class hierarchies, including school-age *sons* of laborers, sons and daughters of small business owners and affluent capitalists, as well as many fifteen- or sixteen-year-old apprentices and occasional adult laborers<sup>1</sup> (emphasis mine, 1932/1989). Mao was keenly aware of the

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<sup>1</sup> One way that class difference manifested here was that, as Mao (1932/1989) suggested, poor people tended to read LHH at the bookstall, while richer families could afford to carry them home with a higher rental fee. In the

relationship between this heavily visual reading material and literacy development. According to his analysis, two-thirds of the space on one LHH page was image, and one-third was occupied by text (in addition to conversation balloons in the picture), which matched the sequential pictures and could also stand alone as an abridged novel. Therefore, he argued that LHH could serve as one step on the reading “ladder” by “luring” with pictures those who could not read very well, and by helping them gradually make sense of the text (Mao, 1932/1989, p. 652). This was perhaps true at the time of Mao’s observation. As anecdotal evidence, in his memoir Shen (1999), a lifelong LHH fan, claims that his parents could barely read but entertained themselves with LHH. Seven-year-old Shen had not learned to read at all but was fascinated by the pictures while listening in on what adults were saying about the stories.

Another of Mao’s comments concerns the relationship between LHH and children’s literature. The fact that so many primary school children liked LHH novels, Mao (1932/1989) said, indicated an inadequacy of reading material for children. His assertion was accurate, but also limited. Lacking literature defined as specifically produced for a young audience, Chinese youth throughout history had entertained themselves with what they could appreciate from popular culture intended for a general audience. However, LHH differed from traditional folk culture and performance in that a small portion was indeed produced with young readers in mind and was suitable for them, even though youth often read beyond that.

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childhood memory of Shen (1999), born in 1924 and son of a successful businessman, LHH were brought home and shared among parents, brothers and sisters, and hired laborers.

Gender was an equally weighty factor that influenced the readership of LHH. Mao’s careful note indicates that females from poor families were more likely to be denied education and access to LHH. The “apprentices” and “adult laborers” Mao mentioned were by default male.

Mao (1932/1989) disapproved of the subject matter of most LHH stories, calling them “poisonous” (p. 652). The market clamored for supernatural, kung fu, adventure, and romance novels, but news and realistic stories were small in quantity and unpopular. Research by Hung (1994) and Shen (2001) shows that some comics in early 20th century Shanghai were works of political satire and social commentary, but their main readers at the time were the more educated urban middle-class who could afford newspapers and magazines. LU Xun (1881-1936), a left-wing writer and critic, was among the earliest Chinese intellectuals to attempt to employ the popular format for the political socialization of the masses, but it would take a world war as the catalyst to realize his vision.

### **From 1937 to 1949: The “Metamorphosis” of LHH**

The most important change in Chinese LHH of the 20th century took place during the Sino-Japanese War (1937-45) and the subsequent civil war (1946-49), which facilitated the use of the format as a tool for war and political causes. In times of national crisis, individuals (regardless of their party affiliation), the government, and CCP unanimously resorted to popular culture for war propaganda and mobilization<sup>1</sup>. Even though wartime publishing was highly contingent on the personal safety of producers, supply of printing equipment and materials, and consumer potential of residents and refugees, LHH was one of the visual publications whose potential many interest groups hoped to mine.

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<sup>1</sup> In addition, extant library materials show that the Japanese occupation force also officially sponsored the publication of Chinese-language LHH works.

### *The Politicization of LHH in Nationalist-Controlled Areas*

In the preface of *Zhandi Enchou Ji* [战地恩仇记, Friends and foes on the battlefield] (1943), HUANG Shiyong articulated the idea of capitalizing on the immense appeal and persuasive power of LHH for war mobilization:

In order to serve the needs of the Anti-Japanese War, pictures have become a forceful weapon for propaganda and education. LHH enjoys a sizable output and a wide penetration among the folk. The format has been employed to satisfactory effect....My motivation for creating LHH stories comes from the needs of the war. (Huang, 1943, n. pag.)

The “needs of the war” encompassed informing the Chinese populace of Japanese brutality, encouraging men and women to contribute to the war effort, and keeping up morale through highlights of military victories and war heroes. Occasionally, the Japanese military and people were also the targeted audiences of Chinese propaganda materials, which were written in the Japanese language and carried anti-Fascism content.

The thematic transformation of ZHANG Leping’s (1910-1992) *Sanmao* series is the best example of how the war sensitized Chinese LHH creators to political issues and social conflict. Zhang’s comic strips featuring Sanmao, a boy with three characteristic hairs standing on his nearly bald head, were first serialized in *Chenbao* [Morning post] in 1935, and later collected in monographs. When Sanmao debuted in Zhang’s nearly wordless comic world, the character amused the Shanghai public with his childish innocence, mischievous tricks, and slapstick humor. Sanmao’s sexual innocence, for example, is the source of comedy in several strips. In one panel, the boy is seen, eyes shut tight, approaching a Cupid statue, intending to cover the angel’s naked body with a long jacket (Zhang, 2005, p. 3). China’s class conflict and prewar tension of the late 1930s are occasionally present, but only as settings for comic relief, not as topics to be confronted. Sanmao of this time period lives in a middle-class family with an electric fan and

refrigerator at home, enjoys toys and snacks, and spends lots of leisure time with peers. When beggars appear in the strips, Sanmao and his family are donors of money and clothing, but poverty is not the theme of concern in these early works. In one episode Sanmao encounters a beggar of his age, who has three hairs on his head just like himself. Sanmao immediately fetches money and scissors from home, gives the boy money, and cuts off his three hairs, apparently disliking the resemblance (Zhang, 2005, p. 67).

Zhang's *Sanmao* series was suspended shortly after the Japanese invasion. From 1937 to 1942, Zhang was a leading artist in Jiu Wan Man Hua Xuan Chuan Dui [the national salvation comics propaganda corps], which received modest financial support from the Military Affairs Commission of the Nationalist government. From the disbandment of the Corps in spring 1942 to the Japanese surrender in 1945, Zhang continued creating, publishing, and exhibiting propaganda comics with war themes (Qiu & Zhang, 2007). As a patriotic artist, his single- and multiple-panel comics, appearing in newspapers, magazines, flyers, posters, fabric, and street walls, sent war mobilization messages to soldiers and civilians. While traveling widely to cities and rural areas as a Corps leader and later as a refugee himself, Zhang was exposed to heroic ventures, Chinese treachery, Japanese atrocities, civilian suffering, and Nationalist oppression. These first-hand experiences and observations not only inspired Zhang's art works for propaganda purposes, but also continued to provide substance to his postwar creations.

Resuming in 1946, the *Sanmao* series adopted a political thrust heavily influenced by Zhang's wartime experiences. In *Sanmao Congjun Ji* [三毛从军记, Sanmao joins the army], first serialized in 1946 and published in monograph in 1947, an underage Sanmao joins the Nationalist army to fight the Japanese. Zhang's next series *Sanmao Liulang Ji* [三毛流浪记, Sanmao the vagrant], first serialized in 1947 and published in monograph in 1948, stepped away

from his prewar works. *The Vagrant* was inspired by the homeless youth with whom Zhang became acquainted in the streets of Shanghai, a city plagued by inflation, speculation, and bureaucratic capitalism after the Japanese defeat and thwarted in its attempt at economic revival by the ensuing civil war. Sanmao is an orphan boy who leaves his rural hometown to seek a livelihood in Shanghai. The boy's survival story and unfulfilled dreams, expressing the misery of poor people, is a bold confrontation with widespread poverty, social injustice, and class conflict of the 1940s in China.

The war period facilitated the metamorphosis of LHH from apolitical popular reading material to a tool consciously constructed by intellectuals and politicians for promoting social change. He's (1947a, 1947b, 1947c) overview of 110 titles from a LHH exhibition held in Shanghai indicates that the subject matter of LHH greatly expanded from traditional stories to a diverse range of genres. Novels with progressive themes by LU Xun, who called for but did not live to see the change; a biography of Franklin D. Roosevelt; and Pearl S. Buck's *Dragon Seed* (1942), a war novel based on the fall of Nanjing, all found their way into illustrated Chinese-language story books (He, 1947a, 1947b).

### ***LHH as Art for Politics' Sake in Communist-Controlled Areas***

In North and Central China, where the Communists gained partial control during the Sino-Japanese War, the ideological principles of literature and art were consolidated by MAO Zedong's influential talks delivered at a forum in Yan'an, May 1942. Mao (1942/2004, Conclusion, Sections III & IV) stated that there was no such thing as "art for art's sake...or art that is detached from or independent of politics," and considered it the fundamental task of revolutionary writers and artists to expose "all the dark forces harming the masses of the people" and to extol "all the revolutionary struggles of the masses of the people." According to Mao

(1942/2004), “the political criterion” for good works of literature and art was contributing to “unity and resistance to Japan,” encouraging “the masses to be of one heart and one mind,” opposing retrogression and promoting progress.

Hung (1994) identifies three main functions served by the popular culture campaign in Communist regions. In addition to war propaganda—a common function shared with the Nationalist government—the CCP was more intent on using popular culture to win public support over its political rival (the Nationalists) and to spread revolutionary ideas and socialist reforms, which proved vital in the subsequent victory of the CCP in 1949. Although Hung paid little attention to LHH in his study, we shall see that his statement applies to Sino-Japanese War stories in this format. Major LHH titles that were published under the Communist regime in this period are *Tie Fo Si* [铁佛寺, Iron Buddha Temple] (1943), *Langya Shan Wu Zhuang Shi* [狼牙山五壮士, Five heroes at the Langya Mountain] (1945), and *Tu Di* [土地, The earth] (1948) addressing war and land reform topics.

### **From 1949 to 1976: LHH in the Mao Era**

During the eventful period from the CCP’s military victory in the civil war in 1949 to the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976, it was imperative for the Party to stabilize its newborn state, which it perceived to be under the threats of the Nationalist Party, the Cold War, and a capricious relationship with the Soviet Union. The CCP continued to appreciate the potential of LHH in the political socialization of the Chinese populace. The first step it took to ensure the intended use of LHH was a reform campaign launched in the first half of the 1950s against the immensely popular, “poisonous” and “harmful” LHH works, most of which were published under the Nationalist regime. Through organizational control of publishers and rental stalls, critical control of individual titles, and direct training of LHH artists, the Party successfully

weeded from the LHH market works which were considered to be without “a correct political orientation” (Farquhar, 1999; “Shanghai *Lianhuanhua*,” 1999). The historical documents I have consulted about this campaign, with words like “qing li” [clean away] and “geng huan” [replace], were vague about how weeded books were dealt with physically. Farquhar (1999) cited one source which showed that a plan drawn up in 1949 was to burn them.

Weeding LHH works with an undesirable political framework was conducted simultaneously with the creation of new titles for a hungry LHH market. The earliest works approved by the authorities, however, were disliked by readers. A *Wenyi Bao* article “Duoqu Jiu Xiaorensu Zhendi” [Seizing the territory held by old LHH] (Bai, 1950) highlights how the low literacy rate and the poverty of the Chinese shaped the market preference for the style of LHH. The title suggests how the Party viewed the format as an ideological battleground it must occupy to reinforce Communist domination. As Bai (1950) reports, new LHH titles failed to meet the needs of average readers in many respects. Some of them contained too much text and too few images, while the vast number of illiterate and semi-illiterate readers relied heavily on sequential pictures to make sense of the story. Most new LHH were too short, thus not only offering fewer visuals to entertain readers but also far less financial competition than old titles from the previous Nationalist regime because patrons were charged by the number of volumes in the rental business. Apparently, the LHH reform campaign took these complaints seriously and used them to inform later publications, helping to sustain the popularity of the format. A LHH title published in the People’s Republic of China averages more than 100 images.

An enormous number of new LHH titles were released under the Communist regime. Wang’s (2003) incomplete bibliography listed more than 36,000 titles of LHH published from 1949 through 1994. He provided an estimate of 50,000 post-1949 titles. In order to reach beyond



the Mandarin-speaking population, some LHH titles were made available in languages used by China's minority ethnic groups—including Mongolian, Kazakh, Uyghur, Tibetan, and Korean—and in more than a dozen foreign languages, including Esperanto<sup>1</sup>.

The use of LHH as an educational tool for “the masses of the people” can be exemplified by *Hunyinfā Tujie Tongsu Ben* [婚姻法图解通俗本, The marriage law in illustration: A popularized edition] (1951). Covering marriage licenses, divorce, bigamy, name change, women's and children's rights, and legal responsibilities, this is one of quite a few LHH works published to help the uneducated Chinese population understand the Marriage Law promulgated in 1950. To explain Article 18, that the husband may not file for divorce when the wife is pregnant, the image shows a woman with a pregnant belly and a man in front of a judge, who stretches out his arm to give the man a firm gesture of denial (Huadong & Zhonghua, 1951, p. 80). A strong concern for the literacy status of readers is also manifested in the text, which paraphrases each article in plain language and even provides pronunciation guides and definitions for difficult words. LHH on parenting, agricultural science, and other useful topics were also published to help popularize knowledge among adults.

LHH publishing did not escape the devastating effect of the Cultural Revolution (1966-76) on all aspects of Chinese society. From 1966 to 1970, the LHH industry, as did all book publishing in China, nearly froze. In fact, many LHH editors and creators had to stop working when they were sent to labor camps to be punished (Jiang, 1986). Under the vigorous

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<sup>1</sup> The Beijing-based Foreign Language Press translated many LHH titles into English and some of these works found their way to Hong Kong, Britain, and the United States. The 1970s and early 1980s saw the publications of quite a few studies on LHH in English, conducted by British and American researchers (See, for example, Hannabuss, 1976; Stones, 1977; Mitchell, 1980; Smith, 1981)

intervention of Chinese Premier ZHOU Enlai, LHH was among the earliest leisure reading material that resumed publication after 1970. Under stifling censorship control over content and style, LHH served as an intensive tool of ideological indoctrination (Jiang, 2002). Titles from the 1970s received the most scholarly attention in the United States, thanks partly to the U.S.-China rapprochement in 1972. As multiple studies have shown, common topics and themes found in LHH works available in this period include hero worship for Chairman MAO Zedong and other Communist role models, celebration of CCP's leadership, superiority of China's Communist society, class struggle, collectivism, and revolutionary movements in other countries (see "People's Republic of China," 1974; Blumenthal, 1976; Hwang, 1978; and Chang, 1979).

### **From 1976 to 1989: The "Last" Golden Period and Decline**

After the Cultural Revolution ended in 1976, the native LHH industry at first expanded quickly but then started to decline from the mid-1980s until a final "retreat" at the end of the decade. Although LHH was never allowed to challenge Party leadership and Party-approved ideology, the format was liberated from being a sheer propaganda tool, which had resulted in one-dimensional characters and formulaic stories. The subject matter of LHH works diversified as numerous taboos were lifted. Traditional stories set in ancient China, criticized in the 1960s for featuring royal and upper-class protagonists rather than proletarians, reappeared in LHH works. Folktales, fantasy, and fables—genres suppressed during the Cultural Revolution for reasons ranging from superstition to feudalism, capitalism, and revisionism (Pu, 1989, p. 27)—came back to entertain young readers. LHH renditions of translated literature, previously highly restricted to revolutionary content, such as stories about the Paris Commune and Vladimir Lenin, works by Maxim Gorky, and Nikolai Ostrovsky's fictionalized autobiography *How the Steel Was Tempered*, expanded to include titles from Western Europe.

For a brief time period from 1977 to 1979, LHH even provided an outlet for intellectuals to voice their pain and trauma about the Cultural Revolution, joining what is called “shanghen wenxue” [scar literature] that rose meteorically in China’s literary landscape. Scar literature and art represented a deviation from China’s Communist literary tradition shaped by Mao’s 1942 talk in Yan’an. Even though anti-Cultural Revolution literature restrained its criticism within the rhetoric of the Party line, writers were preoccupied not with educating the masses about socialist ideology, but, as Chen (1996) pointed out, with exploring humanism and human nature. The passionate reception of scar literature—the most influential LHH title and a highly controversial one is *Feng* [枫, Maple leaves] (first published in the *Lianhuanhua Bao* magazine in 1979)—suggested that the format of LHH was a double-edged sword for the Communist regime, which had benefited from its popularity and persuasive power, but which could also be undermined by exposure of the Party’s dark history through authentic stories and visuals that struck a chord with the masses. A political climate amenable to scar literature did not last long, and the genre disappeared unceremoniously from LHH publishing<sup>1</sup>, as well as from Chinese literature in general at the time.

The early 1980s saw a shift of LHH from popular reading material for the poorly educated populace to a format perceived as being mainly for youth. BIAN Chunguang, head of the National Publishing Administration of the CCP’s Propaganda Department, directed the shift from the top down when he spoke at a LHH publishing conference organized by the Administration in March 1982. Bian (1982) instructed that LHH should target children and young adults as the main

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<sup>1</sup> An editor from the Liaoning Fine Arts Publishing House, for example, specifically mentioned withdrawing scar literature from LHH on the grounds of undesirable “social impact,” giving “political allegiance to the Party central committee” as the essential criterion for thematic appropriateness (Zhang, 1982/1987, p. 586).

audience; even works produced specifically for adults should be wholesome and wary of possible “poisonous effects” (p. 6) upon young readers who were not capable of critical reading; for late adolescents and older readers LHH publications were not adequate to help them become “socialist-minded, educated” (p. 7) workers. These instructions, given after the enormous impact of adult-oriented works like *Maple*—read and discussed by people from factory workers to school teachers—are intriguing. Could it be that, by directing LHH publishers to focus on child-friendly works, the Chinese authority was steering them away from politically sensitive topics and themes that would promise great appeal to adults who had been disillusioned by the Cultural Revolution?

Prior to Bian’s talk, some publishers had already increased their LHH publications for youth. WANG Pilai (1982/1987), editor of the influential People’s Fine Arts Publishing House, argued that for children in the fourth grade and under, LHH was virtually their only extracurricular reading. For older adolescents and adults, however, the format was only one of their reading choices. Interestingly, he was also a pioneer voice proposing that LHH for beginning readers should be published in a large size (Wang, 1982/1987), suggesting a transformation into picture books. As we shall see, despite the high quality of many individual works tailored for the young, the transition of LHH from popular reading to youth literature in the 1980s was not successful enough to stop the decline of the industry.

Post-Cultural Revolution years first saw an exponential growth in the quantity of LHH works. In Wang’s (2003) incomplete bibliography, the number of listed LHH titles doubled from 1977 to 1979, and nearly doubled again by 1981. According to Xu (1986), LHH and children’s books were nearly sold out after June 1, 1981, the International Children’s Day celebrated in China and an important gift day for young people, prompting publishers to greatly increase LHH

titles and print runs. In the peak years of 1982 and 1983, the total impression of LHH approached 1.5 billion, or one quarter of the book publishing in China (Jiang, 1986). However, the publishing bubble burst in 1985. More than 3,000 titles were printed that year with a total of 8.1 billion copies, but they sold poorly, marking the beginning of LHH's gradual retirement from being the most prominent popular reading material for "men and women, young and old" of 20th century China. In 1991, the industry shrank to 350 titles in several million copies (Lin, 1997).

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to offer a satisfactory answer to what caused the decline of Chinese LHH, a multifaceted question considered in numerous articles by laymen and researchers alike. Commonly cited factors include poor works released by unqualified publishers lured into the business, readers' changing tastes and value systems, a narrow thematic scope, rising production cost, and competition from television and other new media (See, for example, Yi, 1987; Lin, 1997; Zhong, 2004). Since Japanese manga replaced native LHH works as the most popular graphic reading material for youth after 1990, some studies sought answers by comparing the two in content and style. Shi and Hu (2008) suggest that Chinese LHH stories lack the originality and appeal found in successful Japanese imports, whose visual art is not necessarily as refined as that of Chinese works but is highly integrated with the text for effective and dynamic storytelling. Seldom discussed is the responsibility of government censorship, which led to prevalent self-censorship, in constraining the range of topics and themes that could have helped sustain the interest of a wide audience.

Another neglected issue is how Chinese LHH has adapted to a Chinese population celebrating a greatly improved rate of schooling and literacy. Various sources indicate that the illiteracy rate in China dropped to 22-25% by 1982 (Ross, 2005). Traditionally, LHH readers demanded a strong explanatory function from visuals, which were the main appeal of this format.

As the vast majority of the Chinese population could now read, however, visuals that simply repeated the same message in the text, while they still served pre-literate and beginning young readers well, became redundant. Starting from the 1970s, it became increasingly common for Chinese LHH to do away with conversation balloons—which were thought to ruin the integrity of the pictures (Fei, 1982/1987)—seriously diminishing the need for readers to look at image panels for extra information. Renowned LHH artist HE Youzhi was dismayed that most of the readers he observed skipped the illustrations and had eyes on the text only (Duan, [2000]). My examination of *Liehuo Jingang* [烈火金刚, Steel meets fire] (Vol. 1, 1984), a title that appeared in both the traditional LHH and Japanese manga style, shows that this reading pattern is highly possible, if not true for all readers.

The 178-page volume contains about 10,000 characters of text, which is continuous from page to page and makes up a complete story. A child finishing the third grade in elementary school would have learned nearly all the characters used in this book, which targets a general audience. For a fluent reader who needs no visual aid to comprehend the text, taking time to view images on every page might break the flow of reading. What role do images play in this LHH? Contrary to conventional expectation, not all images are a mere literal rendition of the text. Set during the Sino-Japanese War, the story begins with SHI Gengxin, an injured platoon leader of the Communist Eighth Route Army, seeking shelter from a peasant named Zhao. On page 11 (Figure 2.4) is a paragraph of 71 Chinese characters:

SHI Gengxin's words were interrupted by sudden gunshots and noisy shouts from the outside. The enemies had come close. Shi urged Uncle Zhao to leave immediately. Zhao, however, pushed Shi into the haystack and covered his body with more grass before exiting the stable.

The image above the text shows the frontal portrait of an old northern Chinese peasant standing still, his weather-beaten face looking determined. A darkish background with curvy lines resembling stormy waves conveys a sense of impending danger. This is a carefully executed portrait intending not to capture the actions described in the text, but to highlight the heroic nature of the peasant in a perilous circumstance. A piece of interpretive rather than explanatory illustration, it may unfortunately be skipped by fluent readers just the same. In fact, artwork like this would have attracted more attention if offered in an infrequently illustrated chapter book.

**Figure 2.4: Stylistic Changes in *Lianhuanhua***



11 史更新正说着，忽听外边响起枪声和嘈杂的喊声，敌人已到跟前了。他忙让赵大爷快跑，赵大爷把史更新推进草堆里，又在他身上盖了许多草，才转身出了牛棚。

(1) 1984 edition

*Liehuo Jingang* [烈火金刚, Steel meets fire] / by LIU Liu (刘流); adapted by DAI Ying (戴英); illustrated by LI Yongzhi (李永志).

Shenyang: Liaoning Meishu Chubanshe, 1984.



(2) 1998 edition

*Liehuo Jingang* [Steel meets fire] / by LIU Liu (刘流); adapted and illustrated by ZHOU Nanping (周南平).

Shenzhen: Haitian Chubanshe, 1998.



The dispensability of visuals in the 1984 edition contrasts sharply with a 1998 edition of the same story, which adopts the vocabulary and grammar of narrative art found in Japanese manga and Western comic books. The same segment mentioned above is expanded into three panels (Figure 2.4), one showing the coming noise and shouts, and two showing the peasant's successive actions—first hiding the soldier under the grass and then leaving the stable (p. 5). The length of text is cut by half, all of it appearing in conversation balloons except the onomatopoeia character “啪” (pa), written in the image to represent gunshot. These changes break the continuity of the text, which can no longer stand alone to form a complete story, and reduce the overlap of information between text and images, as a result forcing readers—regardless of their educational level—to put both together to make sense of the story.

My analysis of *Steel Meets Fire* suggests that traditional Chinese LHH, dominated by illustrated story books, lessened the significance of visuals for an increasingly literate Chinese population even as LHH creators were striving to perfect the artistic standard and expressive depth of individual panels. The “decline of Chinese LHH” after 1985 was partly the collapse of a “one-format-fits-all” model having prevailed in China since the 1920s, as different age groups were now attracted to other formats of reading and entertainment media, each with some competitive edge over the old LHH. The 1980s saw a fast growth of Chinese youth literature, boasting a plethora of high-quality works in diverse genres and formats tailored to different age levels. The bright side was that seeds for both the diversification and specialization of Chinese LHH had long been planted. A small number of brief children's LHH stories with simple language and colorful illustrations, clearly taking very young readers' comprehension level and interest into consideration, seemed ready to morph into large-size picture books. A minority of



LHH works were comic books relying heavily upon visuals for storytelling, the most famous titles being ZHANG Leping's nearly wordless *Sanmao* series. WANG Peikun's fantasy and science fiction series *Xiao Jing Ling* [小精灵, The little elf] (first issued in 1982; see Figure 2.1 for one page from this series), winner of the second prize in the fourth national LHH award given in December 1991, is an early and skillful adopter of the manga style. The sad fact, however, was that these promising seeds failed to help revive the Chinese LHH industry in the latter half of the 1980s and became dormant in the 1990s when Chinese youth literature, too, suffered decade-long inactivity.

### **From 1990 to the present**

LHH broadly defined as sequential narrative art did not disappear from Chinese publications after the 1990s, but works by Chinese creators lost their claim on the market. Meanwhile, according to Lin's (1997) estimation, Japanese manga occupied more than 90% of China's LHH market in 1994. Alerted by the sweeping preference of Chinese youth for imported manga and animated cartoon shows, the CCP's Propaganda Department and the national Administration of Press and Publication launched a "5155 Project"<sup>1</sup> in 1995 to sponsor native manga publications and cartoon works. These Chinese works, however, were not successful (Lin, 1997). *Steel Meets Fire* (1998), analyzed above, was part of a manga series introduced by the Haitian Publishing House. Despite the official awards the series received, such effort to "spice up" old LHH stories with popular Japanese comics language saw little impact and was a long way from revitalizing the domestic industry. Incidentally, imported comics overwhelmingly were pirated copies sold in

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<sup>1</sup> The project drew its name "5155" from the goal to establish 5 comics publishing bases, to publish 15 major children's comics series, and to create 5 children's comics magazines.

less reputable venues. Today an illegal market of pirated manga has remained so robust in China that publishers can hardly profit from importing authorized editions (Liu, 2009).

For both its content and style, Japanese manga quickly acquired a bad reputation among concerned adults in China. In one article, Senior LHH editor JIANG Weipu (1995) juxtaposed crudely drawn, nonsensical, and vulgar Japanese LHH with other pornographic publications apparently responsible for juvenile delinquency. Echoing comic artist HUA Junwu's condemnation that Japanese manga's invasion of Chinese children's minds was equivalent to "the Incident of July 7"<sup>1</sup> in the comics realm, Jiang (2000, 2001) warned of the pernicious messages—ranging from capitalism to imperialism to militarism—that were embedded in Japanese LHH publications.

Recently, the huge success of a domestic anime television show *Xiyangyang yu Huitailang* [喜羊羊与灰太狼, Pleasant Goat and Big Big Wolf] (first aired in 2005), whose protagonists are now national household names, is beginning to give people hope about the revival of domestic Chinese anime and related industries. The tie-in comic book series of the humorous show sold more than 1 million copies within three months after hitting the market (Zan, 2009). The first anime movie adaptation and its sequel, shown in 2009 and 2010 in the theatre, were both box office hits.

## Issues

The discrepancy between what can be strictly defined as "youth literature" in China and what Chinese youth read for leisure during much of the 20th century raises questions about the

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<sup>1</sup> Referring to the Marco Polo Bridge Incident on July 7, 1937, which marked the beginning of Imperial Japan's full-scale aggression against China.

scope of my study, which seeks to understand how the history of the Sino-Japanese War has been reflected in information sources for youth.

One title highlights the intricate relationship between LHH and youth literature. LIU Zhixia's *Tie Dao You Ji Dui* [铁道游击队, The railway guerrillas], first published in 1954, was an adult bestseller of combat stories set during the Sino-Japanese War. Its LHH version in ten volumes (1955-1962), retold by DONG Ziwei and illustrated by DING Binzeng and HAN Heping, further expanded the readership of the story to those who could not read the original hefty novel. In 1963 the first nine of the ten volumes won the first prize in the national LHH award for illustration and the second prize for text. By 1983, each of these nine volumes had been released in well over three million copies, a record-breaking number among LHH works. As Farquhar (1999) reminded us, the vibrant LHH rental business (not to mention many children's exchange of their private LHH collections with each other) means that the actual readership was much larger than indicated by the sales statistics (p. 202).

Liu also tried writing for young people. In 1959 he published a juvenile novel featuring young guerrilla soldiers who work with adult characters in *The Railway Guerrillas*, and in 1983 LIU Zhenhua, the author's wife, shortened the original novel *The Railway Guerrillas* into an edition for youth. These youth literature versions and their LHH adaptations, however, circulated far less widely among young readers than the ten-volume set did.

The case with *The Railway Guerrillas* prompts us to reconsider what constitutes “youth literature” in China. *Guerrillas* in LHH is representative of those popular works with appeal to young readers becoming the *de facto* youth literature, a familiar phenomenon found in the early developmental stages of youth literature in the West. Prominent examples of this are *The Pilgrim's Progress* and *Gulliver's Travels*. That LHH works intended for a general audience

made up a big proportion of youth's leisure reading suggests that (text-oriented) books produced specifically for them—the “real” youth literature—failed to satisfy their need for quality, quantity, and diversity of targeted age groups. Tellingly, during the 1980s, the decade which celebrated achievements and breakthroughs in Chinese youth literature, the LHH industry shrank considerably. Anecdotal evidence from memoirs has confirmed that LHH made good reading for people with limited vocabulary. It helped establish confidence and interest in independent reading, and with increased reading skills young people were able to consume more complex texts of youth literature provided that good works were available.

Continuing MAO Dun's (1932/1989) slight of LHH as a sub par replacement for, rather than a form of, youth literature, Chinese youth literature researchers have largely bypassed LHH as a legitimate subject of their field, and scholarly works are instead focused on text-oriented juvenile publications. It was not until the recent expansion of picture books after 2000 that the situation began to change. CHEN Guangyi's humorous, child-friendly LHH has never been mentioned in youth literature history. Even the best of the children's titles in LHH, such as the award-winning *Ji Mao Xin* [鸡毛信, Feather letter], have received little critical attention from youth literature specialists.<sup>1</sup> The exception is a few Western scholars. For example, Australian scholar Mary Ann Farquhar (1999) devoted one well-researched chapter to LHH, which she called comic books, in her study of Chinese children's literature. (However, she mistook the format as being literature originally intended for young people before developing into popular literature for a broader audience [p. 193, 195].)

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<sup>1</sup> An interesting conversation I had in 2007 illustrates well this unfortunate neglect. When I first discussed my research project with a renowned Chinese scholar in youth literature studies, the professor was almost indignant that I considered LHH as children's literature. Five minutes into my explanation of the purpose of my study, the scholar, then in his fifties, told me that he grew up reading LHH voraciously, having rented them cheaply from book stands.

On the one hand, to continue to disregard LHH would miss an important part of the reading history of Chinese youth. In its heyday LHH would have been the most widely circulated reading materials across China. It was in abundant supply in urban areas. In the vast rural areas where most families could not afford other books and subscriptions to children's magazines, LHH might be the only leisure reading materials a child could get hold of outside school.

On the other hand, to include LHH—a mixture of titles produced for youth and *de facto* youth literature—in my study means that I should be cautious about applying youth literature standards familiar to Western researchers. Genre analysis will have to accommodate the characteristics of LHH. Not all LHH has been careful about the line between factual and fictional stories. Quite like early biographies produced for children in the United States, some biographies in LHH were furnished with vivid—and entirely imagined—conversations. Works about real people and real events rarely included sources and references—nowadays a common practice adopted by American nonfiction for youth and even some historical fiction as well.

A final issue concerns the availability and collection of data, pertinent to youth literature and even more to LHH. One is viewed as “kiddie lit” and the other as ephemeral popular literature; both receive poor organization in Chinese libraries and do not support effective search by subject matter. Considered an important tool for political socialization and indoctrination, LHH, among other cultural artifacts, was the target of repeated purges after 1949. What has survived in public and research libraries in China is only part of what has been published. Currently many LHH titles—published no longer than fifty years ago—can be found in private collectors' hands only and are sold as collectables. The conclusions I reach about LHH are thus limited to those surviving and reprinted works available to the public today. However, those are numerous and—

as explored in the next chapter—provide rich insights into the relationship of youth literature and cultural history.

### **Chapter 3. The Sino-Japanese War as Depicted in Chinese Youth Literature**

This chapter analyze how the Sino-Japanese War has been depicted in Chinese youth literature published from the war years to the present (1937-2007). They seek to address the following questions: what are the major subjects and themes of Sino-Japanese War literature read by Chinese youth? What part of the war history has been reflected in these books, and what part underrepresented in them? What is the relationship between the characteristics of Sino-Japanese War youth literature and the political, social, and cultural dynamics of the contemporaneous time period?

#### **Scope and Data Source**

Two types of Chinese youth literature—the image-heavy LHH and text-heavy juvenile books—were collected for this study, and 360 titles of LHH and 22 titles of juvenile books were analyzed. As noted in the previous chapter, not all Chinese LHH was published specifically for youth, but the format nonetheless enjoyed the widest readership among this age group until its decline in the mid-1980s. In fact, of all the LHH titles I found about the Sino-Japanese War, only a small number, with a focus upon mature topics concerning adult relationships, can be considered most appropriate for grown-ups but still easily readable by teenagers. I did not exclude these few titles from my study. Of the text-heavy juvenile books I collected, some are full-length fiction and nonfiction, others are anthologies of short stories and short-length novels and nonfiction accounts. Many of the anthology entries had previously appeared in newspaper and magazines.

It must be clarified that my search was limited to Mandarin Chinese youth literature published in China. This drawback is slightly assuaged by the fact that many titles in ethnic

minority groups' languages are also available in Mandarin Chinese—and are likely a translation from the latter. My search did not exclude translations and adaptations from foreign-language literature and media, although I found only a small number of them featuring ethnic Chinese experience during the Sino-Japanese War. One area I decided to skip over was the Chinese translation of Japanese manga, partly because of the access issue: the Chinese edition of manga is usually a piracy, which was less likely to enter public libraries. Although Morris-Suzuki pointed out that Japan's aggression in Asia and the Pacific is a fairly big topic in Japanese manga of historical fiction and nonfiction (2005, p. 177), imports to China are overwhelmingly fantasy and apolitical titles. Two of the best known manga works about the Sino-Japanese War or the Pacific War—NAKAZAWA Keiji's *Hadashi no Gen* [Barefoot Gen: A cartoon story of Hiroshima] (1972-1973) and KOBAYASHI Yoshinori's bestselling and controversial *Sensōron* [On war] (1998-2003)—were never introduced to the Chinese market, legally or illegally. A separate study that combs illegal market and library legal collections for Japanese manga on the Pacific War would be a worthwhile undertaking.

The approach I took in collecting data was restricted by the cataloging practice of libraries in Mainland China. LHH and juvenile books about the Sino-Japanese War were commonly assigned the subject heading *ge ming gu shi* [革命故事, revolutionary stories]. A search in the online catalog of the National Library of China found that this broad term was also applied to stories about Vladimir Lenin, Joseph Stalin, Chinese Communist leaders and heroes, the Long March (1934-35), the Chinese civil war (1946-49), the Korean War (1950-53), contemporary Communist role models, and many other Communist activities. No narrower terms such as “the Sino-Japanese War” or “World War II” were used in the subject field to distinguish youth literature about the historical period of 1937-45 from other “revolutionary stories.” A summary



of the book's content was rarely provided in the catalog. Such a level of granularity in the catalog records of youth literature was typical in Chinese libraries, rendering it impossible to generate a reliable list of juvenile titles about the Sino-Japanese War from the catalog database. There were no thematic reference books on Chinese youth literature to assist me with the search for Sino-Japanese War stories. None of the bibliographies I found for LHH and juvenile books contain information about the subject matter, except when the title gives some clue to what the book is about.

**Figure 3.1: A Pile of Uncataloged *Lianhuanhua* at the Yunhe County Public Library**



Photo taken when I was identifying World War II stories from the library's collection of 3,700 or so LHH titles.

Date: October 25, 2007

With these barriers in mind, I located 468 titles of LHH published from 1937 to 2007 about the Sino-Japanese War. (Through my search I came across the publication information of another 240 or so items, identified as Sino-Japanese War stories by their title or plot summary. I was unable to obtain the actual copies and read them. Three quarters of them, judging by their titles, seem to be other adaptations of the same LHH stories I have collected.) More than half of the 468 titles were collected from the Yunhe County Public Library of the Zhejiang Province. Part of

the reason for the choice of this library was convenience. Serving a rural town of 123,317 residents (Yunhe Xian Fazhan he Gaige Ju, 2008), it was the only library that allowed me to browse its LHH collection on the bookshelf and to borrow items for a long term. Other libraries I visited kept most of the collection in the closed stacks, and the Shanghai Children's Library had stopped circulating the old, palm-sized copies, which I had to request after obtaining special permission from the head librarian. I read the plot summary, commonly provided on the title page verso, and occasionally browsed the content of an estimated 3,700 titles of LHH held in the Yunhe Public Library, and found 263 to be related to the Sino-Japanese War. A total of 126 titles, in electronic format, were downloaded for a fee from cartoonwin.com, an online bookstore which digitizes LHH from hard copies. I located relevant works by reading the plot summary of all the titles categorized under "revolutionary war," "Chinese and world history," and "biographies" at this website. The rest were either in-print titles purchased from Amazon.cn, the Chinese branch of the U.S.-based online bookstore Amazon.com, or out-of-print titles partially photocopied and scanned from the National Library of China, Shanghai Library, and the Shanghai Children's Library<sup>1</sup>. Some titles were discovered by keyword searching, and others were known items mentioned in bibliographies and review articles.

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<sup>1</sup> These libraries were chosen for their collection size and location. The National Library of China is the legal deposit library of the People's Republic of China. The Shanghai Library and Shanghai Children's Library are two public libraries located in China's largest metropolitan city which for many decades was widely recognized as the publication center of LHH and youth literature. In these three libraries I was often able to find known items not available elsewhere.

In future research I hope to use the rich collections of pre-1949 titles at the Nanjing Public Library and the Chongqing Public Library. The two cities were significant during World War II. Nanjing was the capital of the Republic of China until the city fell and the notorious massacre followed in December 1937. The Nationalist government had to make Chongqing of Southwest China its provisional capital until the war ended. These two

Of the 468 titles of LHH, I found 360 to be unique titles, which were coded in my content analysis. The remaining 108 titles were set aside for two reasons. When there were several LHH adaptations of the same story, only the edition with the earliest publication date or a better-known edition (an award-winning copy or the one by a renowned illustrator) was chosen for my study. Ten titles were also set aside because they appeared to be random volumes from multiple-volume works, and I did not feel comfortable analyzing them without having access to the complete set.

I collected 88 items of full-length works and anthology entries from text-heavy juvenile books and used 22 of them for this study. My search for juvenile books about the Sino-Japanese War focused upon three categories: canonical titles on this subject, titles that had attracted the attention of reviewers and scholars, and titles in print in 2007. Canonical titles such as *Little Soldier Chang Ka-tse* (Xu, 1962), *Ji Mao Xin* [鸡毛信, Feather letter] (Hua, 1949/1990), and *Yulai Mei You Si* [雨来没有死, Yulai did not die, aka Little hero Yulai] (Guan, 1948/1990) were hard to miss, for me who grew up in China. They have been adapted into popular LHH and often media as well, and a few were classic pieces in school textbooks, taught to generations of Chinese children. Ka-tse, Haiwa, and Yulai—the teenage boy heroes in these stories—were made household names in China through their steady presence in literature, media, and elementary school education.

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libraries were in the best locations to collect wartime publications and those published until the defeat of the Nationalist government.

During my stay in China in the autumn of 2007, the Nanjing Library was moving to a new building and had packed its pre-1949 books “half a year” before. One staff member told me over the phone that the library was not expecting to open the collection to the public till perhaps “after the Spring Festival” of 2008. The Chongqing Library told me that it was still organizing its pre-1949 collection and that the date of opening the collection to the public was “indefinite.” (Anonymous, personal communications, 2007)

By combing through juvenile book award lists, review articles and academic writing in Chinese youth literature, I located other titles that had been reviewed, recommended, and critiqued. One source I used to find important works was an anthology of Chinese youth literature, compiled by renowned scholars and children's and young adult authors to "reflect the trends in the development of Chinese children's literature"<sup>1</sup> (*Zhongguo Ertong Wenxue Daxi* Bianji Weiyuanhui, 1990, para. 1). The anthology was comprised of seven volumes, reprinting research articles on youth literature and short-length juvenile works of novels, fairy tales, essays, poetry, plays, and science (non)fiction "representative of each historical period" (Pu, 1990, p. 40) from the May Fourth Movement of 1919 till the end of the 1980s. I photocopied all stories relevant to the Sino-Japanese War from the three volumes for novels, fairy tales, and science (non)fiction respectively. Lastly, 25 in-print juvenile titles were purchased from amazon.cn during the fall of 2007.

Of all 88 items of juvenile books and short stories, 22 are also available in LHH adaptations or feature the same biographees in the LHH that I collected, establishing themselves as among the most accessible Sino-Japanese War stories in China. My dissertation focuses on these 22 titles, to be integrated into the discussion of corresponding LHH works. The study of Sino-Japanese War stories in less widely distributed juvenile books, a broad and significant project on its own, is in my future research agenda.

Chronologically, most of the stories I collected for this study are set during the Sino-Japanese War, but not all of them are. Works which span a longer time period, unless having

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<sup>1</sup> It is still uncustomary in China to divide youth literature into children's and young adult literature. The term *ertong wenxue*, which I translated faithfully into "children's literature" from Chinese into English, is often inclusive of literature for both age groups.

World War II as a trivial part of the story, are included in my study. A handful of fiction titles are set in postwar years and contemporary times, reflecting the continual impact of the war or using literary devices to recount World War II. For biographies and biographical fiction, I included biographees who were either a historic figure during the Sino-Japanese War or whose life stories reflect a significant impact by the war.

Geographically, most of the stories are set in Mainland China. Some have an international setting, as protagonists and biographees travel widely. A small number of LHH works are set in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and other areas in the Pacific theatre, and all have to do with the Sino-Japanese War and (overseas) Chinese participation in the Pacific War.

Although this is outside the scope of my study, I did find and record about 100 titles of World War II LHH works set in the European theatre, primarily taking place in the Communist countries of Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Romania, and Albania.

### **Limitation of the Data**

The limitation of my data lies in incompleteness. This is not a comprehensive study of all the youth literature titles ever published in China since 1937 about the Sino-Japanese War. Due to restrictions in the library catalog and reference tools, I am certain that I missed some titles on this subject. The data set is weak in pre-1949 publications. Those titles did not survive easily in Communist China, and previously described circumstances also prevented me from using two special pre-1949 collections in Nanjing and Chongqing when I collected my data.

On the other hand, my search revealed that at least 550 titles of LHH and juvenile books—over fifteen times the number of American juvenile fiction—had been published in Mainland China from 1937 till the present. The quantitative difference in American and Chinese titles is conspicuous enough to demonstrate how intensely or sparsely the same topic has been treated in

the youth literature of the two countries. The 382 titles (360 in LHH and 22 in text-heavy juvenile books) I coded and analyzed involve no small amount of data. What characteristics are revealed in this incomplete body of Sino-Japanese War stories should be an important indication of the nature of the whole body.

Despite the small number of pre-1949 titles in my data set, what I have obtained are possibly among the most widely circulated and most influential works published during that time period, judging by the fact that these titles have survived in Chinese libraries or been reprinted. Titles most offensive to the Communist government, if such works were ever written, were likely to have been physically destroyed. In this case, at least, we can safely assume that these books did not have much influence over Chinese children growing up after 1949, regardless of their readership under the Nationalist regime.

## **Methods**

This study applied several methods to answer the proposed research questions. In order to capture the general image of the Sino-Japanese War portrayed in Chinese youth literature, I used content analysis with all LHH titles and surveyed the way they deal with a common set of elements. Through literary analysis, significant titles were examined in greater detail to see how they conform to or differ from the overall pattern revealed by content analysis. Through historical analysis, all these findings about the characteristics of Sino-Japanese War stories were viewed through the lens of Chinese history and politics, to examine the ways in which youth literature shifted from 1937 to 2007 under the larger shaping forces in Chinese society.

The set of elements I coded made up the bare bones of the plot or content of a book: the time and geographical settings of the book; the gender, ethnicity or nationality, professional identity, and political membership of the main character or biographee; and the main subject matter. An

extra element I took note of was the identity of the enemy in the book. For the majority of the stories, I identified one or two central characters in each, and three in rare cases. When the story seemed to portray more than three characters all as key figures, I considered them a “crowd cast” and recorded “group” as the main character. I identified the subject terms by summarizing the content of the story in free keywords, some of which coincided with Library of Congress Subject Headings. I was able to apply some of the terms which emerged early in my coding process—examples of such terms include “military combat” and “guerrilla warfare” (LCSH)—repeatedly to titles I encountered later. But I also had to create new terms throughout the process when none of the old keywords could describe a new topic in a book. An average of two or three terms was assigned to each story.

I also coded the subject portrayed in the cover art of LHH works, which treat this element seriously. Although it is unclear how common the practice was, since 1955 LHH publishers had charged artists with creating cover images in color, as opposed to the usually black-and-white narrative art inside, which was done by book illustrators for a lower rate of payment than received by painters. The purpose was to give the most appealing outside look to LHH so as to attract potential renters and readers (Li, 2001, p. 15).

After I finished the coding of all 360 LHH titles, two Chinese-speaking volunteer coders were recruited through an electronic mailinglist announcement to help me with a reliability test. The female volunteer, born in the late 1970s, had a Master’s degree in Library and Information Science, and the male volunteer, born in the early 1980s, was a doctoral student in the same field. Even though their age means that the industry had begun to decline by the time they could read independently, both claimed to love reading LHH as a child. Each volunteer coded 10 random

titles from my collection, and neither mentioned coming across any of them during their childhood.

Cases of contradictions between my coding and volunteers' coding were low (under 3%). Volunteers' unfamiliarity with the military history of the Sino-Japanese War caused almost all of the contradictory coding. For example, one volunteer did not know that “Yanling Dui” [雁翎队, the wild goose feather squad] was the name of a Communist-led guerrilla force. Although the relationship between the squad and the CCP was provided in the story, she missed the cue and coded “Yanling Dui” as a resistance force of civilian peasants. One case of contradictory coding was caused by the lack of enough information in the book and by the coders' nuanced interpretations. For example, one story takes place in a nameless town on the river of Zhujiang, which flows through the Guangdong Province of south China. Based on the text and images in the book, I decided that the town does not appear sufficiently urbanized and considered it a rural town. The volunteer coder, however, labeled it “urban” because it is clearly not a farming village.

Besides these direct contradictions, differences in coding lay in what facets and how many facets of the story we each identified. I did not impose any restrictions on the number of terms volunteers could fill in each field, and the only instruction I gave was to use their best knowledge and write down what they thought were major terms—the same rule I followed in my coding process. In the subject field, volunteers and I provided at least one common or equivalent term to 90% of the tested stories, but almost always differed in the total number of subject terms we assigned to each story. Personality of the coders seemed to matter here. I tended to list more subject terms than one volunteer did, but fewer terms than the other. The latter volunteer also tended to list a crowd cast as the main protagonists of a story, including the central figures as well as what his fellow volunteer coder and I considered supporting characters.



In this reliability test, individual coders rarely disagreed with each other but frequently differed in the granularity of their coding. The pattern of variations mirrors the diverse ways general readers approach LHH works and absorb information from them. Readers do not come with cookie-cutter personalities, equal depth of history background, and the same amount of attention paid to detail. Our divergence in the subject field is reflected in the cataloging and indexing process, which, according to Mai's (2001) semiotic analysis, is fundamentally interpretative, variable, and human, yielding "only little certainty to its result" (p. 591).

The test showed that my coding was only one valid version of how these LHH works could be coded. Given this and given the incompleteness of data I worked with, it must be cautioned that my conclusion about the thematic pattern of Sino-Japanese War stories in LHH should not be viewed as representing the whole of Chinese children's literature on the Sino-Japanese War.

### **An Overview of Publication Patterns**

At first glance, LHH of Sino-Japanese War stories, not unlike Chinese LHH in general, is heavy with adaptations. According to publication information found in them, only 68 out of the total 468 titles (15%) seem to be original creations or otherwise their publishers gave no clue about the source text and original authors. The rest drew their stories from a wide variety of sources, including but not restricted to youth literature, adult literature, poetry, plays, operas, ballets, movies, anime, and drama television series. Until its retreat from the Chinese market around 1990, LHH offered a convenient view of what the general public of all ages, of varying educational background, and with uneven access to media had been enjoying in popular culture.

### **Format and Genre**

I coded 360 unique titles of LHH featuring Sino-Japanese War stories and ethnic Chinese experience during the war. Besides one nearly wordless comic book and four in the format of a

graphic novel, almost all other titles are typical LHH works with one image and a short paragraph of text outside the image frame on every page. Conversation balloons were occasionally used. Three of them, published before 1950, have image on one page and text on its facing page—a layout that was particularly mentioned as unpopular during the massive LHH reform campaign of the early 1950s (Bai, 1950). Apparently, all later publications made sure to have visuals on *every* page, the popular format which had become the norm under the Nationalist regime.

The length of LHH, too, was shaped by the double force of the market preference and the Party's determination to claim that market. The few earliest Sino-Japanese War titles published by the CCP were mostly short (50 images or fewer), which had to do with its lack of access to publishing materials during the war. As MO Pu, one of the illustrators of wartime work *Iron Buddha Temple* (1943) recalled, the extremely small supply of print paper had to be procured from areas occupied by the Japanese, "sometime at the cost of blood and lives" (Mo, Lü, & Ya, 1984, p. 67). Either Communist LHH authors became comfortable telling brief stories or their pre-1949 short works were reprinted to replace "old" ones. Since the short length of these early titles was criticized during the reform campaign, later publications clearly conformed to the demand of the market. Of the 360 titles, only a dozen are under 32 pages, if we compare them with the typical length of an American picture book. Three LHH works each include three short illustrated stories in one volume, reducing the risk of their being discriminated against at the rental market for thinness. The page number of all titles, excluding the bound works, averages 116 pages each.

There is little variety in the genre of these Sino-Japanese War stories (Table 3.1). Most of them (79%) are historical fiction set during the Sino-Japanese War. Since it is not always easy to

tell biography apart from biographical fiction in LHH, the two categories are counted together and they make up 13% of all. Except for one comic book and three anime spin-offs, whose exaggerated images and unrealistic events require readers to suspend disbelief, all other LHH titles are restricted to realistic settings and realistic characters. Ten of the historical and contemporary realistic works of fiction can be considered romance, and six are stories about Chinese martial arts and can be roughly categorized as kung fu novels, in which genre heroes' and heroines' fantastic kung fu skills may not be entirely attainable. Otherwise, there is no fantasy or science fiction in this collection. In my search for Sino-Japanese War stories I kept my eye open for works which allude to the history, as in the metaphorical way Eve Bunting's *Terrible Things* (1980) did to Holocaust history, or in the way J.K. Rowling used the history of World War II and the Holocaust as a cultural reference in her *Harry Potter* series (1997-2007). I did not discover any works like these among LHH about the Sino-Japanese War<sup>1</sup>.

**Table 3.1: Genre of Chinese *Lianhuanhua* About the Sino-Japanese War**

Genre	Number of Titles	Percentage
Historical fiction	286	79%
Contemporary realistic fiction	10	3%
(Auto)biography or biographical fiction	47	13%
Nonfiction (excluding biography)	16	4%
Youth literature	84	23%
<b>Total</b>	443 (>360)	(>100%)

I define works adapted from (text-heavy) juvenile titles and those featuring young protagonists as LHH specifically oriented for young readers. They make up over one fifth (23%) of the collection. As has been discussed in the previous chapter, this figure is consistent with the

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<sup>1</sup> Among text-heavy juvenile literature about Japanese aggression, I found four metaphorical works in the genres of fairy tales and science fiction: *Mi Feng Guo* [蜜蜂国, Honey bees' kingdom] (HE Yi, 1937/1989), *Kai Xuan Men* [凯旋门, Arch of triumph] (HE Yi, 1939/1989), *He Ping de Meng* [和平的梦, The dream about peace] (GU Junzheng, 1940/1990), and *Xin Mu Ou Qi Yu Ji* [新木偶奇遇记, New Pinocchio's adventure] (SU Su, 1940/1989). Curiously, all were published during the first half of the Sino-Japanese War.

general observation that LHH was mostly an adult-child cross-reading format. A larger proportion of LHH works consumed by Chinese youth were not strictly “youth literature,” due partly to the absence of a strong children’s book publishing industry in China. Among the youth-oriented titles, only very few show some consideration of the youngest readers’ cognitive level. Nine of the youth-oriented titles are illustrated in color, and five are also under 32 pages, a manageable length for preschoolers to pore over. For decades, Chinese low purchasing power forced LHH publishers to produce palm-sized, thick, black-and-white books printed on poor-quality paper, discouraging the growth of picture books for preschoolers<sup>1</sup>. Pre-literate children were nonetheless not denied the pleasure of LHH, from viewing the images alone to sometimes being read to by adults.

### Quantity by Date of Publication

**Table 3.2: Publication Date of Chinese *Lianhuanhua* About the Sino-Japanese War**

<b>Date of Publication</b>	<b>Number of Titles Obtained</b>	<b>Bibliographical Information Only</b>
1937-1949 (During the Sino-Japanese War & the Chinese civil war)	11	36
1950-1965 (The first 16 years of Communist China)	60	57
1966-1976 (Cultural Revolution)	50	(Not tabulated due to incomplete bibliographical information of many titles lacking publication date.)
1977-1989 (Till the Tiananmen Square protests)	220	
1990-2007 (After Chinese titles retreated the LHH market)	19	
<b>Total</b>	360	240

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<sup>1</sup> Evidence of the average Chinese people’s poor purchasing power of books is seen in a letter published in *Wenhui Bao* [文汇报, Wenhui daily] in 1958. The letter writer complained that a new series of picture books, each volume with a length of 28 pages and sold at 10 cents, was “still a little bit pricy” (Yang, 1958).

Table 3.2 shows that Sino-Japanese War stories were told in Chinese LHH published in every postwar historical period, until the industry shrank and foreign imports took over the market after 1990.

The number of pre-1949 titles is underestimated here, because of poor preservation, deliberate destruction, and my lack of access. In two reference tools I consulted—*Xiandai Lianhuanhua Xunzong* [现代连环画寻踪, Seeking the traces of modern LHH] (Lin & Zhao, 1993), a bibliography of 3369 Chinese LHH titles published from the 1920s through the 1940s, and *Zhongguo Lianhuanhua Mulu Huibian* [中国连环画目录汇编, A bibliography of Chinese LHH] (Wang, 2003), which mainly recorded post-1949 works but devoted one section to old publications of the 1930s and 1940s as well—the bibliographical information on over 40 items indicates unmistakably that they are about the Sino-Japanese War. (And there must be other Sino-Japanese War stories whose subject matter can not be ascertained by title alone.) The majority of them, however, are unavailable for me to read.

Even LIN Min and ZHAO Suxing, a married couple and the compilers of *Seeking the Traces of Modern LHH*, regretted not being able to keep the books long enough to write a summary for each story. As was explained in the preface of the bibliography and in editors' note, when the couple started the project during the Cultural Revolution, it was politically dangerous simply to look for those books. "We...searched for LHH among dust-covered books which had been dumped to some dark corners but which fortunately had not been fed into the oven, recorded and selectively read them..." (Lin & Zhao, 1993, p. 7). The compilers state that not many of the LHH titles listed in their bibliography survived in China, but some might be found in foreign countries. My own search in North American libraries through the WorldCat catalog database failed to confirm their surmise, although several large East Asian collections in the United States,

including those in the Yale University Library and the Library of Congress, did contain pre-1949 titles of text-heavy juvenile literature rather than LHH.

Due to the vast cultural demolitions of the Cultural Revolution, LHH titles published from 1950 through 1965—the first 16 years of Communist China—are not well represented in my data set either. In addition to what I have collected, the publication information of another 57 titles (Table 3.2) that appear to be about the war turned up in my search but they are physically inaccessible to me. It must be pointed out that most of them appear to be alternative adaptations of the same LHH stories I have read, and only a dozen appear to be unique titles.

The 50 titles dated during the Cultural Revolution were all from the second half of the movement in the 1970s. As introduced in the previous chapter, the LHH industry was paralyzed in the first half of the Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1970. In terms of quantity, this was the least productive ten years since the birth of Chinese LHH.

Given the highly restricted choices of leisure reading materials Chinese had during the Cultural Revolution, it was all the more striking how heavily Sino-Japanese War stories weighed among Party-approved title lists. Since the vast majority of works of literature and film were banned as subversive materials, only a limited number of stories remained safe to tell and to adapt into LHH. These included three categories: a few movie spin-offs and adaptations; stories based upon what was called “model plays,” which were official operas and ballets promoted by the Chinese government throughout the country; and biographical stories featuring Communist heroes whose model behavior Chairman MAO Zedong and the Party called upon the Chinese to emulate. In all three categories the Sino-Japanese War was a prominent subject. Yin and Ling wrote about sanctioned movie titles,

...for years since the Cultural Revolution broke out, only three drama films were shown to tens of thousands of movie viewers in China: *Didao Zhan* [地道战, Tunnel warfare], *Dilei Zhan* [地雷战, Landmine warfare], and *Nanzheng Beizhan* [南征北战, Fighting north and south]. If statistics had been collected, each of the three movies must have reached over 1 trillion viewers, which was a miracle in the history of world movie industry. (2002, p. 85)

All were war movies produced before the Cultural Revolution. Both *Landmine Warfare* (1962) and *Tunnel Warfare* (1965) tell thrilling stories about Communist-led guerrilla warfare during the Sino-Japanese War, and each was adapted by at least five publishers into LHH during this period. Three of the eight major model plays—*Hongdeng Ji* [红灯记, The legend of the red lantern], *Shajiabang* [沙家浜], and *Baimao Nü* [白毛女, The white-haired girl]—are related to the Sino-Japanese War, and similarly appeared in multiple editions of LHH.

Finally, official heroes and heroines were frequent subjects of LHH works during the Cultural Revolution. One of these heroes was Dr. Norman Bethune, a Canadian physician who volunteered in the Sino-Japanese War and died in 1939 while providing medical service to the Communist-led Eighth Route Army. Dr. Bethune's notability among the Chinese was greatly enhanced by MAO Zedong's essay titled "In Memory of Norman Bethune." During the Cultural Revolution, that essay became one of the three required readings, known as *lao san pian*, or "Three Constantly Read Articles," for the entire Chinese population<sup>1</sup>. Another Communist martyr LIU Hulan was a teenage girl who politically matured during the Sino-Japanese War and died in 1947. In a laudatory comment on her heroism, Mao wrote "a great life and an honorable death," a famous line which was quoted whenever her story was told. Liu's biographical story in LHH appeared as early as 1949, and continued to be retold in every decade.

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<sup>1</sup> The other two required essays were Mao's "Serve the People" and "The Foolish Old Man Who Removed the Mountains."

As noted in Chapter 2, after the Cultural Revolution, the Chinese LHH industry initially expanded quickly, but also declined quickly from the mid-1980s until a final retreat around 1990. From 1977 to 1989, at least 220 unique Sino-Japanese War stories—a number several times higher than in any other historical period—were published. Obviously, the Sino-Japanese War continued to be a big topic for LHH as the industry enjoyed its last golden era. Another reason that accounts for the high number here is that books published in this time period are relatively easy to locate.

After 1990, very few new LHH works about the Sino-Japanese War were created, when the general output of the industry was dwindling year by year. I collected only 19 new titles dated from 1990 through 2007, while classic titles of Sino-Japanese War stories continued to be reprinted. The influence of these new works among young readers was modest. Before 1990, it was a common practice for publishers to provide print-run information on the copyright page or colophon. The first printing of a title could easily reach several hundred thousand, and occasionally over one million. Now publishers seemed to have shied away from doing so. When the print-run was given, it was no more than twenty thousand. *Xiao Erhei Jiehun* [小二黑结婚, XIAO Erhei gets married] (1995), a critically acclaimed work illustrated in Chinese color brush-painting by HE Youzhi, had a tiny first print run of 1,000 copies, not unusual for domestic new works of that decade.

### **Authorship**

Dominated by adaptation works, LHH was frequently the end product of at least three creators working in isolation or in collaboration: author of the original work, writer of the adaptation, and illustrator. Who were these people? Who told, retold, and illustrated Sino-Japanese War stories? It is impossible to investigate every creator who contributed to the 360



LHH works. Without a copyright law in the People's Republic of China (PRC) until 1990, Chinese LHH publishers not only freely appropriated stories available in any media, but sometimes failed to give credit to the creator of the original source. Although their work was indispensable to the success of a story, writers generally could not establish their names in the literary world solely by composing the text of LHH. Occasionally, amateurs participated in the creation and adaptation of LHH works. The personal information on all these types of contributors is hard to locate. Rather than a comprehensive investigation, I will focus on authors of the text-heavy juvenile literature in my data set and on the general characteristics of LHH illustrators.

### ***Chinese Youth Literature Writers***

Several patterns emerged from the biographical information of the 21 writers (plus an anonymous one) who were responsible for the 22 stories available in both text-heavy juvenile literature and LHH (Table 3.3). In the first place, most of these writers were born before the war broke out, and at least 16 of them had become teenagers and adults by the time the Sino-Japanese War ended in 1945. The young days of their lives intersected either World War II or the Chinese civil war. In fact, quite a few had a military background: four joined the Eighth Route Army during the Sino-Japanese War, and six the People's Liberation Army after that. In the second place, the majority of these writers were deeply involved with Communist activities. According to the available information about their political membership, over half of the writers (13) belonged to the CCP and at least nine were senior members, having joined the organization before its sweeping victory in China in 1949. In addition to the nine who served in Communist armies, five attended schools and colleges established by the Party in its wartime headquarters in Yan'an, Shaanxi Province. Finally, except for two women writers, males dominated this group;

and except for one from the Chinese ethnic group of Manchuria, all others belong to the majority Han nationality.

**Table 3.3: The Authorship of Chinese Youth Literature About the Sino-Japanese War**

Name		Year of Birth	Year Joining the CCP	Year Joining Communist-led Armies or Activities
<b>Chinese Communist Party members (13):</b>				
CHEN Mo	陈模	1923-	1938	1941 (education in Yan'an)
GAO Yubao	高玉宝	1927-	1948	1947 (People's Liberation Army)
GUAN Hua	管桦	1922-2002	1946	1940 (Eighth Route Army)
HUA Shan	华山	1920-1985	1938	1938 (education in Yan'an)
LI Xintian	李心田	1929-		1950 (People's Liberation Army)
LIU Dongli	刘冬立	1963-		1981 (People's Liberation Army)
LIU Zhen (female)	刘真	1930-	1943	1939 (Eighth Route Army)
LIU Zhixia	刘知侠	1919-1991	1938	1938 (education in Yan'an)
SONG Fan	宋汎	1929-		
XIAO Ping	萧平	1926-		
XU Guangyao	徐光耀	1925-	1938	1938 (Eighth Route Army)
YAN Yiyao (female Manchurian)	颜一烟	1912-1997	1938	1938 (education in Yan'an)
ZHOU Erfu	周而复	1914-2004	1939	1939 (Eighth Route Army) 1943 (education in Yan'an)
<b>Non-Party member or membership information unavailable (9):</b>				
(Anonymous)				
BING Fu	冰夫	1932-		1949 (People's Liberation Army)
CAI Weicai	蔡维才	1934-		1947 (People's Liberation Army)
GAO Guoqing	高国庆			
LU Yanglie	陆扬烈	1931-	N.A.	1949 (People's Liberation Army)
REN Daxing	任大星	1925-		
WANG Chunjiang	王春江	1928-		
WANG Lei	汪雷			
ZHANG Yingwen	张映文			

(Source: Zhongguo Zuoji Xiehui, 2008)

These 22 well-known Sino-Japanese War stories were therefore largely the work of male, Han-nationality writers who matured during World War II and the immediate postwar years and who had a history of working within the CCP or its military. There are two observations to be made. First, the prominence of male and ex-soldier authors is exactly opposite to the authorship

pattern Hearne noticed in her overview of American youth literature featuring Americans' experience of World War II: female children's writers far outweigh men, and novels by ex-soldier are few and far between; correspondingly, stories set on the American home front far outweigh those of soldiers at the battle front (Hearne, 1980, p. 23). As we shall see in the main subject matter of Sino-Japanese War stories in LHH, her association between the gendered identity of authors and the pattern of subject matter can be readily applied to the Chinese body of literature, though the proportions differ radically.

Secondly, judging by their small presence among the creators of the 22 important stories, it is safe to conclude that later generations who grew up after 1945 played an insignificant role in storytelling World War II for Chinese youth. Tong's (1994) comparative study of Chinese and Japanese war novels for youth reached a similar conclusion, stating that Chinese World War II youth literature followed a "gradual downward trend" from the 1950s to the 1990s, as old authors who experienced the war passed their prime creative years or died. He named *Yanding'er* [盐丁儿, A boring girl] (1985), an autobiographical juvenile novel by YAN Yiyang, as one of the few notable war stories published during the post-Cultural Revolution era—again, the author Yan belonged to the senior camp, having established herself as an active playwright during the war years.

On the one hand, it is not surprising that authors who witnessed the Sino-Japanese War were responsible for most of these major titles. In her overview of juvenile literature about World War II published in the United States up until 1980, Hearne stressed how experience mattered as much as literary skills did for high-quality works:

Qualitatively, there seem to be three kinds of juvenile literature about World War II. The first is written by people who experienced some phase of it but who may not be skilled in turning that experience into a story. The second is by people who did not

experience it first-hand but have understood and known how to write a good story. And the third is by the writer who was touched first-hand by the experience and knows, also, how to craft that experience into a story. (1980, p. 24)

In China, authors like YAN Yiyan and XU Guangyao belong to the third type of storytellers, having crafted their first-hand experiences during the Sino-Japanese War into the most successful literary works for youth. On the other hand, as the first generation of storytellers are disappearing, it is disturbing that recent creators of youth literature have not crafted new stories about World War II. The situation improved slightly only after the year 2000, when new juvenile titles on the Sino-Japanese War, mostly nonfiction and biographies based upon primary and secondary research, began to be published. The complex reasons behind this change had to do with government control of scholarly inquiry of Sino-Japanese War history as well as sanctioned topics and themes about the war in popular culture, a factor that I will discuss more in the next section on subject matter.

### ***Chinese Lianhuanhua Illustrators***

LHH illustrators were commonly divided into three categories: self-taught illustrators and those who were trained in the old apprentice system before 1949, art school graduates, and non-professional amateurs (Bu, 1959; Liu, 1982). Interestingly, whereas the writers' life experiences during the war were tightly associated with the success of their works, personal experiences were less stressed for LHH illustrators than solid research was. In artists' notes about creative process, a common topic was the research they conducted, especially site visits and interviews in areas where the story is geographically set.

The case with the LHH edition of *The Railway Guerrillas*, a classic title on the Sino-Japanese War and also a classic work of Chinese LHH, well illustrates this aspect. DING Binzeng, who collaborated with HAN Heping on the illustration of *The Railway Guerrillas*, recalled that

their first finished work was a failure. After that, the two art school graduates did extensive preparations for reworking the adaptation. They further familiarized themselves with the original novel, interviewed its author LIU Zhixia, collected historical photos and documents about the Sino-Japanese War and Chinese civil war in the rural area of southern Shandong Province, where the story is set, traveled widely to meet with the prototypes of the protagonists in the novel, visited the sites where battles took place, and even learned techniques in railway operation from staff members and watched the performance of stunts they would portray visually in LHH (Ding, 1959/1987). Seven years passed from when they started the research work in 1954 to the publication of the last of the ten volumes of their adaptation in 1961. The illustrators' research deepened their understanding of the characters and plot, and their attention to the historical accuracy of clothes, objects, buildings, environment, etc. depicted in LHH contributed to a strong sense of time and place in the art work.

Other illustrators of award-winning Sino-Japanese War titles, such as *Tonggong* [童工, Child labor] (1953), *Wo Yao Dushu* [我要读书, I want to go to school] (1957), and *BAI Qiu'en Zai Zhongguo* [白求恩在中国, Dr. Norman Bethune in China] (1974)—all dated before the 1980s—attributed their success to on-site research work as well (See, for example, Ben, 1954/1987; Ben & Wang, 1957/1987; Wang, 1981/1987). Significantly, Qian (1982/1987) pointed out that, after the Cultural Revolution, illustrators had paid much less attention to research work than before, as the commercialization of the Chinese society encouraged a shorter production cycle of LHH—perhaps foretelling one possible factor contributing to the decline of the industry after 1985.

## Time Period

As recorded in the section on format and genre (Table 3.1), the majority of these LHH works are historical fiction, and the rest (about one fifth) are contemporary realistic fiction, biographical fiction, biography and other nonfiction. Table 3.4 tabulates the starting point of the storyline in all 286 titles of historical fiction by year. One third (33.6%) provide no specific information about time setting except that the story takes place during the Sino-Japanese War. It is noticeable that the years 1942 and 1943 are the most frequent starting point for a story.

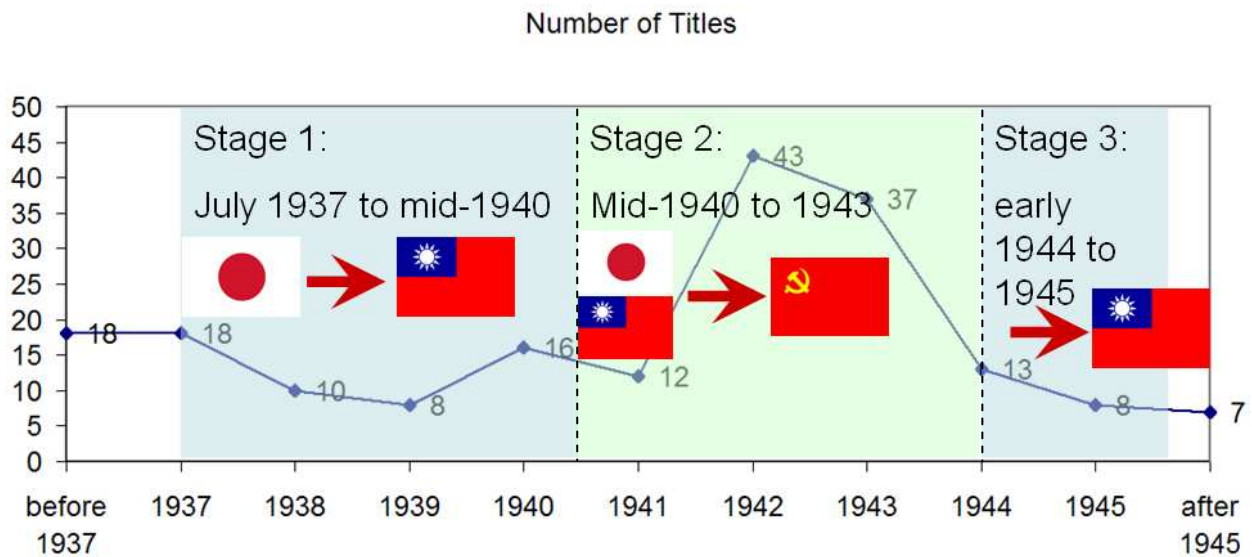
**Table 3.4: Starting Date of the Storyline in Historical Fiction About the Sino-Japanese War**

Starting Date	Number of Titles	Percentage	War History
Before 1937	18	6.3%	/
An unspecified point during the Sino-Japanese War	96	33.6%	/
1937	18	6.3%	Stage 1
1938	10	3.5%	
1939	8	2.8%	
1940	16	5.6%	
1941	12	4.2%	Stage 2
1942	43	15.0%	
1943	37	12.9%	
1944	13	4.5%	Stage 3
1945	8	2.8%	
After 1945	7	2.4%	/
<b>Total</b>	286	100.0%	

To put this table into the context of Sino-Japanese War history introduced by Van Slyke (2001a), during the initial period of the war from July 1937 to mid-1940, Japan directed by far the heaviest blows against CHIANG Kai-shek's Nationalist Army, which was in constant retreat, until the Japanese advance lost momentum and the central China Front lapsed into stalemate. In the table, for those works with a specific time setting, the years 1938 and 1939 are the time when a story is least likely to begin. Then followed the most difficult years for the CCP, when the Communist-Nationalist United Front against the Japanese gradually fell apart. From mid-1940 to

1943, both the Nationalist Army and the Japanese were “vigorously opposing” the CCP. Table 3.4 shows that this time period is when roughly one third of the stories in historical fiction start. From early 1944 the brunt of the war fell on the Nationalists again, allowing the CCP to move forward once more with rapid expansion. The number of stories which begin during this period decreases abruptly. Thus among the stories the starting date of which is specified, the favorite moment is during the period when the CCP’s army faced the greatest threat; other years, when most of the military threat fell upon the Nationalist Army, are not reflected in LHH as heavily.

**Figure 3.2: Starting Date of the Storyline and a Chronology of the War History**



### Geographical Setting

To understand the pattern of geographical setting in LHH about the Sino-Japanese War, I coded the main setting and, in the case of nonfiction works, the main site concerned, in all 360 titles. A small number (26, or 7%) of them are completely or partially set outside Mainland China, including Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan and other areas in Asia-Pacific and Europe. No story is mainly set in the United States, although, in two or three titles which cover a broad geographical scope, the country does appear briefly. About 22% (79 titles) of the LHH works are

set within Mainland China, but provide little specific information about the location. For example, the text may identify the locale as “a Japanese-occupied area,” “a coal mine,” or the images depict characters in clothes typical of peasants in north China, but no further geographical information can be extracted from the book. Table 3.5 shows that, when the province information is clearly identifiable in a book, four provinces—Hebei, Shandong, Jiangsu, and Shanxi—are where a story or event most frequently takes place.

**Table 3.5: Geographical Setting of Chinese *Lianhuanhua* About the Sino-Japanese War**

<b>Geographical Setting (by province, if identifiable)</b>		<b>Number of Titles</b>
Outside Mainland China		26
—Hong Kong		—1
—Taiwan		—1
Unspecific Within Mainland China		79
—Northeast China		—14
Hebei	河北	63
Shandong	山东	50
Jiangsu	江苏	34
Shanxi	山西	23
Sichuan & Chongqing	四川、重庆	12
Inner Mongolia	内蒙古	12
Shanghai	上海	10
Tianjin	天津	9
Anhui	安徽	8
Jiangxi	江西	8
Liaoning	辽宁	7
Henan	河南	7
Guangdong	广东	5
Heilongjiang	黑龙江	5
Shaanxi	陕西	4
Beijing	北京	4
Hubei	湖北	3
Zhejiang	浙江	3
Guangxi	广西	2
Southern Islands	南部海岛	2
Hunan	湖南	1
<b>Total</b>		272 (>360)

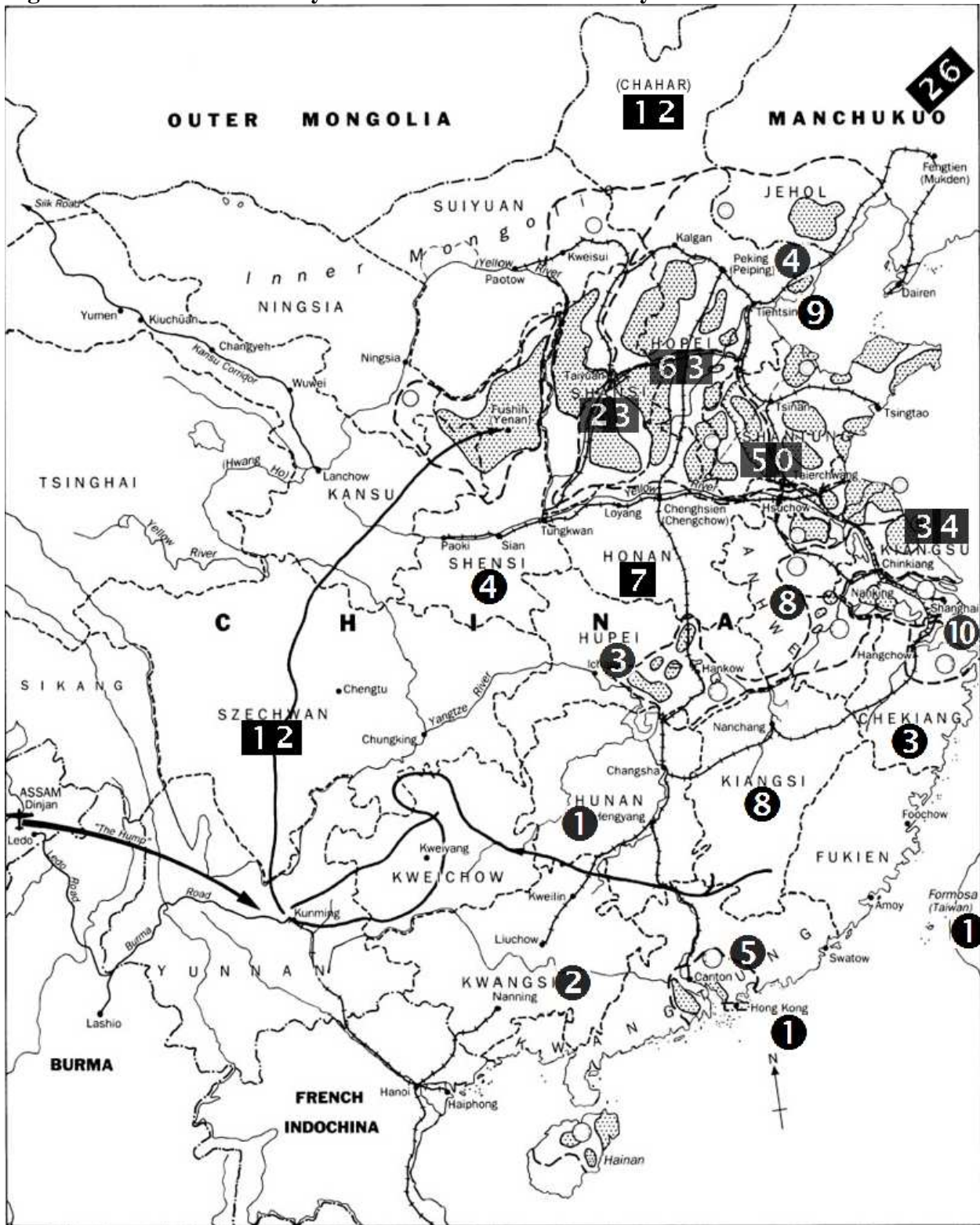


The following map (Figure 3.3) shows that the majority of the stories are set in Northeast and north China, in provinces which the Japanese had at least partially taken hold of (indicated in pink) by the year 1940. The Sichuan Province in Southwest China and especially the city of Chongqing—the Nationalist wartime capital, where the CCP also had its office—are the setting of 12 titles of LHH. No stories are set in the neighboring Yunnan Province, where the American Flying Tigers were stationed and where Chinese laborers carved the Burma Road out of mountains to break the Japanese siege along the China coast. Relatively few stories are set in the south, including provinces like Hubei, Zhejiang, and Anhui, which, too, were partially occupied. In Chapter 4 we will gain a closer at the province of Zhejiang, in particular the disparity between the huge amount of activities and disruptions happening there and its minimal presence in LHH stories.

What are the differences among Japanese-occupied provinces, some of which are treated heavily, and others lightly, in Sino-Japanese War stories? By juxtaposing the Japanese occupation map (Figure 3.3) with a map which indicates areas where the CCP gained control in 1944 (Figure 3.4), we observe that the four provinces where most stories take place—Hebei (or Hopei), Shandong (or Shantung), Jiangsu (or Kiangsu), and Shanxi (or Shansi)—had largely been penetrated by the Chinese Communists (indicated in grey) before World War II ended. In contrast, few stories are set in Japanese-occupied Hubei, Zhejiang, and Anhui, where the Communist control appears tenuous.



Figure 3.4: Areas Claimed By the Chinese Communist Party in 1944



Note:

1. Source of the original map: *The Oxford Companion to World War II*, 2001

2. Numbers are positioned to approximate the name of each province for easy reading, and do not represent the precise spot where stories take place within that province.

As an exception, the three provinces of Heilongjiang, Jilin, and Liaoning in Northeast China, marked as Manchuria or Manchukuo on the two maps, are the setting of a total of 26 titles even though none of the areas appear to have been claimed by the CCP. Historical study confirms that CCP's leadership in Northeast China during the first half of the 1930s was unsuccessful. In 1935, supported largely by the Moscow-based Communist International and its Chinese Delegation, the Northeast Anti-Japanese United Army was formed, uniting Communist and non-Communist resistance forces in Manchuria, which had been occupied by the Japanese since 1931. Research suggests that the CCP was not involved in its establishment, and, soon after the war broke out in 1937, the Party headquarters in Yan'an also lost contact with the United Army (Lee, 1983, p. 237-238; Coogan, 1994). Nonetheless, today the Party emphasizes that the heroic deeds of the United Army in Northeast China were part of the CCP history, providing one possible explanation to the aforementioned "exception."

To conclude, the pattern of geographical setting in the 360 titles of LHH is that the majority of the stories are set in Japanese-occupied provinces which were also heavily penetrated, or allegedly so, by the CCP.

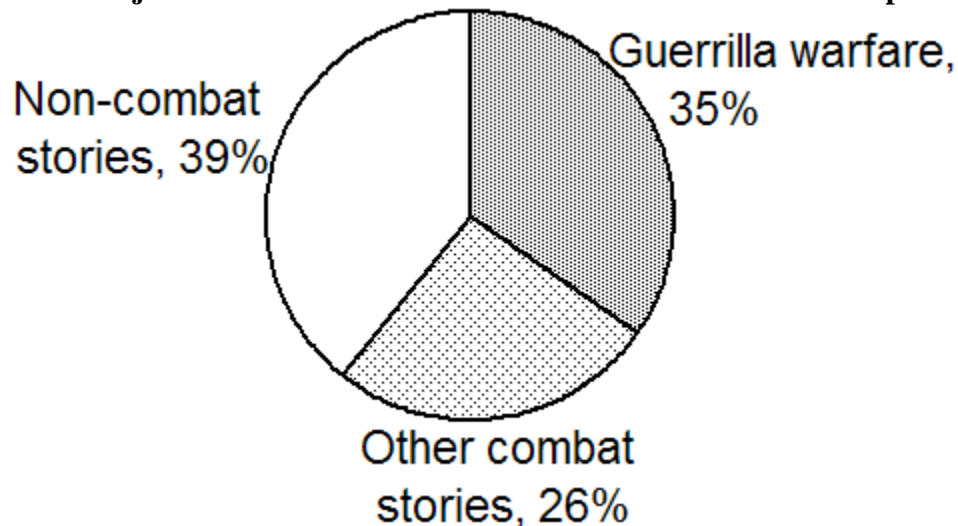
### **Subject Matter: A General Pattern**

This section summarizes the main subject matter of Sino-Japanese War stories in LHH, to be followed by four sections which discuss specifically how a few major topics and facets of the war history have been treated in this body of literature.

Military activities dominate the subject matter of Sino-Japanese War stories in LHH. According to my coding, well over half (219, or 61%) of the 360 titles have military combat as a

significant part of the story, and, among them, 57% (125 titles, or 35% of all LHH works) feature guerrilla warfare. These combat stories portray a wide variety of military activities, particularly tasks and strategies involved in guerrilla warfare. My analysis found that military confrontation is not the main subject of the other 141 titles, although many of them portray military activities, such as acquiring war materials and espionage, which may operate with little or no combat.

**Figure 3.5: The Subject Matter of Chinese *Lianhuanhua* About the Sino-Japanese War**



Below is a list of subject matter or topics, each of which is portrayed in at least 15 titles.

- military combat: 219 titles
- guerrilla warfare: 125
- class struggle (factory strikes; rent and interest reduction movement; punishing the enemy class); class conflict: 47
- acquiring materials (foodstuff, munitions, medicine, etc.): 43
- the suffering of Chinese soldiers, civilians, women as well as the Japanese: 34
- sabotage of the enemy's transportation and communication infrastructure: 31
- espionage and military intelligence: 26
- the conflict between the Nationalist and CCP; the South Anhui Incident, 1941: 25
- rescue action: 23
- journeys: 23
- the assassination of Chinese traitors (but only occasionally of the Japanese military): 17
- survival: 15
- love (romantic relationship): 15

This list reflects what stories were mainly told in the 360 titles of LHH works. To understand whose stories were told, we need to examine the fields relating to the identity of the main characters and biographees: their ethnicity or nationality, gender, professional identity, and political membership.

Consistent with the dominance of military combat stories in these LHH works, my coding found a similar proportion of central figures playing a wide variety of roles in the armed forces. Out of the 360 titles, 231 (64%) feature military leaders, officers, regular soldiers, guerrilla fighters, members of the People’s Militia, etc., as well as some non-combat personnel such as army doctors and nurses, scouts, spies, and messengers. Civil servants and officials of the CCP government are the main characters of 24 titles. Another 28 titles portray young members from the anti-Japanese Children’s Squad, a youth organization established in areas governed by the CCP, as central figures.

**Table 3.6: The Diversity of Protagonists and Biographees in Chinese *Lianhuanhua* About the Sino-Japanese War**

Types of Characters	Number of Titles	Category
Han Chinese	338	Chinese ethnic majority group
Mongolian Chinese	6	Chinese ethnic minority groups
Hui Chinese	2	
Manchurian Chinese	1	
Buddhist	1	Religious groups
Taoist	1	
Disabled	3	Disability
Chinese Singaporean	4	Chinese immigrants or ethnic Chinese outside Mainland China
Taiwanese and Gaoshan people	3	
Hong Kong people	1	
Japanese	11	Non-Chinese; foreign nationals
Korean	9	
American	4	
Canadian	1	
Indian	1	
Multi-national cast	1	
<b>Total</b>	387 (>360)	

There is a clear homogeneity of the racial and ethnic background of central figures in these LHH works (Table 3.6). Han Chinese were portrayed as the main protagonists or biographees in 338 out of the 360 titles (94%). Some types of diversity—in ethnicity, nationality, religion, and disability—were found in only 48 titles (13%). Despite the active participation of overseas Chinese in the war efforts, and the way foreign nationals from allied countries were deeply entangled in the Sino-Japanese conflict and later in the Pacific War, LHH largely ignores their presence, and at the best, casts them in supporting roles when they appear in stories at all.

**Table 3.7: The Political Membership of Protagonists and Biographees in Chinese LHH About the Sino-Japanese War**

Political Membership	Number of Titles	Percentage	Category
Communist Party member*	118	33%	Communist parties of China and other countries
Eighth Route Army (regular army and guerrilla force)	100	59% (214)	CCP-led military forces, agencies, and organizations
New Fourth Army (regular army and guerrilla force)	42		
People's Militia	29		
Anti-Japanese Children's Squad	28		
People's Liberation Army	5		
Other	10		
Northeast Anti-Japanese United Army	11	3%	Communist International
Guerrilla forces of unspecified affiliations	29	8%	Unspecified
Civilians of unspecified affiliations	48	13%	
Chinese Nationalist	15	4%	Non-Communist
Japanese army	6	1.7%	
American air force	3	0.8%	
Other miscellaneous groups	16	4.4%	
<b>Total</b>	460 (>360)	34.90% (>100%)	

\*Including characters who join the Communist Party towards the end of the plotline in a story.



Homogeneity is also found in the political membership of the main characters. As can be seen from Table 3.7, the majority of the titles feature either Communist party members or people who belong to the CCP-led military, agencies, and organizations. The Chinese Nationalist Party members and people who serve in the Nationalist Army or government are cast as the central figures in only 15 titles, and even fewer titles have American air force members as the main characters or biographees.

Finally, judging from the gender of main characters and biographees in the 360 titles, Sino-Japanese War stories are mostly about men, featuring male adults and boys as central figures in 330 titles, and women and girls in 112 titles. More importantly, female figures become the sole main character in only 23 titles, meaning that, in the rest of the cases (89 out of 112, or 79%), there is at least one other, more often male than female, protagonist in the story. In contrast, when a book portrays a male central figure, in over half of the cases (183 titles), he is made the sole main character. The pattern holds true if we focus upon young protagonists. Boys almost five times as frequently as girls are made the main characters in a story (93 versus 19 titles), and a boy character is about a dozen times more frequently made the sole hero as a girl is made the sole heroine (59 versus 5 titles). Analysis of the cover art generates a similar gender-skewed representation. A male character is four times as likely as a female one to appear on the cover, and six times as frequently to be highlighted as the sole figure.

To sum up, my coding of the subject matter and identity of central figures shows that Sino-Japanese War stories in LHH are predominantly about male, Communist heroes of Han Chinese and their military activities, thus giving smaller and marginal space to stories about the military activities and civilian experiences of other characters who are female, or non-Chinese, or non-



Communist. The imbalance will be illuminated further by drawing examples from notable titles to show how the following four topics and issues of interest are treated.

### **Portrayal of Military Combat**

Historians have presented a complex picture of the military history of the Sino-Japanese War, a history that consisted of multiple players, a wide geographical span, and what Van Slyke (1968, p. 71) called “a war within a war.” During the Sino-Japanese War, CHIANG Kai-shek’s National Republican Army fought the Japanese in open warfare, while MAO Zedong’s Communist Army was mainly engaged in guerrilla warfare against the Japanese. Although the two rival parties pledged truce and cooperation, by 1939 they had given way to armed conflict at the local level (Van Slyke, 2001b; “Sino-Japanese War,” 2003). According to *The Oxford Companion to World War II*, the United States started sending military aid to China even before entering into the Pacific War; after the Pearl Harbor attack merged the Sino-Japanese War into the World War, Allied units—British, American, and Chinese—were also engaged in the struggle against Japan in the China-Burma-India theatre (Van Slyke, 2001b; Van Slyke, 2001c).

This section analyzes the characteristics of combat stories, and compares the military activities portrayed in LHH with the military history constructed by historians. Historians are not without errors, biases, and disagreements among themselves, and their interpretation of history evolves over time; neither do LHH works speak in a unified voice about what the Sino-Japanese War was like. My comparison will reveal the pattern of change in LHH stories as well as the convergence and discrepancy between story and history.

Most of the combat stories in LHH have happy endings, highlighting military victories accomplished by Communist-led armies and guerrilla forces. At the end of these stories, the Japanese army and its Chinese collaborating lackeys are defeated; food and war materials are

obtained by ambushing the Japanese transportation unit; the enemy's rail tracks are successfully bombed in spite of vigilant patrol; military intelligence is obtained through clever tricks played by innocent-looking peddlers; strategically important information is brought to the receiver in time by a brave and quick-thinking messenger; a Chinese traitor is stalked and assassinated so that he (the assassinated traitor is almost always male) can no longer help the Japanese aggressors; a Communist cadre being pursued by the enemy is safely escorted through the Japanese-occupied area; etc. These numerous stories confirmed the effectiveness of the counterattacks organized by the CCP, especially through guerrilla warfare. As Kuisong Yang's scholarship pointed out, both the CCP and the Nationalist government carried out guerrilla warfare during the Sino-Japanese War. The former survived the war and was able to expand its armed forces during the process and the latter, despite a far larger military force behind Japanese lines to start with than the CCP, dissolved within only two or three years through deadly defeat, retreat, absorption into the CCP's Eighth Route Army, and surrender to the Japanese (2006, p. 1, 14-18).

The Sino-Japanese War, however, was not simply a string of victories achieved by the CCP's military. How do LHH works reconcile the vast number of happy-ending combat stories with the fact that, when Imperial Japan finally surrendered, eight long years had gone by since the outbreak of the Marco Polo Bridge Incident in 1937? In the first place, as was discovered in the section on time periods, a relatively small percentage of the stories are set during the initial three years of the war, when the Nationalist Army suffered constant defeat in large-scale battles. In the second place, military defeat is not so much absent as marginalized in LHH. Setbacks and difficult situations are introduced early and briefly, adding tension and suspense to the story, and a satisfactory and victorious resolution is arranged at the end.

It is useful to think about the typical structure of LHH stories in both the sphere of literature and that of movies. Characterized by storytelling through sequential art—not to mention that movie spin-offs and adaptations have constituted many LHH titles—Chinese LHH have been fondly called “pocket movies” (Chi, 1966/1987, p. 544). Storyteller Haven (2007, p. 79) defined story as “[a] detailed, character-based narration of a character’s struggles to overcome obstacles and reach an important goal.” Not all stories ever told and written by people of every culture fit his definition, but Haven nonetheless pointed out a common story structure which many people appreciate. Similarly, screenwriting instructor McKee defined what he calls the “classical design” of a movie as follows:

[Classical design] means a story built around an active protagonist who struggles against primarily external forces of antagonism to pursue his or her desire, through continuous time, within a consistent and causally connected fictional reality, to a closed ending of absolute, irreversible change. (1997, p. 45)

Haven and McKee’s definitions stress the essential elements of “obstacles” and “struggles,” and Haven’s especially implies a satisfactory ending. As we shall see, LHH stories about victorious battles adopt a classical structure to organize the sequence of events.

### **The Case of the May 1st Mopping-up Campaign**

The “May 1st mopping-up campaign” of 1942 marked perhaps the heaviest blow that the CCP’s army received during the Sino-Japanese War. *Zhongguo Kangri Zhanzheng Da Cidian* [中国抗日战争大辞典, A dictionary of the Sino-Japanese War], published in 1997 in China, gives the following information about the Campaign: Commanded by General Yasuji Okamura of Imperial Japan’s Northern China Area Army from May to June, 1942, the massive Campaign crippled the Communist government in central Hebei Province, where the Eighth Route Army lost 35.8% of its combat personnel and more than 50,000 civilians were either killed or carried

off (“Jizhong Qu,” 1997, p. 759-760). Van Slyke’s data also show that the year 1942 saw the lowest number of CCP members during the eight years of the war, and it was not until 1944 that the number began to grow rapidly again (2001b). However, the nine combat stories which begin during or immediately after the Campaign mostly end with battles won by the Chinese. Only the three-volume *Steel Meets Fire* (1984) shows a military advantage of the enemy at the end of the first volume, leaving the conflict to be resolved in the next one.

As mentioned earlier, the movie *Tunnel Warfare* (1965) was one of the three titles allowed in Chinese movie theatres during the first few years of the Cultural Revolution and it was adapted into at least five LHH works during this period. The version I have was published in 1970. Set shortly after the launch of the Campaign, *Tunnel Warfare* (1970) tells about the resistance movement led by the CCP cadres, who strictly follow the tactics specified in MAO Zedong’s *On Protracted War*, a lecture he delivered in 1938, to ensure effective counterattacks. Indeed, pages 6-8 and 42-43 even portray the characters reading Mao’s book, quoting verbatim from the famous lecture in a manner not dissimilar from the way pious disciples revere a religious text and resort to it for enlightenment; studies have showed that it was common for LHH published during the Cultural Revolution to quote Mao’s works before, after, or within a story, in order to extol the thoughts of Mao, who appears less as human than as deity (Hwang, 1978, p. 64-65; Blumenthal, 1976, p. 73-74). In *Tunnel Warfare*, Chinese characters are enraged by the Japanese assault and saddened by the loss of GAO Laozhong, a CCP branch secretary who alerts villagers to a sneak raid at the cost of his own life. However, not a single moment of fear or gloom can be found in any resistance fighters, who find confidence and inspirations in Mao’s text. The book depicts a few comic scenes where characters are having fun with the tunnels by virtually playing hide-and-seek, and has villagers bantering about a dead Japanese soldier, giving

light humor to an otherwise straight-faced LHH work expressing the most orthodox political message at the time of its publication. Chang (1979, p243) rightly pointed out the lack of humorous political satire and social criticism in Chinese LHH, but he missed the humor of poking fun at “bad people’s” stupidity and failure as well as funny remarks exchanged by optimistic Chinese characters under the most dangerous conditions. Humor increased the appeal of renowned titles such as *Little Soldier CHANG Ka-tse* (1963), *Shajiabang* (1971), and *Pingyuan Qiangsheng* [平原枪声, The gunshots over the plain] (1984).

Stories published in the 1980s about the Campaign are darker than titles from the 1970s, but all end with victories won by the CCP and its followers. When the story begins in *Qiaozhan Wandi* [巧战顽敌, A clever battle against the die-hard] (1984), a squad is outnumbered in a battle and only four soldiers survive. On their journey to catch up with the main force, they and a boy bugler who later joins the team not only shake off the Japanese pursuit, but, with boldness and some clever tricks (involving a bugle), also destroy the enemy’s warehouse and stable.

The hardest-won battles are probably found in *Guyang Hegan de Zhandou* [古洋河畔的战斗, The battle by the Guyang River] (1982) and *Steel Meets Fire* (1984). *The Battle by the Guyang River* (1982) opens with a fierce combat scene during the May 1st campaign. Outnumbered, the Eighth Route Army has to fight their way free from a besieged area. The CCP cadres and guerrilla fighters who are left behind encounter a series of setbacks. Occasionally they are immobilized and even forced to go into hiding, until they are able to strike a major counterattack right before the Spring Festival of the following year. A final battle is won, but not before the heroine XU Feng and two other female POWs are murdered by the enemy.

*Steel Meets Fire* in three volumes, adapted from a novel published in 1958 and also available in the same-title movie (1991) and television show (2004), is likely the title that faces the severe impact of the Campaign in the most honest manner. When the first volume opens, a platoon is charged with diverting the Japanese attack so that three companies of the Eighth Route Army can break out and retreat to the west of central Hebei. The task is completed, but all soldiers in the platoon are killed except its leader SHI Gengxin, who joins other soldiers who are left behind, local members of the People's Militia, and CCP cadres in the village of Xiaoli Zhuang. The book chronicles their survival of frequent searches by the enemy, rescue actions, assassinations, and other resistance activities, until they win a major battle with the main force which has moved back to the area. *Steel Meets Fire* portrays more narrow escapes, high casualties, and thwarted efforts than can be seen in other LHH titles.

Besides the structure of a story, LHH writers also used rhetoric to put the desired emotional spin on factual information, especially negative information about the CCP's army. Both *Tunnel Warfare* (1970) and *Dihou Wugongdui* [敌后武工队, Behind enemy lines] (Vol. 1, 1973) (illustrated by LI Tianxin) introduce the campaign briefly at the very beginning. On the second page of *Tunnel Warfare* it says:

*Unable to bear* the depletion of a long-term war, the Japanese aggressors launched the more cruel "May 1st mopping-up campaign" in central Hebei Province in 1942. Through... repeated "mopping-up campaigns" and the merciless Three Alls Policy [(kill all, burn all, loot all)], the enemy *vainly attempted* to extinguish the revolutionary flames of the people's war. (emphases mine, p. 2)

Carefully chosen adjectives, adverbs, and verbs in the text emphasize the unfavorable condition in which the Japanese army finds itself, suggest a sense of desperation behind the Japanese

operation, and play down the enormous damage that the campaign in reality caused the CCP and civilians in Hebei.

Similarly, the opening page of *Behind Enemy Lines* summarizes the May 1st campaign, describing it as having been carried out with “unprecedented cruelty” (p. 1); on the next page it introduces the mass retreat of the CCP’s army:

In order to preserve our effectiveness, the CCP’s main force had long since left central Hebei. In an autumn night after the enemy’s “mopping-up campaign,” one unit which had stayed to fight locally also transferred to a mountain base by order. (p. 2)

The only adjective and adverb that appear in this text are “long” and “locally.” No other modifiers are used to interfere with the matter-of-fact tone of the text, which conveys no sense of disadvantage and loss in what is actually a major military setback suffered by the CCP. For readers who did not have a sufficient background in the history of the May 1st mopping-up campaign—young LHH readers and poorly educated ones often did not—the text suggests that the CCP has actively and purposefully planned every move for a positive effect.

To sum up, stories about the May 1st campaign acknowledge at varying levels the military disadvantages of the Chinese army following the massive crackdown. The common structure adopted by nearly all these titles—placing severe adversities at the beginning and a grand victory in the end—highlights the admirable behavior of the heroes who continue to fight back with unwavering belief and commitment. The happy ending, however, as well as authors’ control of the nuanced meaning of the language, dilutes the terror of the May 1st mopping-up campaign depicted in LHH.

## Other Military Defeats

It must not be inferred that literary convention is solely responsible for the dominance of victorious stories in LHH. As shown by the limited number of stories which end with military defeat, stories without a happy ending can also adopt the classic structure of conflict-climax-resolution. *Five Heroes at the Langya Mountain* (1951, 4th ed.) recounts the true story of five Eighth Route Army soldiers who were charged with holding back the enemy's progress while the main unit tried escaping the Japanese siege. The five soldiers kept the enemy at bay as long as their ammunition lasted, making sure that the main unit was now out of the danger zone, and committed suicide by jumping off a cliff (two of them survived). Military setback and death notwithstanding, this is a celebratory story about the superb qualities—loyalty, bravery, and altruism—of fighters from the CCP army. It remains a story of hope as much as a victorious battle story. For decades, the story of the five heroes at the Langya Mountain remained a classic piece in Chinese elementary school textbooks.

A similar story portraying female martyrs, *Banü Toujiang* [八女投江, Eight women throwing themselves into the river] (1981) (illustrated by ZHOU Xuefen & LI Pingye) was adapted from an award-winning movie made in 1950 (my search did not find any earlier LHH adaptations). Having drawn the enemy's sneak attack away from a main unit of the Northeast Anti-Japanese United Army, a squad of woman warriors runs out of ammunition and is cornered to the riverside with no means of crossing the river. They decide that they'd rather die than being taken prisoner by the Japanese. Arm in arm, the eight women walk into the roaring river until the waves engulf them. Stunned by what he sees, a Japanese officer exclaims at the end of the story, "An unbeatable people! An unconquered China!" (p. 99) From the mouth of an aggressor, this is



a key line that reinforces the proud, optimistic, and celebratory tone of the finale, highlighting not loss or death but the model behavior of the United Army soldiers.

### **“A War Within a War”**

In LHH, a selective coverage of military defeats and victories during the Sino-Japanese War is segmented by a party line. Battles won by non-Communist forces against the Japanese are rarely portrayed. For example, the most notable victory achieved by the Nationalist Army was the Battle of Tai’erzhuang in April 1938, which delayed a Japanese advance on Xuzhou, Shandong Province, by about six weeks (Van Slyke, 2001). Celebrated nationwide and acknowledged by the Communists at the time, the battle is included in only one nonfiction work in my data set: *Di’erci Shijie Dazhan Shi Lianhuanhua Ku* [第二次世界大战史连环画库, The history of the Second World War: A LHH collection] (1990), published in the twilight of the Chinese LHH industry. Bibliographies indicate that the 1940s saw the publication of at least one title, *Xue Zhan Tai’erzhuang* [血战台儿庄, The bloody fight at Tai’erzhuang] illustrated by JIANG Binqun ([194?]), on this battle. The actual copy is not available for me to examine, having probably been purged in a series of post-1949 political campaigns. In my data set, the only title which focuses upon the American ally’s victory during the Pacific War is *Taipingyang Da Xuezhàn: Hongaha Dongjing* [太平洋大血战: 轰炸东京, Bloody fights over the Pacific: The bombing of Tokyo] (1987), a nonfiction account of the Doolittle Raid in 1942. Led by General James Harold Doolittle, it was the first aerial raid on Japan after the Pearl Harbor attack and “gave a much needed fillip to American morale” (“Doolittle raid,” 2001).

Not only do the LHH I examined avoid celebrating and commemorating Nationalist victories, but the majority of works also marginalizes Nationalist defeats, giving them just enough narrative space to underscore Communist superiority but rarely putting them in the

center of a story. As a result, LHH successfully minimized the amount of information about the Nationalists' participation in the Sino-Japanese War, including their contributions and sacrifices. For example, only the first two volumes of *Nanjing de Xian Luo* [南京的陷落, The fall of Nanjing] (1997), among all LHH works, choose to focus upon the combat history of the Nationalists' thwarted defense of the nation's capital city in 1937. Another title which devoted a few pages to the loss of Nanjing is *Friends and Foes on the Battlefield* (1943), a realistic work of fiction and a publication of the 1940s. The book chronicles a Nationalist soldier's life from his abused childhood to his turmoil during the Sino-Japanese War, tracing his drastic identity shifts from a soldier fighting against Japan, to a POW surviving the fall of Nanjing, to a pawn coerced into the Japanese puppet army, and back to a Chinese resister after a successful revolt he leads among fellow puppet soldiers. Aside from these exceptions, however, even a mere reference to the battle of Nanjing is hard to find in the rest of the LHH works I examined.

Perhaps the delicate choice of military topics that LHH publishers made are best illustrated in books about the South Anhui Incident (aka the New Fourth Army incident), which was a 1941 military defeat suffered by the CCP, surprisingly not from Imperial Japan's attack, but from the Nationalist Army. Despite a pledge of a united front against Japan, a military clash occurred between the two parties in January 1941, when the Nationalist force attacked the New Fourth Army in South Anhui Province to check Communist expansion, killing, wounding, and imprisoning New Fourth Army members in the thousands—the exact figure varies widely according to different sources, from 3,000 to 9,000 or even more (Benton, 1986, p. 709).

I found several books about this military clash. Given that all these titles are dated after the Cultural Revolution, the topic was likely not an easy choice for LHH publishers. This is somewhat ironic considering that the CCP had to fight against the Nationalists' censorship right

after the Incident to get the word out in the Communist newspaper *Xinhua Ribao* [新华日报, New China daily] (Benton, 1986, p. 711) and the *New York Herald Tribune*. The U.S. news coverage was the work of American journalists Anna Louise Strong and Joseph Barnes. In fact, *The New York Times* received Strong's articles first, but decided not to publish them as they differed from the version provided by the Chinese Nationalist government (Strong & Keyssar, 1983, p. 195-198). *Jiangnan Yiye* [江南一叶, A leaf in the south of the Yangtze River] (1982) (illustrated by XING He) portrays YE Ting, commander-in-chief of the New Fourth Army during the Incident, as the protagonist. The Incident is also the climax of his biography *YE Ting* (1982) (illustrated by PAN Jinba & LIU Qiduan). Both books are not reluctant to give the huge death toll of the New Fourth Army in this civil war. The casualty of the CCP's force—given in one book as being 9,000 (Xing, 1982, p. 122) and in the other as over 7,000 (Pan & Liu, 1982, p. 118)—is a conspicuous loss among all LHH about the Sino-Japanese War. In fact, my reading of LHH failed to find a loss of a similar scale suffered by the CCP to what should be the major enemy—Imperial Japan's army.

In a third book, *Yuxue Jiangnan* [浴血江南, Blood-soaked in the south of the Yangtze River] (1984), the South Anhui Incident is woven into a romance about two New Fourth Army members. The ending of the story resembles both *Five Heroes at the Langya Mountain* and *Eight Women Throwing Themselves into the River*: The heroine MENG Hui and three army telegraphers, all female, decide to attract the enemy's gunfire to themselves so that other New Fourth Army soldiers can escape. Meng's boyfriend is one of the survivors due to the sacrifice of the four women, who now rest at the bottom of a cliff. This does not seem to be a fabrication of the fiction writer. Historian Gregor Benton wrote about the casualties of the Incident in his historical study: "women were said to have thrown themselves off cliffs shouting patriotic slogans" (1986,

p. 709)—a strikingly similar scene to what is portrayed in *Blood-soaked*. In *Wudu Baotong* [雾都报童, The newspaper boy in the foggy city] (1979), a significant portion of the book is devoted to the Nationalists' news censorship of the Incident and the Communists' effort to publicize the news in wartime capital Chongqing.

All these works share a common theme: they condemn CHIANG Kai-shek and the Nationalist Army for cooperating with the Japanese against the Communists, which, according to Van Slyke (1968, p. 85), is the exact criticism that the Nationalist government evoked from the Communists, all liberal groups, and even the foreign press right after the Incident. Recent studies by Benton (1986) and Yang (2003) disagree with such a simplistic criticism and put the Incident in a larger context of ongoing Communist-Nationalist conflict. These stories inevitably touch on the mistakes made by the CCP's army. *A Leaf in the South*, *YE Ting*, and *Blood-soaked* all put the blame on XIANG Ying, Political Commissar of the New Fourth Army. In these books, he makes a series of political and strategic mistakes, allegedly against the instruction from the Central Committee of the CCP and against the sensible judgment of General YE Ting, who is depicted as a determined follower of MAO Zedong's political line. Again, this echoes a familiar view adopted by the CCP to explain the disaster; again, historians Benton (1986) and Yang (2003, p. 15) disagree, pointing out the responsibilities that the Central Committee and Mao must share.

To sum up, in LHH stories about military activities, defeat is a far less comfortable topic for writers and publishers than victorious battles. Chinese fighters are not necessarily invincible all the time, but in story after story, they are the people who have the final word. Political concerns loom larger than literary convention behind the choice of topics. Stories featuring defeat as the main subject are told judiciously in LHH, and most of them have a publication date during the

post-Cultural Revolution era. The small number of stories which carefully portray military setbacks reiterate the same messages conveyed in books about victories: only the CCP's army was the true defender against the Japanese aggressors; only the CCP and its followers truly cared about the interest of Chinese people—they fought for it, and were willing to die for it. Defeat stories nonetheless show the times when the CCP's army is vulnerable, ineffective, and error-prone, which possibly accounts for the small number of them despite a pro-Communist message. The Nationalists' and American ally's activities, both feats and defeats, during the Sino-Japanese War are kept to the minimum and in the margin. LHH works focusing upon the combat history of these two parties were published either before the Communist seized control in 1949 or after the mid-1980s, when a more tolerant political climate in China seemed to allow the recognition of non-Communists' participation in and contribution to the Sino-Japanese War.

### **Portrayal of Violence and Wartime Atrocities**

Also known as a “total war,” World War II “reached all over the world, and penetrated every aspect of existence for almost all the people then alive in it” (Foot, “Introduction” 2001). One manifestation of the total war was the unprecedented casualty of civilians, who were the direct target of violence and violations by the war—looting, arson, rape, air raids, massacres, biological and chemical warfare, and the controversial nuclear warfare. World War II also wrote a bloody page of history on the brutal treatment of POWs by Axis powers and—as Dower (1986, p. 62-71) argued—Allied powers alike. Van Slyke opined that “the Japanese pioneered the strategy of war against a civilian populace that came to be used by all nations” in World War II, beginning with the 1937 battle of Shanghai, where the Japanese arson and air raids caused tens of thousands of deaths in the most densely populated city of China, and created even more refugees who struggled to survive the immediate winter in Shanghai with or without shelter (Van

Slyke, 2001b; Shanghai Tongzhi, 2005). Under some circumstances, it might be difficult to enforce a distinct line between sheer military clashes and assault against civilians, and to separate military death from civilian loss during the Sino-Japanese War. As Van Slyke (2001b) further pointed out, “[f]rom late 1940 to 1943, the Japanese carried on mopping-up campaigns which no longer sought to distinguish civilians from guerrillas.”

Of the numerous ways in which the Sino-Japanese War affected people’s lives, this section analyzes how LHH works portray violent assaults targeting civilians and POWs, paying particular attention to the three currently best-publicized war crimes—the Nanjing Massacre, comfort women, and Japanese biological warfare (BW). My analysis will be preceded by a discussion of the portrayal of violence in general, whether it is violence against soldiers or unarmed civilians, against Chinese or Japanese. In my analysis I have attempted to maintain a clear-cut line between the military and a civilian populace. However, the total war did not observe the distinction all the time and stories about the war may consequently blur the line. First I will show how LHH treats violence in general, in order to put my analysis of the portrayal of violence targeting Chinese civilians in an appropriate context.

Researchers have noticed the prevalence of violence in Chinese LHH. Chang (1979, p. 249) observed, “In story after story we see violent behavior—in battles against the British, the Japanese, and the Americans, and in the struggle against invaders from Taiwan.” He proceeded to give two examples, both of which involve violence inflicted by the “good people” upon the “bad people,” considered righteous behavior in the stories. In a review article, the popular multi-volume set *Dong Zhou Lie Guo Gu Shi* [东周列国故事, Stories from the states of Eastern Zhou Dynasty], which are historical stories from circa 771-221 B.C., by the Shanghai People’s Fine Arts Publishing House was criticized for showing many “vulgar and horrendous scenes.”

“Clearly, depictions like these are harmful to readers (especially the vast number of young people),” says the reviewer (Tao, 1963/1987, p. 810). (Some of the criticized pictures were replaced in a new edition published in 1981.) These comments seem to tell us that LHH has portrayed violence in varying degrees of cruelty and vulgarity. They also suggest that all violence is not equal: some is approved in LHH—even for young readers—and some frowned upon.

My study of Sino-Japanese War stories in LHH agrees with these two suggestions. Take *Shuangxi Sao* [双喜嫂, Sister Double Happiness] (1973) (illustrated by GU Zengping) for example, a LHH work whose English edition was distributed in the United States. Mitchell (1980, p. 33) found “violence, drunkenness, shooting, lust, [and] trickery” in this combat story set in the fall of 1944 in south Jiangsu Province. Led by “Sister Double Happiness,” the People’s Militia dress up and stage a wedding ceremony to first lure the Japanese out of their fort, where they undoubtedly occupy a military vantage position, before wiping out the deceived enemies. The story illustrates the primary goal of guerrilla warfare—to win a battle against the odds through unconventional methods, not confronting the enemy’s strength but seeking opportunities from its vulnerabilities. It also suggests that, in total war, not only the aggressors but also the defenders deliberately blur the line between the military and civilians to maximize their odds of victory. In *Sister Double Happiness*, a pompous traditional wedding crowd that consists of a covered rickshaw which supposedly is delivering the bride to her in-laws’ house, neatly dressed bridesmaids, trumpets making loud noise, porters carrying brightly decorated dowers, and a man who sets off firecrackers all the way, suddenly changes into an armed force before the enemies can blink their eyes.

Violent confrontations between the People's Militia and the Japanese occur towards the end of the story. Fifteen successive images, starting from page 77, show Chinese people attacking the Japanese in a wide variety of ways and with all kinds of weapons—from pistol to rope, spear, and shoulder pole. The mention of primitive and convenient weapons is a realistic reflection of guerrilla warfare, in which Chinese fighters were poorly equipped in comparison with the modern Japanese army. It must be pointed out that these combat images are violent but not gory. This is achieved through artistic choice in framing, perspective, focus, and decision on which exact moment to portray from a series of continuous actions. Many images present a panoramic view, reducing each character to a small size. There seems to be a tendency to avoid portraying the detail of the wounds, which rarely receive a frontal and close-up view. The illustrator frequently adds curvy lines representing stirred-up dust here and there. The exaggerated dust clouds suggest how intense the activities are, and also give the images a murky look.

Finally, these images frequently choose to “freeze” a moment before the injury occurs. Historically, the low literacy of Chinese people shaped the typical relationship between image and text in LHH: it was desirable that the picture somehow helped ease the understanding of the text. However, artists working under this restriction still had room for choice. Whereas even a short paragraph of text may have described a succession of actions, the corresponding image might reflect only one moment. For example, a text tells us that Heiniu, a militia man, “took out a shining dagger and made a forceful stab at [the Japanese officer]” (p. 88) and that “with a few forceful stabs blackish red blood immediately smeared the river” (p. 91). In contrast, the two pictures on both pages show Heiniu seizing a Japanese officer firmly in one hand and holding a dagger in the other. The dagger does not draw attention to itself in either of the pictures. In the first one, the dagger is partially blocked from view by Heiniu's shoulder. In the second, the



weapon appears blurred as if obscured by some cloudy dust. The illustrator's choice of the moment he presented visually, the angle from which readers can view the scene, and the way a menacing weapon is depicted soften the violent nature of the images.

The treatment of violence in *Sister Double Happiness* is typical of the vast majority of LHH works I examined, and the pattern can be attributed to the same political considerations behind the preference for victorious combat stories. Violence against the aggressors, suggesting the bravery and upper hand of Chinese fighters, is reflected in both words and visuals. However, gory and vulgar visuals are rare, not only because excessive horror was considered harmful for young readers, as the reviewer's opinion and the publisher's response I cited earlier told us, but it would have also cast Chinese characters as being cruel and bloodthirsty. Instead, in Sino-Japanese War stories in LHH, Chinese fighters are carefully portrayed as executors of necessary violence for justice's sake, rather than its abusers.

So far we have understood only how "righteous" violence against the Japanese aggressors and enemies is portrayed in LHH. How does LHH portray violence inflicted upon Chinese by the aggressors, particularly Japanese war crimes? Violence upon Chinese people is handled with greater caution. I will examine four aspects of this issue: the relationship between text and images, the relationship between the original work and its LHH adaptation, changes from an old edition to a new or revised one, and the pattern of change in subject matter over the seven decades during which all LHH in my data set was published.

### **The Relationship between Text and Images**

First, similar to what I found out about "righteous" violence, the majority of LHH illustrations tend not to capture violence upon Chinese victims as fully as it is described in words.

Going back to the 95-page *Sister Double Happiness*, two pages mention briefly the violence inflicted by the Japanese upon Chinese. Page 10 says, “[This Japanese officer] was sly and wicked. He set fires, murdered, and looted, sparing no evildoing.” And on page 20, “In a heavy tone Dagang condemned an incident of the day before yesterday: [the Japanese officer] stabbed a girl, who would not submit herself to humiliation, to death with his bayonet.” (In Chinese, the word *wu ru* [侮辱, humiliation, insult] is one of the various euphemisms for raping.) A comparison between the text and images found that Japanese violence was portrayed sparingly in the pictures. Chinese people are at the center and foreground of the image on page 10, pointing at what seems to be burned-down houses in the background; thus the text and image present unequal scales of atrocities by the Japanese military. Page 20 shows nothing else but a group of militia members having a meeting on a boat, completely leaving the violent part out.

LHH works employed some common strategies to avoid portraying the Japanese violence and cruelty in visual detail: depicting the narrator or witness of the violent event instead of the event itself, keeping the violent action off camera through framing, showing a violent scene in the background or in a distant panoramic view so that everything appears small and hard to discern, etc. However, information about the Japanese violence must be provided verbally, if only summarily, because it helps to drive the plot forward and to confirm that the Chinese violence appearing later in the story is “righteous.” In the case of *Sister Double Happiness*, the Japanese atrocities enrage the guerrilla fighters and militia, who pledge to destroy the enemies in retaliation.

Under the double influence of political and cultural restrictions, sexual violation is a particularly delicate topic, referenced by some LHH verbally through inexplicit terms and depicted in minimum visual detail. Under the CCP’s ruling, sex, including romantic sexual

behavior in a love relationship, was a cultural taboo in Chinese media until the 1980s. Chang (1979, p. 243) observed that “there is nothing pornographic” about Chinese LHH, whereas “American comics have no dearth of sex.” In fact, sex-related topics appear to be so awkward that in *Lian Xin Suo* [连心锁, Heart lock] (Vol. 3) (1976) (illustrated by LIU Shiduo, ZHAO Jingdong, & ZHAO Bingkai), the only book in which I found a heroine in her late-stage pregnancy, the woman is portrayed with no difference in body shape from other female characters (p. 44-45). A few exceptions which broke the taboo are found in titles published either earlier than 1949 or after 1980, and I will discuss them in the fourth aspect.

### **The Relationship between the Original Work and Its Lianhuanhua Adaptation**

The second aspect I examine is how the Japanese brutalities are treated when a story is adapted from the original work into LHH. Although I did not compare all LHH works with their source of adaptation, examples from important titles show that sometimes information about violent violations inflicted by the Japanese and civilians’ suffering was cut out in the process. Selection and elimination is the routine of the adaptation work, as the source text is often denser than LHH. What is kept and what is deleted suggest the weight of the information considered by LHH authors. Zhixia’s novel *The Railway Guerrillas* (1954), consisting of 28 chapters, was adapted into 10 volumes of LHH. One chapter that was largely skipped over in LHH is “Xiaopo’s Arrest,” which recounts a teenage guerrilla fighter’s experience after he is captured by the Japanese. Despite all kinds of cruel torture, Xiaopo insists that he is not a guerrilla fighter but only a poverty-stricken, lone thief. Whereas his fellow inmates disappear every day, Xiaopo keeps his life thanks to his youth. Considered adaptable and a potential candidate for collaborator, he is locked into a crowded freight train compartment, sent to a camp, and taught the ideas of “the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere” and “the Sino-Japanese fraternity.” Slowly he

recovers in the camp and manages to escape (p. 82-91; ch. 6). Xiaopo's odyssey is dropped by the LHH version, which highlights the thrilling military activities described in the novel. This does not mean that the adaptation has purged violent atrocities suffered by Chinese. Many details provided in the novel are scattered throughout the ten-volume set, but, unlike the chapter "Xiaopo's Arrest" which focuses on suffering and survival, they do not occupy the central narrative in any volume.

More often, LHH reduced the amount of terror conveyed in the original work by leaving out traumatic detail. The LHH version of *Little Soldier CHANG Ka-tse* (1963) kept one line which asserts that killing has become the second nature of a Japanese brigade commander, HIDA Ichiro, but omitted the two gruesome incidents XU Guangyao wrote in the original novel to prove that; in both incidents Hida carries out senseless killing without warning to terrorize his Chinese subjects (1964, p. 42-43). Set after the outbreak of the battle of Shanghai, CHEN Mo's novel *Qi Hua* [奇花, A fantastic flower] (1979) contains some descriptions of Japanese brutality against Chinese refugees in the first two chapters. Many of them are not found in the LHH version published in 1982, including the most horrendous detail about a Japanese soldier impaling a baby on his bayonet, raising it into the air and hurling it against the ground (p. 15-16). LHH authors' decision to drop these particular details of Chinese suffering is less a matter of space limit than an intention to de-emphasize the victimization of Chinese people by the Japanese military.

### **Changes between Editions**

A third aspect that illuminates LHH's inclination for de-emphasizing violence and trauma inflicted upon Chinese is changes made from the old edition of a story to a new one. About 10% of the titles in my data set went through revisions by the same publisher, but I have access to only the different editions of the most popular works. Again my analysis will be based upon

examples drawn from them. The writer and illustrators of *The Railway Guerrillas* were known for the great amount of time, work, and tireless revision they devoted to the ten-volume set, which was a huge critical and commercial success. The two editions I have were published in 1955-1962 and 1978 respectively. The fifth volume “Qiao Da Gangcun” [巧打冈村, A clever attack against Okamura] opens with a sneak attack won by guerrilla fighters, but soon afterwards the Japanese launch a brutal retaliation against civilian residents in the area. The old edition, dated 1956, contains a rare disturbing picture which has two Chinese bodies lying by the lake and a wolf dog—apparently belonging to the Japanese officer on the horseback—sniffing over them (p. 23). In the new edition of 1978, except for the disappearance of the bodies, everything (including the wolf dog, which now looks down at an empty space) stays the same in that picture (p. 17). I can not locate a direct external influence, such as a negative review article, to explain the change. Whether the driving force was external or internal, the change was in alignment with LHH’s judicious depiction of violence inflicted by the enemy upon Chinese victims.

**Figure 3.6: *The Railway Guerrillas* (Volume 5 “A Clever Attack Against Okamura”), 1978 edition**



(17) 他把这口气出在撒网的渔民身上, 在湖边烧杀, 还捉了許多人, 没收了魚网, 永远禁止渔民在湖中捕鱼。

(1978 2nd ed.)

In general, Sino-Japanese War stories in LHH are inclined to provide minimum information about Japanese atrocities and Chinese suffering. Such text information, when given in the original source, was cut down as it transferred to the LHH adaptation, and was cut further as illustrators chose not to convey the full terror entailed in the text. Just like information about military defeat, atrocities and suffering are not totally absent in LHH but marginalized in short text and mild pictorial representations. Eventually, the information is weakened by the more generous depiction of the revenge that the Chinese take on aggressors, guaranteed at the end of a story. To give more coverage to the moment when Chinese victims are overpowered might have undermined their image as being brave and strong, a risk which the majority of LHH works carefully dodge.

### **The Pattern of Change over Seven Decades**

Not all LHH titles follow the general pattern I described above. Although the number of exceptions is small, they are not random anomalies. Date of publication is a crucial index of how far a title deviates from that pattern. The fourth aspect I examine is the chronological changes in the treatment of violence and war crimes, with a focus on LHH works having these issues as the main subject.

Of the 360 titles of LHH works in my data set, at least one third reference some type of attacks and tortures by the Japanese aggressors—arson, killing, massacre, sexual assaults, air raids, forced labor, and other cruelties—but most of them are summary and tangential to the story. What must be pointed out is the small number of references to specific major war crimes, including the Nanjing Massacre, comfort women, and Japanese BW, which in today's China have come to epitomize Japanese wartime atrocities. Fewer than ten titles of fiction and

nonfiction in my data set, published over a span of seventy years, can be considered mainly about war crimes.

### ***From 1937 to 1945***

LHH titles dated between 1937 and 1945 portray a remarkably darker image of Japanese cruelty than did other LHH works, which had to do with the special function that LHH served during the war. Patriotic publishers and authors regardless of their party affiliation recognized the power of the popular LHH in persuasion and adopted the format for war propaganda. For the purpose of effective war mobilization, wartime LHH works confront the Japanese atrocities in textual and visual detail to alert people to the danger of the enemy, and to call for their support for the war effort.

*Dongbei Huiyilu* [东北回忆录, A reminiscence of Northeast China] (illustrated by CHEN Zhizhong, [1937]) is the earliest LHH work I found about the Sino-Japanese War, likely published soon after the outbreak of the full-scale war. This is a nonfiction work that reviewed the impact of Japanese colonization in Northeast China, starting from 1931, on people and resources in that area. Due to poor printing, the black and white illustrations appear crude and hard to discern, but the text unequivocally condemns the violent atrocities, economic exploitation, and cultural oppression that the Japanese colonizers systematically imposed. I defined this book as being about the Sino-Japanese War because the author intended it as a severe warning and war mobilization to Chinese people in the rest of China:

For the six years since Northeast China was lost, blood from slaughters stained the snow-covered Changbai Mountain and the dark Heilongjiang River. Now the Japanese have proceeded to occupy north China and to attack the coastal area. No part of China's territory is not threatened. This is the final life-and-death moment for China. Come, my compatriots! Finish the Japanese aggressors and reclaim our land!!! (p. 52)

Huang's *Friends and Foes on the Battlefield* (1943) is the earliest title I found that describes the fall of Nanjing and the infamous massacre that ensued. From crude woodcuts printed on flimsy paper, we can identify airplanes, explosions, fire, people or bodies in a river, and a Japanese soldier taking aim to shoot (p. 22-23). The text gives "over 100,000" (p. 22) as the death toll of the Chinese military and civilians.

I found three Sino-Japanese War stories in LHH published by the Education Department of the Nationalist government. One of them, *San Xiong Di Yong Yue Cong Jun* [三兄弟踊跃从军, Three brothers eagerly joined the army] (1944), is a thinly disguised recruitment advertisement containing 54 woodcut images, as the preface of the book readily admits. It features the experience of a family in the Jiangxi Province of southeast China after the enemy's occupation in 1942. A peaceful rural town is turned into hell, and a large and happy family torn apart. The book does not shy away, verbally or visually, from the suffering of Chinese civilians. Three consecutive images (unpaged) in it are perhaps among the most sickening scenes portrayed in all the LHH works in my data set: the mildest one of the three shows a naked woman lying on the ground, a saber piercing into her body, and a motionless child half leaning upon her. The brothers decide that the best way to revenge their loved ones is to join the army and serve the country. The story ends happily with the three brothers winning medals for their heroic acts in battle. My bibliographical research of pre-1949 titles also found *Rikou Baoxing Xieshi* [日寇暴行写实, A plain account of the Japanese aggressors' atrocities] (SUN Xingyu, 1939), published by the Education Department of the Jiangxi Province. Though I could not locate an actual copy, it requires little guesswork to grasp the main subject of the book.

These wartime LHH publications differ drastically from the majority of titles in their focus upon Japanese wartime atrocities and bold visual representations of trauma and cruelty. As



Huang put it, this was for “the needs of the war” (1943), to invoke anger towards the enemy and help persuade readers—whether their family might have shared similar experiences or they feared such a fate—to contribute to the defeat of the aggressors.

### ***From 1946 to 1970***

From the immediate post-World War II years to the 1950s, the CCP defeated the Nationalist government in the civil war, established the People’s Republic of China, and spent the first half of the 1950s “reforming” Chinese LHH. In terms of the treatment of Japanese atrocities, titles dated during this politically unpredictable period seem to be in a negotiation stage, just as the new government was negotiating its path to a firm control of the state, and shifting its foreign policies during a period marked by volatile Sino-Soviet-US-Japan relationships, an intricacy further complicated by the issue of Taiwan. The pattern is not as easily identifiable as during the war years, because of some interesting cases that defy a simple explanation, but what emerges as an overall trend is one towards the diminishing of information about Chinese victimization by the Japanese in LHH.

My search did not yield any LHH titles that dealt with Japanese wartime atrocities and were published between the end of World War II and the downfall of the Nationalist government. This was the same period when the International Military Tribunal for the Far East (May 3, 1946-November 4, 1948)—the Pacific counterpart to the Nuremberg trials—was convened in Tokyo, and when military courts were held in China, as well, to try Japanese war criminals and Chinese traitors. However, because the overriding conflict was now between the belligerent Nationalists and Communists, Japanese brutality and Chinese suffering ceased to be a main topic in LHH. Japanese military scientists who were responsible for the biological warfare (BW) program, except for a dozen captured by the Soviet Union, escaped the Tokyo trial, where they would have

been classified as “A” or at least “B” level war criminals. Thanks to the secret intervention of the United States, they were granted immunity after handing over to America the coveted technical details of the forbidden research conducted on live human beings—mainly Chinese civilians and POWs (Harris, 2002, ch. 14). The Japanese military brothel system, which sexually enslaved several hundred thousand “comfort women” from Korea, mainland China, Taiwan, the Philippines, Indonesia, as well as Japan itself, were also neglected by the Tokyo trial (Chang & Barker, 2001, p. 75).

The year 1951 saw a surge of interest in Japan’s BW program in Chinese LHH. In late December 1949, the Soviet Union held trials in the city of Khabarovsk, Siberia and indicted twelve Japanese Army men, captured in Manchuria more than four years before, for BW atrocities (Harris, 2002, p. 317-321). The PRC, barely three months old at this moment, followed the news closely. *People’s Daily* covered the Khabarovsk trial as frequently as three news articles a day. The next two months saw many follow-up reports—quite frequently published on the front page—of newly discovered evidence of the crimes, interviews with BW victims and witnesses, and demands to bring justice to criminals at large<sup>1</sup>. *Materials on the Trial of Former Servicemen of the Japanese Army Charged with Manufacturing and Employing Bacteriological Weapons* (1950), a 534-page record of the Japanese confessions published in Moscow, was also translated into Chinese. At least two nonfiction titles for adult readers—CAO Yuan’s *Rikou*

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<sup>1</sup> For example, *The People’s Daily* reported Japanese BW in the Heilongjiang Province (“Heilongjiang,” 1950; “Qian Rikou,” 1950), Northeast China (“Guanyu Riben,” 1952), Beijing (“Rikou Cengzai Beijing,” 1950), Nanjing in Jiangsu Province (“Rikou Cengzai Nanjing,” 1950; “Nanjing Daxue,” 1950), the Zhejiang Province (“Zhe Sheng,” 1950; “Yige Mujizhe,” 1950; “Qinshen Shouhai,” 1950), and Changde in Hunan Province (“Aoguo Yisheng,” 1950; “Hunan Changde,” 1950; “Xijun Xuejia,” 1950). Nearly all of these reports appeared in the first two months of 1950.

*Xijunzhan Baoxing* [日寇细菌战暴行, The Japanese aggressors' BW atrocities] and CHU Hua's *Rikou de Taotian Zuixing* [日寇的滔天罪行, The Japanese aggressors' carnage]—credited *Materials* as one major source of their books (Cao, 1951, “preface”; Chu, 1951, “preface”).

XU Zeren, a children's nonfiction writer, exclaimed that *Materials* was the most exciting book he read in 1950. “I really wish everybody found *Materials* and read it,” said Xu, but due to its intimidating length he decided to adapt the original book for “youth and general readers” (1951, “preface”). Xu's *Xi Jun he Xi Jun Zhan Zheng* [细菌和细菌战争, Bacteria and bacterial warfare], a text-heavy children's book published in 1951 and in a third edition in 1953, introduces bacteriology and Japanese BW in China, with comprehension questions listed at the end for young readers.

Thus it is not surprising to see the following titles, all dated in 1951 and all from the publication center of LHH—Shanghai—listed in Wang's (2003) *A Bibliography of Chinese Lianhuanhua*.

- LIN Xueyan et al. *Zai Ri Kou Xi Jun Shi Yan Chang Li* [在日寇细菌试验厂里, In the Japanese aggressors' bacterial experiment plant]. [Shanghai]: Deng Ta.
- SHEN Feng et al. *Ri Kou Xi Jun Zhan Zui Xing Lu* [日寇细菌战罪行录, A record of the Japanese aggressors' crime of biological warfare]. [Shanghai]: Shi Yue Wen Yi.
- WANG Ying et al. *Tao Chu Le Ri Kou de Sha Ren Gong Chang* [逃出了日寇的杀人工场, Escaping the Japanese aggressors' death factory<sup>1</sup>]. [Shanghai]: Hua Dong Shu Dian.
- YING Quan et al. *Ri Kou Qin Hua Zui Xing* [日寇侵华罪行, The Japanese aggressors' war crimes in China]. [Shanghai]: Yi Xun.
- ZOU Enjie. *Kong Su Ri Kou Xue Shu* [控诉日寇血书, A bloody record of the Japanese aggressors' crimes]. [Shanghai]: Fu Ji Shu Ju.

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<sup>1</sup> Nowadays the phrase *sha ren gong chang* [杀人工场/厂, death factory] is often used metaphorically to refer to 1) the facilities in China where Japanese military medical personnel carried out biological experimentation on humans and 2) the Nazi death camps. Though I could not obtain a copy to examine, I believe the expression was used in the first sense in this 1951 publication.

All of these indicate their main subject through a straightforward title. All are likely to be nonfiction accounts of Japanese war crimes, and the first three should be about the Japanese BW program in particular. However, no library I searched held a copy of any of these five titles, suggesting that they became the target of purge in the LHH reform campaign or political movements. The bibliographical information above is the closest to the topic of Japanese BW that I could find in LHH. Out of the 360 titles, three mention BW in passing<sup>1</sup>, but none focuses on the crime like the 1951 works do.

In 1951, the intense attention that the Khabarovsk trial and Japanese BW received in the CCP's newspaper and subsequently in popular reading materials was made possible by a match between the needs of the ruling elite at the time and those of the public. At the official level, exposure to Japan's crimes coincided with a growing Sino-Soviet friendship. The Soviet Union was the first country in the world to recognize the PRC and the first one to establish a diplomatic relationship with her, all happening on the second and third day of her birth on October 1, 1949. By supporting, praising, and expressing gratitude to the Soviet Union's trial of military justice, the Chinese authority nurtured the budding allied relationship between the two countries. By showing care for Chinese suffering and condemning Japanese victimizers, the CCP also

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<sup>1</sup> And a fourth one *PENG Dehuai Yuan Shuai* (1983), which is the biography of Chinese Marshall PENG Dehuai, mentions BW allegedly committed by the US army during the Korean War (p. 110).

In text-heavy youth literature, the history of Japanese BW and the suspected American-Ishii collaboration on BW also inspired a science fiction short story, *Hei Long Hao Shi Zong* [黑龙号失踪, The missing battleship Black Dragon] (WANG Guozhong, 1963). I could not find a LHH version of this well crafted story, which came after the 1960 wave of anti-Japanese militarism in association with a new US-Japan security agreement and the publication in 1961 of the Chinese translation of AKIYAMA Hiroshi's memoir on Unit 731. *Bacteria and Bacterial Warfare* (Xu, 1951) and *Shi Ren Mo Ku* [食人魔窟, The devil's den] (by LIU Qian, 2005), published half a century apart, are the only two titles of text-heavy nonfiction I found about the crime.

contrasted itself with other parties which supposedly ignored people's interests<sup>1</sup>, and enhanced the moral legitimacy of the Communist regime. At the popular level, ordinary Chinese people had a strong wish to bring Japanese criminals to justice. Survivors also appreciated a supportive public venue to let out their pain and anger. Official publications about BW atrocities not only educated writers of popular reading materials on the issue, providing them with information sources, but also assured them what were acceptable topics to pursue. The flourishing of LHH works about Japanese war crimes was therefore built upon the cooperation between top-down opinion leadership and bottom-up public impetus, and facilitated by the social responsibility of Chinese intellectuals.

To understand the later banning of LHH on topics once publicized by the CCP's official newspaper, and the diminishment of information about war crimes in later publications, again we can examine the changing needs of the ruling elite for possible explanations. During the raging Cold War, "American Imperialism," by maintaining its support for the Chinese Nationalists and later intervening in the Korean War, had risen to become Communist China's No. 1 enemy. Even though Japan's war crimes remained unsettled, they quickly dropped to a secondary place—at least for Chinese authorities. As He (2007) pointed out, from the 1950s China was hoping to build a "United Front" with Japan against the US superpower; for that purpose, it avoided elaborating on Japanese war crimes, and adopted an official narrative which "drew a clear line

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<sup>1</sup> One article in *the People's Daily*, for example, accuses the Nationalist government of "covering up" the Japanese aggressors' crimes. According to the article, when local health administrators of the Zhejiang Province made connections between the Japanese air raids and the epidemics of the Plague in 1940, the central Nationalist government sent investigators to that area but dismissed the BW accusation as untrue ("Weisheng Bu," 1950). However, a criticism like this does not reflect what historians find about the Nationalist government and Chinese epidemiologists' wartime attempt to alert the international community to Japan's germ warfare (Harris, 2002, p. 222; Barenblatt, 2004, p. 184-186).

between ‘the small handful of Japanese militarists’ and ordinary Japanese people, who were treated as the Chinese people’s fellow victims of the militarists” (p. 47). The notion that Japanese people also suffered from a war waged by their own government was not new in China; what was new was the idea being elevated to such an extent as to squeeze out narrative space for Chinese suffering from war crimes committed by the Japanese military.

*Meiguo Wuzhuang Riben Zuixing Lu* [美国武装日本罪行录, A criminal record of the United States militarizing Japan] ([1951]), a work of nonfiction in LHH, moves closer to the official stance that the CCP took towards the United States and Japan at the time of its publication. The book criticizes a litany of policies implemented by the Douglas MacArthur-led Occupation administration in postwar Japan. The first policy, according to the LHH, is “harboring war criminals and releasing them” (p. 13). Terms such as the Three Alls Policy, Nanjing Massacre, and BW, and names of many major war criminals are mentioned (p. 14-26), but the focus of this book is not on Japan’s responsibilities, but on America and McArthur’s appeasement of the former aggressors of China. The message that wartime Japanese people were fellow victims is not explicit, but on at least six pages, contemporary Japanese—especially working-class people and the Japanese Communist Party—are introduced as the victims of McArthur’s policies and Shigeru Yoshida’s postwar government. For those readers who could not distinguish who are the “good” and “bad” guys among the Japanese, illustrators made the job easier by portraying decent-looking “*Riben renmin*” [日本人民, Japanese people] and caricatures of the Japanese military, often characterized by buck teeth, Hitler moustache, rough face, and monkey-like body features.

If the accusation against America’s release of Japanese war criminals was still ringing in some people’s ears, the approximately 1,500 Japanese Army men detained in China soon found

themselves, too, beneficiaries of the tension of the Cold War. LUO Ruiqing, Minister of Public Security of the PRC, clearly states the main reason for leniency in a talk he gave in 1956:

On the one hand, we indict felonious Japanese war criminals to send a severe warning to Japanese militarists. On the other hand we grant amnesty to those we can pardon, which helps us unite with Japanese people, support their struggle for peace and democracy, maintain peace in Asia, enhance the friendly collaboration between Chinese and Japanese people, and isolate the US warmongers' group and its allies. (Luo, 1956/1995)

Except for 45 of them, 417 prisoners were pardoned, released in August 1954, and sent back to Japan, and another 1,017, in the summer of 1956 (Lin, 2004, p. 30-31).

The priority of a United Front with “Japanese people” and the amnesty clearly discouraged popular literature that dwells on Japanese wartime atrocities and potentially instigates the dissatisfaction of the public. Besides the particular foreign policy towards Japan, other political agendas such as instilling national pride and highlighting the CCP’s heroes (not villains) in popular literature might also render the focus upon past trauma, regardless of who the perpetrators were, unwelcome.

Children’s literature with detailed textual and visual portrayal of Chinese suffering was criticized outright. The newly established magazine *Wenyi Yuebao* [文艺月报, Literature and art monthly], carried an article by DING Jingtang, who in the 1950s headed various offices in the Propaganda Department<sup>1</sup> of the Shanghai CCP Municipal Committee. He criticizes XU Zeren’s *Bacteria and Bacterial Warfare* for “boosting the enemy’s arrogance and damping our own morale:”

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<sup>1</sup> As Hung clarifies, the Chinese word *xuan chuan*, or propaganda, “meaning to inform and to propagate, carries a more positive connotation than its English counterpart” (1994, p. 9).

[These titles] describe how the American and Japanese Imperialism murdered and bombed Chinese people, who are described as “obedient subjects”—weak-kneed, incompetent, and surrendering to the enemy’s killing without any resistance....This is an insult to Chinese people,...who have never been intimidated by the enemy and kowtowed to them....[Such descriptions] will foster in children a sense of inferiority about their own people and sap their brave and strong will. (Ding, 1953, p. 26)

A second point that Ding raises concerns the illustration of children’s books:

Most of the images that portray the Korean War, Sino-Japanese War, crackdown of counterrevolutionaries, and land reform frequently show cruel scenes of killing, burying people alive, bombing, etc., which exaggerate the atrocity and tenacity of the enemy,...and distort the image of noble heroes and martyrs into dispirited cowards. (Ding, 1953, p. 27)

If Ding’s argument was based upon a farfetched interpretation of the books he criticized, and if his one-sided reasoning was debatable even within the CCP and Mao’s ideological framework, the propaganda official’s writing went unchallenged. According to Ding (1953), another author LU Jingshan, whose work was earlier criticized by a CCP’s newspaper for the same fault as Xu’s, made a public admission of guilt together with his publisher.

Although Ding’s comment was for children’s literature specifically, it is reasonable to assume that LHH, widely understood as children’s favorite reading, was subjected to the same political criteria. From LHH titles dated after 1951 till the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution in 1966, I found only one title focusing on a traumatic incident during the Sino-Japanese War—*Huagang Can An* [花冈惨案, The Hanaoka incident] (1956), which is an interesting case to study. This nonfiction title was introduced from Japan by the People’s Fine Arts Publishing House, a national publishing house established under the auspices of the Bureau of Publications, PRC. *The Hanaoka Incident* is a precise rendition of China’s official view on the distinction between “Japanese Imperialism” and Japanese working-class people. It opens with the suffering of miners and peasants in Hanaoka, a mining town in Japan. Japanese workers, poorly fed, are



forced to work long hours in the mine and often punished by foremen's beating. In a serious rock fall in May 1944, the mine owner refuses to attempt rescue and lets many workers be buried alive. With the shortage of labor caused by the war, the Japanese military and the mine owner transport forced labor from Korea and POWs from China to Hanaoka, where they are expendable—some are tortured to death on the trip and never reach their destination. In a failed riot in June 1945, more than 400 Chinese laborers lose their lives to combat and persecution. It is Japanese miners and their families who sympathize with them, smuggling food to them, building friendship with them, and even singing *March of the Volunteers*, a song (and the national anthem of PRC since 1949) which calls for anti-Japanese resistance, with the Chinese. After the war, Japanese people hold a grand funeral for the Chinese martyrs and also help with disclosing the crime to the public.

It was not sheer luck that the Chinese publisher could find a Japanese LHH expressing the exact message espoused by the Chinese ruling elite, which was not alone in rhetorically disassociating the Japanese “military clique,” supposedly solely responsible for launching the war, from “ordinary Japanese people” who were nothing but victims of the war. The conservative elite in postwar Japan made a similar distinction, or what He calls “myth,” to disassociate themselves from the wartime government and legitimate the group's ruling power (2007, p. 46). What is thought-provoking is that Chinese writers and illustrators, who had been quick and enthusiastic to respond to previous official opinion condemning Japanese wartime atrocities, did not create *The Hanaoka Incident*. When the political elite modified the discourse to “the brotherhood of Chinese and Japanese people against their common enemy of Japanese and American Imperialism,” Chinese LHH authors of the 1950s were seemingly not keen to create works that reflected the shared victimhood during the Sino-Japanese War. I attribute their

silence to the incongruity between top-down opinion leadership by the ruling elite and public sentiment. The gap between the elite's attitude and ordinary war survivors' feeling about the Sino-Japanese War could not have been wider when, around 1960, Mao (1960/1994, p. 438; 1961/1994, p. 460-461) more than once pointed out the "positive" side of Japanese aggression, " 'thanking' " the Japanese warlords for launching the war, which "awakened" and "educated" Chinese people and built the foundation for the (Communist) victory in the civil war. Materials that transcribed Mao's talks used quotation marks around the word "*gan xie*" [感谢, thank] to suggest that Mao was tongue-in-cheek, but the type of joke was unlikely what victims of wartime atrocities could afford to laugh about.

The early 1950s set the general pattern of the way atrocities and war crimes are treated in LHH: the topic could be presented in a brief and subtle manner, but not elaborated. We shall see that the subdued voice of LHH authors, partly in compliance with the priority of the government and partly in submission to pressure, would contribute to a temporary Chinese memory loss of the major crimes Imperial Japan committed during World War II.

### ***During the 1970s***

After a long absence of LHH works elaborating civilians' suffering during the Sino-Japanese War—long enough for one generation of young Chinese to mature—*Tuanshan Nuhuo* [团山怒火, The flames of fury in Tuanshan] (1972), a title dated shortly after the publishing of LHH recovered during the Cultural Revolution, seems to have made a bold choice in its subject matter. This nonfiction work relates a series of massacres launched by the Japanese Army in Tuanshan of Jiangxi Province in 1939, giving a local death toll of 11,000 in its preface. Viewed in the context of the domestic and international political climate at the time of its publication, the book was actually not radical. First of all, *The Flames*, dated January 1972, came about one year

after the construction of the Memorial Tomb of the Tuanshan Temple Massacre and the Tuanshan Class Struggle Educational Exhibition Hall—The Revolutionary Committee of the Gao'an County was both the agency that approved the construction of the projects and the editor of the book. These local projects were apparently triggered by several incidents in Japan's politics around 1970<sup>1</sup>, when China's accusation against the "revival of Japanese militarism" reached an all-time high (Saywell, 1971, p. 508-509). In the second place, *The Flames* was a typical LHH work during the Cultural Revolution in disclosing the evils of the "old society" before 1949 to remind readers what a blessed life they enjoyed in the "new society," thanks to the liberation of China by the CCP. This idea, termed in Chinese as *yiku sitian* [忆苦思甜, recalling bitterness, understanding sweetness], was reinforced among young people through school education, lectures by old peasants, and the tasting of hardly edible food supposedly consumed by poor people in the past. "Recalling bitterness" was consequently a prevalent theme in LHH published during that era. Blumenthal's study of the LHH works she purchased from China in 1973 and 1974 finds many stories that show "the abuses of the old regime in China" (1976, p. 67). *The Flames* indicates these two influences as follows:

Currently, the revived Japanese militarism dreams about launching another invasion in China. Enraged, the people of Tuanshan have built the Tuanshan Class Struggle Educational Exhibition Hall on the site of the Tuanshan Temple Massacre. The recollection of past bitterness teaches revolutionary successors to treasure today's happy life. (Gao'an Xian, 1972, p. 98)

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<sup>1</sup> According to Saywell (1971, p. 512), the Sino-Japanese relationship had improved significantly during Hayato Ikeda's administration (1960-64), but reversed when his successor Eisaku Satō assumed office in 1964. Among the incidents that *The People's Daily* repeatedly condemned in 1970 were the renewal of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty and escalation of Japanese military defense expenditures. One article also criticizes two sets of elementary school textbooks for indoctrinating militarism among Japanese youth: one was a wartime edition republished for contemporary use, and the other a postwar edition undergoing revisions considered by the CCP as pro-aggression and anti-China ("Zuoteng Zhengfu," 1970, p. 4).

On a close reading, *The Flames* employs some of the common techniques I discussed earlier—the mismatch of text and image, a greater coverage of the moments when Chinese are fighting back and getting the upper hand than when they are subdued, a distant view of traumatic scenes as opposed to a close-up view, and an absolute evasion of portraying sexual violations—to deal with the enemy’s violence. By giving generous coverage to villagers’ resistance in the second half of the book, *The Flames* could pass the criteria that Ding (1953) set without “insulting” brave Chinese people. Furthermore, the book attributes the source of villagers’ courage and strength to Mao’s Red Army, which led land reform there in 1930 (p. 43-49), ensuring that the CCP received credit.

However, *The Flames* is indeed a rare title which deals with massacres during the Sino-Japanese as its main subject. It includes gruesome verbal descriptions of Japanese persecution that individual villagers—men, women, old, and young—suffer; reference to chemical warfare in which half the population of a large village is wiped out (p. 60-61); visual depictions of massacred bodies, hard to find in other titles; and even one frontal portrayal of the bloody gun wound of a Chinese warrior (p. 65). The informational value of this book, even with its flaws and inaccuracies, cannot be underestimated. There is a scarcity of research on the history of massacres in Tuanshan area. On the Internet, I found some tourism information about the Memorial Tomb of the Tuanshan Temple Massacre, and a journalist interview with local survivors, done in 2005 when the highest wave of anti-Japan sentiment since the two countries restored formal diplomatic relations coincided with the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II. The news article, juxtaposing local county records and eyewitness accounts (*Beige*, 2005), and *The Flames*, an illustrated nonfiction work with no source information, provide a fairly consistent version of the chemical warfare and Tuanshan Temple Massacre. Other than

those resources, it proves difficult to locate information about the history of Tuanshan during World War II. I found no historical scholarship on these traumatic incidents of 1939, which thus far has prevented me from discussing the historical accuracy of *The Flames*. What little popular reading materials are available about Tuanshan are probably embedded in books about Japanese wartime atrocities in general or about the history of Jiangxi Province during World War II. For children of Tuanshan, the memorial tomb, the exhibition hall, and this LHH work, all a direct response to the Sino-Japanese deterioration of relations in 1970, could have served as important reminders of local history.

One question that I am not exploring further is why so few LHH titles about civilians' wartime suffering appeared, when the political climate temporarily opened up space for such stories. Perhaps, after a long suppression of this topic, most LHH creators failed to respond to the change as quickly and boldly as the Revolutionary Committee of the Gao'an County did. This was not helped by the fact that the LHH industry, paralyzed in the first half of the Cultural Revolution, barely revived in 1970-71. In 1972, the Sino-US-Japan relationship took a swift turn, with President Richard Nixon's visit to China in February and Japanese Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka's in September (two months after he succeeded the Communist-hating Satō). In the negotiations for the normalization of relations between China and Japan, the most serious concern for the CCP was Japan's position on the status of Taiwan and the peace treaty signed between Japan and the Nationalist government (Seiichirō, 2006, p. 111-113). The low priority that the interests of war victims received can be seen in the CCP's acceptance in 1972 of Tanaka's ambiguous apology for the war and its renouncement of war reparations in the joint communiqué of diplomatic normalization (He, 2006, p. 75-76). Before more LHH stories

disclosing Japanese wartime atrocities could be produced, an adverse climate for this topic prevailed again.

### ***During the 1980s***

After 1972 Sino-Japanese relations continued to improve, with various agreements reached between the two governments, until the Peace and Friendship Treaty was concluded in 1978. Qiu (2006, p. 26-28) finds it ironic that, while official, economic and cultural relations between China and Japan have tightened since then, Chinese and Japanese public perceptions of each other have been deteriorating. The first loud discordant sound was heard in 1982, when the controversy over revisions to Japanese history textbooks erupted, evoking official protests from China, South Korea, and Vietnam, and receiving media attention throughout Asia (Yoshida, 2000, p. 86). The revisions of history textbooks in Japan would continue to trigger diplomatic controversy from that point on. Scholarship on the issue of Japanese textbooks shows that political agendas and power struggles are behind both the revision of history textbooks in Japan and the strong reaction from the Chinese government. On Japan's side, the conservative elite and right-wing activists have combated leftist efforts to increase textbook coverage of Asian peoples' war suffering; these Japanese have found many willing supporters, especially among the younger generations of Japanese, who are disappointed with the country today in a declining economy and eager to embrace a more positive version of the country's history (Qiu, 2006, p. 19-20). On China's side, facing the growing social instability and declining public faith in the CCP, the Chinese government has attacked Japan's amnesia about its past aggression as a way to assuage public resentment towards itself (He, 2006, p. 52-54).

How did LHH publishers respond to China's official condemnation of Japan's treatment of war history in school textbooks? Did they perceive it as another signal for acceptable topics

concerning civilians' experience and war crimes during the Sino-Japanese War? The timing would not have been too bad if they had decided to pursue stories on these topics—the production of native LHH works expanded rapidly, at least between the end of the Mao era and the mid-1980s, when it started to take a downturn. However, my examination of the 220 titles dated between 1977 and 1989 shows that the LHH industry was slow or unable to take full advantage of the newly opened political space. On the one hand, some titles from this time period paint a darker image of the terror of the war than previous works, and there was a modest increase in stories featuring refugees and the impact of the war on civilians. On the other hand, the dominant subject matter is still military activities. Only a few stories mention the Nanjing Massacre, BW, and comfort women at all.

*Steel Meets Fire* (1984), analyzed in the previous section for its portrayal of the destructive “May 1st mopping-up campaign,” is equally prominent in its confrontation with atrocities suffered by Chinese civilians. The second volume devotes 30 pages to a harsh clash between soldiers and over fifty Chinese women locked in a classroom (p. 8-37)—the term “comfort women,” familiar to today’s Chinese, is not used, but the purpose of holding these hostages is obvious. This episode is also a rare reflection of the complexity of the Chinese “puppet army”—their choices and constraints, and their capricious distinctions between collaborators and targets of Japanese coercion. The women decide to defend themselves with the only weapon they can find in the classroom—the legs of chairs. After a minor clash with the puppet soldiers who guard them, one woman successfully stirs up the empathy of the soldiers by reminding them of their own sisters upon whom they would hate to see the same fate falling. When Japanese soldiers come for the women, prisoners—young, old, and pregnant—fight bravely against the fully armed men. Once again, a woman rouses indignation among the puppet soldiers by asking them how

they can afford to watch Japanese “devils” killing fellow Chinese. The puppet soldiers join the fight on the women’s side, wounding many Japanese, but revenge immediately follows. More Japanese arrive, first disarming the twenty or so Chinese guards, before bayoneting them to death on the spot.

The visual style of *Steel Meets Fire* differs from the thin-lined outline sketch, the most prevalent drawing technique employed in LHH works from the very beginning. In the 1950s this style was further encouraged on the grounds of its being within the tradition of Chinese art, favored by poorly educated readers, and easier for them to appreciate than drawings heavy with shades of light and dark, which was considered a Western influence and foreign to Chinese peasants and workers (Ju, 1961/1987, p. 224; Li, 1960/1987, p. 101; Anonymous, 1960/1987, p. 214; Jiang, 1983/1986, p. 135). The technique may have been widely adopted also because it was relatively quick (for many apprentices and self-taught illustrators) to learn and to use. Clean outline sketches can leave plenty of white space in a picture and result in a rather bright outlook, even when the subject is action in a pitch-black night or an incident of horror. After the Mao era, one major change that Jiang (1983/1986, p. 129) finds in LHH is a great diversity of artistic styles and drawing techniques. In *Steel Meets Fire*, generous use of hatching, crosshatching and stippling frequently places characters in a dark background, giving a heavy tone to all three volumes. The tone is already set in the first page of Volume 1. The text, referring to the “cruel May 1st mopping-up campaign” and summarizing the huge loss of life and materials, is quite typical of all works about the Campaign. However, the image uses black-and-white contrast and a close view to create a visual impact for that brief information: on the top are the words “Year 1942” occupying one fourth of the height of the image, in pure white and set against the darkest sky; in the distance, almost engulfed by a black background, are some small and vague figures of



Japanese soldiers brandishing their national flag; in the foreground and portrayed in a large size, is a little girl crying over a woman, who lies unconscious right in front of the viewer of the page, her eyes closed tight, her clothes blood-stained. This traumatic scene is both a concrete and symbolic representation of Chinese suffering during the Campaign. Bereft crying children must have been a common occurrence where civilians were terrorized by mass killings. The mother also easily reminds one of the “motherland.” Her bleeding and her inability to protect her child are symbolic of a country being invaded and unable to safeguard her people.

Despite changes like these, LHH of the 1980s is a poor source for information about specific war crimes. I found five works which mention either the Nanjing Massacre or BW, and ten which refer to comfort women or the trafficking of females for sexual enslavement. *Jiandui Siling de Nü'er* [舰队司令的女儿, An admiral's daughter] (1988) is a good example of how little information a mere reference to war-crime-related terms can convey. YIN Hong is the spoiled daughter of a Chinese admiral who serves the Japanese in occupied Manchuria. Her romance with a secret member of the guerrilla force slowly changes Hong into a sympathizer for the resistance movement. However, her father gives her to a Japanese officer as a bribe to secure his position, endangered by a gunboat uprising led by Hong's boyfriend. Hong kills the officer during his rape attempt, and, as a punishment, faces the fate of being “sent to the ‘log’ transfer station in the suburbs, for the use of Unit 731's bacterial experimentation” (p. 123). From this book alone, readers will never find out what “log” (“logs of wood”—a euphemism used by ISHII Shirō and his colleagues to refer to human subjects) means in this context, and what is the connotation of “Unit 731's bacterial experimentation.” Hong is rescued half way to the death factory and survives. If those terms do not trigger a curious reader to seek explanation from other sources, the meaning may not register well with him or her.

My most unexpected finding is that, in half of the stories published during the 1980s and alluding to war crimes, the victims are Japanese military and civilians (5 titles), as well as ethnic Chinese people from outside mainland China (2 titles). A common pattern emerges from stories that portray Japanese victims: victims and their families turn out to be the “good” Japanese in this war and are likely to become helpers and Chinese allies in fighting the Japanese army. This theme is most prominent in *Jiang Cheng Ce Fan* [江城策反, The revolt in Wuhan] (1984), in which the protagonist Tarō is a Japanese *kempei* (military policeman, with the reputation as a "Japanese Gestapo" during the war years) stationed in Wuhan, Hubei Province. With a combined feeling of fear and resentment towards the war, Tarō is unable to fire at anti-Japanese resistance fighters and is punished for that. About a month after the Victory in Europe Day, Tarō visits the comfort station and is shocked to find his wife, who tells him how she and all other Japanese women have been captured and sent here by force. His wife is temporarily released from the military brothel, but is coveted by Tarō's boss, who is later killed by the CCP's secret resistance fighters during his rape attempt. Tarō's loyalty to Imperial Japan increasingly wavers through these incidents. Finally, when he is ordered to perform seppuku (cutting the belly) following the emperor's announcement of Japan's surrender, he decides to rebel and collaborate with his Chinese friends who have saved his wife. (For a Japanese army man's own family [wife, sister] to become a comfort woman seems to be an overused plot device. It also appears in *Hengli En Chou Ji* [亨利恩仇记, Henry's friends and foes] (1983) and *Hu Kou Dao Qiang* [虎口盗枪, Stealing guns out of a tiger's mouth] (1984).)

As far as Japanese BW is concerned, the only actual victim I found in post-Mao titles is a Japanese soldier's mother, mentioned in *Xue Jian Jin Men* [血溅津门, Tianjin splattered with blood] (Vol. 5, 1983). An adaptation of a novel published in 1981, the LHH portrays a minor

character Satsuki, a low-ranking Japanese officer of the occupation force in Tianjin. One day he receives a letter from Japan, and learns that his mother back home has been infected with bubonic plague “at the imperial BW factory” (p. 57).

Scholarship on Japanese war crimes confirms that both Chinese and Japanese suffered from the military brothel system and BW, although what is presented in these LHH works does not necessarily match historical findings. According to information provided by the Asian Women’s Fund—originally an atonement project initiated by the Japanese government for former comfort women—the recruitment of military prostitutes from Japan stipulated the rule that the women had to be involved in prostitution in Japan already, be at least 21 years of age, and have permission from their parent or guardian to go overseas ([2007]). Although one might ask how faithfully the regulation was enforced, it applied to recruitment in Japan’s homeland only; most of the “comfort women,” whose age went as low as thirteen or even younger, were taken by lies and force from Japan’s colonies and occupied territories (Ahmed, 2004, p. 124).

It is now known that, during the 1942 Zhejiang campaign launched by the Japanese, Japanese troops became victims of the epidemics spread by the BW force (Harris, 2002, p. 148). However, historical record does not indicate any death of Japanese civilians in Japan’s homeland, such as in the case of Satsuki’s mother in *Tianjin Splattered with Blood*, from BW during World War II.

The minimum and inaccurate coverage of Japanese war crimes in LHH between 1977 and 1989 raises several questions. Why is there so little information on these topics in LHH? Why, when war crimes are mentioned, are Chinese victims so often “spared” in the story? Was it because LHH creators intentionally tweaked what they knew about the history, or because they

were poorly informed? Based on the political and cultural history of this time period, I propose that at least three factors contributed to the pattern we witness.

(i) First of all, for the previous three decades there was a lack of scholarly investigation of and popular culture about Japanese wartime atrocities, and indeed LHH creators were not better informed on this issue than the general public. Jiang pointed out that a great number of young and middle-aged creators joined the industry after the end of the Cultural Revolution (1986, p. 240-241)—these were largely part of a postwar generation whose second-hand knowledge about the history of the Sino-Japanese War would have been heavily influenced by media (including LHH, as many creators were fans of this format in their childhood) and school education during the Mao era. In China, information about Japanese BW had just started to reappear in official newspapers and books in the 1980s, and the issue of comfort women would not receive media attention until the 1990s. The prevailing ignorance of the postwar generation was epitomized in two Chinese intellectuals' reactions when they first learned about these crimes from Japanese sources.

WANG Xuan, born in 1952 in Shanghai, received her graduate education in Japan in the late 1980s. There, in 1992, she first learned about Japan's employment of biological weapons in China and asked in fury, "How come I got to know this as late as forty years old? Who set up this foggy barrier [to my right to know]?" (Nan, 2005, p. 13) Wang became the major Chinese investigator of this issue, working with Japanese lawyers to collect testimony from survivors in various sites—including her father's hometown in Chongshan, Zhejiang Province—attacked by Japanese BW. On August 30, 2002, the lawsuit she led against the Japanese government resulted in the first formal admission of BW crimes from a Japanese court (Barenblatt, 2004, p. 235-236).

SU Zhiliang, born in 1956, was a historian specializing in the history of Shanghai. As a visiting scholar in Japan in 1992, he was shocked to be told that the earliest comfort station during the Sino-Japanese War was established in Shanghai (Su, 2006, p. 80). Su became the major Chinese investigator of comfort women, searching for the former sites of comfort stations and collecting oral history from survivors throughout China. His first monograph on this topic, *Wei'anfu Yanjiu* [慰安妇研究, Studies on the comfort women], was published in 1999.

The scarce and inaccurate war crime information we observe in LHH titles of the 1980s can thus be attributed to a lack of personal experience during the Sino-Japanese War among the young generation of authors, and a lack of secondary sources to further their understanding of the history. The inclusion of Japanese characters who suffer from war crimes committed by their own military reflects the shared victimhood between Japanese and Chinese people during World War II, a message which the CCP had repeated in its official publications for decades and which had apparently gained a wider acceptance among the postwar generation. The theme can be found in a few other titles, published in the 1980s, portraying friendship and romance between Japanese and Chinese characters.

(ii) In the second place, China's condemnation of the Japanese textbooks controversy in 1982 did not automatically dissipate all political and cultural barriers to the exposure of war crimes. Some of those barriers persist even today. For one thing, writing about war crimes often means setting stories in broader geographical areas than those traditionally highlighted in popular literature, including where the CCP's influence was either weak or absent and the Nationalist government and Western allies might have played a stronger and positive role. Writer ZHOU Erfu considered himself engaging in a risky project when he worked on *The Fall of Nanjing* (1987) in the early 1980s. He expected his novel, which focuses upon the Nationalists' activities in the lost

battle of Nanjing and covers the ensuing massacre at the end, to invite such criticism as “glorifying the Nationalist Party and its Central Army, as well as depreciating the great achievement made by the CCP and its armed forces.” Zhou found his risk lessened when the CCP released a document in August 1985 in commemoration of the 40th anniversary of World War II, acknowledging the contributions made by many parties—including overseas Chinese, the Nationalist Army, and allied countries—towards the defeat of Japanese Fascism (Zhou, 2004, p. 4-7). If Zhou, a senior Party member since 1939 and China’s Vice Minister of Culture at the time, felt insecure about novelizing the little explored history, it is easy to imagine the amount of hazard that politically less prestigious writers might have perceived in the topic before the CCP’s sanction.

For various reasons, scholars still have not gotten the green light to conduct historical research on Japanese war crimes. Attending a forum, held in Nanjing in 1991, on victims of the Pacific War, American journalist Ian Buruma (1991) could barely conceal his discomfort at best, and disgust at worst, with what he considers “political gamesmanship” of the Chinese government, which retracted or released support to the forum according to the progress or setback of a negotiation for Japanese interest-free loans (p. 51-52). As late as 2006, SU Zhiliang reported that archival materials about comfort women were still classified and inaccessible to researchers, and had been ever since the early 1990s when the government directed local archives to close all files relating to this issue (Su, 2006, p. 86, 145). Su did not suggest any reason why these files were classified at the very moment when former comfort women started to draw international attention, and the motive of the government will probably be revealed by examining those materials when they are re-opened.

The investigation of sexual violations by Japanese soldiers was made even more difficult by the social stigma attached to female victims in China. Chinese media and society did little to foster wide respect and compassion for former comfort women, who for decades kept silent about their suffering and most of whom passed away before researchers started looking for them. WANG Bingyi, a native of Nanjing and an amateur historian, began collecting testimonials from local comfort women in 1987. He reported an initial reluctance to speak out by the majority of the survivors he contacted. In two cases, children of survivors forced him to burn the materials he had collected—in front of their very eyes (Zhu, 2007).

(iii) A third factor that contributed to the way war crimes are sparingly reflected in post-Mao LHH works is ill timing. The slow growth of information about war crimes in the 1980s unfortunately coincided with the downturn taken by the LHH industry in the latter half of the decade. At least one case suggests that publishers were eager to introduce new titles on war crimes, but their efforts were hampered by the dispirited industry. Chinese LHH creators heavily rely upon text-heavy literature and other media for sources of adaptation. When the novel *The Fall of Nanjing* was published, senior editor JIANG Weipu immediately contacted the artist Zhu Zhengeng, asking him to illustrate the bulky work. Zhu took the task seriously, and spent over five years creating more than 400 images for the three-volume set. By the time Zhu finished in 1993, however, LHH publishing in China had limped for quite a few years and no publisher would accept his work until the Hunan Fine Arts Publishing House printed it with grant money in 1997 (Zhu, 1998, p. 37-38).

I have proposed three factors—a lack of secondary sources about Japanese war crimes for LHH creators who grew up in postwar China, continual political barriers to historical research and to the production of secondary sources, and the decline of the LHH industry after 1985—to

explain why China's official disapproval of Japanese history textbooks did not translate into an influx of LHH about war crimes in the 1980s. In the United States, this was the same decade when Art Spiegelman, child of Holocaust survivors, published *Maus* (1986) based upon his Jewish parents' struggle outside the Nazi death camps. His germinal work is considered to have helped win respect for comic strips, a form long dismissed as light reading in America. Spiegelman is only one representative of what Berger and Berger (2001, p. 3) call the "Jewish second generation," who "emerged as a distinct group in the midseventies, and gathered momentum in the eighties and early nineties" and whose "members expressed their Holocaust inheritance through a variety of genres: art, essays, film, memoirs, novels, poetry, and short stories." No similar patterns were observed in China: no ground-breaking works were created by Chinese LHH artists to rejuvenate the industry; throughout the eighties, children of survivors of Japanese war crimes did not emerge as a noticeable group to help preserve the dark history and enrich Chinese literature and art through that history.

### ***From 1990 to 2007***

As shown above, some of the cultural, political, and commercial factors that sustained the silence about war crime topics in LHH actually extended well into the 1990s and even today. Besides the three-volume set *The Fall of Nanjing* (1997), I found only two other titles, out of all nineteen dated between 1990 and 2007, about Japanese war crimes: *Xuelei 'Wei'anfu'* [血泪 "慰安妇", The bloody tears of 'comfort women'] (2001) and *Dong Shilang Xiezui* [东史郎谢罪, AZUMA Shirō's apology] (2002)<sup>1</sup>. The tiny output may tempt us to underestimate the amount of

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<sup>1</sup> Among text-heavy juvenile literature, a major series containing six volumes of informational books on Japanese wartime atrocities was published by the Zhejiang Juvenile and Children's Publishing House in 2005. *Xuese Lishi Congshu* [血色历史丛书, The blood-colored history series] claims to be the first popular history book series in



enthusiasm and social responsibility with which Chinese intellectuals brought the history of wartime trauma into LHH, which had long suffered from a tepid market for domestic works and a severely diminished creative force. Both works are a collaboration between academia and LHH artists. SU Zhiliang and ZHU Chengshan, who contributed to the text of the books, are major Chinese researchers of Japanese war crimes. Su is director of Center for Research on Chinese Comfort Women, the first and only research institute on this issue in China. Zhu is curator of the Memorial Hall of the Victims in Nanjing Massacre by Japanese Invaders, which, given its international notability, is the closest Chinese counterpart to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC. As if to take a leaf from the difficult labor of *The Fall*, both titles employed not one, but from four to seven illustrators each, to divide up the graphics workload and speed up the production. Indeed, compared with the interval of ten years between the publication of the original novel and *The Fall* in LHH, *Tears* (2001) came two years after Su's historical scholarship *Studies on the Comfort Women* (1999) was published, and *Apology* (2002) was based upon a Japanese veteran's wartime diary, translated into Chinese in 1999. According to the preface of *Apology*, its publisher intended this as the first installment in a series of nine books that portray the Nanjing Massacre from three perspectives—those of perpetrators, victims, and witnesses—to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II (Li, 2002, "Preface"). However, thus far the rest of the series has failed to materialize.

Through the choices of subject matter and artistic styles, *The Fall* (1997), *Tears* (2001), and *Apology* (2002) took a bigger step towards confronting war crimes in LHH. The treatment of

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China that provides young readers with a "comprehensive" picture of the war crimes committed by the Japanese aggressors ("Zhe Shao She," 2005). Topics covered by the six volumes include major historical events of Japan's invasion of China, the Three Alls Policy, air raids, Nanjing Massacre, Unit 731 and biological warfare, and concentration camps set up by the Japanese military.

violence and brutality in a format read by Chinese youth challenged LHH creators to reconcile historical accuracy, age appropriateness, and artistic appeal. We have witnessed a rich array of strategies which old LHH works employed to tone down violence in textual and visual representations, thus conforming to political constraints and meeting the requirement for age appropriateness. My examination of the three new works shows how hard it was for LHH creators, clearly unaccustomed to war crimes as the main subject, to juggle standards that contradict with each other.

The three titles distinguish themselves from the vast majority of LHH works about the Sino-Japanese War by embracing unusual subject matter—civilian and female suffering in war, lost battles, and failed missions—which in old works, if mentioned at all, tend to occupy marginal narrative space. None of them ends on a happy note. The original hefty novel *The Fall* is mainly about the military history of the battle of Nanjing and covers violence committed by the Japanese occupation army only at the very end. The three-volume LHH version cut down the first part, and greatly increased the coverage of the Nanjing Massacre, adapting into one volume the last four sections (Sec. 64-67) about the Chinese army's final futile defense at the city gate and the subsequent trauma of civilians and POWs. Considering that past LHH adaptations, in favor of accentuating military activities, so often eliminate detail about atrocities from the original novel, the intensified treatment of trauma information in *The Fall* has done a significant reversal. Volume 3 ends with the execution of 10,000 refugees, who are accused by the Japanese of being Nationalist soldiers in disguise and drawn from the International Safety Zone led by the Nazi John Rabe. No hope can be found on the last page (p. 136), which says, "Flames and smoke rose from every corner of the city. Nanjing, an ancient capital city for six dynasties, turned into an inferno on earth. Gloomy and ghostly, Nanjing was engulfed by grief, rage, and hostility."

*Tears*, a nonfiction account of sex crimes by the Japanese army, is composed of one sad story after another. Individual former comfort women's life histories are braided with official combat history and a chronology of the military brothel system, established by the Japanese army to curb rampant sexually transmitted diseases among soldiers from random raping, as well as to raise morale (Asian Women's Fund, [2007]). No triumph is reached at the end of the book: the tone of writing is heavy and the outlook is mixed. The last page (p. 181) announces the death of Ms. Guo, a former comfort woman and plaintiff who sued the Japanese government for sex crimes. Two such lawsuits and the Women's International War Crimes Tribunal on Japan's Military Sexual Slavery, then anticipated in the Hague, Netherlands in October 2001, are mentioned, giving readers a thread of hope for justice—even though the fact remains that no Chinese victims of any Japanese war crimes have been successful at claiming compensation from the Japanese government through lawsuits.

*Apology* traces the life of AZUMA Shirō, an Imperial Japanese Army soldier who, as a perpetrator, witness, and beneficiary of wartime atrocities, in his older years felt a deep remorse for what he did. Best known for his war diary, Azuma was almost a villain-turned-hero in Chinese media. As part of his personal repentance and fight against what he considered still present Japanese militarists (Azuma, 1999, "Preface" p. 4), in 1987, Azuma published his diary, which contains records of the killings, looting, and sexual violations that he and his comrades committed. However, in 1993, he was sued for libel charges by HASHIMOTO Mitsuji, captain of the division to which Azuma belonged, and lost the case. Azuma received mixed reactions in Japan, including support for his legal defense as well as harassment and life threats from right-wing groups and Nanjing Massacre deniers (Morgan, 2002, p. 243-244; *Scarred*, 2005). He continued making public admissions of guilt to Chinese victims until his death in 2006. The

LHH work is part an adaptation of his personal experience as recorded in the diary, and part the ramifications of the publication of this diary, particularly the process of the lawsuit and the conviction for libel that Azuma had to bear for the rest of his life. The ending of *Apology* is slightly more upbeat than the other two titles: a black-and-white photo shows Azuma striking a huge bell, an act expressing wishes for peace between Chinese and Japanese people.

In addition to dark topics and non-victorious endings, what further sets the three works apart from traditional Sino-Japanese War stories in LHH is the style of images. The strategies we found in older works—choices in framing, perspective, focus, etc.—to avoid a visual confrontation of violence are reversed in these books, capturing violent actions in all their goriness and terror. *The Fall* adopts a dark tone in its illustrations. Fine-line drawings appear in only a few of the early images in the first volume, and are quickly discarded altogether. Thick brush strokes and extensive use of dark shades give the images a look of woodblock prints and a heavy—even depressing—mood. The theme of killing competition runs through Volume 3, which first devotes about 40 pages to a beheading contest held between two Japanese officers, Noda and Miyaoka, and then frames large-scale massacres within a spontaneous game where one military division strives to kill more Chinese than have been wiped out by the other. These pages portray mass corpses and mutilated body parts (p. 41, 88, 95, etc.), freeze the moment when a Japanese bayonet pierces all the way through a man's belly (p. 42), and give a clear frontal view of an old man being shot, with a large black hole on the left side of his chest and a painful expression on his face (p. 58). The one crime which the illustrator treats with subtlety is sexual assault. Still, this is the one LHH title, of all Sino-Japanese War stories preceding it, that brings readers the closest to the unspeakable violation. The actual rape takes place off camera in *The*

*Fall*, but images show the crime locale as well as the actions of Japanese soldiers, always fully dressed, immediately before and after the forced sex (p. 45-46 & 67-68).

The graphic works of *Tears* and *Apology* differ from each other in one significant way, but are similarly bold in the treatment of violence and trauma. Both books, measuring about 21 x 14 cm (8.3 x 5.5 inches), are twice the page size of traditional LHH. Inside, *Tears* adopts the style of Japanese manga, featuring multiple panels in one page and a tighter complementary relationship between the visual image and text. Although published one year after *Tears*, *Apology* generally maintains the format of one picture and one short paragraph of text on each page, thus adhering to the style of typical illustrated story books. (For this reason, below I will examine *Apology* first before discussing *Tears*.) However, the enlarged canvas does allow illustrators of *Apology* to depict small details with clarity, to juxtapose two or more scenes in one page for certain effects, and occasionally even to use a double spread to portray a busy scene in full view.

Just like *The Fall*, *Apology* and *Tears* do not shrink from images of physical tortures, mutilations, homicides, gory wounds, and mass corpses. What differs between *The Fall* and the later two titles is the treatment of sex crimes. Verbally, the two books not only use the term “raping” and the exceedingly rich variety of euphemisms for that word in Chinese to repeatedly refer to the crime, but also quote Japanese soldiers’ obscene language which expresses pleasure from sexual assaults of women. Visually, except for genital areas, which are strategically positioned behind the foreground, nudity, sexual intercourse, and gang rape are all blatantly represented.

*Apology* is one of six LHH titles I found that portray one or more Imperial Japanese soldiers as the central figures. The text of *Apology* has adapted AZUMA Shirō’s diary from first- into

third-person narrative, but retained numerous direct quotations from Azuma's diary to share with the reader the soldier's thoughts and emotions. Clean line drawings are unequivocal about what is happening at the crime scene, often observed through Azuma's eyes; the invisible camera, stationed where Azuma should be standing, allows the reader to look at Chinese victims from the viewpoint of a Japanese soldier. Direct quotations and Azuma's perspective increase the immediacy of war crimes, and also surreptitiously invite the reader to identify with the narrator and observer. One image illustrates the intricacy of presenting sex crimes to a young audience. On page 109, three Chinese females, under the threat of a bayonet, are shown sitting half naked with their private parts exposed, onto which a grinning Japanese soldier's eyes fall. One wonders how teenage boys and girls might differ in their reception of the image: whether they identify with the fear and humiliation of the weeping victims, who, according to the caption, are about to be raped and killed, or with the sexual curiosity displayed by the male soldier. The irony of sexual explicitness in Sino-Japanese War LHH is amplified by the fact that current Chinese youth literature on sex education is poor in quantity and conservative in nature (Qu, 2005).

Temporary identification with the perpetrator is not an ultimate sin, but can go a step beyond the typical dichotomous interpretation of Japanese wartime atrocities, pitting "us virtuous Chinese" against "those barbarous Japanese." A richer understanding is reached if the reader can reflect on the thin line between a war-trained, racism-imbued villain and an ordinary human being, and see his or her own vulnerability to evil. In his original diary, Azuma reflects on his struggle with the conflicting demands of humanity, loyalty, and survival, and documents the trajectory he goes through from an awkward killer and shy soldier to a veteran who develops indifference to slaughter and visits comfort stations with no shame—but still finds time between battles to "lie under the blue sky," reading and admiring Pearl S. Buck's *The Good Earth*

(Azuma, 1999, p. 436). However, these ambiguities and complexities disappear from the LHH adaptation of *Apology*, which is instead focused on *what* atrocities were committed during the Sino-Japanese War, not *why*. The term “Japanese militarism” is mentioned in the adaptation, but no information is provided to help the reader make sense of how that ideology translates into Japanese contempt for the Chinese people. The LHH of *Apology* constructs binary oppositions, putting people into mutually exclusive camps, and can hardly tolerate any morally in-between status. In the LHH adaptation, the “good” Japanese who repent their wartime cruelties to Chinese, help publicize the history of atrocities to the postwar world, and condemn the rightist deniers, contrast with the “bad” Japanese who commit cruelties without remorse, deny atrocities, and harass those who argue otherwise. The “good” individuals and non-government organizations which support Azuma’s honesty contrast with the “bad” Japanese legal system which “disrespects laws and abandons justice” (p. 185). Even the “good” postwar Azuma who apologizes to Chinese victims contrasts starkly with the “bad” wartime Azuma who sets fire, loots, and murders with no qualms. Except for the image of a Chinese collaborator on page 61, *Apology* also exempts all Chinese people from discussions of their equally diverse and complex moral choices during the war, not challenging a false sense of the moral superiority of the Chinese people. Lacking space for ambiguity and complexity, *Apology* remains a book whose main purpose is to firmly counter Japanese war crime denials, not to help young Chinese readers delve into the contemporary relevance of racism.

It is not hard to notice the lack of stylistic consistency among the seven illustrators of *Tears*, which shares with *Apology* the challenge of presenting violence and sex crimes in words and graphics to young adult readers (in the prefaces both titles specify this age group as their main target audience). Since the topic of *Tears* is sexual slavery during the Sino-Japanese and Pacific

War, the book contains a greater amount of information about sex crimes, and, at first glance, is even more visually explicit than *Apology*. However, various artistic decisions by individual illustrators, who were each roughly in charge of one or two comfort women's stories, made *Tears* an assortment of experimentations with the thorny topic. I will point out some of the drastically different strategies employed by artists and the subsequently contrasting effects.

One important element in the visual depiction of sex crimes is eye-level view point. In the above example in *Apology*, the fact that the implied viewer shares a common central eye level with the Japanese soldiers in the picture makes him/her a bystander of the crime scene, if not a potential perpetrator. In *Tears*, the pages from the beginning through 59 cautiously eschew this central eye level, but frequently use a high or low perspective to distance the viewer from the perpetrators—with some degree of success. Page 10 is a good example of how the illustrator takes advantage of perspective drawing and Japanese manga styles to add to the dramatic impact of an obnoxious scene. Gang rape is portrayed through a combination of four panels in full and close-up views. The first panel, occupying the upper half of the page, is a full view captured from a strikingly low viewpoint. The viewer finds his or her eye level even lower than the shoulder of the woman victim, who is forced upon the floor by one soldier, with the rest of the soldiers towering over her. The careful compositional device thus invites the viewer to share both the woman's perspective and her powerless position. With lewd facial expressions, soldiers are engaged in various activities: watching close by voyeuristically, undressing to get ready for a turn, and so on. Three other panels are close-up views of three soldiers' faces—all sweating and distorted—as they assault the same woman in succession. Another image from this section also reveals the illustrator's aim to foster the viewer's empathy with the victims, not identification with the perpetrators. Page 27 contains a scene of two girls under the threat of bayonets, similar



to what is in *Apology* but for the direction of the sharp blades. Whereas in *Apology*, the bayonet thrusts from the right side of the image frame and points towards the girls on the left, sparing the viewer the menace of the weapon, in *Tears*, the viewer is put in a hazardous position behind the girls, seeing the tip of the bayonet shoved in his or her direction. Images from other parts of *Tears* show that not all illustrators are as sensitive to the significance of perspective as the first one. Quite a few panels capturing rape scenes at a central eye level from the rapist's back or side might be considered quasi-pornographic, even turning the viewer into a dubious voyeur or nonchalant bystander.

A second intriguing element I found in *Tears* is the diverse ways that human bodies, especially women's bodies, are portrayed. The Japanese rapists, whether nearly naked or exposing only a small portion of their skin, are often portrayed as being hairy to symbolize their beastly behavior. Their moral ugliness is also mirrored in their offensive looks—a monstrous facial expression, jagged head shape, rough face, and buck teeth are common stereotypes adopted by illustrators. However, illustrators diverge widely on the portrayal of comfort women, particularly on the issue of nudity. The most conservative illustrators present sex attacks in words alone, not in exact visual replications of the information, which is in alignment with some of the old LHH works I discussed earlier. The section which pays attention to eye level occasionally suggests partial nudity but, through framing, carefully avoids exposing large areas of women's naked bodies. On the other end of the spectrum, particularly seen in the section about Korean comfort women, a few images capture the moments when victims are being attacked and exposing their sexually attractive or sexualized bodies, thus subjecting them to a voyeuristic gaze. The section which introduces comfort stations established in different areas adopts a style which I consider roughly occupies the middle ground. Nudity is not shunned, but

the illustrator tries to avoid portraying sexually attractive objects. Comfort women, with untamed short hair, a look of pain, anger, and sometimes apathy (in the case of those who seem to have passed out) on their faces, and often confined behind bars, convey the metaphor of caged animals stripped of their clothing, dignity, and freedom. As the first and only LHH title focusing on the Japanese military brothel system, *Tears* does provide space for artists to experiment with different ways of visually representing a crime that is still awkward to speak about in Chinese culture. The result is a medley of strategies and styles—some effective, others flawed—to meet the standards for historical accuracy, sensitivity for a young audience without watering down the darkness of the crime, and artistic appeal as opposed to repulsiveness, vulgarity, and sensationalism.

*Tears* touches upon several issues which are all neglected by *Apology*. First, it alludes to Chinese responsibility for the sexual enslavement of women in mainland China and Taiwan. Victim is not the only role that Chinese people play in this nonfiction account. Some of the recruiters who help the Japanese trick Chinese and Taiwanese women into joining the brothels are clearly Chinese, judging by their names provided in the text. After the war, while some former comfort women are blessed with love and support from their families, others often endure hostility, discrimination, and punishment from their partners, neighbors, and the larger Chinese society.

Second, compared to the widespread criticism of Japanese history textbooks whitewashing war crimes, *Tears* is a rare Chinese title to point out the lack of understanding about the comfort women issue among contemporary Chinese. This criticism, though subtle and brief, brackets the book. On the page preceding the main body of the comic book is a provocative statement:

“Japanese people said to Chinese: ‘You’ve forgotten about it yourself. How do you expect us to

remember?”” The book then opens with an episode in which “I,” the narrator SU Zhiliang, is surprised to learn from a Japanese professor that the comfort women system might have been first established in Shanghai. The second to last page brings up Chinese amnesia once again: “Whereas it is significant how the Japanese government and people deal with the comfort women issue, it is a more important question how we as people from the victimized country treat our national humiliation.” (p. 180) The text proceeds to call for increasing information about comfort women in Chinese history textbooks.

On page 166, *Tears* also hastily offers some explanations for the formation of the comfort women system, which is attributed to militarism and samurai spirit under the autocracy of the Emperor of Japan, a sexist Japanese society, and fascism. By citing these familiar ideological underpinnings of the crime, *Tears* is not promoting any “innate” bestiality and moral inferiority of Japanese people. However, the cut-and-dried explanations, compressed in one page of four images, give the reader only a surface understanding of the cause of a war crime as shocking as the institutionalized rape of several hundred thousand teenage girls and women. Like *Apology*, the priority of *Tears* is not to help contemporary young readers understand that they, too, are susceptible to racism and sexism. Published in 2001 and 2002—after the former Japanese Prime Minister KOIZUMI Junichiro’s (2001-06) annual visit to the Yasukuni Shrine in downtown Tokyo sent waves of anti-Japan sentiment across China—both titles are intent upon countering Japanese rightists’ denials and educating Chinese young adults about the “correct” version of war crime history. *Tears* (p. 6, 152-153) even reprints, from the notorious Japanese manga title *Taiwan Ron* [On Taiwan] (2000) by KOBAYASHI Yoshinori, the cover image and panels which claim that no one forced comfort women to join the military brothels, where better health protections and financial benefits were provided than by general brothels.

This section has reviewed the way violence and major war crimes are represented in Sino-Japanese War stories in Chinese LHH. The majority of titles, mostly dated from the Mao era to the 1990s, soften the goriness and cruelty of a total war in verbal and visual representations, regardless of the national membership of the target of the violence. Major incidents of war crimes are scarcely mentioned, and detailed portrayal is further eschewed. The suppression of brutalities and war crime information in LHH is congruent with a distaste for violence and sex in mass media until the Communist asceticism started to dissolve from popular culture during the post-Cultural Revolution era of the 1980s. The suppression goes along with the Party's agenda to promote national pride among the Chinese public and youth, and to cultivate a politically and economically benign relation with postwar Japan.

The small number of titles aberrant from the general pattern bear distinct timestamps. Works published during the Sino-Japanese War record the cruelty of the war, which was part of people's daily reality, mainly as a cultural tool for mobilization. A few titles focusing on Japanese war crimes, including biological warfare, were made available in the early 1950s, when the CCP was eager to be seen as the true representative of people's interest. For a short while during the Cultural Revolution, when the Sino-Japanese relationship went sour under a Communist-hating Cabinet of Japan, the narrative space for Japanese wartime atrocities opened in China, allowing a few bold LHH creators to incorporate local history into an echo of the Party's official diatribe against Japan's "revived militarism." Finally, a small number of titles featuring the best publicized wartime atrocities were published at the turn of the 21st century, when several situations converged: first, anti-Japan sentiments in China encouraged publishers to appreciate the market value of native LHH about Japanese war crimes, for an industry otherwise

long beaten by legal and illegal Japanese manga imports; second, contemporary Chinese intellectuals, quite like their wartime counterpart, saw LHH as a cultural weapon to combat the enemy—not the Japanese army this time but collective amnesia and rightist deniers of wartime atrocities; and third, Chinese scholarship on Japanese war crimes accumulated to provide LHH with source materials.

During the seven decades from the onset of the Sino-Japanese War to 2007, the extent to which civilians and POWs' suffering could be represented in LHH was almost always conditioned by how well the topic could match and facilitate other agendas prioritized by the ruling political party. Victims of war atrocities suffered a second time from being silenced about their personal experiences and denied an emotional outlet in the public media, not to mention that they were also denied compensation by the Japanese government.

The military history of the Sino-Japanese War, particularly the CCP's involvement in that history, has nurtured numerous works of literature and art, the best of which are now becoming part of the frame of reference among Chinese. In comparison, the history of Japanese wartime atrocities is the main topic of so few LHH titles that it is challenging at this point to discuss the thematic gaps and ideological blinders in this thin body of literature. Yet the latest three titles, *The Fall*, *Tears*, and *Apology*, do testify that the unfamiliar and difficult topic of trauma has inspired new creativity among native LHH illustrators.

## **Portrayal of Class**

### **Class Enemies and the Virtuous Poor**

My coding of the identity of the enemy in the book shows that, in addition to the predictable enemy—the Japanese military—affluent people, identified as landlords, capitalists, slave owners, mine owners, ranch owners, rich peasants, etc., are frequent villains and almost never shown in a

positive light. Specifically, negative landlord characters are featured in 76 titles, or 21% of the total. Conversely, even though most of the LHH works portray some Chinese traitors and members of the Japanese puppet regime and army, the level of wealth and exact class background of such characters, unless they are rich, are rarely introduced. The treatment of upper-class villains can be divided into two types. The first type of stories converges class enemy with national enemy, portraying landlords as gutless collaborators of the Japanese and despicable betrayers of their fellow Chinese. In the second type, class conflict between the rich and the poor replaces the Sino-Japanese conflict as the main theme. For example, in *Ku Cai Hua* [苦菜花, Common sow thistle flowers] (1978), spin-off of a well-known movie made in 1965, the landlord's son is an officer in the puppet army, seeking protection from the Japanese to stem the local underground Communist movement. The capture and execution of the landlord by the Communist "anti-Japanese democratic government" kill two birds with one stone: The Japanese temporarily lose control over the village now that their willing lackeys are gone; the death of the landlord also means that the heroine's family, poverty-stricken peasants, get land back from the exploiter.

In another famous story *The White-haired Girl* (1965), originally an opera first created and performed in Yan'an, 1945, national conflict is a vague context that influences the plot only towards the end. Two years before the outbreak of the war, Xi'er, a poor tenant's daughter in a village in the Hebei Province, is forced into slavery to pay off family debt to the landlord, who rapes her. Her fiancée Dachun, another tenant, runs off to join the Red Army after failing to rescue Xi'er. The girl flees by faking suicide and survives in the wilderness for two years. The war brings Dachun's troops, now reorganized into the Eighth Route Army, back to his hometown

area to fight the Japanese, and Dachun, having grown into a politically mature soldier, is able to lead local peasants in putting the landlord on a public trial for all the crimes he has committed.

On the one hand, historical evidence supports the general statement that many higher-class and rich people served as Japanese collaborators during the Second World War. In discussing how the Party won the loyalty of peasants through its popular wartime land policy, Meisner (1999) wrote,

Where the gentry-landlord elite remained [in other areas landlords simply fled], collaboration between Chinese landlords and Japanese occupiers was not uncommon; in exchange for political services performed—the traditional gentry function of "social control"—the Japanese allowed the gentry their traditional economic privilege of exploiting the peasantry. In such cases, the landlord appeared to the peasant not only in his old role as economic oppressor but also as national traitor. Traditional hatred of the landlord on socioeconomic grounds was intensified by new nationalist resentments, and the Communists appealed to both simultaneously, promoting class as well as national struggle. (p. 40)

For readers of postwar generations, the depiction of treacherous and exploitative landlords in LHH justified the punishment meted out to that class. As Meisner (1999, p. 98) pointed out, in the land reform campaign of 1950-52, a small proportion out of the approximately 20 million people classified as members of landlord families were executed or sent to labor camps, in addition to the redistribution of their land. Throughout the Mao era, former landlord families would continue to be the target of class struggles and punitive policies.

On the other hand, by portraying landlords and rich people as having willingly and actively engaged in helping the enemy, the majority of LHH works do not reflect the diverse nature of Chinese collaboration with the Japanese aggressors. Starting in the 1970s and mid-1980s respectively, American and Chinese scholarship on Chinese collaboration with Japan have just begun to unpack the complexity of the issue (Barrett, 2001, p. 12). In reality, traitors and

collaborators ran the gamut of all classes, and the myriad causes for involuntary or enthusiastic collaboration ranged from coercion to poverty, political apathy fostered by an unpopular Nationalist government, opportunism, and moral depravity. Payment offered by the Japanese attracted a great number of the lower class people, the unemployed and petty criminals, motivating them to serve the Japanese army. According to the shocking data provided in Fu's (2002) study, during the Battle of Shanghai, 1937, Chinese traitors formed a hierarchical pyramid structure, in which those at the top earned as much as 200 *yuan* from the Japanese, while those at the bottom—including some 12- to 13-year-old girls—were willing to work for a meager reward of 50 cents from the immediate contractors (p. 84).

### **Chronological Changes and Class “Black Sheep”**

It is worth noting that a small number of “aberrant” titles, dated either no later than 1960 or after 1980, show a slightly messier picture than a simplistic conflation of class and national enemy, and of poor people with virtue and patriotism, demonstrating the effectiveness as well as general direction of Communist ideological control during the decades in between. In titles published under the Nationalist regime, a high social class is not an automatic barrier to patriotism. *Quanguo Zong Dongyuan* [全国总动员, A total mobilization] (1938) is a 24-page thin booklet, each page portraying one way Chinese people of various occupations and identities can contribute to the war. While soldiers fight on the front line (p. 1), females work as nurses (p. 3), a wealthy man, wearing a gentleman's hat and long gown befitting his class, donates money to national salvation (p. 12), and a peasant, barefoot and in patched clothes, toils in the field (p. 13). The agenda of war mobilization is as clear as the book title indicates. *Rongyu Junren* [荣誉军人, The disabled veteran] (1944), one of the wartime LHH publications directly sponsored by the Education Department of the Nationalist government, is a didactic story about how a disabled



veteran becomes a leader in the agricultural, industrial, commercial, and cultural development of his hometown, partly for the goal of sustaining the war against Japan. The gentry class is shown as being supportive of the protagonist's leadership and initiatives.

One counter narrative implicit in these aberrant works is the irrelevance of family background to individual choice between patriotism and betrayal. The violent confrontation of family members who have taken different sides, a common plot device found in these works, adds to the drama of the stories, as well as to the altruistic patriotism of the heroes. In *Pu Bumie de Huoyan* [扑不灭的火焰, The inextinguishable flame] (1960), two brothers from a seemingly ordinary rural family in central Shanxi Province choose opposite directions in their life course. JIANG San'er is a squad leader of the guerrilla fighters, while his elder brother JIANG Wanlu is a stalwart collaborator and has obtained a significant position in the puppet troops. The class background of the family is never specified in the text, but the illustrations show their mother dressed in patched clothes and San'er in a typical Northern Chinese peasant's attire, contrasting with Wanlu and his wife, who, having apparently gained wealth from services to the Japanese, are wearing a mandarin jacket, long gown, and *cheongsam* of the gentry class. As the Japanese feel the threat of the resistance movement led by San'er—the first of his major operations rescues women rounded up from his home village by the Japanese and puppet army—Wanlu is ordered to capture and interrogate his own mother for the whereabouts of his brother, which he carries out with no qualm. Meanwhile, San'er continues to mobilize fellow villagers and even a few members from the puppet troops to fight the Japanese. The siblings confront each other in a final battle, ending the story with the death of the traitor from his brother's gunshot.

The splintering power of war and the ordeal of the conflict between family and national loyalty do impact a few fictional wealthy families. In *Friends and Foes on the Battlefield* (1943),

the protagonist XU Zurong captures and interrogates a gentry-collaborator, only to find that this is his father whom he has not seen for fifteen years. *Steel Meets Fire* (1984) arranges a dramatic scene where Linli, a landlord's daughter and a nurse of the Eighth Route Army, is found in a secret cave by her own brother and father, who are searching for injured Chinese soldiers on the enemy's order (p. 141-142). In all LHH stories, Linli's family is a distinctive one in which the class line cuts squarely across national allegiance. Her father, the biggest landlord in the area, is appointed head of the village "peace maintenance association" by the Japanese. Two brothers are a translator and a special agent for the Japanese respectively, while another brother and she join anti-Japanese resistance.

The association of class background with moral orientation justified the continual treatment of former landlords, their family and offspring—long after they lost their land and wealth—as political pariahs until the end of the Cultural Revolution. A bold exposure to the falsity of such association comes from *Nei Jian* [内奸, The traitor within] (1981), a LHH adaptation of an award-winning short story written by FANG Zhi in 1979. Bespectacled college student YAN Jiaju, a supporting character in the story, is the firstborn son of a big landlord in north Jiangsu Province. When the Japanese approach his home province, Jiaju organizes local villagers to put up an effective defense, becomes deputy commander of a New Fourth Army detachment, generously contributes his income to the war endeavor, and even changes his name to "Chi," meaning "red," all to the distress of his rich uncle and first cousin Jiazhong, who works as a plainclothes policeman for the Japanese. Chi is portrayed as a Communist convert, in contrast to the chief commander, a senior Red Army member, who appears as a more "authentic" Communist Party member than the landlord's son, at least initially. Despite Chi's long-term contribution to the Party and nation, his family suffers during the Cultural Revolution. Chi is persecuted and dies;

his wife, also a member of Chi's anti-Japanese army, is disabled by a violent attack; the son has his four front teeth knocked out because as a toddler he accepted candy from a Japanese sentry but has refused to plead guilty; the daughter is sent to a remote village to serve her punishment. The protagonist TIAN Yutang is a well-to-do businessman and an admirer of the two commanders' integrity and patriotism. Taking cover under his occupation as merchant and using his broad social network among various power groups, Yutang accepts the risky mission of securing military materials for Chi. During the Cultural Revolution, however, his close connection with Chi and his very success in having completed dangerous tasks where less resourceful people failed become the basis of libel and defamation. Succumbing to repeated interrogations and brutal corporal punishment, the former businessman confesses to whatever crimes are leveled at him. Yutang is convicted as a "rich peasant" and believed to be guilty of espionage and treachery. While demonstrating the cruelty and injustice of the Cultural Revolution, *The Traitor Within* restrains its criticism within the rhetoric of Mao's successors, who exempted Mao but made JIANG Qing—the First Lady and Mao's third wife—and Marshall LIN Biao shoulder the blame of the Cultural Revolution. The ending expresses a thread of hope that the villain "Director Tian," a backstabbing opportunist whose power remains intact after the end of the Cultural Revolution, will receive his proper punishment.

### **Shaping the Master Narrative**

How has the CCP's top-down ideological control led to a fairly consistent portrayal in LHH of rich villains, poor heroes, and family solidarity in allegiance, which proves at best a selective representation of the history? The transformation did not occur overnight, but was realized through the gradual forces of selective retelling, literary criticism, censorship, and self-censorship. During the Sino-Japanese War, when national conflict was the highest priority

requiring support and resources from the maximum number of Chinese people across classes, even among the CCP's publications, stories like *The White-haired Girl* co-existed with stories that violated the pattern of national and class "two-in-one" enemies. The former type has enjoyed visibility and longevity through reprints and retellings in various formats and media; the latter, however, has become obsolete and has faded from people's memory.

The way selective retelling has shaped class representation in Sino-Japanese War stories is best illustrated in *Fang Niu Lang* [放牛郎, The cowherd boy] (1946), a collection of children's short stories (not LHH, but each story is provided with 3-5 pictures) set in Party-controlled rural areas. The titular entry of the collection, "The Cowherd Boy," is based on a true incident in the Hebei Province of north China. WANG Erxiao, a young cowherd boy, deliberately guides Japanese soldiers to an ambush by Chinese guerrillas before his trickery is discovered and he is killed. To this day, Erxiao remains a well-known name in China. The boy's heroic sacrifice is not only retold in LHH, but also taught to generations of school children in Chinese language textbooks and through a melodious narrative song "The Cowherd WANG Erxiao" (1942) in elementary music class. Intriguingly, the third entry, "Tao Yan Gui" [讨厌鬼, The nuisance] in the collection is almost a reversal of "The Cowherd Boy." A village boy nicknamed "The Nuisance" is a young traitor who has had training from the enemy. Too young to receive criminal penalty for his offense, he is sent for education but apparently refuses to reform. When the Japanese army approaches, he does not flee like all other villagers, but meets the enemy head-on and tells the officer the whereabouts of the Eighth Route Army. Unbeknown to "The Nuisance," Chinese soldiers have set up an ambush on the way to their encampment. The enemy is overpowered. As "The Nuisance," the guide, tries to run away, the Japanese officer beheads him, sending the boy's head tumbling off a stone bridge into the water. When villagers come

back from hiding, they can tell from the clothes whose body it is on the bridge, but nobody is willing to give him a burial. Passing the stinking body, they curse, “A nuisance when alive! A nuisance in death too!”

During the war years, both “The Cowherd Boy” and “The Nuisance” might be considered equally worthwhile stories for young readers. The first is a hero’s story encouraging youth to emulate the honorable role model; the latter is a cautionary tale, showing the consequence—the loss of life and reputation—of betraying your people. However, the two tales received drastically different treatment in the Mao era. WANG Erxiao was commemorated in popular culture and school curriculum. “The Nuisance,” a child traitor who is unfortunately not any rich man’s son, would have been an embarrassment to the Party’s class theory. His story, having not been reprinted, retold, or adapted, is forgotten. In another entry, “Yi Bai Kuai Qian” [“一百块钱,” One hundred *yuan*], an alcoholic peasant coaxes, threatens, and abuses his fourteen-year-old son, trying to enlist him into a Japanese training program, because one hundred *yuan* is promised as reward. The boy runs away and joins the Eight Route Army instead. The fictional “One hundred *yuan*” gives us a glimpse into some of the reasons why the Japanese military had a vast number of Chinese collaborators at its disposal, but the story of a dishonorable poor peasant and his rebellious son was not a candidate for reprinting or LHH adaptation after 1949, and was similarly long forgotten.

For a literary work that violated the increasingly rigid rule of class representation, critical response has been another filtering mechanism. As mentioned in Chapter 2, LIU Zhixia created two novels, one for a general audience and the other for young readers, based on his prolonged and engaged interview with a group of guerrillas fighting along the railway in the Shandong Province. “*Tie Dao You Ji Dui*” *de Xiao Dui Yuan Men* [“铁道游击队”的小队员们, Young

members of the railway guerrillas] (first published in 1959) features three young boys (one of them, Xiaozhang, is no older than thirteen) who work for the guerrilla force, as well as many of the same adult characters from Liu's classic *The Railway Guerrillas* (1954). CHEN Bochui, a prominent Chinese children's author and critic of children's literature, applauded the publication of *Young Members*. As he pointed out, even teenagers were reading, if with some difficulty, Liu's thick novel *The Railway Guerrillas*; elementary school children, however, could entertain themselves with only the movie and LHH version of this exciting and educational story—until the release of *Young Members*, which was written specifically as children's literature (Chen, 1959, p. 145). The first of Chen's criticism was directed at the portrayal of a "fat landlord." In *Young Members*, the landlord, appointed as puppet village head by the Japanese, must tip off the enemy as soon as guerrilla fighters show up in his territory. In turn, the guerrillas launch a series of sabotage activities, damaging the telephone lines and poles which the Japanese have charged the landlord to protect, assassinating two spies and making sure the bodies are found in his village, and so on. After the landlord is suspected of having "colluded with the Communists" and suffers cruel torture from the Japanese, he agrees to collaborate with the guerrillas while still wearing his "village head" hat, letting them use his territory as a much needed secret base (Liu, 2004, Chapter 5). Chen (1959) found this section problematic, and it is worth quoting his reasoning at length:

For military reasons, [protagonists] are allowed to collaborate, to a limited extent, with the secondary enemy to take on the primary enemy. However, this should be done within limits and with appropriate [literary] treatment so as not to blur class struggle. Due to his class background, the fat landlord will not be willing to convert from our enemy to friend after all, but in this particular work the "peaceful cohabitation" seems to go on, thus canceling out a class-based viewpoint. [What is described in the novel] may be factual under specific historical circumstances, and such practice was sanctioned by [Party] policy at the time. However, in dealing with this issue, can today's author write without much thinking "as things really were"? Should he not stand higher to view the issue?...Because children's literature has its specific target

audience, who with their educational level are unable to understand the circumstances and the author's true intention well. (p. 148-149)

Chen criticized the depiction of a “class enemy” who aids the anti-Japanese cause, even as he credited the historical plausibility and political legitimacy of the plot, arguing that true historical incidents should be edited in literature to serve the ends of class struggle, particularly when we take children's limited comprehension into consideration.

My search yielded three LHH adaptations of *Young Members*, dated 1982, 1983, and 1984. Only the 1984 edition by Zhejiang People's Fine Arts Publishing House has kept the “problematic” portrayal of the landlord. Without further evidence, we cannot claim a direct influence of Chen's argument on the LHH creators who adapted the story more than two decades later; however, it suggests that Chen's understanding of what makes politically correct class representation—not only in children's literature but also in LHH—was commonly accepted.

Literary criticism, or even outright banning, of individual titles would not have ensured the dominance of Party-approved messages about class in numerous works, had authors not widely exerted self-censorship and suppressed their personal knowledge about war history. While evidence of self-censorship is usually slippery, prolific authors occasionally leave clues in autobiographical writings and memoirs. XU Guangyao, author of the best-known Sino-Japanese War story for children—*Little Soldier CHANG Ka-tse* (1963)—wrote a memoir about surviving the “May 1st mopping-up campaign” of 1942 in central Hebei Province as a seventeen-year-old Eighth Route Army soldier (he joined the army as young as age thirteen). In one section, Xu (2001) introduces us to a landlord in a respectful and caring tone not to be accorded to this class as a routine in Communist literature. In the fall of 1942, Xu and about 30 other military officers were ordered to leave the perilous central Hebei as a way to “preserve more strength for the

revolution” (p. 43). For two nights on his journey of secret transfer, Xu, now in plain clothes and unarmed, was assigned by the underground Party branch to lodge at the house of a landlord by the name of SONG Baozhen with his long-term hired hands. Xu expressed his initial misgiving at the arrangement. A Party member for five years and an anti-espionage officer, he distrusted the landed class, fearing betrayal in time of crisis. And a major crisis did come. The moment Xu woke up one morning, he found the village besieged by the Japanese. All residents were rounded up in the village square, and seven men and three “kids” (p. 45) (teenagers), including Xu, were picked out randomly. The adult men were taken into a courtyard in threes, and in no time people waiting outside heard shrill, heart-rending cries mixed with the beating sound of clubs and staffs. Luckily for Xu, the interrogation and torture were over before it was his turn, and all villagers were dismissed. Having nowhere else to go, Xu went back to the landlord’s house, only to find that it had been occupied by the Japanese. On seeing Xu, the landlord hailed him as if he were one of the hired hands and the two worked diligently together on the chores ordered by the Japanese, thus camouflaging Xu’s dangerous identity. When it was time to leave, Xu (2001) thanked Song for having saved his life, and he described the farewell scene as follows:

Yet he [Song] said only one sentence: “The moment I saw that big pock-face pick you out, it was as if a knife plunged into my heart...” I looked at his eyes, and would never forget till I die the sincerity that shone in there. (p. 46)

Indeed, Xu did not forget the landlord. During the Cultural Revolution, he cautiously found out from a villager that Song’s land and house property were all redistributed after the class struggle for land reform, and villagers had not heard about him for more than ten years since he left for Northeast China. Xu thought wishfully to himself, “A man as smart and capable as Song was—surely he would not suffer from hunger and cold if he worked hard?” (p. 47) Xu’s major works were all inspired by his experience during the Sino-Japanese War, particularly after the



May 1st mopping-up campaign. However, apparently no political space opened up for Xu to write his private memory of a “good landlord” into his many novels until 2001, when, at age 76, he considered it safe to publicize Song’s story and express his gratitude.

On a final note, one would have assumed that the 1980s, not 2001, would provide enough time to shatter the black-and-white class representation in LHH. In reality, titles that disagree with the dominant pattern are few, and even fewer are works like *The Traitor Within* (1981), which defends a landlord war hero (though in a minor role) and condemns his mistreatment during the Cultural Revolution. My search among LHH works of the 1980s failed to yield any book that takes as bold a stand as *The Traitor Within*. FANG Zhi’s original short story (1979) belongs to the anti-Cultural Revolution “scar literature” of the late 1970s, a genre that was quickly suppressed. I would also propose another factor to explain the persistence of class enemies and virtuous poor people in Sino-Japanese war stories of the 1980s, a factor similar to what I have discussed in the portrayal of war crimes. By 1980, political campaigns, literature, popular culture, and school education of the Mao era had raised a postwar generation whose understanding of the history of the Sino-Japanese War was heavily influenced by a prevalent unambiguous class representation. The new LHH creators who joined the industry after the end of the Cultural Revolution were not the spontaneous candidates to challenge the portrayal of war history distorted by a class line.

## **Portrayal of Partisan Membership**

### **Nationalist Villains and Communist Saviors**

The way partisan membership is portrayed in my data closely resembles the pattern of class representation I found in the last section. Just as the class background of a character, when the

information is given, is a highly accurate predictor of the role he or she plays in the war story, whether a character belongs to the Communist or the Nationalist Party also foretells, to a large degree, his or her moral integrity and national allegiance. The section “Portrayal of Military Combat” has shown how LHH marginalizes and suppresses Nationalist battle history, be it about victories or defeats. In addition, my coding of the identity of the enemy found 83 titles (23% of all LHH I examined) in which the Nationalist play a villain’s role. Similar to landlords in LHH, there are two types of Nationalist villains. In the first type, the Nationalist party members, officials, and army are cowardly collaborators of the Japanese, traitors, and corrupted oppressors of the Chinese people. In the second type, the Nationalist-Communist conflict or the conflict between the Nationalist and Chinese civilians is more prominent than the Sino-Japanese conflict. In contrast, as shown earlier in Table 3.7: The Political Membership of Protagonists and Biographees in Chinese LHH About the Sino-Japanese War, the vast majority of the heroes are tied to the CCP, being Party members, member candidates, and part of Party-led military forces, agencies, and organizations.

Again, the pattern of partisan depiction is partly supported by historical research but remains selective and biased. On the one hand, among those who defected to the Japanese were many non-Communist political and military forces, including the eminent Nationalist politician WANG Jingwei, who went over to the Japanese side in late 1938 and until his death headed the notorious puppet regime in Nanjing. As Van Slyke’s (2001b) overview of Sino-Japanese War history points out, the Japanese organized extensive Chinese puppet forces, some of whom were recruited from peripheral Nationalist forces (as opposed to the Central Army, over which Chiang Kai-shek exercised fairly direct command); credit was also given to the strict code of conduct enforced upon Eighth Route Army men, who stayed away from the looting, raping, and other

crimes that so often went with Chinese armies of whatever persuasion, successfully building a positive image of the army in the eyes of the Chinese rural population. In his case study of a single county in northern Henan Province, Seybolt (2001) proposed that what happened in this county—including the Nationalist government’s loss of legitimacy and popular allegiance thanks to local officials’ corruption, non-resistance, and even services to the Japanese—might well be found elsewhere, hence offering one answer to why the Nationalist government lost China in the subsequent civil war against the CCP.

On the other hand, the Nationalist government led by Chiang Kai-shek never capitulated to the Japanese and fought all the major positional battles, despite the Nationalist army’s weakness that became increasingly evident in the latter stages of the war (Barrett, 2001, p. 3). Historical record shows that Nationalist collaboration and resistance varied from locality to locality and group to group, and even within specific groups themselves (Wou, 2001, p. 230). Finally, not all Communist Party members were as morally superior as the CCP would have liked Chinese people to believe. Seybolt’s (2001) case study, for example, introduced us to a former CCP officer, a polygamous womanizer who defected to the Japanese, later “specialized in killing Communists,” and won a reputation of being “more vicious than the Japanese” (p. 218-9).

### **Chronological Changes**

As I found in the portrayal of class, the moral distance reflected in LHH between Communist and Nationalist camps kept widening from the war years till the end of the Cultural Revolution, and the narrative space for positive Nationalist characters re-opened slightly only in the 1980s.

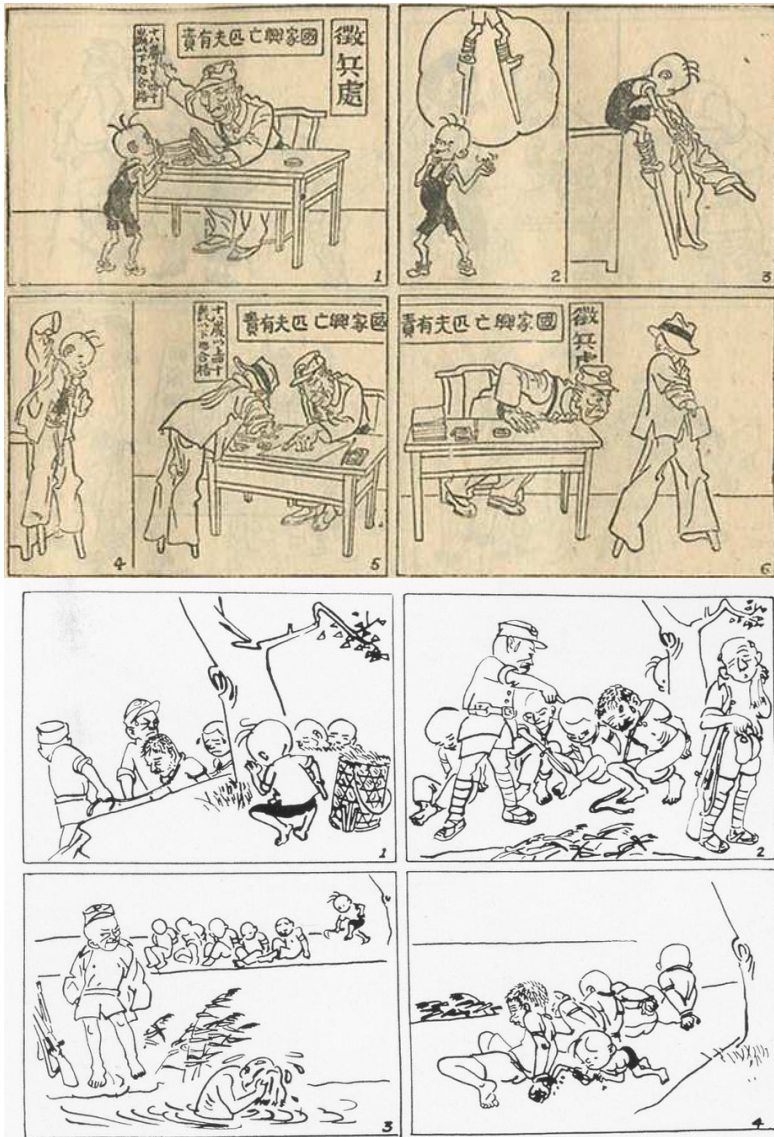
Titles published under the Nationalist regime hold no bias against its soldiers. *A Total Mobilization* (1938), *Friends and Foes on the Battlefield* (1943), *The Disabled Veteran* (1944),

and *Three Brothers Eagerly Joined the Army* (1944), all wartime works with a heavy agenda of mobilization, show Nationalist soldiers as role models for readers to emulate. The most influential LHH work featuring a Nationalist soldier as protagonist during the Sino-Japanese War is arguably *Sanmao Joins the Army* (first serialized in 1946) created by ZHANG Leping. Winning instant popularity in the immediate postwar years, the comic strip met with a peculiar destiny in the vicissitudes of political climate in mainland China and Taiwan. Thanks to its portrayal of an amusing and likable boy who is also a resourceful and resilient young Nationalist soldier doing his part for the country, the book, which was Zhang's own most satisfactory work in terms of artistic creativity, was banned in mainland China after 1949. When the book was finally republished in 1983, some panels were revised to reinforce negative messages about the Nationalist government. In the original edition, Sanmao tricks the recruiter in order to be enlisted, because he is underage. In the new edition, he becomes a soldier against his will, when the Nationalist military is rounding up male Chinese and forcing them to serve in the army (Feng, 2006, p. 34-35) (Figure 3.7). According to Zhang's wife FENG Chuyin, the next new edition that included the original panels was released in 1990 by Tongji University Press (Feng, 2006, p. 46). By this time, the CCP had changed its position and started reassessing the role Nationalists played during the Sino-Japanese War.

Incidentally, the book was also banned in Taiwan until 1989, when a censored version was published with the help of Taiwanese writer CHEN Ping (born in wartime capital Chongqing and a big fan of the *Sanmao* comic series, she was best known by her pen name "Sanmao"). *Sanmao* is not flattering to the Nationalist army, but contrasts the selfless boy soldier, who has been used as cannon fodder, with brutal higher-ranking officers, who never sacrifice personal comfort

during the war. Scenes where Sanmao is abused by Nationalist officers were removed from the Taiwan edition (Feng 2006, p. 35-36).

**Figure 3.7: The First Page of *Sanmao Joins the Army* in the Original and 1983 Edition**



(1947 edition)

(Chengdu, China:  
Sichuan Shao Nian Er Tong  
Chu Ban She, 1983)

In titles published during the war years and shortly after, hero figures of the CCP's camp, including Party members, cadres, and Communist military, do not necessarily appear politically and morally impeccable, and do not grow to be so by the end of the story as many fictional Communist heroes do. Two titles from the 1940s serve as examples. *Iron Buddha Temple* (1943),

mentioned earlier as one major wartime LHH title published under the Communist regime, is based on a true incident in the Anhui Province during the summer of 1942. In preparing the book, the three woodcut artists MO Pu, LÜ Meng, and CHENG Yajun paid a special visit to the Tiefo village, where a militia officer was murdered; collected details of the case by interviewing residents; and sketched the venues, local scenes, and persons involved (Mo, Lü, & Ya, 1984). The book portrays no strong hero characters. The villain and protagonist WANG Desheng is a rich land owner, a former neighborhood head under the Nationalist regime, and a notorious leader of local gangsters. Having tricked the Communist New Fourth Army and been appointed as commander of the guerrillas, Wang seeks an opportunity to serve two masters and gets in touch with his old boss LIU Kaiyuan, a former Nationalist township militia leader who has betrayed the Chinese and become a regimental commander of the Japanese puppet army. Soon Wang's evildoing escalates from looting local peasants to two assassinations (with Liu's military aid), and the story ends with the murder case cracked by village cadres and Wang arrested. One of the assassinated victims is FANG Yongcai, leader of the people's militia of the village. He offends the villain by organizing the militia to put up a fight against looters. Fang is then invited to drink with a subordinate of Wang's, gets inebriated, and is murdered in his own bed by a team of assassins. Despite Fang's integrity and reputation, his death is not an honorable one. In fact, in one LHH story after another, weakening by alcohol is a clichéd plot device and a one-way ticket to death reserved for stupid and epicurean puppets and Japanese army soldiers.

Upon close reading, *Iron Buddha Temple* is an uncommon work among all Sino-Japanese War stories in LHH. First, it chooses to portray a villain as the central character, whereas in the vast majority of the LHH in my data set, only positive figures can be protagonists and villains are assigned a minor role. Although the book stresses Wang's identity as a class enemy and his

connections with the Nationalist and Japanese, the treacherous villain is still a guerrilla leader of the Communist Party. Second, Fang, who by the dominant LHH model could have been the hero and center of the story, is a flawed Party cadre, dying a dishonorable death at the end.

Such unflattering, if realistic, depictions of the Party's military is echoed in *Erge* [儿歌, Children's songs] (1945). Typical of early LHH works from the Communist regime, *Children's Songs* is heavy with text and stingy with images, providing one illustration for each nursery rhyme. The narrator of the entry "Hao Po Yi" [好婆姨, A good wife] is a soldier's wife. Seeing her husband back at home in military uniform, the wife is concerned that he has been injured, but she quickly figures out that he is a deserter. First shaming her husband, then assuring him that she and their son are well taken care of as an army man's family, and finally threatening to leave him, she urges the deserter to return to the army the next day. "A Good Wife" resembles a biographical story appearing in *Hou Han Shu* [后汉书, The history of the Later Han] compiled by FAN Ye in the 5th century, featuring a wise and sensible woman who urges her husband YUE Yangzi to leave home and continue his education. While recycling a historical story from Chinese cultural heritage, "A Good Wife" is a bit odd as a nursery rhyme intended for children since it features an adult narrator, and the image of a peasant soldier and Communist army deserter being shamed by his wife is at odds with the dominant image of brave and selfless Communist fighters. At the time of its creation and dissemination, however, the rhyme must have served practical mobilization and educational purposes.

Occasionally, titles from the 1950s and early 1960s confuse the general picture of admirable Party cadres and irredeemable Nationalist followers by including characters that defy the increasingly consolidated stereotypes of political membership. In *Xin Ernü Yingxiong Zhuan* [新

儿女英雄传, New heroes and heroines] (1950), the main villain ZHANG Jinlong is an opportunist who is sly, tenacious, and sexually promiscuous. Before he defects to the Japanese, however, Zhang is married to a Party member, whom he physically abuses, and is part of the anti-Japanese force led by the Communists. Once, by colluding with his sworn brother—a puppet army soldier—he even leads a successful night assault on a watchtower and captures the puppet squad with ease. *Tong Zhi, Ni Zou Cuo le Lu!* [同志, 你走错了路!, Comrade, you've followed the wrong path!] (1962) focuses upon the Nationalist-Communist conflict rather than the Sino-Japanese conflict. Set early in the war in a rural area behind Japanese lines, the story features WU Zhike, a hardworking, loyal, but politically and militarily naïve Party official. Trying to form a united front with the Nationalists against the Japanese, Wu continually concedes to the aggression of a Nationalist army commander Zhao, and not until Zhao's army captures Wu and is about to kill him does he regret how he has been blind to the Nationalists' false anti-Japanese gesture and real intent to destroy the Communists. Even though *Comrade* is sharply critical of the Nationalist army, it nonetheless portrays a young and patriotic Nationalist brigade commander, Wang (also Zhao's relative), who is injured in fighting the Japanese, treated in a Communist army hospital, and converted into an admirer of the Communist Party. A minor character in the story, Wang is a misfit in the partisan segregation of moral camps prevalent in LHH.

It was after 1980 that LHH gave moderate credit to the Nationalist role in defending China against Japan and expanded narrative space for characters like brigade commander Wang, whose moral choices are independent of their political membership. Historiographical studies marked 1985 as the turning point of the CCP's attitude. That year China commemorated the fortieth anniversary of the War's end with a major exhibition at the Military Museum of the Chinese



People's Revolution in Beijing, acknowledging that "the regular armed forces at the command of the National Government...had fought this most crucial of wars;" the first PRC-sponsored monument to victims of Japanese atrocities was also unveiled in Nanjing in 1985 (Waldron, 1996, p. 950). In 1985 Chinese historian QI Shirong published what was considered a major breakthrough in opening up the Sino-Japanese War as a topic of historical writing in China, an article which included the forces led by Chiang Kai-shek in an appraisal of China's contribution to the global victory against fascism (Coble, 2007, p. 398). Reasons for the change of official position, suggested by historians, include a desire to tell the historical truth under loosened Party control, a wish to improve relationships with the Party's erstwhile rivals and enemies and to lure Taiwan into an agreement of unification, and increasing emphasis on nationalism and patriotism in China to make up for the waning appeal of Communist ideology (Waldron, 1996; Coble, 2007).

I found at least nine titles, out of a total of 220 dated between 1977 and 1989, that either mention Nationalist resistance to the Japanese in passing or differentiate the "progressive" Nationalist individuals from the corrupt and regressive Nationalist government and military as a whole. The Party's official approval in 1985 coincided with the LHH industry's decline from 1985 onward, failing to embrace previously suppressed war stories from the Nationalist sphere, even as newly sanctioned topics enriched China's movie industry of the 1980s with such groundbreaking works as *Yi Ge he Ba Ge* [一个和八个, One and eight] (1983) (featuring nine inmates in the Eighth Route Army's military prison, available in LHH adaptation), *Huang Tudi* [黄土地, Yellow earth] (1984), *The Bloody Fight at Tai'erzhuang* (1986), *Tucheng Xuezheng* [屠城血证, The bloody evidence of the massacre in Nanjing] (1987), and *Hong Gaoliang* [红高粱, Red Sorghum] (1987) (featuring spontaneous, non-partisan civilian resistance against the

Japanese).<sup>1</sup> *Songshi San Jiemei* [宋氏三姐妹, The three Soong sisters] (1988), a LHH adaptation of Roby Eunson's *The Soong Sisters* (New York: Franklin Watts, 1975; translated into Chinese in 1984), focuses on the story of SOONG Ching-ling, a leftist Nationalist leader who later sided with the Communists. While Eunson's original book details the diplomatic effort of SOONG May-ling (CHIANG Kai-shek's wife) to secure U.S. financial and military support for China's resistance against Japan, the information is completely missing in the adaptation.

Quantitatively, the 1990s and later works did not fare better in revising the biased partisan portrayal of war history in LHH. Qualitative changes in individual titles, however, are significant. One major work of nonfiction that offers broad global coverage of the battle history of World War II in the format of LHH is the award-winning *The History of the Second World War: A LHH Collection* (1990) in six volumes. Marshall XU Xiangqian's Chinese brush calligraphy for the book, "Great historical facts; vivid teaching materials," is printed in each volume as a sign of official approval. This post-1949 LHH title is astounding in its treatment of Nationalist war history. Each volume focuses upon one or two geographical areas, with mainland China and the Pacific theatre covered in Volume 1 and 6 respectively. The first volume allots equal space to battles fought by the Communists and Nationalists. The Marco Polo Bridge Incident that triggered the total war, the Battle of Shanghai in 1937, and the Battle of Tai'erzhuang in April 1938—all Nationalist activities—are related in three sections. The other three sections are devoted to the Battle of Pingxingguan in 1937, the New Fourth Army's guerrilla warfare behind enemy lines, and the Hundred Regiments Offensive of 1940—all CCP's achievements.

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<sup>1</sup> The 1980s is commonly considered a "golden age" for China's movie industry.

What is more important than a numerical balance is the way activities of the Nationalist military from leaders to the nameless rank and file are described verbally and visually. “Xuezhai Tai’erzhuang” [血战台儿庄, The bloody fight at Tai’erzhuang] features Nationalists’ first major victory, which broke the myth of Japanese military invincibility and resulted in a huge boost to Chinese morale. Even though his leadership is described in a matter-of-fact tone, Nationalist General LI Zongren, who became a Communist sympathizer in his late years and eventually defected to the Beijing regime in 1965, is shown as having made a series of crucial decisions that facilitate the defeat of the Japanese. (General BAI Chongxi, Li’s famous military partner who also commanded the battle, however, is never mentioned in the story.) Those portrayed as heroes are lower level officers and soldiers. Whereas in LHH works the Nationalist army is frequently associated with non-resistant forces, the puppet army, and *wanjun* [顽军, anti-Communist forces], in “The Bloody Fight” the terms *wojun* [our army] and “Chinese army” are assigned to the Nationalists. Terms that traditionally describe patriotic martyrs, such as *xi sheng* [牺牲, sacrifice], *zhuanglie xunguo* [壮烈殉国, to die heroically for the country], and *yingyong xisheng* [英勇牺牲, to die a brave death], are used throughout the text. Quotes from officers’ pledge to fight to the death and detailed accounts of Chinese resistance demonstrate the determination and selflessness of the Nationalist fighters, as well as the bloodiness of the battle. High numbers of both Chinese and Japanese casualties reflect the shocking scale of the Chinese army’s sacrifice as well as Japanese losses, neither encountered in the prevalent guerrilla warfare stories in LHH. Quotes from news reports and even from the Japanese military confirm the bravery of Chinese soldiers and effectiveness of the Nationalist defense. Here are some examples:

The [122nd] Division was poorly equipped, but, with a strong enemy approaching the doorstep, [the Division Chief] WANG Mingzhang was determined to fight to death for the [Tengxian] county. (Vol. 1, p. 181)

Japanese tanks charged forward. Lacking explosives, the defenders bound grenades onto their bodies and rolled towards the coming tanks... (Vol. 1, p. 182)

[Japanese general] Isogai...encircled YIN Guohua's battalion of more than 500 soldiers with his superior force. Yin was hit by cannon shells and died heroically. Later, all the soldiers, who had pledged to fight to death, died heroically for the country... (Vol. 1, p. 200)

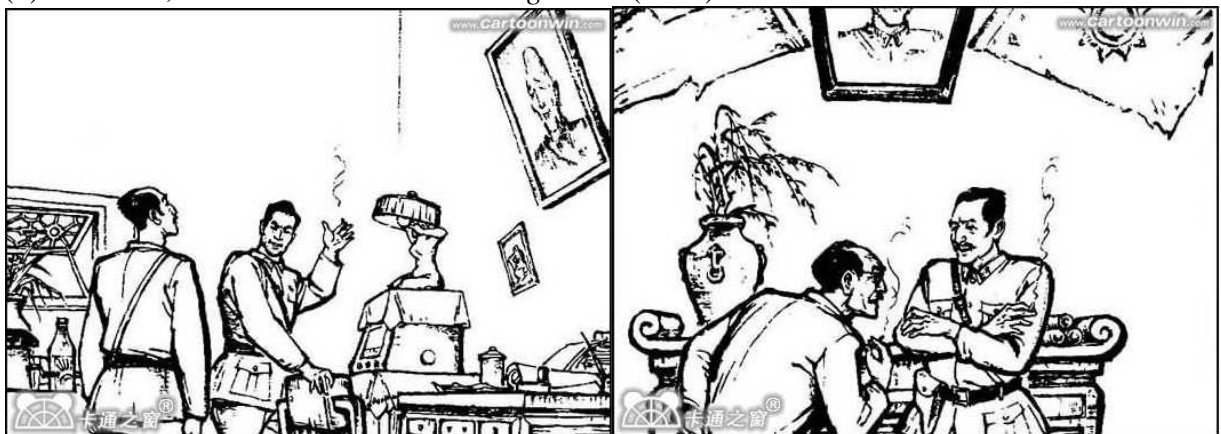
One rare passage reflects the friendly relationship between civilians and Nationalist soldiers who were there to protect them from Japanese aggression: "Civilians in Tengxian volunteered and formed teams for stretcher evacuation and delivery service, expressing their appreciation for the army by bringing tea and wines. The 122nd Division soldiers were moved to tears." (Vol. 1, p. 181) Content and rhetoric combine to show the Nationalist army in a drastically different light from what one would perceive in average LHH works.

The visual depiction of the Nationalists in "The Bloody Fight" is also distinctive. The Mao era saw LHH illustrations become increasingly stereotypical until reaching a climax during the Cultural Revolution. As one British reviewer commented on works from the Culture Revolution, "[I]t is not difficult to sort out the goodies from the baddies. 'Goodies' usually have excellent posture, looking statuesquely noble, and have healthy complexions while 'baddies'...are generally round shouldered, grey faced and have a tendency to sulk about suspiciously." (Stones, 1977, p. 14) In addition to caricaturing villains, LHH creators visually distinguished heroes from negative figures by manipulating size, position, frame, perspective, light and shade, and symbolic background scenes (See detailed discussions in "Drawing Heroes," 1970; Chi, 1974; Hwang, 1978, p. 66-67; Chen, 1996). Since the Nationalists often serve as foils for Communist heroes in LHH, it is common to encounter ugly, arrogant, sinister-looking Nationalist characters appearing at the edge of a frame (heroes occupy the center of the picture). Such stereotypical depictions do not apply to the Nationalists in "The Bloody Fight." A comparison of how CHIANG

Kai-shek is visually treated in an old title *Comrade* (1962) and in this entry demonstrates the sharp reversal that LHH has taken. Chiang is not a character in *Comrade*, but his portrait appears four times in the Nationalist commander's office. Three of these times, only the lower part of the portrait is included in the frame, never reaching his eyes (p. 61, 64, & 69)—in Chinese political culture to cut off the leader's portrait suggests irreverence and profanity. When Chiang's portrait is finally given a complete view, it is positioned at the upper-right corner of the frame, showing an ugly and comical face (p. 86). In "The Bloody Fight," however, Chiang is positioned close to the center and shown as a uniformed, decent-looking man in his office, bearing a thoughtful and calm facial expression (p. 196).

**Figure 3.8: Visual Depictions of CHIANG Kai-shek**

(1) *Comrade, You've Followed the Wrong Path!* (1962)



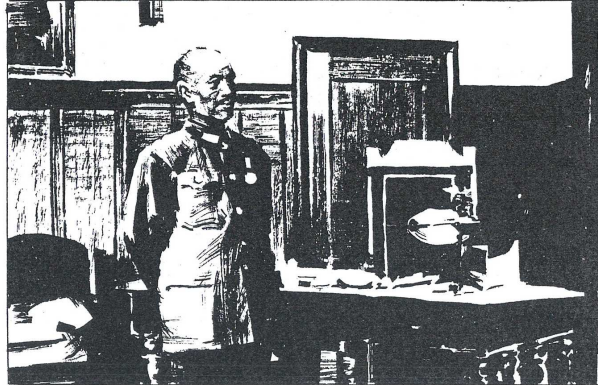
86. 陈之德一顿脚说：“放他们回去岂不是放虎归山？怎么得了！”赵友臣答道：“参谋长，你办事情还是过了时的一套手段，今天，我们要按领袖的训示办事。”

69. 刘觉民告诉陈之德，他已和八路军方面的贾团长搭好线，以后的活动可由他做内应。并说：“姓吴的很赏识他，就是那个姓潘的对他有些警戒，如果能押姓潘的左诗次一弄干掉，那就更有价值了。”

**Figure 3.8 (cont.)**

(2) “The Bloody Fight at Tai’erzhuang”

in *The History of the Second World War: A LHH Collection* (1990)



58 坐镇武汉的蒋介石，一方面为台儿庄初战的胜利所鼓舞，另一方面又为下一步的对策而伤脑筋：由于孙连仲军已无力再投入战斗，只有汤恩伯军和于学忠的一个师在据守台儿庄，兵力不足2万，急需增援新军。

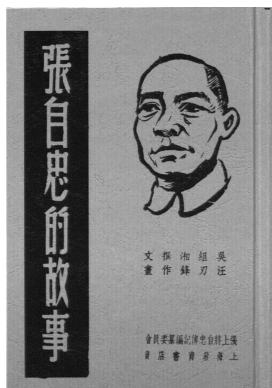
196

### Shaping the Master Narrative

Just like the portrayal of class in LHH war stories, the dominant pattern of partisan depiction was achieved through the concerted effort of top-down ideological control and, at LHH creators' and critics' level, selective telling, retelling, criticism, and self-censorship. The case of General ZHANG Zizhong (1891-1940) in literary representation and repression serves as a most poignant example. Zhang was the highest ranking Chinese officer to die in combat and also the highest ranking allied casualty in any theater of the entire Second World War. As commander of the eight divisions that constituted the Nationalist 33rd Army Group, he was killed from seven wounds by grenade, bullet, and finally by bayonet while fighting in northern Hubei Province on May 16, 1940. From his heroic death through the immediate postwar years, General Zhang was the most celebrated Chinese patriotic martyr of the Sino-Japanese War, solemnly mourned and commemorated by Communists and Nationalists alike; but from the Cultural Revolution through the late 1970s his memory was largely expunged in the People's Republic of China, until the 1980s when official commemorations of the Nationalist hero resumed in mainland China (Waldron, 1996). Zhang is the biographee of a heavily illustrated chapter book, written by the

famous professor of Chinese literature WU Zuxiang in 1948 (Figure 3.9). (One of China’s most significant novelists and playwrights, LAO She, also published a four-act play *ZHANG Zizhong* in 1941.) I discovered no LHH edition from the Mao era, and only two youth literature titles of Zhang’s biography dated more than half a century later: *Zhong Yong Gai Shi ZHANG Zizhong* [忠勇盖世张自忠, ZHANG Zizhong, a loyal and brave hero] (2005) and *Kang Zhan Ying Lie Chuan Qi* [抗战英烈传奇, Tales of martyrs from The War of Resistance Against Japan] (2005), which devotes the first of 20 biographical stories to General Zhang. Several generations had grown up with the absence of ZHANG Zizhong in popular culture and youth literature.

**Figure 3.9: Cover Image of *The Story of ZHANG Zizong***



*ZHANG Zizong de Gu Shi* [张自忠的故事], 1948.

I will draw upon the memoirs of two notable authors, XU Guangyao and LIU Zhixia, to demonstrate how self-censorship facilitated the CCP’s master narrative of a partisan war history. In 2001, 76-year-old novelist and children’s author XU Guangyao published an autobiography *Zuoye Xifeng Diaobi Shu* [昨夜西风凋碧树, Last night’s west wind and a withered tree], tracing his life from a peasant boy growing up in the rural Hebei Province to a young teen joining the Eighth Route Army during the Sino-Japanese War, to trials and tribulations he went through in the Anti-Rightist Movement and the Cultural Revolution. Some of the events and topics which Xu related in this memoir were not favored during the Mao era: lost battles he participated in, his

father and younger sister hiding from the Japanese, and a friend's mother-in-law being gang raped to death by the Japanese. In one chapter, the relationship between the Communist army and Chinese civilians was not as harmonious as the Party always boasted. Xu's anti-espionage division rented a house as its office and dorm. The teenage Xu soon befriended the landlord's family and their daughter, a cheerful, good-looking young girl of his age named KANG Yingzi. It is not hard to notice how much of Yuying's story in Xu's *Little Soldier CHANG Ka-tse* (1963) was borrowed from the sweet dynamics between Xu and Yingzi, and to understand that, by giving the character a name which combines that of *Yingzi's* and his own (Xu's childhood name was *Yuzhen*), Xu was commemorating the girl on whom he had a crush. The honeymoon-like relationship was over as quickly as it began. After the anti-espionage division arrested and interrogated two local residents and traitor suspects, whom the Kangs clearly considered "good people," the whole family avoided Xu all the time. Were the two people wrongly accused and persecuted? Xu, a clerk at the time, did not seem to know.

In another chapter, Xu related an incident which could have sabotaged the army-civilian relationship, but was used, at huge expense, to good publicity effect. In the spring of 1945, Xu's division charged an Eighth Route Army soldier with kidnapping and sentenced him to death. The 23-year-old soldier, a valiant fighter, had been injured in a battle and put in a peasant's home for recovery. After he had healed, he "abducted" the family's daughter-in-law, and the scandal reportedly enraged the entire county. When he was captured, it transpired that this was not a case of kidnapping, but eloping. Nonetheless, the woman was sent back home and the battle hero received a death penalty as a way to save the army's reputation and to protect the "intimate" (p. 42) army-civilian relationship.



The eloping incident was a strong footnote to the Communists' determination to maintain a good reputation among the Chinese populace, and it even served as twisted evidence for the close relationship between army members and civilians. Xu had conflicted feelings about the "unforgettable" (p. 41) incident, but for obvious reasons could not retell the incident in his literary creations—not in a direct manner. A flawed Communist army soldier who nearly damaged the Party's reputation runs counter to the image of ascetic and selfless Communist heroes prevalent in post-1949 literature. Through a most unlikely transformation, Xu managed to pay his private respects to the eloping incident in *Little Soldier*. In this children's story set in the Hebei province under Japanese occupation, the thirteen-year-old CHANG Ka-tse is a scout of the underground army led by the CCP. When the boy is injured in a battle, he is sent to recover with a peasant family, where he befriends an old couple and their only daughter Yuying. The girl dreams of becoming part of Ka-tse's exciting military life, and decides to join his team when the boy heals. Fearing that her parents are unwilling to part with their only child, the teens plan in secrecy, but leave the illiterate couple a picture to illustrate their destination. The eloping incident, combined with Xu's own affectionate memory of Yingzi, thus inspired an innocent and upbeat episode about two emotionally intimate yet sexually unawakened youth pursuing a higher mission, replacing romance with revolutionary romanticism. Xu's imaginative retelling is also a subtle form of self-censorship, because a more faithful rendition of a condemned soldier's transgression would not have survived censorship.

Another author's work gives us a more nuanced view of how and why a writer selected, deselected, reorganized, and consolidated information from real life to be used in a novel, whose theme conforms to the dominant political view. LIU Zhixia published an article that documented his creative process for *The Railway Guerrillas* (1954) and provided a nonfiction account of

what had happened to the prototypes of his characters. Liu first got to know the guerrilla members in 1943, and spent a great amount of time interviewing them both before and after the Japanese surrender, forming a deep personal relationship with these fighters. Originally Liu had agreed to write a nonfiction account about them, but when the civil war broke out he received an urgent letter from the mayor of Zaozhuang, where the story is set, advising Liu to discontinue the writing project (Zhi, 1986/2005, p. 493). Guerrilla leader XU Guangtian, Liu's longtime friend, had just defected to the Nationalists, rendering a true-to-fact account of the guerrillas' heroism impossible—or so the mayor reasoned. Liu disagreed, feeling instead that the incident freed him from the constraint of facts and allowed him to take artistic liberty in recreating them in a novel.

A comparison between the prototypes' stories and the plot of the novel shows that the fictional account consolidated the guerrilla fighters' strength and achievements, downplayed their flaws and mistakes, and mitigated the internal conflict of the Communist-led group. In real life, a beloved Captain Hong was killed in a battle after making a serious yet avoidable military mistake, but the novelist lets the mistake get corrected in the nick of time and allows the protagonist Captain LIU Hong to survive (p. 475-476). Commissar DU Jiwei, who is portrayed as the politically mature and widely respected Commissar LI Zheng in the story, in reality developed a sour relationship with two other unit leaders and had to leave. He insisted on dating a girl whose brother was a Japanese collaborator killed by the guerrilla unit—a choice, as Du's colleagues reasoned, that could invite revenge upon the unit (p. 484). Intense disputes over promotion decisions also prompted the seasoned combat hero XU Guangtian to withdraw from the Party's military altogether and to temporarily join its political rival.

Liu's documentation made an attempt to explain his motives and rationales for transforming fact into fiction the way he did. As he argued convincingly, the requirement of the genre—

fiction—meant that as a storyteller he must discard “trivial, secondary, and repetitive” (p. 487) facts in order to heighten heroes’ characteristics and to concentrate on the most interesting plot. He found it necessary to take artistic liberty with facts in order to create “rounded” images of heroes and Party leaders (p. 476 & 487), stating that factuality in life differs from authenticity in art and the latter is “higher and more consolidated” than facts (p. 480). Liu’s main argument was about following the rule of artistic creation, a rule with which writers from all political persuasions can identify. What counts as “trivial,” what facts are considered subtraction from a “rounded” image, and what plots are interesting and moving, however, are subjected to individual interpretations influenced by thematic and ideological concerns. Liu’s suppression of what was considered negative information about the guerrilla cadres and fighters was a combination of “artistic liberty” and self-censorship, guided by the Party’s moral standards and dominant political views. Conversely, given the huge popularity and impact of *The Railway Guerrillas*, the types of hero images Liu carefully protected in the novel must have contributed to the model of Communist protagonists for future writers.

### **Summary**

This chapter analyzed how the history of the Sino-Japanese War has been reflected in 360 LHH titles and 22 youth literature works that also exist in LHH adaptations, published in mainland China from 1937 through 2007. Broadly speaking, this body of popular and youth reading materials presents a war of resistance that predominantly takes place in Japanese-occupied territories where the CCP penetrated and led military activities—particularly guerrilla warfare—and frequently occurs from 1940 to 1943, a time when the Party was confronting the most severe threat from both the Nationalist Army and the Japanese. The majority of

protagonists and biographees are affiliated with the Party, further marginalizing the activities of other players, including the Nationalists and American allies.

The 22 well-known youth literature titles were largely works by male authors, including many ex-army men and senior Party members, a gendered pattern that is mirrored in the embracing of masculine combat stories, male war heroes, and, at best, a small number of woman warriors who can fight as well as men, at the cost of marginalizing stories that feature such non-combat topics as war crimes and civilian women as victims of war atrocities.

While military combat is the dominant subject matter of these books, it is victorious battles fought by the Communist forces that receive most attention. Defeat, whether of the Communists or Nationalists, is the least portrayed aspect of war history. Not only were the Nationalists denied credit for winning the battles or sacrificing for the war, they and the landed class are frequently portrayed as cowards and ready collaborators of the Japanese as well as oppressors of Chinese.

The politicization of war history in LHH and youth literature also reflected a pattern of change over time, showing a correlation between sanctioned topics and the political and social milieu at the time of publication. From the war years through 2007, shifting political priorities from war mobilization to the Party's legitimacy, class struggle, nationalism and patriotism, diplomatic and economic relations with Japan, and reunification with Taiwan all left marks of subtle or drastic change in the way war stories are told in LHH. An accurate and comprehensive reflection of war history in LHH was a secondary pursuit, permitted and encouraged only when it matched higher agendas of the ruling party. Although my study analyzed only selected topics and aspects of war history, I propose that the same approach can be applied to other aspects, such as the portrayal of Western foreign nationals and Japanese, to reveal what stories are available during particular time periods in particular social and political contexts.

Finally, this chapter closely examined a continuum of activities that established the dominance of the Party's master narrative on war. Outright banning from the top and hackneyed writing from below were only partly responsible for an incomplete and biased portrayal of the war history in LHH. Many cases suggested that what was written and published was not pure baseless propaganda but a tension-ridden compromise between the permitted political space and the authors' personal faith, conscience, and passion.

## Chapter 4. Family Narrative as Information Source: A Case Study

The main question that Chapter 3 pursued, based on the 360 titles of LHH and 22 titles of text-oriented youth literature published from 1937 through 2007, is what patterns of war information are prominent in these materials accessible to Chinese youth. *Reading* print publications, however, is only one channel whereby young people obtain information about a certain topic. The characteristics of LHH partly made up for the limitation of my study in that until 1990 the format had broadly absorbed what was available in other formats and media, including literature for youth and for a general audience, poetry, plays, operas, ballets, movies, anime, and television drama series. At least one LHH title *Shui Chong Long Wang Miao* [水冲龙王庙, Flood submerges the dragon king's temple] (1982) attributes its source to “recollections by six old guerrilla soldiers from the Hunan-Jiangxi border region.” Common to the poor citation practices of nonfictional LHH, the booklet neither indicates whether the LHH creator did the interview or obtained the text elsewhere, nor provides the names of the six informants. It nonetheless reminds us that oral narrative, like written memoirs, published fiction and nonfiction, and other media, can be a direct source of information about the Sino-Japanese War.

This chapter moves from publicly available cultural artifacts to examine a private information source about World War II—family oral narrative—through a case study of three families in the Yunhe County<sup>1</sup>, Zhejiang Province, which was the target of the Zhejiang-Jiangxi offensive, 1942, and Japanese BW attacks. The use of oral narrative is indicated by several facts I discovered in Chapter 3. First, the Zhejiang Province is a poorly represented geographical area

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<sup>1</sup> County, or *xian*, in China is an administrative unit lower than prefecture-level cities and above towns and townships.

in Chinese LHH. Of the 360 titles I examined, only three specifically set the stories in Zhejiang despite its tumultuous war history. Second, various regions of the province endured heavy blows from Japan's BW attacks, but as I have reviewed, there was close to nothing about BW history in LHH, which has at least covered other atrocities such as the massacre of Nanjing, sexually enslaved "comfort women," and the abuse of POWs and forced labor—if only in a very small number of titles. BW-related LHH titles and text-oriented juvenile works, dated in the early 1950s, were either purged or chastised by the Communist Party officials. Among the 88 text-heavy juvenile works I collected, the only recent title devoted to BW attacks is *Shi Ren Mo Ku* [食人魔窟, Den of ogres] (2005), one volume in the "Blood-colored History" series published by Zhejiang Juvenile and Children's Publishing House. To sum up, the general war history of Zhejiang and the specific history of BW attacks, which saw an inestimable number of victims in this province<sup>1</sup>, are poorly represented in Chinese youth literature. The poverty of youth-oriented print materials about regional and local war history renders the following question more pertinent: to what degree can oral information sources from private memory make up for the lack of sanctioned formal publications and even counter bias in the latter materials, providing personalized war history to younger generations?

Through interviews with seven women about their wartime experiences, this chapter examines information that these women provided orally, asks whether adults passed on their personal experience and knowledge about the war to younger family members, and discusses the role of family oral narrative as an information source for the Second World War. I will first

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<sup>1</sup> I did not find specific statistics of BW victims in Zhejiang. Daniel Barenblatt cited a total of 580,000 people as the approximate death toll of Japanese BW attacks and human experiments, and pointed out that in Quzhou of Zhejiang alone, more than 50,000 civilians died from bubonic plague and cholera that had been spread by Japanese BW squads in 1942 (Barenblatt, 2004, p. xii, 174).

provide an overview of the wartime history of Yunhe and its historiography, because these contexts determined the selection criteria for my informants and situated the wartime experiences they would recall for me.

## **Wartime Yunhe in History and Historiography**

### **History: Yunhe Caught in the Sino-Japanese Conflict**

I was born in Yunhe, a small mountain town in the southwest of Zhejiang Province, in the late 1970s. I spent my childhood and went to school there as the first generation of post-Cultural Revolution youth until I left for college in Shanghai. The selection of Yunhe as site for this case study, however, is determined by the significant role Yunhe played during World War II. Eleven days after the fall of Republic of China's capital city Nanjing on December 13, 1937, Hangzhou, the capital city of Zhejiang, was captured by the Japanese. Just like the central Nationalist government, which gave up its capital and retreated southwest to the less developed inland China before settling in Chongqing, the Provincial government chaired by HUANG Shaohong (黄绍竑) migrated from the historically affluent northeastern corner near the sea to poor mountain regions in the southeast of the Province. Yunhe—far away from railways and hard to reach by automobiles and other mechanized transportation tools—sheltered the Provincial government from the summer of 1942 until Japan's surrender in 1945.

The impact of the war was felt in Yunhe as soon as the Sino-Japanese War broke out, perhaps most keenly by those families whose members joined the Nationalist army. Zhejiang Sheng Yunhe Xian Zhengxie Wenshi Ziliao Weiyuanhui [Local history and literature committee, Yunhe County, Zhejiang Province (thereafter "Zhejiang Sheng")] (2007, p396-408) compiled an incomplete list of soldiers recruited from the Yunhe County and killed during the war, chronologically arranged by their time of death. The majority of those appearing at the top of the



list were shown as having died August-December, 1937 in Shanghai, apparently having fought in the Battle of Shanghai. Anhui, Jiangxi, and Zhejiang were three other provinces where most of these Nationalist soldiers lost their lives. Three of the youngest died at ages 18 and 19.

That the Provincial government had to relocate to Yunhe was the chain effect of the Pacific War situation. To retaliate against the Pearl Harbor attack, the US navy launched the Doolittle raid against Japan's homeland on April 18, 1942. Sixteen bombers took off from the carrier *Hornet* 700 miles away from Tokyo, and planned to fly to Chuchow (衢州) airfield in the Zhejiang Province (now spelled as Quzhou, about 110 miles from Yunhe) after the raid. According to *The Oxford Companion to World War II*, the raid was of little military consequence but boosted American morale and showed that Japan was more open to air attack than had been supposed ("Doolittle raid," 2001). Both as revenge for the raid and to capture the local airfields to prevent another, the following month the Japanese launched a 100,000-strong offensive into the Chekiang and Kiangsi (now spelled as Zhejiang and Jiangxi) provinces where they also employed biological warfare, slaughtering no fewer than 250,000 Chinese before the Japanese withdrew in September, 1942 (Van Slyke, 2001a). It was at the onset of the Zhejiang-Jiangxi offensive that the Provincial government made a further retreat, finally settling in Yunhe for the rest of the war.

Hosting the Provincial government proved an enormous challenge for the poverty-stricken mountain town, which was not prepared for the space, resource, and infrastructure requirements of a political center. All of a sudden, the county had to accommodate another 20,000 people (at

least one-fourth of its original population size)<sup>1</sup>, including civil servants and their families, refugees, and people working for the agencies, institutions, factories, and businesses which had moved along with the government from Hangzhou. As revealed by local historical records, in addition to contributing an exorbitant share of grain produce and natural resources (wood in particular), residents of the county were assigned mostly unpaid heavy labor for the numerous political and military affairs and construction projects; when the enforced quota exceeded the number of eligible adult males in a village, women and old men were conscripted to fill the gap (Zhejiang Sheng, 2007, p. 31-32, 35).

Furthermore, the obscure county turned into a military target of the Japanese overnight. From late July to early August, 1942, the enemy's ground and air forces approached the town from three directions. From the northeast one division pushed as close as to the town of Bihu (碧湖), only 25 miles away from Yunhe, and was blocked by the Chinese defense and the river of Oujiang (甌江); from the north another Japanese division took the neighboring Songyang (松阳) County, and, after a bloody battle lasting three days and three nights, was defeated on Yunhe's border at Fangshanling (方山岭) Mountain; a third Japanese division pursued a route from the northwest but met an effective counterattack near the border of the Jiangxi and Zhejiang Province (Zhejiang Sheng, 2007, p. 352-355). The land of Yunhe was thus exempted from Japanese occupation. In time of peace her secluded geographical location had been a curse, a handicap in economic development. In time of war, her natural barriers to the outside world could be a blessing. (This understanding was so ingrained that the Communist government

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<sup>1</sup> The Yunhe County had a population of between 70,000 and 80,000 before the relocation of the Provincial government. In one source the population of the county seat (the town of Yunhe) was given as "800 households, or 3,000 people" (Zhejiang Sheng, 2007, p. 6).

would choose Yunhe to host an arsenal, the only firearm factory of the Zhejiang Province, later in 1965.) In local historical records, every one of Yunhe's neighboring towns and villages which had fallen to the Japanese—Jinyun (缙云), Lishui (丽水), Songyang, Suichang (遂昌), and many others—had traumatic stories to tell about the ruthless massacre and torture of civilians, the shameless raping of women, the loss of homes to Japanese arson, the looting of food, cattle, and properties, and forced labor. Though blessed not to be one of them, Yunhe too was not exempted from air attacks.

**Figure 4.1: The Fangshanling Mountain, Yunhe County, Zhejiang Province, China**



A photo taken from the top of Fangshanling Mountain, one of the battlefields in defense of Yunhe. The valley at the bottom belongs to the neighboring Songyang County, which the Japanese captured, and from there they launched an attack against Chinese soldiers atop Fangshanling, August 3-5, 1942.

Date: December 23, 2008

(Photo by Minjie Chen)

The first air raid on Yunhe had been recorded in early 1938, and between one and four raids targeted the area each year from 1939 to 1941. Air raids intensified during the four months of the Zhejiang-Jiangxi offensive, when the Japanese launched no fewer than 16 air attacks, and twice dropped more than 100 bombs in a single day (on July 1 and August 26, 1942) (Zhejiang Sheng, 2007, p. 386-387). A team of young teachers and students investigated and documented the strange raids on August 26 and 27: hundreds of bombs left holes on the ground, and some bombs were buried deep under, but they did not explode. Later witnesses began to make a connection

between these unusual bombs and another odd phenomenon: dead rats were found everywhere; other rats were seen escaping from town in long lines, which would conjure up too well the image of the Pied Piper for anyone who knows the story (Zhejiang Sheng, 2007, p. 431-432).

The carnage that followed was beyond the understanding—and control—of local officials, the public, and medical experts. It is now known that Japan's massive BW testing commenced with an attack on Ningbo (宁波) in the Zhejiang Province, the birthplace of Chiang Kai-shek, in July 1940, followed by one in Quzhou on October 4, and another over Jinhua (金华) on November 26, causing outbreaks of the plague in the targeted sites and nearby communities over a long term extending well into the postwar years (Harris, 2002, p100-103). Historians and scientists have yet to tell us exactly what was contained in those bombs that did not explode, and whether outbreaks of plague in Yunhe were caused by direct Japanese BW attacks alone or by the epidemic having simultaneously spread from other parts of Zhejiang. At any rate, the first outbreak of bubonic plague in Yunhe that was recorded in the local gazetteer and a government document occurred in August 1943, in a nursery for refugee children from all over the province (Zhejiang Sheng, 2007, p. 465). Oral testimonials collected in the late 1990s, however, suggest that dysentery, plague, and anthrax first broke out in villages outside the county seat soon after August 1942, but, unlike the nursery outbreak, seemingly received no government intervention (Zhejiang Sheng, 2007, p. 468-470). From then on, bubonic plague, which spreads by bites from infected fleas; pneumonic plague, which spreads from person to person through the air; anthrax; cholera; and dysentery claimed hundreds or even thousands of lives in Yunhe. Survivors of anthrax were either disabled or are still suffering from the disease to this day.

**Figure 4.2: Japan’s Biological Warfare Attacks and Outbreaks of Plague and Other Diseases in the Zhejiang Province (1940-)**



Sources: Zhongguo Renmin Zhengzhi Xieshang Huiyi Lishui Xian Weiyuanhui, 1985, p. 187; Harris, 2002; Lishui Shi, 2004, p. 221; Zhejiang Sheng, 2007, p. 465.

### Historiography

For decades after 1949, there were hardly any written records, besides the local gazetteer and archives, about the wartime history of Yunhe. The mid-1980s saw the establishment of county-level committees of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) in Lishui (the prefecture-level city that administers Yunhe and other counties), publishing what is called the “wen shi zi liao” [historical materials] series about local modern history—defined as the time period between the Hundred Days’ Reform of 1898 in the late Qing Dynasty and 1966 (Zhongguo Renmin, 1986, p. 198). Wou (2001) pointed out that China scholars have for the most part confined themselves to the provincial “historical materials” series and suggested that the

series produced at the county and subcounty levels can also assist researchers in localizing their study, looking at the war from the bottom up, and answering the question, “What was the impact of the war on society?” (p. 230). My research is an inadvertent response to his call. I located seven volumes of relevant historical materials, released by the Yunhe and Lishui committees from 1985 through 2007, and consulted them as the major sources for the wartime history of Yunhe.

Combining historical writing by local intellectuals and memoirs by people who have experienced the history, the first four volumes of the “historical materials” series from the Yunhe committee prove a timely project to rescue vanishing memories. The second (1986) and fourth (1989) volume each devotes more than half of the entries to wartime Yunhe, including the impact of hosting the provincial government, the battle of Fangshanling, the Japanese BW attack, and outbreaks of plague<sup>1</sup>. The epilogue of the fourth volume, published in 1989, states that most of the contributors for this installment were retired people between 80 and 90 years old (Zhongguo Renmin, 1989).

Yunhe no doubt waited too long to compile her wartime history. Many key political figures during the war as well as ordinary people were long gone, because of both natural death and political repercussions. For example, county magistrate PAN Yichen, considered a leftist and liberal leader during his first tenure (1938-39) in Yunhe but an anti-Communist, corrupted

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<sup>1</sup> Vol. 1 (1985) features the Chinese Revolution of 1911; Vol. 3 (1987) is devoted to the local *She* [畲] ethnic minority group.

Some of the entries in these four volumes were also included in *Lishui Wenshi Jicui* (2004), which selectively reprinted the “historical materials” series compiled by the CPPCC committees of all levels throughout the Lishui area, covering the time period from 1898 to 1949 and giving preference to personal memoirs. War history is thus presented in a slightly larger geographical scope than individual counties.

official during his second (1942-45), was sentenced to death after the Communist victory of 1949 (Zhejiang Sheng, 2007, p. 596, 790-794). Provincial chairman HUANG Shaohong, a Communist sympathizer, chose to stay in mainland China and serve the Communist government when the Nationalists were defeated. He was accused of being a “rightist” in 1957 and committed suicide in August 1966—only three months into the Cultural Revolution. Fortunately, Huang published *Wushi Huiyi* [五十回忆, My memoir at age fifty] (1945) (possibly banned in mainland China after 1949 but made available again by the Guangxi People’s Publishing House in 1991) and left some writings about Yunhe.

Chinese first names are not gender-specific, but to my best knowledge female voices are rare in the two volumes I examined. QI Zhengyin, director of the No. 2 Provincial Nursery, WEI Dingshi, an unusual woman who worked as political instructor for a Nationalist artillery company, and ZHENG Qiushi, active in war mobilization work and a female officer in charge of women soldiers, contributed invaluable pieces that highlight women’s activities in wartime Yunhe (Zhongguo Renmin, 1989). Both Qi and Wei passed away before the release of the fourth volume.

The history of BW attacks, covered only briefly in the series of the 1980s, did not attract particular attention until 1997, when three local elder intellectuals ZHANG Naimin, WANG Xinbai, and XU Zhihe started collecting testimonials from survivors and family members of deceased victims. The 1990s was the decade when a grassroots movement grew in China, seeking both Japan’s official apology for various war crimes and financial compensation to victims through lawsuits, because the diplomatic channel had been closed in 1972, when the Chinese government renounced its demand for war reparation from Japan “in the interest of the friendship between the Chinese and the Japanese peoples” (“Joint Communiqué,” 1972). Ironically and predictably,

the logic failed to work for the Chinese public. That Japan never paid monetary compensation to individual Chinese victims, in addition to Japanese politicians' visits to the Yasukuni Shrine and their periodic public denial of war crimes, convinced Chinese people that Japan had not properly accepted its responsibility for the war and remained one source fueling anti-Japanese sentiment. The three old intellectuals' initiative in Yunhe was part of the grass roots' delayed fight for justice. In September 2003, a group of 338 people from Yunhe sued the Japanese government for its BW attacks between 1942 and 1945.

The Yunhe committee released a special issue of the "historical materials" series, *Kangzhan yu Shuyi* [抗战与鼠疫, The War of Resistance Against Japan and the plague] in 2005, publishing testimonials, memoirs, and research findings on the BW history of Yunhe, mostly provided by local activists who had participated in BW investigations. A passage found in the memoir of ZHANG Naimin, one of the three earliest activists, hinted at barriers to the belated attention to the BW issue and illustrated the disparity between private memory and topics sanctioned or encouraged by state-owned media. Recalling the death of his wife, a victim of the plague in 1944, the 82-year-old Zhang wrote,

I have long wanted to condemn [the crime] in writing, but, encumbered by many reasons, I had to swallow my pain, thus all this delay. The Japanese people are certainly kindhearted and innocent, and are, too, victims of the aggression against China. In view of this I wish for friendship and permanent peace between China and Japan. (Zhejiang Sheng Yunhe Xian, 2005, p. 92)

Indeed Zhang proved a competent writer when he was given access to media. A college graduate, he retired as a senior hydraulic engineer in 1987. As early as 1986 he contributed to the "historical materials" series a comprehensive, detailed introduction to a hydropower station built in Yunhe during the war. For people who are familiar with the rhetoric of the CCP's propaganda



concerning Sino-Japanese relations during the Mao era, it is easy to understand why Zhang hastened to echo and stress the shared victimhood of Chinese and Japanese people as well as bilateral friendship, on account of which the Party had justified the suppression of exposure to Japanese war crimes. The question is, how many people in Yunhe have had to “swallow their pain,” but did not live as long as Zhang to tell their stories to the public?

### **Method**

In the fall of 2007 I interviewed seven women to find out what information they could provide about wartime Yunhe and BW attacks, and to assess the characteristics of family oral narrative as an information source for the younger generation of a family. The way I present my study is modeled upon Danke Li’s (2010) oral history work on women’s wartime experience in Chongqing, China’s provisional capital during much of the war. From 1999 to 2007 she interviewed more than fifty women who lived in the Chongqing region during the war, and reproduced twenty of her interviewees’ stories, which were grouped into thematic sections. In each section Li presented the stories and discussed the major issues that were raised for both Chinese history and gender studies. The scale and structure of my study resembles one of Li’s sections. I will first reproduce three women’s full stories and then discuss how the interviews address my research questions. Readers, however, may decide on their own whether to turn to my discussion or to begin by reading the narratives first.

By no means a comprehensive effort to capture the vanishing war memories in Yunhe, the selection of interviewees was a combination of the convenience factor and the restricting requirements for the candidates. Specifically, candidates must have spent a significant amount of time in Yunhe between 1937 and 1945, be able to recall and articulate their experiences from that time period, and, in particular, provide some information about BW attacks from first-person

knowledge. From my own extended family, which lost at least four members from 1942 through 1944, I located five elderly women who met the requirement and interviewed each of them once from September to October, 2007. Their names were WANG Jingju, JIANG Meinü, WANG Renjuan, WANG Houjuan and WANG Shanjuan. WANG Jingju, who was nineteen years old when the Sino-Japanese War ended in 1945, gave me the most detailed recollection of how the BW attack had affected her family. I will provide her story in this chapter and cover four other women's accounts briefly.

The two other women whose stories I will tell are MEI Xiunü, a distant relative and family friend, and GAO Caiqin, who used to live next to the store owned by my grandfather during the war and whom I found through my mother's network. My mother, WANG Biqin, was born after the Second World War (in 1946), spent her whole life in Yunhe, and was acquaintance with many old residents in the county seat. In September 2007, she and I paid casual visits to some of these old residents still in town, asking whether they had first-person knowledge about BW attacks or knew someone who did. The name of GAO Caiqin came up. I interviewed both Mei and Gao twice, from September to November, 2007.

One story that came up and had apparently circulated widely in the neighborhood was about a family by the name of Liao, nearly killed off by the plague. The Liaos owned a cloth store in town. As the most prevalent version of the story goes, when the wife of Liao was confined on the upper floor of the store alone and craving for water (a symptom of the plague), neighbors were so afraid of being infected that nobody dared to bring water to the poor woman even though she threw out expensive cloth in exchange for assistance (but in other versions, water was provided). In fact, I have heard the story from my mother, who said she heard it from her father. The Liaos' tragedy has appeared in multiple places in Yunhe's "historical materials" series, including a first-

person account provided by LIAO Yulong, the only surviving member of the family (Zhejiang Sheng, 2007, p. 441-443). Given the great detail I found in print about the Liao's family experience, LIAO Yulong, who was nine years old when orphaned, seemed to me a quite exhausted source. I decided to interview other people who had received less attention from previous investigators.

The gender of my interviewees, all female, was a welcome accident. Four of the seven women were widows, some of whose husbands would have met my requirement and could have been interviewed if I had approached them in the 1980s and 1990s. Three other women's husbands were from other parts of Zhejiang, and one of them did volunteer to me what he knew about his own hometown during Japan's aggression. Considering the small amount of information by and about women in the "historical materials" series of Yunhe, my focus upon female interviewees seems appropriate. All of them were recruited according to the human subjects protocol approved by the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Institutional Review Board. One major regret in the selection of my interviewees was the lack of voice from the ethnic minority group of *She*, who had been historically oppressed and discriminated against by Han Chinese. *She* people's wartime experience might have added an extra layer of complexity to Sino-Japanese War history.

It is important to address my mother's role in the interviews and the language issue. My mother was present in two interviews and acted as a translator. I conducted my interviews mostly in the dialect of Yunhe, which was the language I grew up speaking before I learned Mandarin Chinese at school. The dialect and China's official language differ not only in pronunciation, but also in vocabulary and word order, meaning that the former cannot be sufficiently captured by the written system based on Standard Mandarin. When I interviewed two of the oldest women,

using the questionnaire I had prepared in writing, frequently they could not understand me until my mother paraphrased my questions in a more colloquial manner. I realized that my dialect had been “tainted” by the vocabulary and syntax of the written Chinese language, making me intelligible only to people who had experience with Mandarin Chinese. My mother also helped me in transcribing all three women’s interviews, when I found the rich and archaic vocabulary they spoke outside the range of my comprehension.

Given the differences among the Yunhe dialect, in which the interviews were conducted; Mandarin Chinese, in which they were transcribed; and Standard English, into which they were translated, I have tried to be faithful to the meaning of interviewees’ answers. After two levels of translation, I made no attempt to reproduce the linguistic characteristics and language styles of my interviewees’ speech, or to keep the pauses, filler words, and unfinished sentences which might provide nuanced insights into the interviewees’ subconscious thoughts.

I organized relevant answers in a roughly chronological order and provided in the Appendix A the questionnaire I used. In his guide on reproducing oral history interviews for publication, Ritchie (2003) stressed the necessity of including the questions as well as the answers, arguing that oral historians should show what questions elicited the responses and demonstrate that the interviewee did not necessarily volunteer the information (p. 129). Although the purpose of my interview differs slightly from an oral history project, I partly adopted Ritchie’s advice. However, I reproduced the answers in continuous essays instead of in a “Q and A” format. The problem I find with “Q and A” is that in reality the interviews defied this clear-cut framework. My interviewees volunteered information I had not considered asking, told life experiences that did not fit the pre-conceived questions, digressed to what was significant historical information, and jumped back (or ahead) to address question X while being asked question Y. To force their

answers into a “Q and A” format would either disrupt the logic and clarity of the interview answers or generate a false impression of the oral interview process, which was not linear.

In addition to the prepared questions, I asked follow-up questions which arose from answers. Conversely, when an answer suggested that a whole group of related questions would not apply to the interviewee, I skipped them. I generally did not interrupt my interviewees when they volunteered information outside the historical period on which my study is primarily focused.

Both general historical scholarship and local “historical materials” series helped me check for the historical accuracy of the information provided by interviewees. I also took note of cases where personal memories appeared to conflict with published sources. This does not mean that I rank print materials as more authoritative and reliable than information gathered from interviews. I consider my interview answers most likely to be reliable when corroborated by print sources, believable when supported by common sense and not contradicted by published works, and open to discussion when the two types of sources do not support each other.

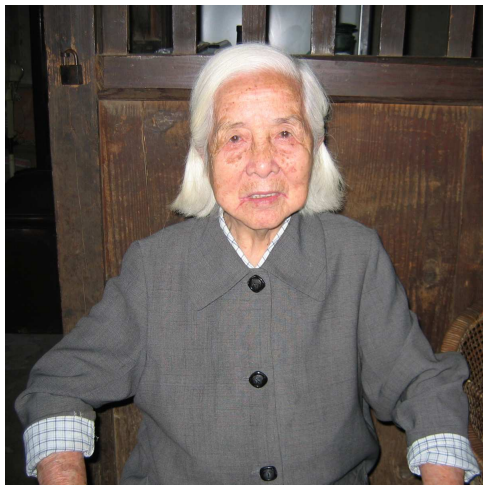
### **Her Story of the War**

Information gathered from my interviews reflected the impact of the war upon average families in Yunhe. Women played myriad roles during the war. They were wives and sisters of men who joined or were forced to join the army. They donated handmade shoes to soldiers. They protected young children from air raids, nursed patients with the plague at the risk of being infected, and sometimes lost their own lives. BW attacks increased the number of bereft mothers, orphaned daughters and sons, and stepfamilies with no shortage of dramas and conflicts. Some women were introduced to literacy, and others took up non-traditional public work for the purpose of war propaganda.

In comparison to war information found in Chinese youth literature, my interviewees' stories ignore the prevalent dichotomous political pattern, offering an alternative version of history that does not conform to the Party's master narrative. In my interviewees' stories every person is an individual, not a representative of his or her political group or social class. Contrary to the Party's long-term pursuit of hero stories and de-emphasis of civilian suffering, these women were most eager to tell me about "bitter days" in the past, during or after the war. In these respects, these women's stories resemble the personal memoirs that I quoted in the previous chapter, published by renowned Chinese novelists in their old age. Below are three women's oral narratives I have reproduced, ordered by age.

### 1. GAO Caiqin (高彩芹)

**Figure 4.3: Photo of Interviewee GAO Caiqin**



Born in 1912<sup>1</sup> in Yunhe, Zhejiang Province.

Interviewed in Yunhe on September 23 and November 4, 2007.

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<sup>1</sup> Chinese traditionally count a newborn baby as one year old, and a person is considered one year older on the Spring Festival (as opposed to the birthday). The women I interviewed all calculated age in this manner. They also liked to use the lunar calendar, and to refer to pre-1949 years by the Republic system, in which the first year was 1912—the year of the founding of the Republic of China. Please note that in this section only I have retained the figures they gave instead of recalculating according to the Western norm.

My name is GAO Caiqin. I was born in the first year of the Republic [1912]. I don't know what year number that was in AD. My zodiac animal is rat. I am a native of Yunhe. Both my parents were from Yunhe. My father had done lots of things for a living. He had run a jar kiln, an umbrella factory, a store, and later he was engaged in civil engineering, building bridges and roads. He became an engineer at the Lishui Construction Company. He never went to college. He wasn't well educated, didn't even go to middle school, but he was smart. My mother was a housewife.

My family wasn't too old-fashioned. My father was open-minded. In the past, girls of my age had their feet bound. I didn't. My grandmother wanted to have mine bound. After one night or two, I cried that it was painful. My dad told us to release them. He said, "Don't bother. This gives her pain." So the second morning the two pieces of the binding cloth were thrown away.

I didn't graduate from primary school. I was thirteen years old and one semester short when [the warlord] SUN Chuanfang's army swept over here. The townsfolk all fled. I stopped going to school, and went to hide in the countryside.

I was married at age 21, a late age in those days. My husband was younger than me. According to feudal practice of the past, it was through matchmaking and I didn't know him until the wedding. The Huangs were a wealthy family. We were counted as old relatives, but not related by blood.

I first heard about the Japanese invading China in the 26th year of the Republic [1937]. That year I was elected director of the women's committee. I didn't attend the election. People later told me that I was elected. I thought to myself, hell I am still breastfeeding my baby girl. I said I wouldn't go. The second day I was notified to take over the work. I had little education; I could just read a little. Later Miss DU Yongkang of the county government came everyday and asked

me to go working [with her]. She had come with the county magistrate PAN Yichen.<sup>1</sup> I breastfed my baby, gave her to my mother-in-law, and left to do propaganda work in the countryside. The first thing we did was mobilize women to make shoes for soldiers. “Sisters, now is the war against the Japanese, everybody please work hard to make shoes for our fellow brothers in the army. If you have financial difficulty but can help with sewing, we will get donations of copper cash and shoe cloth<sup>2</sup> from other people, and give you the material to work with. How about every two families make one pair?” We sent all the shoes to the tax office. I signed my name and the [county] archive has it.

I went with DU Yongkang to propagate Communists’ songs, like “Da Dao Xiang...” [Cut the devil's head off with the broadsword]<sup>3</sup>. Now I am old and can’t sing those songs. Some Nationalists said to me, “Caiqin, don’t go with those people.” I said, “What does it matter? We are just singing songs and doing propaganda work.”

We encouraged child daughters-in-law<sup>4</sup> who were illiterate to learn to read. We set up a place with desks and seats, and asked the girls to come for two hours every afternoon. We taught them to read and to sing. There were the hair-cutting and foot-releasing movements to liberate

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<sup>1</sup> According to local record, in his first tenure of 1938-39, Pan brought to Yunhe a group of progressive young college students, including some underground Communist Party members, from areas fallen to the Japanese. Pan originally belonged to neither party, but joined the Nationalist Party in 1939 (Zhejiang Sheng, 2007, p. 519-521, 790).

<sup>2</sup> Sewing shoes out of cloth (the upper and sole required cloth of different texture) was a local craft commonly practiced by women.

<sup>3</sup> The formal title of the song is “The Broadsword March.” The song originally honored the courageous effort of the Nationalist Army in the Marco Polo Bridge Incident, but was considered a patriotic song and adopted by the CCP’s army as well.

<sup>4</sup> “Tong yang xi,” a pre-adolescent girl from a poor family taken into another family as a daughter-in-law-to-be. The girl acted as free labor before marrying the family’s son, and could often be abused. The practice was banned by the Communist regime.



women. I asked people to cut their hair short and release their foot-binding. Some people still bound girls' feet [in 1937].

We went to the countryside to propagate the policy of “25% rent reduction.”<sup>1</sup> This was to help poor peasants, too. For example, if a tenant had to surrender 100 *jin* (1 *jin*=500 grams) of unhusked rice to the landlord, the government asked to reduce 25 *jin* from that rent. But peasants were afraid of implementing the policy, fearing that the landlord would take the land away. There was a big landlord in Huangshuidui [黃水碓, a village a little way off the county seat]. I had to go on stage to publicize the policy. Other people thought I was bold.

I was director of the women's committee from the 26th year of the Republic [1937] until my husband died [in 1947]. I have a bitter fate. He died at age 32. No, I didn't receive a salary. I took money out of my own pocket even. The county government gave us five silver dollars as administrative expenses, and the county [Nationalist] Party branch allocated three dollars for paper expenses. Propaganda in the countryside, printing songs... all needed paper. You must give notebooks to the women learning to read. We hired someone to offer literacy classes in the village of Kuzhu, and paid that person five dollars. So I contributed my own money. No, no

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<sup>1</sup> The “25% rent reduction” was a Nationalist agricultural policy first proposed around 1926-27. According to historical studies, it was considered a failure nationwide, but Zhejiang was recognized as the only province that implemented it in earnest for seven or eight years and succeeded in a limited scope (Zhuge, 1998; He, 2006). It is important to point out that current scholarship generally gives 1932 as the beginning of the decline of the policy in Zhejiang. My interviewee's recollection shows that as late as 1938-39 there could still be active attempts to promote the policy in certain areas in a certain political climate—in this case, the influence of underground Communist members such as Miss Du and leftist politicians such as Pan.

salary. Not one cent. No salary, volunteer work, and still accused of being a counterrevolutionary<sup>1</sup>. That had to be a joke!

**Figure 4.4: The Lady Liu’s Temple, Site of a Former Air-Raid Shelter**



The Lady Liu’s Temple on the hill of Ma’anshan.<sup>2</sup> The temple absorbs the space offered by the cave, where GAO Caiqin and her children used to take refuge.

Date: September 24, 2007

(Photo by Minjie Chen)

When we had to “escape the airplanes” [*tao feiji*, meaning “hiding from the air raids” in the dialect] during the war, I took my three kids to a cave in the hill of Ma’anshan. There were three

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<sup>1</sup> Caiqin’s experience before and during the Cultural Revolution: “The [Rightist’s] ‘hat’ was put on you by the state. I got the ‘hat’ in the winter of 1958—the year of massive steel production. I shouldn’t have got into trouble, but someone set it up. In a meeting on a winter evening of 1958, I was summoned onto the stage and told that I, too, was a counterrevolutionary.

Because you did things before the liberation [the CCP’s victory in 1949], people accused you of being a counterrevolutionary. Like what my daughter said, the anti-Japanese war propaganda I did was good for the Communist Party. I did those things, didn’t get any credit, but was punished as a counterrevolutionary. Sometimes I thought, you helped this party, and thus the other party would charge against you.

The woman who set me up had lost a lawsuit to me. She hated me. Her family was trying to add a story to their house, but the court forbid it to do so, because my house would have been completely blocked from the daylight. This woman was the lover of the town magistrate [who interrogated Caiqin for her ‘crime’].”

<sup>2</sup> My other interviewee also referred to the temple as the Dragon Son’s Cave. In a folktale circulating widely in Yunhe, a virgin girl by the last name of Liu finds an egg in the river where she does laundry, swallows it by accident, becomes pregnant, and gives birth to a dragon. With a tarnished reputation, the girl breastfeeds her son everyday, who visits only in the darkness of the evenings. The mother begs to see her son, and, after being granted the wish, is shocked to find him a dragon. The temple, newly built in Ma’anshan in 2007, worships Lady Liu as well as her son.

types of sirens: air raid alert, emergent alert, and all clear signal. You had to leave at the first siren. If you waited till the emergent alert, it would be too late. The cave was a natural one. People swept the floor clean, and twenty people could hide there. If the emergent alert didn't come, I let kids play outside on the hill. When we entered the cave, I took tea, *zong zi*<sup>1</sup>, and dry food I bought. Kids didn't attend school any more. We had to survive first. The cave is now made into a temple, the Lady Liu's Temple.

We escaped the planes like this for a while. The war situation became increasingly critical. In the 31st year of the Republic [1942], the Japanese attacked Dagangtou. We Chinese damaged the bridge and our soldiers kept the Japanese away. People said that the Japanese were vicious, and that when they occupied Bihu they killed, looted, and raped women. We never saw them. The Japanese didn't come to Yunhe. Yunhe was a blessed place.

When the Japanese were in Dagangtou, my family fled to the countryside, first to Chenzhai, then to Xikeng. There people sent me the message that our house was bombed, so we went home. Other bombs exploded. There was one in the river of Houxi, one underneath the bridge near the Wus' house—and it killed people. Another one at the bridge of the town god's temple—near the Culture Center—killed people too. The bomb that fell into my house didn't explode. It first landed on the roof of your kitchen<sup>2</sup>, creating much damage to the roof and tiles. Then it pierced through the wall of your house, flew into my courtyard, and bored a hole in the ground near a pomelo tree. Looking down we could see only a little bit of the bomb's fin. If it had exploded, both your house and mine would have been gone.

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<sup>1</sup> Traditional Chinese food, made of glutinous rice and other fillings and wrapped in large bamboo leaves.

<sup>2</sup> Referring to the interviewer's grandfather's house, the front of which was his store and the back was where his family lived.

I was afraid of sleeping in that house. Rats made loud noises in the evening, and I was scared. In the daytime we could work in the rice paddy and stay elsewhere, but you had to go home to eat and sleep. My family tried hiring someone from the engineer battalion to get rid of the bomb. That person wouldn't come, saying that he didn't have the skill. I bought a whole bucket of bitter solution, and had people pour it over the bomb, hoping that the bomb would rust away. I wasn't brave enough to watch, just stood afar as if it were a tiger. Finally someone was willing to dig out the bomb for 60 silver dollars. Back then silver dollars were valuable. I feared that the house would explode, so my husband escorted me across the river of Qianxi. When I returned home, the bomb was removed. I was told that all was well.

The year after the removal of this bomb, they released the bacteria of the plague. I don't know how they spread the bacteria. Rats were everywhere. Before I went to bed, I put all the firewood and dry grass in a bamboo basket, and placed the basket in a high spot, so that the rats were less likely to climb into it. I swept the kitchen floor clean. When I got up in the morning, I held a flashlight and searched for dead rats. One here, one there, yet another one over the ditch. We picked them up and sent them to the bridgehead, where they were burned with kerosene. Only after that could I start cooking breakfast. Lots of rats died in the first half of that year [1943].

My younger daughter was nine years old and started school in the eighth moon. On the seventeenth day of that month, she came home for lunch, didn't say she was feeling unwell or anything. She got changed into clean clothes and went to school again. In the evening she said, "Mom, I'm having a bad headache." She went to sleep on the bamboo bed. I asked her, "How are you feeling?" She said it was all right, and I was busy...At bedtime I asked her to have some dinner. She refused. I didn't know that it was the plague. I thought she was just tired. At night

she was feeling ill. She had a fever, vomited, and was taken with diarrhea twice. She said her throat was painful. When she tried to swallow water, her throat was blocked—later the doctor found a swelling lymph gland in her neck. She said, “Mom, I’ll get well if only this little problem were gone.”

We called two doctors the following morning. The first one took my girl’s pulse and said that she was already gone. The second was the best doctor that had come with the Provincial government—Doctor Zhang, I think. He was Silan’s [a neighbor] tenant, and Silan was a close family friend. Otherwise the doctor wouldn’t have made the house call for us. He listened to my girl’s heart with a stethoscope and said, “There’s no way to save your child.” I cried and begged him, “Doctor, I don’t care how much money this will cost. Please save my child.” He gave her two shots of cardiogenic. After two hours [she] was gone. Was gone around one in the afternoon.

She died at age nine, on the eighteenth day of the eighth moon. The 32nd year of the Republic was 1943, and I was 32 years old. These I remember clearly. One moment she was perfectly healthy, and the next moment she lay there crying “Mom, mom, I feel awful.” Gone like that. At first my husband wouldn’t let me know where she was buried. They put her in a big coffin and built a tomb, treating her like a full grown-up. But they wouldn’t tell me the burial place.<sup>1</sup> Once when I was hiding from an air raid in the hill, I looked all over for her, and found it. The name “HUANG Xingjuan,” as well as those of her siblings, the date, was all engraved there. Now the grave and the stone have been destroyed.<sup>2</sup> Even her bones are nowhere to be found.

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<sup>1</sup> It did not occur to me to ask why Caiqin’s husband had to hide the burial place from her. I was not surprised by what she said, because my understanding was that her husband wanted to prevent Caiqin from being overly saddened by visits to the tomb if she knew the exact location.

<sup>2</sup> Caiqin’s daughter was buried in Ma’anshan, the same hill which sheltered the family from air raids. Ma’anshan was one of the two major hills where residents of the county seat buried children who died young, a history that

This daughter was smart, smarter than the older one. She used to say to me, “Mom, don’t marry me off and please keep me at home. Mother-in-law can’t be as nice as mom. Please keep me home as if I were a son.” Only eight or nine years old, yet she was so smart. I said, “Fine! We have plenty of rooms, and we can keep you home as a son.” Other people physically punished their kids. We never did. After she was gone, for months I couldn’t go to Qianxi [the river at the foot of the hill of Ma’anshan]. It hurt me to think that trees on the hill sprout and turn green every year, but people can’t. I don’t like watching TV when it shows the Japanese in battles. I hate it. It gives me headaches.

In my parents’ family, a young longterm hired hand by the name of Zhang was infected with the plague. He died after being sent to the hospital. Next my mother came down with the disease. My father didn’t tell me. When I found out, she had been quarantined at Houshan<sup>1</sup>. My father said, “You can’t go there. That place is forbidden.” So I didn’t go. My mother stayed under quarantine for about a week, took some medicine, got well and came home. Soon after that, my father was infected. My daughter had died by then. On my way to Father’s house, I wore white socks, white shoes, and watched out for fleas all the time. Down there all eleven members of

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reflects the high mortality rate of young children in the past. People generally treated children’s funerals in a more casual manner than adults’—which entailed a careful selection of burial sites by practicing *feng shui*. In contrast, for children who died young, Ma’anshan was a “popular” burial site because of its convenient location near the county seat. It was common that children’s graves were rudimentary, and coffin and tombstone might not be used at all. As the mortality rate of young children lowered greatly, Ma’anshan lost its traditional function in the second half of the 20th century. As of 2010 many construction projects have encroached upon the hill, at the foot of which is a growing residential area. Children’s graves, including that of Caiqin’s girl, were destroyed in the urban expansion. I consulted WANG Biqin (personal communication, September 29, 2010), my mother, for this piece of local funeral history and culture.

<sup>1</sup> One of the quarantine sites, set within the Jingde Temple (Zhejiang Sheng, 2007, p. 470).

Genchang's family, owner of the "Liao He Feng" store, died of the plague.<sup>1</sup> Even people who helped them died, too. Finally, Liao's wife was the only one left and confined on the second floor alone. The neighbors cried out to her, "Don't come out!" She let down a rope and people gave her water. None of the bowls she had used should be brought out. A few days later she died. When I walked past that family's store at the street corner, I could feel a chill run down my spine.

When I arrived at Father's house, he called out, "Don't come in!" I said, "It'll be all right. I'm just standing here for a while." My children liked to follow me [to Grandpa's house]. My father said, "Don't you come here. Your kids may be infected." My sister took care of him at home. He took medicine from the hospital and recovered.

One year [2003] someone came from Ningbo [to Yunhe]<sup>2</sup>, and we were all invited to a meeting. The woman told us that the plague was spread by the Japanese who flew the planes, and that the Japanese had admitted so. Folks in Yunhe worked together, compiled the names of those who died [of the plague], and demanded compensation from the central government [of Japan]. Well, we gave the names and contributed money to cover the travel expense, but nothing came out of it. What is the use of compensation now that people have been killed? If I get a big amount of money, I will donate some to the government—I can't eat it up, can I? The Japanese wouldn't give you compensation anyway.

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<sup>1</sup> She was referring to the Liaos' deaths I had heard of multiple times. As we can see, the detail varies depending on who told the story, but all captured the scale of the tragedy.

<sup>2</sup> My interviewee was referring to WANG Xuan, an activist who led lawsuits against the Japanese government for BW crimes. She was one of the attorneys representing BW victims of Yunhe for the lawsuit filed against Japan in 2003.

## 2. MEI Xiunü (梅秀女)

**Figure 4.5: Photo of Interviewee MEI Xiunü**



MEI Xiunü (Left), born in 1921 in Yunhe, Zhejiang Province

Interviewed in Yunhe on September 15, 17, and 22, 2007

(Right: WANG Biqin, translator)

My name is MEI Xiunü. My zodiac animal is rooster. I don't know in which year I was born,<sup>1</sup> but I am 87 years old. I am a native of Yunhe County. I was born in Shanjing, about thirty or forty *li* (1 *li*=500 meters, or 0.31 mile) from here. It was a remote village in Yunhe. My father was a peasant. He also sold brooms. I went to school for only half a year, because my family couldn't afford the tuition. When I was old enough to work, my mother and I husked rice for others, to earn a little money. We were poor.

When I was eight my feet were bound for half a year. I liked to play in the water, and would release the cloth and go play. That's why my feet are in lousy shape. My maternal grandmother had tiny feet. If you had big feet, people called you "yasao po."<sup>2</sup> The feet of Qifa's [husband]

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<sup>1</sup> I noticed that my interviewee used year number very rarely, and when asked, often could not recall. Terms that she used to indicate broad time and historical periods include "when the provincial government was in exile," "when the Nationalists ruled," "when the Communist Party took over," before or after "the liberation."

<sup>2</sup> Literally meaning "smelling duck woman." A derogatory term used by the local *han* people for female ethnic *she* people, who did not adopt the foot binding practice. I cannot confirm if the term relates to duck's large web feet.



maternal grandmother were tiny. The front part was pointed, folded down without a sole. With “three-inch golden lotus” you couldn’t walk. It was useless.

I was carried in a sedan chair [as bride] to the county seat at age eighteen. I remember the date—the eighteenth day of the eleventh moon [in year 1938]—when I got married here, where the water-powered grain-mill was. My husband was nineteen. Our parents arranged the marriage. We’d never seen each other before we got married. My husband was adopted at age four or five and grew up by the mill. My father-in-law bought it and built the house.

There were seven or eight mills in town, and this one was the best. The water was directly channeled from the upper-stream of Qianxi, rapid and clean. Townsfolk liked to send work to the Jiuchang [久长, forever] Watermill. After the marriage we lived on rice revenue from the mill. I had a rice measure this big. For every hundred *jin* of rice I husked, I received one and a half liter for the millwork. There was no cash payment. After the liberation the production team took over the mill. For two hundred *jin* of unhusked rice in two full bamboo crates, we received three *jin* of rice.<sup>1</sup>

I can’t tell when I first heard about the Japanese attacking China. I only know about the planes bombing us. At around seven o’clock when twilight fell one day, a surveillance aircraft came and hovered over Yunhe really low. So folks in Yunhe said to each other, “We must flee early tomorrow morning, because the plane will come.” The next day my in-laws finished breakfast early, rounded up all the chickens and pigs, carried them and escaped to Xintianyang<sup>2</sup>. The plane arrived at eight, and my husband and I were still home. We each hid ourselves in the

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<sup>1</sup> This cut 25%-50% of her income from before the liberation of 1949, because “one and a half liter” of rice weights between two and three *jin*.

<sup>2</sup> 新田垌 or 新殿垌, a village about 3 miles to the northwest of the county seat.

two waterways, which had high banks on both sides. I was in the small waterway and he was in the big one.<sup>1</sup> The plane came, and a bomb exploded close behind me with a loud bang. It was a sulfur bomb.<sup>2</sup> I wasn't hurt, but what came out of the bomb trickled down my legs like watery ox dung. It was yellowish, and stunk. I squatted and planned to wash the stain off my legs first, but had a hard time getting rid of it. My husband thought I was surely gone, seeing big stones tumbling down in a pile, but I answered him. More planes came roaring over, releasing bombs here and there. When a bomb whooshed down this way, birds flocked away to the other side; when another exploded over there, birds were driven back noisily. I found three metal bands from the bomb and brought them home. When I told other people about surviving the bombing, people would say, "You have nine lives."

**Figure 4.6: Metal Band of a Bomb**



(Photo by Minjie Chen)

One of the metal bands Xiunü took home from the first air raid she experienced. When I interviewed her in 2007, she still kept it, now rusted, in her kitchen. She used it as a stand for her round-bottomed wok.

The band measured 142~148mm in diameter.

After my interview, Xiunü donated the band to the Yunhe Public Library, which considered it a useful item if a museum about the local war history should be built in the future.

Date: September 15, 2007

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<sup>1</sup> The big one—the main waterway—was where the mill, powered by a vertical-waterwheel, was installed. When the mill was not in use, the operator must close a dam valve to cut off the stream to this waterway, and open another valve to detour river water through a small, side waterway.

<sup>2</sup> Local people called the bombs that yielded yellow powder "sulfur bombs." What my interviewee described fits the characteristics of sulfur well.

From that day on we had to “escape the plane” almost everyday. The pre-warning air alert went “clank, clank, clank,” a pause, and then three “clanks” again. If the planes were flying in the direction of Yunhe, the emergent alert clanked incessantly, and the planes would be here right away—too late for you to escape. The mention of planes was scary enough. They came with an intimidating roar. Machine-guns on the plane went “takka takka takka,” spraying bullets from above. It was horrifying to listen to the bullets shooting down. We went to the hill of Ma’anshan to hide after a quick breakfast, and would come home for lunch. Other people took lunch with them. Where we hid is now the Dragon Son’s Cave, the Lady Liu’s Temple. A deep cave it was. It could hold 20 to 30 people. The entrance was not tall. You must stoop down to get in. People brought straw and sat inside. Some families dug their own caves in the hill, but you couldn’t use theirs.

The Japanese scared me a lot (laugh). People said the Japanese were vicious. When they were in Bihu, nobody knew how many women were violated. Once they seized you they would assault you. They were very bad, raping you to death. Once the Japanese were attacking Fangshanling, weren’t they? That evening I finished dinner and fled to Hekeng [河坑]<sup>1</sup>, like many other folks did. When we left home we heard bombings. In Hekeng, other people put mats on the ground and lay there. Later my husband said, “Let’s go home.” I said not. He said, “What can possibly happen? It’ll be alright.” So we two went back. He made some food, ate, bathed, and went to bed. I asked him not to fall asleep. He said, “Shut up! Let me sleep for a while.” I didn’t sleep, got up and returned to Hekeng again (laugh). I sat there till morning and, seeing nothing happened, I went home. My father-in-law had fled farther and stayed out the whole night.

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<sup>1</sup> A village northwest of the county seat, about 4 miles away.

I was told that Chinese had bombed our own bridge in Jucun [局村] to prevent the Japanese from coming to town. They didn't come here, but went to Fangshanling. That's where Songyang is. They killed a lot of people in Songyang, but not here. Fangshanling was said to be a high mountain. Our soldiers occupied the top first. The Japanese launched an attack, and we pushed them back. Attack again, and pushing back again. The Japanese couldn't charge forward up the mountain, and went other ways.

I don't know in which year the plague broke out. The disease was ferocious. People died every day. Patients were quarantined, first in Ma'anshan—it didn't work—then in Chahuadian [a temple], and the plague quieted down. People said you'd die from flea bites. Prevention? The government was in charge of that. I received a vaccine during that time. They came to your house to give you shots.<sup>1</sup>

My husband was perfectly fine one evening when he went to bed. After sleeping for a while he suddenly cried, "Aww I can't move my legs. What's going on?" He felt them and said, "I've got lumps on my legs." I got up immediately, broke a bowl, and used its shard to stab into the lump. Then I held the lump tightly, squeezing blood out. The next morning he recovered.<sup>2</sup> He was not destined to die yet. Otherwise he couldn't have survived. You develop a fever and you

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<sup>1</sup> I could not verify this piece of information in local published records, but both MEI Xiunü and my other interviewee WANG Jingju claimed that they received vaccines during the plague. The question remains if there is error in time or, if they did receive the shots during the war, against what diseases were they immunized. According to one early local investigation, vaccine for the plague was expensive and rare during the war years, but after 1950 the CCP's government offered shots to all residents in infected areas (Zhongguo Renmin, 1986, p. 33-34).

<sup>2</sup> I found a number of similar survival stories involving breaking open patients' swollen lymph glands; in one case, the patient lived for four months after being infected (Zhejiang Sheng Yunhe Xian, 2005, p. 68-69; Lishui Shi, 2004, p. 221; Nan, 2005, p. 67). As another unconventional medication, opium was also frequently documented as being effective in the "historical materials" series.

die. My husband was at the very early stage and didn't have a fever. I had heard that it helped to let go of the blood. He didn't take medicine either. He had some stamina. Two of my acquaintances died of the plague. I didn't know about others. I didn't attend any of their funerals. People were too scared to go. Even relatives skipped funerals. My husband and his father knew how to engrave tombstones. When other people asked for help they would go and do the engraving work.

People had wondered how the plague broke out. I don't know how. From what I heard, the Japanese sent poison down from airplanes. Many people did say so. Must have been some kind of powder. I don't know. The year before the last someone started an investigation into this, but didn't continue. There was no visit to my house. Yes, I watch TV. I haven't seen anything about the plague in Yunhe on TV. In those years you died and so be it. The government didn't help you track down those things. You died of the plague and that was your business.

When the provincial government was in exile [in Yunhe], one of our rooms was used by the self-defense brigade, supposedly organized by our own neighborhood and the county. Later the government migrated to Longquan [龙泉]<sup>1</sup> and the soldiers took all kinds of things from us. Government officials needed chairs—so carry away. My house was made a mess. After the brigade was gone, a family from the provincial [Nationalist] Party branch rented the room for about a year. The lice the family brought were all over the place, even in the crevice between

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<sup>1</sup> A neighboring county to the west of Yunhe. According to HUANG Shaohong's memoir, in the Provincial government's southwestward retreat during the Zhejiang-Jiangxi offensive, it first anchored in Yunhe, then continued moving, but doubled back after the end of the offensive in early September 1942 (Zhejiang Sheng, 2007, p. 17).

wallboards. The woman and I were on good terms. I made a pair of shoes for her daughter, and she insisted on giving me money. When they moved away they left stuff for us.

My husband never fought in the war. [To escape conscription] he finished supper early and went to sleep in the field or on top of the ox pen. If he had been conscripted... One of my elder brothers, a lively man, was conscripted into a supplementary battalion and ended up being locked up like cattle with a crowd, for fear that they'd escape.<sup>1</sup> Later he got sick, and I was notified to take him home. I did and he soon died. Gone. You were doomed in supplementary battalions. Anyone who was of an eligible age could be forced in, and he hadn't even held a gun. What did he know [about battling]? So many conscripted men of Yunhe died in those years.

### 3. WANG Jingju (王景菊)

**Figure 4.7: Photo of Interviewee WANG Jingju**



Born in 1926 in Yunhe, Zhejiang Province

Interviewed in the village of Zhuxi (a.k.a Wanzhu), Bihu Township, Zhejiang Province on October 27, 2007

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<sup>1</sup> I found at least one passage in the local “historical materials” series that recorded a chaotic picture of Chinese soldiers harassing civilians and newly recruited soldiers being severely abused in Chinese hands (Zhejiang Sheng, 2007, p. 33). Further details of the abuse and discussion of its cause—except a broad attribution to the Nationalists’ corruption and oppression—are lacking.

My name is WANG Jingju. I was born in Yunhe in the 15th year of the Republic. My zodiac animal is tiger. My father WANG Yishu was from Wangjiating [The Wangs' clan hall], where I was born. He was supposed to have passed the [Imperial] exam and gotten a *xiuca* degree, but when I was a child I knew nothing other than that he had taught in the village of Shencun. My mother ZHANG Aichun was from the Zhangs' clan, considered a wealthy family in Yunhe. Her clan's mansion had a grand front gate. She was a housewife. When I was thirteen [1938] she died of what was called "jing luan bing" [Raynaud's disease].

I had three elder brothers<sup>1</sup> and one elder sister. When we were children at home we never suffered from hunger. After the liberation we did—we even ate grass—but not before. My sister died when I was nine years old. All my brothers went to school and perhaps graduated from elementary school. I went to school for only two or three years and quit after I got the fifth volume [of the textbook]. I didn't like to go to school. I never bound my feet.

From age fourteen to eighteen I worked at the weaving mill near the sports field in Yunhe. I spun yarn. For every package of Western yarn, containing 32 hanks, the payment was four dimes. Skilled workers could finish 8 packages a month—only three dollars and two dimes. Sometimes I finished only five packages a month, for two dollars (laugh). Besides we had to flee during air alerts. Someone was in charge of a huge bell on the hill of Liyushan. If the planes were close to Yunhe, he struck the bell "clank, clank, clank" really hard. At the alerts we were eager to run away to play. We were young (laugh) and not too serious about the work.

The Japanese occupied Lishui but didn't come to Yunhe. To the north of the Longmen village was Fangshanling, a high mountain. Our soldiers were at the top and the Japanese were at

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<sup>1</sup> Her eldest brother was WANG Boru, my grandfather.

the foot. We pushed them back. I'd never seen the Japanese people. I only knew that air raids were a horror. People did say that the Japanese were evil and vicious. If they caught chickens, they'd kill them. They'd violate women with no restraint. People did spread the word. The Japanese had never been in our town, so no such thing happened here.

While working at the mill I lived with my father and my third brother's family in the Wu clan's residence. The evening before the 21st day of the sixth moon [August 2, 1942], a surveillance aircraft came over Yunhe. So people said we must flee early next morning. The planes arrived when my sister-in-law was still cooking breakfast. We panicked, put a cotton comforter over a table and hid underneath. My neighbor Chuanzhen, who was of my age, didn't escape in time and hid with us too. All we did was listen to bombs whooshing down like stones. When the planes were gone, we found that my brother's kid had been left standing in a walker at the front door. The baby girl was too young and didn't know fear [about the air raid]. Ever since then the mention of planes frightened us.

One bomb fell upon Chuanzhen's house and one room was damaged. One bomb fell into the soft mud field outside our house and was buried with no explosion. My third brother and someone from the Xu family dug it out and took it apart. It was no bigger than a thermos bottle, full of sulfur powder. Another sulfur bomb fell through the store run by my eldest brother, neighboring the Huangs'. It was really strange that it didn't explode. That was why people said Yunhe was blessed by Buddha and had good *feng shui*.



The Wu clan's residence had hosted the [provincial] high court<sup>1</sup> as well as a platoon of *xianbing* [military police]—I only knew they were called *xianbing* anyway. The wife of the platoon leader and I were good friends. With a young baby in her arms she couldn't keep up with others who had taken flight to the hills. She then hid under a stone bridge and was hit by shrapnel. After the planes had bombed for a good while and the policemen came home, they heard moans and rescued her, still breathing. She was placed upon a bamboo bed and soon died. A pool of blood gathered on the floor. Strange or not, her baby was not hurt at all. The woman was buried in Yunhe and the platoon departed.

After the bombing my two sisters-in-law and I took kids to Chazigang—the village of big brother's in-laws—to make it easier to escape the planes with the little ones. Actually we lived in a place called Zheyuan, about four or five *li* further up the mountain from Chazigang<sup>2</sup>—for quite a long while, maybe for about a month before we headed home. Because Chazigang was seven to eight *li* from town, we still felt unsafe. In Zheyuan there were only two houses, one with an old couple, and the other occupied by a woman and her teenage daughter. The woman's husband had joined the army, so we all stayed in her house. When we heard the planes, we only needed to hide somewhere in the mountains.<sup>3</sup> Every once in a while I went down to Chazigang to fetch rice.

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<sup>1</sup> At first I thought this was inaccurate information, as the print source indicated that the court was in the Xu clan's ancestral hall (Zhejiang Sheng, 2007, p. 10). Upon further inquiry the two buildings turned out to be neighboring structures set apart by a vegetable garden, thus either oral or print source could be the correct one.

<sup>2</sup> Chazigang [茶籽岗] is a mountain village northwest of the county seat. Zheyuan [柘园村] is further west of Chazigang.

<sup>3</sup> Here it is useful to quote from my interview with two other women, who were no older than ten years old when brought to Zheyuan, to understand why it was considered a safer place than the county seat. WANG Renjuan, born in 1932, recalled, "It was a very high mountain. I remember we were carried there in bamboo crates, because we couldn't walk that far. It was so high that when the planes passed by they seemed to be at our eye level." WANG Houjuan, born in 1935, said, "It was a high place. When the planes bombed the county seat we could see the bombs

Somehow my father developed dysentery. After the bombing all the stores in town were closed and my brothers couldn't put together the right herbs for him. I guess he suffered a great deal. Within one day and one night he could frequent the toilet for 50 to 60 times, yet nothing came out and his stomach ached. He probably hung a rope between the bed and his neck [to hang himself]. It was a thin one and wouldn't have held. I was young and didn't understand, "Dad, what's on your neck?" He wouldn't let me talk about it. He died in the seventh or eighth moon [of 1942] at age fifty-nine. According to superstition it was a "three-inauspicious" year for my father's funeral, which would have brought bad luck to the family. I seem to remember that the coffin, not painted, was placed in an ash shack<sup>1</sup> by the Qianxi river for a year. The burial was held in the seventh or eighth moon of the next year [1943].

My eldest brother and his wife had three sons and three daughters. When I was eighteen [in 1943], their one-year-old baby boy Renhuan was suddenly sick. At first nobody knew what was wrong. My brother sent for doctors, but the baby died in no time. My brother put together a few boards, made a box, and quickly buried the child. The mother was heartbroken and couldn't stop crying. She was put to bed and never got off that bed. Her sister, who was divorced, was here to look after her for a few days. Many doctors came and nothing helped. I don't think she lasted more than ten days. She died in the first half of the eleventh moon [of 1943] at age 35. After her death we had all the doctors over for dinner [to express thankfulness]. We didn't see dead rats. Fearing that they could be under the floor boards, we loosened the boards but didn't find any rats underneath either. I heard that Hongbao's wife from across the street died of the plague, but

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falling one by one like eggs being laid." A third interviewee WANG Shanjuan, born in 1937, remembered "escaping the planes" but could not recall any detail.

<sup>1</sup> An ash shack was a stone-and-mud hut, wherein Chinese peasants burned plant, wood, and even trash into ash as fertilizer.

didn't hear about other people. The same year my third brother died of cirrhosis, and his wife remarried later.

Because my sister-in-law died, my big brother asked me to move to his house, to look after kids, cook, and do laundry. My brother was 17 years older than me. When customers came to his store, they didn't ask me "Where's your brother?" They all said "Where's your dad? Your dad not home?" (laugh)

The summer of the next year [1944], my brother's son Renxuan, six years old, and daughter Shanjuan were sent to Chazigang, partly to stay away from the heat and partly to escape the planes. The boy had been born with a small hole under his chin but was physically stronger than his siblings. A smart kid, he played "the little white rabbit" in the kindergarten really well. After about a month someone suddenly sent a message that the kid was under the weather. My brother tore away to the village, but no medicine could save the child. He died the same day. My brother couldn't understand why there had been so many malign stars in his life and was told by the fortuneteller that he was destined to shoulder three coffins. Frustrated, my brother bought a coffin to bury the six-year-old Renxuan in Chazigang<sup>1</sup>—Renhuan had been buried in a small wooden box.

I cooked for my brother's big family for close to one year. Now my brother had only one son left. In those days people favored sons over daughters. He wanted more sons, so remarried [to XU Lannü<sup>2</sup>], who was 16 years younger than him. The wedding was on the 20th day of the

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<sup>1</sup> Presumably this and the two coffins used for adults—his wife and third brother—made up three to ward off further loss of family members. There was no explanation why his father's coffin did not count.

<sup>2</sup> The interviewer's grandmother.

eighth moon [of 1944]. Scarcely within half a month, I was married at age 19 on the 5th day of the ninth moon.

I don't remember much about the Provincial government. Yunhe used to be a quiet town. With the Provincial government moving in, it bustled with noise. Store owners, businessmen, barbers...all moved here. The barber shop across the street from my brother's store—that was where the provincial governor had haircuts. When I got married, I had my hair done there with a perm. I don't remember about the soldiers. My brother was strict with me and was worried that young men and women would fool around outside. He wouldn't allow you to go to the theatre without company.

My brother served as *bao* [保, neighborhood unit] leader in those years. One *bao* of Yunhe residents was like one production team. When soldiers passed Yunhe, they needed laborers to bear loads. So they would find the *bao* leader and charge him to send eligible adult males. Among this number of adult males in one *bao*—it was your turn to go today and his turn tomorrow. It wasn't oppressive. After the liberation my brother was accused of being a counterrevolutionary. Serving as *bao* leader shouldn't have mattered. The liberation merely liked to make some trouble.

When I worked at the mill people of the whole town received vaccination shots. That was in the days of the bombing.<sup>1</sup> I hadn't heard that the Japanese caused the plague. Do people say so nowadays? No, I don't talk to my neighbors or my kids about escaping the planes and the plague.

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<sup>1</sup> Again, I could not verify this piece of information and locate more detail about the vaccine she received. See a previous footnote under MEI Xiunü's account.

## Discussion

This section treats women's oral narrative as an information source parallel to youth literature and discusses the historical accuracy of this source, its availability to young people, and the implication of its patterns.

### Historical Accuracy

In her oral history work with women of Chongqing, Li (2010, p. 28) pointed out the flaw of human memory in capturing specific details and its proclivity to gaps and errors, but stressed the truthfulness of her interviewees' account. I found similar flaws in the oral narrative I gathered. The level of detail that my interviewees could reach was contingent upon multiple factors. The less educated women tended to be vague about year information on dates and described historical time periods in broad strokes. A seemingly vague idea about time occasionally also made them unsure about the sequence of separate incidents. Personal relationships between the narrator and whoever was involved in the incidents matters. As a mother GAO Caiqin provided rich detail about her daughter and how the plague cut her life short. As an aunt, in contrast, WANG Jingju knew that her two nephews and their mother died between 1943 and 1944 but could not describe their symptoms. She was able to tell more detail about her father's disease and death in 1942. At a tender age the memory of even a close family member was fragmented. Of the three Wang sisters, whose mother died when they ranged from age six to eleven, the oldest daughter WANG Renjuan recalled that her mother's disease started from throat pain, the second daughter WANG Houjuan remembered that her mother developed a lump under her armpit, and the youngest one WANG Shanjuan could not remember anything about her symptoms.

What the sisters could recall from childhood and describe with captivating clarity was detail with deep emotional impact. Renjuan recalled running off to her birth mother's grave and crying

over a big fight with her stepmother. Shanjuan said that at the funeral she had expected her mother to “come back to life.” All three sisters had some vivid detail to tell about their “naughty,” “smart,” and “energetic” brother Renxuan. Shanjuan in particular remembered being bullied by the boy who was younger but stronger than her, and feeling frightened and ashamed. Although she could not describe the boy’s symptom except that he mentioned abdominal pain, she remembered “even dad cried” over the boy’s sudden death, a rare witness of a man’s emotional response.

Another limitation I found in the women’s accounts was that their own information sources, or lack thereof, influenced their interpretation of life experiences. As a result they repeated widely circulated tales, along with their own misunderstandings and confusions. Japan’s BW attacks were launched with such secrecy, and the biological science and technology behind the attacks were so much beyond ordinary people’s comprehension, that my interviewees’ understanding of what caused the plague was at best a rumor: the Japanese army *might* have spread the plague by airplanes, and nobody was certain how they did it. GAO Caiqin was informed of Japan’s BW attacks when she attended a victims’ meeting as late as 2003. All three oldest women enjoyed repeating the myth that Yunhe was a blessed town so that the Japanese were never able to occupy it and many of the bombs did not even explode. On the other hand, that my interviewees remained deceived of a war crime is a significant part of Sino-Japanese War history. I also interpret their ready admission of confusion and uncertainty in particular parts of their memory as a sign suggesting the reliability of the interview accounts as a whole.

Given flawed human memories and the limitation of personal knowledge, I was impressed by the great extent to which I could confirm that the details my interviewees provided fit historical scholarship and local print sources, as well as by the level of consistency among these

women's accounts about major historical events. Furthermore, occasionally their experiences suggest to historians overlooked research questions and dubious facts (in print sources) which should be investigated and double-checked. The three oldest women, aged between 81 and 95 when I interviewed them, gave almost exactly the same account of the battle of Fangshanling, based on what they had heard during the war. When asked about air raids, three women recalled the same major bombing on August 2, 1942. Although MEI Xiunü and WANG Jingju's survival experience on that day differed, both started their accounts with the same detail: a surveillance aircraft paid a visit to Yunhe the evening before the raid, and bombers arrived early next morning, a detail which I was actually unable to find in print sources. All three women witnessed what they called "sulfur bombs" that did not explode.

It was striking how these women, seemingly casual about dates and numbers otherwise, could retain specific factual information in their heads when an event was of personal significance. In answering my questions WANG Jingju gave four exact dates: her own birthday, the day her big brother re-married, her wedding day two weeks after, and the first major air raid she experienced. GAO Caiqin recalled with precision the date when the plague claimed her daughter's life. The year and date they provided allowed me to situate their personal stories in what print sources showed was the larger political and military dynamics of the town, enabling the oral and print sources to corroborate each other.

GAO Caiqin's story about her propaganda work on the Nationalist policy of "25% rent reduction" for local peasants is well supported by history studies, but her account also suggests that there might be more twists and turns in the implementation of the policy than had been recorded in literature.

Another piece of circumstantial evidence that suggests the credibility of these women's accounts is shown in the way they freely made unflattering comments about the post-1949 Communist regime. Even though the Chinese government has loosened its control over speech, these women's stories of suffering and their sharp criticism are still not what the government encourages and, if publicized in China, may even invite censorship. I do not think their willingness to share such information and opinions with me was due to their political naivety but consider it a strong sign of their openness and trust in my interviews. This evidence is not fully captured in the three stories I reproduced because I did not translate most of what occurred outside the time period of the Second World War. However nearly all the interviewees volunteered to me information concerning later historical events: the "liberation" of 1949; oppressive agricultural policy of the 1950s that led to food shortage and famine; official lies spread during the Great Leap Forward period; unfair treatment, torture and humiliations during the Anti-Rightist Movement and the Cultural Revolution; and the burden of being associated with a "counterrevolutionary" father. When asked whether they had experienced a shortage of food and supplies in their lives, my interviewees surprised me because none mentioned the war years but all pointed to the mass starvation of the late 1950s.

### **"Availability" of Family Oral Narrative to Youth**

Human memory is both a resilient and fragile information source. At age 95 GAO Caiqin could still recall her wartime life with details which receive support from, enrich, and challenge historical scholarship. As the majority of Chinese population born in the first half of the 20th century were not literate, human memory about the Second World War is also fragile and limited by live span, unless it has been passed on orally or recorded in writing or media.



My interviews suggested mixed answers to the question of whether or not adults with first-hand experiences during the war passed that memory on to the younger generations of their families. GAO Caiqin was the only interviewee who claimed she had told her wartime experience to her grandchildren. Other interviewees either could not recall talking to children about this topic or thought they had not done so. It was possible that they had talked more often to children, friends, and neighbors than they could recall. In fact, WANG Shanjuan's own knowledge about her mother's disease was from her elder brother, who passed away in 1997. On the other hand, my personal experience suggested it was equally possible that some interviewees had not told their offspring much about the war years.

The Wangs' family, to which I am related, was severely disrupted by Imperial Japan's determination to terrorize Chinese civilians even when it failed to occupy their land. According to interviewees' recollections, my great-grandfather developed dysentery in 1942, struggled without medication because stores were closed after a massive bombing in August, and died soon afterwards. The next year, my grandfather lost his baby son and wife to the plague that swept over Yunhe, and another son in 1944. The only occasion my family mentioned to me the death of the two boys was one morning in the late 1980s, when the news program on radio was condemning Japan's BW attacks in China. The news prompted my father to mention the two family victims—he had learned it from my mother, who heard it from her father. After that morning when I was an elementary school child, the incident was never mentioned again until I requested detail from my mother for a graduate course project in 2005. It was not until then that I learned about the boys' mother being another victim. It was not until my interview study in 2007 that I saw how their grandfather was possibly impacted by the air raid and began to question whether his dysentery was part of the BW attacks. If the Chinese government had continued

suppressing Japanese war crime information, if there had not been a prompt from public media, my family probably would never have thought of telling me this piece of history and my mother's generation would have been the last link in the oral relay.

I would also argue that the lack of information in public media could undermine the credibility and significance of family oral sources even when they were actively made available to youth. My study of the three families did not yield supportive data for such statement, but Iris Chang (1968-2004) related a personal experience in the introduction of her book *The Rape of Nanking* (1997), helping us imagine how convincing older generations' oral narratives are to youth in a society void of public information to corroborate the substantiality and accuracy of private sources. A Chinese American girl growing up in Urbana-Champaign, Illinois, Chang first learned about the Nanjing Massacre from her parents, who heard stories about the atrocity as young children themselves. While still in grade school, Chang searched the local public libraries for information about the massacre but could not find anything, and her curiosity about the matter soon slipped away—not, though, before she found it odd that nobody had written a book about an episode in world history as horrifying as her parents insisted. With family oral informants alone, it was difficult for Chang “to find the line between myth and history” (p. 8). It was not until December 1994, when she saw poster-sized photographs of the Rape of Nanking at a conference sponsored by the Global Alliance for Preserving the History of World War II in Asia, that she realized “the Nanking massacre of my childhood memories was not merely folk myth but accurate oral history” (p. 9).

Not everybody is willing to share his or her private memory with other people, not even with their own children. Guilt and shame associated with a painful memory can be a major hindrance. Among my seven interviewees, I was unable to obtain as much information as I expected from

JIANG Meinü. In our interview she liked to stress that she “kept to herself” and did not know much about what was happening in the community. Meinü was married at age 16 in 1936 and during the war got a divorce, which was likely a stigma for Chinese women. She took care of her elder sister Xingnü when she fell ill with the plague. From there, family stories diverged. Another interviewee WANG Jingju claimed that, after Xingnü died, Meinü wished to marry her brother-in-law, but it did not happen. Meinü herself claimed that she rejected other people’s suggestion that she should stay and marry him. The truth is unknown, but if Jingju was right, this episode could be a source of embarrassment for Meinü and contribute to her unwillingness to revisit that memory.

Family oral narrative can be an extremely valuable information source about the World War II, potentially reliable and accurate, rich with detail to help the younger generation personalize a general history, and enduring throughout a life span. However, its availability to youth can be contingent on personality, relationship among family members, and significantly, a larger public media environment that triggers private memory on specific topics and confirms its credibility. All these factors influence the role that family oral narrative plays for younger generations.

## Epilogue

Shortly before I finished the draft version of this chapter, a 32-episode documentary series *Wode Kangzhan* [我的抗战, My war of resistance against Japan], based on oral history work and produced by a famous Chinese Television anchorman CUI Yongyuan, was released on August 16, 2010 in China and made an instant hit. In the duration of eight years the production team interviewed 3,500 people, accumulated more than two million minutes of oral history footage, and collected two million minutes of other documentary tapes and three million historical photos (*Wode Kangzhan*, 2010a). Many interviewees had passed away by the release of the

documentary, and it was estimated that for 90% of them this was the first and last time they were interviewed about their wartime experience (*Wode Kangzhan*, 2010b). Episode 24 “Zhan Huo Hong Yan” [战火红颜, Beautiful women in the flames of war] is the only one devoted to women’s contributions—mainly through espionage and military intelligence work, as the show seems to suggest. The regrettable timing of this oral history project about the Sino-Japanese War is highlighted in the fact that, more often than not, only heroines’ offspring were available to provide fragmentary childhood memories about their mothers’ secret work and sacrifice.

According to the publicity of the show, selected footage from 300 interviewees was used, and it is unclear whether there is a production plan for future shows to incorporate more people’s oral narratives. Based on what was released in the series, what could be the last attempt to rescue living memories of the Sino-Japanese War is intent upon covering military activities, using civilians’ experience such as air raids only as the background of the central subject matter. There were no separate episodes about any particular war crimes. However, the series did continue some of the thematic changes introduced after 1985, giving equal attention to the Communists’ and Nationalists’ battle history, covering the American ally and “Flying Tigers” in one episode, and even confronting, in one full 30-minute offering, the embarrassing topic of Chinese people serving as puppet soldiers for the Japanese.

## **Chapter 5. Ethnic Chinese Wartime Experience in American Youth Literature**

This chapter works toward a better understanding of information sources about ethnic Chinese wartime experience that were available for American youth. The analysis will not be as detailed as it was for the text and images of Chinese youth literature, but will provide an overview of the publication patterns of U.S. juvenile fiction that has the Sino-Japanese War as its main setting or subject. The purpose of this chapter is to discover how those patterns correlate with the political and cultural context of a racialized American society.

Just as an analysis of Chinese-language Sino-Japanese War storybooks must be contextualized within the big picture of the birth and development of China's publishing for youth in the 20th century, an understanding of American youth literature portraying ethnic Chinese wartime experiences cannot be isolated from its context. The books of interest are at the intersection of at least two literary environments: the publication of American youth literature about the history of World War II, and Chinese American youth literature defined as children's and young adult books featuring ethnic Chinese. I will first examine these two bodies of literature before delving into the patterns of war stories about ethnic Chinese.

### **World War II in American Youth Literature**

It is hard to make an exhaustive list of the factors that have contributed to the wide presence of World War II in American popular culture: the ongoing impact of the war on global politics and on everyday lives; the endless drama that it is capable of unfolding; the secrets that are yet to be declassified and uncovered; the status of being "the good war," as many like to remember it, and the access to its records; the availability of the vast number of people who experienced it as soldiers and civilians; the Holocaust history which must be impressed on the public conscience

because, as we are cautioned, "if it is forgotten, it is certain to recur" (Kimmel, 1977, p. 84). It is easy to see how popular the topic is—in media from Oscar-winning movies to the History Channel documentaries, bestselling novels and memoirs, nonfiction Pulitzer-winners, and computer games, such as the first-person shooter game *Medal of Honor* (1999) and strategy game *Hearts of Iron* (2002), allowing players to reenact the war in their own ways. Whereas the wardrobe to the land of Narnia is accessible to only a few of the luckiest children, the windows through which to peek into the years during World War II open generously in the form of cultural artifacts for the consumption of postwar generations.

Literary works published specifically for young readers are no exception. The richness of American youth literature about World War II is manifest in the quantity, quality, and diversity of books on this topic. J. K. Rowling's popular *Harry Potter* series, by frequently referencing Nazi history—from the downfall of an evil wizard in "1945" (Rowling, 1997, p. 103) to a prison called "Nurmengard" (or should it be spelled "Nuremberg," as Rowling's fans asked knowingly in online forums?) to lock him up (Rowling, 2007, p. 360)—illustrates how World War II history, or, more precisely, World War II fought in the European theatre, has seeped into contemporary Western consciousness.

Even if we do not count literature related to World War II history at such a subtle level, according to bibliographies and library catalogs, as of 2007 approximately one thousand children's and young adult novels with the Second World War as their main subject have been published in the United States; not shunning one of the darkest pages in modern history, around seven hundred titles with the Holocaust as the central topic, in genres such as (auto)biography, fiction, nonfiction, picture books, and poetry, have been produced for an audience from kindergarten through high school (Holsinger, 1995; Sullivan, 1999; *Library of Congress*, 2008).

Together these books tell numerous stories of what happens when the lives of men, women, children, and, occasionally, animals intersect with the world's biggest military confrontation, whether the protagonists are in the European theatre or the American home front, in the Auschwitz Concentration Camp or the Manzanar Relocation Center.

It is worth mentioning that Holocaust youth literature has developed a necessary diversity in subject matter to reflect the many facets of that horrifying history. Young readers can learn about Jewish experience/suffering preceding, during, and following the war, from a wide variety of perspectives—of Jews in hiding, Jews fighting in the ghettos, Jews confronting the ovens inside a death camp, Danish rescuers who risk their lives saving Jews, a Gentile who gradually benefits from Jews' downfall, Hitler Youth who grow up in a world saturated with racist propaganda, a contemporary Neo-Nazi who is made to think about racism and prejudice, and many more<sup>1</sup>.

From this sizable body of juvenile literature portraying World War II history have emerged many highly acclaimed titles, cited in various awards and notable booklists released by the American Library Association, National Council for the Social Studies, and influential book review magazines. Prizes and honors extend the shelf life of these books and increase the likelihood of their being introduced to young people by teachers, librarians, and parents.

Researchers have noticed a heavy dose of World War II stories in the Mildred L. Batchelder winners list. Nist's (1988) study of the first twenty years of the award 1968-1987 found six (30%) out of the twenty honored titles to be World War II novels, presenting a wide array of perspectives: German, Polish, Greek, Swiss, Dutch, Japanese, and Jewish. She wrote, "[I]t

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<sup>1</sup> Examples of notable Holocaust literature for youth: *The Diary of a Young Girl* (1947) by Anne Frank, *The Devil's Arithmetic* (1988) by Jane Yolen, *Number the Stars* (1989) by Lois Lowry, *Friedrich* (1961) by Hans Peter Richter, and *Hitler Youth: Growing Up in Hitler's Shadow* (2005) by Susan Campbell Bartoletti.

appears that Batchelder emphasis on the war of 1939-1945 is a reflection of adult preoccupation with that cataclysmic event and the wish to convey vivid depictions of it to young readers.” (Nist, 1988, p. 7) The pattern has not changed much since Nist’s study. My own examination of Batchelder-cited titles from 1968 through 2010 found more than one quarter of them dealing with the history of World War II, the Holocaust, and the atomic bombings of Japan. The Batchelder Award, given by the American Library Association, recognizes the most outstanding children's books translated from a foreign language into English and re-published in the United States. In a country which is known for its reluctance to embrace cultural imports from foreign lands, each book cited in this list can be considered to have achieved a hard-won success. Whereas publishers and researchers often identify financial, cultural, and ideological barriers to children's books from non-English countries (Roxburgh, 2006; Garrett, 2006), they neglect to point out that World War II, thanks to its global impact, has become a universal topic that appears to enable foreign publications to reach the American juvenile book market.

In “Notable Social Studies Trade Books for Young People,” an annual list of juvenile books recommended to social studies teachers who can use them with K-12 students, the section “World History & Culture” shows how often “world history” actually means “World War II history (in Europe).” In the booklist of 2006, for example, six out of 11 books under this section focus on World War II and the Holocaust (four titles). Incidentally, the only book which gives some space to the Pacific War, *Remember World War II: Kids Who Survived Tell Their Story*, gives a wrong date, 1940, for Japan’s invasion of China (Nicholson, 2005, p. 31). Four people who experienced the Pacific War as a child—two in Hawaii, one in Manila, Philippines, and one in Tokyo, Japan—recalled their lives during the war. Despite a map showing that China was besieged by the Japanese army (p. 32), there is no story about Chinese.



## Chinese American Youth Literature: From the Gold Rush to World War II

After nine decades of Chinese settlement in the United States beginning in 1848, American youth literature portraying ethnic Chinese people was only in its infancy when World War II broke out in 1939. Even rarer was youth literature by ethnic Chinese. Nearly all existing scholarship on early Asian American writers focuses on adult literature (Kim, 1982; Ling, 1990; Yin, 2000), and research on multicultural youth literature is largely interested in works produced after the American Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, so this section will sketch the birth and sluggish development of Chinese American youth literature from 1848 to the end of World War II.

Since the first arrival of Chinese laborers in California during the gold rush of 1848, the voices of ethnic Chinese had long been confined within the Chinese community, not reaching mainstream American society. As compilers of *Chinese American Voices* showed us, ethnic Chinese were not so much mute as ignored (Yung, Chang, & Lai, 2006). The anthology contains primary documents—letters, speeches, testimonies, oral histories, personal memoirs, poems, essays, and folksongs—generated exclusively by Chinese Americans writing in English or Chinese from the gold rush to the present day.

Historically, the dominant American literature featuring people of color was written by white authors for a white audience. For example, European Americans have written about African Americans for hundreds of years, portraying comic Negroes and contented slaves (Harris, 2003)—characters which fit and perpetuated popular stereotypes held by the white society. Similarly, caricatures of Asians have been part of American popular culture for generations (Kim, 1982, p. 3). As a less insidious example, in the story "A Trip to China" in *Eight Cousins* (1874), the famous juvenile writer Louisa May Alcott depicted a Chinese character named "Fun See."

Unable to communicate with the young protagonist Rose in English, he serves purely as the "fun" object for her to "see." At one point in the story, Rose is relieved and delighted to receive a fan from him as a gift, not "a roasted rat, a stewed puppy, or any other foreign mess which civility would oblige her to eat" (p. 77).

Why did Chinese immigrants not pick up the pen and write "fun" stories from their own perspective? Kim (1982) has pointed out the economic and language barriers to literary creation by powerless and socially excluded Asian immigrant workers (p. 23-24). As rare exceptions, a few well-educated Chinese published English-language nonfiction books, presenting Chinese viewpoints and catering to the occasional curiosity of Americans about Chinese high culture. These include international students Yan Phou Lee (李恩富, 1861-1938) and Wing Yung (容闳, 1828-1912), Chinese diplomat Wu Tingfang (伍廷芳, 1842-1922), and Der Ling (德齡, 1886?-1944?), the daughter of another Chinese diplomat<sup>1</sup>. Many factors may have led to their choice of the nonfiction genre, among them the fact that the novel, literally meaning "small talk" in Chinese, had rarely been treated as serious literature (or even considered as literature) in China and was instead despised by Chinese highbrows as leisure reading for the common people (Conn, 1996, p. 116; Luo, 1996). Not until the May Fourth Movement of 1919 did Chinese scholars and writers vigorously advocate and begin to develop vernacular novels for purposes that included "improving the society" (Lu, 1933/1973).

Another crucial factor, more important than the personal talent of Chinese immigrants, was that in a Sinophobic society which preferred to be entertained by "*The Insidious Dr Fu Manchu*" (1913)—the type of characters fitting neatly into what the mainstream culture considered

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<sup>1</sup> Their works are *When I Was a Boy in China* (Lee, 1887), *My Life in China and America* (Yung, 1909), *Two Years in the Forbidden City* (Der Ling, 1911), and *America, Through the Spectacles of an Oriental Diplomat* (Wu, 1914).

Chinese were like—there existed no ready ears for stories about the pain, joy, feelings, and thoughts of Chinese as human beings, rendering literary creation a less wise career choice for ethnic Chinese than for white people. Anti-Chinese sentiment reached its climax in America with the enactment of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and continued for many years.

When Japan defeated China in the first Sino-Japanese War (1894-95), for example, American media interpreted Japan's victory as the righteous manifest destiny of the strong, or the "civilized," to conquer the weak ("uncivilized"). Indeed, newsman Frank Leslie proclaimed that the war would "remain the battle of civilization against barbarism" (1894, p. 9). *The New York Times* blamed the defeat on, among other dishonorable characteristics of Chinese people, their resistance to Western civilization and approved Japan's Westernization efforts ("The Fall," 1894). *The New York World* praised the victory of the Japanese Navy as, citing military experts' opinion, "rank[ing] among the most famous triumphs in history" ("China is in the Dust," 1894, p. 6). A number of observers in the United States found Japan to be "at the top of the 'Oriental' heap of humanity" (Krenn, 2006, p. 59). News about the 1894 Port Arthur massacre of Chinese civilians during the first Sino-Japanese War was hurriedly refuted by publishing an official denial made by the Japanese government ("Japan on its Behavior," 1894) and an "eye witness" article, which, upon close reading, neglects to tell us if the author stayed in the fallen port after November 21, 1894 when the three-day butchery reportedly started (Leslie, 1894). *The New York World*, a newspaper owned by Joseph Pulitzer, wrote, "The reports of Japanese atrocities at Port Arthur are confirmed from various sources," but it hastened to explain that "they were provoked by the persistent atrocities of the Chinese" ("Japanese took revenge," 1894, p. 6). The article detailed the cruel treatment of Japanese POWs by the Chinese Qing government, with the underlying

message being that a barbarous and backward people deserved any atrocity inflicted upon them by the more civilized invaders.

The well-known case of the Eaton sisters, the first two fiction writers of Asian descent, illustrates the power of the market and popular taste, a power which acts independent of the literary merit and social significance of authors' writing. Edith Eaton (1865-1914) and Winnifred Eaton (1875-1954), the first and the eighth children of a large family, were half Chinese and half English. Edith claimed a Chinese identity by choosing "Sui Sin Far" (meaning "narcissus" in Chinese) as her pseudonym. Her journalistic and fiction writing, published from the last decade of the 19th century through 1912, focused on illuminating the plight of Chinese immigrants and on changing the popular stereotype of them ("Edith Maude Eaton," 2003). She "achieved a moderate success, publishing numerous short stories and articles but only one volume of her collected stories" two years before her death (Ling, 1990, p. 27). Despite her pioneer work, Sui Sin Far was relegated to historical oblivion until rediscovered in the 1980s and is now recognized as "the godmother of Asian American fiction" (Birchall, 2005).

In contrast, according to Honey (2000), the younger sister Winnifred published "the first novel authored by an Asian American, *Miss Numè of Japan: A Japanese-American Romance* (1899)" when she was only 24, and went on to enjoy critical acclaim, wide readership, and commercial success marked by bestsellers and Broadway adaptations in her lifetime. Her popularity had to do with her choice of writing subject as well as timing. Adopting a fake Japanese identity under the pseudonym "Onoto Watanna," from 1899 through 1912 she produced 10 novels, frequently set in an exotic Japan and focused on cross-racial romance between Japanese/half-caste and Caucasian characters. Winnifred camouflaged herself as of Japanese descent and launched her writing career at a time when Japan/Japanese were less detestable to

white Americans than were China/Chinese. Eventually, anti-Japanese sentiment rose with the increase of Japanese immigrants to the United States. Racial antagonism against Japanese immigrants materialized in discriminatory legislations until the Immigration Act of 1924 (just two years before Winnifred's final Japanese-themed book, *Sunny-San*, was published) subjected Japanese to the same exclusion affecting Chinese since 1882.

By the 1920s, four decades after the Exclusion Act, outright racial hatred in the form of violent attacks against ethnic Chinese, who now made up an almost invisible population in the United States, had abated in the U.S. Sociologists conducting the Survey of Race Relations on the Pacific Coast even concluded in 1925 that the "feeling on the Pacific Coast toward the Chinese ha[d] been a tolerant one for many years" (Yu, 2001, p. 73). It was with the reduced tension between whites and Chinese that the character of Charlie Chan, a capable Chinese American detective, made his debut in Earl Derr Biggers' adult novel of 1925. At the same time, criminal, dirty, and subhuman Chinese characters continued to be part of American popular culture. In the wake of World War I, there was a keenly felt need to bring up a new generation of Americans as respectful and friendly towards the foreign-born and "the people of other nations and races." The topic of the 20th annual conference on children's reading, conducted by the public library in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in 1924, was "National and race prejudice." Speakers and librarians criticized children's books that stirred up racial/national hostility and called for those that stressed "the oneness of the human race" ("Conference on Children's Reading," 1924, p. 363).

During the 1920s, a sign of tolerance for ethnic Chinese could be seen in the publication of folktales translated from Chinese and fairy tales casting Chinese people, culminating in Arthur

Bowie Chrisman's Newbery-winning short story collection *Shen of the Sea* in 1925<sup>1</sup>. Considering how Chinese immigrants previously had been condemned for their heathen belief system and superstitions, it was not a trivial gesture for the American market to welcome Chinese folktales, legends, and fantasy stories featuring Chinese characters. *The Chinese Fairy Book* (1921), for example, was a late installment in the "Fairy Series" that had been published by a New York company since 1900, each title introducing folktales and legends usually from a European country. The book contained translated folktales about Chinese ghosts, fairies, immortals, and gods and freely mentioned Buddha and Taoist priests. The limited number of imaginative and engaging children's books which did not demonize ethnic Chinese, however, was far from being typical of the decade. Sociologist Bruno Lasker's (1929) study on race attitudes in children found widespread sources contributing to youngsters' prejudice against Chinese—in parents, teachers, school textbooks, the cheap and popular "penny dreadfuls," and feature films—even as he recognized the limited "corrective influences" at work to counteract erroneous representations of people of color. At any rate, librarians had to be disappointed, though not surprised, by the finding of a questionnaire study with boys "in the choir school of a church known throughout the country as a center of liberal Christianity in a cosmopolitan city." In their unaffected voices, children expressed, with spelling and grammatical mistakes, their negative attitudes towards people of color and foreigners, and Chinese appeared to be the most unpopular of all disliked people (Lasker, 1929, p. 139-141).

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<sup>1</sup> Chrisman fondly mentioned a Chinese storyteller, his acquaintance in California, in his unpublished biographical articles (Reed, 1955, p. 42), but it is unclear how much of his folktale-style stories was informed by Chinese oral tradition, and how much furnished with his own imagination. One story, "Chop-Sticks," is a *pourquoi* tale about why ancient Chinese switched from knives and forks to chopsticks (Chrisman, 1925). Chrisman's fairy tales about Chinese people are therefore partly along the line of Hans Christian Andersen's literary tale "The Nightingale" created in 1843.

The acceptance of Chinese supernatural characters in books was nevertheless the first step towards accepting real Chinese human characters shown in a neutral or positive light. The earliest creators of such realistic novels, published after 1930, were not Chinese Americans from neighborhood laundry shops or ethnic enclaves in Chinatown. Rather, they consisted of white Americans who had lived in treaty ports and concession territories in China. After 1842, a militarily impotent Qing Empire had signed a series of unequal treaties with Western powers, opening dozens of port cities to foreign trade. Westerners, including Americans, were attracted to settle in China, working there as missionaries, merchants, and professionals, getting married, and having children. Western settlers in China and Chinese immigrants in America both became the victims of anti-foreign sentiments in the two countries, but otherwise their experiences differed widely. In contrast to most Chinese immigrants who were treated as cheap labor and disposable lives in the United States, Americans in China belonged to the highest class and enjoyed privileges granted by treaties, including, for example, residential concessions exempt from Chinese jurisdiction and Chinese taxes ("treaty ports," 2000). As we shall see, the continual American presence, reaching its peak in China in the 1930s (Isaacs, 1958, p. 148), inevitably entangled the interests of the United States and China despite their unequal status and unresolved conflicts.

From the first- and second-generation settlers in China arose some white American writers who produced finely crafted realistic novels based on their varying amount of experience in China and with Chinese people, breaking "the American public's longstanding indifference to books about China" (Conn, 1996, p. 133) and presenting humanized Chinese characters to a wide American audience. The best-known of these authors, and perhaps the most versatile one, too, is Pearl S. Buck (1892-1973). Raised in the province of Jiangsu, east China, Buck had been

contributing essays about and short stories set in contemporary Chinese society to *Atlantic*, *Nation*, *Asia*, etc. since 1924, followed by her first two adult novels *East Wind: West Wind* (1930) and the tremendously successful *The Good Earth* (1931).

Simultaneously, in literature for children and young adults, the Shanghai-born Eleanor Frances Lattimore wrote and illustrated her first book *Little Pear: The Story of a Little Chinese Boy* in 1931. Little Pear, endearing and adventurous in both Lattimore's text and images, was one of the earliest realistic Chinese characters portrayed in American juvenile fiction. Lattimore's brush drawing captures the folk life of rural northern China in the early 20th century with artistic simplicity and photographic accuracy. The success of the book, still in print in paperback and marketed as a classic today, kicked off Lattimore's prolific writing career. She would write three more books featuring Little Pear and tell stories about other very young ethnic Chinese characters set in China and in America. In 1932, Elizabeth Foreman Lewis, who had been sent to China by the Methodist Women's Board and who taught there for a few years until her departure in 1921 ("Elizabeth Foreman Lewis," 2003), published her first book *Young Fu of the Upper Yangtze* and won the next year's Newbery Medal. This was the first realistic novel about Chinese people to win the prestigious Medal—and the only one thus far. The novel describes the adventures of Young Fu, an apprentice coppersmith whose mother was widowed, in a turbulent China of the 1920s. *The Horn Book* reviewed Lewis' book together with Pearl Buck's *The Young Revolutionist* (1932) in an article entitled "Young China." The uncanny combination of the two words "young" and "China," conjured up a sense of freshness, hope, and endearment for this old country, and the subsequent texts give us some idea of the changing sentiment underway as well as of the possible driving forces of the change:

The past year has been one in which the eyes of the world have been turned toward China as never before. The floods of last summer, and Colonel and Mrs. Lindbergh's



notable and spectacular service to China in her suffering<sup>1</sup>; the wars of the past winter [Japan's attack on Shanghai starting on January 28, 1932], arousing both indignation and sympathy for China; and, lastly, Mrs. Buck's picture of daily life among the common folk of that land, in her masterpiece, "The Good Earth," have all contributed to giving the average American a conception of the individual human factors that make up the life of the Chinese people. (Bugge, 1932, p. 176)

The "indignation and sympathy," which was not aroused decades before, were the result of the fact that Shanghai—unlike Lüshun that was conquered by Japan in 1894—was China's largest metropolitan city and one of the earliest ports opened by unequal treaties. Britain, France, and the United States all held concessions there. The Sino-Japanese military clash threatened Western business interests as well as foreign residents in Shanghai. The article also reveals some adults' eagerness to educate youth about "the oneness of the human race" ("Conference," 1924)—in words given at the 1924 conference on children's reading—through books as well written as *The Good Earth* and appropriate for youth. Both Lewis and Buck's young adult novels apparently get the message across satisfactorily, because reviewer Kathrina van Wagenen Bugge found the two Chinese boys, Young Fu and Ko-sen, "solving their problems...with the same courage, ambition, and loyalty that we rejoice to recognize in our own children" (1932). Another function these books could serve was to educate youth about current Chinese events. What *Young Fu* and *The Young Revolutionist* have in common is an unromanticized setting where young protagonists face constant danger prevalent in 1920s' China. In fact, Buck's book was produced with a strong pedagogical goal. She wrote it at the request of the Presbyterian Mission

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<sup>1</sup> In August 1931, China suffered its worst flooding of the 20th century with the Yangtze River, causing a death toll of at least 145,000 ("Hongshui," n.d.). The flood affected treaty ports such as Hankow (Hankou) and Nanking (Nanjing), where many foreign nationals including Pearl Buck dwelled. The famous American aviators Charles A. Lindbergh and his wife Anne Morrow went to China to help with relief flights, which were covered in American media.

Board, which paid Buck \$500 in exchange for the story and distributed the novel along with an elaborate study guide, "Youth and Revolution in China," providing a fairly sophisticated introduction to contemporary China (Conn, 1996, p. 140, 405).

White settler authors ushered in an age of American adult and youth literature characterized by unprecedented interest in Chinese topics. The new market facilitated the admission of ethnic Chinese authors into the American literary world. In 1935, LIN Yutang (1895-1976), a China-born Harvard graduate, published *My Country and My People*, an adult nonfiction book about Chinese culture. It was an instant bestseller "read by millions of Americans" (Kim, 1982, p. 28). Lin received Pearl Buck's help with the publication; he and his wife even stayed at Buck's house in Pennsylvania while they looked for a place to live in the United States. Buck was furious when the Lins were denied housing in Princeton because a professor's wife would not rent to Chinese (Conn, 1996, p. 175), an incident which revealed the chasm between liking a people portrayed in books and accepting them as equals in life. Lin never wrote children's books, but we shall see how the Lins contributed to American youth literature by bringing up three daughters who co-authored two of the earliest juvenile books by Chinese in America.

The real boost to Chinese American voices came with Japan's full-scale war against China in 1937, which increasingly threatened America's interest in Asia and, especially after the Pacific War broke out and temporarily tied the destinies of China and the United States together, turned the attention of the American public to the East during the war years. Researchers also pointed out that some of the early books by Chinese Americans served, unwittingly on the authors' part, as anti-Japanese propaganda, contrasting the "Good Asian" and the "loyal minority" with the "bad" Japanese Americans (Kim, 1982, p. 60). H.T. Tsiang (蒋希曾, 1899-1971), a China-born student and political activist who had been self-publishing English-language poems about the

Chinese revolution and novels since 1929, presented *And China Has Hands* (1937), whose radical dedication says "To the Death of the Japanese Empire" (Lee, 2005). The novel is about a Chinatown laundryman who arrives in the United States as a "paper son" seeking fortune and success. Kim (1982) names it "the first fictional rendition of the bachelor society in English by a Chinese immigrant" (p. 109). Lin's first novel *Moment in Peking* (1939), considered by a *Nation* article as his best work (Lazarus, 1942), chronicles the vicissitudes of three families in Peking from the Boxer Rebellion at the turn of the 20th century to the Sino-Japanese War. Until the end of World War II, amidst the continual production of books about China by white authors, quite a few ethnic Chinese authors—Hui-lan Koo (黄蕙兰, n.d.), Yee Chiang (蒋彝, 1903-1977), Pardee Lowe (1904-?), Mai-mai Sze (施蕴珍, 1910?-1992), Helena Kuo (1911-1999), HAN Suyin (韩素音, 1917-), Jade Snow Wong (黄玉雪, 1922-2006), and siblings Adet Lin (林相如, 1923-1971) and Anor Lin (林太乙, 1926-2003)—published autobiographies, books about Chinese topics, and at least six adult novels, all relating to Imperial Japan's military aggression.

What is noticeable about these pioneer Chinese American authors is that there were more new emigrants than American-born Chinese, more writings of autobiography and nonfiction than of fiction, and productions of many more titles for adults than for young people. The paradox of there being fewer Chinese American authors born in the United States than émigré authors from China writing in their second language is easy to explain. Thanks to the Exclusion Act and the challenge of forming families in Chinatown's bachelor society, there were only 102,159 Chinese Americans in 1930, making up 0.08% of the total American population (*Becoming American*, 2003). A tiny population base, a land historically uninterested in nurturing authors of color, and Chinese Americans' continual struggle for livelihood worsened by the Great Depression and racial discrimination (receding hatred did not rescind oppressive legislations), all explain the

delay of Chinese Americans in finding their literary voice after the market was wedged open to Chinese topics. While the legacy of traditional prejudice against fiction might have influenced which genres China-born literati felt most comfort to write, writing for youth was further constrained by the fact that children's literature was a fledgling field in China and an unfamiliar type of literary creation. As explained in Chapter 2, the May Fourth period from 1919 to Japan's invasion in 1937 is the formative period of modern children's literature in China.

Before the end of World War II, the small number of juvenile titles by pioneer Chinese authors in American was overwhelmingly nonfiction. Although originally published for adults, *Our Family* (1939) received a particularly warm review from *The Horn Book*. It is a collection of diaries written by LIN Yutang's daughters: Adet, Anor and Meimei Lin at age 16, 13, and 8 respectively. Anne Carroll Moore was so charmed by their "perceptive," "reflective," and humorous writing that, in her famous column "The Three Owls Notebook" of May, 1939, she regards *Our Family* as "the most important book among spring publications" and states that "American children are going to find it the most satisfying book in relation to China and the Chinese people that they have ever known" (Moore, 1939). The next year, the Lin family flew across the Japanese lines to China's provisional capital Chungking (Chongqing). After experiencing forty bombing raids within three months' stay in the city, the three sisters returned to the safety of the United States and published *Dawn Over Chungking* (1941). An anthology of biographies about ancient and modern Chinese figures, *Giants of China* (1944) was written by Helena Kuo specifically for a young audience and dedicated to "the young men and women of fighting China." The illustrated autobiographies of *Fifth Chinese Daughter* (1945) by Jade Snow Wong and *Echo of a Cry* (1945) by Mai-mai Sze, recording the authors' girlhood, were naturally welcomed as appropriate reading for young adults. One author who tried his hand at juvenile

fiction (about the war and collected in this study) in 1942 was Yee Chiang, who was an émigré in Britain at the time.

I have outlined, in quick brushstrokes, the slow growth of American youth literature about ethnic Chinese during the first century of their stay, from 1848 to 1945, in the United States. It was not until the 1920s that juvenile titles featuring Chinese were accepted and occasionally celebrated in American mainstream society. Those ethnic Chinese literati who made their voices heard after the mid-1930s and became the most active during World War II were prolific in works for a general audience and in nonfiction writings, but remained new to youth literature, a genre not found in the tradition of Chinese culture. That the war loomed large in their works shows how eager ethnic Chinese were to tell stories about Chinese experience during the Sino-Japanese War, when the American society let them.

The trajectory of Chinese American literature from the mid-19th century to the end of World War II shows that writings about or by ethnic Chinese are never a simple reflection of Chinese Americans' literary endeavors. Who gets to tell stories about ethnic Chinese and what gets told routinely succumb to the forces of racial tensions between whites and Chinese. The about-face which American media and literature did from 1895 to 1945, with the two Sino-Japanese Wars, suggests that we can continue following the fickle U.S.-China-Japan relationships to interpret postwar literature about Chinese, or lack thereof. That the improved perception of Chinese Americans was contingent on America's wartime friendship with their ancestral land worried the sociologist Rose Hum Lee, who was quoted as asking in 1944 "how lasting this change [would] be" and "what the tone of literature toward the Chinese [would] be in 1954" (Isaacs, 1958). The rules which regulated Chinese American literature in 1944 would still function in 1954, at a

subtler level and embedded in the sweeping force of the Cold War. From there we can start to examine American youth literature featuring Chinese experiences during World War II.

### **Scope and Data Source**

My focal point in this part of the study is American juvenile fiction about the Sino-Japanese War or featuring ethnic Chinese during that time period. In youth literature, nonfiction is arguably the most direct source providing factual information about any topic<sup>1</sup>, but fiction and imaginative works can reveal an emotional truth too often hidden by figures and maps in nonfiction. With artistic power, fiction can sell either carefully or poorly researched information no less aggressively than nonfiction does. With its focus on works of fiction, this chapter should be seen as a first step towards a better understanding of American youth literature and other multimedia information sources about the part of World War II fought in China.

I located 28 fiction titles about World War II in mainland China, specifically written for a young audience and published in the U.S. (including titles published previously or simultaneously in other countries) from 1937 through 2007. I have also included in my study three adult titles which are suggested by the bibliographies I consulted as suitable reading for older young adults. In order to find these titles, I did keyword searches in library online catalogs as well as examining multiple bibliographies that might list relevant titles. The latter included general bibliographies of historical fiction for youth and special-topic bibliographies of juvenile fiction about World War II, of multicultural youth literature, and of juvenile fiction about China/Chinese.

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<sup>1</sup> My preliminary search for juvenile nonfiction works has found fewer titles than fiction for youth: a dozen information books, two autobiographies, and several biographies about Claire Chennault have World War II in China as the central topic or main backdrop.

The first thing noticeable about this search result is that little has been told about ethnic Chinese experience during World War II in American juvenile fiction, particularly when we interpret the 31 titles, produced over a span of 70 years, in the context of the much celebrated body of American youth literature about World War II. Not all of these titles are readily available to today’s young readers. According to Bowker’s Books in Print database, only twelve out of the 31 titles remain in print today. Few of the out-of-print books are included in bibliographies of multicultural youth literature about Chinese experience, or are likely to be read in classrooms or booktalked by librarians. These novels, like the history which they preserve, have been forgotten.

For this study I was able to obtain the physical copies of all but one from research libraries. Although the earliest title in my list, *Mac of the Marines in China* (1938), was not available for me to examine, I included its bibliographic information in my analysis of publication patterns.

## An Overview of Publication Patterns

### Format and Genre

Except for two picture books, *My Friend, the Enemy* (1992) and *Nim and the War Effort* (1997), the books are chapter books, some of which are illustrated, for young readers and others full novels the middle-grade youth and young adults.

**Table 5.1: Reading Levels of American Juvenile Fiction About the Sino-Japanese War**

Age Level of the Audience	Number of Titles
Elementary (K-Gr. 4)	7
Middle School (Gr. 5-8)	18
Senior High School (Gr. 9-12)	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>

Note: Compiled according to recommended levels in bibliographies and my own judgment based on language and subject matter.

To categorize the genre of these books is challenging. First of all, the illustrated story book *Little Red* straddles contemporary realistic fiction and historical fiction, two genres that may not

overlap. Pearl Buck first published the short story “Little Red” in 1945, and it was illustrated by Duane Krych and republished in book format in 1988. The text was written as “contemporary realistic fiction,” but I decided that the book *Little Red* should be more appropriately defined as “historical fiction” given the gap of four or five decades between its publication date and the time setting of the story. Second, all titles dated during or shortly after the war were set in their contemporaneous time period, but look like historical fiction to today’s readers. In order to reflect the publication history of this body of literature, I decided to classify them as contemporary realistic fiction. The third issue comes from a few fictional works of adventure stories portraying unrealistic heroic achievements, which require considerable suspension of disbelief from readers—much like the stories of James Bond do—though there is no explicit magical or supernatural element in these books to qualify them as fantasy. These titles fall into both “contemporary realistic fiction” and “adventure stories” in my classification system. Given the small total number of titles, there is not a broad diversity of genres, as shown in Table 5.2.

**Table 5.2: Genre of American Juvenile Fiction About the Sino-Japanese War**

<b>Genre</b>	<b>Number of Titles</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Historical fiction	18	58%
Contemporary realistic fiction	13	42%
Adventure stories	4	13%
Romance	2	6%
Fantasy	1	3%
<b>Total</b>	38 (>31)	(>100%)

### **Quantity by Date of Publication**

A tabulation of these 31 titles’ publication date reveals how the output has fluctuated over the past seven decades. To make sense of the small total number and quantitative changes over time, I will analyze this table in context of political climates that tolerated, encouraged, or intimidated the publishing of World War II stories about China and Chinese.



**Table 5.3: Publication Date of American Juvenile Fiction About the Sino-Japanese War**

<b>Date of Publication</b>	<b>Number of Titles</b>	<b>In Print</b>
1937-1939	1	0
1940s	15	4
1950s	2	1
1960s	0	0
1970s	1	0
1980s	4	1
1990s	4	2
2000-2007	4	4
<b>Total</b>	31	12

### *During the Sino-Japanese War*

The trajectory of yearly publications about the war in China is compatible with America's lessening distance from the Sino-Japanese military conflict—from neutrality to intervention to full participation. Thus, even though the full-fledged war between Japan and China broke out in 1937, only three titles were published before 1941, but the number mushroomed from 1942 through 1946 with 13 titles, which was part of the boom of juvenile novels, including many popular series of battle stories, set in the Pacific theatre. The 16 war novels produced before and during the 1940s are quite unusual. Unlike what later researchers such as Mingshui Cai (1994) lamented about the excessive attention paid to ancient China and cultural traditions in fictional writing for youth, the limited number of wartime titles constitutes a unique body of juvenile novels with intense focus on contemporary Chinese issues, a phenomenon that did not recur.

### *During the Cold War*

After 1946, juvenile novels focusing on the Sino-Japanese War all but disappeared. It was as if the moment China finished its short-term role as an American ally in war, it became much less interesting and marketable to help American young people imagine Chinese experience during World War II. On the other hand, during these early postwar years, American publishers continued to provide juvenile literature—fiction and nonfiction—about World War II set on the

American home front, in some other parts of the Asia Pacific, and in Europe. *Five Chimneys*, a memoir of a Hungarian woman who was imprisoned in Auschwitz, was translated and published for a young audience in 1947; Anne Frank's diary was published in English in 1952, with an introduction by Eleanor Roosevelt; and the same year, Claire Huchet Bishop published *Twenty and Ten*, a juvenile novel about ten Jewish children in hiding in France during the war.

It appears that the Sino-Japanese War had ceased to be an interesting topic to children's publishers. This was further complicated by the first half of the 1950s, which saw an especially disagreeable climate for topics relating to modern China. One of the political consequences of the Sino-Japanese conflict was that the Chinese Communist Party expanded its membership and power during the years of World War II (Van Slyke, 2001). In the subsequent civil war (1946-49), the CCP defeated Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist Party and became the ruling party of the Chinese government. The Korean War (1950-53) saw Chinese and American soldiers fighting each other and eventually led to the establishment of yet another Communist regime in North Korea. In 1951 and 1952, the U.S. signed several peace treaties with Japan, making it a much needed collaborator to contain the communist threat in Asia (Barnhart, 1999).

Studies have told us how, during the early hysteria of the Cold War, "numerous China experts" were accused of being Communist sympathizers and "had their careers derailed, their reputations tarnished, and their access to the media restricted" (Klein, 2003, p. 34). Beginning in 1949, Pearl Buck was "periodically" accused of disloyalty, despite her declaration of being anti-Communist "to the last drop of [her] blood" (Conn, 1996, p. 317). With her literary reputation shrinking to the vanishing point and her voice kept out of the public sphere of foreign policy debates, according to Klein (2003), Buck "retreated into the private, traditionally female sphere of the family" and, through her Pennsylvania-based Welcome House, promoted trans-racial

adoption as a practical means of achieving racial harmony on a global scale (p. 178-179). In 1950, Owen Lattimore, brother of children's author Eleanor Frances Lattimore and a leading authority on central Asia and the Far East, was accused of being a Russian spy by Senator Joseph McCarthy and was not exonerated until 1955 ("Owen Lattimore," 2003).

Youth materials were not left out of this ideological combat zone. As Christine Jenkins' investigation (2001) of Cold War censorship in the years from 1946 to 1955 showed, American librarians serving young people had to adopt various strategies to defend their choice of allegedly "pro-Communist" books. Only seven juvenile novels about the Sino-Japanese War were published in the U.S. from the 1950s to the 1980s. From the 1950s I located two titles, set in wartime China and written by Newbery-winning authors Elizabeth Foreman Lewis and Meindert DeJong respectively. The timing of the two books is intriguing. According to the *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, DeJong wrote *The House of Sixty Fathers* in China, where he spent three years during World War II as historian for the American Composite Wing of the Fourteenth Air Force, but did not get his manuscript published until 1956. The reason quoted was that "the story was considered too realistic and too harsh for a children's book" (Kibler, 1986).

The cruelty and horror of the war in China was not totally absent in works of the 1940s published for youth, although few could tell it as grippingly as DeJong did. Could it also be that, after missing the "golden time" for Sino-Japanese War novels, his publisher had to wait for a "safer" moment? Harper & Brothers announced the title under "A preview of Harper highlights for 1952" in *The Horn Book Magazine* as early as February 1952: "[DeJong] is working on *The House of Sixty Fathers*, the moving and beautiful story of a boy caught up in war. Tien Pao happens to be Chinese, but his story is a universal one" ("A Preview," 1952, emphases mine).

Notice how the wording suggests an attempt to distract us from the specific identity of Tien Pao as a Chinese.

It is unclear if Lewis, too, had to wait for many years before *To Beat a Tiger, One Needs a Brother's Help* (1953), a young adult novel about refugee boys in wartime Shanghai, could be published. There was an 11 years' gap between the publication date of this new title and that of her last work—*When the Typhoon Blows*, another war novel set in China and published in 1942. On the last page of *To Beat a Tiger*, one boy who survives the war makes a vague anti-Communist comment, which could have given the book a passport to publication in the middle of the McCarthy era.

DeJong's critical and commercial success with *The House of Sixty Fathers*, a Newbery Honor winner still in print today, should have reopened space for Sino-Japanese War novels and anticipated a new surge of interest in this topic and possibly in realistic Chinese topics as well. This did not happen. For several decades to come, the brilliance of *The House* was the last light shone on ethnic Chinese experience during World War II for young American readers. DeJong's book was wedged between the end of the McCarthy era and rising new tensions between the United States and Communist countries (Sputnik was launched by the Soviet Union in 1957). The Sino-U.S. relationship continued to worsen, and America signed a new U.S.-Japan security agreement in 1960 to strengthen that mutual tie.

After a complete silence in the 1960s, Earle Rice managed to produce *Tiger, Lion, Hawk* (1977), the only children's fiction about the Sino-Japanese War we have in the 1970s. This is a quick-read combat story featuring U.S. fighter pilots in the China-Burma-India theatre during World War II. If it was the author's intention to divert readers' attention from China and from the Sino-Japanese War, he achieved his goal. *Tiger, Lion, Hawk* gives so little information about

Chinese involvement in the war that young readers with no background knowledge could finish this book without realizing that China was at war against Japan. The beginning of the book, for example, mentions the *Panay* Incident, in which Japanese warplanes sank the U.S. Navy's gunboat in 1937, but avoids providing the location of the Incident, Nanjing, China, and the context of the incident—it happened during the bloody Sino-Japanese War, on the day before China's capital city fell.

The four titles in the 1980s had little to do with American authors. J.G. Ballard's *Empire of the Sun* (1984) and Michael Morpurgo's *King of the Cloud Forests* (1988) were first published in Britain, and *The Bombers' Moon* (1985) was written by Betty Vander Els, a Canadian author. The fourth one, with an alarming title of *Little Red*—which is no more related to Communism than the controversial Caldecott Honor Book *The Two Reds* published in 1950—was Pearl Buck's old short story written in 1945, illustrated and republished in 1988.

### ***After the Cold War***

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, ethnic Chinese wartime experience was no longer a politically risky topic. However, Table 5.3 shows that there was no major increase in the reflection of this history in American juvenile fiction from 1990 on (a total of eight titles by 2007). The absence of information about the Sino-Japanese War in mainstream media, popular culture, and school curriculum for at least four decades led to American amnesia of that history. Postwar generations grew up in a society which offered little information to trigger their interest in the topic (and the disconnection with modern China worsened when its Communist regime closed the door to Westerners from 1950 till the end of the 1970s). Authors from these generations thought of obtaining, second-hand, information from people who had experienced the war, as we have seen in *Remember World War II: Kids Who Survived Tell Their Story* (2005).

However, it does not seem to have occurred to them to interview Chinese Americans. It was no accident that, among authors of the eight titles dated from 1990 to 2007, all were born before 1945 and at least five titles were based on the childhood experiences of those who lived through not only World War II but also the Cold War to tell their stories at a more welcome moment.

Iris Chang's bestselling adult nonfiction about the Nanjing massacre, released in 1997, has left its mark on the juvenile novels relating to the Sino-Japanese War published afterwards, even though the number of books is small and none has accepted the challenge of telling a story about Japanese war atrocities to a young audience in an honest and sensitive manner. *Chinese Cinderella and the Secret Dragon Society* (Mah, 2005) makes a brief mention in the "Historical Note" of Japanese biological warfare, a topic to which Chang also draws public attention. One protagonist in *Mismatch* even speaks of Iris Chang's book in conversation (Namioka, 2006, p. 46).

### **Authorship**

The most prominent question that arises from a tabulation of the ethnic and racial background of all authors is that Chinese Americans remained almost invisible among the creators of juvenile fiction about World War II in China, a history that has had a profound impact on ethnic Chinese people in mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, other Asian areas invaded by Japan, and the United States. Except for Yee Chiang's *The Men of the Burma Road* (1942), first published in London and republished by the New York-based Transatlantic Arts for the American market, ethnic Chinese did not start writing war novels for American youth until after 1990.

**Table 5.4: The Authorship of American Juvenile Fiction About the Sino-Japanese War**

Date of Publication	Number of Titles	Ethnic/Racial Background				Gender	
		Non-Chinese Americans	British & Canadian	Chinese Americans	Background Unclear	M	F
1937-1939	1	17	/	<b>1</b>	1	13	17
1940s	15						
1950s	2						
1960s	0						
1970s	1						
1980s	4	1	3	/	/		
1990s	4	2	/	<b>6</b>	/		
2000-2007	4						
<b>Total</b>	31						

Note:

1. Illustrators, unless they illustrated their own texts, are not included in this table.
2. The total number of authors is 30, due to the situations of multiple works under one author and co-authored works.

The lack of Chinese voices during the war years can be easily explained by the history of Chinese American youth literature: as latecomers to literature about their own cultural group, and even later to the world of youth literature, pioneer Chinese authors during the war years are underrepresented in a list that focuses on fictional writing for youth. However, after having been ushered into the literary circle, their continual “silence” or even “nonchalance” about storytelling the war for youth is unsettling, especially viewed in respect of other ethnic, racial, and cultural groups’ active telling and retelling of their war history.

Having discussed the general chilling effect of the Cold War on topics concerning modern China, this section inspects more closely how ethnic Chinese people in particular were impacted, to better understand their postwar publications. I argue that the Cold War successfully manipulated writers' choices of subject, to the point of suppressing the voices of Chinese Americans about a recent and most significant event for their people.

Ethnic Chinese were more vulnerable than whites during the Cold War hysteria, when the Chinese community was contained, not behind any visible barbed wire, but within a tangible boundary delineated by ethnic lines and constructed by political anxiety. During the Pacific War, Chinese immigrants and Chinese Americans enjoyed a brief period of ease about their ethnic and national identity and of pride in their loyalty to both their country of origin and country of residence. After China became the new Communist threat in 1949 and fought against the United States in the Korean War (1950-1953), Chinese Americans found themselves the suspects of an uneasy connection which America always made between Asian countries and "unassimilable" Asian Americans, but not between European countries and European Americans once the latter were merged into the white majority. Takaki (1990) and Chang's (2004) historical account of Chinatown in the 1950s depicts what feels like a *déjà vu* of Japanese Americans' experience during World War II. In 1950, Congress passed the McCarran Internal Security Act, which provided for the internment of Communists during a national emergency. In 1952 the federal government allocated \$775,000 to establish six internment camps in five states, threatening the Chinese American community with mass incarceration. In 1956 federal agents raided Chinatowns on the East and West coasts to track down suspected Communists. The government also created the "Confession Program," which involved intelligence gathering and loyalty tests, to help investigate and deport supporters of the Chinese Communist government and "subversives." In a famous case of the McCarthy-era "Red hunting," the U.S. government deported Dr. TSIEN Hsue-shen, a top Chinese aerodynamicist who made substantial contributions to both American science and national defense during World War II, to mainland China in 1955. (Takaki, 1990, p. 415-416; Chang, 2004, p. 247-256, 451). Chang (2004) commented on the aftermath of the 1956 mass inquisition of the Chinese community, "[I]ts shadow remained over



Chinatown, instilling in the Chinese American community a terror of government authority and a legacy of silence" (p. 252).

The legacy of silence, however, clashed with the presence of Chinese American authors who had been actively making their voices heard between 1935 and 1946, and the resulting compromise in Chinese American literature was a narrowed space for ethnic Chinese to present their culture and experience. The Cold War forced Chinese in America to distance themselves from topics which were dangerously close to contemporary Chinese society lest they were seen as being attached to Red China. Even stories about the Pacific War, an occasion where Chinese Americans proved their "Americanness," did not seem to be the best tales to tell at a time when Chinese were associated with the enemy country and Japan had turned into America's important ally to curb the Communist threat in Asia.

Of the wartime authors who had produced books for youth, some became silent; others who continued writing seemed to be subdued. Mai-mai Sze published her last fiction in 1948, before changing her focus to Chinese painting. Her *Silent Children* was one of the few adult war novels written by a Chinese American between 1947 and 1990. She set her story about homeless children struggling for survival during the Pacific War in an unnamed country. After the war, Helena Kuo translated two novels from Chinese to English, fell silent for three decades, and published her last book, *Dong Kingman's Watercolors* (1981), on painting. Yee Chiang, who had published, while in Britain, several self-illustrated juvenile novels featuring Chinese before he immigrated to America in 1955, concentrated on travel writings only and never wrote fiction again. His travel book series, all entitled "The Silent Traveller in..." conveys a quiet sense of nostalgia and homesickness, feelings he did not openly express "for fear of persecution during the McCarthy era" (Zheng, 2005, p. 42). Chiang's passion and emotion for his birth country

erupted in his last book *China Revisited, after Forty-Two Years* (1977), written between Chiang's two visits to China enabled by the Chinese American rapprochement of 1972 (Zheng, 2005). Adet Lin produced no more novels after the war, and closed her writing career with a collection of Chinese folktales published in 1961. Anor Lin was one of the few Chinese authors who revisited contemporary China in postwar literature. After a novel set in World War II and another set in the Chinese civil war, however, she left the United States and settled in Hong Kong in 1962. The only one who enjoyed prosperity during the Cold War was Jade Snow Wong, whose autobiography of 1945 was translated into several Asian languages by the U.S. State Department to spread a minority's success story praising American democracy and opportunities (Kim, 1982, p. 60). She did not publish again until after 1970.

One wonders why the theme of anti-Communism did not flourish in Chinese American literature. As Ling acutely pointed out, after the 1950s the political climate in America was ripe for anti-Chinese books (1990, p. 85). A few immigrant adult authors, including LIN Yutang and Eileen Chang (张爱玲), made their anti-Communist stance known early, and were hence resented by the Chinese government and were never allowed to return to mainland China. For those Chinese Americans who had family and relatives in mainland China—two large waves of Chinese immigrants arrived around 1949 and in the 1960s to flee the Communist regime (Chang, 2004, p. 262), almost certainly leaving relatives behind—this was a precarious choice of writing topic. McCarthy's Red Hunting was perhaps no match for China's hunt for "counter-revolutionists," "rightists," "capitalists," and "internal and external enemies" lasting decades until the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976. During that period, numerous families were charged with treachery and punished for the "crime" of having a relative in Taiwan or Western countries. To gain fame by publishing anti-Communist books in the United States would have spelled

disaster for the relatives in China. The apprehension lingered after China reestablished its tie with the United States in 1972. Before Bette Bao Lord wrote *Spring Moon* (1981), an adult novel set against the backdrop of the cultural and political upheavals in modern China, her original plan was a nonfiction account of a trip she took to China in 1973. She switched to the genre of historical fiction for fear of implicating her relatives ("Bette Bao Lord," 2001). Her first book *Eighth Moon* was nonfiction based on her sister's girlhood in Communist China and published in 1946, but she did not mention if that was where she learned a lesson in caution.

Facing restrictions left and right, few new Chinese American juvenile writers emerged after World War II. Authors of stories featuring ethnic Chinese retreated to a safety zone where they maneuvered without having to worry about federal agents' surprise calls. Stories about traditional Chinese social life and customs, stories set in ancient and pre-war China such as folktales, and stories set in Chinatown devoid of its chaotic political reality made up Chinese American youth literature published from the late 1940s to 1970. Books celebrating traditional Chinese culture had the double merits of meeting the persistent curiosity of a wide white audience about the Oriental, and of differentiating Chinese in America from those in Communist China, which was known to have condemned Chinese tradition and heritage. In fact, in order to combat Cold War damage to the image of Chinese Americans and to Chinatown business, ethnic Chinese in San Francisco organized an annual Chinese New Year parade that began in 1953 to render themselves culturally authentic and politically harmless to mainstream society (Yeh, 2004).

Books published in the 1930s and the first half of the 1940s had embraced a wide range of Chinese topics, including the Chinese revolution and the Sino-Japanese War. In contrast, after the beginning of the Cold War, military and ostensibly masculine topics were weeded from juvenile books about the experience of ethnic Chinese, at the same time when hundreds of titles

about World War II set mostly on the American home front and in Europe were published for a young audience. Wong's (1971) study of picture books published mostly after 1945 and featuring ethnic Chinese, found that the books overwhelmingly favored tales and legends of ancient China and stories of pre-World War II China, circa 1920-1935. Two of them were self-illustrated by Chinese American author Yen Liang, who was active during the 1950s, and two were illustrated by Ed Young, who had published children's books since the 1960s. Four books are set inside and outside Chinatown in America, and they are all "harmless" tales about the Chinese New Year, children's pets, and everyday business. Mei-Ying Liu's (1993) study of juvenile fiction featuring Chinese showed a similar pattern. In her list the three titles published in the immediate postwar years, *Li Lun, Lad of Courage* (1947), *Su-mei's Golden Year* (1950), and *Little Wu and the Watermelons* (1954), share the theme of farming or growing food. Despite the participation of Chinese American veterans in San Francisco's Chinese New Year parade to demonstrate the patriotism of the Chinese community (Yeh, 2004), children's books featuring Chinese kept a safe distance from the war. The trend of distancing young readers from China's political reality in fictional writing had been established once and for all.

Towards the end of the Cold War, Chinese Americans were the first to revisit Sino-Japanese War history in juvenile fiction—after white Americans had steered clear of the topic in this genre for at least a whole decade of the 1980s—contributing to six of the eight titles dated from 1990 to 2007. Once again, ethnic Chinese proved eager to tell stories about their people's experience during the Second World War, when the American society let them.

### **Subject Matter**

This section summarizes the main subject matter of the 31 juvenile war novels portraying Chinese and pays specially attention to titles that cover Japanese war crimes. Unlike what was

discovered about Chinese youth literature, American juvenile fiction shows greater interest in civilians' experience during the Sino-Japanese War than in the combat history. Terms ranking relatively low in the list of major subject matter of LHH in Chapter 3, such as survival, journeys, love and romance, and suffering, received the most attention in the American titles. The clear homogeneity of the racial, ethnic, and national background of central figures found in LHH is absent here, thanks largely to stories featuring the American military and Western civilians. The distribution of political membership of protagonists in LHH is reversed. Communist characters are a minority; and the Chinese military depicted in American titles is most likely to be the Nationalist Army. The ratio of male and female protagonists is much more even than in Chinese offerings.

In Lattimore's *The Questions of Lifu* (1942) and *Peachblossom* (1943), Ward's *Boat Children of Canton* (1944), Poston's *The Girl Without a Country* (1944), Lewis' *To Beat a Tiger* (1953) and DeJong's *The House of Sixty Fathers* (1956), young people who were separated from their families or orphaned undertake a hard journey to a reunion with family or to safety, sometimes receiving kind help from adults and at other times surviving by their wit, luck, and, in the case of teenage boys in Lewis' book, roughness they acquire along the way. This continues to be the main story told in novels published in the 1980s by two British and one Canadian author. Ballard's *Empire of the Sun* (1984), Vander Els' *The Bombers' Moon* (1985), and Morpurgo's *King of the Cloud Forests* (1988) all feature White children of missionaries or businessmen caught in the Sino-Japanese War/Pacific War in a turbulent China, repeating the themes of journeys and adventures, family separation and reunions. Though Chinese characters are peripheral in these three stories, they nonetheless depict a wartime China where threats of death, journeys of escape, and loss became part of daily business.

Adopting an unusual format for a harsh topic, Sanford's *My Friend, the Enemy* (1992) is a picture book rendition of two siblings' survival in a prison camp in China. Kathy and Dick, Caucasian children separated from their parents, are among the 1,700 POWs put in this concentration camp by the Japanese. For five years until the war is over, they live on meager and wormy food, and under the threat of diseases and gun shots.

Chiang's *The Men of the Burma Road* (1942) is a fictional account of two Chinese families' participation in the construction of the Burma Road—a non-existing topic in the Chinese LHH that I examined—built by more than 200,000 Chinese laborers, often with the most primitive tools, in the mountains connecting southwest China to Burma after the Japanese army closed all of China's seaports ("Burma Road," 2001).

Two stories are set in Nanjing, once the subject of headline news about the atrocities Japanese soldiers committed towards the POWs and civilians of this city. Buck's *Dragon Seed* (1942), recommended for senior high school students and older young adults, apparently because of its frequent portrayal of violence and rape, sets the story against the backdrop of the Nanjing Massacre and portrays a Chinese family's survival and resistance against Japanese invasion in a village several miles south of the fallen city. The book was adapted into a movie, released in 1944, and nominated for two Oscars. (As pointed out in Chapter 2, it was also adapted into Chinese LHH before 1949.)

The other book, Cormack and Bytovetzski's young adult novel *Underground Retreat* (1946), tells the thrilling story of an American girl, her British boyfriend, and a wealthy Chinese family being stranded in the city when the Japanese army attacks Nanking. After organizing some sabotage actions against the occupation army, they flee by plane, by boat, by wheelbarrow, and on foot, and finally settle down in an area of safety controlled by the Chinese Communist Party.

We do not know the experiences or whereabouts of Cormack and Bytovetzski, but they show intimate knowledge about Nanking under occupation. Written at a time when the feat of "the Good Nazi" John Rabe in Nanking was known by Chinese but scarcely reported in the Western media, one passage of the book describes Rabe, who was head of the International Safety Zone: "Wearing a swastika armband and traveling in a car draped with Nazi flags, he met Japanese insolence with Prussian arrogance and cowed the conqueror into giving him a little food for the hungry refugees packed into the International Safety Zone" (p. 140-141).

Two stories are set in America. Lee's *Nim and the War Effort* (1997), set in San Francisco's Chinatown after America has been provoked to join China's fight against Imperial Japan, is unusual in reflecting the sense of double identity which the Pacific War instilled in the Chinese community. On a busy day, the young protagonist Nim wins the paper drive for the war effort before attending her Chinese school as usual. Namioka's *Mismatch* (2006), a young adult romance set in contemporary America, illustrates how a war between Japan and China, after having ended decades earlier, creates barriers to the relationship between a Chinese American girl and a Japanese American boy—barriers no less daunting than those Romeo and Juliet faced.

### **Silence about Japanese War Crimes**

*Dragon Seed* (1942) and *Underground Retreat* (1946) raise thought-provoking questions about the portrayal of Japanese War Crimes in American juvenile fiction. The Nanjing Massacre, which was reported to the American public earlier than the Holocaust in the European theatre, immediately inspired literary creations and media adaptations. After the war, however, the incident faded from public memory and joined other major war crimes—Japanese BW and "comfort women"—among the best-kept secrets of the Pacific War. Their lack of representation in American juvenile fiction is a reflection of amnesia and unawareness in the larger society. All

three atrocities were not magicked away from American public memory for the same reason, although all were pertinent to the Cold War.

The Nanjing massacre, when it occurred, was not a secret to the world. American journalists were unable to present a full picture of the six-week atrocity due to their short stay after the city fell, but they captured the nature of the event from their observations of the Japanese occupation during the first few days. For example, a *New York Times* article dated December 17, 1937, the fourth day after the Japanese took control of Nanking, reported from Shanghai: "Wholesale looting, the violation of women, the murder of civilians, the eviction of Chinese from their homes, mass executions of war prisoners and the impressing of able-bodied men turned Nanking into a city of terror" (Durdin, 1937, p. 1). Durdin seemed to depart on late Wednesday, December 15, 1937, when, "[j]ust before boarding the ship for Shanghai," he "watched the execution of 200 men on the Bund" in ten minutes (Durdin, 1937, p. 1)<sup>1</sup>. Such early reports, incomplete as they were, gave the American public some awareness of the atrocities committed in Nanking. Since Buck had moved back to the United States permanently before the Sino-Japanese War broke out, she likely used secondary sources available in America to imagine and compose her *Dragon Seed*.

The Cold War wiped Nanking, as part of the history of World War II in China, from the American public conscience. Hitler was right about the frailty of human memory: in an American society of the 1980s one could ask, as he had done rhetorically about the Armenian Genocide, "Who, after all, speaks today of the Rape of the Nanking?"

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<sup>1</sup> Other American journalists who made the horror of Nanking known to the American public include C. Yates McDaniel of the Associate Press and Archibald Steele of the *Chicago Daily News*.



Unlike the Nanjing massacre, which was at least partially known by the public, Japanese BW was not so much "forgotten" as hardly visible to American historians until the 1980s and by the public even later. During the war, the Chinese government and doctors started to connect the outbreaks of bubonic plague in different parts of China with some "mysterious" recent Japanese air raids on the infected areas. The international scientific community, however, was never convinced of the germ warfare, due either to its inferior knowledge in this field or to its lack of imagination. Through investigations after the war, the United States found out about Japan's possession of BW technology and struck a deal with her: the scientific and technical data was sold to the U.S. government in exchange for immunity for Japanese BW experts and a pass on American integrity and medical ethics. Again, the Cold War was the main push towards the bargain. American intelligence was eager to obtain the data and to "prevent the Soviet Union from achieving any advantage militarily or in the scientific field over the United States" (Harris, 2002, p. 306).

American media was no wiser about the dirty bargain, a top secret sealed in 1948, than anybody else. From this point on, Russia's and China's charges against Japanese BW, even when they were quoted in American media, were greeted with skepticism because the information source was Communist governments. In 1952, when Communist China charged that the U.S. used germ warfare in the Korea battlefield, the *New York Times* was quick to defend the U.S., and, in effect, the "innocence" of Japan concerning BW during World War II, in two articles published in March.

All this has a familiar ring. In December, 1940, the Chinese accused the Japanese of spraying bubonic plague over at least three hapless cities. Tokyo's denial was readily accepted by Western bacteriologists because they knew that bubonic plague cannot be transmitted by sprays. Peiping's recent charges will be greeted with similar skepticism by the Western scientific world. (" 'Germ Warfare' Again," 1952)

Now that [bubonic plague, smallpox, cholera and typhus] have assumed epidemic proportions in some districts the temptations to make the utmost use of them in inflaming the Far East against the United States is too strong to be resisted by the Communists. ("Germs and Propaganda," 1952)

To this day, many years into the post-Cold War era, the strategy of discrediting any claims from China by labeling it "red" and thus trashing the whole thing as propaganda, conspiracy, and nationalist education is often adopted by the deniers of Japanese war crimes. See, for example, a recent article on the Nanjing massacre suggesting that the casualties in Nanking included "94 murders (only one actually witnessed), 243 rapes, 201 lootings and 34 fire settings and destruction" (Tanaka, 2008)—when in fact the estimated death toll fell into the six-figure range.

According to Harris (2002), the U.S. military tried covering up the BW bargain as late as 1986, denying that the army held any files on Japanese BW. In 2007, however, the U.S. National Archive was able to declassify 100,000 pages of Japanese war crimes records and to release "a selection of 1,400 documents related to Unit 731 and biological warfare experiments and attacks in World War II" (U.S. National Archives, 2007).

Unfortunately, the Chinese American community, including the waves of new immigrants arriving from mainland China after 1949, was no wiser. As I have shown by analyzing Chinese youth literature and oral narratives, for long decades most Chinese people were kept in a fog about the secrecy of Japanese BW.

The silence about comfort women—sex slaves rounded up from mainland China, Taiwan, Korea, and other Pacific areas into Japanese military brothels—was due to several factors. After Japan's surrender in 1945, the Allied forces ignored the comfort women issue in spite of their awareness of the widespread militarily sponsored "comfort stations." Tanaka (2002) argues that one possible reason lies in the fact that the majority of the women victims were Asians and were

therefore neither white women nor civilians of the Allied nations (p. 87). After that, surviving comfort women fell into silence, enforced by an Asian culture which prevented them from speaking up about the sex crime inflicted on them. More than forty years elapsed between the end of World War II and the reopening of the issue in the late 1980s by women's groups in Korea and Japan, demanding official apology and compensation from the Japanese government. All these years saw the dwindling of victims, many of whom took the pain and shame to their graves. To add insult to injury, during the Cultural Revolution, Chinese women who were known by their community to have been "recruited" into comfort stations were even accused of being "Japanese secret agents," were discriminated against, and were punished (Su, 2000, p. 126). Chinese scholars who investigated the comfort women issue after the 1990s also met with near-insurmountable barriers. For example, when historian SU Zhiliang took a survivor to an international conference on comfort women, a local official scolded the elder woman, "[S]he will lose our face in front of the foreigners" (Su, 2006, p. 82). From forced sex to forced silence of these victims, no wonder the world was uninformed about the Japanese military brothel practice, even though random raping by Japanese soldiers was a familiar topic in Asia.

The reasons why Japanese war crimes escaped exposure and censure after World War II are manifold, but they all led to the cover-up of these atrocities. I would suggest that World War II history in Asia was barely a topic of interest to the postwar generation—including those of Chinese ancestry—until the 1980s, when the war crimes were rediscovered, documented, and debated by human rights activists, journalists, and academics participating in historical research and a campaign to redress violated Asian civilians.

This helps us understand why, from the American Civil Rights Movement, through the Sino-U.S. rapprochement of 1972, to the end of the 1980s, poorly informed Chinese American authors

remained conspicuously silent about Japanese war crimes, unready to reclaim the history of the Sino-Japanese War—both as part of the modern history of China and as part of a significant history for Chinese Americans. The same time period saw second-generation Chinese American author Maxine Hong Kingston, with her masculine-sounding *The Woman Warrior* (1976), open a new era in Asian American literature, while juvenile author Laurence Yep, with his Newbery Honor winner *Dragonwings* (1975), broke away from the postwar tradition of telling "harmless" tales about ethnic Chinese and confronted young readers with the Chinese Exclusion era, a history he researched six years before writing the novel ("Laurence Yep," 2006). The 1970s and 1980s also saw the wartime experience of one ethnic group—Japanese North Americans—being recalled in juvenile fiction, nonfiction, and autobiography about internment in the United States and in Canada, often by authors of Japanese descent. Thus Chinese and Japanese ethnic groups both emerged, during the same time period, as victims.

### **Summary**

My search for American juvenile fiction set during the Sino-Japanese War revealed a disappointingly tiny body of literature, largely outdated, out of print, and contributed by white authors. Never being the legitimate storytellers in a white racist society, Chinese American authors seized upon the brief interest in Chinese topics during the war and actively told their stories, although the golden season was too short for them to produce war novels in the unfamiliar genre of youth literature. The Cold War manipulated Chinese American youth literature, which avoided the "wrong" topics, the Sino-Japanese War being one of them, and instead established the postwar routine of celebrating Chinese cultural customs and heritage in American youth literature.

The subject matter of this small body of American juvenile fiction is diverse, covering some areas ignored in Chinese offerings. However, both Chinese and Chinese American bodies of literature were time-stamped by the political vicissitudes of the East and West, and both leave a huge thematic hole—the remembering, representing, and imagining of Japanese war crimes in the Pacific War.

## Chapter 6. Conclusion and Reflection

This chapter will summarize the research questions that my study has answered and the implications of my research findings, point out what further questions have been raised, and end with a self-reflection on the way this research has impacted me. In order to understand the ways in which information about the Sino-Japanese War and ethnic Chinese experience during the Second World War were made available to young people from two former military allies—China and the United States—I selected information sources that were potentially significant to children and young adults. From print materials published in mainland China between 1937 and 2007 I focused on *lianhuanhua*, a popular reading format enjoyed by all ages (but especially youth) until the mid-1980s, and literature produced specifically for young readers. My study examined the availability of these sources, measured the historical accuracy of the war information in these books by comparing them with current historical scholarship, and, through literary and visual analysis, evaluated other qualities such as appeal and age appropriateness. I also did a case study with three Chinese families' oral narratives, discussing their characteristics as information sources about war history for younger generations. From print materials published between 1937 and 2007 in the United States I focused on juvenile fiction, a format and genre widely collected by children's and young adult librarians in America, reviewed by youth literature experts, highlighted in prestigious youth literature awards, and incorporated into the school curriculum by classroom teachers. I reviewed the publication and thematic patterns of these American offerings about ethnic Chinese wartime experience.

### Research Findings

The main conclusion drawn from this comparative study concerns the communication of war information to Chinese and American youth: who obtained the opportunity to tell, which

part of the war history they told—and in what way—were highly politicized in both countries. In China, the subject matter and main themes of war stories served the shifting agendas and needs that might or might not be shared among different political and interest groups, from the war years, through the establishment of the Communist regime in 1949, to the post-Mao era after 1976. The information needs of the public—for understanding history that has a continual impact on postwar society, for seeking representation and confirmation of their own experiences in media, and for healing from the trauma and shame of being victimized by war crimes—as well as the need to present younger generations with accurate and comprehensive history information took a secondary place. When the needs of the political elites were in harmony with those of the public or when censorship loosened, intellectuals were allowed narrative and artistic space to cover stories that reflected the public's concern, including civilians' suffering, war crimes, and contributions and sacrifices made by people from all political camps, socioeconomic status, and nationalities. When the elites' interests clashed with those of the public, authors and artists were restricted to portraying only those facets of war history echoing the ruling party's ideological orientation and leading opinions. Personal memoirs published since the late 1980s and the oral histories I examined present a picture of the war that differs from the dominant pattern in literary sources, cutting across party and class lines, and focusing thematic concerns not on heroism, patriotism, and the Communist Party's leadership, but on suffering and survival.

In the United States, the narrative space for ethnic Chinese wartime experiences expanded or contracted in a racialized society that perpetuated Asian Americans' alien identity. As Imperial Japan's invasion of China increasingly threatened American interests in Asia, eventually uniting America and China as military allies following the attack on Pearl Harbor, Chinese emigrants and Chinese Americans joined Caucasian children's writers, took advantage of the widened

political space for Chinese topics, increased popular interest in Chinese affairs, and published autobiographies, fiction, and nonfiction about China/Chinese in general and about the war against Japan in particular. Conversely, when U.S.-China relations went sour during the Cold War, Chinese Americans were made a politically vulnerable group and the Sino-Japanese War was rendered a sensitive topic. The result was a dearth of information in youth literature that could help ethnic Chinese to understand their ancestors' role during the war and, in the larger American society, amnesia about a military conflict with ongoing political, economic, and social ramifications.

The implication of this study for researchers and practitioners who work with youth and information is manifold. For scholars interested in methods and criteria of evaluating the quality of youth literature, my thesis on the politics of information for youth invites researchers to look beyond children's authors' personal endeavors and talent, and beyond text and images in individual titles. As an alternative perspective, researchers can seek to uncover broad patterns and systematic issues that can be attributed to larger political, social, and cultural forces. This perspective should be especially meaningful to the study of multicultural youth literature, where the quality of some titles has been highly contested in terms of an authentic and sensitive portrayal of race, ethnicity, and minority culture. Introducing political milieu into the debate may prevent researchers from decontextualized interpretation of narrative and images, and over simplified assignment of value tags to individual works and authors. Keeping sight of the political context of a title enriches our understanding of the problems and flaws found in youth literature. Criticism of misrepresentations, stereotypes, bias, and historical inaccuracies should not stop at the examination of individual titles, but rather delve into creators' concessions to



political and cultural pressures, and even reclaim varying degrees of resistance against the confining power of the political environment.

My study of a minority group's experience during one historical event suggests to students of multicultural youth literature that the problematic representations of Chinese wartime experience might not be a unique case, but a symptom to which we should stay alert for subject matter concerning other less privileged ethnic, racial, and gender groups. The uniqueness of the Second World War lies in its global scale, making a cross-cultural, international comparative study of its representation in literature possible. However, we can still expand our vision from the so-called four f's—food, festival, fashion, and folklore—in multicultural youth literature, placing events under a critical lens to reveal gaps and distortions in literary representations.

For educators and librarians who are the intermediaries between young readers and youth literature, this study draws attention to flaws in a much celebrated World War II youth literature, which in both China and America prides itself on many award-winning titles, classical works taught in classrooms, and household characters' names. Underneath the quantitative richness of this body of literature is a selective portrayal of war history, emblematic of the power relations among different social and political groups, and resulting in huge inequality when youth seek information in literature about their identity groups. The information inequality not only harms youth from those groups lacking voice in public media, but also does a disservice to all youth by facilitating tunnel vision and feeding bias. Until the day teachers and librarians who collect, review, recommend, and teach youth literature stop perceiving the war experience of some groups as significant “mainstream” stories for all mankind, and of other groups as stories serving their self-interest only, there cannot be said to be a real understanding of the role of multicultural youth literature for young people.

## Future Research

This study raised more questions than it answered. The raw data I collected include at least 360 titles of LHH, 88 titles of text-oriented youth literature in Chinese, and 31 titles of American juvenile fiction about the Sino-Japanese War and ethnic Chinese experience during that war. My analysis only began to articulate what information and messages are conveyed about the war history, age, gender, race, nationality, class, and political entities. Some of the most significant questions worth further content analysis include: What types of roles have women played in these war stories? How are foreign nationals, including American and Japanese military and civilians, portrayed in Chinese works? What types of relationships are formed among American, Chinese, and Japanese characters in works published in the United States? How is death portrayed? How does youth literature reconcile the cruelty of the war with a young audience? How did these patterns change over time and why?

A new direction of inquiry could extend this research from youth literature to other information sources accessible to youth. Social studies and history textbooks for K-12 students, children's newspaper and magazines, radio and television shows, documentaries, movies, the Internet, video games, and memorial museums are all important domains where multimedia information about the Second World War is proliferated. Extending to non-print information sources would address one major limitation in my study of Chinese data. By 1990, Chinese LHH, once the most popular format of reading for youth, had lost its grip on the dominant market; the year 1990 also saw Chinese youth literature heading into long-term inertia. However, Chinese youth did not live in an informational vacuum after 1990. On the contrary, in the post-Mao era information channels proliferated as communication technology introduced into Chinese families a plethora of new formats and platforms for entertainment and information exchange. For the past two decades since 1990, when Chinese youth literature failed to produce any titles as

influential as *Little Soldier Chang Ka-tse*, Chinese young people continued to be exposed, through television screens in their sitting rooms, to new media adaptations of old stories, daily news broadcast, documentaries, and shows relating to the Sino-Japanese War and its ongoing impact. School children have routinely been taken to movie theatres to watch children's films and "patriotic" movies, some of which may be about the war history. In cities where memorial museums were built, field trips to those sites—again for "patriotic education"—were common. Not all of these sources were sensitive to young people's cognitive and emotional developmental stages, but they made up the real media world where youth grew up, and thus are worth studying if we are to obtain an accurate understanding of the ecology of young people's information environment.

Today in 2010, the Internet is increasingly becoming the new LHH for "men and women, young and old" in China, although the elderly population is still caught on the wrong side of the digital divide. The aforementioned oral history documentary "My War of Resistance Against Japan" (2010) was the first Chinese documentary to be released on the Internet (the Beijing-based Sohu.com purchased the series), months before television broadcast, thus making it an easy job to predict the main audience of the show—viewers tended to be young, educated, regular Internet users, with access to broadband connections. The characteristics of the Internet open up exciting venues to collect new data and possibilities for answering new research questions. The number of times an episode is played is consistently captured and publicized. Viewers can rate the show, leave their comments, and debate with each other. (As of November 8, 2010 the Web site tv.sohu.com showed that the first episode, about the Marco Polo Bridge Incident, had been played 2,798,415 times, and received an average rating of 9.8 out of 10 from 9,340 viewers and 108 entries of comments.) On the Internet, "the audience" is no longer simply

the recipient of information, but can participate in the active creation, relaying, and dissemination of information.

Video games, seemingly in the pure entertainment business, can also serve as information sources and have not escaped the scrutiny of potential censors. World War II history is a popular theme for video games, among which is the much famed strategy PC game *Hearts of Iron* (2002). Made in Sweden and released internationally, the game was banned in China for purportedly "distorting history and damaging China's sovereignty and territorial integrity" ("Swedish video game," 2004). The real reason was the mismatch between some details in the representation of World War II history in the game and China's officially approved version of that history.

### **Self-reflection**

Working on this dissertation project has been a transformative experience for me as a student and researcher. As soon as I began my research for the project, I found myself looking at my own bias, misunderstandings, and ignorance as well as those of my fellow Chinese. At the end of the project, it was clear how much of my previous understanding about the Sino-Japanese War was a reflection of the messages embedded in the very books and stories I analyzed in my study. However, just as I was about to dismiss all I had learned as Communist propaganda, the study revealed to me what parts of my knowledge, even the part endorsed by the Communist Party, were well supported by historical evidence, not allowing me to stop at a black-and-white understanding of any single topic.

The most unexpected part of my transformative experience came from the "backlash" of trying to move away from bias, thus from the prevalent understanding of the war shared by many Chinese of the postwar generations. When I was a college student, I had the opportunity to take a Japanese class but never considered it. I took German instead for a simple reason: German

people apologized for their war crimes, and their Chancellor Willy Brandt dropped to his knees in Warsaw, Poland, to express apology and repentance for the Holocaust. For all I knew the Japanese government did not take responsibility for their atrocities; this was enough for me to harbor resentment towards their “national character” and stay away from their culture. The semester before I proposed my dissertation, I registered for a Japanese class. Hardly had I congratulated myself on making one big step away from racial stereotyping, when I met with a Chinese friend’s angry accusation: “What is there to learn about *xiao Riben* [“little Japan”, or Japs]?!” In another conversation about Japan, a middle-aged Chinese immigrant, an American citizen, rebuked me for being an obnoxious unpatriotic Chinese. Coupled with a Japanese seminar student’s angry denial of Japan’s bio-warfare attacks on China, the experience of Chinese stereotyping of Japanese people convinced me that a boundary-crossing research project like this one is of ongoing importance.

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## **Appendix A: Questionnaire for Interviewees**

### ***Biographical information of the subject***

Birth, birthplace

Father's name; mother's name; siblings

Birthplace: father, mother

Father's work; mother's work

Subject's education/schooling experience

Family of origin: special remembrances such as New Year's Eve, birthdays

Family of origin: cultural life (local theatre, Buddhist/Taoist temple experience)

Chores as an adolescent, favorite social events as an adolescent

Marriage (date, spouse, where met)

Children (names, date of birth)

Work experiences

### ***The Sino-Japanese War***

How old were you when you first hear about the Sino-Japanese War? What do you remember?

Did you ever experience a shortage of food and supply in your life? When?

How was your life impacted by the war? Describe a typical day of your life before and during the war.

Did you experience air raids? What did you do during air raids?

How was your schooling impacted by air raids?

Do you remember any difference about the town of Yunhe since the war broke out?

What is your recollection of nationalist soldiers? Do you know any of them? How do you feel about them?

What is your recollection of the guerrilla fighters? Do you know any of them? How do you feel about them?

Were you aware of Japanese collaborators or sympathizers in town?

Did you encounter any foreign people in town during the war years? Have you heard about them?

What do you remember best about the war?

### ***The Plague in Yunhe***

How old were you when you first heard about the Plague?

How did you learn about the Plague? Have you heard of it before the war?

What do you know about the Plague? How did you feel about it?

What do you remember best about the Plague?

Whom do you know was infected with the disease?

What was the symptom of the Plague like?

How long did the Plague last in Yunhe?

Were you aware of other contagious diseases that were going on in Yunhe at the time?

Did you attend any funeral of people who died from the Plague?

What was it like—any different from the usual funerals?

What stories do you remember about townsfolk's experiences during the Plague?

### ***The Wang's family during the Plague***

What is your relationship with the Wang's family?

If you are not a family member, how long have you known the family?

What do you know about Mr. Wang—birth, birthplace, father's and mother's name, siblings, parents' birthplace, parents' work, education, favorite social events, marriage (date, where met), children (names, date of birth), work?

What do you remember best about Mr. Wang?

What do you know about Mrs. Wang—birth, birthplace, father's and mother's name, siblings, parents' birthplace, parents' work, education, favorite social events, marriage (date, where met), children (names, date of birth), work?

What do you remember best about Mrs. Wang?

How old were Mr. and Mrs. Wang's two youngest sons when the Plague broke out?

What do you remember best about the two sons?

Describe what happened to the family during the Plague.

Who took care of the patients? How?

Did the family send for a doctor? What medicines did the family try?

Who helped with the family during the tragedy and the funerals?

How were you involved with the family after the tragedy struck?

How did the family cope with the tragedy?

Did the neighborhood/your friends treat you differently after the tragedy?

What preventive measures did you take against the Plague? Who told you to do so?

Were you quarantined? What was it like?

### ***After the Plague***

What was the biggest change for you in life after the tragedy?

How do you think the Plague has impacted Mr. Wang?

Why did Mr. Wang remarry?

What do you know about Mr. Wang's new wife—birth, birthplace, father's and mother's name, siblings, parents' birthplace, parents' work, education, favorite social events, marriage (date, where met), children (names, date of birth), work?

When and how did Mr. Wang's new wife meet Mr. Wang?

What was your initial feeling about the new wife? Was it changed?

What do you remember best about the new wife?

Was the topic of the Plague brought up again later in your life, with whom?

Did Mr. Wang discuss the Plague with you afterwards? What did you talk about?

Do you know what caused the Plague in Yunhe? How and when did you find this out?

Do you watch TV, read newspaper or other materials? If yes, have you encountered the mention of the Plague in Yunhe (or the Lishui County)?

Do you talk with your children/grandchildren about things that happened to the family in the past? What topics/what historical periods/whom in the family do you talk about?

Have you told your children/grandchildren about the Plague in Yunhe? What do you think made you talk (or not talk) about it?

## Appendix B: Title List of Sino-Japanese War Stories in Chinese (1937-2007)

This list includes titles of widely circulated Sino-Japanese War stories in Chinese fiction and nonfiction, most of which are available in both text-heavy youth literature and *lianhuanhua* adaptations. A number of post-1990 titles, with a modest print run but notable for their subject matter, are also included.

TITLE	AUTHOR(S)	
小铁头夺马南征记 [Tietou the little cavalry]	蔡维才	CAI Weicai
奇花 [A fantastic flower]	陈模	CHEN Mo
高玉宝 [GAO Yubao], various chapters adapted into multiple <i>lianhuanhua</i> works: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 童工 [Child labor]</li> <li>• 我要读书 [I Want to go to school]</li> <li>• 半夜鸡叫 [The rooster's midnight crow]</li> </ul>	高玉宝	GAO Yubao
小英雄雨来 [Little hero Yulai]	管桦	GUAN Hua
鸡毛信 [Feather letter]	华山	HUA Shan
两个小八路 [Two little Eighth Route Army soldiers]	李心田	LI Xintian
闪闪的红星 [Sparkling red star]	李心田	LI Xintian
烈火金刚 [Steel meets fire]	刘流	LIU Liu
我和小荣 [Xiaorong and me]	刘真	LIU Zhen
铁道游击队 [The railway guerrillas]	刘知侠	LIU Zhixia
小铁道游击队 [Young members of the railway guerrillas]	刘知侠	LIU Zhixia
雾都报童 [The newspaper boy in the foggy city]	陆扬烈 冰夫	LU Yanglie & BING Fu
白毛女 [The white-haired girl]	(originally a theatrical story)	
地道战 [Tunnel warfare]	(originally a movie story)	
地雷战 [Landmine warfare]	(originally a movie story)	
放牛郎 [The cowherd boy]	(originally a news report)	
红灯记 [The legend of the red lantern]	(originally a theatrical story)	
沙家浜 [Shajiabang]	(originally a theatrical story)	
野妹子 [The wild girl]	任大星	REN Daxing
永路和他的小叫驴 [Yonglu and his little donkey]	宋汎	SONG Fan
血泪“慰安妇” [The bloody tears of “comfort women”]	苏智良	SU Zhiliang
军中之花叶挺 [General YE Ting]	王春江	WANG Chunjiang
芦叶船 [Reed leaf boat]	汪雷	WANG Lei

三月雪 [Snow in March]	萧平	XIAO Ping
小兵张嘎 [Little soldier CHANG Ka-tse]	徐光耀	XU Guangyao
狼牙山五壮士 [Five heroes at the Langya Mountain]	彦涵	YAN Han
小马倌和大皮靴叔叔 [The little horsekeeper and Uncle "Big Leather Boots"]	颜一烟	YAN Yiyan
三毛从军记 [Sanmao joins the army]	张乐平	ZHANG Leping
血溅津门 [Tianjin splattered with blood]	张孟良	ZHANG Mengliang
扶我上战马的人 [The man who helped me onto the horse]	张映文	ZHANG Yingwen
白求恩大夫 [Dr. Norman Bethune]	周而复	ZHOU Erfu
南京的陷落 [The fall of Nanjing]	周而复	ZHOU Erfu
东史郎谢罪 [AZUMA Shirō's apology]	朱成山	ZHU Chengshan

## Appendix C: Title List of Sino-Japanese War Stories in American Juvenile Fiction (1937-2007)

- Ballard, J. G. *Empire of the Sun*. London; New York: V. Gollancz; Simon and Schuster, 1984.  
Widely reviewed in U.K. and in the U.S. Although portraying an eleven-year-old English boy, a child protagonist who spends three years in a prison camp outside Shanghai until the end of World War II, the novel was reviewed usually as an adult book and much less often as a young adult book. In 1987, it was made into a movie of the same title by Steven Spielberg.
- Bliss, Mrs Helen Cory. *Honorable Goat*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1940.
- Buck, Pearl S. *Yu Lan, Flying Boy of China*. New York: John Day, 1945.
- Buck, Pearl S., and Duane Krych (illustrator). *Little Red*. Mankato, Minn: Creative Education, 1988.
- Buck, Pearl S. *Dragon Seed*. New York: John Day, 1942.  
Set in a village several miles south of Nanking (Nanjing), Buck's bestselling novel tells a Chinese family's story of survival and resistance under Japanese invasion. Although an adult novel, it was read by American young people during the war years. The book was made into a movie of the same title in 1944, starring all Caucasian actors and actresses; and translated into Chinese and adapted into *lianhuanhua* before 1949.
- Caniff, Milton Arthur. *April Kane and the Dragon Lady ... a Story Based on the Famous Newspaper Strip "Terry and the Pirates," by Milton Caniff*. Racine, Wis.: Whitman, 1942.
- Chang, Margaret Scrogin, and Raymond Chang. *In the Eye of War*. New York: Margaret K. McElderry Books, 1990.  
Shao-shao, a ten-year-old boy from an upper-middle-class Chinese family, tells of his much sheltered life in Japanese-occupied Shanghai during the last year of World War II.
- Chiang, Yee. *The Men of the Burma Road*. New York: Transatlantic Arts, 1942.  
A fictional account of two Chinese families' participation in the construction of the Burma Road, built by more than 200,000 Chinese laborers, often with the most primitive tools, in the mountains connecting southwest China to Burma after the Japanese army closed all of China's seaports.
- Cook, Canfield. *Lost Squadron*. New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1943.
- Cormack, Maribelle, Pavel Bytovetzski, and Margaret Ayer (illustrator). *Underground Retreat*. New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1946.  
A thrilling story of an American girl, her British boyfriend, and a wealthy Chinese family being stranded in Nanking under Japanese attack. After organizing some sabotage actions against the occupation army, they flee by plane, by boat, by wheelbarrow, on foot, and finally settle down in an area of safety controlled by the Chinese Communist Party.
- De Jong, Meindert, and Maurice Sendak (illustrator). *The House of Sixty Fathers*. New York: Harper, 1956.  
Tien Pao is separated from his parents when the Japanese attack China. The boy witnesses the horrors of war, saves an American pilot from the Japanese, and finds a substitute family

in the airman's barracks—which becomes “house of sixty fathers” to Tien Pao. DeJong's gripping account keeps you on edge. A Newbery Honor book in 1957.

Hollister, Mary Brewster, and Esther Wood Brady (illustrator). *Bright Sky Tomorrow*. New York: Friendship, 1940.

Lattimore, Eleanor Frances. *Peachblossom*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1943.

Lattimore, Eleanor Frances. *The Questions of Lifu, a Story of China*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1942.

Lee, Milly, and Yangsook Choi (illustrator). *Nim and the War Effort*. New York: Frances Foster Books/Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1997.

Set in San Francisco's Chinatown after America has been provoked to join China's fight against Imperial Japan, this is a rare story reflecting the sense of double identity which the Pacific War instilled in the Chinese community. In a busy day, the young protagonist Nim wins the paper drive for the war effort before attending her Chinese school as usual.

Lewis, Elizabeth Foreman, and Kurt Wiese (illustrator). *When the Typhoon Blows*. Philadelphia: John C. Winston, 1942.

Lewis, Elizabeth Foreman. *To Beat a Tiger One Needs a Brother's Help*. Philadelphia: Winston, 1956.

A group of teenage boys, separated from parents or orphaned, form a gang in wartime Shanghai. Occasionally they receive kind help from adults, but most of the time they survive by their wit, luck, and roughness they acquire over the years.

Li, Richard T. *The Rough Journey, a War-Time Romance*. Self-published, 2006.

Lord, Bette. *The Middle Heart*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996.

Reviewed in *School Library Journal* as an "Adult Book for Young Adults." The novel follows the protagonists' lives from 1919 through 1989, and what happens to them during the Sino-Japanese War constitutes about one quarter of the length of the book.

Mah, Adeline Yen. *Chinese Cinderella and the Secret Dragon Society*. New York: HarperCollins, 2005.

After twelve-year-old Ye Xian is kicked out of her father's and stepmother's home in Shanghai, she is taken in by a kung fu academy and trained to secretly fight against the occupying Japanese.

Mazet, Horace Sawyer. *Eagles in the Sky*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1946.

Morpurgo, Michael. *King of the Cloud Forests*. New York: Viking Kestrel, 1988.

A rare fantasy title in this list. A fourteen-year-old boy, son of western missionaries in China, is rescued by the yeti (half-human creature in Tibet) after he is injured when fleeing away from the Japanese.

Namioka, Lensey. *Mismatch*. New York: Delacorte, 2006.

A young adult romance set in contemporary America. The story illustrates how a war between Japan and China, after having ended decades earlier, creates barriers to the relationship between a Chinese American girl and a Japanese American boy—barriers no less daunting than those faced by Romeo and Juliet.



Poston, Martha Lee, and Margaret Ayer (illustrator). *The Girl without a Country*. New York: T. Nelson, 1944.

Rice, Earle. *Tiger, Lion, Hawk: A Story of the Flying Tigers*. Belmont, Calif.: Fearon-Pitman, 1977.

Ruby, Lois. *Shanghai Shadows*. New York: Holiday House, 2006.

During World War II, Shanghai sheltered over tens of thousands of German, Austrian, and Polish Jewish refugees that escaped the Nazi terror. This book is a rare young adult novel about the survival of a Jewish family in Shanghai.

Sanford, Doris, and Graci Evans (illustrator). *My Friend, the Enemy: Surviving a Prison Camp*. Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 1992.

This is a picture book rendition of two siblings' survival in a prison camp in China. Kathy and Dick, two Caucasian children separated from their parents, are among the 1,700 POWs put in this concentration camp by the Japanese. For five years until the war is over, they live on meager and wormy food, under the threat of diseases and gun shots.

Slesinger, Stephen, and Frank J. Hoban. *Mac of the Marines in China*. Racine, Wis.: Whitman, 1938.

Sowers, Phyllis Ayer. *Sons of the Dragon*. Chicago: Albert Whitman, 1942.

Vander Els, Betty. *The Bombers' Moon*. New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1985.

For four years, Ruth and her younger brother Simeon are separated from missionary parents and herded about with their schoolmates on an odyssey of escape from Japanese air attacks. The wartime adventure, narrated matter-of-factly, takes them from central China to India and back to Shanghai, where the family reunites.

Ward, Marion Boss, and Helen Sewell (illustrator). *Boat Children of Canton*. Philadelphia: David McKay, 1944.

### ***Notable new titles since 2007:***

Moss, Marissa, and Carl Angel (illustrator). *Sky High: The True Story of Maggie Gee*. Berkeley; Toronto: Tricycle Press, 2009. (Biography)

A biographical story in picture book. Maggie Gee dreamed of flying as a child and went on to become one of only two Chinese American Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASPs) to serve during World War II.

Smith, Icy, and Gayle Garner Roski (illustrator). *Mei Ling in China City*. Manhattan Beach, CA: East West Discovery, 2008.

In wartime Los Angeles China City, a twelve-year-old Mei Ling raises relief funds for refugees in China, while corresponding with her best friend Yayeko Akiyama, who has been taken away to a Japanese American internment camp. Additional facts and rich archival photographs are included at the end.