Television in China: The Medium That Raises The Bamboo Curtain

by

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A thesis submitted to the
Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment
of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Arts

GRADUATE PROGRAM IN COMMUNICATIONS
McGill University
Montreal

ABSTRACT

When the Communist Party took over China in 1949, it imposed a form of national isolationism. This thesis deals with the role of television as the medium which has done much towards raising this "Bamboo Curtain" which had been drawn across the free-flow of intellectual and technological exchanges.

Television, a latecomer among the mass media, is analyzed within its socio-political, historical setting, and within the mass communication network of the Communist Party. An analysis of the contents of television programming also gives meaningful insight into the ideological changes that have taken place among the people.

Television has lifted the Bamboo Curtain and yet may turn out to be a Trojan Horse, containing forces neither fully appreciated nor taken into account. A projection of the effects which television may have in the future forms the concluding part of the thesis.

Résumé

Après l'accession au pouvoir du Parti Communiste Chinois en 1949, un état d'isolationisme national a été imposé. Cette thèse se propose de présenter le rôle de la télévision en tant que médium qui a fait beaucoup pour enlever le 'Rideau de Bambou' qui avait auparavant empêché le libre échange intellectuel et technologique.

La télévision, dernière née parmi les médias masse, est analysée dans son contexte historique et socio-politique, et par rapport au réseau de communication du parti communiste. L'analyse du contenu de la programmation nous permet aussi de mieux saisir les changements idéologiques qui ont en lieu parmi les leaders du parti tout en présumant qu'ils reflètent aussi la pensée du peuple.

La télévision a contribué à la levée du 'Rideau de Bambou' et pourrait cependant s'avérer être un cheval de Troie, impliquant des conséquences qui ne sont pas tout à fait comprises et dont on ne tient même pas compte. La conclusion de cette thèse est ni plus ni moins qu'une projection des effets à long terme de la télévision.

Acknowledgements

Grateful acknowledgement is made for the encouragement and assistance given to me during a visit, in 1981, to the East-West Institute, Hawaii University. I am most grateful to both Godwin C.Chu and Wilbur Schramm who encouraged me in my endeavour, shared many personal observations and material with me, and gave permission for their researches to be quoted in the thesis. I would like to thank my very dear friend, Killian Holland, who proof read my thesis and guided me through the final stages of the thesis preparation. Recognition and thanks are also extended for the support and patience of my supervisor, friends and fellow students in the Graduate Programme in Communications.

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Chapter One: Introduction

This thesis is about China and television and communication since the communist take-over. Historically, this can be placed at the time of the Communist Revolution. However, to understand this situation we will have to put it in an historical context - in other words, China and communication and the mass-media before the Revolution.

The thesis is based largely on available library materials, as well as various official and unofficial publications- newspapers, magazines, etc.; It also draws upon personal interviews and experiences. It makes use too, of an historical perspective with regard to communication, the use of mass-media before the introduction of television, and the mass-media after the introduction of television.

The Chinese Communist Party may have been changed by television over the years but this is not easily assessed; there were no statistics or studies during the past twenty years (television started in 1958). Major changes within the Chinese Communist Party itself linked with the use of television, have probably "cross-fertilized" each other, or at least had a

mutually supportive effect on each other, so that when Deng Xiao-Ping wanted to thrust China into the technological 20th century, he was able to fall back upon and to use the television already operating in China. The Chinese Communist Party has gone through changes over the past 20 years, and these changes probably reflect pressures and causes over and above television.

Marshall McLuhn, in his book, Understanding Media, says: "Television has changed our sense-lives and our mental processes. It has created a taste for all experience in depth....". (1) Jeremy Tunstall says: "Virtually every country of even a few million people has adopted the box-in-the-sitting-room concept of television, even though the box may cost more than a farm-family's annual cash income". (2) So the "square box", which eats electricity, and provides audio-visual messages, has enriched the whole idea of communication. It accelerated the carrying of the message, shortened the distances between countries, and brought about new revolutions at home. When this medium penetrates into every corner of the world, every sitting-room of the family, then it becomes the new tool of the bearers of knowledge and changes human relations drastically.

My parents fled to Taiwan, when the Chinese Communist

Party took-over China in I949, and I was born and brought up there. I grew up with television during the 50s and 60s, and I have watched the changes within this medium- the government supervision, the Western influence, the commercial influence, and the constantly changing content. Though Taiwan and Mainland China have the same cultural background, they have very different government policies, and television has been used more for recreation pruposes in Taiwan. But what of China? How has television been used there? What has influenced the development of Chinese television itself? What has it influenced or changed, behind that mysterious bamboo curtain which has been pulled down since the Chinese Communist Party formed the new government in I949? Has there been any change since the death of Chairman Mao? These are some of the questions we shall address in this thesis.

Available research inside and outside China

From the standpoint of the West, China has always been regarded, in history, as a country possessing a huge land-area and the largest population on earth, but more especially, as a country with a complex culture and a long continuous history. After the communist revolution of I949, China closed herself off from the

West. This meant that information on the media was difficult to acquire. This difficulty was further increased because the media were considered part of the "official network" which was carefully guarded. Because of China's long period of isolation from the Western world, the main difficulty for Western research has always been to observe and to obtain the necessary evidence and to measure the changes which have taken place. In spite of these difficulties, some valuable data have been collected by Western scholars, during their studies, within a multidisciplinary perspective. But making contact with reliable data sources has been severely restricted. Only after 1972 were tourists, even those of Chinese ancestry, admitted into China, and the accounts they brought back were mainly personal experiences, eventful, but with little insight into the real social-economic and political problems of China. (3).

Research on Chinese communications media may be divided into that carried on within the country and that done outside of the country. In China, television is a relatively new medium: black and white telecasting did not begin until the summer of 1958, (4) and its development was restricted for several years. This form of the mass media was held in suspicion by the Red Guards

during the time of the Cultural Revolution. They were of the opinion that television would be responsible for bringing into China, Western capitalist ideas and values. In addition, they felt that the whole television industry would be too costly. During the ten years of Cultural Revolution, the country was in turmoil, and eductional establishments were closed down, including the universities, and so, any up-to-date research has not been forthcoming. The main information sources about Chinese television are scattered throughout the Chinese newspapers, such as the People's Daily, Red Flag, magazines like, Peking Review, China Reconstructs, and Survey of China Main Press, and News Front, which are published in China. These, together with the weekly newspaper Dian Shi Zhou Bao (Television Weekly), published in Chinese, which includes all programme contents and broadcasting schedules, have provided a clearer picture of what is presented on Chinese television.

Outside of Chinea, the scholars interested in Chinese communication and the mass-media are situated all over North America, and in a number of European countries, such as England and France. However, most of the research done in English comes from the U.S. Much of the information going into this thesis comes mainly from

the following two places: The Center For Communication Studies of The Chinese University of Hong Kong. The most important scholar working in this institution is Leonard L. Chu and, under his direction, this center has monitored all the television programmes on the mainland. It has collected much information in Chinese and in English from many of the foreign visitors to China, also their information is the most up-to-date and is quite trust-worthy. For the most part, they present a primary data base, while also offering some analyses. Important for this thesis is Leonard L. Chu's "The Flow of International News of Peking Television and in The People's Daily" which deals with news programmes and television content; The second source of information is the East-West Communication Institute of Hawaii University. Wilbur Schramm and Godwin C. Chu are the most important scholars working here adding insights on the Chinese media situation. In addition, this institute has been the site for conferences on China's communications situation and media, gathering together experts on Chinese affairs of both Chinese and Western origins. The works produced by the East-West Communication Center are much more analytical in content than those produced in Hong Kong. Other scholars, such as Lynn White of Standford University, Vivienne Shue

of Yale University, Frederick T.C. Yu of Columbia University, Doak Barnett of Brookings Institution, Francis Hsu of the University of San Francisco, Fred Hung of the University of Hawaii and Lucian Pye of M.I.T. have always been well associated with this center and have published many books and articles.

The writings on Chinese communication from this institute can be roughly divided into two classes: a) books and articles about the socio-political situation and the way it has affected Mao's thought on the role of communication; the role of communication in the social revolution; and b) writings dealing more directly with the media.

Three major contributions within the first group are, Radical Change Through Communication in Mao's China, by Godwin C. Chu; Communication and Development in China, edited by Godwin Chu, Fred Hung, Wilbur Schramm, Stephen Uhalley Jr, and Frederick T.C Yu; and Communication and Change in The Developing Countries, edited by Daniel Lerner and Wilbur Schramm. Within the second group of writings which deal with the media more generally, Communication For Transformation In Development, edited by Godwin Chu, Syed A. Rahim and D. Lawrence Kincaid; Mass Persuasion in Communist China by Fredrick T.C Yu; To Change a Nation: Propaganda and Indoctrination in Communist China, by Frandlin W Houn, and Moving

a Mountain: Cultural Change In China, edited by Godwin Chu and Francis I.K. Hsu, stand out as major contributions to our understanding of specific media studies. Another study on The Press and Journals in Communist China, by Alan P.Liu, has given us deeper insight into the use of the printed word in the service of the Communist Party in China.

The first three books deal with the social-political situation within which the media function, and the recurrent theme is that of the Party leadership and its efforts to merge political power, the allocation of economic resources and the affirmation of Communist ideology within one single structure. Talk about this merger is continually presented to the masses by means of the mass-media, especially through television.

According to Mao's concept of communication, which is the socio-political setting for the media, all aspects of people's lives are under the direction of the Party. Continuous ideological indoctrination is necessary for social pressure and because it provides a unifying theme to bind the people together. Through a constant flood of messages from the media, as well as through person to person contacts, the people of China are reminded continuously that there can be only one correct way of life, and that only with the success

of the proletarian revolution is collective security possible.

Mao wants to build a China based on its peasants rather than the elite. He wants to remove the distance between manual and mental labour, between industry and agriculture, between city and countryside, rather than heighten differences by depending on modern technology, narrow specialization, material incentives or burdensome administration. Recognizing it is the man in industry, the peasant in the field, or the worker in the factory, who is seen as the basic building block of societal development. Mao appreciated from the beginning of his propaganda campaign that techniques must be created, developed and refined, to ensure that communication links are forged between the Party and the people.

Fred Yu, has analysed available information on the Chinese Communist use of campaigns, including not only a list of campaigns, but also generalized patterns and step by step accounts of actual campaigns. All these focus not on immediate issues but are intended to transform values and personality, and to make aggressively active revolutionaries out of peace-loving peasants. In other words, all these campaigns are designed to produce "new socialist man".

In contrast, Doak Barnett is somewhat dubious of

this interpretation, which views modernization as occuring from below, in other words, coming from the peasants themselves. He points out in Communication and Change in The Developing Countries, that the impetus for the major changes in China, comes primarily from a group of Party leaders at the top of a centralized bureaucracy. Nevertheless, he recognizes the real accomplishments of Chinese communication in the use of persuasive methods of innovation and propaganda. The response of the masses to Party persuasion is consequently explicable by the coercive elements within the system. Without the backing of a totalitarian political apparatus,Barnett believes, these techniques are not likely to operate with such seemingly communicative magic as they do in China.

Of the literary works dealing with specific media studies, that of Fredrick Yu, Mass Persuasion in Communist China, is still an authoritative source. This was the first detailed analysis of the mass-media system of the People's Republic and, except for the statistical data, is still widely refered to. This book was written in I964, and between this year and I980, there were no other reliable statistics available. (According to the UNESCO statistical year book of I983, the number of television receivers or licenses issued per I,000 inhabitants in I980 was 4.2 and in I98I this figure in-

creased to 5. These are the only current figures available.)

In addition to these books, there are a number of magazines published in China dealing specifically with the content of Chinese television. Among these are: Television Weekly, Radio-Television Broadcasting, and China Reconstructs. Other magazines like the New York Times; Intermedia; Newsweek; Esquire; and Far Eastern Review, which are published in the West, provide a critical or analytical point of view on Chinese media. Their general remarks have been helpful, though Wilbur Shramm's "What the Chinese are telling their people about the world: a week of the New China News Agency" is of even more vital interest because it analyzes the content of Chinese television. Finally, personal conversations with exchange scholars from China at the University of Montreal provided important details.

The Chinese Communication Setting

In order to understand China's television, we have to look at how the mass-media work, and how the Chinese communication system works, This means placing the Chinese communication system within its social and political setting and investigating the Chinese Communist Party's concept of communication.

The concept of "communication" in this thesis, is taken very broadly. Shramm points out, "When we study communication, we study people relating to each other and to their groups, organizations, and societies, influencing each other, being taught, entertaining and being entertained". (5) Lerner regards communication as the means of exchange and the measure of value in social life. (6) These exchanges take place through settled networks, both technological and interpersonal. In this thesis we will follow Levi-Strauss and define a communication network as those regulated paths along which messages flow in a society, between the source and the audience, in oral or written form, through interpersonal contact or the mass-media. (7)

According to Godwin Chu there are four kinds of communication in China: I) Informational communication; 2) Normative communication; 3) Affective communication; and 4) Value-oriented communication. (8) It is the latter, namely, value-oriented communication which has predominated in China ever since its very early beginnings. Confucius, (551-479 B.C.) advocated the use of value-oriented communication, through moral teachings, rituals, folk music, and ancestor worship, to change what he considered to be an unhealthy contemporary society back to the early Zhou dynasty. (9) In contrast, another philosopher Mo Zi (466-403 B.C.) who came from a more

working class background than Confucius, advocated a more revolutionary style of philosophy and change within Chinese society. He wanted to revolutionize Chinese society and remove social inequalities through the following of a disciplined life and universal love. (10) Since the influence of Confucius was so overwhelmingly accepted before the emergence of communism, the need for social reform was never really considered until the invasion of Western imperialism at the end of the nineteenth century and the subsequent emergence of the Communist Party. The Party opted for Mo Zi's philosophy and his revolutionary ideas of change rather than Confucius and his more traditional "back to old form" philosophy.

More recently, the founder of the Republic of China, Sun Yat-Sen, used value-oriented communication to change the Chinese social system, enunciating the "Three Principles of the People". But he had no great success. He employed communication to preach value-orientations and relied on the emotional appeal of nationalism, but made little efforts to mobilize mass participation.

It was not until Mao Tse-Dong that value-oriented communication was used as an integrated tool blending nationalism with the Leninist version of agitation and

propaganda. (I1) The result was a powerful instrument of persuasion and organization that reflected both the traditional Chinese emphasis on value-oriented communication and the coercive pressure of Leninist tactics. Mao built the new Chinese Socialist State on self-criticism, and mutual-criticism in a group-setting, to bring about his version of this ideological reform.

The Maoist ideology stresses the importance of people, as well as two-way communication between the people and the government. But according to Maoist ideology, only the proletariat are considered to be part of the "people". All others, such as landlords, rich business people, and the educated elite, must be reformed.

In his communist theory, propaganda and agitation have a general and permanent role to spread the ideas of Marxism-Leninism, to explain to the masses the policy of the Party and to influence them emotionally to support this policy actively. (I2) The role of the mass-media is to function as a tool in this process. Generally speaking, there are four functions: mobilization, information, power-struggle, and ideological reform. How the masses are going to carry out the Party programmes and policies is left to the groups to work out in greater detail, as long as they stay within the Party's

guidelines.

The major means for fulfilling this function of implementation are the small study groups, which have been instituted all over the country, within rural production teams, factory and mine-workers, government offices, military-units, schools, and within urban neighborhood groups. (I3) Everyone belongs to a study group, which meets regularly. As a result of the limited number of television sets, the use of this medium has been implemented in terms of collective ownership and collective viewing. It is reported that after the Cultural Revolution, many units, villages, street-lanes and industries, formed their "collective viewing-points". Organizing the people to watch television is regarded as a political duty for the local cadres. (I4) In rural villages, peasants sometimes have to travel two to three miles to watch television. Since peasants have to get up early for field-work, evening television is less popular than might be expected. (I5) In the cities, the situation is similar; people also may have to ride a bus or walk long distances to watch television. Thus, unless the people are required to do so, or unless the events are as important as the death of Mao Tse-Dong or Chou En-Lai, or as interesting as an athletic match between China and other countries, people generally prefer to stay home. Of course, this description

refers to the period befor 1981. After that, private ownership became popular, and television content was demonstrably improved. These changes will be detailed in chapter four.

Information on Party policies and programmes reaches the group through the mass-media and is quickly transmitted to all the members. Local cadres, as group leaders, function as opinion leaders and discuss and digest information in the light of relevant local tasks such as production campaign, family planning, or a movement to criticize Lin Biao and Confucius. In these discussions, the information coming from the mass-media takes on a degree of local relevance and helps the group towards the performance of its task, which is the implementation of the Party Programme.

The small study group has been employed as a mechanism for the purpose of providing ideological support for behavioral conformity, by requiring the Chinese to study a uniform text of Chairman Mao's thoughts, and by relying on the strength of assertions repeated again in the group setting, deviance is easily exposed and punished, and conformity is publicly approved. The Party expects communication of this nature to be effective eventually in changing the deeply rooted traditional values and beliefs of the large and diversified Chinese population.

While interpersonal communication in the group is supervised by local cadres, mass-media communication is controlled by the Party hierarchy. China's communication media are tightly organized into three layers, the national, provincial, and local, for the purpose of guiding the perception and behavior of her one billion people. The Party's Central Committee, through the Department of Propaganda, controls all the national media, including the People's Daily, the monthly magazine Red Flag, and Radio Peking. The Party's provincial committees perform the same function for the provincial newspapers and provincial radio stations. Except for local news, which varies from province to province, the same kind of information and views are disseminated by the New China News Agency (Hsinhua) to the entire population.

The process of news management at the provincial level seems to be somewhat less rigid than that at the national level. (16) Editors, as Party members of sufficient standing, are held responsible for the editorial content of the newspapers entrusted to them, and are able to publish routine items without seeking approval. There are two sources which keep them informed of the Party's policies and background events: one is the weekly study session during which the Party's latest instructions are discussed, and the other is a weekly publication, Can Kao Xiao Xi, which is a tabloid of four to eight

pages published six days a week by Hsinhua for internal distribution among Party cadres. It contains news about world events, both favorable and unfavorable to the communist cause, as well as foreign press comments on China. It occasionally carries a foreign wire service report on some domestic events. (I7)

Radio broadcasting facilities have increased rapidly to give the Party a powerful tool of informing the people, organizing mass actions and teaching ideology right down to the village level. The government began developing radio facilities for rural areas in I955, using radio-relay stations and wired loudspeakers, According to an official announcement of September 2I, I974, all provinces and cities now have broadcasting stations.

Since the Cultural Revolution, the Party has taken steps to develop a local print medium at the production brigade level to serve as a vital linkage between the national media and small groups. This publication is called the War Bulletin (Chan Bao), a mimeographed information sheet edited and put out by peasant correspondents in the brigade. The peasant correspondents act as opinion leaders in the village, disseminating information from the national mass media, eliciting local support for Party programmes, and organizing

normative communication through interpersonal channels in the village to sanction undesirable behavior. (I8)

The Introduction of Television Into China

Television tests were started in China in I956, and regular telecasting was initiated in I958. The history of colour telecasting is even shorter; it begins only in May I973. (I9) Its development was slow in the beginning because during the Cultural Revolution, it was regarded as unnecessary. Television thus did not become part of the Chinese way of life until I977, when the regime of the "Gang of Four" was replaced by Deng Xiao-Ping. Today, about one-third of Peking's families living in the city probably have television sets. Elesewhere in the country, in the workshops of industrial plants, in rural production brigades (a production brigade is composed of one or a number of villages), in schools, government offices as well as in every local resident's committee, there is a television set; some even have colour ones replacing the black and white.

Peking residents, every evening, have three television programme services to choose from, and each channel provides news, recreational items and special programmes. Mornings and afternoons there are educational programmes. On Sundays and national holidays there are more variegated services. All of these programmes

are prepared and released by CCTV, short for'Chinese Central Television', (one channel beamed to the whole country and another to Peking only) and a local television station.

The Thesis Plan

China's decision in the mid-seventies to take her place on the world's stage, and her manner of doing it, was inextricably linked to the confusion of the early seventies and to the deaths in 1976 of Chou En-Lai and Mao Tse-Dong. The chronology is complicated, and interpretation is hazardous. At the time, ignorance and confusion were widespread, and hardly distinguishable. Nobody got near to predicting the rise of Hua Guo-Feng, nor the rise, fall and rise again of Deng Xiao-Ping. Yet a grasp of those events is crucial to an understanding of how China, today, sees itself and how its newest medium, television, works.

In order to make sense of the opposing camps, some labels are needed. The West's favorite division into right-wing and left-wing tendencies is, however, useless for describing the Chinese political situation. Jiang Qing, Mao's widow, was generally described as ultra-leftist during the Cultural Revolution while she was called ultra-rightist after it. But one of Mao's own phrases, provides a key. It distinguishes between

'red' and 'expert'; 'red' means loyal to the Party, 'expert' refers to masters in their jobs.

Put simply, the choice facing the Chinese, both during the Cultural Revolution, and today, is the choice between ideology and expertise, between the radicals and the moderates, between pure politics and politics and pragmatism, It is concerned with time given to political education and time given to technical education, between keeping one's eyes fixed on Mao and looking aside at what foreigners have to offer. It is also a choice between class-struggle, in which all privileges must be abolished, and commercial competition, in which bonuses and perks can substantially increase a worker's wages.

The Cultural Revolution was a great cleansing of China in which the reds dominated politics, the economy, all cultural matters, life in general. In I978, the experts regained the helm. China in the six years since then is in tension between these two forces and this tension has to be understood in its historical and socio-political dimensions. For a study of television an understanding of these tensions is particularly essential since they have both inhibited and speeded up this medium's innovation and development. Since television in China has been used to such political advantage, it also recreates this country's political "shades"

in its programming since its inception. Consequently, the various power struggles can be read off from the programmes selected, the tone permitted and the amount of television broadcasting allowed. In a sense, television has become a gauge of the political fantasies, feelings, fervour or even fanaticism of the different types of Chinese Communist Party leaders. The development of television as a medium of communication cannot be divorced from their actions. More than in any other country an understanding of this total "situation" is crucial to an appreciation of the medium as a propaganda weapon in the hands of an utterly dedicated and committed totalitarian regime.

This thesis will therefore begin by placing Chinese communications growth into a historical frame-work. This chapter will trace the relationship between the Party and the State and how communications, in general, have gradually emerged, as a link between the Party's political ideology and the State's activities. These can be divided into five periods during which different media gain ascendance. Television is the last and was innovated during a particularly turbulent time when the Party's struggle for power underwent change. In chapter three we shall examine "The Growth and Organization of The Mass Media" in so far as there has evoloved an over all media policy for the different media in China,

e.g. the written word—national, provincial and commune newspapers, reference information, and Dazibao, and the audio-visual media—radio and television. The actual content of television in China is dealt with in the fourth chapter of the thesis and centers around an analysis of the news, entertainment and educational programmes presented on Chinese television. The final chapter is both a conclusion of what has gone before, as well as a projection of what may happen in the future. In this concluding part we try to show some of the ways in which China may be unwittingly affected by some of the Western values and cultural standards which the Party has intended to exclude, and how these may well affect China in the decades to come.

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Chapter Two

China's Mass Communication In Historical Perspective

The Country and its people

On the first of October, 1949, Mao Tse-Dong proclaimed the establishment of the People's Republic of China. The country is made up of twenty-two provinces (this figure includes Taiwan), and five autonomous regions inhabited by national minorities, though owing to the immigration of Han Chinese, the original national groups are sometimes outnumbered. The autonomous regions are Inner-Mongolia, Xingiang-Uygun, Guangxi-Zhuang, Ningxia-Hui and Tibet. And lastly, there are three centrally controlled municipalities: Peking, Shanghai, and Tianjin.

China is the world's third largest country in size, ranked after the U.S.S.R. and Canada which are slightly larger, and the United States of America which is slightly smaller. The latest figure for the total area is estimated at 9,597,000 square kilometers (3,704,000 square miles). And China certainly needs all this land, for it supports nearly one-quarter of the world's population. The latest census took place in July 1982, and it is reported that the population was 1,007 million. Population densities vary from ten people per square kilometer in the west, to over one hundred people per square

kilometer in the east. This large population must be fed from cultivatable acreage which constitutes only eleven per cent of the country's land mass.

Within China, a number of widely divergent dialects are spoken. The official "Modern Standard Chinese" is based on the dialect of North China and the government is promoting its use generally. The ideographic writing system is uniform throughout the country, and has, over the years, undergone systematic simplification. In 1958, a phonetic alphabet (Pinyin) was devised to transcribe the characters, and on January 1, 1979, this was officially adopted for use in all texts in the Roman alphabet. The decision of press agencies to use the Pinyin transcription led to the suppression of the spelling system previously used in English-speaking countries. (1)

China is very poor according to virtually all the economic indicators now in use. It is a rural agricultural country. Supporting 800,000,000 peasants who represent nearly eighty percent of the total population, and twenty percent of the world's population. Its gross national product is $424,620 million (1978), its income per capita is $460 (1978). Yet it has great assets: enormous mineral resources; a high growth rate; a huge and willing labour force, including many Chinese trained overseas and skilled in finance and trade; a confident

ideology; a sense of great responsibility; and, in large measure, the world's goodwill. (2)

The State and the Party

In essence, the organization of the State and the Party which emerged in the early years of the Communist rule, has remained unchanged. The thousands of elected representatives of the people to the National People's Congress meet annually to enact new laws or to amend the Constitution if they see the necessity. These delegates are elected to office every five years. Every five years the NPC elects a Standing Committee as its full-time executive authority. However, neither the NPC nor its Standing Committee is the focus of State power. That authority is held by the State Council, the largest and most active State body, which is headed by the State Premier (since 1978, nominated by the CCP) and several Vice-Premiers. The State Council administrates thirty-seven ministries, eight commissions and numerous offices and agencies. (3)

The other dominant force is, of course, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). There are other parties in existence, but they are effectively powerless. The National Party Congress is the Party's senior body and it is responsible for the election of the Central Committee, which in turn elects the Political Bureau, or Politburo, and the Politburo's Standing Committee.

This Central Committe has numerous departments and agencies.

The relationship between the State (in particular, the State Council) and the Party (the Politburo) is crucial, but obscure. In a formal sense, the Party is supreme. The Constitution says clearly that "the CCP is the core of leadership of the whole Chinese people". The working class exercises leadership over the State through its vanguard, the CCP. Actual practice is more complicated. The Party is older than the State (it created the State) and it is the repository of ideology and revolution. In China these are powerful forces.

The symbiosis of State and Party is most strong in the communications sector, where the State and Party act together. Information is collected, processed and distributed in ways that are both formal and purposive. The State Council exercises its authority mainly through the Ministry of Communications, the Ministry of Post and Telecommunication and the Ministry of Culture. Also important are the Ministry of Education, which regulates the country's substantial education drive, and the Ministry of Light Industry.

The Ministry of Communication has a presumed, but not a very real, responsibility for broadcasting. In practice, both television and more especially radio, are so much the concern of the Party that the Ministry

does not seem to be greatly involved. The role of the Ministry of Post and Tele-communications is more clear cut. It administers China's international and domestic networks of post and tele-communications.

The Ministry of Culture is responsible for film, theatre, publishing, etc, and is very active, although it also works in close collaboration with the Party. In film matters, the Ministry operates mainly through the China Film Corporation. In the area of publishing, it has links with the State Publishing Bureau, which, however, functions as a direct agent of the State Council and so counts itself as having equal rank as a Ministry. (3)

Social Communication in Historical Perspective

The concept of "communication" within China is different from that of the West, at least in so far as some of the methods are concerned. These methods are not limited merely to the more commonly accepted mass media channels nor to the latest technological supports, but depend rather on the systematic and shrewd use of blackboards, story-tellers, street-corner shows, study-meetings and hand-written Dazibao. Peking's communication system uses all of these together with the more formal channels of education and every form of "criticism", "struggle",

and "reform". The Chinese Communist Party, in a sense, has transformed all forms of communication into a mass distribution network. Thus, the way to understand the historical background of China's mass communication system is to examine various forms of human expression, and all the different ways of influencing attitudes and behavior.

The whole system is complicated and is interwoven with the Communist Party's politics. Its policies are shaped by the personalities who control it, and by the problems with which the Party is confronted. It is both an instrument as well as an outcome of the Chinese Communist Social Revolution. If we wish to have a general picture of the history of the development of Chinese communication, then a clear understanding of the interaction of all these forces is necessary. This requires a review of the growth of China's version of Communism and an examination of the most important and intriguing ideological clashes and power-struggles within the Party during the past sixty years. We must also scrutinize the effect of these clashes on the rise of formal and informal networks of communication. Frederick T.C Yu divides the development of the Chinese communication system into five successive historical periods. These periods have no agreed upon names, as in the chapter titles of an epic drama, but can only be identified by the dates in history that clearly

betray a shift in momentum or direction in the Party itself.

The First Period I92I-I927

The first period begins with the emergence of the Chinese Communist Party in July, I92I. The first Communist Party Congress was held in the French Concession in Shanghai and it held some of its sessions on a boat on the South Lake in Chekiang. Three officials were elected to take care of "secretarial , organizational and propaganda work." (4)

The first Congress concentrated on "practical problems" and had only enough time to "touch upon" such things as the necessity for a "Party newspaper to carry on propaganda work". But the Congress did discuss "the task of Party organs to propagate Marxism among the masses of workers through such means as publication of popular reading materials". (5) The Party at this time had no communication system to speak of ; many of its members were politically inexperienced and ideologically confused. Mao was not yet a leading figure in the Party, and those who were there had no revolutionary experience. Their greatest influence was on other intellectuals.

Peng Shu-Shih, was made the director of the Party's propaganda department in I924. He was responsible for

directing propaganda work within the Party, including popular propaganda, political propaganda and cultural and educational activities for Party members, and under his direction the Party's propaganda work gained momentum. Yet, the editing of the Party's publication "Xiang Dao Zhou Bao" (Guide Weekly) was entrusted to other people. Xiang Dao was considered by the Central Committee as a significant publication for political guidance. It's editorial policy was decided by the Central Committee, so that "it's work was not subject to interference from the Department of Propaganda". (6) The separation of power during this period indicates that even then unanimity did not exist among the Party's chief propaganda figures.

The present People's Daily has its roots in this early period. It was, according to an official Peking source, "the guide in the period of the first Revolutionary Civil War (1924-1927)". (7) Other important publications were Hsiang-Chiang Ping Luen (Hsiang River Review), one of the magazines published and edited by Mao, and Chen Du Xiu's "Hsin Quin Nian" (New Youth).

It is difficult to evaluate Mao's contributions to the development of the Chinese Communist communication system during this period. For obvious and understandable reasons, his role tends to be exaggerated by his official

biographers. Already an experienced organizer when he joined the Party in I92I, he formed a number of organizations, including the Hsin Min Study Group in I9I7 while he was a student at a school in his native Hunan. His work was primarily propaganda and agitation at this time, and many of his methods of revolutionary communication became common practice in later periods: wall-newspapers, mass-demonstrations, union work, disscussion groups, night schools or literacy classes for workers and peasants, "youth corps", and many others. (8)

Perhaps as a result of circumstances rather than choice, Mao spent more time during this period on practical insurrectional politics than on the theoretical study of Marxism-Leninism. He worked more closely with peasants, workers, and students of his own background than with the intellectual elite and as a result of this developed a practical approach to political and ideological problems.

In March I927, Mao published his now widely publicized article "Report on the Investigation of the Peasants' Movement in Hunan". He had much to say about propaganda in this piece, and he urged the establishment of "peasants' associations" as "the means of engaging in political propaganda". He wrote:

"To use those simple slogans, pictures and speeches for political propaganda is like sending every one of

> the peasants to a political school. The success is big and great... In places where peasants' associations are set up, such mass meetings have popularized quite effectively our political propaganda and mobilized into action whole villages. We should in the future make use of all opportunities to en rich the content of the simple slogans and to make their meaning better understood gradually." (9)

Many of the methods of "attacking the landlords politically", described in this article, were used later in the land Reform Movement of the early years of the People's Republic of China, and some were used against the "capitalist roaders" during the Cultural Revolution. One such restatement was the "High Hats Parade", in which "villains and bullies" were led by a rope through the streets, wearing paper hats bearing inscriptions detailing their crimes against the collective. Thus we see Mao's talent for direct action in symbolic gestures that were intended to "destroy the affect-oriented, hierarchical relations in the Chinese Villages, in which landlords were deferred to by peasants both with awe and affection". What the Party wanted to remove was "... the traditional patterns of relations...

> the humiliation of the landlord class was the first step toward establishing a new set of role relations... according to the ideals of communism". (IO)

The Second Period I928-I935

Because of strong military pressures from the "extermination campaigns" of Chiang Kai-Shek, Mao and his fellow "armed revolutionaries" were forced to retreat to Kiangsi where they established the

Kiangsi Soviet as the base of operations. This took place during the period 1928 to 1934.

The whole question of ideological indoctrination began to attract Mao's attention very early in this period. Many of the tactics which he was to use later had their initial tryout during these years. In 1928, shortly after the founding of the Red Army, Mao wrote an article on "The Battle of Chingkanshan", in which 1) he emphasized "political education" and demanded "class consciousness" for all officers and soldiers of the Red Army; 2) he talked about the need for purges in the Party, which he referred to as "washing the Party" rather than "ideological remolding" (a term he used later); and 3) he called attention to the resistance of "dangerous and erroneous thoughts" operating against the Party.

A year later, in 1926, Mao was able to clarify these existing "erroneous thoughts and ideas" within the Party, and to suggest some remedial measures in his article, "Regarding the Correction of Erroneous Ideas in the Party". His diagnosis: The various incorrect ideas within the Party, in the Fourth Army, were caused by the fact that people with peasant and petty bourgeois backgrounds had formed the absolute majority of the Party's fundamental organization and that the leading authorities of the Party had failed to engage in a

resolute struggle against such erroneous ideas and to offer the Party members an adequate education and indoctrination. (II)

Mao singled out criticism as one of the best tools for destroying "petty bourgeois individualism" and "subjectivism". The method of "ideological struggle" was already his prescription at this time. These early writings of Mao must not mislead one into believing that Mao alone was doing all the planning for the Party's propaganda. During this period, he did not even have full control of the Party, sharing it instead with other people. Most of these people, in spite of their political differences, were all experts on insurrectional politics and veterans in propaganda work.

The first All-China Congress of Soviets established the Chinese Soviet Republic in Kiangsi province on November 9th, 1931, with Mao Tse-Dong as Chairman. A month later, the first organ of the Republic was launched as Hung Se Chung Hua (Red China), published weekly at first, then every three days. This newspaper was available in all Soviet Chinese areas, and reported a circulation of 50,000 in 1934. Also launched during this period, in 1933, was Tou Cheng (Struggle), which became the official mouthpiece of the General Political Department of the Red Army in the Chinese Soviet Republic in

Kiangsi. It lasted until I934, shortly before the Long March.

The present New China News Agency also dates from the Second Period, having been organized by Mao himself in I929 as a department of the Red China Newspaper agency (Hung Se Chung Hua Pao She) in the Kiangsi Soviet. It accompanied the Communist forces on the Long March, in I934, to Yenan, sending national and international dispatches to Mao's cave office every evening. (I2)

Until the time of the Long March, the Chinese Communists reportedly were publishing thirty-four newspapers in their bases in the Kiangsi Soviet during the I930's. (I3)

The Third Period I936-I949

After the end of the Long March in I935 to the Communist takeover in I949, the Party pushed its propaganda on three fronts: the Communist-controlled 'red' or 'liberated' areas, the Kuomintang-controlled, 'white' area, and the Japanese-controlled or 'guerrilla' area. The Party also made a concerted effort to win the support of the Chinese masses and discredit the Kuomintang government.

Not long after leading the Red Army into Shensi, Mao took over the leadership of the Party and sought to change its Moscow orientation, attacking as Trotskyites

those who opposed the participation in the revolution of the bourgeois intelligentsia. Mao conceived the bourgeoisie as, "a bridge that has to be crossed on our way to socialism". Ideological struggle, in the form of criticism and self-criticism, was to be the means to cross this bridge. For this struggle he proposed a rigorous programme, called "Xiue Xi" (study). That is to say, the intelligentsia were needed for their abilities, but were carefully guided in the eradication of their bourgeois ideologies.

In 1939, Kung Chan Tang (Communist), a special Party Journal, was introduced as a study guide for the Party members and cadres. It was followed by another, Chung Kuo Kung Jen (Chinese Workers), which was intended to appeal to the working class. In these journals, Mao and other Party leaders published writings on the importance of ideological training for Party members. (14) The fundamental preoccupation of these journals was to express the Marxist dialectic in Mao's policy of the "mass line" in which "the methods of work of the Party must originate from the masses and go back to the masses". The policy attempted to transform the sentiments of the masses into an idea that both expressed the public-will and met the aims of the Party, in a version of the classic pattern of

thesis, anti-thesis, and synthesis. These inarticulate wishes of the masses, systematized and articulated by Party members in the light of socialism, were to be taken back to the masses who were to test them by direct action, and this process was to be repeated again and again, until they reached their most meaningful form. (I5) As an indication of the success of this first and prototypical brain washing reform programme, formally called Cheng Feng or Ideological Remolding, the Party was able to raise membership from 40,000 in I937, at the beginning of the Sino-Japanese War, to 4,500,000 in I949. (I6)

The official organ of the Party, in the early part of this period, was Chieh Fang Joh Pao (Liberation Daily), established in Yenan in I94I and published right up to the spring of I949, when Yenan was occupied by Kuomintang forces. The present People's Daily was first published in I948, in Shih Chia Chuang, and moved to Peking by the victorious Communist forces in I949. It is the official organ of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party.

Apart from these flagship publications, the Party published many newspapers in border regions, even under the trying conditions imposed by the Sino-Japanese War between I937 and I945. During this period the Party presses were burned and the so-called Kuomintang-

Communist coalition during this war permitted the Party to publish several editions of Hsin Hua Jih Pao (New China Daily News) in several Kuomintang cities during the period. In Chungking, for example, it was under the direction of Chou En-Lai whose formal position there was Chargé d'Affaires of the liason office. The responsibility of the N.C.D.N. in Chung-King was, despite the coalition, to attack the Kuomintang, speak for the Party, and win over the masses. (I7)

It was Chou En-Lai, who had organized and chaired a Committee on Broadcasting in Yenan, and in I940, had made plans for the establishment of a radio station and, within the same year, managed to improve the Yenan Hsin-Hua broadcasting station. In the summer of I94I, the station acquired a manual gramophone. When Chairman Mao heard that there were no records, he presented more than twenty of his own discs to the cause. More importantly, he asked all liberated areas to receive Yenan's broadcasts regularly, and indeed the Party relied heavily on this channel to keep in touch with these liberated areas. But radio at this time was not a principal instrument of the Party to indoctrinate and organize the masses in Red areas, since radio transmission and receiving facilities were few and inadequate. (I8)

In retrospect, we can see that it was in the border

regions and revolutionary base-areas, where they had used popular drama and other traditional forms in art and literature comprehensible to an illiterate populace, that the Maoist style in mass politics and mass culture grew to maturity.

The Fourth Period I949-I966

The first task which faced the new government, in I949, was to mobilize the people to rebuild the country after nearly a generation of war. The government developed a remarkably effective system of mass communication because it need to enlist the support of the people to achieve set national goals, including programmes of collectivization. The people were brought into closer contact with the Central Government than they had ever been in the past, and this was achieved largely through the development of this mass communication system.

The characteristics of this system remain unchanged: it continues to be both pervasive and penetrating, and integrates oral, informal and traditional means, with the more conventional methods of mass indoctrination. From its inception, the system has always been controlled by an elite group within the Party, be they "Capitalist Roaders" or the Gang of Four. There have been changes in its control, content,

and even some of its components, but always as the result of Party policy or Party political developments, rather than as the result of politically independent changes in the system itself. (19)

Thus, it is necessary to view the development of the communication system in the light of the basics of Chinese Communism and the political conditions in which this communication system has taken form. Following the Maoist dictum that "thought determines action", Chinese Communism alters a fundamental Marxist dogma which asserts that social change is the outgrowth of political and economic conditions. Maoists believe, instead, that attitudes are the key and must first be revolutionized so that they can act as the foundation for planned political, economic and social changes. Upon taking over the Chinese mainland, Mao declared that persuasion was to be used among the people "on a nationwide and full scale" in order that the people would "rid themselves of the bad habits acquired in the old society". He set this into motion in the form of a nationwide study movement (Xiue Xi), immediately after establishing the People's Republic.

There were four areas of study: I) theories of social development; 2) history; 3) revolutionary policies; and 4) the study of work or occuptions, dedicated to the study of production rather than class struggle.(20)

The methods of this were: the reading of assigned documents, small group discussions, criticism and self-criticism, and the preparation of one's ideological conclusions. Xiue-Xi was closely integrated with other mass movements in the countries, e.g. that for land reform; the Resist America-Aid Korea movement; and the movement for the suppression of counter-revolutionaries. By I952, when the Executive Committee of the People's Political Consultative Council passed the "Resolution concerning the Development of the Ideological Reform Study Movement of People of all Circles", the mass study movement had already become a formalized institution in the country. Collectivized production in town and country was routinely accompanied by evening study sessions in which problems were submitted to the dialectic process. In these meetings villains were exposed to public humiliation as described earlier in this chapter, and Party writings were interpreted to the people by Party cadres. We may imagine a perpetual night school, guided by Ai-Chi's textbook Ta Chung Che Hsueh (Popular Philosophy) written in I936 and revised in I947. It was written in simple Chinese and used popular anecdotes, old sayings and jokes to popularize Marxism-Leninism. Also used from the earliest days of the Republic were two magazines: Xiue Xi (Study), a fortnightly appearing

in the major cities and intended for the educated class, and Xiue Xi Chu Shi Ban (Study Primer), meant for those with little or no education. (21)

Mao Tse-Dong's thought was hailed by Liu Shao-Chi, director of China's communication system in 1949, as "the highest theoretical attainment of the Chinese people". Mao's thought occupied an even more prominent place in the study movement after Liu's fall in 1966.

From an organizational point of view it may be said that the Department of Propaganda was hierarchically organized and operated through three main publications. They are: the People's Daily, Hung Chi (Red Flag) organized in 1959 and the Chieh Fang Chun Pao (Liberation Army Daily). These three form a trinity of authority in propaganda, to which all other publications turn for guidance. What the People's Daily publishes is re-printed or quoted in Party newspapers and other publications at local levels. Its reports are also carried by the Central People's Broadcasting Station in Peking, which transmits them to stations in other regions so that the content of the People's Daily is made available to listeners down through the entire broadcasting network. Amplification occurs through repetition when these same radio reports are printed as pamphlets for study groups. On the local level, the media are expected to integrate these reports

with the local events and thus to countextualize national material for use in any mass movement of the moment.

During the period under discussion, the Department of Propaganda supervised national agitation-propaganda activities, yet it did not own or control the Party newspapers, which were under the jurisdiction of the Party Press Commission of the Party's Central Committee. It also did not operate radio stations or make films, these activities being likewise within the domain of the central government. Such separation of powers led to political clashes between factions and made it possible to use the organs of communication for debate about important political issues. For example, Chou Yang, deputy director of the Department of Propaganda and its Minister of Culture, attacked the Great Leap Forward, praised the "international standard" of art, and warned that radio and television should not always be propagating support for Chairman Mao. Mao, in his turn, published works indirectly damning his opponents in a subtle way, difficult to understand for the outside world. Since he limited himself very strictly to the discussion, in his somewhat enigmatic style, of specific elements of policy or general elements of dogma (Mao Tse-Dong's Thought), Mao never descended to naming his opponents. (22)

Mao contributed two important developments to the communication system during this period. In 1957, to keep cadres better informed of news about the outside world, he increased the circulation of Can Kao Xiao Xi (Reference Information) from 2,000 to 4000,000, arguing that such anti-Marxist information would serve as"vaccination to increase the political immunity of the cadres and the masses." (23)

Mao's second contribution to the system was the Dazibao or "big character poster", first used on a dramatically large scale during the Hundred Flower and Anti-Rightist movement of the 1950s. At a conference for cadres in Shanghai on July 9th, 1957, Mao explained the corrective ability of Dazibao in this way: "Will it be used in the future when rectification is unfolded, in factories for instance? I think it is a good idea to use it, the more the better. Like language, it has no class nature. Our vernacular has no class nature. We all speak in the vernacular and so does Chiang Kai-Shek ... The big character poster as an instrument favours the proletariat, not the bourgeoisie." (24) And in an article published the same year, he says that Dazibao, forums, and debates are "three excellent forms for revealing and overcoming contraditions and helping people make progress" at all levels and in all institutions of Chinese society.

We see from these pronouncements that Mao Tse-Dong, poet and principal exegete of Chinese socialism to the masses, has a profound attachment to the written word. He reveres the classical works, saying at the same 1957 Shanghai conference, "The Confucian Analects, the Five Classics, the Thirteen Classics and the Twenty-Four Dynasty Histories, have all been handed down to us. Won't the big-character poster be handed down to posterity too? I think it will." Such an association of the classics with the popular art of Dazibao may be interpreted as either Mao's attempt to democratize literature or to elevate one of the media of his own design to classic heights. Either way, we may infer that Mao Tse-Dong was himself not committed at that time to the introduction of television, in spite of its advantages in a vast land where illiteracy still poses great challenges to the indoctrination of the people. The future role of television in China's communication system needed to wait a little longer before being assigned. (25)

The Fifth Period 1966-1976

The period of the mid-sixties to the mid-seventies was one of intense and almost continual power struggle, in which the mass media played essential roles. It was the period of the Cultural Revolution, in which the Maoists wished "to settle the question of 'who

will win in the ideological field between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie." More specifically, however, according to a Red Flag article, it was the desire "to establish the ascendandy of Mao Tse-Dong's thought."

This intention was signaled by Mao's declaration during the Party Plenary held in 1962 that, "in order to overthrow a political regime, it is always necessary to prepare public opinion in advance. This is true of the revolutionary class; it is also true of the counter-revolutionary class". (26) Consequently, four years later the Maoists seized control of the communication system and waged a full scale propaganda war, unique in the history of communication.

Although his thought had already been given a place of honour in the Party Constitution by the time of the 1949 victory, his writings were only slowly introduced to the public. None of the twelve books prescribed for cadre training, for instance, included as much as a single article by Mao before 1952. At this point the study of Mao's thought began nationally, with his On Contradiction. Four years later, this was followed with the national movement to study his Select Works. The following year the pace quickened, and Mao's On The Internal Contradictions Among People, was introduced and in 1958 there was another national

study of the Selected Works. In spite of these harbingers, the full ascendancy of Mao's thought did not come until the I966 Party Plenary. This declared, in its Special Communiqué, that,"Comrade Mao Tse-Dong is the greatest Marxist-Leninist of our era...(whose thought) is the guiding principle for all the work of our Party and country... The most reliable and fundamental guarantee against revisionism... and for victory of our socialist and communist cause, is to arm the masses of workers, peasants, soldiers, revolutionary intellectuals and cadres with Mao Tse-Dong's Thought and to promote the revolutionizing of people's ideology." (27)

According to the Maoist chroniclers, Mao's writings had been condemned during the regimes of Liu Shao Chi and Chou Yang. Both of these were held responsible, as Ministers of Culture, for the fact that printings in I962 of Dream of The Red Chamber and Romance of The Three Kingdoms had consumed 7,500 tons of paper while Mao's writings had consumed only 70 tons. Between I966 and I968, this imbalance was more than redressed. In these two years,Peking issued I50 million sets of the Selected Work of Mao Tse-Dong in Han, Mongol, Tibetan, Uighur, Kazakh and Korean; I40 million copies of Selected Readings of Mao Tse-Dong; and 740 million copies of Quotations of Mao Tse-Dong. Unfortunately

for our comparison, no figures are available for the tons of paper consumed by this massive undertaking. (28) They demonstrate, however, that it was during the Cultural Revolution that "Mao's Thought" advanced to the status of an unchallengeable dogma and became the ultimate symbol of legitimacy in the Party. In a joint editorial on October Ist, I967, the People's Daily, the Red Flag and the Liberation Army Daily said very simply: " The history of the past eighteen years proves that only Mao Tse-Dong's Thought can save China."

At the same time, there are changes in the communication system; The biggest shake-up in the Party's propaganda organization and an almost complete change in leadership of the Department of Propaganda and the Ministry of Culture, occur during the Cultural Revolution. It also spans the so-called Red Guards (I966-I968) after the ousting of Liu Shao-Chi at the close of the Twelfth Plenary. These propagandists, called the "Roaders", Mao Tse-Dong's Thought Propaganda Team, were to be stationed permanently in schools and colleges. (29)

While the leadership may have changed in the Department of Propaganda and Ministry of Culture to protect the interests of Mao's chairmanship, no changes in functions can be detected and no new propaganda

publication were initiated, apart from the newspapers of the short-lived Red Guard. The changes in the communication system are to be found more in content and emphasis than in structure. They occurred more in the field of art and literature, than in the organized mass-media. Chang Ching and the Gang of Four made use of the traditional forms of art and literature, e.g. operas, plays, novels, and poster-art, for political purposes and in so doing made these media more important than they had previously been in the history of the People's Republic. (30)

Under Chiang Ching's tenure, revolutionary Chinese culture began to tilt toward a performance culture, as opposed to a reading-study culture, a change that probably could only be achieved by the wife of the Chairman, so deeply did it challenge the philosopher and political thinker-Mao, whose mode of communication had always been the printed discourse. Indeed, it is hard to imagine a purely Maoist television as anything but an oscillation between a newscast and a televised study session.

Chiang Ching was, in pre-revolution days, an actress in that most notoriously Westernized and decadent of Chinese cities, Shanghai, whose hotels featured cabarets and tango orchestras. There were none so pious as the Gang of Four calumnated for the suffocating

influence they had exercised over art and literature, which had been required to observe the so-called "high-great-complete" principle in the creation of main characters in drama. This means that the writer should start with a "high" point in the life of the hero or heroine, emphasize the "great" wisdom of the characters, and deal with the "complete" or "whole" success of the characters. (31) So, while it was Chiang Ching's innovation to encourage a body of dramatic work parallel to the body of Mao's writings, her attempt to direct it too rigidly ultimately led to her downfall.

The whole post-Mao period has been a confusing one since one might have thought that, having their great hero in Mao and the great canon of his writings, his pre-eminence would never be eclipsed. But this has not been so, and only now is Mao being re-habilitated as the father of the People's Republic after a time in the shadows.

From these observations we can draw out a few characteristics of media use and communication that are quite distinctive to China:

A) The Chinese have reestablished some important links of social communication by rather unusual methods. They have made it necessary for bureaucrats, scholars, university students, and other city people and "white collar" workers to spend time working and living with peasants and workers. This actually is part of the non-

formal education policy. It establishes communication links between persons and groups, who otherwise would have only generalized knowledge of each other, but whose assignments within the development effort are clearly related.

B) As might be expected, there is a high incidence of patriotic and revolutionary appeals, and references to Chairman Mao, in the development communication of China. After 30 years, rather special efforts are still being made to retain the atmosphere of revolution and nation-building, and the consensus of opinion which molds this atmosphere.

C) "Rectification" and "renewal" are important principles of Chinese development that are reflected in the communication arrangements. The movement must renew itself periodically. A worker, cadre member, or leader must stand back every so often and review his performance, be ready to criticize himself, and join in other criticism so that the whole performance can be purified of errors. This is the purpose of the sessions of self-criticism, the criticism of others, and the invitations to criticize through Dazibao. It is also the reason for the "remembering meetings" in which the older people recall the hard and oppressed past in order to view the present in perspective.

D) According to Mao, the major obstacle to development is the stubborn persistence of petty

individualism that includes, among other vices, various forms of selfishness. The notion that one should be selfless and learn to serve the people is by no means new. It is taught in almost every country and religion, but to try to exorcise a nation of its egoism and selfishness through the massive penetrating, and shrewd use of communication, with the conviction that this can in fact happen, is distinctively Maoist. How it will turn out, we do not know, but this uncompromising stress on personal change as an integral part of the process of development is uncommon in development communication.

This is, of course, a limited and inadequate picture of what China is doing with communication. But enough is illustrated here to indicate that an extraordinary amount of activity in development communication is underway in China. We must also note that some rather effective methods have been found to transform this energy into social change, and that China's methods are unlike those in other countries.

Notes

I) John Paxtox, (ed.) The Statesman's year-book I20th edition. p.346, I983 - I984.

2) John Howkins. "China: this society is communications", Intermedia, I982, p.I0.

3) Ibid., p. I3.

4) Chang Kuo-Tao, Autobiography, vol. I, The Rise of the Chinese Communist Party, I92I - I927 (Lawrence, Kansas: The University of Kansas Press, I97I), p. I5I.

5) Ibidem, p. I5I.

6) Ibidem, p. 408.

7) People's China (Peking), January I6, I954, p.I2.

8) Lee Jui, Comrade Mao Tse-Dong's Early Revolutionary Activities, (Peking: Chin Nien Chu Pan She, I959).

9) Selected works of Mao Tse-Dong, vol. I (Peking: Jenmin Chu Pan She, I953), pp. 36-37.

I0) Ibid., pp. 25-27.

II) "Regarding the Correction of Erroneous Ideas in the Party", in Mao Tse-Dong Hsuan Ji, vol. I, p.87.

I2) Remin Ri Pao (People's Daily), September 20, I977.

I3) "On Tactics of Fighting Japanese Imperialism," in Mao Tse-Dong Hsuan Ji, vol. I, p. I45.

I4) "The Role of the Chinese Communist Party in the National War," in Selected Words of Mao Tse-Dong, vol.2 (London: Lawrence and Wishart, I954), pp. 214-216.

I5) "Speech at the Chinese Communist Party's National Conference on Propaganda Work," in Selected Words of Mao Tse-Dong, vol. 5 (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, I977), p. 434.

I6) Franz Shurmann, Ideology and Organization in Communist China (Berkely: University of California Press, I966), p. I29.

I7) Ibid., p. 227.

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Chapter Three

The Growth And Organization Of The Mass Media In China

Media Policy

The importance of communication in the attempt to build a communist China is evident from the late Chairman Mao Tse-Dong's talk in 1943:

> "We should go to the masses and learn from them, synthesize their experience into better, articulated principles and methods, then do propaganda among the masses, and call upon them to put these principles and methods into practice, so as to solve their problems and help them achieve liberation and happiness." (1)

This strategy of organizing and mobilizing the people by means of communication and dialogue, has been followed since Yenan days. By initiating this two-way communication structure, the Party leadership expects to learn from the masses and then to re-organize and integrate their experiences into new programmes of socialist reconstruction. China's mass media have played essential roles in this strategy.

A second and related function of the Chinese media is to provide information that can support mass mobilization. Mao had this to say to the editorial staff of the Shanxi-Sueiyuan Daily in 1948:

> "Our policy must be made known not only to the leaders and to the cadres but also to the broad masses. Questions concerning policy should, as a rule, be given publicity in the Party papers or periodicals... Once the masses know the truth and have a common

> aim, they will work together with one heart ... The role and power of the newspapers consists in their ability to bring the Party programme, the Party line, the Party's general and specific policies, its tasks and methods of work before the masses in the quickest and most extensive way." (2)

Over the last three decades, a third function has become prominent. This is the use of the media as instruments of political power struggle, a function which has been expanding with the growth of the Party but which has come to the fore more strikingly since the Cultural Revolution.

A fourth function of China's media is what Mao called "combatting the wicked wind". It was during the Anti-Rightist Movement of I957, in the wake of the Hundred Flowers Movement, that the primary objective of the media shifted from that of mobilizing for reconstruction, to one of stressing the correct-thinking of the people, particularly that of intellectuals. There was concern that the objective of national mobilization would be seriously impaired unless undesirable thinking was weeded out. Forseeing such a shift, Mao came back to this theme again and again in a major policy speech in January I957.

> "By a wicked wind, we mean to say that these are not individual mistakes, but have become a general trend. Therefore we strike it down. The way to strike it down is by reasoning. If we have persuasive power, we can knock-down this wicked wind. If we do not have persuasive power, and only say nasty things , this wicked wind will keep blowing and growing". (3)

The current structure and content of China's mass media can be understood in the perspective of these four functions: mobilization, information, power-struggle, and ideological reform. The relative importance of each function has fluctuated somewhat during the last thirty years in response to the prevailing political, economic, and ideological climates. Except in the early 1950's, when the Party was able to operate with a moderate degree of unity in the first few years of the new regime, China's mass media have been inseparably involved with the internal contentions for power. This has been evident both before and since the death of Mao.

To carry out these functions, the Party leadership has developed an extensive mass communication system in which the various media - The New China News Agency (Hsinhua), the People's Daily, the Party magazine Red Flag, the provincial newspapers, radio and television - all deliver essentially the same official message. They are supervised by the Department of Propaganda under the Party's Central Committee and, for the provincial media, through the Party's Provincial Committees. In practice, the operation of these media reflects a brand of investigative reporting with a one-sided perspective. Red Flag explained it in this way:

> "Guided by Chairman Mao's proletarian revolutionary thinking and the various policies

> and directives, we must go to the masses, and carry out serious and not perfunctory investigation and research. We must grasp model materials that can point to the correct direction of a movement. Then we must use accurate, clear and vivid language to write out reports on the objective reality." (4)

The objective reality is not what is or has happened. Rather, it is the final outcome of a long and involved process by which "the rich materials we (Chinese media personnel) obtain from our senses are screened by a careful thought process, which retains the essence and leaves out the unimportant, keeping the truth and eliminating the falsehood". It is meant to be a "penetrating, accurate and complete representation of objectivity" that has progressed from sensory perception to a kind of "rational perception". (5) All this means, of course, that reality is distorted because it is seen and interpreted through the biased lens of the Party's ideology rather than through the more objective vision of the masses, the people themselves. The whole approach suggests a philosophy or ideological stand-point that believes that control of input, the information, can structure the individual's perception of what reality is about, and in turn this influences his values, beliefs, and behavior.

The Organization of the Major Print Media

China's major media are hierarchically organized and cover the country in a vast network. There are the national and provincial newspapers and the single sheet hand-outs. There are the commune newspapers and the national information bulletins and there is the use of Dazibao. Radio and television broadcasting are two forms of communication which belong to a categary of their own—the audio-visual media.

A) People's Daily

The official newspaper of the Communist Party is People's Daily(Ren Min Ribao) which is operated under the close supervision of the Department of Propaganda and has an estimated (1974) circulation of 3.4 million copies. (6) This newspaper reaches all the agricultural production teams, some 740,000 of them, and all schools, factories and government offices in the cities. The total number of readers reached by this official newspaper is much greater than its circulation figure would indicate, because of the existence of newspaper reading groups. In each group a student or someone else reads the stories from the People's Daily to his illiterate neighbors. The Party's supervision over the paper is such that major editorials have to be confirmed with the highest authorities. All news stories, both domestic and

international, reflect the official stand point. (7) The weekly programmes of Peking's televisions are listed in this newspaper although not regularly.

All foreign news stories originate from the official New China News Agency, whose correspondents are in some of the major capitals of the world. Such as, Washington D.C, Paris, Ottawa, London, and many of the capitals of the communist world. Important domestic news stories are also released by the agency. The People's Daily has correspondents all over the country to cover local events. Occasionally, an article from a provincial newspaper is reprinted if it is considered worthy of national attention, but no other news sources are used. Like all other newspapers in China, the People's Daily carries no advertising, and is subsidized by the Party.

B) Provincial and Local Newspapers

Over and above the People's Daily, there are some 350 provincial and local newspapers in various provinces and municipalities which publish approximately four pages a day. The Wen Hui Bao, probably one of the largest of the local newspapers appears in metropolitan Shanghai, and has a circulation of 900,000 copies. Other well known local newspapers include the Kuang Chow Daily, and the Nan Fan Daily, both published in Canton, and the Shanghai Daily which distributes

320,000 copies daily, and is published in Sian. (8) Unlike the People's Daily, which is distributed overseas as well as in China, provincial newspapers are not made available to readers outside the country, ostensibly because of the local nature of the news they contain. Yet these newspapers print not only local news. Since they are very close to the people, their news has to be factual. This means that they sometimes present a much more negative picture of internal affairs than China wants to project to the outside world. (9)

C) Reference Information

One of the newspapers or, in this case, information bulletins, which has become widely known outside of China, is one known popularly as Reference Information (Can Kao Xiao Xi). This paper was first published in the early 1950s by the New China News Agency and it was intended to be an internal or domestic news bulletin for the high Party officials. Its circulation in 1957 was 2,000 approximately. This has increased dramatically over the years to 400,000 in 1979. This followed a major decision by Chairman Mao. (10) The latest estimate puts the total circulation of this tabloid-size newspaper at 6 million copies, larger

than the circulation of the People's Daily. (II) It now appears daily, usually in a four page format. It contains news from around the world, both favorable and unfavorable to China, which does not appear in other newspapers in the country. Its circulation is not limited to Party members; anyone who has a cadre position can subscribe. Although the subscriber is not supposed to share this publication with non-subscribers, even his spouse and members of his family, this rule is not rigidly enforced. Accounts by former residents of China indicate that Reference Information is perhaps the most popular newspaper within China. The function of Reference Information, according to Mao, is to provide a measure of exposure so that the Chinese will not be totally unprepared for the realities of the world outside.

D) Commune Newspapers

Soon after the Cultural Revolution, there appeared a kind of "grass-roots" newspaper serving the production brigades and the teams working in the communes. The peasants themselves edit and produce this mimeographed information sheet which is sometimes called the War Bulletin (Zhan Bao). These peasant correspondents, called "Tu" (muddy) because they have mud on their feet

and calluses on their hands, have been compared to the barefoot doctors because of the level of involvement at which they function.

"Muddy" correspondents have a better understanding of the problems of peasants than the urban reporters, because they work on the farms themselves. Most of them are the sons and daughters of the poor and have only elementary, or junior high school, education. More important than professional training, however is loyalty to the Party and Chairman Mao. (I2) In general, the peasant correspondents act as opinion leaders in the village, using the news bulletin to disseminate information from the national mass-media and to correct what are considered to be undesirable behavioral patterns.

E) Dazibao

Dazibao, an ancient and traditional way of communicating information to the people, uses wall-posters as a means of announcing forthcomming events and functions, edicts of the Emperor (now, of the Party) and for airing private grievances.This form of communication has now developed into a major component within the media system of China. (I3)

In the days when the Chinese Communists were eager to follow the Russian model, they began to make effective use of this form of information dissemination, perhaps

because of the wide-spread use of posters in collective farms and factories in Soviet Russia shortly after the Russian revolution. (I4) In the Hundred Flowers Movement and the subsequent Anti-Rightist Movement they have become a powerful instrument of criticism and counter-attack. (I5) During the Cultural Revolution, Dazibao was established as a major social institution in the process of the Chinese political struggles and it continues to play a permanent role in it.

The Organization of the Audio-Visual Media

A) Radio Broadcasting

The CCP set up its first broadcasting station in I945 in Yanan. Today, nearly four decades later, radio broadcasting in China reaches all cities, more than ninety-two percent of the agricultural production teams in the villages and some seventy percent of peasant homes. (I6) When the Republic was founded, the Yenan station moved to Peking and became the Central People's Broadcasting Station (CPBS). The national network consists of nine major units. There is the Central Broadcasting Administration, which is the regulatory authority. Next, there is the Central People's Broadcasting Station, which provides national radio programming. There is also International Radio which provides international radio services in many

different languages and is better known for its call-sign, Radio Peking. (I7)

The CPBS currently broadcasts over five channels. Two channels in Putonghua (the common speech or Mandarin) are broadcast throughout the mainland for a total of forty hours per day. A third, in Putonghua, Fujian and Kejia dialects, is transmitteed to Taiwan for about twenty hours per day. The fourth channel serves the overseas Chinese (in Hong Kong, etc.) in both Putonghua and various dialects for about twenty hours per day.

The CPBS is the top of a pyramid of regional and local stations. There are ninety-three regional stations, of which eighty-seven are operated by provinces, municipalities, autonomous regions and cities. About 2,000 provincial and municipal stations relay a large portion of the central broadcasts and add programmes of a regional nature, primarily news events in the provinces and criticisms of local deviances.

The CPBS estimates there are about 50 million radio-sets capable of receiving over-the-air broadcasts and about I20 million loudspeakers in the wired network. The figures imply that some five percent of all households have a private radio-set and that ninety percent of households have a loudspeaker or more than "one loudspeaker for every eight Chinese, young and old"

in or near their place of work. (I8)

B)Television

Chinese television broadcasting started in the late fifties, as a result of work done by the Broadcasting Research Institute and Peking Broadcasting Equipment Factory. It is the youngest medium and has had a checkered history. Black and white telecasting did not begin until September of I958, though there was an experimental service in May. (I9) The commitment to innovate television came as part of the "Great Leap Forward", when the government announced a four year plan to establish a National Television network of thirty stations. (20) The first to start was a Peking station. It had only one studio, with four image orthicon camera chains, one OB van and a I Kw VHF transmitter set atop Broadcasting house. It was a novel venture. There were probably no more than I,000 sets in Peking at this time. (2I)

By I960, about a dozen rudimentary stations were operating; and there was a line between Peking and Tianjin. It was not the grandiose network that had been planned; but it was still an achievement. (22) Thereafter, progress was slow, mainly due to the break

with the Soviet Union which depleted China's engineering resources, and the Cultural Revolution, when much of "television" was regarded as "incorrect" or at least unhelpful. (23) Nevertheless, by 1970 most provinces has a television station, and the stations in Peking, Tianjin, Shanghai and Canton were connected by an experimental micro-wave line. By March 1978, however, China had thirty-nine television stations, (24) in twenty-eight provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions, (25) compared to only seven stations before the Cultural Revolution. Together with the 123 relay stations around the country, television is now able to reach such remote regions as Tsinghai, Tibet, Inner-Mongolia, Yunan, and Heilungchiang. (26)

Since 1980, television services have been provided by CCTV in Peking and by thirty-two stations in the municipalities, the provinces and autonomous regions. All these stations produce their own programmes. The CCTV occupies two channels, the Peking municipal station occupies one channel; Shanghai, three channels; Tianjin Conton and Changtu, two channels each: the remainder one channel each. In addition, all stations retransmit CCTV's national service. Therefore, with one exception, all these different audiences can receive CCTV's special Peking service and the local service. The exception is Peking, where it is possible to receive CCTV's national service, CCTV's special service, and the local service

provided separately by the Peking Television Station. (27)

In Peking, and everywhere else, CCTV's first channel is broadcast as the primary service and any local services as the secondary services. However, audiences for the secondary service often match those for the first service when it deals with local events and theatre. An additional factor in audience preference is the dialect. The CCTV uses Putonghua, while other services use the local dialect.

When China started to experiment with colour television in May 1973, it tried both the PAL system, which had been developed by West Germany and is used by the United Kingdom and others, and the SECAM system development by France and used by the U.S.S.R. and the Eastern European countries. It chose Pal, and has developed its own version. The first station to switch to colour was the CCTV. Yet by the end of 1979, most stations broadcast in colour, although black and white programmes are still being produced. (28)

In 1979, the Central Broadcasting Administration estimated a figure of two-and-a-half million television sets in China while the Chinese Electronic Society says two million. So there is likely to be a considerable difference between the number of sets that have been sold (either produced locally or imported) and the number

of sets that are still in use. All too often, the estimates of sets in use are simply accumulations of sets produced over the years and because of the low technical standard of some Chinese sets, together with the paucity of maintenance engineers, this has resulted in many sets being out-of-order. Taking these factors into account, and extrapolating the number of sets found in specific organizations, the number of television sets in domestic use is between one-and-a-half to two million. This total has been growing rapidly over the last few years. At the end of 1983, there were more than eight million television receivers in China, and television programmes can be seen in more than thirty percent of the districts throughout the country. (29)

As in other developing countries, television is a luxury item. Though locally produced, the price of a television set varies from about 200 yuan for a nine inch black-and-white set to about 2,900 yuan for an imported Hitachi 20 inch colour set. These figures are important when one bears in mind that the average monthly wage in China is approximately 40-60 Yuan, (1.7 Yuan is about one Canadian dollar). Prices differ considerably from town to town as does the quality of these sets which is generally poor. The People's Daily blamed the "Gang of Four", 1978, for the fact that certain models tended to break down after only twelve

hours of use. (30)

According to investigations carried out by an NCNA reporter, poor quality was the result of mismanagement, the use of second-rate tubes, dependence on manual operation, and outdated assembly techniques. Thus, though production has been on the increase, the I977 figure was a fifty-three percent increase over I976, the quality has generally been on the decline. (3I)

CCTV has three studios ranging form 600 square meters down to a news and continuity suite of 30 square meters. 70% of the programmes are taped on Ampex 2 inch VTRs, Type C I inch VTRs, and Sony 3/4 inch U-matics, and approximately 20 percent are filmed and just a few are presented live. There are about a dozen electronic news gathering units. The CCTV became the first station in China, (and perhaps the world) to have a Television University, when, in I960, it started the Peking Television University. Shanghai followed suit the same year. However, the current Television University was not inaugurated until February I979. It is on a much larger scale. Last year, some 500,000 people enrolled in one or another of the television universities - an amazing total. (32)

The potential of television for propaganda and education has been recognized for a long time.

Reportedly, Mao Tse-Dong himself, as long ago as 1955, instructed that television be developed in China. (33) In 1960, Ho Ta-Chung, then Deputy Director of the Broadcasting Research Institute, noted that:

> "unlike the ordinary radio broadcasting, television can simultaneously transmit sound and image. It is more complete than a radio broadcast ... In the field of propaganda, television has more advantages than other propaganda media." (34)

Thus, television performs functions similiar to other mass-media in China. In Mao's words, the mass media's functions are to organize, agitate, stimulate, criticize, and promote; they are, in effect, the tools of the "proletarian dictatorship". At a television work conference held in Hunan in the summer of 1976, television's functions were clearly stated:

> "The proletarian television represents the interests of the proletarian class. It has a distinct proletarian class nature. It is a powerful weapon in attacking and exterminating the enemies. It must use class struggle as the key link and insist on serving the proletariat and socialism. For the past few years, television has considered the projection of Chairman Mao's image as its most important duty. At the same time, television also has followed closely the Party's central duties in propagating Marxism, Leninism, Mao Tse-Dong thought, in criticizing revisionism and the bourgeois class, and in warmly glorifying the socialist new born things emerging from the Cultural Revolution." (35)

This was written, when Chiang Ching was in power and in control of China's mass-media. However, the functions assigned to today's television remain the

same. At the Fifth National People's Congress, held in February 1978, Chairman Hua Kuo-Fong's government work report also indicated the need for rapid development of television so as to make full use of its propaganda and education functions. (36) In March 1979, the People's Daily still referred to television as:

> "A tool for propaganda and education that can contribute to the propagation of Marxism-Leninism and Mao Tse-Dong thought, the Party's lines, guidelines and policies, as well as the execution of political and cultural education". (37)

To sum up, the Party has developed a highly efficient communication system. Although the most important development communication in China is interpersonal, and much of that is in groups, the mass-media are not neglected. To an outsider they seem to be managed rather skillfully in a sort of contrapuntal relation to the local groups and the cadres. The media provide a way for the cadre to hear policy, for the one billion people to hear or read the words of their top leaders, and for information to travel both to and from the center. Media announce and support the endless stream of campaigns. Among other things they pick up innovations from local communities and recommend them for trial elsewhere; they announce local successes and awards; they help social pressure and condemn ideological failures; and they report on the surrounding world,

as (Hsinhua) New China News Agency sees that world.

The Chinese mass media are serious about their task of fostering development and the Socialist revolution. In contrast to the West, the Chinese media are virtually free of "Media Personalities", who can compete with politicians in the interpretation of events. In spite of the variety of their technical transmission means, these media are however secondary in the great ideological education process. They feed directly into the enormous structure of interpersonal communication consisting of meetings and community discussions, which are the real backbone of the information mission being carried out by the cadres. It is in these local, interpersonal communication situations in which the people of China are being transformed into "new socialist men and women". It is in the local discussion group that these people are trying to master the "correct" way of thinking about the new society being built, while at the same time solving the problems of their everyday lives.

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Chapter Four

What is Television Content Like in China?

It would be true to say that television was of little concern before the appearance of the Red Guards in 1967. However, shortly before the Cultural Revolution, Chinese television was becoming a little more enterprising. They signed up with Visnews and the International News Films Agency in London, both to take their service and to reciprocate with news pictures from China. Leading Chinese broadcasters were showing keen interest in learning more about the uses of television. In 1967, the Red Guards stopped that line of development because they were suspicious that this costly medium might create a capitalistic atmosphere. A number of broadcasters disappeared; never to be heard of again. (1)

The revival of television was slow. Since the Cultural Revolution had made all art and culture suspect, no one was sure exactly what to programme. The simplest, and safest, strategy was to show nothing. Even in 1970, by which time television was back on the air for three or four evenings a week, much of the time was taken up by screening captions with the thoughts of Chairman Mao. A British broadcaster, who visited Peking in October 1970,

calculated that eighteen minutes, of a total of twenty-six minutes of the main evening news bulletin one night, were rolling captions of Mao's thoughts accompanied by background music of "The East is Red". (2)

Times and regimes have changed. Encouraged by Deng Xiao-Ping's "Four Modernizations Programmes" which has emphasized increased production of consumer goods, China has belatedly entered the television age. China's viewing boom has been paralleled by an explosive change in programming and in the amount of time allotted to programmes.

The actual number of television sets produced before, during, and after the Cultural Revolution, has varied tremendously as much as has the viewing time. The Chinese television manufacturers produced more than 5.5 million television sets in I982, compared to just 3,000 a year at the peak of the Cultural Revolution. Nearly 400 million of China's one billion people now have access to a television set, and the number is growing daily-even in the backward rural areas, e.g. in a commune in the north eastern Hebei porvince more than half the families have television sets. (3)

The officials of Wuxi reported 760 television sets in their county; in other words, there is at least one in each production brigade. Likewise, Qingxu county

production brigades all have television sets, and two-thirds of the production teams own them too. Guanghan county has 320 television sets, some at brigades and others in schools, factories, and other institutions. In Hongshan district, as in many countries, wire broadcast network technicians are using video projection machines to make television programmes accessible to larger audiences. There are 60 large-screen sets in the district operating each evening from 7 o'clock onwards. The screens are made of silk and can be viewed from both sides making it possible for audiences of more than 1,000 people to watch a single set. (4).

During the Cultural Revolution, the uncertainty as to what was permissible, meant that the handful of programmes known to be officially approved, were repeated over and over again. The schedule, therefore, differed little from day to day. The staple-fare most evenings after the news at seven o'clock, was yet another screening of one of the five "Peking Operas" approved by Mao's wife. All these operas glorify the Communist guerrilla campaigns waged against the old Chinese regime and the Japanese troop-trains during the Sino-Japanese war. The operas were all shown in live performances direct from theatres and since many

different theatrical groups put them on, the repetition at least benefited from the change of cast each night.

In 1977, when Godwin Chu analysed the week's programmes presented by the two channels of the Peking Television Station, he found that both began their evening broadcasts at 7:00 p.m. and signed off at 10:00 p.m. In addition, channel 2 had three morning broadcasts in the week, from 10:00 a.m. to noon. This gave a week's viewing time for the two channels of forty-eight hours, which included nearly seven hours of domestic and international news (Chung, G. 1977).

After the period 1976-1977, when television returned to favour, the choice of programmes widened. The great May Day Parade, in 1977, for example, was shown for five hours, with relatively elaborate coverage from five outside broadcast cameras. The pictures were then relayed direct to other cities by landline, where it existed, or by videotape to cities throughout the country. The International Ping-Pong Tournament in Peking, which marked the beginning of the relaxation in China's relations with the outside world, was also shown live. A much-heralded documentary "Red Flag Canal", reported on the building of an irrigation canal through treacherous mountain country in Honan Province. Even the evening news underwent radical changes, for Mao's

thoughts gave way to world news, as Peking agreed to start screening agency news film again.

In The Asian Messenger of Spring, 1981, Leonard Chu pointed out that foreign news is mostly taken from Visnews via satellite. Except for translations, the material is presented almost unedited. The Polish leader, Lech Walesa, for instance, was seen across China. Documentaries provided by foreign embassies are also common fare on the screen. (5)

According to the Kuang Min Daily of December 31st, 1980, China's television, which previously had not shown the faces of its announcers, finally began to present on the screen those who do the narrations and news coverage. Li Chuan is one of those previously "faceless" announcers who have now become household names as a result of this new exposure on the television screens. (6)

With the increase in the exchange of foreign programmes and the relaxed government policies, the content of television has disseminated new ideas and technological advances both from inside China and from outside. Educational programmes have changed and have reflected variations in government attitudes towards technology and development showing changes from manual labour to mechanized labour in the rural areas.

In the early days of television programming, the industry was "anemic" in production. It was too costly for a developing country like China to produce great quantities of expensive television sets which no one could afford to buy. Furthermore, there was also a lack of trained personnel to programme for this medium. Gradually, there has been a considerable improvement in the general health of television programming and production. With the introduction of new tax-laws, there has been an increase in the flow of television sets which have been allowed to enter the country but only after payment of very high import duties. Now, many of the residents of Macao, Hong-Kong, Singapore and other places are rushing to bring their television sets to their new homes in China. (7) The television set has risen considerably in term of its prestige value, that is to say, television is second only to the refrigerator in the market. The bicycle and the sewing machine, which once held the lead, no longer present the same competition. The television set has become an important status symbol; it indicates directly a person's social standing and position.

In 1983, when the investigation and evaluation of economic productivity was taken by China's "Committee for Social Economic Development", it was discovered

that 531,000 colour television sets were being produced by various companies. The rate of increase in production between 1982 and 1983 is about 84.4%. (8)

As a result of the new and open relationships with foreign theatre and arts, together with local talent in the same area, and with the involvement of foreign producers and directors, Chinese television has also received a tremendous content boost. Foreign films have also proved useful in the educational sphere. In the past, all foreign films were dubbed; eventually, however, the use of subtitles in Chinese replaced the old system, and, as a result, students began taking advantage of listening to the foreign language programmes. The benefit of this cross-cultural exchange with the rest of the world appears to be limited, by their own desire, to the urban elites within China. Country-folk continue to be quite content with local expressions of talent in opera, drama and so on. (9)

Though content has improved, Chinese television's technical presentation is still haphazard. Time schedules are often incorrect, and sometimes, shows scheduled to appear at a particular hour, may be up to five minutes late. All stations use the Russian-sponsored 'D' standard of television. The system has 625 lines, a channel width of 8 MH/ (relatively generous) and a vision band width of 6 MH/ (also generous). The second signal is

frequency modulated (FM). (IO) Breaks in the television signals are also very common. Any interruptions due to technical difficulties are merely given "band-aid" treatment, which means that the television logo is presented on the screen or perhaps a scenic view is shown. (II)

According to one of the rare statistics published by China-Facts and Figures in I982, (I2) the national and local television channels broadcast for a total of I00 hours per week, 76 hours on the national channel, 23 hours and I9 minutes on the local channel. Interestingly enough the Chinese Central Television (CCTV) national programme consists primarily of entertainment (52%) with special items (30%) taking second place and news (I3.5%) and sport (4.5%), a distant third in content. Doubtlessly this has something to do with a scarcity of local production talents and the heavy emphasis on entertainment in imported programming. Chinese television exchanges tele-films with television organizations in more than 30 countries and regions.

There are three television stations in Peking; Chinese Central Television I (CCTV I), Chinese Central Television II (CCTV II), and Peking Television Station (PTV). According to the Television Weekly (Dian Shi Zhou Bao), schedule from January I9th - January 29th, I984, CCTV I's programming pattern is more

educationally oriented. It's total broadcasting is 54 hours per week, and of this the educational programmes take up about I8 hours, in other words, about 34%. CCTV II is more entertainment oriented, it's total broadcasting time is 38 hours, and entertainment programmes take up 28 hours which is about 74.6% of the total time. PTV, the local station, in contrast, has a very short air-time of three or four hours a day, and is politically oriented. Its broadcasts offer explanations on government policies as well as some general educational programmes.(I3)

To get a feeling for contemporary programming which is not yet systematically analyzed, this thesis makes use of a one week case-study of Television Weekly to gain further understanding of China's television programming. The analysis of time-slots indicates that CCTV I day time programmes present a one hour show between I2:00 and I3:00 hours, which contains educational programming and a newsbreak of I5 minutes or so. Evening programmes, in contrast, start at 5:30 p.m. and last for five hours, till I0:30 p.m. Again, there is an educational programme followed by the national and international news for 30 minutes, with productions on technology, documentaries, film and dramas completing the schedule. CCTV II is a bit more flexible. It starts in the morning at 9:00 a.m. and finishes at around noon. The evening schedule starts at 5:00 p.m. and ends at I0:00 p.m.

Both mornings and evenings the programme consists of music, art and social services. Here, too, the evening news is the last item shown at 9:I5 p.m. for a length of 30 minutes.

Sunday, CCTV I goes on the air at 8:30 a.m. and finishes at I:00 p.m. A number of programmes focus on school education and productions catering to children, including, as well, some drama and political awareness lectures. Broadcasting resumes at 2:00 p.m. and finishes at 5:20 p.m. and is filled with educational programmes and some sports.

The reason why these three channels are so different is most likely the desire to increase viewing choices. A quick perusal of the viewing times for these periods, namely in I982 and I984, shows that the television channels were broadcasting for approximately I00 hours per week in I982, and II3 hours in I984 (when educational programmes accounted for 46 hours of the total), and these figures were more than double the amount of time allowed for television broadcasting in I977 - a mere 48 hours per week.

News Programmes

Though it is difficult to acquire a detailed understanding of television programming from a schedule only, there is some additional evidence from other sources.

Wilbur Schramm, for instance, in his personal memorandum entitled "What the Chinese are telling their people about the world" makes some comments about news programming. This, he points out:

> "...is a rather short wire, highly focused on China but intended for other countries as well, highly centralized in Peking, highly disciplined, with a world view built on Mao's concept of "three worlds" as made up of two hegemonistic and dangerous powers, a number of other affluent powers who are potential allies, and a great majority of developing countries, whose strength and safety lies in developing a united front against the hegemonists." (I4)

Tight political control, and the need to refer all news back to Peking, makes the news service often late with news stories. Yet timeliness is not a major concern for a service which conceives of the news as instrumental rather than imformative, and interprets it against a consistent world view and political purpose. Of all the world's news services intended for international use, it gives perhaps the greatest proportional representation to Third World News, and of course, to the news of China itself.

After the Cultural Revolution, when television regained strong support and popular approval, the number of people watching television news programmes in the evening increased and this has "gradually become a way of life", according to the Peking Review of March 9,

I98I. (I5) Further insight into differences between the Chinese and U.S. coverages of international news are offered by Leonard L Chu in his "The Flow of International News of Peking Television and in The People's Daily". The first thing that Chu notes is that the Chinese news appears as a text on the screen and is read by an announcer whose face never appears. (I6) This practice continued until I980 when, for the first time, the announcer was visually presented. Another difference is that the same news items may be repeated several times in the course of a week. In contrast to the Western news broadcasting, furthermore, background music often accompanies the reading of the Chinese news.

In addition, attribution is not important. For most, if not all of the news items, no sources are given. Only twice, during the period reviewed by Chu, certain films were identified as having been made by the "General News Documentary Manufacturing Factory of Peking Television Station". These two items were about Chairman Hua's meeting with the foreign leaders of Niger and Equatorial Guinea. Foreign film clips are usually produced by Visnews or originate in the countries protrayed in the newscasts. (I7).

Another difference is that there are no interviews with leading personalities in the news, nor are "Stills"

widely used. Only two such items appear during the week reviewed by Chu. They provided general background on the Republic of Niger and described the history of the Panama Canal. Even weather forecasts for the Peking region are not visually illustrated but state temperatures and the direction and strength of the wind. Finally, even though there are no news commentaries, as we know then, almost all news items are punctuated with political comments, about the general world situation and China's role in its struggle against the two major powers, Russia and the United States of America.

Chu found that 77.8% of the international news was political in content. However these "political" items were concerned with welcoming or departure ceremonies at the major airports around the world; foreign leaders' visits to the Great Wall, or a People's Commune; or official State banquets for foreign dignitaries. The rest of the "political" news was about events happening in other countries.

The second largest section within the international news was concerned with "sport". The "international" aspect was concerned with athletic meetings in countries like Japan, Niger, etc. News about economic, social, and cultural affairs takes up a very small part of the total international news. These items, during the period

analyzed by Chu, were about the completion of a bridge in Guyana; the building of an oil tanker and steel-industry in Romania; and the opening of a Chinese art exhibition in Japan.

For national news, however, the emphasis shifts to economic, social and cultural affairs. Here, in contrast to the international news, "political" and "military" news is not covered. Crimes or disasters, either domestic or international, are never reported. In this domestic news, "non-timely" items predominate, constituting well over two-thirds of all news items (72.7%), and "timely" news (having occurred within the past twenty-four hours) constitutes a paltry 22.7%. Items reported more than seven days after the events took place accounted for 4.5% of all news. The pattern for international news is just the reverse. That is, 63% of the items were reported within 24 hours and 33.3% were "non-timely" items.

Most of the differences in news content are attributable to the ways in which the New China News Agency (Hsinhua), makes its selections.

Table I

Foreign Areas Covered in News on Peking TV

	Within China		Without China		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Communist	0	0.0	2	I6.7	2	3.7
Western	I0	23.8	3	25.0	I3	24.I
3rd World	30	7I.5	4	33.3	34	63.0
Combined	2	4.7	3	25.0	5	9.2
Total	42	I00.0	I2	I00.0	54	I00.0
%	77.8		22.2			

Source: Leonard L Chu. "The Flow of International News of Peking Television and in The People's Daily". Center For Communication Studies: The Chinese University of Hong Kong: I978, p II.

Table I shows that of 54 international news items selected by Hsinhua, 42 were about China's relationship with other countries, and of this number, 30 were Third World countries. This percentage, 7I.5%, shows that Hsinhua is interested chiefly in news from the Third World and especially from those countries with direct links with China. Among the topics covered are: the military preparations or activities of non-Third World countries, the foreign relations, economics, education, and scientific news of the Third World, violations of human right by non-Third World countries, sports of Third World countries and their competition with others, and Third World arts.

Hsinhua concentrates on the Third World more than any other wire service because it reflects Mao's view of the world divided into "Three".(I8) Given this world view, Hsinhua's news selection is based upon certain instrumental objectives, among these are the themes that: China is the guardian of peace and independance and wants the rest of the world to regard the two major hegemonist powers as threats to peace. Russia is presented as the most dangerous country in the world, but even a capitalist country like the United States has the potential of being an enemy of peace and independence if the decay of its system drives it to desperate measures. Other countries are urged to stand up to this First World combination of Russia and America and to cooperate by developing economic and military strength to resist the two major powers. In all of this China will be the friend and the ally to all who seek peace and who wish to defend their independence and dignity in the face of hegemonist aggressions.

Education Programmes

Educational programmes on Peking's television screen are provided by a number of sponsors. They are arranged by the Central Television and Radio Broadcasting University, under the joint sponsorship of the Ministry of Education and the Central Broadcasting Administration.

Municipal television stations also offer a number of basic courses for the Peking Television Radio Broadcasting University, which was initiated in I960. Much emphasis has been placed upon using television for formal instruction. All the television universities, throughout the country, offer their own curricula according to local needs and capabilities. In Shanghai, medical science was among the courses offered.

This emphasis on formal instruction came about as a natural result or reaction to the long educational "starvation" during the period of the Cultural Revolution. In the time of Chairman Mao, the main thrust or purpose of the television educational programmes was political indoctrination and the imposition of Mao's Thoughts. After the death of Mao, the content of educational programmes shifted to a wider representation of technological teaching, languages, and, in general, to programmes answering basic needs. Howkins observes that: "China... wants to modernize itself, and in recent years the leadership has stressed modernization over the quality of life. It wishes to use the best of science and technology to make China equivalent to the World's leading industrial countries." (I9)

other commentaries see this tension or shift of emphasis, as healthy, for example; Godwin Chu and Francis Hsu.

The week's educational timetable for CCTV I, in "Television Weekly" for the period January 23rd to 29th, I984, indicates that educational programming consists of five topics: languages, science, politics,

general science and children's programming. Each of these have their physiognomy and will now be discussed in greater detail.

At least two foreign languages are taught, English and Japanese, the former on a daily basis, and the latter on a weekly basis. The science programmes cover a number of subjects, such as high school maths, electronics, mechanics, agriculture and medicine. These science topics are covered in half hour programmes three or four times a week.

The political science and the general education programmes go together in so far as they both represent the Communist Party's view of itself, it's own history, and it's view of the rest of the world. Two programmes, "Round the World", and "Cultures of Foreign Countries", expose the Chinese viewers to a certain amount of foreign culture and provide them with a "window through which to look out on the world". A number of other programmes attempt to bring to the attention of viewers some of the modern advances in technology, an appreciation of nature, and some of the problems of everyday living.

Feature films are used to depict the unusual feats of revolutionary heroes, model communes and factories, or those youths who have been "sent-down" i.e. sent into the country for re-education, whose self-sacrificing behavior deserves praise. One of the heroes of this type of film, Lei Feng, "the man for the eighties", is a

person who compiles an awesome record of good deeds, "selflessly" helping everybody, and is presented as a model for the "new socialist man".

Almost everyday, either in the morning or early evening there is a programme for children, including songs, dances or stories, to instill a revolutionary spirit in their young minds. (20) The children's programmes broadcast during the week which was analyzed, cover a variety of interesting features including the story of "mogera wogura wogura" a kind of rodent, which could be interpreted as a cartoon of the underground agent's work. The week also included cartoons, such as " Mathematical Land", allowing children a fun view of the complex world of mathematics; "Din Din fights the monkey king" - with modern technology a young boy defeats the Chinese classic magic-power hero. (21) There were also some puppet-shows in which "Mr. Pig" was used as a useful teaching technique to help children in matters of hygiene. Stamp-collecting and an educational quiz-show made up the rest of the week's arts and crafts contribution.

There can no longer be any doubt that children and adults learn a great amount from instructional television, just as they do from any other experience that can be made to seem relevant, such as, reading the encyclopedia.

Godwin Chu and Wilbur Schramm in their Learning from Television (22) conclude that, I) given favorable conditions 2) television can be used efficiently to teach any subject matter where one-way communication will contribute to learning; and 3) television is more likely to be an efficient part of an educational system when it is applied to an educational problem of sufficient concern to gain the support of both the teachers and the viewers. The educational television programme serves as a funnel through which superior teaching, elaborate demonstrations, and otherwise scarce subject-matter can be distributed more widely than would otherwise be the case. The Chinese have made an ingenious use of television educational programmes to strengthen the revolutionary minds of the people, to create new socialist behavior, and to train efficient workers for their "modernization" needs. This training starts with children's programming which teaches that modern technology is able to achieve more than the traditional methods. The school educational programmes reinforce these notions with their emphases on technical courses as well as on foreign laguages and in turn contribute to the change in attitude which has appeared since the birth of the slogan of "The Four Modernizations".

Entertainment Programmes

Very little imformation and statistics are available about the actual content of entertainment. Much of what is available is contained within a number of articles. e.g. "Changing Faces of China's television" by Leonard Chu; "China's Burgeoning Television" by Liang Yang; the Television Weekly; "China: Everything is Media", in Intermedia, April, 1977; and some references in Moving a Mountain: Cultural Change in China edited by Godwin Chu and Francis Hsu.

The elite tend to pay a lot of attention to the television newscasts, whereas the general audience pays a great deal more attention to the entertainment programmes. Now, about half of the television programmes may be considered to be recreational.

In 1942, Mao outlined the political application of the Arts in his "Talks at the Yean Forum on Art and Literature", and said:

> "Our purpose is to ensure that literature and art fit well into the whole revolutionary machine as a component part, that they operate as powerful weapons for uniting and educating the people and for attacking and destroying the enemy, and that they help the people fight the enemy with one heart and one mind." (23)

From that time on, the question of "for whom" has been debated, off and on, among Communist theoreticians, artists, and political leaders. Some consider classical

drama and Peking opera a cultural heritage, others, among whom are the radical elements of the Party, condemned the traditional drama and opera as part of the feudal past, containing elements harmful to the new society. Mao, as Party leader, took swift action and curtailed the prolonged debate by announcing a new slogan: "Weed through the old to let the new emerge." (24)

The entertainment programmes we shall consider in greater detail are films, television drama, music, dance and Chinese Opera. While in the past, foreign programmes or films shown in China were mostly imports from such communist countries as North Korea or Albania, they are now coming in from America, England and other Western countries. The first series, foreign or Chinese, to be shown on China's television was, "The Man From Atlantis"; chosen for its low price. This American series was, for many Chinese, an eye-opener to the life style of a capitalist country and successfully kept many people off the streets over weekends. Other series, such as, "David Copperfield", "Anna Karenina" and "Marie Curie", bought from the British Broadcasting Corporation have had a similarly positive reaction. (25) In addition to these films there are imports from friendly communist and Third World countries. Their subject matter is often espionage and security as well as the exploitation and

control of workers. Most of these films hold little in the way of emotional content and completely reject romantic love as a theme, thus fitting in with Chinese cultural mores. All of these films usually last for about one and a half hours and most are slotted for the peak viewing period at 19:30 hours. The only film series is BBC's "Heidi", which is shown on Saturday evening and develops the life story of remarkable child, who rises out of poverty and illiteracy and succeeds to master her enviroment. (26)

Though there has been some improvement in the local productions, Chinese film programmes are still scarce. The movie themes usually demonstrate the essential quality of China's pride and patriotism, the sacrificing of one's identity and personal needs for the sake of developing the country's "Four Modernizations" dream. The Chinese press has been carrying discussions on the topic of improving the film industry. In June 1980, a national conference was called to discuss ways and means of improving television programming. As a result of this conference, competitions were held to find the best actor, the best actress, the best script, the best director, and so on. In other words, a practice condemned and banned in the past, is now being reinstituted and revitalised.

Drama reform was characterized by the eradication of "traditional plots" and the implantation of "proletarian plots". These new dramas were heavily political and ideological and possessed a discernible unity of content. "Modern revolutionary drama" was promoted on a massive scale between I963 and I965. During this period, and right up to I976, only I4 traditional plays were allowed to be performed. Today, there is no restriction in form, and realistic stories and figures are dramatized (27)

Drama specially produced for television is very popular. In the past few years, these dramas have boldly depicted the "traumatic events" of the Cultural Revolution. Known as "dramas of the wounded", they confront bureaucratic practices corruption, wrong-verdicts, torture and other social problems. The drama shown on CCTV I, on January 25th, I984, entitled "The Green Cradle" is a case in point. It criticizes repression, once directed at scholars and intellectuals during the Cultural Revolution, and portrays some cadres as illiterate in science and technology.

Contemporary music closely reflects the international style, and includes solo-work, quartets, choirs and symphony orchestras. Local production programmes also include pop music, ballads, and propaganda-music. In many of these performances the government portrays

itself as the supporter of the customs, music and dance of the various minority groups, which often perform on television. Love and unity in interpersonal relationships centers not on young men and women but on the family. They stress the love between father and daughter, mother and son, brother and sister, and are used as symbols to help creat the foundations of social responsibility to the "Party" which is, in a sense, symbolized by those relationships.

Chinese opera has its ancient origin in the Tang dynasty and reached its peak within the Qin dynasty (1644-1944). The stage props and costumes are mostly symbolic; generally the stage is bare, perhaps with only a table and two chairs, covered with colorful embroidery. The Peking Opera Theatre embodies many of the major facets of Chinese culture - philosophy, history, literature, language, dance and acrobatics.

Since the late 1945s to 1960s, the Party attempted to use the traditional Peking Opera form for new political purposes. To this end old plays were modified and new ones written. These plays often expose the injustices and evils of feudal society, or the fighting spirit of farmers against the ruling classes throughout history. By 1966, during the height of the Cultural Revolution,

the performance of all traditional opera was suddenly banned.Only a few revolutionary operas, personally approved by Mao's wife, Chiang Ching, were permitted. After the fall of Chiang Ching, the traditional Peking Operas have been performed again. (28)

Since the main purpose of television is to educate the general audience to become "new socialist men", the entertainment programmes are used to broaden the knowledge of the people. For this reason, the word "entertainment" does not fully express the true content and purpose of these programmes. There is little separation between entertainment and the socialist revolution, between technocracy and politics, for everything is politics, everything is the Socialist revolution, and everything is development. Popular songs, dance-performances, cartoons, even the Peking Opera are used to carry a political message, and to extend the notion of the "Four Modernizations" which are currently being supported by the leadership.

The content of the three broad areas of news, education and entertainment, reflect the ways in which the Chinese people, as a nation, are subjected to the Party's ideology and its subtle strategy for mass formation and action. As we have pointed out, much of the content is political and represents the hard-line

of the Party, and even more specifically, the personal views of the Party leader. Without realising it, the people were influenced greatly by the limitations set on the television content by the Party leaders. As there are minor or major shifts in Party policy or ideology, so these are reflected in shifts within what is permitted or forbidden to be shown on the national television network. Specific periods, which reflected basic shifts in the more recent history of both the Party and television, were the earlier days of Mao, the Cultural Revolution, and Deng Xiao-Ping's rise leading into the period of the "Four Modernizations". During these periods of transition, the Party's control on what was presented has differed and has probably contributed to the outward looking policy of the country at large.

Notes

I) Greene, Hugh. The Universal Eye: World Television in The Seventies. Toronto: (The Bodley Head,) I972, p. 248.

2) Ibid., pp. 246-249.

3) Ling Yang. "China's Burgeoning TV", Peking Review, March 9, I98I., p.I9.

4) Greene, Hugh. op.cit. p. 249.

5) Leonard Chu, "Changing Faces of China's TV", The Asian Messenger, Winter I980/Spring I98I, p. 36.

6) Ibid., p.37.

7)"Television comes to China", World Press Review, in an article taken from Monsoon. April I980,p.59.

8) "China-Facts and Figures", (Peking) I982. p.3.

9) Leonard Chu, op. cit. p. 38.

I0) John Howkins. "China: this society is communications," Intermedia. p. I6.

II) "Television comes to China", op. cit. p60.

I2) "China-Facts and Figures" op. cit. p.3.

I3) "Dian Shi Zhou Bao" (Televisipn Weekly), I984, Vol 3. Peking.

I4) Mao's theory of the "Three World", (described in the Peking Review, 45, November 4, I977, p. I0) Mao revised the older concept of a capitalist world, a communist world, and a developing world, and asked his readers to think of the three divisions as:

A) A First World consisting of two "hegemonist" powers, the USSR and USA.

B) A Second World of powers like Europe and Japan, many of them affluent but none so hegemonistically inclined as the first two, and consequently potential allies of the developing countries in their resistance to the war-mongering First World.

C) A Third World of developing countries whose hope lies in creating a united front against the First World, and in developing their own military and economic power for self-defense and preservation.

I5) Ling Yang. op. cit. p.I6.

I6) Leonard Chu. op. cit. p. 6.

I7) Leonard Chu. op. cit. p. 7.

I8) Wilbur Schramm. op. cit. p.I3.

I9) John Howkins. "China: this society is communications, Intermedia. p. I6.

20) Godwin C Chu. Moving a Mountain - Cultural Change in China. East-West Center: The University Press of Hawaii, p. 69.

2I) This interpretation was given by Mr. Shi who works for the New China News Agency.

22) Godwin C Chu and Wilbur Schramm. "Learning from TV: what the research says," Washington, D.C. National Association of Educational Broadcasters, I967. pp. I0-I4.

23) Mao, Tse-Dong. Selected Works of Mao Tse-Dong. Vol 2. p.33. Peking: Foreign Language Press, I977.

24) Mao Tse-Dong, "Talks at the Yean Forum on Art and Literature", in Selected Works of Mao Tse-Dong, Vol. 5 (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, I977).

25) Leonard Chu "Changing Faces of China's TV". The Asian Messenger, Winter I980/Spring I98I, p. 35.

26) Television Weekly (Peking) I984. P.4.

27) Chao Tsung. "Drama Reform in Mainland China, I942-I967" The Chinese University of Hong Kong, I969, mimeograph. pp 237- 240.

28) Philip, H Cheng. "Traditional versus Revolutionary opera." and "Revolutionary Opera: An instrument for Cultural change." in Popular Media in China: Shaping New Cultural Patterns (ed.) Haiwaii, The University Press of Hawaii, I978. pp 75- I03.

Chapter Five

Chinese Television: The Curtain-Raiser to the 21st Century

In many countries the links between communications, whether television, transportation or handshakes, and society are multifarious. It has been suggested that a society exists to the extent that it communicates. In the United States of America, Japan, and other countries, where information is becoming the dominant economic product and the main creator of wealth, a new kind of "information society" is said to be replacing the old "industrial society". This change into an information society is being pushed by entrepreneurs and financiers; as a result, the parameters that are being used to measure the change are essentially economic. But the new society also involves cultural, ideological, moral and legal elements. (1)

When the Chinese Communists came into power in 1949, they used Marxist theory to deal with China's problems and the elimination of exploitation was to take top priority. In order to release human resources for development, they took over the land and business from the rural land-lords and urban businessmen. Instead of using force, they mobilized the social pressure from

the mass of people—the peasants and workers—through a combination of group communication and coercion, which toppled the landlords and businessmen and eventually led to a fundamental change in the social structure.

To deal with the economic and social problems in China, the government needed an efficient organization to coordinate and supervise the huge population. This required an effective national communication network for transmitting the directives to the people, eliciting their support, and representing their feedback to the policy-making body. The immense geographical size of China and the lack of transportation facilities made communication difficult. But the major obstacle seemed to be the old Chinese bureaucracy, which had no effective communication with the people. Bound by strong kinship-ties, the Chinese, in the past, found it difficult to engage in cooperative efforts that required the pooling of manpower and resources outside the kinship network. The traditional educational system could not fulfill the function of training adequate manpower for the tasks of development. The concept that "scholarly achievements lead to official positions", inhibited the promotion of practical skills and technology, and the creation of new goals, new values, and new ways of thinking.

Major decisions in the past had been made without seeking input and understanding from the ordinary people.

Some development efforts tend to aggravate conflicts because they disrupt the existing social equilibrium and leave varying impacts on different segments of the population. By conflict, we are referring not to the internal power-struggle within the Party, but to the conflict among people over the limited resources and status. The old mechanisms for conflict resolution built into the kinship structure were no longer functioning after the removal of the landlords and other influential people. New social mechanisms were necessary to enable the Party to manage social conflict, giving it timely attention and resolving it to the satisfaction of the parties concerned.

John Howkins suggests in his "China: this society is communications", that the Chinese Communist Party has found its own way to resolve these obstacles by using communications from the following sources: Old China; Marx and Lenin; and Mao's vision of the "new man". (2)

Several aspects of Imperial China have affected China's modern use of communications. Their significance was spelled out by Joseph Needham in his massive study, "Science and Civilization in China". The first is the nature of the Chinese written language. Most Chinese characters, and practically all the older characters,

have evolved directly from pictographs or ideographs. Chinese characters pictorially symbolize, in a much more direct way than Western script, the object and ideas which they stand for. In addition, the Chinese script is nationally understood by all, even though the spoken dialects may differ. Such a derivation makes each character have to do with communications, with relationships, and with content. Another factor, perhaps of equal importance, is that the structures of government and bureaucracy carried within themselves, structured communication patterns, which ran from top to bottom, especially at the time of the Imperial court. When the flow was impeded, the dynasty was invariably weakened. For instance, when memorials and petitions from the provinces to the Emperor were intercepted by the Eunuchs in the late Ming dynasty, the traditional bond between top and bottom was broken. (3)

The Marxists learned from these examples and gave communication strategy an important emphasis in their programme. The totalitarian ideology of Marx and Lenin teaches that the media should be controlled by the state, though on behalf of the people. This is to be achieved through control of the material facilities of communication, so that private media are eliminated. (4) Lenin's assertion that the Party is the prime mover of communism,

encouraged all Marxists to view communications as a powerful tool. In the struggle first for existence and then for power, communist parties have always tended to believe that the secret of politics is locked in the power of agitation and propaganda.

The Chinese Communist Party has given the orthodox communist notion of communications an entirely new twist. The commitment is much the same; Mao Tse-Dong said, "Anyone engaged in talking with another person is engaged in propaganda work", but the direction and development has been very different, because of the nature of the early Chinese Communist Party and its relationship to the rest of the Chinese people. The CCP was primarily composed of peasants and it worked through the mass of people in the countryside, whereas the Russians worked through urban cells consisting largely of skilled and professional people who formed the nucleus of a revolutionary elite, The war experiences that the CCP went through with the long fight against Kuomintang, during the Sino-Japanese war (I937-I945), are also different to Russia's short civil war which lasted a mere two years from I9I8-I920.

The unique character of Chinese communism and communications began to be apparent in the peasant associations that flourished in the mid-twenties. Most of these

associations were organized by Mao and his followers in the CCP; but many emerged spontaneously in the revolutionary fervour and energy of the Civil War and the Northern Expeditionary Wars. The associations were basically groups of radical peasants who wanted to reform the ancient system of land tenure and to instigate a more participatory, or shared, way of life.

From the thirties onwards, the Party constantly emphasised the importance of writing and film-making. In I937, a Dutch film-maker, Joris Ivans, gave the CCP its first I6mm film camera in a gesture that has come to assume symbolic importance. (5) Up to this day, the main channels of every communication are the Party's meetings, discussions, newsletters and posters, and the political allegories in plays, films and on television. It seems that the CCP uses itself as a communications resource, and turns its internal lines of communication into a mass medium. The three sources, namely old China, Marxism and more especially Mao's thought have each contributed to the Party's current vision of its own development. The result is a blend of what is revolutionary, participative, and communicative.

China's decision to take its place on the world's stage, however, only occurred after Mao's death in I976. Since that time, the slogan of the "Four Modernisations"

referring to agriculture, science and technology, industry and defence, has become very popular in China. But even these have been re-interpreted since Deng Xiao-Ping first proposed them in 1973, and even more so since Hua Guo-Feng adopted them in 1977.

The rush towards modernization was modified in March 1979 by Deng Xiao-Ping himself, the advocate of liberalism. During the spring, Hua, Deng, and the leadership evolved a new policy, which was announced at the Second Session of the 5th National People's Congress in June. The key element of the report was modernisation:

> "Class struggle is no longer the principal contradiction in our society; in waging it we must center around and serve the central task of socialist modernisation". (6)

The session acknowledged that Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse-Dong thought is not a sufficient basis for solving the problems that now face China, and that other ideas, theories, and models are needed. Television provides a current example: Many Chinese television sets are manufactured in or near Shanghai. The municipality of Shanghai is now faced with a series of decisions on production, distribution, prices, etc, that are entirely new to them. The workers in Shanghai who make the sets want to sell them to their own people. But a number of questions present themselves: Is this selfish? Should the workers concentrate on colour sets that can receive

Shanghai's own colour transmissions or on black-and-white sets that are much cheaper and more popular with the great majority of Chinese who are not within range of a colour signal? Should television carry advertisements? Should the Shanghai municipality assist towns that lie outside its own borders to get television sets, to construct relay transmitters and so receive its programmes? Does it then have a duty to serve these extra-territorial audiences with programmes about their own locality at the expense of programmes about Shanghai itself? All these questions are often asked and discussed. (7)

CCTV, probably inspired by the "Four Modernizations" movement, started a special programme entitled "Look and Think it Over". (8) This programme has developed more than a dozen subjects concerning economic and social problems. They have looked into the cause of the housing shortage in Peking; they have explained why the number of traffic accidents in the capital went up at one particular time; and they have cited reasons for vegetable scarcities on the market. On this particular programme, the authorities concerned often appeal to the public to make more reasonable use of Peking's already overtapped subterranean water resources and to economize, in general, on water; or they may call on people to develop collectively owned service trades

for the convenience of the public and to provide more job opportunities. The express purpose of this programme is to give some stimulus or push to the solution of certain problems and to improve things generally by using both criticism and praise.

This calls to mind the fact that, for some time, reporting on short-comings and problems in the press was looked on as detrimental to socialism. But, today, more and more people have come to see that white-washing reality will not help to solve problems, but, on the contrary, will compromise the credibility of China's mass-media. These are some of the efforts being made by the television stations to bring about progress in real life.

Even though many of the television shows are artistically immature and artless in style, they have touched on many facets of life-careers, friendship, love, marriage and so on. Some are in praise of people and things contributing to the country's modernization drive; some recall the difficult yesteryears of war or the trauma wrought by the ten years of turmoil during the Cultural Revolution; still others deal with bureaucracy, conservatism, special privilege mentality, social abuses, morality and the legal system. Apart from these adult content programmes, there are also dozens of programmes especially designed for children.(9)

Up-and-coming television shows have now become the topic of the day, with some people trying to define what their salient features should be, and others debating whether artistically they should be presented more like a modern play or like a film. The general public, in their tens of thousands, however, simply ask for more and better television shows, in addition to more and better television entertainments in the form of local operas, songs and dances, musical programmes, as well as comedy items, ballad-singing and acrobatics.

A more blatant manifestation of China's modern television is the decision to have commercial advertising. Both Chinese and foreign companies can now buy air-time on most of the main television stations. The rates vary: a 30-second shot on Peking television costs $900-I500 for foreign companies, and $I200-I500 for Chinese companies. The products advertised range from Marlboro cigarettes and Mitsubishi trucks to local flu-remedies, and all these are bunched between the news and the evening's cultural entertainment. Foreign commercials are probably a result of the drive to earn foreign exchange, but it is somewhat ironic that the state-owned medium shows Marlboro commercials just as China is launching an anti-smoking campaign. (I0)

The Chinese are still presumed to be too poor to

buy imported goods, which are not readily available in China. Commercials lend glamour to foreign products and also influence the local selling and buying. For example, a heavily advertised flu-remedy made in Guang-Zhou is repeatedly out of stock in drugstores. Television probably will not be a major source of foreign exchange, but it certainly will provide alternate visions of life in China.

As we have demonstrated, the Chinese Communist philosophy for the purposive use of communication differs rather dramatically from the Western philosophy. Although communication research, as it is conducted in the West, does not seem to exist in China, the Party leaders have apparently accumulated considerable practical experience in the art of mass persuasion. (11) They are certainly aware and have been highly selective in the dissemination of information, so that the people will not be confronted with divergent views, but will perceive their situation primarily in the manner proposed by the Party. This end is facilitated by screening the input of information from outside and by discouraging the expression of any major dissent from within. The impression given is that the masses speak with "one voice", as it were, creating a sense of unanimity and popular support.

Chinese television has become a part of this enterprise even though it is still in its infancy both technically, in editing and camera work, and conceptually. At present, China is still unable to produce sufficient television sets fast enough to supply the public need, and channels and programme times are very limited as well. While the majority of North American programming is entertainment-oriented, with a small percentage devoted to "serious" or educational shows, Chinese television is almost entirely educational and political in its orientation, even when it presents entertainment. Everything is within an instructional, information-oriented context. The content is designed to illustrate the history of the Chinese class struggle.

The use of television as a two-way, sending and receiving, principle of communication, has not been utlized to its full potential in either the government controlled Chinese system or in the industrially controlled American system. To experience two-way television communication, the U.S. has gradually changed from a line-system into an air-system via satellite. The Chinese have also used an air-connecting system for both radio and television. An air-system has the advantage that it allows for interactive community programming. Hopefully, both countries will be able to develop this

sending and receiving system to serve their rural and urban populations.

There is an immediacy and pervasiveness about the new media, including television in China, which represent a great leap forward, a century's leap from the use of wall posters. The Chinese have begun to see the world directly through satellite transmissions, e.g. Vice-Premier Teng's world travels were televised directly from Japan to China's mainland by satellite. How much control the government can continue to exert on this specialized medium of television, and how much influence it will give to the country's economic and social development have yet to be determined. When the Communist government starts purchasing those inexpensive American feature films (sometimes costing as little as $30, for a half hour's programming), they will be following in the steps of those other developing countries who have succumbed to the manufactured products of "Hollywood". (I3)

It has been argued that the use of American television programmes in the developing countries is a form of neo-colonialism replacing the classical relationship between the metropolitan nations and their former wards. Some of these Western television programmes are exported by a combination of aggressive salesmanship, on the part of the producing companies, and seductive offers of

assistance and tied-aid to the developing world which only create further dependence.

The Chinese government has tried to control this danger by limiting foreign programmes in terms of both quality and quantity. The programmes which have been chosen and shown are usually news items, feature films, and documentaries. There is no official statement about how much air-time they should be allowed to have, but from January 23rd to January 29th, I984, the total foreign programmes (news items are not included) on CCTV II was only I5.7%. Yet the seemingly universal appeal of American programmes may subvert this effort. This appeal derives from high technical quality and the simplicity of storyline. This is characterized by reliance on action and pace, familiarity of characters, as well as predictability of outcome, all of which seem to appeal to Third World as well as First World audiences. Even though only a very small number of American films and television series like the "Man from Atlantis" were shown on Chinese television, they proved extreamely popular. (I4)

Jeremy Tunstall in his <u>The Media Are American</u>, notes: "The more media each country has, the more each country must either import or imitate competitive American practices. Whatever else the current and future communication revolution produces, there will be increased internationalization of consumption, leisure-patterns, youth-culture, education, language and changes in consciousness generally." (I5)

How can the Chinese circumvent this fact, and resist this neocolonial invasion? When the quest for modern technologies to develop an ancient Oriental country to a new Western standard is so badly needed, when teaching English becomes an everyday programme, when the capitalist idea of commercials starts appearing on Chinese television, can Tunstall's prediction be disregarded for China?

The debate in the United Nations and other world forums over "media imperialism", which, to Marxists, means Western domination of the world information-flow and to Americans is based on the democratic notion of "the free flow of information", is a sincere reflection of the hopes and fears of two radically different media traditions. It raises the question of how to control the television and film-barrage which is clothed in American style. North American ideas, both the significant and the trivial, seem to pierce all censorship, and they seem to change perceptions and raise expectations—even if these are, primarily, materialist expectations. It seems virtually impossible for China, or any Third World country, to compete with the quantity and popular entertainment quality of the words and images generated by and for American television.

For better or for worse, the "tube" is America's greatest weapon. The whole idea of television as "a box in the home" is an American contribution. The Chinese

Communists originally envisaged communal viewing of large sets (rather than individual sets in each home) connected by a controlled cable system. But, whether they be American or Chinese, for the people watching television, at home, alone with their families, this medium has far more radical political and social implications than any government loudspeaker in a village.

On August the 16th, 1977, the People's Republic of China joined the agreement of the International Telecommunications Satellite Organisation (Intelsat), a group formed in 1964 to establish and operate global communications. The spacecraft involved are owned by Intelsat, whose headquarters are in Geneva. In all countries except China, ground stations are owned by the telecommunications entities (ITT, Western Union, etc.) of the countries in which they are located. China has been using the Intelsat system domestically since 1972. It now has three earth stations, two near Peking and one near Shanghai. The first international link was set up by ITT for Nixon's first visit to China. The system was a turn-key operation designed mainly to send documentation of Nixon's visit back to the U.S. Totally portable, it was the model for the two recent earth stations constructed in China. The Chinese used Nixon's visit as an opportunity for access to, and utilization of, the broad-based media-technology of

the rest of the world. (I6)

The new Chinese regime has emphasized its commitment to expanding television, to maximize the use of this medium for both education and propaganda. But when television's own space age arrives, the Chinese will undoubtelly be able to rewire television sets and replace antennae, and intercept shows being beamed down from satellites to the world. May be what will happen then, is that the Chinese government will no longer have the choice or power to constrain people on the collective farms and direct them to the "right thought". The power on innovative technology using satellites as the primary channels of communication will surely have an influence on reconstructing all world political platforms including the Chinese. (I7)

Such a reconstruction has already commenced with the mere introduction of the medium of television, as our thesis has shown. This medium from its inception in the I950s has reconstructed this society which, in John Howkin's phrase, "is communications." Once introduced, it led to the emergence of many problems and dilemmas too, and these have demanded answers and decisions which the early political philosophy of Marxism-Leninism -Maoism was not able to provide. The zig-zag approaches during the Cultural Revolution and its aftermath indicate this dilemma. In spite of controlling, the actual content

of programmes and the times of viewing, Maoism was not able to control the side-effects of making a new medium with vast popular appeal more generally available. It is equally difficult to control the generation of ideas and desires which television sows in the minds and hearts of the people who watch it.

In effect, television has been a medium which has raised the Bamboo Curtain, and it has done this from within the country. Television was like the Trojan horse: It was an interesting and curious technology from the outside world which found itself, eventually, within the camp. Once inside China it was the cause of gradual changes which few leaders and programmes alike, had expected. Television, in the fifties, prepared the ground, and led eventually in the seventies, to Deng Xiao-Ping and thus to the "Four Modernisations" policy. In their nationwide dissemination via television broadcasting, in the days of Mao, the contradictions between government policy and the actual content of what was being seen on television weakened the over all impact of the communist Party's earlier messages. Once films and news items, even entertainment items, began to appear from countries other than China, the awareness of the people and their natural critical sense became much stronger and more clearly focused.

Just as the Trojan Horse contained within itself hidden "forces" which only appeared after they were inside the city, so television contained within itself certain "forces" which have only just begun to appear and to make their presence felt. The Chinese Communist Party took television into China and thought that they would be able to control it and use it as simply and effectively as the other media. But the advances in technology and the use of satellites seem to be breaking down the possibility of a country being able to hide behind its borders, to keep its gates shut, or to keep the curtain down. The future may thus show that total control is an illusion. As well as being a Trojan Horse, television in China may turn out to be a "Pandora's Box" for the Communist leaders. What they initiated for their own ends and purposes may well contain the very "ills" to which they are militantly opposed: consumerism, materialism, capitalism, and all the other Western values and standards.

Sometimes, what people perceive may be quite different from what the CCP leaders hope for. In the series "The Man From Atlantis", the Chinese viewers saw middle-class American families, cities, shops, food, clothes, people and their attitudes, contented and happy families, medicines, hospitals, etc., and they were making their

own judgements and decisions about them. The man from Atlantis himself was insignificant in all this. What was more important was the total situation, the backdrop of society, culture, consumer-items, and all the little things which an American viewing audience does not notice and takes for granted. But these precisely are the things which are being absorbed by millions and millions of Chinese. Gradually, such television fare could become counter-productive to the intentions of the Party leaders and produce their own harvest of change and development.

In general, we can say that there are visible indications that this has already begun to take place in the whole area of love and family relations. In traditional Chinese culture, love is the basis of security, and family security comes from love. This love, sometimes presented in the form of romance, is part of human nature. But under the Chinese Communist regime, love and family security have become restructured to stand for a unit of "comrades" united by the same revolutionary cause. The family as a unit of close and warm kinship relations has given way, in official ideology, to a political cause .

Thus, love, one of the most noble feelings in traditional Chinese culture, is criticized as bourgeois.

The communist leaders believe that love should be expressed as a kind of passion, enthusiasm, or dedication to the proletariat, the people, the Communist Party, and most of all, to Chairman Mao. But since television carried a number of foreign films, especially those American ones, which inevitably exposed the Chinese viewers to Western expressions of love and family life, there has been a gradual growth in the questioning of Chinese Communism's altruistic definition of love. In I983, the sub-editor of the People's Daily, Wong Ruo-Shui wrote an article called "Humanism within Communism". This article, which presented humanism as an essential element of communism, provoked a sharp response from the Chinese Communist Party denying his interpretation. The movement known as "Clean the Pollution of the Mind" was initiated which condemned those who advocate the Western selfish kind of individual feelings of love, and who place themselves above the country, the Party and its ideology. Many thousands of Chinese have suffered the dire consequences of this campaign, which was considered " effectively completed" this year.

Another value which has "suffered" change as a result of Party's ideology is that of "loyalty". Loyalty as a prevalent value was very important in traditional Chinese culture. It is seen as important to the cause

of salvation, national security, and a sense of accomplishment. In the past, loyalty was directed to the royal courts, emperors, princes, or the nation, but today, in Communist China, it is directed to the Party, the leaders, and particularly Chairman Mao. In films, plays and Chinese revolutionary operas, salvation is closely identified with the Communist revolutionary cause for the liberation of the general masses, the proletariat, and the new society.

The sense of accomplishment arising from loyalty has often assumed a collective connotation for the Chinese. It would suggest that not only is loyalty essential to any accomplishment in Chinese culture, but accomplishment may be conceived as an expression of loyalty itself and gratitude offered by the lower classes to the ruling class. The Chinese Communist Party feels that gratitude for any national accomplishments should be given to the Party, which has been the engine of the social transformations experienced by the country in the present generation.

Though the Chinese authorities have used television to serve as an effective socializing agent for all kinds of political indoctrination, the four modernizations pose a problem because they at one and the same time

sanction the extention of a technology which is perceived as "modern", while needing to carefully screen the symbolic content conveyed. In the eighties the revolutionary programmes of the Cultural Revolution had lost their appeal for the audience simply because of a lack of diversity and variety. Now that people are able to see foreign films, foreign advances, and foreign standards of living, there is bound to be comparison of Party achievements which may not always be positive.

The Party is aware of this and a 1983 government document consequently designates television as "the strongest modern tool" for communication and education. It directs the use of television as an educational medium to purge the radical and extreme left. This in itself is a tremendous change from the past and foreshadows the Party's willingness to effect changes. Such innovations and experiments in turn will produce more change, the outcome of which is difficult to predict, because the meanings people attach to their existence are as varied as they are open-ended.

Notes

I) John Howkins, "China:this society is communications", Intermedia, I982, p. IO.

2) Ibidem, p. II.

3) Robert. T.Oliver, Communication and Culture in ancient India and China. (New York: Syracuse University Press, I97I), p.I33.

4) Antony Buzek, How the Communist Press Works (Frederick A. Praeger: N.Y., London, I964, p. I3-37.)

5) John Howkins, "China: this society is communications" Intermedia, I982, p. I3.

6) People's Daily, June I6th, I979.

7) John Howkins, op.cit. p.I4.

8) Liang Yang, "China's Burgeoning television", (Peking Review), I98I, March 9th, p. 22.

9) Ibidem, p.23.

I0) "Television Comes to China - Peking permits a 'fifth modernization' " (This article is adopted from the monthly "Monsoon" of Hong Kong. World Press Review: April I980, p. 59.

II) Wilbur Schramm, Men, Messages and Media, (New York: Harper and Row, I973), pp. I89-262.

I2) Elihu Karz and Paul Lazarsfeld, Personal Influence: The Part Played by People in the Flow of Mass Communication. (Glencoe, Ill: Free Press, I955).

I3) Keith Sonnier, "Chinese Television", Peking Review. March/April, I979. p. 26.

I4) Richard Reeves, "China Beams Aboard - Deng's new TV plans has 'made in the U.S.A.' stamped all over it." Esquire January 30; I979. p. 9.

I5) Jeremy Tunstall, "The media Are American - Anglo-American Media in The World. (Constable and Company Ltd.), I977. p. 77.

I6) Richard Reeves, "China Beam Aboard - Deng's new TV plans has 'made in the U.S.A.' stamped all over it", Esquire. January 30, I979. pp. 9-IO.

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