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Expose and Punish: Trial by Moving Images in Revolutionary China

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Abstract

Expose and Punish: Trial by Moving Images in Revolutionary China

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My dissertation traces a history of how class struggle was made *of* and *through* moving images in China. Whereas many existing studies concerning socialism and leftist cultural politics treat class struggle as a given fact, my dissertation draws back the curtain on how class struggle was *constructed* in China. Much emphasis has been put on either the violent components of Mao's class war or Chinese class struggle as a project saturated with displays, performances, and spectacles. However, the intersection of class struggle as both spectacular violence and spectatorial violence remains largely underexplored. Through historicizing the merging of violence and spectacle within an overarching class-coded system, however, my dissertation suggests the mutual constitution of image making and justice, upon which the project of class struggle was legitimized, and in effect produced everyday violence.

Drawing on archives, fieldwork, and an audiovisual corpus, the project examines the mass production of what I call *looks of enmities*—penal spectacles, incriminating media, hate images, antagonistic ideologies, and encounters of watching-as-judging. Overall, the project is a dual history of trial as media and media as trial in revolutionary China. Concerning the complex interrelation between photographic media vis-à-vis socialist criminal justice and violence driven by a singular and overarching system of partitioning coded in the term *class*, my dissertation intends to challenge established boundaries within which both film/art-historical scholarship and legal historiographies are usually approached and disseminated. I address the following questions: Historically, how did (audio)visual media and trial/execution, whether legal or extralegal, intersect in China? How did moving images enact and, in turn, shape punishment and the politics of enemy-making in the age of class struggle? Theoretically, (how) is justice visible? How does an image shame or judge, and how does cinema punish? Methodologically, what is the role of the archive in history, historiography, and historical thinking? How do archival images live their own lives?

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My explorations of China's traumatic past began in the years when I was studying in Hong Kong and also working as a contributing writer for media organizations. One of the most memorable feature stories was one piece called "Searching those Invisible Wounded People" that I partook in by conducting interviews and writing for *Southern Weekly*. It was a story about the transgenerational transmission of trauma produced by the Chinese Cultural Revolution. A story of how survivors and their offspring, researchers, and mental health professionals had been dealing with an invisible black hole they somehow shared. The biggest fact I learned from that experience of writing about trauma and continue to learn it in refreshing ways is that *trauma lives on and on*, while the healing process seems to be underway. The pain *was* and *is* there. In so many ways, either visibly or invisibly, it will *never* go away. It lives inside the body and the mind. In our ongoing past and in the present. Much likely, also in the unimaginable future.

Retrospectively, I see my dissertation as a record of both my scholarly and personal journey throughout the PhD years. If the point of departure was to regard the pain of others and take it seriously, now there is something new I embark on: the rediscovery and rethinking of the pain of both others and my own. I did not realize that I could or perhaps should identify myself as a survivor of trauma (while it is, unrelated to the Cultural Revolution, a completely different kind of trauma), until I found those previously unrecognized connections between my initial research interests, concerns, and personal histories: trial, violence, pain, justice, and female shame; until I became a witness and, consequentially, the co-defendant of a defamation court case in China (as part of the #MeToo-inspired wave of defamation lawsuits). At that time, I was, in my worst moments, going through the most difficult stages of my research and dissertation writing. Thanks to such experiences and a group of people around me, I have lost and found my own voice as well as a way of speaking through scholarship. My dissertation is a long-term product of many such unexpected encounters. It is impossible to name all the individuals and institutions that have enabled my work, since research and writing is often a solidarity endeavor. But I would love to try my best to keep a record as my way of appreciating those accompanying me in solicitude.

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DEDICATION

For Wei, my parents,
and those survivors and silence breakers

Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION

The classic epic *Farewell, My Concubine* (1993) perhaps exemplifies one of the most iconic forms of spectacular violence in Mao's China. A set of highly visible formal elements mark the familiar moment for many Chinese people: gesticulating and slogan-shouting masses, the objects of struggle hanging their heads or kneeling down (sometimes wearing dunce caps or holding their arms in a humiliating and painful position called *the jet plane style*), and big sign boards with denunciatory labels written on them, and with the person's name crossed out. The scene is called *pidou* 批鬥 (literally, denouncing and struggling) or *pidouhui* 批鬥會 (struggle sessions), referring to a constellation of generic mass gatherings in which class enemies were accused and tormented in public.¹ Scenes of *pidou* are drawn both spatially and symbolically. They frame an open spot that demarcates *the people* as the enclosure and *their enemies* as the center, with the question of membership at stake.



Figure 1. *Pidou* as an image of demarcation, film still from *Farewell, My Concubine* (1993).

Pidou is an elaborate assemblage invented during the heyday of Chinese socialism, as well as a constellation of practices that caused ordinary people to commit extraordinary (bodily,

¹ The term was coined by the Chinese Communist Party. Incorporating theatrical elements and seemingly judicial or semi-judicial procedures (interrogation, torture, trial, and punishment), *pidou* staged the ritual of popular justice, in which the “good,” the exploited classes were urged to struggle against the “evil,” the exploiting classes.

linguistic, or symbolic) violence in the name of pursuing people's justice. Comparable to soviet phenomena ranging from shop-floor scapegoating to agitation trials, Chinese cases of *pidou* incorporated theatrical elements and seemingly judicial or semi-judicial procedures, such as interrogation, trial, torture, and punishment.² These generic practices were generally about the staging of popular justice, in which the “good,” the exploited classes, were urged to struggle against the “evil,” the classes who did the exploiting.

1.1 KEY TERM I: CLASS EXORCISM

Whereas many existing studies concerning socialism and leftist cultural politics treat class struggle as a *given fact*, my dissertation draws back the curtain on how class struggle was *constructed* in China. Much emphasis has been put on either the violent components of Mao's class war or Chinese class struggle as a project saturated with displays, performances, and spectacles.³ However, the intersection of class struggle as both *spectacular* violence and

² See Sheila Fitzpatrick. *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999). There are various ways of naming similar historical phenomena such as accusatory practices, mass denunciation, and so forth. See Sheila Fitzpatrick, Robert Gellately, and Mazal Holocaust Collection. *Accusatory Practices: Denunciation in Modern European History, 1789-1989*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997); Sheila Fitzpatrick. *Tear off the Masks: Identity and Imposture in Twentieth-century Russia*. (Princeton [N.J.]: Princeton University Press, 2005).

³ Concerning the rich scholarship on violence (particularly around the Cultural Revolution) in Mao era, see Lynn T. White. *Policies of Chaos: The Organizational Causes of Violence in China's Cultural Revolution*. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press), 1989; Anne F. Thurston, “Urban Violence During the Cultural Revolution: Who Is to Blame?” in *Violence in China: Essays in Culture and Counterculture*. Edited by Jonathan N. Lipman and Stevan Harrell. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990, 149-74; Xiuyuan Lu. “A Step Toward Understanding Popular Violence in China's Cultural Revolution.” *Pacific Affairs* 67, no. 4 (1994): 533-63; Donald S. Sutton. “Consuming Counterrevolution: The Ritual and Culture of Cannibalism in Wuxuan, Guangxi, China, May to July 1968.” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 37, no. 1 (1995): 136-72; Cheng-Chih Wang. *Words Kill: Calling for the Destruction of “class Enemies” in China, 1949-1953*. (New York: Routledge, 2002); Xiaoyang Zhu. *Zui Guo Yu Cheng Fa: Xiao Cun Gu Shi, 1931-1997*. 罪過與懲罰: 小村故事, 1931-1997 (Crime and Punishment: The Story of a Small Village in China 1931-1997). (Tianjin: Tianjin gu ji chu ban she, 2003); Yang Su. *Collective Killings in Rural China during the Cultural Revolution*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011). For works about the role of rituals, performances, and spectacles in Mao's China, for example, see Franklin W. Houn. “The Stage as a Medium of Propaganda in Communist China.” *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 23, no. 2 (1959): 223-35; Göran Aijmer. “Political Ritual: Aspects of the Mao Cult during the Cultural ‘Revolution’.” *China Information* 11, no. 2-3 (1996): 215-31; Daniel Leese. *Mao Cult: Rhetoric and Ritual in the Cultural Revolution*. (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Jeremy. E. Taylor. “The Sinification of Soviet

spectatorial violence remains largely underexplored. Neither the notion of the spectacle nor the practice of violence itself is new; they each possess a distinct and complex genealogy that has been engaged by a number of scholars. Through historicizing the merging of violence and spectacle within an overarching *class*-coded system, however, my dissertation suggests the *mutual constitution of image making and justice*, upon which the project of class struggle was legitimized, and in effect produced everyday violence.

At the heart of Maoist class struggle, identifying who was part of the Chinese proletarian masses was an urgent and public matter. Marx's theory of class struggle describes the conflicts between the bourgeois and the proletariat in transition towards a proletariat dictatorship and a classless utopia. In China, Mao's rhetoric of *class struggle* (*jieji douzheng* 階級鬥爭) prior to 1949 had been effective as the guiding principle for the communist revolution and, further as an enduring justification for "continuous revolution" after 1949.⁴ Everything builds up to class struggle, which is, as the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) claimed, a struggle necessitated by the basic contradictions between the proletariat and the classes opposed to them, between the Chinese people and "feudalism" (landlordism and premodern social forms).⁵ Since its

Agitational Theatre: 'Living Newspapers' in Mao's China," *Journal of the British Association for Chinese Studies*. 2, (2013): 27-50; Tuo Wang. *The Cultural Revolution and Overacting: Dynamics between Politics and Performance*. (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2014); Brian James DeMare. *Mao's Cultural Army: Drama Troupes in China's Rural Revolution*. (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

⁴ About the "continuous revolution" in theory and in practice, see Stuart R. Schram. "Mao Tse-tung and the Theory of the Permanent Revolution, 1958–69." *The China Quarterly* (London) 46, no. 46 (1971): 221-44; Lowell Dittmer. *China's Continuous Revolution: The Post-liberation Epoch, 1949-1981*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987); Timothy Cheek. "Introduction: Comrade, Chairman, Helmsman—The Continuous Revolutions of Mao Zedong," in *Mao Zedong and China's Revolutions: A Brief History with Documents*. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2002), 1-36.

⁵ Concerning the CCP's theory and practice of class struggle and class analysis, see Richard Curt Kraus. *Class Conflict in Chinese Socialism*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981); James L. Watson, "Introduction: class and class formation in Chinese society," James L. Watson (ed.), *Class and Social Stratification in Post-Revolution China* (Cambridge, etc.: Cambridge University Press, 1984); Jean-Francois Billeter. "The System of 'Class Status,'" in *The Scope of State Power in China*, ed. Stuart R. Schram. (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1985), 127–169; Philip Huang. "Rural Class Struggle in the Chinese Revolution:

establishment, the CCP had employed the method of *jiejī fenxi* 階級分析 (class analysis) to solve the land problem, promote its political ideals, and seize state power.⁶ As Mao argued, “[everything] in this world can be categorized, and [with] mankind the division is by [social] class,” and the primary division of social life depended on “class.”⁷ In Brian DeMare’s words, a set of “ferocious ritual[s] that allowed peasants to obtain their liberation by *publicly* attacking landlords and other class enemies” prominently framed and embodied what was understood as class struggle.⁸ It should be crucial and necessary to explore how *class* was presented and shaped as objective scientific fact as its authoritative foundation for a theory of history.

Indeed, as the CCP rose to power, a “demonizing discourse,” defined by the historian Michael Schoenhals, “[as] the ‘essential’ distinction between people and non-people,” started to

Representational and Objective Realities from the Land Reform to the Cultural Revolution.” *Modern China* 21.1 (1995): 105-143; Wen-Hsin Yeh. *Provincial Passages: Culture, Space, and the Origins of Chinese Communism*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996); Wenhui Cai. *Class Struggle and Deviant Labeling in Mao’s China: Becoming Enemies of the People*. (Lewiston, N.Y.: E. Mellen Press, 2001); Xing Lu. *The Rhetoric of Mao Zedong: Transforming China and Its People*. (University of South Carolina Press, 2017); Brian James DeMare. *Land Wars: The Story of China’s Agrarian Revolution*. (Stanford University Press, 2019).

⁶ For Mao’s class analysis, see Mao Zedong, “Analysis of the Classes in Chinese Society” (1926), *The Selected Works of Mao Zedong, vol. 1* (Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 1960), 13-21; Xinhua fenshe 新華分社. *Zenyang Fenxi Jieji 怎樣分析階級* (How to Analyze Class). (Hong Kong: Zhongguo chubanshe, 1949), 1-18. *How to Analyze Class* published in the 1949 version in Hong Kong was an excerpt of the 1933 document with the same title, issued by the Jiangxi Soviet government. This book also included 中央政府關於土地鬥爭中一些問題的決定. There were three most important documents concerning class division issued in the history of CCP’s land reform. Apart from *How to Analyze Classes* (1933) 怎樣分析農村階級, two other documents are *the Direction from the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China concerning Differentiating Classes and Different Treatments (draft)* (1948) 中共中央關於土地改革中各社會階級的劃分及其待遇的規定(草案) and (1950) 政務院關於劃分農村階級成分的決定. See 中南軍政委員會土地改革委員會編. *Tudi gaige zhongyao wenxian yu ziliao* 土地改革重要文獻與資料 (Important Archives and Documents of the Land Reform Movement). Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1950.

⁷ “Di shiliuci zuigao guowuhuiyishang de jianghua,” 第十六次最高國務會議上的講話 the English translation is from Zedong Mao. “Speech at the Sixteenth Supreme State Conference April 15, 1959,” in *Mao Tse-tung: Previously Untranslated Documents (1957-1967)*, *Chinese Law and Government*, IX, 3, (1976): 103.

⁸ Brian DeMare. *Land Wars: The Story of China’s Agrarian Revolution* (Stanford University Press 2019), XI. (emphasis mine).

permeate mass campaigns in the decades to come.⁹ Such a discourse proliferated as a binary framework of the heroic exploits of the good and the demonic machinations of the bad. The opening of the canonical *Selected Works of Mao Zedong* defines the parameters of this framework by asking “Who are our enemies? Who are our friends? This is a question of the first importance for the revolution.”¹⁰ Originally written in 1926, the questions set up the conceptual basis of a police force prior to the invention of the Maoist state. They described the driving force behind CCP’s campaign-style politics: defending Party power by policing the line between the friend and the enemy.¹¹ Mao’s questions reappeared in August 1966 publication of Mao Zedong’s “Mother of All Mass Movements” but with a notable addition: “Who are our enemies? Who are our friends? This is a question of the first importance for the revolution, as well as a question of the first importance for the Great Cultural Revolution.”¹² Wang Xiaojue observes that this claim has to be understood within the Cold War framework that had been deeply ingrained in the Chinese politics, society, and culture since the late 1940s.¹³ The framework provided a key foundation for the whole sets of claims, semantics, concepts, and cultural representations surrounding heroes and demons, proletariat and landlords, revolutionary masses

⁹ Michael Schoenhals. “Demonizing Discourse in Mao Zedong’s China: People vs Non-People.” *Totalitarian Movements & Political Religions* 8, no. 3/4 (2007): 465-82.

¹⁰ This was published in 1951 to mark the second anniversary of the founding of the PRC. About the English translation, see Zedong Mao. *Selected Works of Mao Zedong* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1967; 1977), vol. 1, 13.

¹¹ See Michael Robert Dutton. *Policing Chinese Politics: A History*. (Duke University Press, 2005).

¹² The English translation is from Michael Schoenhals (ed.), *China’s Cultural Revolution, 1966–1969: Not a Dinner Party* (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1996), 33–43. About Mao’s claims about the people-enemy dichotomy, also see Mao Zedong 毛澤東. “On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People,” 關於正確處理人民內部矛盾的問題, in *Mao Zedong xuanji diwujuan* 毛澤東選集第五卷 (*Selected Works of Mao Zedong, Vol. 5*), (Beijing: People’s Press 北京: 人民出版社), 1977.

¹³ Xiaojue Wang. *Modernity with a Cold War Face: Reimagining the Nation in Chinese Literature across the 1949 Divide*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Asia Center, 2013), 4-5.

and counterrevolutionaries, and the people and the *class enemies* (*jieji diren* 階級敵人) in the Mao era. The penetration of the enemy/us dichotomy into people's everyday life took the form of violence that was driven by and enacted by a singular and overarching system of partitioning coded in terms of class.

This dissertation traces a media history of what might be called *class exorcism*—popular obsessions with unmasking, accusing, and expelling “class enemies”—which functioned as a guarantee of the continued purity and transparency on which the Chinese communist revolution and “continuous revolution” depended.¹⁴ On the one hand, class exorcism appeared to be practiced as widespread corporeal, linguistic, and symbolic violence in divergent forms such as spectacular shame penalties, sanctions, and executions on the spot. On the other hand, class exorcism was embedded in cultural production and perceptual encounters of incrimination (through mass media, with a trial-like setting) that endorsed “class justice” for and of the people. Historically grounded in the legal and moral lives of socialism, the focus of my dissertation is a wide range of “show trials,” material or mediated, that enabled class exorcism and its enduring legacies in China.

1.2 KEY TERM II: THE EXPOSURE COMPLEX

Drawing on archives, fieldwork, oral histories, and an audiovisual corpus, my work explores the mass (re-)production of what I call *looks of enmity*—penal spectacles, hateful

¹⁴ I describe the preoccupation with such practices in the Chinese revolution as “class(ist) exorcism”—a working concept inspired by what Barend J. ter Haar calls “demonological paradigm”, Peter Baehr’s notion of unmasking, and others works concerning exorcism. See Barend J. Ter Haar, “China’s Inner Demons: The Political Impact of the Demonological Paradigm.” *China Information* 11, no. 2-3 (1996): 54-85; Peter Baehr and Daniel Gordon. “Unmasking and Disclosure as Sociological Practices: Contrasting Modes for Understanding Religious and Other Beliefs.” *Journal of Sociology* 48, no. 4 (2012): 380-96; Mary Douglas. *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. (Ark, 1984).

images, incriminating media, antagonistic ideologies, and encounters of watching-as-judging in China. I share the views of scholars who hold that the dominant Foucauldian model cannot simply fit into the Chinese context, a context in which, crucially, disciplinary power is exercised through visibility and publicity.¹⁵ With that in mind, I develop *exposure* as an analytical concept to describe the mode of (re)producing looks of enmity. This framework driven by the logic whereby the People-as-One is achievable and perceivable operates only via the *appearance* and *visibility* of class enemies.¹⁶ By “exposure,” I mean an effect of being made public, considered as the necessity for any form of “dou” 鬥爭/鬥 (struggling against). In other words, I want to stress the highly visible mode that enabled and shaped Maoist class exorcisms. I address four entangled sites of such exposures, where looks of enmity were produced through public display and mass performance: the courtroom or punishment spot, the exhibition space, the pictorial/photographic frame, and the cinema screen. In establishing the centrality of the violence-spectacle dynamics in enacting class exorcism, the sites share the same motivation: to expose and to render the “evil” others visible for the sake of justice; at once to produce punitive images and to perform the image-punishment and acts of display as punishment.

¹⁵ For example, see Ann Anagnost. “Socialist Ethics and the Legal System,” in *Popular Protest and Political Culture in Modern China: Learning from 1989*, ed. Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom and Elizabeth J. Perry. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1992, 177-205; Ann Anagnost. *National Past-Times: Narrative, Representation, and Power in Modern China* (Duke University Press, 1997); Karen Turner. “The Criminal Body and the Body Politic: Punishments in Early Imperial China.” *Cultural Dynamics* 11, no. 2 (1999): 237-54; Børge Bakken. *The Exemplary Society: Human Improvement, Social Control, and the Dangers of Modernity in China* (Oxford University Press, 2000).

¹⁶ *Exposure* has been variously defined; here it refers to a combination of multiple meanings as follows: the act of subjecting someone (“class enemies”, namely, the object of struggle) to an influencing (mostly violent, shameful, and punitive) experience; abandoning without shelter or protection; to the action of heat or cold or wind or rain; the disclosure of something secret (the imposed and hidden identity of the “enemies” and/or evil deeds); presentation to view in an open or public manner; the state of being exposed or vulnerable (mostly traumatically); and the general practices of mediating something and rendering it visible (aligned to the act of exposing film to light; a picture of a person or scene in the form of a print or transparent slide; recorded by a camera on light-sensitive material; the intensity of light falling on a photographic film or plate).

What I propose as *the exposure complex* refers to a matrix of socio-cultural forms and institutions, including religious ritual, political assembly, criminal justice, theatrical performance, and (audio)visual practices, such as lantern slideshows, photojournalism, exhibitions, and cinema. In the context of the exposure complex, these forms all share a spectacular, punitive form, and through this form, they partake in the process of class exorcism. The exposure complex embodies a rich network of *pidou* practices, generic sessions that incorporated theatrical elements and seemingly judicial or semi-judicial procedures (interrogation, torture, trial, and punishment). The brutality of class exorcism was specifically condensed in practices of *pidou*. Such generic practices went by a variety of names with different connotations—denunciation rallies, struggle meetings, public shaming rituals, etc.—however, the essential act remained the same over time.¹⁷ Within the network, the various practices must not be understood in isolation from one another; all shared the *pidou* mechanism to establish “class” categories and hierarchies to justify the structure of power and violence. They were largely characterized by the discursive currency of terms like “exposing” or “unmasking” (*baolu* 暴露, *jielou* 揭露, *chuochua* 戳穿, *sikai huapi* 撕開畫皮 *tear off the mask*, etc.). “Exposing to the Public” (*shizhong* 示眾) was specifically one of the most used and recognizable slogans (e.g.,

¹⁷ Such a complex of practices must not be understood in isolation from one another that all shared the *pidou* mechanism to establish “class” categories and hierarchies that justify the structure of power and violence. Those practices of varies types included *qunzhong/renmin fating* (people’s court 群眾/人民法庭), *kongsu hui* (public accusation meeting 控訴會), *doudizhu* (struggling against the landlords 鬥地主), *douzheng dahui* (struggle meetings 鬥爭大會 or other forms described as 說理會/民主批評會/清算會/訴苦會), *tongzhi shenpan hui* (comrades’ trial 同志審判會), *gongpan/gongshen dahui* (public execution/show trial 公判/公審大會), *youjie* (shame parade 掛牌遊街), *huoren zhanlan* (human display 活人展覽), *jieji zui’e zhan* (class crime exhibition 階級罪惡展); *baizhou tu* (the display of one-hundred-clown picture 百/群丑圖公示), among many others (揪斗、遊斗、評審鬥爭、斗批改、示眾會、反霸鬥爭).

“drag out for public display” 揪出來示眾) in campaigns that adopted *pidou* of many kinds.¹⁸

Exposures enabled and shaped the process of punishing on a massive level. My dissertation aims to suggest that the exposure complex fundamentally functioned to routinize violence against purported enemies, giving violence social acceptability, legitimacy, and popularity.¹⁹

¹⁸ For centuries in premodern China, *shizhong* 示眾 (displaying the condemned or “evil” others in public), a loosely defined term, was well known as the means par excellence of disgracing and shaming offenders in a public setting and was used as both a single and a supplementary punishment within a wide range of sanctions and penalties. In general, the major types of shaming punishments included (1) public parade or infamous procession, in some cases with symbols, masks, or just naked; (2) public exposure in a particular place, such as a pillory, and with constraints, such as a sign or attached symbols that announced the deviance; and (3) public humiliation through specific manipulations, perhaps light flogging, shaving, or drowning. See Jörg Wettlaufer and Yasuhiro Nishimura. 2012. “The History of Shaming Punishments and Public Exposure in Penal law in Comparative Perspective: Western Europe and East Asia.” In *Shame between Punishment and Penance: The Social Usages of Shame in the Middle-Ages and Early Modern Times*, edited by Benedicte Sere and Jörg Wettlaufer. Florence, Sismel-Ed. del Galluzzo, 2013, 199-200; also see Itaru Tomiya. *Capital Punishment in East Asia*. (Portland, Or.: Kyoto University Press, 2012).

¹⁹ Some significant and yet fragmental attention has been paid to a wide-ranging spectrum of practices related to *pidou* (*hui*), either with or without being named as such: for example, about criticism and “self-criticism”, see Lowell Dittmer. “The Structural Evolution of ‘Criticism and Self-Criticism’.” *The China Quarterly* 53 (1973): 708-29; for linguistic and literary practices of denunciation, see Cheng-Chih Wang. *Words Kill: Calling for the Destruction of “Class Enemies” in China, 1949-1953*. (New York: Routledge, 2002); for “kongsu hui,” namely, public accusation meetings particularly during the Korean War and the “Suppression of Counterrevolutionaries” campaign, see Julia C. Strauss, “Paternalist Terror: The Campaign to Suppress Counterrevolutionaries and Regime Consolidation in the People's Republic of China, 1950-1953,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 44, no. 1 (2002), 80-105; for 打土豪鬥地主 as both the predecessors and avatars of struggle sessions, see 張世瑛. 罪與罰: 北伐時期湖南地區懲治土豪劣紳中的暴力儀式 “Crime and Punishment: The Violent Punishment Done to the Landowners and Gentries in Hunan during the Period of Northern Expedition,” *國史館學術集刊* 9 (2004): 49-101; for public execution, see Chang-tai Hung. “The Anti-Unity Sect Campaign and Mass Mobilization in the Early People's Republic of China.” *The China Quarterly* 202 (2010): 400-20; for speaking bitterness as political confession, see Feiyu Sun. *Social Suffering and Political Confession: Suku in Modern China*. (Singapore: World Scientific, 2012); for people's court, see Xiaoping Cong. “‘Ma Xiwu's Way of Judging’: Villages, the Masses and Legal Construction in Revolutionary China in the 1940s.” *The China Journal*, no. 72 (2014): 29-52; for thought reform and different *pidou*-related elements, see Ping Hu. *The Thought Remolding Campaign of the Chinese Communist Party-State*. (Amsterdam University Press, 2012); for struggling against landlords in the form of exhibitions, see Haiyan Lee. “The Enemy Within,” in *The Stranger and the Chinese Moral Imagination*. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press), 2014, 197-242; and Denise. Y. Ho, and Jie Li. “From Landlord Manor to Red Memorabilia: Reincarnations of a Chinese Museum Town.” *Modern China* (2015): 1-35; and there are many more other works.



Figure 1-1 *Shizhong* as integral to *pidou*, rhetorically and materially: the “One Hundred Clowns” posters based on photographic collage of *pidou* showing “Drag out the counterrevolutionary revisionist elements and expose (*shizhong*) them,” January 1967.

The foundation of class exorcism can be understood as a culture of pervasive exposures in which anyone could be exposed. Exposure refers to the act of making oppositional others visible, viewable, and visually knowable as “the evil,” besieged and governed by a judgmental view from the collective body. The notion of exposure describes and theorizes the primary mode of interpersonal networking and class-knowledge production that came to characterize the Maoist lifeworld. People exposed one another as opposites, and it was through this process that collectives were brought into being. Mutually exposed, both the “people” and the “enemies of the people” dealt with the problem of violence and vision vis-à-vis identity formation in the process of class struggle. Seeing exposure as a dynamic process helps to move beyond the dominant top-down approach by stressing complex socio-political factors that defy binary

relations between either the (party-state) authority and people, or spectators and spectacle.²⁰ *The exposure complex* thus points to a multilateral network of practices and mediated encounters through which simultaneously exposing and exposed bodies play dynamic, interchangeable roles.

1.3 MATERIALS, METHODOLOGIES, AND RESEARCH INQUIRIES

An exploration of the exposure complex engages with the undertheorized dynamics among Maoist justice, emotions, and technologies of truth-making by casting light on the socialist construction of criminal bodies.²¹ My dissertation moves beyond conventional historiographic concerns about Chinese socialism (high politics, party programs, official propaganda, the quest for power, and economic policies), all of which have been well documented, and much explored by scholars.²² My emphasis is instead on the everyday production of *pidou*, as driven by feelings, words, ideas, and fictions that acquired the power to

²⁰ Peter Kenez. *The Birth of the Propaganda State: Soviet Methods of Mass Mobilization, 1917-1929*. (Cambridge [England]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Lynn Mally. *Revolutionary Acts: Amateur Theater and the Soviet State, 1917-1938*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000).

²¹ Several works especially help me to rethink law, legal culture, and the construction of criminal body in China, particularly in the Mao era. See Jeffrey C Kinkley. *Chinese Justice, the Fiction: Law and Literature in Modern China*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2000; David, Der-wei Wang. "Crime or Punishment? On the Forensic Discourse of Modern Chinese Literature." in *Becoming Chinese, Becoming Chinese*, (University of California Press, 2000); Robert E. Hegel and Katherine Carliz. *Writing and Law in Late Imperial China: Crime, Conflict, and Judgment*. University of Washington Press, 2007; Eugenia Lean. *Public Passions: The Trial of Shi Jianqiao and the Rise of Popular Sympathy in Republican China*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007); Alexander Cook. *The Cultural Revolution on Trial: Mao and the Gang of Four*. (Cambridge University Press, 2016); Susan Trevaskes. "Weaponising the Rule of Law in China." *Justice: The China Experience*. Ed. Flora Sapio, Susan Trevaskes, Sarah Biddulph, and Elisa Nesossi. (Cambridge University Press, 2017), 113-40. Puck Engman and Daniel Leese. *Victims, Perpetrators, and the Role of Law in Maoist China: A Case-Study Approach*. (Walter De Gruyter GmbH, 2018); and Jennifer E. Althenger. *Legal Lessons: Popularizing Laws in the People's Republic of China, 1949-1989*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Asia Center, 2018).

²² See some of the historiographies of Chinese socialist revolution: David E. Apter and Tony Saich. *Revolutionary Discourse in Mao's Republic*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994); Roderick MacFarquhar and Michael Schoenhals. *Mao's Last Revolution*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006); Elizabeth J. Perry. *Anyuan: Mining China's Revolutionary Tradition*. (Berkeley: University of California, 2012); Andrew G. Walder. *China under Mao: A Revolution Derailed*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2015); Andrew M. Greeley. *The Chinese Economy Under Maoism*. (Routledge, 2017), among many others.

regulate and shape political behavior and institutions. In contrast to existing scholarship that rarely treats pidou as a specific object of historical analysis, this dissertation unearths the logistics of pidou within a long-term network of its variables, from the material, mediated, and mental, to the symbolic; from the pictorial, theatrical, and exhibitionary, to the cinematic.

This dissertation seeks to provide a non-Western, historical and interdisciplinary perspective that draws attention to alternative narratives of cinematic arts and media overshadowed by the Euro-American-centric ideological framework or technology-determinist narratives. It reveals the *longue durée* of the exposure complex that performs what I call *cinema as show trial*, complexly imbricated in the time period's moral imagination and its ways of othering.²³ Thus, the dissertation opens new conceptual avenues for rethinking cinema and exhibition as social apparatus while intersecting with broader inquiries of global socialism, media labor, and judicial imagination. As a fresh step beyond the familiar terrain of the art and film historiography (representations, masterpieces, auteurs, genres, major studios and aesthetic trends), my dissertation centers on the social life of vernacular images, which are susceptible to banal marginalization as ephemera, but which shift and blur the boundaries between high and low art, professional and amateur images, fiction and nonfiction.²⁴ My dissertation therefore has

²³ In questioning an oversimplified and seemingly self-evident approach that largely relies on cinematic representations of pidou, what I would call the Maoist mechanism of pidou as cinema speaks to the rich and complex relationship between pidou and cinema at various intertwined levels: 1) pidou as pro-filmic event; 2) scenes of pidou in fiction films; 3) filmgoing and loosely defined cinematic experience in the pidou setting that puts films, filmmakers, producers, audiences, and other people involved "on trial"; 4) beyond the screening/exhibition space: human encounters with the paratextual world of films as literary pidou; and 5) the cinematic imagination and imaging of "the Maoist State" in anti-Communist Taiwan, British colonial Hong Kong, and other non-Chinese areas either beyond the Communist Bloc or within it but in a temporary conflict with the PRC (such as United States and Soviet Union) as an alternative form of pidou within the context of Cold War.

²⁴ My emphasis on images, medium, and form does not preclude me from examining the social and political ramifications of class exorcism and pidou. Instead, reading pidou as moving images closely has enabled me to approach them with tools gathered from outside my own discipline of cinema/media studies and art history and to understand better the mutual constitution of and dynamics between image and justice.

been developed to fashion an archive out of unconventional materials, such as community texts, personal artifacts, and various forms of visual ephemera, including family photos, illustrated storybooks, personal artifacts, unpublished notebooks, diaries, booklets, slides, film stills, and exhibition catalogs. All those were part of the mass-produced Maoist media network on a daily basis. This methodology allows me to question the oversimplified discourses of socialist visual culture as propaganda, and to reflect on what has been concealed, highlighted, and misrepresented in dominant narratives.²⁵

In an attempt to elucidate the symbiosis between image and justice in China, my dissertation engages with three large scholarly contexts: first, the increasing recognition and problematization of the image as central to the production of legitimacy, aesthetics, and order in modern society (also responding to legal humanities and visual criminology)²⁶; second, a globally growing body of work on the relationship between violence and witnessing;²⁷ third, the surge of critical interest in ideology as everyday violence in socialist cultural production.²⁸ As a

²⁵ Some recent work has offered refreshing perspectives on Mao-era cinema. See Yomi Braester, “The political campaign as genre: Ideology and iconography during the Seventeen Years Period,” *Modern Language Quarterly*, 69, no. 1 (2008): 119–140; Yomi Braester. “A Genealogy of Cinephilia in the Maoist Period.” In *The Oxford Handbook of Chinese Cinemas* (Oxford University Press, 2013); Chenshu Zhou. “The Versatile Film Projectionist: How to Show Films and Serve the People in the 17 years Period, 1949-1966.” *Journal of Chinese Cinemas* 10, no. 3 (2016): 228-46; Ying Qian. “When Taylorism Met Revolutionary Romanticism: Documentary Cinema in China’s Great Leap Forward.” *Critical Inquiry* 46, no. 3 (2020): 578-604; Jie Li. “Cinematic Guerrillas in Mao’s China,” *Screen*. Volume 61, Issue 2, (Summer 2020): 207–229. For two most recent book-length studies, see Jessica Ka Yee Chan. *Chinese Revolutionary Cinema: Propaganda, Aesthetics and Internationalism, 1949-1966*. (London: I.B. Tauris, 2019); Xiaoning Lu. *Moulding the Socialist Subject: Cinema and Chinese Modernity (1949-1966)*. (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2020).

²⁶ Works such as Costas Douzinas and Lynda Nead. *Law and the Image: The Authority of Art and the Aesthetics of Law*. (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1999); Katherine Biber. *Captive Images: Race, Crime, Photography*. (New York: Routledge-Cavendish, 2007); Alison Young. *Judging the Image: Art, Value, Law*. (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2013).

²⁷ See Judith Butler. *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?* (London; New York: Verso, 2009); Azoulay, Ariella. *The Civil Contract of Photography*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Zone Books, 2008); Gil Z. Hochberg. *Visual Occupations: Violence and Visibility in a Conflict Zone*. (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 2015).

²⁸ See Andrew Hewitt. *Social Choreography: Ideology as Performance in Dance and Everyday Movement*. (Durham [NC]: Duke University Press, 2005); Laikwan Pang. *The Art of Cloning: Creative Production during China's*

Chinese response to the anthropological turn in visual studies, my dissertation deals with the *visual economies of violence*—the production, circulation, distribution, and perception of images *about* and *as* violence per se—within which the prominence of human encounter and agency is brought into focus.²⁹

Weihong Bao and Zhuoyi Wang have reminded us of the vital need to question Chinese cinema and media historiographies as either narratives driven by technological determinism, or as teleological narratives that readily ignore fractured developments and cross-boundary players.³⁰ My project participates in the New Cinema Historical endeavor in the sense that it reveals the mutual accomplishments of an alternative set of fluid cinema–cultural configurations and a radical (media) revolution: an enduring show trial of various “enemies.” Theoretically and methodologically, I am indebted to the nuanced studies of Pooja Rangan and Yomi Braester, which locate cinema as social apparatus in a much wider frame of reference and in conjunction with numerous human encounters, relations, and other media, bodies, and objects, particularly outside of the usual modes of inquiry based in psychoanalysis, narratology, or ideology

Cultural Revolution. (London: Verso, 2017); Emma Widdis. *Socialist Senses: Film, Feeling, and the Soviet Subject, 1917-1940*. (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2017).

²⁹ My use of “visual economy” is generally inspired by anthropological approaches to film and visual culture, such as what is called “the image world” from Deborah Poole. *Vision, Race, and Modernity: A Visual Economy of the Andean Image World*. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997); Christopher Pinney. *Camera Indica: The Social Life of Indian Photographs*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997); Winnie Won Yin Wong. 2013. *Van Gogh on Demand: China and the Readymade*. (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press); Sasha Su-Ling Welland. *Experimental Beijing: Gender and Globalization in Chinese Contemporary Art*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018); Karen Strassler. *Demanding Images: Democracy, Mediation, and the Image-Event in Indonesia*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2020); as well as the following works: Dobrenko, E. A. *Political Economy of Socialist Realism*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007); Laikwan Pang. *The Art of Cloning: Creative Production during China's Cultural Revolution*. (London: Verso, 2017); Denise Y Ho. *Curating Revolution: Politics on Display in Mao's China*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

³⁰ See Weihong Bao. *Fiery Cinema: The Emergence of an Affective Medium in China, 1915-1945*. (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2015); Zhuoyi Wang. *Revolutionary Cycles in Chinese Cinema, 1951-1979*. (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

analysis.³¹ I seek to contribute to current debates in cinema and media studies by turning the *dispositif*—which, in recent years, has been widely explored as a theoretical concept—into an analytical tool and a mode of thinking in the context of socialism and global leftist politics.³² In doing so, I consider the entangled intersections between moving images and punitive violence as central to understanding a society cast into turmoil by revolution or social mutation.

A few studies serve as guiding examples for my research. Alison Griffiths's *Carceral Fantasies: Cinema and Prison in Early Twentieth-Century America* is about cinema and its socially mechanical double: prison.³³ As the first book-length study of such a topic in both historical and theoretical terms, *Carceral Fantasies* blends film scholarship with the history of American prison system. It is not only a groundbreaking contribution to the study of nontheatrical film exhibition—screenings in prison—but it also considers a diverse mix of film genres, from early actualities and reenactments of executions (what might be called execution film as a genre) to reformist *exposés* of the 1920s. Amy Wood's historical study *Lynching and Spectacle: Witnessing Racial Violence in America, 1890–1940* explains what it meant for white Americans to perform and witness lynching spectacles, focusing on the cultural work that cinema

³¹ Yomi Braester. *Painting the City Red: Chinese Cinema and the Urban Contract*. (Durham [NC]: Duke University Press, 2010); Pooja Rangan. *Immediations: The Humanitarian Impulse in Documentary*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017).

³² Concerning *dispositif* as a theoretical concept, see Jean-Louis Baudry, “The Apparatus: Metapsychological Approaches to the Impression of Reality in Cinema,” in Philip Rosen (ed.), *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology: A Film Theory Reader*, (New York, Columbia University Press, 1986), 299-318; Gilles Deleuze. What is a *dispositif*? In: *Michel Foucault Philosopher*. (New York: Routledge, 1992), 159-168; Frank Kessler, “The Cinema of Attractions as *Dispositif*”, in Wanda Strauven (ed.), *The Cinema of Attractions Reloaded* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 57-70; Giorgio Agamben (trans. David Kishik and Stefan Pedatella), *What is an Apparatus?* (Stanford University Press, 2009).

³³ Alison Griffiths. *Carceral Fantasies: Cinema and Prison in Early Twentieth-Century America*. (Columbia University Press, 2016).

and photography played.³⁴ Julie A. Cassiday's *The Enemy on Trial: Early Soviet Courts on Stage and Screen* traces the mutual attraction between Soviet show trials and avant-garde cinema and drama in the project of building the new social order in the 1920s.³⁵ Minou Arjomand's *Staged* and Yann Robert's *Dramatic Justice* are two more recent insightful works with which I share critical concerns about the intersections between theater and politics/justice, as well as both the ontological affinities and contradictions between law and theatricality.³⁶

Despite different focuses, the above-mentioned studies all touch on the parallel and interrelated histories of social control and a media form (cinema, photography, theatrical medium, or other visual art) as social machine in its own right. Two additional books need to be noted: Michelle Caswell's work about the lives and afterlives of mugshot photographs produced during Cambodia's Khmer Rouge period and Rielle Navitski's exploration of public spectacles of violence in Latin America.³⁷ Both give a comparative, transnational point of view from which to rethink the engagement of time-based media (photography and cinema) with cruelty and criminal justice by moving beyond the framework that readily privileges the dominant national paradigm and relies heavily on formal analysis and representational codes.

³⁴ Amy Louise Wood. *Lynching and Spectacle: Witnessing Racial Violence in America, 1890-1940*. (University of North Carolina Press, 2009).

³⁵ Julie A. Cassiday. *The Enemy on Trial: Early Soviet Courts on Stage and Screen*. (Northern Illinois University Press, 2000). Another relatable book I have benefitted from is Christina Vatulescu. *Police Aesthetics: Literature, Film, and the Secret Police in Soviet Times*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010).

³⁶ Minou Arjomand. *Staged: Show Trials, Political Theater, and the Aesthetics of Judgment*. (Columbia University Press, 2018); Yann Robert. *Dramatic Justice: Trial by Theater in the Age of the French Revolution*. (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019).

³⁷ Michelle Caswell. *Archiving the Unspeakable: Silence, Memory, and the Photographic Record in Cambodia*. (The University of Wisconsin Press, 2014); Rielle Navitski. *Public Spectacles of Violence: Sensational Cinema and Journalism in Early Twentieth-Century Mexico and Brazil*. (Duke University Press, 2017).

My dissertation is a dual history of trial as media and media as trial. Concerning the complex interrelation between photographic media vis-à-vis socialist criminal justice and violence driven by a singular and overarching system of partitioning coded in the term *class*, my dissertation intends to challenge established boundaries within which both film/art-historical scholarship and legal historiographies are usually approached and disseminated.³⁸ I address the following questions: Historically, how did (audio)visual media and trial/execution, whether legal or extralegal, intersect in China? How did moving images enact and, in turn, shape punishment and the politics of enemy-making in the age of class struggle? Theoretically, (how) is justice *visible*, and why does it matter so much to us how evil others *look* and for us to *see* justice done to them? How does an image *shame* or *judge*, and how does cinema *punish*? Methodologically, what is the role of the *archive* in history, historiography, and historical thinking? How do archival images live their own lives? More broadly, I am also interested in how media history—a discipline that programmatically employs an integrated approach to various media across generic, temporal, and geopolitical divides—can enrich and refresh our understanding of the history of China and Asia, law and criminal justice, and global socialism.

My dissertation is about modern othering and the shared nature of human existence: how we live our lives in the company of enemies, through the very construction and condemnation of whose being we define who we are and justify what we do.³⁹ In reflecting on the role of visibility

³⁸ Several studies that bridge cinema/media studies and art history have been helpful for me to reflect on media history, or what is called media archaeology as an emerging approach, including Jennifer Wild. *The Parisian Avant-Garde in the Age of Cinema, 1900-1923*. (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2015); James Tweedie. *Moving Pictures, Still Lives: Film, New Media, and the Late Twentieth Century*. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2018); Justin Jesty. *Art and Engagement in Early Postwar Japan*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018).

³⁹ Scholarship concerning enemies/enmities, scapegoating, demonizing, and enemy making that has inspired my work include: Sam Keen. *Faces of the Enemy: Reflections of the Hostile Imagination*. (Harper & Row, 1988); Nancy Lusignan Schultz. *Fear Itself: Enemies Real & Imagined in American Culture*. (Purdue University Press, 1999); Carl Schmitt. *The Concept of the Political* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2007); Igal

in exclusion and demonization, the project shares critical interests with scholarship from Black studies, indigenous media studies, queer art history, visual criminology, and legal anthropology.⁴⁰ While a rich body of studies examines violence aligned with gender, ethnicity, race, and religion, the potentially divergent contribution of my dissertation lies in a significant step towards historicizing and theorizing violence enacted by a singular and overarching system of partitioning coded in “class.” The project participates in such endeavors and yet seeks to demystify not the recourse to violence per se, but rather a larger mode of social functioning and its everyday penetration that made this kind of violence inevitable and necessary because it was legitimated in the minds of those who performed it by their sentiment of doing good and justice.

With the ascendancy of the digital, the subject of this project has become even more globally pressing and topical. My project uncovers the potential “prehistorical” roots of contemporary phenomena of violence in an age marked by cyber-vigilantism, mass-mediated humiliation, and digital xenophobia and terrorism. Echoing scholarship on witch hunts, inquisitions, soviet purges, American McCarthyism, and global lynching, my dissertation fundamentally rethinks fear, shame, mass hysteria, and the ethics of spectatorship that we

Halfin. *Intimate Enemies: Demonizing the Bolshevik Opposition, 1918-1928*. (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2007); Günther Schlee. *How Enemies Are Made: towards a Theory of Ethnic and Religious Conflicts*. (Berghahn Books, 2008); Stephen M. Norris and Zara M. Torlone. *Insiders and Outsiders in Russian Cinema*. (Indiana University Press, 2008); Gretchen A. Adams. *The Specter of Salem: Remembering the Witch Trials in Nineteenth-Century America*. (University of Chicago Press, 2008); Simona Forti. *New Demons: Rethinking Power and Evil Today*. (Stanford University Press, 2015); Zuzanna Bogumil. *The Enemy on Display: The Second World War in Eastern European Museums*. (Berghahn Books, 2015); Sonja Schillings. *Enemies of All Humankind: Fictions of Legitimate Violence*. (Dartmouth College Press, 2016) and so forth.

⁴⁰ I like to highlight inspiring works I have benefitted from specifically in the broad field of legal humanities (e.g. visual cultural criminology) and legal anthropology. See Mariana Valverde. *Law and Order: Images, Meanings, Myths*. (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2006); Shoshana Felman. *The Juridical Unconscious: Trials and Traumas in the Twentieth Century*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002); Daniel M. Goldstein. *The Spectacular City: Violence and Performance in Urban Bolivia*. (Latin America Otherwise. Durham: Duke University Press, 2004); Deidre Pribram. *Emotions, Genre, Justice in Film and Television*. (Florence: Routledge, 2011); Alexander Laban Hinton. *The Justice Facade: Trials of Transition in Cambodia*. (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2018); Katherine Biber. *In Crime's Archive: The Cultural Afterlife of Evidence*. (Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, 2019; Arzoo Osanloo. *Forgiveness Work: Mercy, Law, and Victims' Rights*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020).

inherited from the age-old culture of violence and its postwar milieu, ethics that continue to set the terms for contemporary politics and morality. Overall, the dissertation seeks to speak to an interdisciplinary audience across the fields of film/media studies, art history, legal humanities, Asian and China area studies, performance studies, and critical violence studies.

1.4 A DOUBLE HISTORY? PIDOU AND SHIZHONG

The primary plan is to condense the “ten years of chaos” that spread all over China and on a global basis, with both the depth and width of its enduring impact, into a miniature theme park, through which the substance of the Chinese Cultural Revolution would be contained in the material world of this “Cultural Revolution Amusement City” (*wenhua da geming youlecheng*, 文化大革命遊樂城).....In the park, there should be actual scenes of public exposure (*shizhong* 示眾) and struggle sessions (*pidou* 批鬥): parading the “capitalist enemies” with a tall paper-cap stuck on their heads.....interactive sessions should be designed for the tourists and park goers to partake in and experience the reenactments of struggle sessions, morning request/evening report rituals (*zaoqingshi*, *wanhuibao*, 早請示、晚匯報), and simulation scenes of the literary indictment during the Cultural Revolution.⁴¹

The Chinese scholar Yu Xuecai included the above excerpt in an early 1990s proposal submitted to an academic conference on tourism and leisure studies held in Hubei Province, China. As an expert in the field of tourism planning and cultural heritage preservation, Yu opens his proposal with concerns about the familiar issue of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (CR) as a long-lost image that seems to be visible only in films and televisual drama. He further asks: “shall we package the Cultural Revolution within new tourist attractions and put it on the market as an attempt to refresh the products of Chinese tourism?”⁴²

⁴¹ See Yu, Xuecai. “Conceiving the Idea of Building up a ‘Cultural Revolution City’ as Theme Park” (*guanyu jianshe wengecheng moni jingqu de gouxiang*), *Tourism in Hubei during the Age of Reform and Opening Up*. Wuhan: China University of Geosciences Press, 1993); Reprinted in Yu, Xuecai. *Studies in the Culture of Tourism*. Nanjing: Nanjing University Press, 2012), 110-4.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 110. Yu bases his proposal on his observation that the CR had been rarely seen and viewable in the early 1990s (“現在很難見其仿佛”).

What merits special attention is the parallel drawn between pidou and shizhong as the branded material practices in Yu's conception of what he calls "the Cultural Revolution City." For centuries in pre-modern China, *shizhong* 示眾 (displaying the condemned or "evil" others in public), a loosely defined term, was well known as the means par excellence of disgracing and shaming offenders in a public setting and was used as both a primary and supplementary punishment within a wide range of sanctions and penalties. In general, the major types of shaming punishments included (1) a public parade or infamous procession, in some cases with symbols, masks, or nudity; (2) public exposure in a particular place, such as a pillory, with constraints, such as a sign or attached symbols that announced the deviance; and (3) public humiliation through specific practices, such as light flogging, shaving, or drowning.⁴³ One may easily make a connection to the term *shayi jingbai* 殺一儆百 (executing one for people to see so as to admonish a hundred), which describes the purpose of shizhong. In other words, the term shizhong points out the spectacular essence of penal and punitive practices, regardless of form, period, or context: exposure both as an act of publicizing and an effect of shameful publicity. One may ask how a parallel between pidou and shizhong works.

The paradoxical way Yu formulates such a parallel is notable. On the one hand, Yu sees shizhong as integral to pidou and the Cultural Revolution in general. The material connotation of shizhong points to the practice of struggling against and/or parading class enemies in public. Yu mentions the two together to highlight the participatory installation and immersive experiences offered by the CR theme park. For the target visitors of the theme park, both the historical

⁴³ Jörg Wettlaufer and Yasuhiro Nishimura. 2012. "The History of Shaming Punishments and Public Exposure in Penal law in Comparative Perspective: Western Europe and East Asia." In *Shame between Punishment and Penance: The Social Usages of Shame in the Middle-Ages and Early Modern Times*, edited by Benedicte Sere and Jörg Wettlaufer. Florence, Sismel-Ed. del Galluzzo, 2013, 199-200; also see Itaru Tomiya. *Capital Punishment in East Asia*. (Portland, Or.: Kyoto University Press, 2012).

familiarity and conceptual novelty lie in the vague boundary between shizhong and pidou. Yu considers all parkgoers as potential participants in a reenacted pidou scene with shizhong as the core aspect that delivers a mobile, virtual reality-like experience. For instance, in Yu's plan, Maoist crafts and souvenirs designed for sale, would turn out to be labelled as *counterrevolutionary* or *reactionary* and, for simulation purposes, would end up being the "incriminating evidence" against those who purchased them in gift shops. Their *crime* would be collecting ideologically incorrect items.⁴⁴ In this case, purchasers become the targets of mass denunciation and public shaming, which take place immediately on the spot. Everyone could potentially play a role in such amusements produced in the shared ontological legacies of both shizhong and pidou.

On the other hand, Yu distinguishes shizhong from pidou by structuring the idea of the Cultural Revolution as a theme park through the rhetorical lens of shizhong. While treating pidou as the signature scene of the Mao era and unique to the Cultural Revolution, Yu locates shizhong in line with the master narrative, a much larger, long-term project of engaging national humiliation with a fundamental appeal to patriotism. In Yu's mind, the ideal location of the CR theme park is Lin Biao's hometown, Huangzhou, in Hubei Province. Tourists would be able to learn from the past through the "negative model" of Lin Biao, "the chief culprit bearing the major responsibility for the Cultural Revolution" and "the executive director of the apotheosis during the CR."⁴⁵ The CR theme park, as Yu imagines, provides a combination of entertainment, marketing, memorialization, historical reflection, and pedagogy. Its most essential principle and goal is to "adopt the Cultural Revolution as a special textbook of history," and "through the

⁴⁴ Ibid., 113.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 111.

means of simulation,” to reenact the past for “educating, uniting, and warning Chinese people.”⁴⁶ One of the various display halls in the imaginary theme park (which includes a CR archival gallery, May 7th Cadre School (*wuqi ganxiao* 五七幹校) gallery, the Model Opera Gallery, and so forth) is a gallery of treacherous officials, traitors, and criminals in Chinese history.⁴⁷ In other words, it is a symbolic space that goes beyond Maoist temporality and takes the form of a courtroom of history, where a collection of “enemies of the people” across dynasties and regimes, are shamed and put on trial together. For Yu, ideally, the whole CR theme park is at once a matter of rendering the Cultural Revolution visible and a symbolic act of parading negative models in public. The park functions as a grand project of public education in the name of a practical shizhong of Chinese history.

Yu Xuecai was not the only one who wished to put the history of the Cultural Revolution on display and on trial. Much earlier, in 1986, the writer Ba Jin proposed building an official, state-sponsored museum dedicated to the Chinese Cultural Revolution. The idea was not merely born out of Ba Jin’s own sense of guilt in contributing to the denunciation of others before and during the Cultural Revolution, but also, more importantly, it was born out of his concerns about the need for the nation’s confrontation with the traumatic past in order to “prevent history from repeating itself,” because “only by engraving in our memory the events of the Cultural

⁴⁶ Ibid., 111-2. “達到教育國人、團結國人、警醒國人的目的。”

⁴⁷ May 7th Cadre Schools, commonly known as *ganxiao*, or *wu-qi ganxiao* 五七幹校 were first termed for a letter dated May 7, 1966, composed by Mao Zedong to the then-Secretary of Defense Lin Biao (1907–71), authorizing the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) to take control of key government sectors, research institutions and universities. Ganxiao were located in rural areas and, the enrollees were forced to leave their families behind to take on physically demanding manual labor despite the senior age and frail health that many of them had. In the following years, cadre school became the center of reeducation-through-labor for millions of intellectuals and government cadres. For works about *ganxiao*, see James C. F. Wang, “The May Seventh Cadre School for Eastern Peking”, *The China Quarterly*, No. 63 (September 1975): 522–27; Li Li. “Alternative Remembrances of the Cultural Revolution in Spider Eaters and Six Chapters of Life at a Cadre School.” in *Memory, Fluid Identity, and the Politics of Remembering*, Vol. 15. (2016): 49-72.

Revolution will we prevent another Cultural Revolution from occurring.”⁴⁸ The Chinese Academy of Museums also initiated plans for the museum, but the plans were not put into action due to bureaucratic inertia and fear.⁴⁹ Neither Yu Xuecai’s dream of the “Cultural Revolution City” nor Ba Jin’s proposal for a Museum of the Cultural Revolution ever came true. However, one can still see familiar scenes that echo such dreams of musealizing the Cultural Revolution.⁵⁰ One example is from the image of what is called *pidou tai* 批鬥台 (stage for pidou), namely, the reenacted stage for struggling against class enemies in the Huaxia Western Film Studio (華夏西部影視城 or 鎮北堡西部影視城) in Ningxia Province, established by Chinese writer Zhang Xianliang in the same year Yu imagined the CR theme park. Huaxia Western Film Studio has become a commercialized theme park since then.⁵¹ Later, the scene of *pidou tai* was located in

⁴⁸ “So that everyone sees clearly and remembers clearly, it is necessary to build a museum of the Cultural Revolution, exhibiting concrete and real objects and reconstructing striking scenes which will testify to what took place on this Chinese soil twenty years ago! Everyone will recall the march of events there, and each will recall his or her behavior during that decade. Masks will fall, each will search his or her conscience, the true face of each one will be revealed, large and small debts from the past will be paid.....The construction of this Cultural Revolution museum is absolutely necessary, because only those who do not forget the past will be masters of the future.” See Ba Jin, “A Museum of the ‘Cultural Revolution’,” translated by Geremie Barne. *CND.org*, <http://www.cnd.org/cr/english/articles/bajin.htm> Originally published as “Wenge bowuguan” [Cultural Revolution museum], in Ba Jin, *Suixiang lu* 隨想錄 (Random thoughts), <http://www.readers365.com/bajin/suixianglu/index.htm>. Ba Jin’s essay “Wenge bowu guan” was originally published in 文摘雜誌 No. 4 (1986), 94-5.

⁴⁹ For an overview of such failed efforts, see Yonglie Ye. “‘Wenge bowuguan’ zhi meng” [The dream of a Cultural Revolution Museum], *Zhengming* no. 217 (Nov. 1995): 79–84.

⁵⁰ For more discussions around sites for remembering the Cultural Revolution and the case of Jianchuan Museum Clusters, see Kir A. Denton, “Can Private Museums Offer Space for Alternative History? The Red Era Series at the Jianchuan Museum Cluster.” In *Popular Memories of the Mao Era*, Popular Memories of the Mao Era, edited by Sebastian Veg. (Hong Kong University Press, 2019), 80-111.

⁵¹ In the early 1980s, Zhang Xianliang was the person who first introduced Zhenbeibu as the potential location for filming to people in China’s film industry. Hundreds of Chinese films including Xie Jin’s *The Herdsman* (1982), Zhang Junzhao’s *One and Eight* (1983), and Zhang Yimou’s *Red Sorghum* (1987) were shot around Zhenbeibu 鎮北堡 or claimed to include scenes of Zhenbeibu. *The Herdsman* was adapted from Zhang Xianliang’s novel *Ling yu rou* 靈與肉. Zhang located the story he wrote in Zhenbeibu (what he literally refers to *Zhennanbu* in his novel 綠化樹). Zhenbeibu, as Zhang’s Huaxia Western Film Studio since 1993, has attracted more film crews. For more details about the history of Zhang Xianliang’s Zhenbeibu project, see Xianliang Zhang. “Ningxia youge zhenbeibu.” (There is [a theme park called] Zhenbeibu in Ningxia Province) *Shouhuo*. No.3 (2006): 93-103.

the area called “the Grand Courtyard of the Cultural Revolution,” built and designed as part of the film-studio theme park.



Figure 1-2 Pidou Tai (the reenacted stage for struggle sessions) in the theme-park-style Haxua Western Film Studio.

Even if Zhang Xianliang’s *Huaxia Western Film Studio* project, which communicates between literature and cinema was explicitly not a replica of Yu Xuecai’s proposal for tourism in Hubei, the film-studio theme park’s pidou stage appeared to instantiate Yu Xuecai’s ideas that played with the coupling of pidou and shizhong. As shown in the photo in figure 3, the pidoutai scene presents, on a theatrical stage, a statue of the villain figure wearing a tall hat and holding a board spelling out his name and criminal label, “suppress the traitor Ren Xiaode.” Visitors are free to take photos and interact with other prop objects. Zhang Xianliang’s reenactment of pidou is not as interactive as Yu Xuecai imagined but its photographic image embodies the look of pidou as something that has to be acknowledged within and across multiple temporalities. The contemporary “seeing” of the Maoist struggle sessions came in the form of a press photo (Figure 2) that shows how the ongoing legacies of pidou remain alive in a mixture of artifices and realities. A reenactment of pidou in this case is available only through the simultaneous presence of and bodily interaction between the tourists, who are mobile performers in the present and the target of the enduring struggle, a clearly named figure who is immobile and fixed in time.

The coupling of a museum proposal and the scene from a film theme park neatly encapsulates the central concern of my dissertation. It poses a set of questions: What are the connections and differences between pidou and shizhong in China?⁵² Can we see shizhong and pidou as necessarily entangled with each other? What other narratives might Yu's proposal and this pidoutai photo call forth if we consider them as embedded in much longer and more complex histories of shaming punishment and mass violence? We may further ask: Can we think about shizhong beyond both the nationalist narratives of *guochi* 國恥 (national humiliation) and progressive narratives that relate shizhong to pre-modern backwardness (in contrast with legal modernity) in ways that open us up to seeing precisely what tends to be obscured by the dominant depictions/accounts of public shaming? How did people's bodies become the very terrain of class warfare and pidou as revolutionary violence? Because the legacies of both pidou and shizhong are still evident in post-socialist China, particularly in the deep moral anxiety and ideological divide that colors everyday life, I wonder how we might begin to even imagine the intertwined pasts of such violence.

My dissertation suggests that potential responses to the questions above may be found in what I call *the exposure complex*, as defined earlier. Intertwined imageries of shizhong and pidou open us up to seeing more routinized forms of violence, death, and dying out of frame. Digging into their shared past and also their radical differences helps us to focus on how other, everyday

⁵² A large number of writers, artists, scholars, and cultural critics have drawn connections between pidou and shizhong, either paradoxically just as Yu Xuecai did or in problematic way (seeing the two equally as the same kind of practice). For example, see Woenser and Zerenduoji. *Sha Jie: Si Shi Nian De Ji Yi Jin Qu, Jing Tou Xia De Xizang Wen Ge* 殺劫: 四十年的記憶禁區, 鏡頭下的西藏文革 (Forbidden Memory: Tibet during the Cultural Revolution). ed., (Taipei: 大塊文化, 2016); Jie Hu. "Reign of Terror on the Tibetan Plateau: Reading Woenser's Forbidden Memory: Tibet during the Cultural Revolution." *China Perspectives*. 2008, no. 1 (2008): 105-6; Xinwu Liu. "Geini yiding xiaochoumao" 給你一頂小丑帽: 批鬥示眾與戴高帽 in *Guangu yu guanjin* 觀故與觀今 (Observing the Past and the Present). (Guangzhou: Jinan daxue chubanshe, 2017), 316-318; Yanxiang Shao. "Shizhong tai" 示眾台 (Shizhong Stage) in *Aosi weixinzhijhou* 奧斯維辛之後 (Oswiecim: Then and Now). (Hong Kong: City University of Hong Kong Press, 2019), 310-3.

forms of violence were and have been mass-produced, while emphasizing the exceptional violence in any form of public exposure and shaming that reproduces hegemonic order.

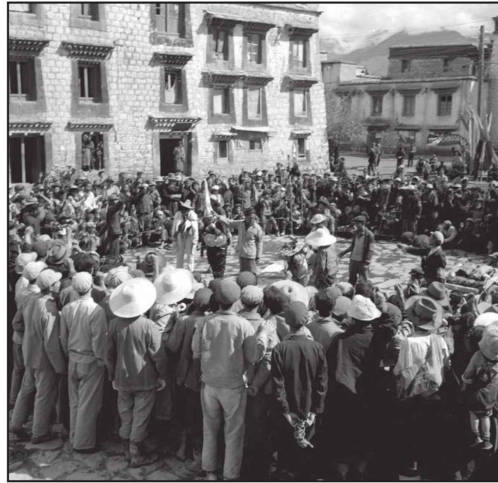


Figure 1-3 Pidou scene in front of Jokhang Temple, Tibet, from *Forbidden Memory: Tibet during the Cultural Revolution*, 2016.⁵³

Pidou has been, *within* and *of* itself, a discursive and image-making machine. Interpreting pidou as both institutional and performative, my dissertation approaches pidou as violence and visibility mutually defining each other. Pidou was an unfolding dynamic central to the making and functioning of class struggle beyond a fixed set of social signs, popular spectacles, and visual representations. Any reckoning with the visibility and significance of pidou requires us to understand it as *images in a long history of images*. Not all images of pidou are works of art, and not all the artifacts about pidou are images, but, in terms of spatial setting and technical composition, their engagement with public shaming, mass gathering, and hostile confrontation in

⁵³ The caption written by Woeseer says, “Among the many onlookers that encircled the city, we have no way of knowing how many came to celebrate liberation, how many came out of fear or apprehension, and how many came to serve their personal interests. But one thing we do know is that slaves remained slaves. When their new masters emerged smiling, when the venues previously used to spread Buddhist doctrine became courts of injustice, when an individual was subjected to a humiliating trial on trumped-up charges, those elders and children, men and women among the onlookers may not have qualified as accessories to the crime, but at the very least their superficially docile acceptance revealed that that they remained slaves. The truth was that they had never been truly liberated.” See Woeseer and Zerenduoji. *Sha Jie: Si Shi Nian De Ji Yi Jin Qu, Jing Tou Xia De Xizang Wen Ge = Forbidden Memory: Tibet during the Cultural Revolution*. ed., (Taipei: 大塊文化, 2016).

a time of class warfare belongs to a very large, culturally and historically prestigious collection of images. Pidou speaks to a rich visual culture that has evolved around sensational violence and spectacularized punishments: countless images of barbaric cruelties and torture recur in artworks, woodcuts, drawings, lithographs, and still and moving images. This pattern is not unique to China but occurs in all time periods worldwide. Art historians have traced how such imagery across pictures, photography, architecture, and sculpture were and have been socially and judicially coded, mostly in European contexts.⁵⁴ Humanistic intervention into the classical issue of crime and punishment in American history is exemplified in much scholarship concerning visuals ranging from paintings and prints of Salem witch trials, courtroom sketches, lynching postcards, and actual executions, to contemporary Abu Ghraib torture photographs and legal films.⁵⁵ Likewise, punishment has a long visual history in China. Several scholars have demonstrated the value of examining it through issues such as pain, sympathy, and material cultures of violence.⁵⁶ Michel Foucault's characterization of executions as displays of sovereign

⁵⁴ Remarkable works among those include Samuel Y. Edgerton. *Pictures and Punishment: Art and Criminal Prosecution during the Florentine Renaissance*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985); Lionello Puppi, *Torment in Art: Pain, Violence, and Martyrdom* (New York: Rizzoli, 1991); Katherine Fischer Taylor. *In the Theater of Criminal Justice: The Palais De Justice in Second Empire Paris*. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993); Mitchell B. Merback, *The Thief, the Cross, and the Wheel: Pain and the Spectacle of Punishment in Medieval and Renaissance Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999); Robert Mills. *Suspended Animation: Pain, Pleasure and Punishment in Medieval Culture*. (London: Reaktion, 2005); Graybill, Lela. *The Visual Culture of Violence after the French Revolution*. (Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, 2016), among others.

⁵⁵ See works like Karen Halttunen. "Humanitarianism and the Pornography of Pain in Anglo-American Culture." *American Historical Review* 100, no. 2 (1995): 303-34; Shawn Michelle Smith. *Photography on the Color Line: W.E.B. Du Bois, Race, and Visual Culture*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004); Rachel Hall. *Wanted: The Outlaw in American Visual Culture*. (University of Virginia Press, 2009); Ross Barrett. *Rendering Violence: Riots, Strikes, and Upheaval in Nineteenth-century American Art*. (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2014); Courtney R., Baker. *Humane Insight: Looking at Images of African American Suffering and Death*. (University of Illinois Press, 2015); among others.

⁵⁶ Jérôme Bourgon. "Obscene Vignettes of Truth. Construing Photographs of Chinese Executions as Historical Documents," in *Visualising China, 1845-1965: Moving and Still Images in Historical Narratives*. Edited by Christian Henriot, and Wen-hsin Yeh. (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013), 39-91; Craig Clunas. "Dark Warriors: Cultures of Violence," in *Empire of Great Brightness: Visual and Material Cultures of Ming China, 1368-1644*.

majesty becomes an archetypal image that has shaped much critical thinking about the modern subject, violent spectacle, and power. Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* has exerted enormous influence on various academic disciplines among which the social and cultural history of capital punishment, execution, and shaming share concerns about social control and the theatrical violence at its essence.⁵⁷ Beyond the dominant Foucauldian model in fields of modern social control (such as surveillance studies and security studies), which mostly bring the political out of concealment, central to this dissertation is an acknowledgement that public displays of violence, in fact, never disappeared in Chinese history—within visual culture or in actual occurrence.

While similar practices, at least in most European countries, were largely removed from public sight much earlier, shizhong in China remains a corporeal reality rooted in a long history of violence, torture, and shaming punishment.⁵⁸ By the mid-nineteenth century, visual representation of what the umbrella term shizhong connotes (including various Chinese executions and judicial practices) had become generic images and a popular source of

(Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007), 160-87; James L. Hevia. "The Photography Complex: Exposing Boxer-era China (1900-1901)," in Morris, Rosalind C., Thomas, Nicholas, Spyer, Patricia, Hevia, James L, and Siegel, James T. *Photographies East: The Camera and Its Histories in East and Southeast Asia*. (Durham: Duke UP, 2009), 79-120.

⁵⁷ See Pieter Spierenburg, *The Spectacle of Suffering: Execution and the Evolution of Repression: From a Preindustrial Metropolis to the European Experience* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); Esther Cohen, "'To Die a Criminal for the Public Good': The Execution Ritual in Late Medieval Paris," *History of European Ideas XI* (1989), 407-16; Richard van Dülmen, *Theatre of Horror: Crime and Punishment in Early Modern Germany* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1990); Arlette Farge, *Fragile Lives: Violence, Power and Solidarity in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993); V.A.C. Gatrell. *The Hanging Tree: Execution and the English People 1770-1868* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994); Jody Enders. *The Medieval Theater of Cruelty: Rhetoric, Memory, Violence*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999); and Lisa Silverman. *Tortured Subjects Pain, Truth, and the Body in Early Modern France*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

⁵⁸ For discussions around China's long and ongoing history of violence and public shaming, see works including David Der-wei Wang. *The Monster That Is History: History, Violence, and Fictional Writing in Twentieth-century China*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); Robert E. Hegel. "Imagined Violence: Representing Homicide in Late Imperial," *中國文哲研究集刊* no.25, Dec 2004, 61-89; William T. Rowe. *Crimson Rain: Seven Centuries of Violence in a Chinese County*. (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2007); Timothy Brook. *Death by a Thousand Cuts*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008).

ethnographical knowledge about China. Such visual materials, alongside official archives and intellectual discourses, worked in tandem with popular prints, scholarly works, travel accounts, and particularly photographic media to create an enduring myth of Chinese torture and cruelty. Legal historian Chen Li points out the sentimental and discursive politics that characterized the transnational representation of Chinese punishments and national character.⁵⁹ In various accounts, images of Chinese executions occupied a spot where Chinese pain was treated as a source of fascination in the name of sympathy, humanism, and modernity for Western historians, sociologists, and writers.⁶⁰ Execution photographs on postcards and souvenirs not only capitalized on the scene of the execution but also played a crucial role in producing and reproducing spectatorship as an alternative form of *violence*. I open my dissertation with a historical exploration of shizhong to understand the pattern and complex workings of pidou rooted in the ongoing past.

1.5 WHY MOVING IMAGES?

I explore pidou as a crucible of *moving images* during and beyond the age of Maoist class struggle. My research was first and foremost a journey toward the *image of movement*, image defined by the mobilities of mass performance of punishing, shaming, and doing justice within and out of frame as well as images set in motion to make (counter-)revolution. My work then

⁵⁹ See Li Chen. "Sentimental Imperialism and the Global Spectacle of Chinese Punishments". *Chinese Law in Imperial Eyes: Sovereignty, Justice, & Transcultural Politics*. (Columbia University Press, 2016), 156-200.

⁶⁰ For example, about Bataille's reading of *lingchi* photo, see Robert Buch. "In Praise of Cruelty: Bataille, Kafka, and Ling'chi" in *The Pathos of the Real on the Aesthetics of Violence in the Twentieth Century*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 27-53. For detailed discussions on Chinese torture as a construct of imperialism and China as a privileged object of American and European discourses on cruelty, see Eric Hayot. *The Hypothetical Mandarin: Sympathy, Modernity, and Chinese Pain*. (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 14-25.

became a journey of various moving images reused and remade across genre, form, medium, and time. Illustrated storybooks, woodcut paintings, pictorial booklets, vernacular photographs, lantern slides, photomontage, film, and other forms of visual ephemera have long been deployed to establish “class” categories and hierarchies that justify the structure of power and violence. A third component of the journey shows that my conceptual framework triangulates three key, interrelated notions: circulation, emotion, and human encounter. Taken together, these inform the title of my dissertation, *Expose and Punish*, in its multiple senses of images that move around, images that move people, and images that enact and make moves. Overall, pidou has performed a regime of visibility not necessarily coded in class, and it has also performed a social imaginary of (criminal) justice, one that needs to be located beyond the Cultural Revolution paradigm and communist framework. I suggest that pidou can be fully produced and known only through an ongoing process of dynamic and even belated circulation, recycling, and re-circulation.

1.6 SHOW/TRIAL AS METHOD

To understand the complex history of pidou activated by the social life of moving images, I see the show trial as a mode of thinking by employing its meanings in a twofold manner. It refers to a staged trial (primarily, of political opponents) in which the verdict is rigged, and a public confession is often extracted. More generally it connotes the normalized interpretation of that trial (with media treatment as the essential ingredient) as a way of performing justice in and/or outside the court of law. Both are essentially visual events with a desire to lay claim to the truth and to colonize the ideological “common ground” of justice through spectacles and sensations. However, there is a difference between the two uses of the term “show trial”: the first refers more to an event practiced within a material space, and the second focuses on mediated encounters with justice as a fluid process across time and space. A

relatively new phrasing in English, “show trial” was first used by journalists who covered Stalinist trials in Moscow. The dual essence of the courtroom has been conveyed in the literary use of the term show trial: “as a didactic space (a space to show something) and as a theatrical space (a space for shows).”⁶¹ The belief that the courtroom is staged and the deep mistrust of theatricality are at once intertwined within people’s perceptions and imaginaries of show trials, both practically and metaphorically. Show/trial points to the ambivalent relations between theatricality and law. It is not my ambition to examine the historical specificity of show trials from the soviet past, nor to trace its judicially discursive construction across time and border. Instead, my aim is, through adopting the term *show trial* with full awareness of its intertwined and contradictory connotations, to develop a form of reflection on *pidou*, a mode of thinking about images, and a way of making sense of both as mutually embraced. Using show/trial as an analytical tool serves to recognize the encounter with images that is both *a show* and *a trial*.

Such a conscious recognition, specifically located in the context of Maoism and its legacies, highlights the role images play in producing trial-like encounters that render the condemned visible, execute the truth, and put spectators on trial. Show trial as method helps clarify the complex entanglement between images and *pidou* as integral to the workings of the exposure complex.⁶² The coupling of “show” and “trial” foregrounds the underlying anxiety born of the thin lines between visibility, publicity, and theatricality. Such anxiety is shared by both *pidou* and imaging as two kinds of judicial showcase on a continuum of theater, tribunal/trial,

⁶¹ The English term derives from the Russian *pokazatel’nyi protsess*, which could be translated literally as either “show trial” or “demonstration trial.” For the historical and linguistic origin and rich meanings of “show trial”, see Minou Arjomand. *Staged: Show Trials, Political Theater, and the Aesthetics of Judgment*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 4-6.

⁶² I do not intend to argue for any intimacy or distinction between historical (and even ongoing) practices of *pidou* and show trial, but to examine the mutual tension between the two as different ways of naming and perceiving something fundamentally the same for different purposes and no less, neither one dominated by the other.

and political ritual. Inspiringly, the historian Yann Robert points out the internal tension that judicial theater in the French Revolution possessed: how to perform (revolutionary) justice without having it seem just a performance.⁶³ One might find that the intertwining of pidou and cinema (and other media or image-making practices) is built on and struggles with a similar challenge: how to showcase justice without making it just a show.

1.7 CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter 2 (“Punishment by Camera in the Age of Public Exposure”) considers pidou’s “prehistoric” sources embedded in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century visual cultural production. A historical and conceptual overview of shizhong as a visual matter, the chapter highlights the key role of the camera in shifting modes of image-making and variations of visibility at the intersection of judicial punishment and popular justice. It introduces and proceeds through two interrelated aspects of an age marked by public exposure, which prefigured some of the patterns and terms of pidou: visual economies of Chinese cruelty and mass production of retribution. By breaking down the 1949 divide and attending to various earlier cases of punishment by photographic and cinematic means, I suggest that recognizing the importance of *an age-old obsession with public exposure* in China and situating it within the late Qing and early Republican era is necessary for fully understanding the mutual dynamics between pidou and media. When pidou was made and embodied in correspondence to and collaboration with the revolutionary period’s new systems of political othering and moral imagination, it took a visual form that was both new and old, and which I examine *with* and *through* shizhong.

⁶³ See Yann Robert. *Dramatic Justice: Trial by Theater in the Age of the French Revolution*. (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019).

Turning to the 1940s, Chapter 3 (“Transforming Shizhong in the Wartime Image Production”) and Chapter 4 (“Cinematic Policing: *Capturing Xie Wendong Alive*, 1947 and the Production of Wartime Pidou”) explores a third dimension of the age of public exposure. Central to pidou, what I call the look of class exorcism derived from “the age of public exposure,” flourished in the culture of pidou throughout the Mao era, and remains functional even today. The two chapters focus on the appearance of wartime pidou through two cine-photographic projects which I believe are critical to the foundational decades of early Chinese Communist Party filmmaking and image (re)production. One is the photojournalistic work exemplified in *Jinchaji hua bao* 晋察冀畫報 (*Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Pictorial*) and other periodicals of the time (1942–1948); the other one is from the largely neglected and understudied film project *minzhu dongbei* 民主東北 (*Democratic Northeast*) (1947–1949). The cases discussed in these two chapters provide a prelude to pidou practices that proliferated more broadly and systematically in continuous land reform and later political campaigns. The coupling of both chapters shows how photojournalistic and cinematic work took on the actual practice of policing and exorcising class enemies including bandits, traitors, and landlords, and how this work also rendered *class struggle* as a set of penal spectacles and punitive encounters serving the displacement of postwar justice with “class” justice.

Chapter 5 (“Museological Warfare: Cine-Exhibition of the Socialist Education Movement”) explores pidou as transmedia practice. Situated in the context of the Socialist Education Movement (1962–1966), the chapter provides a case study of the intersection between a Shandong class struggle exhibition and the documentary based on the exhibition. It opens new conceptual avenues for rethinking the ever-changing dynamics of cinema and/as exhibition in the Maoist context, which I identify as *museological warfare* significant to the continuation of “class

struggle” in the 1960s. I argue that the genre *jieji jiaoyu zhan* 階級教育展 (class education exhibition) lived out its cinematic and transmedia life, transforming the phenomenon that was familiar but not named in a single, unified way and that, consequently, took on extreme forms in a complex of pidou practices during the Chinese Cultural Revolution (1966–1976).

Chapter 6 (“See through Pidou: Found Footage as Maoist Archive”) explains how antagonistic violence occurred not only with and through a network of pidou images from the Maoist lifeworld, but, even more profoundly, was also reproduced between and beyond such images in their archival and recycled forms over time. Focusing on pidou as different kinds of found footage, it also elucidates how, paradoxically, such images have been integral to both the making and unmaking of justice, as they were and are circulated, recycled, appropriated, and deployed in the transnational context at various moments.

Chapter 2. PUNISHMENT BY CAMERA IN THE AGE OF PUBLIC EXPOSURE, OR A PREHISTORY OF PIDOU

“In this horrific image of the Chinese revolution we see expressed all the elements of a culture that needs to be understood in the special sense of a visual culture; of a culture that can be worked out by vision alone and through which we are capable of inferring the universe by memory alone.”

Salvador Elizondo, *Execution by Shooting in China, 1969*¹

2.1 A PHOTO OF DECAPITATION

Three persons shape a scene of decapitation on the beach, Qingdao (Tsingtao), in 1936. Facing toward us and the invisible camera and keeping his chin up, the kneeling convict (*zhanfan*, 斬犯) is about to be decapitated by the executioner (*guizishou*, 劊子手), who holds a sword. An official in charge of supervising the execution (*jianzhan guan*, 監斬官) stands by on the right, watching them with his hands clasped behind his back (see Figure 2-1). The convict occupies the center, without the surrounding crowd regularly shown in execution photos of that time. The three key players in the execution are evenly placed across the width of the frame in a long shot. This photo was published in an illustrated journal as if it were the climax scene captured from a film. However, it is neither a moving image still nor a production photo. It is staged cinematically and yet never taken from an actual film. As the caption at the top literally shows, the title of the photo is *Decapitation*. Dong Keyi, an experienced cinematographer at the time, took this photo in Qingdao with three coworkers who were all well-known figures in the film industry: Jin Yan and Han Langen, respectively playing the executioner and the convict,

¹ Andrew Bachner. “Violent Media, Chinese Fantasies: Salvador Elizondo’s ‘Execution by Shooting in China.’” *Verge: Studies in Global Asias* 3, no. 2 (2017): 17-33.

were film actors; Wu Yonggang, who had directed the well-known film *The Goddess* (1934) and *The Little Angel* (1935), played the supervising official.² Apart from Dong Keyi who worked for Mingxing Film Company, Jin Yan, Han Langen, and Wu Yonggang all came from Lianhua Film Company. One may extrapolate—based on the visible photography location, the year 1936 as the time of publication, and the lineup of photographed figures—that the photographic moment took place when a combined film crew of the Lianhua Film Company travelled to Qingdao in 1935 for location shooting related to two films, *Waves Washing the Sand* (1936) and *Return to Nature* (1936).³ The overlapped crew members of the two films also included film producer Meng Junmou, filmmaker Sun Yu, and actresses such as Li Lili and Wang Renmei, and so forth.⁴ At the time, film trade journals and newspapers published a lot of publicity photos depicting how the film crew, particularly the stars, enjoyed their time in Qingdao.⁵ In the very first issue of the illustrated journal *Texie (Close-up)* which became renowned for its fine-art design and comprehensive pictorial news, Dong Keyi's staged photo echoed those publicity photos taken in

² Keyi Dong. “Zhanshou (decapitation),” *Texie (Close-up)*, No. 1, 1936.

³ The actor Jin Yan played the main protagonists in both two films. Unnamed author. “Jinyan jiangdao qingdao paishe dao ziran qu” 金焰將到青島攝《到自然去》、《浪淘沙》的外景 (Jin Yan is Travelling to Qingdao for the Location Shooting of *Waves Washing the Sand* and *Return to Nature*), *Lianhua huabao*, Vol. 6, no. 3 (1935): 14. Also see Unnamed author. “Lang Taosha: zhijing yu shying” 浪淘沙: 置景與攝影 (*Waves Washing the Sand: Set Design and Cinematography*) *Tiebao* 鐵報 April 17, 1936.

⁴ Wu Yonggang mentions a list of crew members at the time in his memoir. See Yonggang Wu. “Nie'er de qingchun huoli” 聶耳的青春活力 (The Youthful Energy of Nie'er), *The Complete Works of Nie'er II* (Beijing: Wenhua yishu chubanshe), 2011, 247. Dong Keyi and Han Langen were perhaps also in Qingdao due to the filming work, while they were not included in the list of Lianhua filmmakers who went on the same trip. Dong Keyi had been to Qingdao for location shooting even earlier; he was the cinematographer of Zhang Shichuan's film *Downtrodden Peach Blossom* 劫後桃花 (1935), which was one of the earliest feature films shot in Qingdao. See Jinde Zhang. “Jiehou taohua waijingdui zai qingdao: Zhangshichuan yu dongkeyi” 《劫後桃花》外景隊在青島: 張石川先生與攝影師董克毅先生 (The Film crew of *Downtrodden Peach Blossom* Shooting on Location, in Qingdao: the Director Zhang Shichuan and the cinematographer Dong Keyi). *Mingxing* Vol. 3, no. 1 (1935): 1.

⁵ For instance, see “Lianhua xinpian huidao ziran zai Qingdao quwaijing” 聯華新片《回到自然》在青島取外景 (Location Shooting in Qingdao for a New Film Produced by Lianhua Film Company) *Qingqing dianying* 青青電影 Vol. 2, no. 9 (1935): 1.

Qingdao and served the journal's promotional strategy, attracting readers by faking an execution with an all-star cast.

Dong Keyi's photo draws connections between the world of filmmaking and the world of crime and law. While the photo of *decapitation* does not show a film scene, it is commercially associated with the distribution and promotion of the crime film *Waves Washing the Sand* directed by Wu Yonggang, in which Jin Yan played a murderer. It was the first time for Jin Yan to play a villain character in a film; and the film was the first sound film produced by the Lianhua Film Company. *Waves* tells a story of transgression, concerning the struggle and dilemma between morality and law.⁶ A sailor (played by Jin Yan) finds his wife living with another man when returning home from a long voyage. Fueled by anger, he kills his wife's lover and is forced to flee justice. The sailor and a detective in pursuit of him are shipwrecked on a desert island. At first, they are hostile to each other, but they eventually become friends. When a ship approaches, however, the detective immediately handcuffs the sailor in the name of law. Unfortunately, without noticing the pair, the people on the ship do not rescue them. The two men remain on the island and, eventually, die together. Whether a killer or an executioner, Jin Yan's roles in the film *Waves* and in Dong's photograph resonate with each other and remained a shared selling point. Lianhua Film Company even made some creative commercials that took the form of a wanted order describing the storyline of the film with a photograph of "the criminal who murdered and fled," Jin Yan.⁷ In this sense, Dong's photo reveals the symbolic dead end of justice: with a certain kind of immunity from punishment, killing continues legally and

⁶ Yonggang Wu. "Guanyu langtaosha de hua" 关于“浪淘沙”的话 (The Director's Words about the Film *Waves Washing the Sand*). *Shibao* 時報 May 28th, 1936, 8.

⁷ Hai Lu and Xueyun. *Qingdao yu dianying* 青島與電影 (Qingdao and Cinema), (Qingdao: Qingdao chubanshe, 2007), 99.

performatively. Then questions possibly arise: Whom would one *see* and *identify* when looking at an image of punitive violence as such? How would one distinguish illegitimate violence that threatened the social order from righteous, just, and sanctioned uses of force?



Figure 2-1. *Decapitation*, photo by Dong Keyi. *Texie 1* [1936]: 16.

The port city Qingdao as the photography location deserves special attention, which helps us to understand the photo by Dong Keyi in light of a larger mode of violence on a daily basis. Qingdao was under German control since 1898; Japan decided to declare war on Germany when the Great War broke out in Europe in 1914.⁸ Qingdao beaches had been converted into summer vacation resorts during the German occupation and since the Japanese takeover of Qingdao in 1914.⁹ The site where the *decapitation* photo was produced appears to be part of the sea bathing

⁸ Guoqi Xu. *Asia and the Great War: A Shared History*. (Oxford University Press, 2017), 27-8; For the history of Qingdao as a colony, see George Steinmetz. *The Devil's Handwriting Precoloniality and the German Colonial State in Qingdao, Samoa, and Southwest Africa*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 433-507; George Steinmetz. "Qingdao as a Colony: From Apartheid to Civilizational Exchange" Workshop: "Science, Technology and Modernity: Colonial Cities in Asia, 1890-1940," Baltimore, January 16-17, 2009, <http://www.docin.com/p-584351176.html> (accessed on August 19, 2020).

⁹ Yunxiang Guo. "Beidaihe Beach: Leisure Culture and Modernity in Republican China." *Sport in Society: Modern Sports in Asia: Cultural Perspectives* 15, no. 10 (2012): 1368. Qingdao is one of the four summer vacation sites regularly referred by the magazine *China Traveler*; the other three sites were Moganshan, Guling, and Beidaihe. See Madeleine Yue Dong. "Shanghai's China Traveler." in *Everyday Modernity in China*, (University of Washington Press, 2011), 195-226. Those sea bathing beaches built by the German and Japanese were numbered, among which, for example, the No.4 sea bathing beach near Taiping Road was given a Japanese name "Wuhe bin" (Beach of Dancing Cranes). See "Taipinglu zhi haishui yuchang quanjing" 太平路之海水浴場全景 (the Former Wuhebin:

beaches, although we have no further information that allows us to verify which one of the sea bathing beaches it exactly is.¹⁰ As the historian Madeleine Yue Dong argues, along with the imperialist and colonial systems, the idea of tourism emerged in China in relation to “the imagination of unlimited spatial access” and was developed as a “politically neutral and modern form of cosmopolitanism.”¹¹ Well-known for its colonial legacies and tourist attractions, Qingdao also emerged as a site of cultural prosperity in which a group of acclaimed writers, educators, and artists gathered and spent time there in the 1930s.¹² In this context, it is hardly difficult to understand that why Qingdao had become a “natural film studio.”¹³ Qingdao was featured in films since the early 1930s and increasingly attracted an arrange of filmmakers to shoot films on location.¹⁴ Indeed, Dong Keyi’s photographic work as shown above provides a record of Qingdao as hybrid spaces: a site of filmmaking, a place of cultural tourism, and a former colonial space where the everyday systems of violence worked as a reaffirmation of the imperialist authority and implications in the city. The beach setting in Dong Keyi’s photographic work serves as a visual and spatial metaphor to remark China’s plight as a semi-colony.

The Panorama of the Sea Bathing Beach neat Taiping Road). *Memorial Photographs of Taking over Qingdao* 接收青島紀念寫真 April (1924): 169.

¹⁰ In some records, the shooting location of *Waves Washing the Sand* was Yan’er Island and that of *Return to Nature* was No.3 sea bathing beaches.

¹¹ Dong, 220.

¹² Dai Juncheng. “Ershi shiji sanshi niandai Qingdao wenren jiju de wenxue dili fenxi” 20 世紀 30 年代青島文人集聚的文學地理分析 (An Analysis of the Intellectuals’ Gathering in Qingdao during the 1930s). *The World Literature Criticism* 世界文學評論. Vol. 7 (2016): 180-7. Zhai Guangshun. “Sanshi niandai Qingdao jiaoyujie zuojiaqun xianxiang” 30 年代青島教育界作家群現象 (The Phenomena of Qingdao Writers’ Groups in the Field of Education in the 1930s). *Qingdao Literature* 青島文學, no. 6 (2015): 100-8.

¹³ Renmei Wang. *Wode chengming yu buxing* (My Fame and Misery: Memoir of Wang Renmei), (Nanjing: Jiangsu wenyi chubanshe, 2011), 130. Wang talks about the financial reasons (saving money) why the film crews chose to shoot films in Qingdao (it was also related to Sun Yu’s personal property).

¹⁴ Films shot in Qingdao also include *Same Enmity* 同仇 (1934), *Children of Troubled Times* 風雲兒女 (1935), *The Pirates of the Yellow Sea* 黃海大盜 (1936), and so forth.

In short, two actors, one film director, and a cinematographer *perform* the execution without hesitating to expose the *artificial* nature of such an act. They intentionally show their real names to mark the characters, metaphorically mirroring their familiar professional roles in the process of filmmaking. The execution photo documents the performance and its staging, achieving a filmlike look at the same time. On the one hand, framed with a journalistic appeal, the “execution” defines a single photographic event that is not cinematic but fundamentally profilmic, an event unfolding in front of a camera. On the other hand, the photographic and also profilmic event reenacts the execution as a matter of always *being accomplished* and yet *unattainable*. The cameraman, Dong, now works as both a documentary photographer and a performative artist to break down the fourth wall by taking a behind-the-scenes photo that features the director, Wu, who usually works outside the frame. The mediated execution event appears to blur the boundary between what is on and off the shooting set, what is within and beyond the diegetic space, and what is inside and outside the camera’s view. One might either see the photo as a group travelogue of film stars or understand it as a paratextual play with the Western or Japanese method of punishment for individuals who crossed the colonial order. The photo is a conceptual take that falls between fact and fiction, reality and artifice, showing not merely a staged approach to the potential readers’ empirical encounters with countless penal spectacles of that time but also a playful response to the colonial and imperialist violence.

This specific image is powerful because it marks a convergence point of the imperialist (legal) encounter, the film world, and the mediascape.¹⁵ What do the group of four filmmakers

¹⁵ The concept *mediscapes* has been raised by Arjun Appadurai as “the distribution of the electronic capabilities to produce and disseminate information (newspapers, magazines, television stations and film studios)” and “the images of the world created by these media.” See Arjun Appadurai, “Disjuncture and difference in the global cultural economy,” *Public Culture*. No. 2 (2) (Spring 1990): 9.

exactly mimic? Who is executing whom/what? It is neither Jin Yan and Wu Yonggang that are *executing* Han Langen who plays the condemned nor Dong Keyi that is *executing* the camera or his photographic work. Rather, it is the entire group of film professionals and artists that, through staging and mimicking a beheading, *execute* Qingdao as a site of the daily mechanism of violence lying on a continuum among the colonial penal spectacle, state-sanctioned violence against common crimes, and illegitimate physical forces. Chinese people had seen images like this one so often that its fictionalized decapitation could readily become entangled with their memories or mediated perception of actual ones in China as a semi-colonial entity.¹⁶ Various photographs were taken of decapitations throughout the late nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century, the period of so-called Old China (as opposed to the “New China” marked by the founding of the PRC in 1949). However, this photograph as discussed above—a rare one that includes celebrities enacting an execution and explicitly assumes the consumers of popular press and cinema as the phantom penal spectators—marks a point of departure from which we understand an allegory of mass-mediated punishment defined and was defined by what I call *an age of public exposure*.

Public exposure, best described in the rich connotations of the Chinese term *shizhong* (示眾), here refers to the increasing—and pervasive—exposures of bodily violence (*shi*, 示, literally “display”) as well as the creation of publics and communities of various kinds (*zhong* 眾, literally “crowd” or “public”) through such exposures during the late Qing and early Republican

¹⁶ Images of decapitation had been published in popular media including newspapers and pictorials. For example, anonymous author, “Five Pirates beheaded in Tsingtao,” *The China Press*, July 5, Tuesday, (1927): 11; *Luotuo Pictorial* published a photo of staged beheading (presumably shown as a real one without any further explanation about the identity of the western photographer and how the photo was produced). See “Kefa de yimu shatou” 可怕的一幕殺頭 (A Horrible Scene of Decapitation), *Luotuo huabao* 駱駝畫報 (Luotuo Pictorial) Vol. 43 (1928): 2.

era. For centuries in premodern China, *shizhong*, loosely defined, was known as the means par excellence for disgracing and shaming offenders in a public setting and was used as both a separate and a supplementary punishment within a wide range of sanctions and penalties. In general, the major types of shaming punishments included (1) public parade or infamous procession, in some cases with symbols, masks, or just naked; (2) public exposure in a particular place, such as a pillory, and with constraints, such as a sign or attached symbols that announced the deviance; and (3) public humiliation through specific manipulations, perhaps light flogging, shaving, or drowning.¹⁷ One may easily make a connection to the term *shayi jingbai* (殺一儆百; executing one for people to see so as to admonish a hundred of them), which describes the purpose of *shizhong*. In other words, the term *shizhong* literally points out the spectacular essence of those sets of penal and punitive practices, regardless of form, period, or context: exposure both as an act of publicization and an effect of shameful publicity. While similar practices, at least in most European countries, were largely removed from public sight much earlier, *shizhong* in China has remained as corporeal reality rooted in a long history of violence, shaming, and cruelty, even today.¹⁸ Through *shizhong* as a critical lens, an understanding of the age of public exposure boils down to a twofold question: what or whom is being exposed (*shi*) to

¹⁷ Jörg Wettlaufer and Yasuhiro Nishimura. 2012. "The History of Shaming Punishments and Public Exposure in Penal law in Comparative Perspective: Western Europe and East Asia." In *Shame between Punishment and Penance: The Social Usages of Shame in the Middle-Ages and Early Modern Times*, edited by Benedicte Sere and Jörg Wettlaufer. Florence, Sismel-Ed. del Galluzzo, 2013, 199-200.

¹⁸ For discussions around China's long and ongoing history of violence and public shaming, see works including David Der-wei Wang. *The Monster That Is History: History, Violence, and Fictional Writing in Twentieth-century China*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); Robert E. Hegel. "Imagined Violence: Representing Homicide in Late Imperial," 中國文哲研究集刊 no.25, Dec 2004, 61-89; William T. Rowe. *Crimson Rain: Seven Centuries of Violence in a Chinese County*. (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2007); Timothy Brook. *Death by a Thousand Cuts*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008).

the crowd (*zhong*) and how does the mode of exposure (*shi*) inform and transform a certain public (*zhong*)?

In the newly defined age of public exposure, the emergence and social uses of the camera played a crucial role in the shifting modes of image-making and variations of visibility at the intersection of judicial punishment and popular justice. Yet it is impossible to base our understanding of this historically specific moment and “the period eye” simply on new technological possibilities and visual excess.¹⁹ I argue that central to the shift of the period was not solely the proliferation of photographic and cinematic images of criminality, torture, catastrophe, bodily injury, and shaming punishment, but also, more importantly, the social and political lives of those images. A closer examination of such a shift concerning *shizhong* helps to trace the broader historical roots of *pidou* in a way that bridges the 1949 divide and to enrich our understanding of the rise and workings of Chinese socialism in cultural terms. The intertwined legacies of *shizhong* and *pidou* reverberate in today’s China, where public displays of violence and shaming punishment are highly visible. It is essential to acknowledge the historical relationship between *shizhong* and *pidou*, from the beginning of their mutual interaction. To that end, we must recognize the importance of *shizhong* as both a category of analysis and an increasingly salient—and contested—category of media practices that were both old and new during the period I examine in the chapter. In *shizhong*, we see *pidou*’s *prehistoric* sources embedded in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century cultural production. In what follows, there are three interrelated parts to show the historical and intellectual context of such an

¹⁹ Michael Baxandall, *Painting and experience in fifteenth century Italy: a primer in the social history of pictorial style* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 29-57. Baxandall terms “the period eye” in order to argue for the socially conditioned vision and position of the historical spectators.

age marked by public exposure: visual economies of Chinese cruelty, what Lu Xun might (not) see, and mass production of retribution.

2.2 VISUAL ECONOMIES OF CHINESE CRUELTY

Encounters with photographic media fundamentally redefined *shizhong* and reshaped its cultural forms in late Qing and Republican China. Dong Keyi's photographic work *Decapitation* is only one among the tremendous images that shaped the visual economies of punishment and execution, or rather, of "Chinese cruelty." Since the eighteenth century, generic images of what the umbrella term *shizhong* connotes, including various Chinese judicial practices and violence of various kinds, had become a visual category, a popular source of cultural and ethnographical knowledge about China.²⁰ Such visual materials, alongside official archives and intellectual discourses, worked in tandem with popular prints, illustrated newspapers, scholarly works, travel accounts, and especially photographic media to create an enduring myth of Chinese cruelty. As part of a long history of what Teemu Ruskola terms "legal Orientalism," the myth of Chinese cruelty is fundamentally built on the initial Western construction of a discourse about the cruelty of China's legal system and, in particular, its criminal punishments—namely, the making of China's legal cruelty.²¹ It may not be hard to see those materials narrowly as texts of violence

²⁰ For more details about the cultural imaginaries of "China" in European countries, see David Porter. *Ideographia: The Chinese Cipher in Early Modern Europe*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2001. Porter's book focuses on four spheres of encounter: linguistic, theological, aesthetic, and economic.

²¹ Concerning the rich and complex history of legal Orientalism, see Teemu Ruskola, *Legal Orientalism: China, the United States, and Modern Law* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013). Besides, an increasing body of legal-historical scholarship has engaged the construction of Chinese cruelty in legal terms. See Li Chen, *Chinese Law in Imperial Eyes: Sovereignty, Justice, and Transcultural Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015); for the narratives and discursive construction about *lingchi*, "execution by slow slicing" by both Western and Chinese observers, see Brook, Bourgon, and Blue, *Death by a Thousand Cuts*. It may also be called "legal cruelty" see Weiting Guo. "The Speed of Justice: Summary Execution and Legal Culture in Qing Dynasty China, 1644-1912." diss. University of British Columbia, 2016).

intended to serve commercial and pedagogical purposes by evoking horror and cultural shock. I take an intermedial approach to broadening the scope of visual materials under discussion, however, in line with existing scholarly attempts to recognize the key role of images in law and the shaping of legal beliefs, to focus on the intersection between law and images.²²

2.2.1 *Legal Cruelty and Pictorial Shame*

The age of public exposure has to do with foreign involvement in image-making practices related to Chinese law and legal culture. The first kind of legacy derived from this age is the making of legal cruelty grounded in pictorial production in late imperial China. One of the earliest and best-known cases is a book first published in 1801 in London. *The Punishments of China, Illustrated by Twenty-Two Engravings: With Explanations in English and French* was skillfully compiled by a former British military officer in India, George Henry Mason. *The Punishments of China* contains twenty-two engravings depicting the arrest, flogging, imprisonment, exile, and execution of criminals.



Figure 2-2. *Punishment of the Wooden Collar*, from Mason, *The Punishments of China* [1801], Plate 13.

²² For a discussion about the role of images in law and legal beliefs, see Adam L. Rosman, “Visualizing the Law: Using Chats, Diagrams, and Other Images to Improve Legal Briefs,” *Journal of Legal Education* 63 (2013): 70.

In Mason's book, an engraving titled *Punishment of the Wooden Collar* with visible Chinese texts on the cangue seals, for example, helps to instantiate what I call *pictorial shame*, a way of seeing through the relationship between images and law, contextually and analytically.²³ It first and foremost appears to be a pictorial depiction of China's age-old shaming punishment called the cangue (枷刑) (Figure 2-2). Originally adopted for detaining prisoners, the cangue had been used with varying regulations for its size since the time of the Sui Dynasty (581–618); it was not established as a primary mode of punishment, but only arranged for public humiliation, as the supplementary punitive means outside of formal punishments, until the Ming Dynasty.²⁴ Legal scholar Zhang Shiming points out the flawed view of Chinese law and legal life in the book, in which a questionable image of the cangue stands out.²⁵ The colloquial term 責放 (*zefang*, “beating before freeing”) is clearly shown on the seal-strip, or seal cover, whereas the standardized term should be 責釋 (*ze shi*, “beating before release”) on an official seal-strip that could neither be creased nor broken.²⁶ The handwritten crime of the condemned on the cangue is

²³ The Chinese characters are nothing cursory, more likely to be done by Chinese creators. “兩廣部堂示” (“by order of the governor of Guangdong and Guangxi”) in the upper part, the text “吾惡土豪混名插翅虎枷號示衆” (“the evil villain nicknamed ‘winged tiger’ put in the cangue for public exposure”) on the left, and “吾惡土豪混名插翅虎枷號三月責放” (“the evil villain nicknamed ‘winged tiger’ put in the cangue for three months before being freed”) on the right. Following the plate page, Mason gave detailed explanations about the mode of punishment by wooden collar for those convicted of robbery.

²⁴ For discussions about the cangue in Chinese penal system and its representation in Mason's book, see Shiming Zhang. “Painting and Photography in Foreigners' Construction of an Image of Qing Dynasty Law.” *Frontiers of History in China*, vol. 12, no. 1, 2017, 38-39. The reign of Ming Taizu (朱元璋), 1368–98, when the Great Ming Code (大明律) stipulated, in regard to the examination system, that students and officials who took the examinations found secretly hiding papers, or using silver to pay someone to write their examination papers would be punished by the Judicial Office; they would be put in the cangue for a month before being converted to commoner status at the expiration of the punishment.

²⁵ Additionally, George Mason incorrectly identified the Chinese ankle press with the rack for Inquisition in his *The Punishments of China*.

²⁶ Also, according to Zhang's analysis, the seal-strip probably painted by Pu Gua did not fit into Qing legal rule given that it has no official seals but only three red circles in the image. See Zhang, 39.

meant to warn, to educate, and to deter. As the literary scholar Eric Hayot notes, this book shares the conventions within which Mason's earlier typological project, *The Costume of China*, operated: each individual image exemplifies a general type, image-caption pairs show the oscillation between image-as-possible-anecdote and image-as-illustration, and overall they manifest the "domestic and mechanical habits of an original and remote nation."²⁷ The images of punishment in Mason's collection, which achieved great commercial success in Europe, provide a pictorial pattern that falls between "typology and instantiation, encyclopedia and (potential) event" in their imagination of the Chinese legal world.²⁸ For instance, *Punishment of the Wooden Collar* enjoyed a cross-genre following in light of the cangue (枷刑) type. Many of the constructed images, such as sketches, watercolors, engravings, and staged or posed photographs (particularly those still accessible in various photographic archives and in remade forms today, for example, John Thomson's photograph of the cangue in Figure 2-3), in the same vein, showed a visual language informed by Mason's *Punishment of the Wooden Collar*.

²⁷ This is from Mason's preface to *The Costume of China* (London, 1800). Scholars have usually cited an edition reprinted and intercalated with William Alexander's *The Costume of China of 1805, in Views of 18th Century China* (London, 1988), which was published in 1805, with the original title *The costume of China, Illustrated in Forty-eight Coloured Engravings* (London, W. Miller, 1805). The Ashmolean Museum at the University of Oxford acquired another version titled *Costumes of China—Original Watercolours—1800*, containing the watercolors that appear in the published book. Reprinted editions of *The Costume of China* from 1806, 1811, and 1821 are housed at the Huntington Library in San Marino, California. For an insightful analysis of "the compassion trade" around the *Costume* series and more details about the different editions and versions of Mason's project, see Eric Hayot, *Hypothetical Mandarin: Sympathy, Modernity, and Chinese Pain*. (Oxford University Press, 2009), 61-65.

²⁸ As Hayot describes and gives the example, the epistemological power produced by such oscillating functions of Mason's book lies in "the deductive making-visible of a law (Chinese tambouriners *look* like this) sustains itself via the simultaneous inductive presentation of an example (here is one representative Chinese tambouriner)." See Hayot, 66.



Figure 2-3. *The Cangue Punishment*, engraved photographic illustration based on the photograph by John Thomson, from *Illustrations of China and Its People* [1874], Plate VI 13 (left); a remade version as the frontispiece in Thomson's book *The Straits of Malacca Indo-China and China or Ten Years Travels, Adventures and Residence Abroad* [1875] (right).

Yet Mason's *The Punishments of China* is a collection of images far from "the original" in every sense of the word. Dating back to the translator's preface of *The Great Qing Code* (大清律例), George Thomas Staunton claimed that *The Punishments of China* "apparently copied from Chinese originals" and that Mason's deductive imagination based on stereotypes of China's cruelties and barbarous executions partially shaped the pictures in the book.²⁹ Despite recognition of stereotypical views at the time, comments like these were misleading. Indeed, Mason was not the creator of those images, but only the collector and editor. The pictures included in the book were not copies of Chinese originals and fall within the "export painting" (外銷畫) genre that was developed and achieved great popularity, peaking in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (roughly 1810s–1840s). Travelers from Europe and North America to

²⁹ George Thomas Staunton, Ta Tsing Leu Lee, *Being the Fundamental Laws, and a Selection from the Supplementary Statutes, of the Penal Code of China*, Cambridge Library Collection - East and South-East Asian History. Place of Publication Not Identified: Publisher Not Identified, 1810, XXVI-XXVII. The book is also accessible online on the website "Legalizing Space in China" (http://lsc.chineselegalculture.org/Documents/E-Library/Code_and_commentaries?ID=199)

China mainly preferred realistic paintings that celebrated the use of perspective to visually document their visits. Watercolors on pith paper (通草畫) were some of the most recognizable, collected by foreigners and amateurishly glued into scrapbooks with handwritten captions in English. Both commercial interest in China and fascination with the macabre encouraged Chinese export painters to create a series of morbid images labeled “Chinese” in bound albums, appealing to the invented brutality of a distant, alien world.³⁰ What those export paintings shared with pictures like those in Mason’s collection was perhaps a mixture of Chinese line-drawing skills and some stylistic elements of “Western realism” (chiaroscuro, scenography, etc.), or rather, Chinese style with some Western characteristics, as well as the ambiguous authorship and identities of the actual painters. Those paintings were created by Chinese artists who perhaps worked collectively on a production line and whose studios (mostly based in Canton) were set up for foreign consumption—this explains the manufacture of what Craig Clunas calls “paintings for strangers.”³¹ Based on comparative visual analysis along with a close reading of the late imperial Chinese legal code, Zhang Shiming has speculated that the artist who created the pictures in Mason’s collection could be a Chinese painter named Pu Gua, who was one of the export painters.³² With the advent of photography, a major change in the image flow within the

³⁰ There were different kinds of export paintings for foreign consumption: defined by subjects and style, including paintings of river or coastal scenes, paintings about modes of transportation, portraits of people, paintings depicting workmanship and daily commodity production/laboring processing, flora-and-fauna paintings (basically export paintings of natural history subjects that followed the Chinese *gongbi* painting 工筆畫 tradition dating back to the Song Dynasty), paintings depicting morbid images of Chinese society (such as the arrest, trial by judge, public parading of the guilty, a variety of punishments) and so forth; defined by technical forms, paintings on Bodhi leaves, pith paintings, and so on. For more detailed contexts and forms of Chinese export art, see Barry Till. and Paula Swart. “Art for the foreigner: 19th century Chinese export paintings from the collection of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.” *Art of Asia: the Asian arts & Antiques Magazine* 45 (4) 2015, 109–120.

³¹ Craig Clunas. *Chinese Export Watercolours*. (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, Far Eastern Series, 1984), 81-83.

³² Zhang, 35. In the nineteenth century foreigners in China referred to such painters by using the English suffix “qua” after the brand names; thus, most painters’ signatures on export paintings were such names as “Puqua,” “Lamqua,” and “Tingua” or in a different way of spelling, for instance, “Lin Gua” and “Ting Gua.”

shaping and working of “legal cruelty” needs to be highlighted. Apart from the mass circulation and distribution of images as mentioned above, to borrow a term from Allan Sekula, “a unified symbolic economy” was at work through the traffic in photographs, photographic prints, and other photographic forms alike.³³ With its invention announced in Europe in 1839 (three years before the first “Opium War”), photography was not available in China until decades later, around the 1870s.³⁴ The inception of the new photographic medium in China and the development of Western mercantile and missionary presence along China’s coast happened simultaneously. As part of pan-Asian colonial history, photography was embedded in a colonial context in which the earliest studios opened in China’s new treaty port cities, which were forcibly established after the Opium War, including Hong Kong, Shanghai, Xiamen, Guangzhou, Ningbo, Macao, and Fuzhou. With Chinese legal cruelty as a Western fantasy in mind, I would like to return to Dong Keyi’s photographic reenactment shown at the beginning of the chapter, and progress from the mainly foreign involvement in pictorial collection, dissemination, and consumption—say, exporting and publishing as curating a shameful “China”—to the foreign presence and engagement that were more visible and much deeper through photographic practices *in* and *about* China.

If Mason’s book, or more broadly the export painting genre, could be understood as a general mode of both industrial and textual staging in the visual economies of Chinese cruelty, foreigners’ cameras shifted attention to a mode characterized by bodily involvement in Chinese penal spectacles. Staging an execution for photography was technically nothing new. Among the

³³ See Allan Sekula, “Reading an Archive: Photography Between Labour and Capital” [1983], in *The Photography Reader*, ed. Liz Wells, (New York: Routledge, 2003), 443-452.

³⁴ Photography was still a novelty in China, while photographic activities had really taken off in China with the Second Opium War (1856-1860).

earliest execution photos produced by European American travelers in late Qing China, one of the cases Dong Keyi's work resembles most was an unauthored photo called *The Execution of a Pirate* during the period of the Boxer Uprising (Figure 2-4). The kneeling victim, stripped to the waist, head bowed, hands bound behind his back, awaits the fall of the executioner's sword; unlike in Dong Keyi's photographic work more than three decades later, no high official supervises the proceedings. Yet the photographer outside the frame may be seen as a replacement, one who executes and oversees the actual performance of the pirate and executioner roles as well as that of the camera.³⁵ The photo neither represents nor reflects the reality of an execution, but, as the historian James Hevia says, "a kind of metonymic sign of the photography complex in operation."³⁶ It belongs to a set of staged portraits of Chinese prisoners or condemned men, all executed in Loong Wah, within an enormous archive of photographs produced at that time that continues to reproduce images of China for ethnographic, academic, and commercial publications. The *photography complex* refers to a multi-application apparatus that has the capacity "not only to expose and copy things, but to pry them open."³⁷ Hevia examines the four aspects of the complex, including the complex as a "tool of empire," the transmedia forms that also circulate through the complex (both literary and visual), the stereographic component, and the reproductive technologies used by the popular press to

³⁵ Ibid., 63. Even when no foreigners show up in the photograph, most likely, they are behind the camera. Many Chinese photographers were professionals working in studios and mainly took portraits. Relatively few Chinese photojournalists were known in the late nineteenth century.

³⁶ James L. Hevia. "The Photography Complex: Exposing Boxer-Era China (1900–1901), Making Civilization," *Photographies East: The Camera and Its Histories in East and Southeast Asia*. Objects/histories. Edited by Rosalind C. Morris. Durham: Duke University Press, 2009, 81.

³⁷ Ibid., 82.

appropriate and disseminate the photographic images and prints. Images like *The Execution of a Pirate* align with the workings of the photography complex and are ideologically charged scenes.

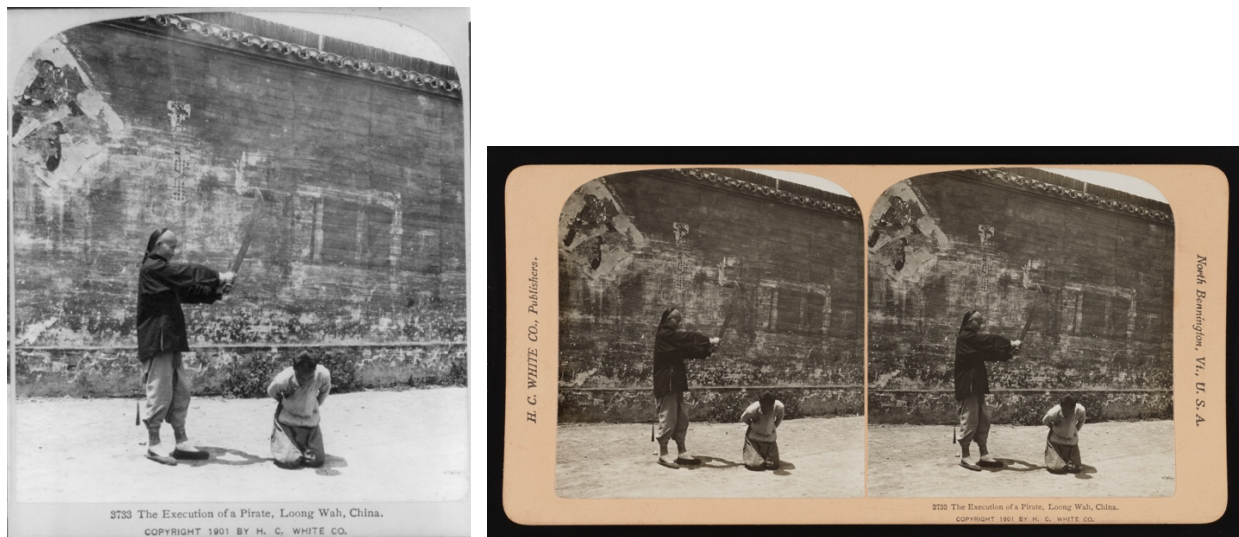


Figure 2-4. *The Execution of a Pirate*, Loong Wah, China [1901], in its photographic and stereographic versions.³⁸

We need to locate the photo and its stereographic account in the context of the Boxer Uprising that made Chinese executions not merely a visual category, but also a highly visible Chinese type around the world. In the photo, Chinese people are depicted as racialized others, and the punitive violence is frozen in its process of at once being enacted and unfinished. The camera did more than record or document; it staged and reworked the ground on which Western technological and moral superiority was based. As the English captions show, the photographs, much like the export painting genre, were produced mainly for much wider circulations outside of China.³⁹ Hevia shows how photography functioned as part of the imperialist project's

³⁸ While there is no other information about the location where the photograph was taken in China, Loong Wah in the caption may refer to Longhua Temple in Shanghai.

³⁹ H. C. White Co. was founded by Hawley C. White and his two sons Harrie C. and Clarence W. White in 1870 in New York City to make stereoscopes. The company moved to North Bennington in 1874. The factory burned in 1887 and was speedily rebuilt; it was expanded in 1907. The two White sons worked as photographers and traveled the world taking pictures for stereographs.

instrument of punishment and pedagogy and an apparatus of surveillance that documents as well as constructs the historical reality of Boxer China.⁴⁰ Only through the link between the execution portrait and its stereotypical or mechanically reproductive double did the effectiveness of the original photographic execution portrait reach beyond the immediate spatial-temporal border, enfolding Qing China in a global narrative of (colonial) violence justified within the moral universe of imperial warfare.

A large body of snapshots of the Boxer events (the executions of Boxer leaders, such as the Baoding execution) marked “a sudden breakthrough of the instant view snapped by cameras.”⁴¹ Jérôme Bourgon’s insightful discussion of *lingchi*, the notorious execution by slow slicing regularly called “death by a thousand cuts,” as a subject of photography and collection for French soldiers reminds us that the snapshot culture depended on three major changes: the topicality of the Boxer Uprising, the use of the portable camera, and the mass-mediated dissemination and circulation of amateur photos.⁴² Although snapshots by European American photojournalists and amateur photographers, such as soldiers, might appear to highlight certain aspects of the event realistically, the so-called realistic view of snapshot photography is in fact highly suspicious and questionable. *Boxer Decapitation at Yizhou* (1901), a drawing depicting the execution of the leaders of China’s Boxer Uprising that was published as a news piece in the French illustrated newspaper *L’illustration* (see Figure 2-5), is a case in point. In the form of a

⁴⁰ See James Hevia. *English Lessons: The Pedagogy of Imperialism in Nineteenth-century China*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003.

⁴¹ Jérôme Bourgon. “Obscene Vignettes of Truth. Construing Photographs of Chinese Executions as Historical Documents,” in *Visualising China, 1845-1965: Moving and Still Images in Historical Narratives*. Edited by Christian Henriot, and Wen-hsin Yeh. (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013), 46.

⁴² Ibid. 63-7. As Bourgon notes, Kodak box camera that first appeared in 1886 mattered in this case; the most complete set of *lingchi* photos is a series of 30 views taken with Verascope cameras.

two-page engraving, it may be called a photographic drawing or photo-illustration as it was taken from photographs by M.V. The original caption says, “Our civilization has not yet imported [*sic*] the Guillotine over there, and it is with a sword, a hollow sword with a large blade, that the condemned are beheaded.”⁴³ Unlike the execution portrait genre, which was based on staged photography and sought to render the “types” visible, *Boxer Decapitation at Yizhou* attended more to specific, momentary action in a particular location. Due to the snapshot-photographic essence of the illustration, there is something hardly assumed to be staged in a portrait photograph: life and death in one precise moment, with all the actual details “alive.” The fate of the two condemned Boxers occupies the foreground, with one severed head fallen into a shadowy corner, and the other in the process of being beheaded. It is also worth noting that while snapshots imply a promise of capturing unplanned moments, the method of selecting and capturing moments can be strictly structured and planned. Similarly, the comparison between photos and their remade or appropriated forms as mentioned above has to be understood in the context of circulation and of a vast world of images—a configuration of photography, print, and film (which I will discuss in detail later)—that gave birth to image events featuring the assault of Chinese “barbarisms” on Christian civilization, specifically during the Boxer Uprising.⁴⁴

⁴³ *L'illustration*, May 1901. “Imported” seems to be a misspelling and may be “exported.”

⁴⁴ The “event” should be distinguished from what the historians call “the Boxers as event” that is only one of the many levels on which we understand the Boxer Uprising historically. See Paul A. Cohen, *History in Three Keys: The Boxers as Event, Experience, and Myth*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997). My use of “Image event” to highlight the eventfulness of the images around the Boxer Uprising has been inspired by anthropologist Karen Strassler’s examination of the work of images in Indonesia’s age of the end of authoritarian rule and neoliberal democratic transition. What Strassler terms as image-events point to political processes set in motion in which publicly circulating images shape the “material ground of struggles to bring a collectivity into view and give shape to its future.” As for more details, see Karen Strassler. *Demanding Images: Democracy, Mediation, and the Image-event in Indonesia*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2020), 9-15.



Figure 2-5. *Boxer decapitation at Yizhou* [May 1901], available from LIFE Pictures Collection and Getty Images.

Neither *The Execution of a Pirate* nor *Boxer Decapitation at Yizhou* was an exception to the style that echoed the work of William Saunders even earlier than the Boxer Uprising. Saunders, a British commercial photographer, established studios in Hong Kong and Guangzhou from 1861 to 1864, during which he staged and photographed fifty stereotypical views of trades, daily activities, and various generic types that drew on popular themes in European prints and engravings in the early eighteenth century.⁴⁵ He then ran the Saunders Photography Studio (森泰相館) in Shanghai from 1863 to 1887.⁴⁶ During that time, Saunders's works, particularly the fifty scenes in his album *Chinese Life and Character Studies (1863–1864)*, were meant to represent “Chinese characters” masked in universal qualities and drew on the excessive staging of laborers with profession-specific props and clothing. What the art historian Sarah Fraser calls “the naïve theatricality of the figures” in Saunders' works lies in the typical ways the photographed subjects performed their designated roles, such as laboring porters for the camera.⁴⁷ Meanwhile, we need

⁴⁵ As Sarah E. Fraser reminds us in her work about Chinese photographic genres in the nineteenth century, such connections between Saunders' photography and earlier European prints are complicated by its other aspect: European engravings reflect themes in Chinese export paintings of trades and types made by painters in Guangzhou and Hong Kong. Fraser 2011, 107.

⁴⁶ An advertisement about the opening of Saunders' studio was published in *Shanghai Xinbao*, (March 1863): 36.

⁴⁷ See Fraser, 92.

to note the never-fixed dynamics between sitters, performers, and cameramen in such photographic activities of essentialized China, Chinese characters, and Chinese type scenes.



Figure 2-6. Photo by William Saunders, *Decapitation* [1870], no. 32 in the *Chinese Life and Character Studies* series.⁴⁸

Saunders created a large series of reenactments of Chinese daily scenes, which were and still are extraordinarily evocative and successful. As part of the reenactment project, Saunders hired about sixty people to stage the “execution ground” and fake a public beheading for his photography (see Figure 2-6), while actual scenes of decapitation were not allowed to be photographed in China until the 1890s.⁴⁹ Saunders’s pioneering work turned out to be an endlessly reproduced and widely circulated picture. It depicts a shocking scene with all the significant details carefully set, including the crucial moment when the executioner raises the

⁴⁸ William Saunders’s album “Chinese Life and Character Studies (1863-1864) includes some of the earliest hand-colored albumen photographs produced in East Asia, housed in Getty Research Institute (2003. R22, Box No.8). The photo as shown above in this chapter is from an album (UoB reference Os04) kept in the School of Oriental and African Studies Archives, London (SOAS reference MS 380 876/4); also kept in Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, with the caption: “*An execution, Native City, Public decapitation*” and the wrong year 1900 as the year of its production. It is reproduced in Clark Worswick “Imperial China”, page 63, with the caption: “Attributed to W. Saunders: Execution Scene, Shanghai, 1870s.” Also reproduced in L. Carrington Goodrich and Nigel Cameron “The Face of China 1860-1912” with the caption: “Photographer unknown: Execution scene, c1860.”

⁴⁹ See Régine Thiriez. “William Saunders, Photographer of Shanghai Customs.” *Visual Resources: An International Journal on Images and Their Uses*, Vol.26, no. 3 (2010): 305-6; Shiming Zhang. “Painting and Photography in Foreigners’ Construction of an Image of Qing Dynasty Law.” *Frontiers of History in China*, vol. 12, No. 1, 2017, 31.

sword while a man pulls the long braid of the kneeling convict, whose neck is thus freed for the blade. However, the even more thrilling event for the gawking crowd is not the contact of the executioner's blade with the convict's neck, but the camera's capture of the exact moment. The crowd's direct look at the camera exposes the physical presence of (Saunders as) the photographer and also testifies to his absence in the photo.

2.2.2 *Photography before the Law*

Photography marked a key site of contestation and stimulation for legal reform in the late Qing era, for law is “part of a distinctive manner of imagining the real.”⁵⁰ Imperial Chinese law was perceived as “cruel” and “barbaric” as many non-Western societies' legal traditions and systems were. During the final years of the Qing dynasty (known as the “New Policies” Decade, 1901–1911), one of the scholar-bureaucrats and most prominent figures who contributed largely to the project of abolishing cruel punishments and modernizing China's legal and judicial procedures was Shen Jiaben (1840–1913).⁵¹ Shen began as a deputy chairman of the Board of Punishment (BP) in 1901 and then became the president of the Supreme Court (SC) in 1906.⁵²

⁵⁰ Clifford Geertz, *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology*, 3rd ed. (New York: Basic Books, 1983), 84.

⁵¹ Legal historians and scholars have reminded us that the move to abolish the cruel punishments was never entirely Western-inspired and yet had been long pushed by a group of Chinese reformers like Shen. See Jerome Bourgon. “Abolishing ‘Cruel Punishments’: A Reappraisal of the Chinese Roots and Long-term Efficiency of the Xinzheng Legal Reforms.” *Modern Asian Studies* 37, no. 4 (2003): 851-862.

⁵² Shen Jiaben (沈家本) was one of the two leading legal experts authorized by the Imperial Court (the other one was Wu Tingfang 伍廷芳) to modify the Great Qing Code. In 1907, the first draft of the New Great Qing Criminal Code (大清新刑律草案) was finished. In 1910 the Great Qing Temporary Criminal Code (大清現行律例) was promulgated. One year later, Shen Jiaben and his colleagues completed the Great Qing New Criminal Code (大清新刑律). Nevertheless, unfortunately, several months later, the blast of the 1911 Revolution put the Qing Dynasty and this short-lived criminal code to an end. For more detailed introductions of Shen's role and work concerning legal reform and the drafting of criminal codes, see Li Guilian, *A Biography of Shen Jiaben*, (Nanjing: Nanjing University Press, 2005); Xiaoqun Xu. *Trial of Modernity: Judicial Reform in Early Twentieth-century China, 1901-1937*. (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2008), 27-8, 37, 42, and 51; Hua Shiping, *Shen Jiaben and the late Qing legal reform (1901- 1911)*, in *East Asia*, 30 (2), June (2013), 121-123.

His importance does not merely lie in his role as the commissioner of law codification, but in his general contribution to shaping a modern Chinese judiciary. In 1905, the Imperial Commissioners in charge of legal reforms, Wu Tingfang (1842–1922) and Shen Jiaben, submitted a memorial that entailed the immediate suppression of so-called cruel punishments (*kuxing*, 酷刑), such as slicing (*lingchi*, 凌遲), decapitation with a public display of the severed head (*xiaoshou*, 梟首), and desecration of the corpse (*lushi*, 戮尸).⁵³ Other reformers also proposed modifying or abolishing harsh punishment methods such as the cangue in the subsequent years.⁵⁴ It is worth noting that photography was at the core of many critical debates concerning legal reform; for instance, Shen Jiaben argued for abolishing such cruel punishments at Caishikou, Beijing:

In recent years, every time when executions were carried out, not only did common people crowd and clamor, but foreigners too were curious and ascended onto roofs to watch; sometimes they were sarcastic in private discussions, they took photos and left. This is not consistent with political order and may cause other disturbances.⁵⁵

又自近年以來，都下每值決囚之際，不獨民人任意喧呼擁擠，即外人亦詫為奇事，升屋聚觀，偶語私譏，攝影而去。既屬有乖政體，並恐別釀事端。

Shen claimed that public executions demonstrated the state's power and deterred crime among the people, but that the novel appeal of foreigners' photographic practices led to gradual changes in the operation of public executions, which in turn profaned legal order and promoted social

⁵³ Shen Jiaben expurgated 344 sub-statutes seen as “obsolete, irrational or incoherent” from the Great Qing Code in the same year. See Jiaben Shen, “Shanchu xianxing Lüli nei zhongfa zhe” 刪除現行律例內重法折 (Abolishing the Harsh Punishments in Current Laws [of the Qing code]), April 24, 1905, reprinted version in Shen Jiaben, *Shenjiaben nianpu changbian* 判例與研究 (Legal Precedent and Research) Vol.1 (2007), 4-6.

⁵⁴ “Fabu zou yi fu biantong jiahao bing chuqu kexing zhe,” 法部奏議覆變通枷號並除去苛刑摺, *Dongfangzazhi*, Vol 4, Issue 6. (1907), 272-8.

⁵⁵ Shen Jiaben. “Biantong xingxing jiuzhi yi” 變通行刑舊制議 (On being flexible for the old regulation of execution). In *Beiyang fazhengxuebao* 北洋法政學報 Vol 120. (1909).

disturbances. In his account *Biantong xingxing jiuzhi yi*, Shen thus suggested closed-off executions like those that were pervasive in Western countries. Rather than just a literary strategy, for Shen, photography became a source of social perception that called for modification of the legal code.

Shen's proposal and the associated consequences offered an intellectual and legal-practical response to the visual economies of Chinese cruelty that were both international and national in scope. Since the late nineteenth century, the rise of illustrated journalism had rendered executions widely visible and laid the foundation for the later popularity of photojournalism. The earliest illustration of news published in a Chinese newspaper was about arresting the *jiulongshan* bandits.⁵⁶ Criminality gradually occupied the center of public attention and early mass media sensation in the late Qing era. The reporting of public executions became an indicator of the popular cultural fascination with a mixture of moralistic discourse and sensational real-life violence. Even when, due to technological limitations, there were no photographs but only engraved illustrations (such as those based on photographs in *Dianshizhai Pictorial*) printed in Chinese newspapers, photography rhetorically, if not visually, set the scene of executions. The focus of a *Ta Kung Pao* report in 1902 about a combined public execution of eight criminals, seven by beheading and one by hanging, was that "several Western photographers brought their cameras to the execution ground for photo shoots."⁵⁷ The description served as a designated attraction for newspaper readership and shows China's

⁵⁶ See "Arresting the Bandits," *Shun Pao*, August 18, 1876.

⁵⁷ See *Ta Kung Pao* 大公報, Vol 18, June 1902. The original text says: 五月二十五日五前，十點二十分鐘，由行不提出斬犯七名絞犯一名，依例處決，梟首時有西人數名攜照相器具臨刑情狀攝影而去。

domestic echo of the visual economies of Chinese legal cruelty as discussed earlier.⁵⁸ When Shen submitted the proposal, the popular success of such reports brought critical attention and public debates. The transnational visual phenomena and the foreigners' stereotypical views of Chinese penal justice featuring bloodthirsty iconic images of the Boxer Uprising sparked both consumerist and nationalist reactions, driving the reformers to promote legal reform and urging the Qing court to take fundamental action to expel extraterritoriality and maintain political order.⁵⁹ In turn, reformers and intellectuals like Shen expressed their critiques of and concerns about the cruel punishments, imperceptibly preparing themselves to partake in the enduring discursive construction of China's legal cruelty in general.

2.3 WHAT LU XUN MIGHT (NOT) SEE

2.3.1 *Shizhong as a Problem*

When discussing *shizhong*, whether it be the age-old and ongoing practice of shaming punishments or a rhetorical trope for any kind of shameful display, one would hardly forget to refer to the writer Lu Xun (Zhou Shuren, 1881–1936). As part of the May Fourth generation of modern Chinese intellectuals, Lu Xun is one of the best known in terms of issues such as literary modernity, left-wing culture, and Chinese national character.⁶⁰ What makes Lu Xun key to

⁵⁸ Some newspaper agencies and publishing houses ran their own special departments for press photo supplies and sales at the time. One example is *Su Pao* 蘇報, based in Shanghai, that sold photographs of major current events including executions and other forms of public spectacle of violence. See the records in Baoxuan Sun. *A Diary of the Master of Wangshan Studio* 忘山蘆日記, March 10, 1897. “詣蘇報館，購得李傅相馬關受傷後映像二紙” (the photographs Su Bao put on sale refer to the those of Li Hongzhang being shot by Japanese and got injured when Li went to Japan for signing *the Treaty of Shimonoseki* in 1895.)

⁵⁹ For the historical context of Late-Qing legal reform, concerning many events that led to repeated riots in Shanghai and increased anti-Manchu propaganda in China, as a way of prompting the Qing court to take action, see Pär Kristoffer Cassel. *Grounds of Judgment: Extraterritoriality and Imperial Power in Nineteenth-century China and Japan*. (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 174-6.

⁶⁰ For a landmark intellectual biography of Lu Xun, see Leo Ou-fan Lee. *Voices from the Iron House: A Study of Lu Xun*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987); see also David Pollard. *The True Story of Lu Xun*. (Hong

understanding the age of public exposure is less about his much-discussed literary achievements, as might be expected, than his discursive engagement with *shizhong* within a wider mediascape and his legacies as intrinsic to the visual economies of Chinese cruelty.

It is first worth noting that Lu Xun grounds *shizhong* in a life-changing epiphany of his personal and literary life history, which later became one of the most-repeated founding moments, or as David Der-Wei Wang recognizes, the “primal scene” of modern Chinese literary history.⁶¹ The legendary story is primarily one of *seeing*, which began in a classroom in the Japanese city Sendai during the early twentieth century. Lu Xun (Zhou Shuren) at the time, was a Chinese student studying at the Sendai Medical Academy between 1904 and 1906. At the end of a bacteriology class, he came across a slideshow of current events, mainly related to the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905), which the teacher had arranged to fill the remaining class time. The transformative and near-mythic moment occurred when Lu Xun saw one of the slides revealing a scene of public beheading during the war. What troubled him most was not the presumed visual focus of the scene, what he was able and likely to *see*: a Chinese prisoner about to be executed, supposedly for spying for the Russians. Rather, it was what Lu Xun *recalled* he saw: the inclusion of Chinese gawkers encircling and watching the killing of their countryman with seemingly blank facial expressions—they were “all sturdy fellows but appeared completely *apathetic*” and “had come to enjoy *the spectacle*,” as suggested in Lu Xun’s autobiographic

Kong: Chinese University Press, 2002); for more recent works, see Gloria Davies. *Lu Xun’s Revolution: Writing in a Time of Violence*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013; Eileen Cheng. *Literary Remains: Death, Trauma, and Lu Xun’s Refusal to Mourn*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2013; Kirk A Denton. “Lu Xun, Returning Home, and May Fourth Modernity.” in Carlos Rojas and Andrea Bachner, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Chinese Literatures*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016, 19-38.

⁶¹ David Der-Wei Wang, *The Monster That Is History: History, Violence, and Fictional Writing in Twentieth-Century China* (Berkeley: University of California Press), 2004, 10.

account.⁶² Insofar as the detail was arresting and compelling, Lu Xun's act of *seeing* it led him to abandon his studies in Western medicine and "devote himself to the creation of a literature that would minister to the ailing Chinese psyche."⁶³ When attributing his career-changing decision to the traumatizing experience of *seeing* the projected slide of public execution, Lu Xun seems ashamed of the Chinese onlookers in the image, as well as of himself because he had to join in clapping with his Japanese classmates during the slideshow.

It should be noted that this record of the incident was revealed only after the fact. Lu Xun recounted similar situations of seeing the execution image in a few later autobiographical accounts, such as the preface to his first short-story collection *Nahan* (吶喊, *Outcry*), published in 1923, and in the essay *Tengye xiansheng* (藤野先生, "Mr. Fujino") in 1926.⁶⁴ In both cases, Lu Xun claimed that the supposedly identical event served as the catalyst for his conversion from medical studies to literature. While there are some slight differences between the two most

⁶² Lu Xun. *Selected Works of Lu Xun*. Vol 1. trans. Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1980, 1985), 34-5. (emphasis mine)

⁶³ See Lu Xun. *Diary of a Madman and Other Stories*, translated by William A. Lyell (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990), xi. The lifechanging moment has been understood as one when Lu Xun realized that medicine or medical studies could only cure the physical bodies rather than those souls who suffered from a spiritual and moral apathy; he decided to *give up medical studies and turned to pursue a literary career* (*qiyi congwen* 棄醫從文) as a way of taking over the people's minds and souls.

⁶⁴ For the "Mr. Fujino" version, see Lu Xun, *Luxun quanji* 魯迅全集 (completed works of Lu Xun), Vol 2, 1995, 306. The three other pieces that also include Lu Xun's recollection of the slide-viewing incident are *Eyiben Ah Q zhengzhuan xu ji zhuzhe zixu zhuanlue* 《阿 Q 正傳》俄文譯本序及著者自敘傳略 (Preface to the Russian Edition of a True Story of Ah Q and a Brief Autobiography of the Writer) (1925) [這時正值俄日戰爭，我偶然在電影上看見一個中國人因做偵探而將被斬，因此又覺得在中國還應該先提倡新文藝] and "*Luxun zizhuan*," 魯迅自傳 (The Autobiography of Lu Xun) (1930) [這時正值俄日戰爭，我偶然在電影上看見一個中國人因做偵探而將被斬，因此又覺得在中國醫好幾個人也無用，還應該有較為廣大的運動]. The incident was referenced in several accounts of other people who knew Lu Xun, such as an interview with Lu Xun conducted in 1933 and published one year later by a Korean journalist Ōn-jun Sin 申彥俊 (1904-1938). See Sin. "zhongguo dawenhao luxun fangwenji," 中國大文豪魯迅訪問記 (An Interview with great Chinese writer Lu Xun), 1934; translated by Zhenshu Jin and reprinted in *Luxun yanjiu yuekan* 魯迅研究月刊 No.7 (1987): 31-3. [在一次觀看電影時，看到當偵探的中國人被槍殺的情景] In Sin's original published interview that combined both Chinese and Korean characters, he used the term 活動照相 to describe what Lu Xun answered.

detailed versions, the consensus among most of the countless literary scholars, historiographers, and intellectuals who have (re)interpreted the incident(s) appears to be that it was in the same incident Lu Xun referred to that he saw lantern slides (rather than film), one of which was the public execution.⁶⁵ Scholars have named this crucial moment of change “the (magic lantern) slide incident” or “screen incident” and enthusiastically taken on the cultural and political reverberations it initiated from time to time.⁶⁶

Shizhong is another key label for the incident, as it was earlier referred to as “the *shizhong* incident.”⁶⁷ In the *Outcry* preface, Lu Xun adopts the term *shizhong* synecdochally to frame the narrative of the incident and structure his critique of Chinese national character:

The people of a weak and backward country, however strong and healthy they might be, can only serve to be *made examples of or as witnesses of such futile spectacles* (毫無意義的示眾的材料和看客); and it was not necessarily deplorable if many of them died of illness.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Film scholar Zhou Chenshu notes that this view is supported by a recent discovery that Sendai Medical Academy did not own a film projector during Lu Xun’s time there. “A professor named Aisaku Nakagawa 中川爱咲 is said to have purchased a magic lantern projector from Germany to use in his classes. Meanwhile, it is important to keep in mind that many lantern slides were printed with hand-drawn pictures rather than photographs. If Lu Xun saw a slide, it is still not automatically clear whether he saw a painted slide or a photographic one.” For more details, see Chenshu Zhou. “Literature by Other Mediums: Revisiting Lu Xun’s Preface to *Outcry*.” *Positions: Asia Critique* (forthcoming).

⁶⁶ I am deeply indebted to Zhou Chenshu for generously sharing the draft, revised and final versions of her forthcoming article with me and for our long-term conversation around shared concerns and related issues. One of the most debatable issues about the incident as Lu Xun recollected is the medium, since in the two versions of the same story Lu Xun shows an ambivalent terminology, a set of different confusing terms including *dianying* 電影, *huapian* 畫片 and *pianzi* 片子. As Zhou Chenshu notes, the “(magic lantern) slide incident” is also widely known in the Chinese public as *kan dianying shijian* 看電影事件 (the film-watching incident). Zhou offers a compellingly critical reexamination of the incident, in which by pointing out the key of the incident, namely, “an experience of screen projection—watching enlarged, virtual images in a public setting,” she argues for a needed shift from “the slide incident” to “the screen incident” to understand this crucial episode in Lu Xun’s life. See Zhou (forthcoming).

⁶⁷ For example, by Lu Xun’s student, the Japanese scholar of Chinese literature Wataru Masuda. See Wataru Masuda (1903-1977) 增田涉. “Lu Xun and Japan,” 1947, reprinted in *Lu Xun and Sino-Japanese Cultural Exchange*, Hunan renmin chubanshe, 1981), 74-99.

⁶⁸ Lu Xun. *Selected Works of Lu Xun*. Vol 1. trans. Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1980, 1985), 5. The original Chinese text says: 凡是愚弱的國民，即使体格如何健全，如何茁壯，也只能做毫無意義的示眾的材料和看客，病死多少是不必以為不幸的。See Lu Xun. “Preface to a Call to Arms”. *Lu Xun’s Complete Works*, Vol.1 (Beijing: Renmin Wenxue Press, 1981), 417. (emphasis mine).

Shizhong is translated as “to be made examples of” and “spectacles” in the English version. In a different version, the highlighted part “made examples of or as witnesses of such futile spectacles” is translated as “the materials and onlookers of such meaningless *public spectacles*,” with *public spectacle* as the English term for *shizhong*.⁶⁹ I am not suggesting a comparative semantic analysis. What deserves more critical attention is that, however it is translated, Lu Xun’s view of *shizhong* sticks to a displacement from the context of an execution; meanwhile, the translations serve an understanding of *shizhong* at the core of a *visual* discourse surrounding the binary dynamics between the spectacle and the spectator (onlooker or witness). This leads us back to the similar logic by which Lu Xun was self-conscious about being the only uneasy Chinese spectator among his Japanese teacher and classmates during the slide show. For several scholars, this is the very moment when the trope of *kanke* 看客 (crowd of onlookers/spectators) that would appear in many of Lu Xun’s later works (including *The True Story of Ah Q*, *Wild Grass*, *Forging the Swords*, and so forth) is prefigured. To put it differently, Lu Xun falls between two crowds of people: the “apathetic” Chinese in the slide and the cheering Japanese. However, he is alienated from both due to his own poignant nationalistic consciousness.⁷⁰ The

⁶⁹ For this version of English translation, see Andy Rodekohr. “Conjuring the Masses: The Spectral/Spectacular Crowd in the Chinese Film” in Carlos Rojas and Eileen Cheng-Yin Chow, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Chinese Cinemas* (Oxford University Press, 2013), 526. The full sentence is: “an ignorant and backwards citizenry, no matter how strong and healthy their bodies may be, can only serve as the materials and onlookers of such meaningless public spectacles.” (emphasis mine)

⁷⁰ For an analysis of the trope of *kanke* and Lu Xun’s alination in the incident, see Leo Ou-fan Lee, 1987, 12-24; For discussions about Lu Xun’s subjective position and the (split) subjectivities in the projection-in-the-classroom setting that could be understood as a cinematic/screening situation, see Huiyu Zhang. “Beikan de kan yu sanchong zhuti weizhi: luxun huandengpian shijian de houbanzhiminjiedu,” 「被看」的「看」與三種主體位置：魯迅「幻燈片事件」的後（半）殖民解讀 (The “Seeing” of “Being Seen” and Three Subjective Positions: A Post-colonial Interpretation of Luxun’s ‘Slides Show Incident’). *Router: A Journal of Cultural Studies* 文化研究 No.7, Autumn (2008): 105-48; Huiyu Zhang. “Yingyuan kongjian, zhuti fenlie yu xiandaixing baoli: Cong Lu Xun de yici guanying tiyan tanqi,” 影院空間、主體分裂與現代性暴力：從魯迅的一次觀影體驗談起 [Screening space, split subject, and the violence of modernity: A case in Lu Xun’s film-watching experiences]. *Dongya renwen* 東亞人文 (2014): 27-47.

classroom became on the spot a scene of *shizhong*, where Lu Xun was put on display as a shameful target.

2.3.2 *The Mystery of a Missing Picture*

As the key to the incident, the slide image has been a longstanding mystery. Besides the question of the medium as mentioned above, many concerns have been addressed in terms of Lu Xun's configuration of what he saw. For example, when looking at the image, how did Lu Xun *know* that the Chinese onlookers in the slide were "apathetic," and, furthermore, what kind of looks on the people's faces indicated that they were? Scholars like Rey Chow have questioned Lu Xun's reading of apathy into the inscrutable expressions of the onlookers' faces.⁷¹ Due to the absence of the slide and related material scarcity, other questions also remain unresolved. What was actually projected and shown in the classroom, and what did Lu Xun (not) see? Did he misremember or misinterpret any detail in the slide image? Did the slide even exist, or was it just Lu Xun's rhetorical strategy in his "framing" of his trauma? Did he construct the entire scene in order to frame a narrative that fit his literary agenda? More crucially, what is the possible source of the slide/photograph that Lu Xun encountered? Can we locate it and see it? Debating these questions may be less important than exploring why people are so obsessed with such a missing picture, around which such a large number of empirical efforts have been made. For scholars who have mainly focused on allegorical readings of the incident or preferred to trace the intertextual connections between Lu Xun's autobiographic life and literary works, the source of

⁷¹ See Chow, 1995, 7-8. Nevertheless, as Lee Haiyan notes, Chow seems to somehow recycle what she criticizes, as she claims that the slide presents the "image of a passive collective mesmerized in spectatorship," which also conveys the "fascism" of the crowd's "immobility vis-à-vis a spectacle of inhuman horror." For more details in Lee's critique of Chow's argument, a sharp and inspiring discussion of Lu Xun's slide moment, see Haiyan Lee. "Sympathy, Hypocrisy, and the Trauma of Chineseness." *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture* 16, 2 (Fall 2004): 76-122.

the actual slide is no more than an anecdotal element. In most cases, a brief note about the lack of available evidence to identify the particular execution slide that Lu Xun describes could be enough. The absence and silence of the slide image have shaped the context of its own presence. One would hardly struggle with the truthfulness of an image as a component of a narrated event if he or she were aware that not “what really happened,” but Lu Xun’s reconstruction of the event, the narrative, has come to constitute one of the key moments of modern Chinese literature.⁷² What I find more intriguing is that either the obsessive engagement with or the intentional disengagement from the ambiguous source of the slide image has enjoyed the same space configured by the slide image’s absence. The fissures left by Lu Xun’s own memory and vocabulary regarding the slide image have nourished the mystery and kept it alive over time.

Among those involved in the ongoing debates surrounding the mystery of what Lu Xun might (not) have seen, two kinds of scholarship are noticeable and need to be historicized alongside each other. Such historicization enables a reflection on the mystery involving *shizhong* that has to be placed back in the early 1900s context of image production (what the student Zhou Shuren encountered and experienced) rather than merely Lu Xun’s 1920s.

⁷² A few literary scholars share this view and have offered insightful analysis of the narrative. Those I found most inspiring are mainly to re-read Lu Xun’s narrative through the missing picture by way of other images. For example, see Ze Yang 楊澤. “Bianyuan de dikang-shilun Lu Xun de xiandaixing yu foudingxing” 邊緣的抵抗——試論魯迅的現代性與否定性 (Resistance from the Margins: on Lu Xun’s Modernity and its Negation). *Zhongguo xiandai wenxue guoji yantaohui lunwenji minzu guojia lunshu cong wanqing wusi dao rijushidai Taiwan xinwenxue* 中國現代文學國際研討會論文集：民族國家論述——從晚清、五四到日據時代台灣新文學. (Taipei: Institute of Chinese Literature and Philosophy, Academia Sinica, 1995), 173-205; Chi-lin Hsu 許綺玲. “Luxun xie shying” 魯迅寫攝影 (Lu Xun Writes about Photography), in *Words in Pictures: Visual Expressions and Cultural Construction in Modern China* 畫中有話：近代中國的視覺表述與文化構圖. eds Ko-wu Huang. (Taipei: Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, 2003), 395-419; Yomi Braester. “Introduction,” *Witness against History: Literature, Film, and Public Discourse in Twentieth-century China*. (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2003); Sean Macdonald. “Montage as Chinese: Modernism, the Avant-garde, and the Strange Appropriation of China.” *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture* 19, no. 2 (2007): 151-99; Michael Berry. *A History of Pain: Trauma in Modern Chinese Literature and Film*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 21-49; Leo Ou-fan Lee. “Zai cong tou tanqi yuanqi luxun de guominxing suixiang” 再從頭談起——緣起魯迅的國民性隨想 (Talking from the “Head” Again: The Source of Lu Xun’s “National Character”). *Xiandai zhongwen xuekan* 現代中文學刊 (Journal of Modern China Studies). Vol. 4, no.1 (2010): 11-19.

The first kind is mainly produced by those who take the approach perhaps categorized as “positivist” to the incident and the image. I would like to highlight that, within such scholarly explorations, numerous searches for the lost execution slide and conflicting interpretations of its look and possible sources have revealed and also played a part in, as previously suggested, the visual economies of Chinese cruelty. The picture of what Lu Xun might (not) have seen is long lost and yet “found” via a corpus of other images. In 1980, Chinese scholar Wei Fu published a short essay with a photograph he had recently discovered in the 1912 Japanese photographic book *Manchurian Mountain, Liao River*. Providing detailed information about the photograph, the book, and the publisher, Wei claimed that the photo and the slide image Lu Xun came across was likely a certain type of image widely produced during the Russo-Japanese War.⁷³ In the photo, a blindfolded and bound man kneeling on the ground is about to be decapitated by a sword-wielding Japanese official (Figure 2-7). Without considering the caption, we can see nothing explicit in the photo to identify the man as Chinese.



Figure 2-7. *The Beheading of a Russian Spy during Russo-Japanese War* (露谍の斩首), photograph (left) and its captioned version (right), printed in *Manshan liaoshui* (滿山遼水; Manchurian Mountain, Liao River [1912]).

⁷³ Fu Wei 隗芾. “Guanyu luxun qiyi xuewen zhi suojian huapian,” 關於魯迅棄醫學文時所見之畫片 (On the slide Lu Xun saw when he decided to abandon medical studies and turn to literature). *Shehui kexue zhanxian* 社會科學戰線. No.3 (1980): 342. Wei provided the Chinese translation of the Japanese caption of the photo, with a title 俄國奸細之斬首.

While there is a notable appearance of Chinese nationality among the gawking crowd, some of whom are stretching their necks to get a better view of the execution, it is difficult to discern their facial expressions. The caption that accompanies the photograph is a brief note on the Chinese tradition of punishment, with commentary terms like “harsh,” “resembling the Buddhist hell paintings,” “absolutely merciless,” and “unbearable to watch.”⁷⁴ The inclusion of a reference to the visual style of Buddhist hell paintings aims to justify the execution of Chinese spies and the war. Since the Japanese target audience is presumably familiar with the hell imagery genre, a visual hint “sufficed to summon a host of terrifying stories and images” in Japan.⁷⁵ An additional note at the end explains that the punitive means employed most during the war was decapitation; although there had been “a gradual tendency towards abolishing the cruel punishments [in China],” the Japanese military continued to execute spies by decapitation in Manchuria.⁷⁶ The image-caption coupling makes a connection between wartime executions and legal reform in late Qing China.

This links back to the initial issue of what one such as the overseas Chinese student Zhou Shuren (rather than Lu Xun, indeed) might have seen, specifically in the early-twentieth-century context of war-imagery production. The year 1905 in China saw the maturation of a nationalist movement stimulated by the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905), as many historians have noted.

⁷⁴ The caption says: 中國古來之刑，在於殺一儆眾，故其刑極為嚴酷，宛如所見之佛家地獄圖，毫不寬貸。若夫捕至馬賊，遊街之後，以所謂鬼頭刀之鈍刀處斬，裸尸曝尸市示眾，尸體身首異處，橫拋街頭，血流凝聚成塊，狀不忍睹。尤其日軍對俄國奸細所處之極刑，多用斬首，今雖漸有廢止慘刑傾向，但斬首之刑，目前仍存。

⁷⁵ The Buddhist hell paintings, with “a standard set of players, backdrops, and props, and a pithy, repetitive visual vocabulary,” were “displayed routinely at temples, festivals, and marketplaces” in Japan. Those have a rich history in which the mise-en-scene of the imagery was firmly anchored in China’s past. For an overview of the Japanese hell paintings, see Caroline Hirasawa. “The Inflatable, Collapsible Kingdom of Retribution - A Primer on Japanese Hell Imagery and Imagination.” *Monumenta Nipponica* 63, No. 1 (2008): 1-50.

⁷⁶ Wei, 342.

Urban elites eventually assembled as a significant organizational force committed to changing the judicial and political realms. When Shen Jiaben and Wu Tingfang proposed abolishing cruel punishments in China, many harsh executions of Chinese citizens, whether by the Russians or by Japanese military, occurred on the battlefield between Russia and Japan, in Manchuria.⁷⁷



Figure 2-8. *A Chinese and His Wife Being Executed on the Charge of Being Russian Spies* (露探清人夫妻の刑所), a photograph printed in 軍国画報 (Military State Illustrated Newspaper) 5 [April 1905].

Such executions were primarily photographed, but also sketched or illustrated, as part of war reporting and propaganda and circulated in various forms including postcards, illustrated prints, lantern slides, and photographic albums.⁷⁸ Those images captured spectacular moments that would have appeared genuinely impressive and novel to most people at the time. One of the countless examples is a photographic print depicting the execution of a Chinese couple, in which a large crowd of people, including many Chinese (as distinguishable from the Japanese military),

⁷⁷ For more about the Chinese population during the Russo-Japanese War period, see Keith Stevens. “Between Scylla and Charybdis: China and the Chinese during the Russo-Japanese War, 1904–1905.” *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic* 43 (2003): 127-62.

⁷⁸ For image production during the Russo-Japanese War, see Jon D. Carlson. “Postcards and Propaganda: Cartographic Postcards as Soft News Images of the Russo-Japanese War.” *Political Communication* 26, no. 2 (2009): 212-37; also see Chris Williams. “‘The Shadow in the East’: Representations of the Russo-Japanese War in Newspaper Cartoons.” *Media History: Newspapers, War and Society*, 23, No. 3-4 (2017): 312-29; John W. Dower. “Yellow Promise/Yellow Peril: Foreign Postcards of the Russo-Japanese War (1904-05),” http://ocw.mit.edu/ans7870/21f/21f.027/yellow_promise_yellow_peril/yp_essay01.html. (accessed on May 15th, 2020).

and the spectacle of horror are given more or less equal importance in spatial terms (see Figure 2-8). The crowd visually proves to be, if not just a part of the spectacle, the spectacle in its own right. Even if this was not the image that traumatized Lu Xun, it serves as a relatable visual reference of the media warfare in a broad sense, out of which the wonder of the slide image emerged. To be specific, the appearance of Chinese onlookers in this case may have been nothing more than a generic, compositional pattern of appealing to audiences in Japan, including students like Lu Xun at the time. In comparison, the transnational dimension of the war's photographic visibility recalls the spatial allocations of images produced during and about the Boxer Uprising: from China (East Asia, more broadly in this case) to Europe and North America. Images of wartime executions functioned in a variety of ways. To achieve a combination of both political and commercial purposes, for instance, European publishers even staged and reenacted the execution scene for photography and postcard production (see Figure 2-9), depicting the execution of the spy from a standpoint opposite to the images shown earlier.



Figure 2-9. *The Execution of 'Spies' by the Russian Military, Manchuria [December 1904], Getty Images (left); Russo-Japanese War: Execution of a Spy, photo-lithograph postcard, published by Virgilio Alterocca (1853–1910).*

The postcard image (figure 2-9, *right*) shows that when the costumed “Russian military” executes the “spy” (who may be either Japanese or Chinese), the heads of the executed blur into the gunshot smoke. Solely depending on this single ostensible postcard, one might read symbolically in the artificial spectacle that Russian/European imperialism teaches a magical lesson of punishment to the East Asian other, whether it be China or Japan.⁷⁹ In contrast, the photograph of an execution by hanging (figure 2-9, *left*) presents a clear view of the alleged spy as a Chinese man. The production of photographic postcards, illustrated press prints, and stereographic images related to military conflict, violence, and execution during the Russo-Japanese War became evident across national and cultural borders, transforming the war into what Gerbig-Fabel has called “a transnational media event” and “a historically specific photographic vision of technological warfare.”⁸⁰ The slide image at the center of the mystery, as discussed, was just one of numerous war images circulated during that time.

More findings led people to continue exploring Russo-Japanese wartime images and to reflect on how Lu Xun’s view was structured. In 1983, Japanese scholar Ōta Susumu received a photograph of an execution, cut from an unknown publication, from his friend. He stated that he

⁷⁹ John W. Dower reads another similar postcard (supposed to be in the same set of Italian photographic postcard with this one shown above) as one of the arrest of Japanese “spies” which is “particularly delectable” and claims that the set of postcards might well have come from an opera. Dower examines a series of Russian postcards during the War. For more details, see Dower, “Postcard Realism,” https://visualizingcultures.mit.edu/yellow_promise_yellow_peril/yp_essay02.html

⁸⁰ Marco Gerbig-Fabel. “Photographic Artefacts of War 1904-1905: The Russo-Japanese War as Transnational Media Event.” *European Review of History: Revue Européenne D’histoire: Cultural History of Politics* 15, no. 6 (2008): 629. For the Russo-Japanese War as “a global moment within a transnational history of the modern world,” see Gemil Aydin. “A Global Anti-Western Moment? The Russo-Japanese War, Decolonization, and Asian Modernity.” In *Competing Visions of World Order: Global Moments and Movements, 1880s–1930s*, edited by Sebastian Conrad and Dominic Sachsenmeyer (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 213–36. However, I need to point out that the “transnational” for the scholars of the Russo-Japanese image production is relatively limited in terms of the long-neglected, complex role of Chinese and China in the production, circulation, and reception of images (also including images about China or those produced/circulated in China) as part of such a large “global” media event.

found the photo “bears a striking resemblance to the slide image as Lu Xun recollected and described,” with the year of its production, 1905 (fitting the time in Lu Xun’s case).⁸¹ With no clear visual difference from the one Wei found earlier, the photo comes with a different caption: “Execution of a Russian spy. Among the audience were also soldiers laughing (shot outside the town of Kaiyuan, Manchuria, on March 20, 1905).”⁸² Watanabe Jō is another explorer who sought to identify the source and original look of the slide image Lu Xun recalled seeing. He considered three possible similar images.⁸³ The first was a photograph, *Punishment to the Russian Spy in Manchuria*, published on a Japanese magazine widely circulated at the time, *The Truthful Record of the Russo-Japanese War* (Figure 2-10).



Figure 2-10. *Punishment of the Russian Spy in Manchuria*, from a frontpage of 日俄戦争實記 (The Truthful Record of the Russo-Japanese War) 108 [December 13, 1905].

⁸¹ Ōta Susumu. 太田進 “guanyu luxun de suowei huandeng shijian: jieshao yizhang zhaopian,” 關於魯迅的所謂“幻燈事件”: 介紹一張照片 (About Lu Xun’s “Slide Incident”: An Introduction of a Photo). trans. Qianbin Han, *Xibei daxue xuebao* 西北大學學報. no. 4 (1983): 42-43. The essay was originally published in a Japanese magazine 野草, June 1983. The Chinese version 魯迅看到的俄國偵探處刑“幻燈” was reprinted in 2002.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Watanabe published multiple essays about his careful investigations of the event Lu Xun narrated and the primary sources he has found. See Watanabe Jō 渡邊襄. “Huandeng shijian de shishi yiju yu yishu jiagong,” 幻燈事件的事實依據與藝術加工 (The Factual Evidence and Artistic Creation of the “Lantern Slide Incident”) in *Luxun yanjiu ziliao* 魯迅研究資料. eds. Beijing Lu Xun Museum, (Tianjin: Tianjin renmin chubanshe, 1987), 186-200. It was retranslated and reprinted in 1990.

But a contradiction exists between the publication date of the photo and the time of Lu Xun's bacteriology class taught by Aisaku Nakagawa, as Watanabe explains. Unfortunately, no complete copy of the magazine is available for further examination. The second image is an illustrated picture called *Russian Spy Taken to the Execution Ground in Lüshun*, from an issue of *The Illustrated London News* on November 3, 1904. In the image, three alleged Chinese spies are surrounded by a crowd of onlookers who all appear to be Japanese military personnel. Due to its unmatched content and form as well as the missing information about the circulation of the British magazine in Japan, the picture was not what Watanabe expected to find. The third image is an engraved photographic image, reproduced in the Japanese illustrated magazine *Fūzokugahō* (風俗畫報; Pictorial magazine of Japanese Customs), on September 15, 1904. Watanabe also examined the lantern slides and films and found that there were commercials about both lantern slideshows and film screenings specifically about the Russo-Japanese war during that time. Yet no clear evidence sufficed to show an image, whether a still slide or newsreel film, similar to the one Lu Xun may have seen while studying medicine in Japan.⁸⁴ Some other scholars, based on the failed search for the correct source, concluded that Lu Xun fabricated the slide incident by drawing on multiple kinds of sources.⁸⁵ The most recent discovery of the image source was by

⁸⁴ This is the main conclusion in Watanabe's revised investigation essay (based on the earlier version) in Chinese in 2002. In this revised version, Watanabe adds more findings and includes a list of all the detailed primary materials and sources he has looked at and analyzed, including interviews with Lu Xun done by Japanese and Korean journalists, local newspapers, See Watanabe. "Luxun kandao de eguo zhentan chuxing huandeng: ziliao yu jieshuo," 魯迅看到的俄國偵探處刑“幻燈”——資料和解說 (The Slide of the Execution of a Russian Spy that Lu Xun Saw: Archives and Explanations). *Luxun de shijie, shijie de luxun 魯迅的世界 世界的魯迅* (The World of Lu Xun, Lu Xun of the World). eds. Yongxin Li. (Huhehaote: yuanfang chubanshe, 2002), 659-672.

⁸⁵ For example, Japanese scholar Atsuyoshi Nijima 新島淳良 (1928-2002) who published an essay in the same edited volume (1990) with Watanabe, arguing that Lu Xun's slide moment was artificially constructed through exaggeration and fictionalization. See Nijima 175-190. Other figures who shared the same view also include Japanese expert of Chinese literature Yoshimi Takeuchi 竹内好 (1910-1977) and literary critic Hideki Ozaki 尾崎秀樹 (1928-1999).

Masao Suzuki, who confirmed the discoveries of the photograph(s) by Wei Fu and Watanabe Jō.⁸⁶ On multiple occasions (searching online archives, an exhibition in a museum, photographic publications, etc.) Suzuki happened to encounter the same photographic image Wei and Watanabe had identified earlier, inspiring him to take further steps to locate the mystery slide among a wider range of media materials.



Figure 2-11. *After the Occupation of Kaiyuan, Our Soldiers Walking Two Russian Spies (Chinese) Along the Street.* *Senji gahō* (戦時畫報, literally “wartime pictorial”; the magazine shows its title translated to English as *The Japanese Graphic*) 59 [July 20, 1905].

To that end, Suzuki contextualizes the publication of the wartime photographic book in which the identified photo was perhaps reprinted. The value of Suzuki’s search lies particularly in the way he traces the flow of the images in relation to one another. A photograph (Figure 2-11) published in wartime magazine *The Japanese Graphic* shows a shame parade of two spies in Kaiyuan. According to a comparative examination and close reading of this photo alongside two other photos found earlier (Figures 2-7 and 2-10), Suzuki states that the three photos very likely

⁸⁶ Masao Suzuki. “Cushi luxun qiyicongwen de zhaopian wei sanchuanminlang zhifu suoshe,” 促使魯迅棄醫從文的照片為三船敏郎之父所攝——對魯迅文學轉向的再探討 (The photo that drove Lu Xun to abandon medical studies to literature was taken by Toshiro Mifune’s Father: Revisiting Lu Xun’s Literary Life-Turn). *Modern Chinese Literature Studies* 中國現代文學研究叢刊 No. 1 (2020): 1-28.

depict the same incident, but show different components of *shizhong*, including the arrest, parade, and execution of the Russian spies (who are Chinese) in Kaiyuan.⁸⁷ Indeed, the more potential slide incident images become visible and accessible, the clearer the view of what Lu Xun might (not) have seen. Although one might see a lineup of the condemned, the executioner, and a crowd of spectators including both soldiers and common folks, for Lu Xun most explicitly, such images display only two kinds of figures: the Chinese and the Japanese.

Besides, it may be readily overlooked that Lu Xun did not see the pivotal slide of execution in isolation, but rather alongside other images during the slideshow and also as part of a lecture, even if his retrospective account singled out the one slide from among the others. Furthermore, the slide we have been referring to was only a small part of the series of disparate and juxtaposed slides that constituted the slideshow and Lu Xun's everyday encounters with images of various kinds.⁸⁸ As I have shown, it was also a single occasional image surrounded by the transnational media world of the Russo-Japanese War as well as a larger network of execution images, beyond wartime, through the decades, and until the 1920s, when Lu Xun recalled his own experience of seeing it in a different political and cultural context.

Lu Xun's narrative around the lost image and its genealogical legacies help to recognize *shizhong* as an enduring visual metaphor, in other words, a kind of "pathos formula" in Chinese history, and reminds us of its dual meaning: revealing the encircling and gawking *crowd* ("zhong") *as spectacle* in its own right as well as making the crowd encircle to gawk and

⁸⁷ Ibid., 18-9.

⁸⁸ Roberta Wue offers a significant examination of the magic lantern show in China, part of which helps to understand and critically reflect on what Lu Xun encountered defined by its media ambience. See Roberta Wue. "China in the World: On Photography, Montages, and the Magic Lantern." *History of Photography: Photographic Montage Before the Historical Avant-Garde*. 41, no. 2 (2017): 171-87.

making such ways of gawking visible (“*shi*”).⁸⁹ As mentioned in previous sections, much insightful scholarly attention given to “the screen incident” or “the slide incident” has revolved around a variety of critical issues via the iconic look or misplaced image of *shizhong*. Overall, not only has *shizhong* in China rarely been traced and reflected on in historiographical terms, the imaging of *shizhong* seems to be much beyond the paradigm of most art historical concerns. While a few historians have dealt with *shizhong* as components of Chinese legal and social culture, *shizhong* itself has yet to be considered as a specific object of historical inquiry or an interrelated history of the spectacle and the crowd that have kept informing each other.

Indeed, *shizhong* has recurred as either a *type scene* across time and genre—a site of judgment where a physical or virtual assembly is numbed by spectacles, present or invoked—or a moral discourse—the idea of public display in the name of doing justice, at the core of which visibility is ethically contested.⁹⁰ Part of Lu Xun’s discursive and intellectual legacies—the

⁸⁹ *Pathosformel* or “pathos formula” is a term coined by the German art historian and cultural theorist Aby Warburg (1866–1929) in his work on the afterlife of antiquity. Here I use *pathosformel* more as a methodological paradigm, inspired by Colleen Becker, than just a Chinese version of emotionally charged visual trope. See Colleen Becker. “Aby Warburg’s Pathosformel as Methodological Paradigm.” *Journal of Art Historiography*, no. 9 (2013): CB1-B25.

⁹⁰ Beginning in the 1920s when Lu Xun pointed out *shizhong* as a problem of national character and through the 1940s, both intellectuals and the government responded to the phenomena around *shizhong*. For example, in the early 1930s, the Hubei government had dealt with cases and announced that photographs of Chinese execution could not go on sale and no photography was allowed at the execution ground. See Chengrui He. 何成濬 “Hubei sheng zhengfu zhun neizhengbu zi wei qudi shoumai woguo zhanjue renfan zhaopian bing zhixing sixing shi bude renrenpaizhao yian ling minzhengting yanxing qudi.” 湖北省政府准內政部咨為取締售賣我國斬決人犯照片並執行死刑時不得任人拍照一案令民政廳嚴行取締《湖北省政府公報》(Hubei Government Gazette) Vol. 168 (1931): 27-299; in contrast, local government in Henan announced that no more actual *shizhong* (beheading and exposure of the corps) but only photography of the criminals was allowed, if needed for keeping records. See Zhi Liu 劉峙. 訓令各區兼司令各部隊為擊斃盜匪遇有取憑證之必要時僅准攝成照片不得梟首示衆 *Henan baoan yuekan* 河南保安月刊 (Henan Policing Journal) no. 1 (January 17, 1935): 57-58; For critiques and discussions around *shizhong*, see Yu Sun. “Sharen de yishu.” 殺人的藝術 (The Art of Killing) *Yusi* 語絲 (Treads of Talk), Vol. 5, no. 3 (1929): 18-20; Ke Si (Mu Qin). “Sixing renshi xue de shangwan” 私刑、人市、血的賞玩 (Lynching, Human-selling Market, and Bloody Entertainment). *Yiwenzhi* 藝文志 (Art and Literature Journal), no. 2 (1945): 73-80, among many others.

notion of shizhong as a site of judgement, a moral discourse, and a visual matter all at once was well manifested in the Lu Xun-esque discussion in the 1920s:

“A few days ago, the condemned soldier was *beheaded and shizhong* (executed with his head hanged and exposed) at the front gate of the Summer Palace. I wanted to write to Mr. Yu (the commander of Beijing’s garrison) and offered my advice that while execution by shooting was fine, it was not necessary for a *beheading and make it the decoration* of Beijing that was already unsightly (in terms of executions)...Today, however, I saw the photographs of Song’er taken to the execution ground and just felt shocked. I realized my ideas of “no shizhong any longer” might be outdated and seemed to be ‘an interest of the wicked’...Ordinary people always enjoy *watching executions*. Even though such joy might be rebuked for its nonsense, they would not care. It is no wonder why many healthy and cheerful people are compelled to follow the truck delivering those criminals sentenced to death to Tianqiao District (the execution site in Beijing). Perhaps taking a careful look at *either the exposed head or the photo of the executed corps* could kill time, satisfy a kind of “intellectual curiosity,” and remedy defects—such a “good idea” is missing in a modern civilization and yet is it still kept as part of the rare Eastern civilization? How dare I go against public opinions and forcefully abolish such things? I only feel ashamed by my lack of enough literacy in this national quintessence and incapacity to enjoy such kinds of *exhibitions* that match the popular interests.”

“前幾天衛戍司令部槍斃肇事兵士，還將他梟首示眾，掛在中和園門口。我當時就想引責備賢者之義，寫一封信給于先生，勸他槍斃儘管槍斃，只是不要切下頭來，掛起來做這個已經欠雅觀的北京的裝飾...今日卻又在報上又看見了宋二赴法場的照片，不禁瞿然警覺，覺得我的意見不免有點背時，不免有點‘惡人之所好’了...普通一般的市民總喜歡看殺人，雖然被噙到所訓斥，‘人家砍頭有什麼好看’，也不見怪，所以在往天橋區的廠車後面跟著許許多健康快活的市民。不過這個人頭，或者這一張尸體的照片，仔細賞鑒，也慰情聊勝無，可以稍滿足智識慾(?)而補救向隅之缺恨。這種好辦法是現代文明國所沒有的，大約也是希世的東方文明的一部分罷？我何敢一定要違反民意而硬生取消這些玩意兒，我只慚愧沒有充足的國粹的涵養，不能與眾同樂這種有趣味的展覽。”⁹¹

As such debates show, shizhong was defined in multiple interrelated contexts: the display of (possibly including the parading of) criminals sentenced to death in the delivery truck to the execution ground, the actual execution on the spot, exposure of the head or corps after the

⁹¹ Feng Ming. “Song’er de zhaoxiang” 宋二的照相 ([Execution] Photographs of Song’er) *Yusi* 語絲 (Treads of Talk), Vol.105 (1926): 13-5. *Yusi* (1924-1930), often translated as “Threads of Talk” or *Yusi Weekly*, was a literary magazine launched in 1924 by Lu Xun’s student Sun Fuyuan. It was one of the most successful ventures with which Lu Xun was associated. It was the showplace for Lu Xun, in which his finest nonfiction writing was published. *Yusi*’s contributors included a long list of the May Fourth writers and pioneers, such as Liu Bannong and Qian Xuantong.

execution, and photographs of any kind as listed above; they are all “exhibitions that matched the popular interests.”⁹² Central to the core problem was that each component of *shizhong* was photographically mediated or remediated. The author’s encounter with such photographs published in newspapers was the exact site where their reaction was evoked, compelling them to point out the problem that was both morally and politically charged and feeling ashamed just as Lu Xun did. The reflection on *shizhong* ended up in a nationalist and moralistic critique of the popular masses, which left much space for the Chinese Communist Party to fill in and rework.

We need to read *shizhong* as integral to a media history widely acknowledged but never treated as a history. Such a history, or rather, a historiographical way of thinking has linked *pidou* and *shizhong* in the ways that have yet to be fully recognized and understood. The two are neither mutually exclusive nor inclusive; but they are conceptually and rhetorically intertwined and must be studied together to examine the relationship between them, which has been encapsulated in the social imaginary of justice in China.

2.4 MASS PRODUCTION OF RETRIBUTION

If we see the Boxer Uprising and the Russo-Japanese War as two of the most remarkable and earliest image events in twentieth-century China that fit into the imperialist and anti-imperialist agendas, the 1911 Revolution marked another key moment of exposure characterized by the camera and the social life it produced and transformed. That year marked a major turning

⁹² Ibid., 15. Another similar critique was also published in *Yusi*, see Ji Gu and Feng Ming. “Rendao yu cansha” 人道與殘殺 (Humanitarianism and Cruel Execution) *Yusi* 語絲 (Treads of Talk), no. 22 (1926): 41-4: “中國的絞死與槍斃久已被視為太輕了，於是又用斬。上海常有這一類的照片出賣的。中國人已‘司空見慣’，此類照片多賣給到中國來的西人——雖然彼西人也早知中國有這種習慣，拳匪時候他們叫中國的劊子手去殺捉去的拳匪。我所見的照相，是被殺者成排的跪者。劊子手持刀顯出威武的樣子。五月一日又見一位朋友從斜橋的書店中購得一枚剛的照片，是剛後暴露著還未收斂的屍體，觀眾聚著觀看...我希望諸位能恕我傳播這黑暗的罪，將那照相發表出來，使不曾看見過這個的人看看。可見中國人只有非人道，歷來並沒有過於人道。這是真的，中國只有非人道的殺人，並沒有這人道主義來妨害過革命” The essay ends with a note from the editor “the photo is temporarily not publishable [for ethical concerns].”

point and rupture in Chinese politics. The end of the Qing Dynasty signaled not just the collapse of the old political system, but also the emergence of the new: a new government, new ways of thinking about state and revolutionary politics, and new approaches to the mutual embrace of image-making and justice—out of which the mass production of retribution poured, as I discuss and explore in the following section.

2.4.1 *Retributive Exposure*

Among the many executions of Qing officials by revolutionary soldiers, a little-known, understudied, and yet notable one for its photographic afterlives was that of Chen Zhaotang (1859–1911), a local magistrate (*zhifu* 知府) of Chaozhou, held in November 1911.⁹³ Records of Chen’s life and execution are relatively limited, but include a short biography in *Qing Shi Gao* (*Historical Manuscripts of Qing: Chen Zhaotang*); Chen family lineage records in Guiyang, Hunan; and brief notes in several contemporary versions of the local gazetteers.⁹⁴ More readily recognizable is a photograph of Chen’s execution by an unidentified photographer (Figure 2-12).

⁹³ While in some contemporary accounts of Chen’s life as a legendary story, the date of his execution was November 22nd, 1911, it was November 28th, 1911 as recorded in *Qing Shi Gao* (*Historical Manuscripts of Qing: Chen Zhaotang*).

⁹⁴ See *Chaozhou fuzhi* 潮州府志 (*Gazetteer of Chaozhou prefecture*), Zhulan Bookshop, 1893; “列傳二百八十三, 忠義十 陳兆棠,” *Qing Shi Gao* (*Historical Manuscripts of Qing: Chen Zhaotang*), Volume 496, Beijing: Qingshiguan, 1927. (It was compiled by a team of historians led by Zhao Erxun 趙爾巽 (1844–1927) during the Republican period); the lineage records of Chen’s hometown Guiyang in Hunan 桂陽泗州寨陳氏續修宗譜; Guangye Peng, *Beyond the Gazetteer of Guiyang, Hunan* 州志之外: 桂陽縣文史研究叢書, Beijing: Xianshuang shuju, 2014.



Figure 2-12. The execution of Chen Zhaotang [1911], in its two versions: a photographic copy with the text “the stretching death” at the bottom, from the uncatalogued collection of “horror cards” at the East Asia Library, UC Berkeley (left); and a reprint of the postcard in the contemporary Chinese illustrated book *Historical Photos of Teochew* [2016] (right).⁹⁵

The text on the banner next to Chen reveals the most vital information about the depicted event: “Executing the bandit and traitor to the people (*minzei* 民賊), Chen Zhaotang, for appeasing the wrath of the nation.”⁹⁶ The photo shows Chen’s body, which appears to have been stretched. The revolutionary soldiers hanged him on a bamboo ladder because he was unable to stand due to his leg injuries, and then executed him by shooting.⁹⁷ In this sense, the English caption “the stretching death” in the copy on the left is more than misleading. Chen’s execution as shown in the original photograph was mischaracterized by the Chinese or foreign people who reprinted and reproduced the photo or photographic postcard for commercial purposes. In the

⁹⁵ Quan Ding 丁銓. *Historical Photos of Teochew* 舊影潮州. (Guangzhou: Southern Daily Press, 2016), 210-3.

⁹⁶ The original text in Chinese says 處決民賊陳兆棠以謝天下.

⁹⁷ “列傳二百八十三，忠義十 陳兆棠，” *Qing Shi Gao* (Historical Manuscripts of Qing: Chen Zhaotang), Volume 496, Beijing: Qingshiguan, 1927. The original text about Chen’s execution by shooting and death says: 二十八日，民黨糾眾攻政府署，火及宅門，左右挾兆棠出。民軍懸賞購執，令輸餉十萬貸死，兆棠曰：“死則死耳，安有鉅金助爾謀反？”眾怒，縛之柱，中十三槍乃絕。

copy on the right, the Chinese caption reads, “This is the front side of a Republican-era postcard; such a bloody postcard might be produced for deterring and educating people at the time.” It is a critical reminder of the form of the postcard as integral to the photograph and its workings.

Despite some differences in the captions between its two accessible versions, the photograph of Chen Zhaotang’s execution is, strictly speaking, not an execution photo, but a photo of the immediate aftermath of Chen’s execution. In a way, we can see it as a portrait of Chen Zhaotang *executed* (unlike the execution portraits showing people “*being* executed” as discussed earlier in the chapter), a photographic record of a twofold punishment: Chen’s execution and the exposure of his corpse (*pushi* 曝尸). *Pushi*, similar to *qishi* (棄市, the punitive act of abandoning corpses for public showing after executions conducted at marketplaces) was not officially included in written legal codes but remained a long-standing custom in ancient China and (or a component of) an informal, supplementary shaming punishment.⁹⁸ Although he was not beheaded, the way Chen’s dead body was exposed with his name and identity visible technically resembles the models and effects of *xiaoshi* (梟示) and *xiaozhan* (梟斬), the supplemental punishments that are both similar to (also applied after execution) and more specific than *qishi* (beheading-related). In either case, the offenders are beheaded and the offenses they committed are made known to the public, with their names written on a signboard on top of a rod; their decapitated heads are usually hung on the city wall as a public warning to the people.⁹⁹ Notably, *xiaoshi*, referring to the exposure of the head or of the corpse after

⁹⁸ For more specific discussion around *qishi* in Ming Dynasty, not recorded in the Great Ming Code, but widely adopted in conjunction with executions like beheading, hanging, and slow slicing, see Chung-Chih Hsieh 謝忠志. “Public Execution at the Market: An Exploration and Analysis of *Qishi* in the Ming Dynasty.” 刑人於市:明代棄市刑探析 *Ming Dynasty Studies*, Vol 30. June (2018): 141-92.

⁹⁹ For the detailed code about *xiaozhan* 梟斬 that should be interchangeable with *xiaoshi* in most cases, see Wang Kentang 王肯堂, *Wang Kentang jianzhi* 王肯堂箋釋. 1689, “五刑圖” 9ab “又有等而上之, 曰梟斬, 曰凌遲, 曰戮

execution, is a short name for the combination of *xiaoshou* (梟首, “beheading”) and *shizhong*, dating back to pre-imperial China, and was employed in most dynasties up to and including the Qing dynasty. In many cases, *xiaoshi*, *xiaozhan*, and *qishi*, more general terms, are almost equivalent to *shizhong* in their practical uses.¹⁰⁰ Overall, *shizhong* can be defined most loosely and broadly, encompassing the shared meanings and variations of all the terms mentioned above and beyond. In the case of Chen Zhaotang’s execution, let us just name the photographed event *public exposure*. Execution by shooting and *pushi* constitute two interrelated kinds of public exposure, the coexistence of which would be impossible without photographic engagements.

In addition to these two levels at which the punishment of Chen Zhaotang was carried out, execution and exposure, there was a third level. After Chen’s execution, copies of this photo went on sale in local photography studios in Chaozhou.¹⁰¹ The act of photography as an ongoing event, unlike the photographed event itself, turned out to be another kind of *shizhong*, or public exposure. Ariella Azoulay notes that the “event of photography” triggered by the camera is composed of a potentially “infinite series of encounters” in relation to the camera, the (assumed) photograph, and the people, including the photographed, the photographers, the viewers, and other people involved.¹⁰² When photographic media and reproductive technologies give people

尸...梟斬者斬其首, 暴其罪, 著其名, 標之以竿”; Shigeki Iwai. “The Death Penalty and Legal Culture in Early Modern China,” *Capital Punishment in East Asia*. edited by Itaru Tomiya. (Kyoto University Press, 2012), 64.

¹⁰⁰ For detailed contexts of the *Five Penalties* 五刑 and other supplementary execution methods including *xiaoshi*, see Chin Kim and Theodore R. LeBlang, *The Death Penalty in Traditional China*, *Georgia Journal of International and Comparative Law*. No. 1 Vol 5. (1975): 77-105; Sidney Shapiro. *The Law and the Lore of China's Criminal Justice*. (Beijing, China: New World Press, 1990), 32; Børge Bakken. *The Exemplary Society: Human Improvement, Social Control, and the Dangers of Modernity in China*. (Oxford [England]; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

¹⁰¹ Ding, 212.

¹⁰² Ariella Azoulay. *Civil Imagination: A Political Ontology of Photography* (Verso, 2012), 26. Also see Azoulay. *The Civil Contract of Photography*. New York: [Cambridge, Mass.]: Zone Books, 2008.

the opportunity to repeatedly display the photographed execution and close-up views of the photo, producing, distributing, and consuming photos is but one part of the sequence of public exposures. Although in the case of Chen Zhaotang, the execution-by-shooting event as the subject of a photograph technically passed in a second, Chen's execution as an event of photography may never end. Hence, *executing* Chen Zhaotang became a prolonged event, a never-ending act of punishment and shaming. In photographic practice, exposure is a crucial element that determines what is actually captured and recorded by a camera's image sensor. The simultaneous exposure of Chen's body, identity, and death penalty, structured by the tension between the image and the text, points to the fundamental exposure of Chen's criminal(ized) role and his "crime": as a former Qing official who killed many common folks and, more essentially, an enemy of the people, 民賊 an evil other destined to oppose the 1911 Revolution. Another notable case of such multiple, simultaneous exposures is a 1912 photograph of an execution and one of its aftermath, the shameful *pushi* (display of the corpse). The photographed figure is a Guangdong-based local bandit and robber named Zhou Chang who was executed by strangulation in a prison in Guangzhou (Figure 2-13). The revolutionary eventfulness of the execution also lies in the fact that it was the first strangulation in response to the evil conducted in Guangdong after the birth of the Republic of China (ROC).¹⁰³ More significant is Zhou's death, which was quite utilitarian, as part of the project perhaps understood as transitional justice nowadays, in preserving the achievements of the Revolution and legitimizing the authority of the new ROC state.

¹⁰³ "Feitu zhi shoushou," 匪徒之授首 (*The execution of Bandits*), *Zhenxiang huabao*, Vol 1. Issue 12. (1912), 15.



Figure 2-13. *The Execution of Bandits: Robber Suffering from the Torture of Strangulation, the execution of Zhou Chang*, published in *Zhenxiang huabao* (真相畫報, The True Record) 12 [1912]: 1.

Not only did the camera construct the evils of both Chen Zhaotang and Zhou Chang as deserving harsh punishment, but it also generated a *sense* of retribution (*baoying* 報應) for the sake of revolutionary politics. The executions of former officials like Chen Zhaotang or local bandits such as Zhou Chang, as events of photography during and after the 1911 Revolution, represented a retributive mode of punishment by camera. In both cases, the camera exposed dissenters in terms of retribution and served apparently legal or legitimate purposes that were essentially political. One of the most significant “conceptual underpinnings of the Chinese ideology of justice,” the historian Paul Katz argues in his work concerning Chinese religion and legal culture, is “the belief in the inevitability of retribution.”¹⁰⁴ As perhaps the most fitting index of the age of public exposure, the camera became a machine of *titian xingdao* (替天行道, “upholding justice for Heaven”) by lending itself to the hands of revolutionary forces and to a process of enforcing retributive justice in the name of the people’s will.

¹⁰⁴ See Paul R. Katz. *Divine Justice: Religion and the Development of Chinese Legal Culture*. (Routledge, 2009), 4.

The case of Chen's execution exemplifies the second kind of enduring legacy I identify from the age of public exposure: the mass production of retribution. Retribution, literally "a restoring or giving back" in English, helps to explain the similar value that permeates the Chinese religious and cultural traditions, the punishment of wrongdoing is a form of "just deserts" or "payback."¹⁰⁵ In such a view, justice prevails, with the criminals and wrongdoers eventually doomed to suffer some sort of punishment as soon as during their lifetimes, namely *xianshibao* (現世報, immediate retribution in this life), despite myriad unjust occasions due to the incompetence and corruption of the judicial system in the world.¹⁰⁶ For such events as the executions of Chen Zaotang and Zhou Chang, retribution is material as well as symbolic, which must be perceived and felt in the circulation and distribution of photographs in their variable forms: engraved pictures, photographic prints, postcards, illustrated press, and so forth.¹⁰⁷ It

¹⁰⁵ *Bao/Baoying* 報應 (retribution) is one of the varied solutions to injustice; apart from retribution, there are also *tianli* 天理 (Heavenly Principle), *wangfa* 王法 (the King's Law), *gongdao* 公道 (fairness), *zhen qingshi* 真情事 (truth), to *li* 理 (reason or common sense). The three major long-standing terms relating to the Chinese justice—*qing* 情 (compassion or feeling), *li* 禮 (principle or reason), and *fa* 法 (law). For discussions about the three terms in legal culture, see Phillip Huang, *Civil Justice in China: Representation and Practice in the Qing* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 12–13.

¹⁰⁶ For discussions about the changing notion of *Bao* and the Buddhist expression *xianshibao* in Chinese history and popular culture, see Zhang, Zhenjun. "From Demonic to Karmic Retribution: Changing Concepts of *Bao* in Early Mediaeval China as Seen in the *You Ming Lu*." *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, vol. 66, no. 3, 2013. Gale Academic OneFile, Accessed 30 January 2020.

¹⁰⁷ Photographic production during the 1911 Revolution deserves more critical attention. Newspapers and magazines owned by and associated with *Tongmenghui* 同盟會 (united league) and revolutionary groups' publications included a large number of photos and photographic booklets. While Chinese newspapers like *Minli Bao* and *Shenzhou ribao* sent journalists (such as Li Shaomu) to the foreground for reporting and photographing the uprisings, people from non-Chinese media organizations and other foreign professionals and travelers also took many photos on the spot (notable photographers such as Edwin John Dingle who worked for English newspaper based in Shanghai, *China Press* 大陸報 at the time, Francis Stanford who worked in Commercial Press, and Frederick McCormick sent to China by the Associated Press). Since the Revolution's success, there were a large number of photographs of war scenes, portraits, military conflict, and the memorial photos of revolutionary martyrs. Examples include *geming jinian mingxinpian* 革命紀念明信片 (*Memorial Postcards for the Revolution*) that was distributed nationwide and *dageming xiezhen hua* 大革命寫真畫 (*War Scenes of the Chinese Revolution*, Commercial Press, 14 issues). Concerning the photographic production around the Xinhai Revolution, see Lin Fan and Shouming Fan. "*xinhai geming de quanhuajuan: dageming xiezhenhua*," (Panorama of the 1911 Revolution-War Scenes of the Chinese Revolution); Hanchao Lu. *The Birth of a Republic: Francis Stafford's Photographs of China's 1911 Revolution and Beyond*. (University of Washington Press, 2017).

would be difficult to trace the detailed circulation, for example, of the photographic postcards of Chen Zhaotang's execution or to estimate its scope, whether domestic or international, even if we could see reprinted copies that survived till today. Little evidence has surfaced to show the true role of mass participation in (re)producing and disseminating certain execution photographs and their remade forms.¹⁰⁸ Nonetheless, it is clear that retribution toward such "target criminals" as Chen or Zhou was not attributed to a single individual (neither the shooter-executioner nor the photographer), particular site, or moment. Rather, the completion of retribution has been attested by a mass of mutual encounters between the human and the nonhuman across temporality—to borrow Allan Sekula's term, "the traffic in photographs"—a traffic "made up of memories, commemorations, celebrations, testimonials, evidence, facts, fantasies."¹⁰⁹ Retribution is produced through mediation on a massive level. Photographic production during and after the 1911 Revolution, exemplified in cases of Chen or Zhou's punishment by camera that merge photography-of-execution, photography-as-execution, and retribution-through-photography, prefigured a tendency toward the close, dynamic interlocking of photographic media and the social imaginaries of criminal justice. That manufacture of retribution may be broken down into two components at the intersection of the legal and extra-legal fields, especially popular cultural spheres: social institutions that develop in response to practical necessities emerged in the search

¹⁰⁸ It is harder to identify meta-data of the remade or recycled forms. Some photographs, titled as "an execution of a Qing official during the 1911 Revolution," available online in various photographic archives and digital collections outside of China are mis-identified or catalogued with a mismatched caption. Many of those were actually photographs taken in different times, either during 1899-1901, around the Boxer Uprising, or in the 1920s. One example is a photo of beheading that is widely labelled as "public execution of a Qing official right after the Xinhai Revolution" and yet is one produced during 1927.

¹⁰⁹Allan Sekula, "Reading an Archive: Photography Between Labour and Capitalism" [1983], in *The Photography Reader*, ed. Liz Wells, (New York: Routledge, 2003), 450. For Sekula's earlier use of and discussion about "the traffic in photographs," see Allan Sekula. "The Traffic in Photographs." *Art Journal: Photography and the Scholar/Critic* 41, no. 1 (1981): 15-25.

for and processing of solutions to injustice on the one hand, and the mental landscape that justifies such efforts on the other hand. Furthermore, what I call the *mass production of retribution* basically refers to occasions wherein those manufacturing activities were put on an assembly line during the Republican era.¹¹⁰ Mass media, with the intermedia interplay among themselves, was central, at every level, to manufacturing retribution and making it accessible, imaginable, and penetrable in people's daily lives.

2.4.2 *Performing a Cinema of Exposure (Baolupian)*

In this context, perhaps the most intriguing development in the mass production of retribution in China was a compelling twist in early filmmaking, sensational journalism, and entertainment culture. A new presence within the bustling Shanghai mediascape, namely cinema, showed strong interests in real-life criminal violence from its inception in China. By the early 1920s, an obsession with documenting life on the run and bringing the real to the reel was perpetuated. In what follows, I examine two such cases that fit into what the filmmaker Cheng Bugao, a witness to the early Chinese film industry, termed *baolupian* (暴露片, “cinema of exposure”) when recollecting memories about the making of the first five feature-length films.¹¹¹ For Cheng, *baolupian* refers to films about “bad people doing evil” and, ideally, films that seek to unmask the ugly truth and dark reality. In this regard, *baolupian* is not a specific genre, but a conceptual category of films that may draw from various and hybrid genre film traditions, such

¹¹⁰ For both the “manufacture of retribution” and “mass production of retribution,” I am highly indebted to sociologist Jon Oplinger’s definition of “the mass production of deviance” and his comparative perspective on European witchcraze (in spite of some constraints in his approach). For more details, see Jon Oplinger. *The Politics of Demonology: The European Witchcraze and the Mass Production of Deviance*. (Selinsgrove [Pa.]: London: Susquehanna University Press; Associated University Presses, 1990).

¹¹¹ Cheng, 53-6.

as crime films, melodrama, social problem films, detective films, courtroom drama, and so forth. The value of *baolupian*, Cheng claims, lies in its “exposure of evil in the world” and sharp social critique, with “an impact that evokes the popular hatred for evil and collective efforts to criticize and attack.”¹¹² Cheng sees *baolupian* as a mode of *fanmian jiaoyu* (反面教育, “teaching through bad models/negative materials”) and a weapon against crime and evil.

One of the earliest and most vivid examples of *baolupian* is the high-profile murder case of Yan Ruisheng, an employee of a foreign trading company in Shanghai, who killed a well-known courtesan named Wang Lianying. Wang was known as the “Minister of the Flowery Nation,” who had been repeatedly awarded the first prize in courtesan pageants.¹¹³ The case went through a life cycle of wide media coverage and representation, followed by numerous copycat publications, local newspaper reports, stage performances such as *wenming xi* (文明戲, “civilized plays”), and appearances in entertainment venues, including amusement halls and storytelling courts.¹¹⁴ The story was soon adapted into a crime-fiction film, the first Chinese-made feature-length film, *Yan Ruisheng* (閻瑞生, dir. Ren Pengnian, 1921), and unexpectedly

¹¹² Cheng, 54.

¹¹³ Yan Ruisheng, who was a gambler in heavy debt, borrowed a car and lured Wang Lianying for a drive to the countryside. Before escaping from Shanghai with the stolen jewelry, Yan and his friend Wu Chunfang drugged and strangled her. Yan was caught at the train station of a provincial city Xuzhou and taken back to Shanghai where Yan and Wu were sentenced to death and executed. See *Shibao*, September 20, 1922.

¹¹⁴ See Zhang, 105-8. Zheng Zhengqiu first adapted the Yan case into a *civilized play* (*wenmingxi*, a hybrid of modern Western dramatic and theatrical elements with those of traditional Chinese theatre; China’s first form of modern theatre that flourished in Shanghai in the 1910s. This foreignizing format is known as *shingeki*, namely new drama, in Japan), *Lianying beinan ji* 蓮英被難記 (The Murder of Lianying), which debuted the month of Yan’s execution. There were a number of Peking Opera productions based on the Yan case, including *Lianying jie* 蓮英劫 (Lianying’s doom), *Lianying gao yinzhuan* 蓮英告陰狀 (Lianying sues in the Hell) in 大世界館 the Great World and *Qiangbi Yanruisheng* 槍斃閻瑞生 (Executing Yan Ruisheng) in various theatres. Gao Yilong and Li Xiao, *Zhongguo Xiqu Xiandai lunshi*, 42-3. Pang Laikwan offers a discussion around the Lianying case in the theatrical world at the time, see Laikwan Pang. *The Distorting Mirror: Visual Modernity in China*. Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2007, 161-3.

became the first box office hit, earning some 4,000 yuan in its first week of screening.¹¹⁵ The film adaption of the Yan case maintained an intimate but ambiguous connection to reality. The film historian Zhang Zhen calls the film “a docudrama that aspired to ‘reflect’ reality,” a film that “reveals the embodied nature of photographic ‘true realism.’”¹¹⁶ The film was shot on location amid Shanghai’s various scenic attractions, where the original murder trap happened; shooting locations including landmark neighborhoods, restaurants, a tea house, a railway station, a wheat field, and governmental bureaus became the film’s selling point afterward. Second, Yan’s friend and colleague Chen Shouzhi, who was said to bear a physical resemblance to Yan, played the murderer Yan; Yan’s friend Zhu Zhijia, who lent Yan his car, invested in the film and played himself; Zhu’s concubine Wang Caiyun, a former prostitute, played the heroine role of Wang Lianying, the murder victim who was a prostitute. The prop car in the film was even the actual car Yan had borrowed from Zhu.¹¹⁷ These dimensions characterized *Yan Ruisheng* as an experiment dedicated to, in Bao Weihong’s words, “ma[king] hyperbolic claims of indexical and iconic realism.”¹¹⁸ *Yan Ruisheng* appears to play with truthfulness at the intersection of the real and the fictional, the topical and the melodramatic. The intermedia horizons of the production,

¹¹⁵ *Yan Ruisheng* (1921) was released by *Zhongguo yingxi yanjiu she* 中國影戲研究社 (Chinese Motion Picture Society), a temporary company specifically for the making and distribution of the film. This proved to be a one-film speculative company as it was disbanded soon after the production of *Yan Ruisheng*. *Yan* as “the first Chinese feature-length film” is still debatable in some way, depending on how to define “feature film” in early Chinese filmmaking. See Zhang 2016, 100.

¹¹⁶ Zhang, *An Amorous History of the Silver Screen: Shanghai Cinema, 1896-1937*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 105.

¹¹⁷ For more details, see Du Yunzhi, *Zhonghua minguo dianying shi* 中華民國電影史, 54-55; Li Suyuan and Hu Jubin. *Zhongguo Wusheng Dianying Shi* 中國無聲電影史, 67-71.

¹¹⁸ Weihong Bao, *Fiery Cinema: The Emergence of an Affective Medium in China, 1915-1945*. (University of Minnesota Press, 2015), 49.

circulation, and reception of such a film simultaneously produce the sense of realism and the cinematic.

What is also noteworthy about the film is its performative engagement with criminal justice through mediations, rather than just depictions, of Yan's crime, trial, and execution. The Yan case was an ongoing encounter between mass media and legal proceeding. The eyeline of the popular masses never moved away from the process of Yan's trial, conviction, and sentencing to death.¹¹⁹ In November 1920, Yan was executed in an open space near Longhua Temple, Shanghai, before a crowd of over five thousand spectators; among them were many prostitutes who came to see justice finally done to the murderer of their "sister Lianying."¹²⁰



Figure 2-14. "The Retributive Consequence of Yan Ruisheng, Who Murdered for Money," in *Shibao huakan* [November 28, 1920].

¹¹⁹ See "Moubi Lianying an yaofan jiang chu sixing" 謀害蓮英案人犯將處死刑, *Xinwenbao*, November 19th, 1920; "Moubi Lianying an yaofan yiding chu sixing" 謀害蓮英案人犯已定死刑, *Xinwenbao*, November 23rd, 1920.

¹²⁰ "Yan ruisheng moucaihaiming zhi jieguo," 閻瑞生謀財害命之結果, *Shibao tuhua zhouban* 《時報》圖畫周刊, November 28th, 1920; Chen Cunren, *yinyuan shidai shenghuoshi*, 銀元時代生活史, 275. Virgil Kit-yiu Ho, *Butchering Fish and Executing Criminals: Public Executions and the Meanings of Violence in Late Imperial and Modern China*, in *Meanings of Violence: A Cross-cultural Perspective*, (Göran Aujmer & Jon Abbink eds., 2000), 153-54.

The execution of Yan Ruisheng, which stirred a citywide frenzy, produced a spectacular retribution in which the worlds of theater, film, and reality coalesce; help to make sense of one another; and enlarge the frenzy. In a pictorial special issue of *Shibao* (see Figure 2-14), a report of Yan's execution was published along with photographic portraits of Yan and Wang and three photos showing the process of Yan's execution (from the right to the left). A brief note in the report stresses that, due to the poor quality of the actual photos taken earlier at Yan's execution, the images on display are a mixture of photographic work and components of *chonghui* (重繪, "pictorial retouching").¹²¹ On the right is an obviously appropriated piece of Yan surrounded by the soldiers who appear to be escorting him to the execution ground; in the middle is a reenacted copy of "the after-execution situation of [Yan's dead body]" (槍決後之情形), and on the left is a view of Yan's coffin.¹²² Publicity for *Yan Ruisheng* mainly consisted of selected sets of film stills that paired dramatic key plots with the display of major protagonists in a tableau-style setting (see Figure 2-15).

¹²¹ See "Yan ruisheng moucaihaiming zhi jieguo," 閻瑞生謀財害命之結果, *Shibao tuhua zhoukan* 《時報》圖畫周刊, November 28th, 1920, 4. The photographs were taken by a photographer called Hui Fang.

¹²² Ibid.



Figure 2-15. “The Film of Yan’s Murder for Money,” film stills from *Yan Ruisheng* (1921), published in *Shibao* (weekly pictorial) 49 [1921]: 3 (left); *Shibao* (weekly pictorial) 52 [1921]: 1 (right).

Those frozen actions ranged from gatherings to the crime, flight, arrest, and interrogation of Yan to the trial. The photographic form of the film scenes signaled the transformative power of cinematic vision and the photojournalistic quality of crime news, which promised to unveil an unjust reality inaccessible through other media. Exceptionally, the final execution was not exposed as part of the publicity images in *Shibao*, perhaps because it was one of the film’s biggest selling points and attractions that needed to be held to promote suspense. As an apparently incomplete narrative, the film stills make sense of an unrelieved desire, echoing the earlier call of the theatrical version of *Yan Ruisheng*. “Men, women, old and young” would have to come to the theater in order to “see the news” (*kan xinwen*), at once to see the topical event *anew* (the reenacted execution on the big screen) and to see the topicality of *the new* itself (in this

case, a resolution by cinematic means).¹²³ As shown in *Shenbao*, it was because the photographs of Yan's execution were too unclear to be referenced for filmmaking that the film crew decided to reenact the entire execution.¹²⁴ They asked the Defense Commissioner of Shanghai (*Songhu hujun shi*, 松滬護軍使) to send the same military group who had carried out the executions of Yan Ruisheng and Wu Chunfang. On May 24, 1921, the "two actors whose likeness to Yan and Wu was astonishing played the roles of two criminals" as they went through the "fake" execution by firing squad; aside from the dry firing, the setting was almost the same as when Yan and Wu were actually executed one year earlier.¹²⁵ A big crowd that gathered on the spot to watch the reenactment, unassigned, was caught on camera as part of the film.¹²⁶ Justice needs to be seen and experienced to be very effective beyond the conventional legal field—in the Yan case, the murderer was ritually executed both onstage and offstage, on screen and in reality. The commentary of Yan Duhé, the popular novelist and editor for *Xinwen Bao*, pointed out the key influence: "While 'real' Yan Ruisheng and Lianying pass away, 'fake' Yan Ruishengs and Lianyings sell well."¹²⁷ As part of the case's resolution, the criminal Yan never fully died, but

¹²³ "Hepingshe bianyan huazongli moushaan di xuanyan." *Xinwenbao*, November 25, 1920. Laughter Stage 笑舞台 made an explicit state earlier about people's experience in the theater as *kan xinwen*, suggesting the beauty of theatrical experiences concerning news that mix life as drama and drama as life.

¹²⁴ "Chongshe qiangbi yan ruisheng yingpian" 重攝槍斃閻瑞生影片, *Shenbao*, May 27th, 1921. What the *Shenbao* report refers to as "benfu yanghang" is most likely to be 中國影戲研究社, the production company of Yan Ruisheng as previously mentioned, since the founders worked as compradors in *yanghang* foreign banks at the time. The execution site was called *longhua caochang* (Longhua playground) in *Shenbao*.

¹²⁵ "Chongshe qiangbi yan ruisheng yingpian" 重攝槍斃閻瑞生影片, *Shenbao*, May 27th, 1921.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Duhé Yan, "Wuhu xianzai de shu," *Xinwenbao*, October 25th, 1920. The quoted part is translated in Qiliang He, 2006, 87.

was always *dying* in order to *be executed* so the procedure of retributive justice could be repeated and reproduced as a combination of mass entertainment, moral education, and social cure.

The case of *Yan Ruisheng*, along with its transmedial life and afterlives, was not the only one. When advertisements for the stage play featuring *Yan Ruisheng*, directed by Zheng Zhengqiu, appeared in major newspapers on a daily basis, another case was repeatedly reported in the local breaking news section: *Zhang Xinsheng* (張欣生). As Yan's case was brought to the big screen, the leaders of the Mingxing Film Company (aka The Star Motion Film Company) became inspired and turned to the Zhang case, known as a "patricide case" (*nilun an*, 逆倫案), that was then ubiquitous in headlines.¹²⁸ With similar qualities that grew out of journalistic resources and celebrated hyperrealist gruesome details, this film, *Zhang Xinsheng* (dir. Zhang Shichuan, 1923), was also based on a real criminal case first adapted as a civilized play.¹²⁹ Zhang Xinsheng, the oldest son of a wealthy family in Shanghai, poisoned his father, a rice shop manager, because he was in great need of money for drugs and gambling. In fact, people had no idea of the murder until a year later, when Zhang's accomplice, Zhu Chaosheng, informed the police. Most remarkably, the police conducted a public autopsy on March 18, 1921, during their investigation of the Zhang case, which became a mass spectacle of justice seeking.

¹²⁸ "Nilun an kaiguan zhengyan ji (1)," 逆倫案開棺蒸驗記 *Shenbao*, March 19th, 1921: 10.

¹²⁹ The film *Zhang Xinsheng* was produced in 1922 and premiered on 16 February 1923, sold well at first but was banned afterward for its shocking scenes of strangling and an autopsy in 1923. The film was renamed later: *baoying zhaozhang* 報應昭彰 (explicit demonstration of retribution). See Bugao Cheng, *Yingtian yiji* 影壇憶舊 (Reminiscences of the Film World). Beijing: China Film Press, 1983, 70.



Figure 2-16. *The Truth of the Patricide Case in Pudong through a Public Autopsy*, illustrated reports on the public autopsy event in the Zhang case, photographs by Ying Ming Photography Studio, respectively published in *Shibao* [March 20, 1921]: 00 (left), and *Shibao* (weekly pictorial) [March 27, 1921] (right). The main difference between the two is the presence of Zhang Xinsheng in the latter, showing the progress of the case as evidenced in a photo of Zhang's arrest.

The event attracted tremendous public attention and media sensation; major daily newspapers such as *Shenbao* and *Xinwenbao* orchestrated elaborate serialized reporting and published photographs of the autopsy.¹³⁰ Ying Ming Photography Studio in Shanghai photographed the entire public autopsy and published a photographic book entitled *The Truthful Panorama of the Public Autopsy for Investigating the Patricide Case in Sanlintang, Pudong*, in which thirty-two photos are carefully assembled into a collection (see Figure 2-16).¹³¹ Newspapers like *Minguo ribao* tracked and published a series of legal documents about the Zhang case. After the long process of trials, Zhang Xinsheng was sentenced to death and

¹³⁰ From March 19th to March 27th, 1921, *Shenbao* published a series of four reports under the same sensational title, “Report on the Patricide Case: Pried Open the Coffin, Steamed the Bones” (*Nilun an kai-guan zhengyan ji*), and another four reports under the title of “Report on the Trial of the Patricide Case” (*Nilun an yanming hou zhi jianting xunwen ji* 逆倫案驗明後之檢廳聞訊記). Only twelve days after the autopsy, the World Publishing House published a book with a catchy title: “Zhang Xinsheng Killed His Dad” (*Zhang Xinsheng sha die* 張欣生殺爹).

¹³¹ The title of the photographic collection is known as 上海浦東三林塘逆倫案開棺驗屍之真相全圖 or 上海新奇逆倫案檢驗骸骨全圖. See the ad page for “Shanghai xinqi nilun’an jianyan haigu quantu,” *Shenbao*, Feb 14th-18th, 1921.

executed on December 19, 1922.¹³² After Zhang's execution, the Mingxing Film Company announced a plan to adapt the case for a feature film, with a strong appeal to reality, by basing the film script on *shidi diaocha* (實地調查, "field work/study") and shooting most of the scenes on location.¹³³ The news article concluded with a celebration of the film's style, saying its "realistic portrayals of actual scenes deserve your special attention."¹³⁴ A commercial for the film *Zhang Xinsheng* included a list of nineteen sites, highlighted in large font, where the Zhang case took place. An additional note claimed that "all the scenes were shot on location; such a sense of realism cannot be achieved in stage plays."¹³⁵ Specific spatial references to local scenic views suggested a potential appeal beyond fascination with the scene of the crime and violence. Once the spectators read the ad and accordingly watched the film, their capacity to locate both the filmic space and the shooting location would invite them to remap and perform the urban space. In the case of *Yan Ruisheng*, particularly for those who witnessed and, as unmotivated extras, partook in the filming of the reenacted execution, film experience was transformative and self-reflexive, since it was likely that the extras could see themselves on screen. What the big screen mirrors and exposes is the people neither in reality nor in film, but their coexistence with themselves in the past and present, testifying to the tension between *reality* and its construction through the movie camera.

¹³² "Zhang xinsheng deng sanfan zuoti zhixing sixing," 張欣生等三犯昨日執行死刑 *Minguo ribao*, December 20th, 1922.

¹³³ "Mingxing Zhang Xinsheng pian zhong zhi shidi jingkuang," 明星《張欣生》片中之實地境況 *Shenbao*, Feb 8th 1923, 17.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.* The prison scenes were shot in the Jiangsu No. 2 Provincial Prison, a newly built prison equipped with the latest facilities. With permission from the Police Chief of Shanghai county, many scenes were shot in the Zhang family's ancestral temple and the graveyard, Sanlintang town.

¹³⁵ See *Shenbao*, Feb 11th, 1923.

Yan Ruisheng (1921) and *Zhang Xinsheng* (1923) showcase a similar, multilayered exposure of the corrupt metropolis as a crime scene and a playground while sharing their obsession with sensational (re-)constructions of reality and active interactions with other media.



Figure 2-17. “Truth Comes Out through the Public Autopsy,” in the presence of Zhang Xinsheng, film still from *Zhang Xinsheng* [1923], *Xinsheng funüwenyuan*, 1, no. 5 [1923]: 1.

What is questionable about such *baolupian* Cheng Bugao identifies, as introduced in the beginning of this section, is related to the issue of exposing evil: to what extent is the exposure of evil in the film acceptable, a cinematic exposure but not “an import of evil” that “spreads evil for encouraging people to follow it?”¹³⁶ For example, as shown in the public autopsy scene from *Zhang Xinsheng* (see Figure 2-17), the exposure of ugly truth through the autopsy as a spectacle is also an exposure of violence and its discontent. Part of the anxiety is born out of the thin line between the public autopsy as a profilmic event and as a public event in a legal sense, between its film-still form and the press photo; all these alike are spectacles. Yan’s execution, staged or reenacted, has to do with the same concerns: What is real and what is not? Isn’t the real a *construct*? Is a spectacle of violence, such as public autopsy or public execution, too real to be

¹³⁶ Cheng, 53-6. Cheng lists four different kinds of problematic approaches to exposing evil through *baolupian*: being willing but unable to expose and critique, the “naturalist” bystander’s perspective, the position defined by an unresolved paradox between sense and sensibility, and a mentality that appreciates the art of praising murder.

true in the sense that it is staged in nature? Then what kind of violence is understood to be *real*, in an ethically correct way? Such inquiries point to the central issues that the two controversial films *Yan Ruisheng* and *Zhang Xinsheng* and many other *baolupian*, in Cheng's mind, could cause and expose. It was not simply the graphic, too-real violence in the films that was under suspicion and debate, but the moral perils of cinema, a discourse that has never been unique to China and early Chinese filmmaking.¹³⁷ When he confessed during the trial, Yan declared that his crime was an imitation of foreign detective films and his knowledge of killing techniques was drawn from American serials. Critiques of *Yan Ruisheng* mainly revolved around the film's model, on which reenactments of similar criminal cases were frequently based and portrayed.¹³⁸ The explicit depiction of public autopsy and bloody violence in *Zhang Xinsheng* resulted in the accusation that the film produced moral anxiety and had a destructive influence on society. Both *Yan* and *Zhang* were banned in 1923, since the two films "made people see the cruel, sullied human mind, and harmed social education."¹³⁹ Beginning with an active foray into court cases and the judicial space, the two films ended up being the objects of censorship and legal regulation, which characterized the cinema of exposure.

¹³⁷ For the histories of how cinema produced a wide range of anxieties and confronted an array of perceived moral dangers since its birth in non-Chinese contexts, see Tom Gunning, "From the opium den to the theatre of morality: moral discourse and the film process in early American cinema," *The Silent Cinema Reader*. Edited by Lee Grieveson and Peter Kramer (London: Routledge, 2004), 145–54; Gray Rhodes. *The Perils of Moviegoing in America: 1896–1950*. (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group), 2012; Rielle Navitski. *Public Spectacles of Violence: Sensational Cinema and Journalism in Early Twentieth-century Mexico and Brazil*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2017; Francesco Casetti. "Why Fears Matter. Cinephobia in Early Film Culture." *Screen* 59, no. 2 (2018): 145-57.

¹³⁸ Yoshino Sugawara, "Toward the Opposite Side of "Vulgarity": The Birth of Cinema as a "Healthful Entertainment" and the Shanghai YMCA," 180. For the connection between American cinema and *Yan Ruisheng*, see Qin, "Pearl White and the New Female Image in Chinese Early Silent Cinema," 249-50.

¹³⁹ "Neiwubu zizhun jiaoyubu ziju tongshu jiaoyu yanjiuhui chengqing jinzhi kaiyan yanruisheng zhangxinsheng er an yingxi," 內務部咨準教育部咨據通俗教育研究會呈請禁止開演閻瑞生張欣生二案影戲, *Jiangsu sheng jiaoyu gongbao*, 江蘇省教育公報, May 18th, 1923 (3362): 4-5.

However, as baolupian, *Yan Ruisheng* and *Zhang Xinsheng* expose something more than the wrongfulness of murder. On the one hand, they at once expose and reinforce a moral tale defined by the binary determination between good and evil. The revised title of *Zhang Xinsheng* sums up the key logic: *baoying zhaozhang* (報應昭彰, “explicit demonstration of retribution”). One of the dominant narrative structures in Chinese storytelling is retributive causality, which, driven by moral necessity, has always found its way into literary works, tabloid stories, folk songs, stage plays, and cinema, not to mention those popular prints and visual artifacts that shape film experiences outside the movie theater, a paratextual world of cinema.¹⁴⁰ Intermedia variations of both the Yan and Zhang cases speak to each other in the same moralist language that fits into “retribution for evildoing and reward for good deeds” (*shan’e guobao*, 善惡果報). People’s perception centers on the films’ core message—justice depends on, in a film spectator’s words, “[retribution as] a clear demonstration of cause and effect” (*yinguo zhaozhang*, 因果昭彰)—nicely summarized in the criticism of *Zhang Xinsheng* that suggests a reading based on the need to juxtapose the film and Zhang’s execution.¹⁴¹ The main problem with retributive causality—the promotion of the “moral order sustained by the ‘inevitability’ of coincidences” that readily leads to an epistemological dead end and reinforces the validity of the existing

¹⁴⁰ Such paratexts include a wide variety of film-related materials and their in-between forms, ranging from film stills, production photos, publicity photos, movie posters, commercials, booklets, *yingxi xiaoshuo* (film fiction), to cartoon or manipulated photographs based on the film, and so forth. Film spectatorship thus becomes the product of not merely a complex intertextuality between the film and the narratives of its exhibition space, but also ongoing human encounters with cinema, which are based on a literal displacement of *the cinematic* from the theater onto its surrounding spaces and mediascapes across multiple worlds. The paratextual world of cinema points to, as some scholars have suggested, the “portability” of the film experience, or fragments of cinema in daily life. For such insights, for example, see Thomas Stubblefield, “Disassembling the Cinema: The Poster, the Film and In-Between.” *Thresholds* 34 (2007): 84-88; Victor Burgin, *The Remembered Film* (London: Reaktion Books, 2004).

¹⁴¹ Ji Run. “Tan guan zhang xinsheng yingpian,” 記觀張欣生影片 (*On Watching the Film Zhang Xinsheng*), *Xianshi leyuan ribao*, March 13, 1923. The author reads the film along with Zhang’s execution in terms of “shidao renxin xia yi banghe” 世道人心下一棒喝 (*an instant awakening, a public warning in the presence of the worldly hearts of mankind*).

order—is revealed in both *Yan Ruisheng* and *Zhang Xinsheng*.¹⁴² On the other hand, pairing the two films helps to expose a pattern shared by many similar cases concerning homicide, suicide, and scandals, in which the cases lived a new life on stage or on screen and resulted in controversies over violence, gender, criminal justice, and moral order. The scenario—dramatic incidents involving the judicial process to varying degrees, followed by sensational journalistic engagements, media representations, and public debates—may be best described in cases including the 1928 suicide of Ma Zhenhua motivated by love, the 1935 suicide of the actress Ruan Lingyu, and the 1935 assassination of the warlord Sun Chuanfang by Shi Jianqiao.¹⁴³ With a focus on *qing* (emotion) and *fa* (law), news remained intertwined with fiction, legends, and imaginaries. The mutual encounters between media and criminal justice unfolded more repeatedly after the case of Yang Naiwu and Xiao Baicai drew attention to media-law dynamics in late Imperial China.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² Karl Kao. “*Bao* and *Baoying*: Narrative Causality and External Motivations in Chinese Fiction,” *Chinese Literature, Essays, Articles, Reviews* 11 (1989): 135. For more scholarly readings of retribution in Chinese law, literature, and history, see Paolo Santangelo. “Destiny and Retribution in Late Imperial China.” *East and West* 42, no. 2/4 (1992), 377-442; Martin W. Huang, “Karmic Retribution and the Didactic Dilemma in the *Xingshi yinyuan zhuan*,” *Chinese Studies* 15.1 (1997), 397-440; Tina Lu, *Accidental Incest, Filial Cannibalism, and Other Peculiar Encounters in Late Imperial Chinese Literature* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2008); Daniel M. Youd, “Beyond Bao: Moral Ambiguity and the Law in Late Imperial Chinese Narrative Literature,” and Jonathan Ocko, “Interpretive Communities: Legal Meaning in Qing Law,” in *Writing and Law in Late Imperial China: Crime, Conflict, and Judgment*, ed. Robert E. Hegel and Katherine Carlitz (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007), 215–33; 261–83.

¹⁴³ See Bryna Goodman. “Appealing to the Public: Newspaper Presentation and Adjudication of Emotion.” *Twentieth-Century China* 31, No. 2 (2006): 32-69; Kristine Harris. “The New Woman Incident: Cinema, Scandal, and Spectacle in 1935 Shanghai,” in *Transnational Chinese Cinemas: Identity, Nationhood, Gender*. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997), 277-301; Eugenia Lean. *Public Passions: The Trial of Shi Jianqiao and the Rise of Popular Sympathy in Republican China*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

¹⁴⁴ For more about the role of print media in the famous wrongful conviction, the Yang Naiwu 楊乃武 and “Little Cabbage” 小白菜 case, see Madeleine Yue Dong. “Communities and Communication: A Study of the Case of Yang Naiwu, 1873-1877.” *Late Imperial China* 16, No. 1 (1995): 79-119; William P. Alford. “Of Arsenic and Old Laws: Looking Anew at Criminal Justice in Late Imperial China.” *California Law Review* 72, No. 6 (1984): 1180-1256; Li Chen. “Traditionalizing Chinese Law: Symbolic Epistemic Violence of the Discourse of Legal Reform and Modernity in Late Qing China,” In *Chinese Legal Reform and the Global Legal Order: Adoption and Adaption* (Cambridge University Press, 2017), eds. Michael Ng and Yun Zhao, 186-7. For recent historical scholarship on

Yan Ruisheng and *Zhang Xinsheng* recall one of the “two principal modes of staging cinematic spectacles of violence,” as the film historian Rielle Navitski notes in the context of early twentieth-century Mexico and Brazil: films called “violent actualities” that recorded and reconstructed real-life violent events.¹⁴⁵ Their shared legacies in filmmaking encompass reenactment, location shooting, onscreen appearances of participants or witnesses in the original incidents (or people with physical resemblances), and, in some cases, a combination of staged and unstaged footage. By reenacting the unpredictable occurrences of violence that escaped the camera’s lens, violent actualities usually develop ambiguous relationships with the topical events.¹⁴⁶ Both the Chinese and Latin American cases remind us of the importance of recognizing the intersections between sensational cinema and print culture since then as key to framing violence—whether produced by the state or by nonstate actors—as an acceptable consequence of urbanization and modernization. With that in mind, it is also necessary to note the difference in the Chinese experiences, situated in what I term the *mass production of retribution*: the mediation of violence was bound up with a moralized imaginary of justice. To be more precise, the above-mentioned binding makes sense somehow by way of legal space because the two mutually forged and preserved each other across the judicial and extrajudicial divides.

While the other mode identified by Navitski in early Latin American cinema, “sensational fiction,” also resonate with the Chinese films in taking a sensationalist approach to capitalizing on the popularity of fictional stories and novelizations of various media forms, it does not help to explain a more specific category of fiction films that framed everyday life in

law, print media, and the circulation of legal code in Qing China, see Ting Zhang. *Circulating the Code: Print Media and Legal Knowledge in Qing China*. (University of Washington Press, 2020).

¹⁴⁵ Rielle Navitski. *Public Spectacles of Violence: Sensational Cinema and Journalism in Early Twentieth-century Mexico and Brazil*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017), 6.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

melodramatic terms and sought to engage the political by negotiating the boundary of the Chinese legal world. Beginning in the mid-1920s and continuing through the 1940s, an array of films favorably featuring lawyers, police procedures, prison conditions, and legal spectacles including trials and executions, whether in the underworld or the earthly world, enjoyed both the tension between and the interlinking of morality and law. As Zhong Dafeng and Li Ying state, *fatingxi* (法庭戲, dramatization of the courtroom as a scene type, or Chinese “courtroom drama”) in early twentieth-century Chinese cinema, distinguishable from the courtroom drama or trial film as a genre defined in European American film scholarship, is closer to a mode of narrative that draws on various media genres and forms in China.¹⁴⁷ Apart from local news reports, the cultural sources of the “Chinese courtroom drama” include the theatrical genre called *gong'an* (公案, court-case) drama dating back to the Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368), translated law-themed novels and plays, and the established cinematic traditions shown in imported Hollywood films, such as detective films.¹⁴⁸ The earliest Chinese “courtroom drama” is not a singular, fixed category, but one produced in flux and mainly across the hybrid-genre variations of *shenguaipian* (神怪片, films about immortals and demons), *guzhuangpian* (古裝片, ancient costume films), and martial arts films.¹⁴⁹ Films spanning from *Qiushan Yuan* (秋扇怨,

¹⁴⁷ Dafeng Zhong and Feng Li. “zhongguo fatingxi de yinmu chuxian,” (*Chinese “Courtroom Drama” and Its Initial Representation on Screen*), *Dianying yishu* (Film Art), Vol.3, 2017, 109.

¹⁴⁸ For discussions about the *gong'an* genre, see George A. Hayden, *The Courtroom Plays of the Yuan and Early Ming Periods*, 34 *HARV. J. ASIATIC STUD.* 192, 200 (1974). The three central ingredients of a *gong'an* play include “a crime, the solution and punishment of the crime in a courtroom situation, and a judge (or, less frequently, a court clerk) who solves the crime and punishes the guilty party.” Also, for the rich context of Chinese cinematic treatments of trials, which is rooted in the *gong'an* tradition, see Stephen McIntyre. “Courtroom Drama with Chinese Characteristics: A Comparative Approach to Legal Process in Chinese Cinema,” *University of Pennsylvania East Asia Law Review* 8 (2013): 1-127.

¹⁴⁹ Examples include *Redress a Grievance* 烏盆記 (1927), *The Imperial Appeal* 梁天來告御狀 (1935), *Blind Wife* 啞妻 (1948) and other cross-genre films that mainly draw on the *gong'an* stories and are set in premodern China.

Complaints, 1925), *Jiushi Wo* (就是我, *This is Me*, 1928), *Shen Nü* (神女, *The Goddess*, 1934), *Mi Dianma* (密電碼, *The Secret Code*, 1937), and *Hanshan Yeyu* (寒山夜雨, *Cold Mountain Night Rain*, 1942) to *Jietou xiangwei* (街頭巷尾, *Streets and Lanes*, 1948), to name just a few, either depict the courtroom as a site of struggle and dramatic change or feature scenes of public shaming and execution (framed under the umbrella term *shizhong* in some commercials). Regardless of genre, style, or production context, these films tend to colonize the ideological ground of justice. However, most of their engagements with the legal and judicial world are scattered and remain governed by retributive causality. In one way or another, they justify violence in the name of retribution and fundamentally work as part and parcel of a much larger punitive spectacle.¹⁵⁰ Their claims about justice mainly point to individual evil rather than to guilt on an institutional level.

¹⁵⁰ Stephen McIntyre. "Courtroom Drama with Chinese Characteristics: A Comparative Approach to Legal Process in Chinese Cinema," *University of Pennsylvania East Asia Law Review* 8 (2013): 10.

Chapter 3. TRANSFORMING SHIZHONG IN THE WARTIME IMAGE PRODUCTION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

“(Class) struggle arises where there is *shizhong*.” A contemporary account edited by the local Party archive and research institute quotes this representative slogan about the long history of socialist class struggle in a county of Zhejiang Province.¹ The quotation is just one among many similar slogans connected to *pidou* practices in the 1960s. “Class struggle” and *shizhong* meet in a single moment of the Party’s grand narrative. In this moment, different temporalities are bridged: the broadly defined Old China, the Communist Revolution, the Cultural Revolution, and the Party-state’s present era free of “class struggle as the guiding principle.”² Why was the appearance of “progressive” class struggle related to and even attributed to *shizhong*, namely, the age-old Chinese tradition regularly understood as premodern? What did the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) make of *shizhong* from the inception of the project called *class struggle*? Part II “The Look of Class Exorcism” will follow the intriguing clue left in the perhaps unexpected and mistimed connection between *shizhong* and class struggle to explore the wartime image production in which the post-1949 proliferation of *pidou* was deeply rooted.

The following chapters explore two cine-photographic projects critical to the foundational decades of early CCP filmmaking and image (re)production. The two projects are

¹ The slogan in Chinese is 示眾到哪裡, (階級)鬥爭到哪裡, which is cited from the documents for “qingli jieji duiwu” 清理階級隊伍 (*Cleansing the Class Ranks*) campaign edited by the local government of Shengzhou county, Shaoxing, Zhejiang. See Shengzhou County’s Revolutionary Committee. “guanyu dui jiuchulai de jieji diren jinxing da shizhong dapipan de tongzhi,” 關於對揪出來的階級敵人進行大示眾、大批判的通知 (*Notice about the Large-scale Shizhong and Great Criticism of Class Enemies Who are Exposed*), October 3rd, 1968.

² See zhonggong shengzhoushi dangshi yanjiushi. 中共嵊州市委黨史研究. *Zhongguo gongchandang shengzhou lishi* 中國共產黨嵊州歷史 (The History of the Chinese Communist Party in Shengzhou) Vol.2 1949-1978. Beijing: Zhongguo dangshi chubanshe, 2011.

helpful in understanding and reflecting on the fruitfulness of Maoist mass mobilization. One is the photojournalistic work exemplified in *Jinchaji hua bao* 晉察冀畫報 (*Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Pictorial*) and other periodicals at the time (1942–1948); the other one is from the largely neglected and understudied film project *minzhu dongbei* 民主東北 (*Democratic Manchuria*) (1947–1949). Both cases in the communist-controlled northern regions instantiate a mode of image production, in which photographers and filmmakers took on much more than the representation of class struggle; they played a part in *enacting* class struggle as a system of mass performances of justice. The camera was in the hands of active participatory media producers and artists who moved across the battlefields, home fronts, and rural neighborhoods as the frontline of land reform. In the rallying cry of Communist journalists, “combine the barrel of a gun with the barrel of a pen,” “the barrel of a pen” could be replaced with *the lens of a camera*.³ A major part of the camera work was to *shoot*—in both senses of the word—the Communist criminals and enemies, including the KMT prisoners, local bandits, and landlords, to identify them, as well as to mold public response to them. Through organizing the eyeline and bodies of the masses, cine-photographic encounters initially shaped the paradigmatic look of class struggle and modelled the way people collectively act in it. In addition to the two dimensions discussed earlier (*the visual economies of Chinese cruelty* and *the mass production of retribution*), a third dimension that I examine in this chapter, *the look of class exorcism*, also derived from “the age of public exposure.” It later flourished in the culture of *pidou* throughout the Mao era, and remains functional even today. In short, the cases under discussion provided a prelude to *pidou* practices that proliferated more systematically in continuous land reform and later political

³ Zhiqing Chang. “zai jinshui ribao de niandai li” 在晉綏日報的年代裡 (In the Years [1946-1949] When working for Jin Sui Daily). *Xinwen zhanxian*. No. 6, 1956, 39. “槍桿子和筆桿子配合起來”

campaigns. The chapter suggests how photojournalistic and cinematic work rendered class struggle as a set of penal spectacles and punitive encounters serving the mass exorcism of *class enemies* and the displacement of postwar justice with *class* justice.

3.2 “DOWN WITH LOCAL BULLIES AND EVIL GENTRY”

Before moving to the dynamics between image production and justice-making in communist-controlled north China, it is necessary to look at the larger political and cultural milieu from the 1910s to 1940s, in which the CCP’s revolutionary vision of justice was articulated. One of the key imageries of justice-making is embedded in the broad-based social movement and rites of punitive violence designed to wipe out the militia leadership by local power-holders, local bullies and evil gentry (*tuhao lieshen* 土豪劣紳), during the period of the Northern Expedition military campaign.⁴ From 1926 to 1927, under the alliance of the Soviet Union with the Chinese Communist Party, the National Revolutionary Army launched the Northern Expedition, a military phase of the so-called National Revolution, advancing from Guangzhou to the north in order to eliminate regional contenders and their local collaborators, and ending the separation by warlords rooted in the long-term militarization of local society.⁵ The anti-imperialist and anti-warlord agenda of the Northern Expedition was about suppressing local opposition to restoring the

⁴ A series of eliminating the local bullies and evil gentry started as early as 1925, supported and participated by the Nationalists. See Thornton 2007, 101. The slogan “down with local bullies and evil gentry,” reoccurred in many public statements made by the KMT and the CCP. One of the examples states that “in order to liberate the Chinese people, we must overthrow the imperialists, warlords, corrupted officials, running-dog politicians, compradors, local bullies and evil gentry, cruel landlords and any other counter-revolutionary forces.” 要達到中國民族完全解放的目的，一定要打倒帝國主義、軍閥、貪官污吏、走狗政客、買辦階級、土豪劣紳、殘酷地主及其他一切反革命勢力 See “The Statement of the Joint Provincial Governments Meeting on October 14th, 1926,” 中央各省區聯席會議宣言.

⁵ For the militarization of local society, see Philip A. Kuhn, *Rebellion and Its Enemies in Late Imperial China: Militarization and Social Structure, 1796-1864* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970), 211-215.

authority of the Nationalist Party, or Kuomintang (KMT). “Down with local bullies and evil gentry” 打倒土豪劣紳 was the most widespread slogan, serving both the Nationalist and Communist activists’ struggle over local militia command and control.⁶ On the one hand, “local bullies” or “local tyrants” openly defied the law and challenged the authority of the regime in collaboration with local ruffians (*dipi* 地痞), hoodlums (*liumang* 流氓), and bandits (*tufei* 土匪). “Evil gentry,” on the other hand, refers to those in power who served their own private interests within the existing bureaucratic system. It was sometimes difficult to differentiate between the two categories due to the gradual fluidity of positions and alliances of the local bully and evil gentry class since the early twentieth century.⁷ Thus, the coupling of “local tyrants” and “evil gentry” points to an overall group of enemies of the national revolution, within which the hybrid was often a warlord, a local bully, a bandit, and an evil gentry all in one. Other labels, such as “running dogs of the imperialists,” “reactionaries,” and “counter-revolutionaries” were also circulated on a daily basis, targeting whoever opposed progress in the name of national revolution.

While the KMT and CCP shared the mission of wiping out the power of local tyrants and evil gentry, they took different approaches to reconstructing the militia following the action. The KMT activists tended toward a stricter system of managing local officials in which the former

⁶ There were other slogans such as “dadao lieqiang chu junfa” 打倒列強除軍閥 (*down with the imperialists and warlords*), “dadao tanguan wuli” 打倒貪官污吏 (*down with corrupted officials*), and “dadao jianshang” 打倒奸商 (*down with treacherous merchants*).

⁷ A local bully used to be “a man of wealth with no formal degree status whose community power was exercised in coercive and illegal ways”; an evil gentry in the early period meant “a lower gentry who broke the law so flagrantly that he could not cover it up”. Concerning the rise of local tyrants and evil gentry in the early-twentieth-century China, see Philip A. Kuhn. “Local Self-Government under the Republic: Problems of Control, Autonomy, and Mobilization.” in *Conflict and Control in Late Imperial China*, edited by Frederic Wakeman, Jr. and Carolyn Grant. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 257-298. “A successful bandit (of any origin) often became a ‘militarist’ or warlord and might retire with his accumulated stash and become a big landlord, and evil or upright gentry, or a militia lord.” For the demolition of the difference between the two statuses/groups caused by the delegitimizing process, see Alitto 1983 and Alvin Y. So. *The South China Silk District: Local Historical Transformation and World-system Theory*. (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press), 1986, 145.

“local tyrants and evil gentry” were replaced by elites under the KMT’s more direct control. In contrast, the CCP activists favored a more anti-elitist quotations marks are almost exclusively for quoting a specified source (and denote the title of an essay) approach: building up a mass militia driven and controlled by new peasant associations and worker unions.⁸ The split in the two parties’ approaches shaped a key aspect of the broader competition between their political mobilization and revolutionary visions. Following the break with the Communists in 1927, the KMT shifted the campaign against “local bullies and evil gentry” quickly, with a more immediate and instrumental goal of consolidating the power of the Nationalist government. The CCP’s approach set the terms for envisioning revolutionary justice and enlisting popular support beginning in the Jiangxi Soviet years (1931–1934) and continuing throughout the wartime period.⁹ What distinguished the CCP’s vision of justice from that of their counterparts was the introduction of the concepts of class, class labels, and class struggle to Chinese villages and the creation of institutions based on class analysis rather than pre-existing social structures, such as surname-based lineages.¹⁰ However, as historians have addressed, the central problem of class

⁸ Edward A. McCord. “Militia Command and Control in the Chinese National Revolution, Hunan 1926–1927.” *Journal of Chinese Military History* 7, No. 2 (2018): 203–31.

⁹ On November 7, 1931, the CCP established the Chinese Soviet Republic (usually referred to as the Jiangxi Soviet, for its largest component territory was the Jiangxi-Fujian base area). It was the largest Communist revolutionary base area; it included 34 counties spread across Fujian (20 counties), Jiangxi (13 counties), and Guangdong (1 county).

¹⁰ For Mao’s class analysis, see see Mao Zedong, “Analysis of the Classes in Chinese Society” (1926), *The Selected Works of Mao Zedong, vol. 1* (Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 1960), 13–21; Xinhua fenshe 新華分社. *Zenyang Fenxi Jieji 怎樣分析階級* (How to Analyze Class). (Hong Kong: Zhongguo chubanshe, 1949), 1–18. *How to Analyze Class* published in the 1949 version in Hong Kong was an excerpt of the 1933 document with the same title, issued by the Jiangxi Soviet government. This book also included 中央政府關於土地鬥爭中一些問題的決定. 《中國的土地改革》編輯部, 中國社會科學院及經濟研究所現代經濟史組編. *Zhongguo tudi gaige shiliao xuanbian* 中國土地改革史料選編 (Selected historical materials from China’s land reform). For internal distribution. (Beijing: Guofang daxue chubanshe, 1988).

Concerning scholarship on the CCP’s theory and practice of class struggle and rhetoric of class, see Jean-Francois Billeter. “The System of ‘Class Status,’” in *The Scope of State Power in China*, ed. Stuart R. Schram. (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1985), 127–169; Philip Huang. “Rural Class Struggle in the Chinese Revolution: Representational and Objective Realities from the Land Reform to the Cultural

analysis deployed in the land revolution lay in the misconceptions and misrepresentations within the movements, as well as gaps between what was intended and what was perceived. Simply put, class analysis did neither fully represent nor match the reality described as the land problem and class injustice.¹¹ Rather, it was adopted to create and perform multiple kinds of *realities*.¹²

Among the CCP's prototypical imageries of justice, I want to highlight a scene of *shizhong* described by Mao Zedong in his most well-known essay, "Report on an Investigation into the Peasant Movement in Hunan" of February 1927. The report was based on Mao's investigation of the peasant movement in five Hunan counties through which the Northern Expedition just passed.¹³ It was claimed to be an analysis of the associations of peasants that emerged throughout the course of the Northern Expedition. While he did not literally use the term *shizhong*, Mao employs a punitive image that echoes and technically stems from the bodily

Revolution." *Modern China* 21.1 (1995): 105-143; Xing Lu. *The Rhetoric of Mao Zedong: Transforming China and Its People*. (University of South Carolina Press, 2017) and so forth.

¹¹ In some cases, landholders certainly existed, but many rural areas lacked actual examples of economic exploitation and fitting cases of class enemies that class analysis served to identify. For example, historians have noticed the practical difficulties of finding (enough) landlords and miscalculations. See Phillip C. Huang, "Rural Class Struggle in the Chinese Revolution," 114–116; Huang Daoxuan. *Zhangli yu xianjie: zhongyang suqu de geming, 1933–1934*. 張力與限界: 中央蘇區的革命, 1933-1934 (Tensions and limits: Revolution of the Central Soviet Area, 1933–1934). (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2011). In most recent work on the land revolution, Brian DeMare devotes the entire chapter to the issue of "creating peasants and landlords," see Brian DeMare. *Land Wars: The Story of China's Agrarian Revolution* (Stanford University Press, 2019), 72-99. Another recent study of land reform is about the case in Shanxi, see Xiaojia Hou. *Negotiating Socialism in Rural China: Mao, Peasants, and Local Cadres in Shanxi, 1949–1953*. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University East Asia Program, 2016). Besides, I am indebted to anthropologist Steve Harrell who shared his ethnographic experiences with me, part of which were what he learned from local peasants in Sichuan about the land-reform memories of their family and local communities: there were a lot of cases in which, due to the lack of "landlords," a village needed to "borrow" landlords from other villages in order to set up struggle meetings. There were also many occasions of mislabeling and misperceptions of the class categories. Phillip Huang points out several sources of the misconceptions: the failure to distinguish between absentee landlords and resident landlords, between managerial farmers and leasing landlords, and the loose revolutionary usage of the term landlord. See Huang, *The Peasant Economy and Social Change in North China*, 82–83. See DeMare, 74.

¹² See Huang. "Rural Class Struggle in the Chinese Revolution: Representational and Objective Realities from the Land Reform to the Cultural Revolution," *Modern China* 21, no. 1 (January 1995): 105–143.

¹³ The report sets out to describe the uprising in the rural areas of Hunan province in the winter of 1926–27.

and visual rhetoric of the shizhong tradition when he lists methods used by peasants to attack landlord power in Hunan. For example, Mao describes the localized use of a shame parade called *dai gaomaozi youxiang* 戴高帽子遊鄉 (crowning the landlords and parading them in dunce caps through the villages) in the section on “hitting landlords politically”:

This sort of thing is very common. A tall paper-hat is stuck on the head of one of the local tyrants or evil gentry, bearing the words “Local tyrant so-and-so” or “So-and-so of the evil gentry.” He is led by a rope and escorted with big crowds in front and behind. Sometimes brass gongs are beaten, and flags waved to attract people’s attention. This form of punishment more than any other makes the local tyrants and evil gentry tremble. Anyone who has once been *crowned with a tall paper-hat* loses face altogether and can never again hold up his head. Hence many of the rich prefer being fined to wearing the tall hat. But wear it they must, if the peasants insist. One ingenious township peasant association arrested an obnoxious member of the gentry and announced that he was to be crowned that very day. The man turned blue with fear. Then the association decided not to crown him that day. They argued that if he were crowned right away, he would become case-hardened and no longer afraid, and that it would be better to let him go home and crown him some other day. Not knowing when he would be crowned, the man was in daily suspense, unable to sit down or sleep at ease.¹⁴

這種事各地做得很多。把土豪劣紳戴上一頂紙扎的高帽子，在那帽子上面寫上土豪某某或劣紳某某字樣。用繩子牽著，前後簇擁著一大群人。也有敲打銅鑼，高舉旗幟，引人註目的。這種處罰，最使土豪劣紳顫慄。戴過一次高帽子的，從此顏面掃地，做不起人。故有錢的多願罰款，不願戴高帽子。但農民不依時，還是要戴。有一個鄉農會很巧妙，捉了一個劣紳來，聲言今天要給他戴高帽子。劣紳於是嚇黑了臉。但是，農會議決，今天不給他戴高帽子。因為今天給他戴過了，這劣紳橫了心，不畏罪了，不如放他回去，等日再戴。那劣紳不知何日要戴高帽子，每日在家放心不下，坐臥不寧。

The shame parade was not unique to Hunan. The villagers had recycled it from the shizhong tradition as a method of shaming punishment in revolt against local landlords. This is just one short episode to show that the “down with local bullies and evil gentry” campaign drew from a broad corpus of folk resources that include rituals, songs, legends, and visual tropes to appeal to the masses. Shizhong lent itself, literally and practically, to the display of revolutionary justice. One photo of the shame parade in Nanjing (Figure 3-1), while taken in an urban area, gives us a

¹⁴ Mao Zedong. “Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan.” in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Vol. 1. Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 1965; reprinted in 1967, 37. For the full text, see Mao, 23-59.

basic sense of what happened to the target in such shizhong practices. The so-called local bully Chen Shiyuan, who wears a similar tall paper hat as observed in Hunan's case, is made to hold up a banner with his name and "local bully" label written on it. to attract local communities to see, the villagers used some festive elements: "brass gongs are beaten, and flags waved."¹⁵ The key purpose of crowning and parading was to make the revolutionary enemies (local bullies and evil tyrants) appear in public, and to name them and their "evil" identities. Thus, they would "lose face" and "can never again hold up [their] head," as Mao describes in the report.¹⁶



Figure 3-1 "The 'Down with Local Bullies' Shame Parade in Nanjing," *Shanghai Pictorial*, no. 249, 1927; a press photo showing one tiny piece of the social and political campaign against local tyrants and evil gentry in the period of the Northern Expedition.

One of the differences in the case of rural Hunan lies in the effect of fear shizhong created among the rural community and within targets themselves, even before the physical action of the shame parade. The labelled local tyrants and evil gentry were "in daily suspense, unable to sit down or sleep at ease," for they had no knowledge of when they would go through shizhong; accordingly, shizhong revealed its power as a repeated and recyclable form of shaming

¹⁵ Mao, 37.

¹⁶ Ibid.

punishment, which “(more than any other) makes the local tyrants and evil gentry tremble.”¹⁷ Also, along with street parading of those wearing dunce caps, many other methods of punishment (including settling of scores, fines, forced donations, interrogations, demonstrations of organized forces, imprisonment, exile, and shooting) worked with one another. Mao in particular recommends the killing of “village kings” in public as “an effective method for repressing reactionaries.” In each district, “there must be executions of at least some people found guilty of the most odious crimes,” as Mao records in the report, because the execution of a local bully or an abusive provincial nobleman “makes the whole district shake with fear; it is very effective for eliminating the vestiges of the feudal regime.”¹⁸ For Mao, justifying this kind of punitive violence was not difficult, for the local tyrants and evil gentry had initiated terror, and the terrorized villagers had every reason to rise up and shoot a few of them, “creat[ing] just a little terror in suppressing the counter-revolutionaries.”¹⁹ In 1926 and 1927, a few regulations and laws were issued in Hunan for punishing the local tyrants and evil gentry legally.²⁰ However, in many cases local peasants were able to take the punitive action on their own both before and

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Mao 1927, 26.

¹⁹ See Mao, 38-9. Mao’s original words: “Such was the cruelty of the local tyrants and evil gentry in former days, such was the White terror they created in the countryside, and now that the peasants have risen and shot a few and created just a little terror in suppressing the counter-revolutionaries, is there any reason for saying they should not do so?” In this report, Mao also believes and assumes that, since the peasants were well informed about the crimes of those local tyrants and evil gentry who deserved the execution, they were able to make accurate calculations before enacting punishment; only rarely was the sentence disproportionate to the crime.

²⁰ The first law issued was “Chanchu tanguanwuli tuhao lieshen jueyi’an,” 鏟除貪官污吏土豪劣紳決議案 in December 1926, see *Dagongbao* (Changsha), Dec 13, 1926, 2. Other regulations and laws included “Hunan sheng chengzhi tanguan wuli zanxing tiaoli,” 湖南省懲治貪官污吏暫行條例 (January 15th, 1927) and “Hunan sheng chengzhi tuhao lvshen zanxing tiaoli,” (January 28th, 1927) 湖南省懲治土豪劣紳暫行條例. The Special Court for Judging and Punishing Local Bullies and Evil Gentry was established on January 15th, 1927 and issued its temporary regulations. See “Hunansheng shenpan tuhao lieshen tebie fating zuzhi tiaoli,” 湖南省審判土豪劣紳特別法庭組織條例. *Dagongbao* (Changsha), Jan 16th, 1927.

after the special court was established; meanwhile, mob justice, often in the form of *qunzhong dahui* 群眾大會 (mass gatherings) the term doesn't strike me as one saved only for very specific occasions (unlike f.ex. *pidou*; if so, use the English translation and just note the Chinese in parentheses and organized punishment through the (apparently) legal apparatus cooperated with each other.²¹ A variety of public trials, executions, and shaming rituals encompassed by *shizhong* proliferated at the time. As scholars have noted, the trials and executions of local bullies and evil gentry in Hunan, undertaken either by the Special Court and other associations, or by the masses, were political in nature, since it was the “counterrevolutionary” political standpoint that defined their crimes.²² Even so, it is notable that the Communists and their allies emphasized class over individual behavior. The extreme form is well displayed in a slogan of the time: “*youtu jiehao, wushen bulie*,” 有土皆豪，無紳不劣 (all landholders are bullies, all gentry are evil) same here — English first, which contrasts with the previous views, which see “local bullies and evil gentry” only as specific what do you mean by “specific”? power abusers.²³ By claiming that a revolution is “an uprising, an act of violence whereby one class overthrows the power of another,” Mao responds in the report to those who saw the punitive violence as “going too far.”²⁴ In Mao's view, to be revolutionary is to overthrow the power of the “local bullies and evil gentry” class; to be violent for such purposes is therefore to be just and right.

²¹ For a number of recorded events of punishment/lynching conducted by the local peasants, a kind of popular justice without the Special Court or any other kind of legal action involved, see Shiyong Zhang. “Zui yu fa: beifa shiqi hunan diqu chengzhi tuhao lieshen zhong de baoli yishi,” (Crime and Punishment: The Violent Punishment Done to the Landowners and Gentries in Hunan during the Period of Northern Expedition). *Bulletin of Academia Historica*. 9 (2004): 68-72.

²² See Zhang, 71.

²³ See *Zhonghua minguo shishi jiyao chugao* 中華民國史事紀要初稿 1927, 1; Li Weinong 李味农. 1982. “Dageming shiqi Liling jianwen” 大革命时期醴陵见闻 (*Liling Information during the Great Revolution Period*). Hunan wenshi ziliao xuanji 湖南文史资料选辑, no. 16, 63-69.

²⁴ Mao, 47.

The binary categories of “the peasantry” and “the feudal landlord class,” as Mao addresses them in his report, started to operate in the CCP’s imagery of justice, which continued to drive the masses to act.²⁵ The idea and effect of parading enemies were powerfully captured in those repertoires that Red Guards later developed during the Cultural Revolution. For militant students in Peking University, the practice of campus-wide parading of “black gang members,” class enemies, sometimes also labelled as “black teeth and claws,” who had “originated in the 1920s when the Communist Party, pursuing its work among the peasants, often forced landlords to march in front of those whom they had formerly oppressed, every landlord wearing a tall, pointed hat bearing a description of his wrongdoing.”²⁶ Likewise, Gao Yuan recalls in his autobiographic account that the secretary of the Youth League, who launched the practice of struggling against class enemies at school, self-consciously drew upon “Chairman Mao’s report on the peasant movement in Hunan province, written in the 1920s, which described how the peasants had put dunce caps on the heads of local tyrants and evil gentry and paraded them through the streets.”²⁷ Mao Zedong’s report about the peasant movement in Hunan is a key text that prefigured the terms of the CCP’s justice-making paradigm and visualized the initial

²⁵ About an overview of CCP’s legal vision and envisioning of justice and equity from 1920s to 1940s, see Xi Lin. “People’s Justice: Socialist Law and Equity in China, 1921–1945.” *Fudan Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences*, vol. 12, no. 3, (2019): 473–491; specifically, around the 1940s, see Xiaoping Cong. 2014. ‘Ma Xiwu’s Way of Judging’: Villages, the Masses and Legal Construction in Revolutionary China in the 1940s. *The China Journal* 72: 29–52.

²⁶ See Yue Daiyun and Carolyn Wakeman. *To the Storm: The Odyssey of a Revolutionary Chinese Woman*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 157.

²⁷ Gao Yuan. *Born Red: A Chronicle of the Cultural Revolution*. (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1987), 57.

appearance of pidou practices that was to haunt China through the ensuing decades. It's not clear where you're going from here, other than chronologically. Provide more roadmaps.

3.3 CLASS STRUGGLE AND WARTIME IMAGE PRODUCTION

Mao's report found its visual echo in a wartime pictorial produced in the *Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei* Base Area. A quote from the opening paragraph of the report is surrounded by a black and white photographic collage of peasants with tasseled spears (see Figure 3-2). The faces of most of the photographed peasants, except those who are visually arranged in the foreground, are blurry; therefore, Mao's words stand out against a faceless crowd that tends to disappear from the picture. The text and the image speak to each other in a way that could not be more straightforward: the overlaid peasants and warriors gather in the battlefield, as if they had heard Mao's call to arms two decades ago, and they converge into the same boundless, transhistorical crowd, as the Hunan peasants did in the past:

[Several hundred million peasants will rise] like a mighty storm, like a hurricane, a force so swift and violent that no power, however great, will be able to hold it back. They will smash all the trammels that bind them and rush forward along the road to liberation. They will sweep all the imperialists, warlords, corrupt officials, local tyrants and evil gentry into their graves. Every revolutionary party and every revolutionary comrade will be put to the test, to be accepted or rejected as they decide.²⁸

Mao's vision of the popular masses as "a mighty storm" and "a hurricane" is visually staged within the paper theater and yet brought to life beyond the pictorial frame.²⁹ The progress of the peasants, namely, the force of the people, is driven by the kind of natural laws that "no power

²⁸ Mao 1927, 24.

²⁹ The natural metaphor shows Mao's vision of rural revolution: the inevitable and violent hurricane.

will hold back.” Such visual references recall, as historian Mary A. Miller points out in her work on the “natural history of violence,” the French revolutionary actors’ obsession with the rhetoric of violent natural phenomena within politics.³⁰



Figure 3-2 The photographic collage and overlay of the masses, *Huabei huakan* 華北畫刊 (The North China Pictorial), No. 9, October 21st, 1948. (*The Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Pictorial* and *People Pictorial* were merged into one, *the North China Pictorial* in May 1948.)

Revolution was not a product of human will but was instead part of a process of natural changes for the revolutionaries. Tropes such as earthquakes, storms, lightning, swamps, and volcanoes turned revolutionary violence and disorder into proof of its unavoidability and justice. Made of photographic overlays and collages, this image is a vivid example of what was at stake in the wartime CCP area: the sacralization of violence, the naturalization of proletarian agency, and the visualization of justice.

³⁰ See Mary Ashburn Miller. *A Natural History of Revolution: Violence and Nature in the French Revolutionary Imagination, 1789–1794*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press), 2011.

The Wartime Chinese Communist Party (1937–1949) has been regarded by Shana Brown as “a photocentric party,” with images as critical to party ideology as words.³¹ The production of pictorial media including illustrated periodicals, booklets, posters, and photomontage prints was fueled by photographic work in communist base areas (nearly all in north China). Documentary photography was specifically appreciated in *The Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Pictorial* (晉察冀畫報), named after the guerilla base area where it was established. Yet, during the wartime period, most of the photojournalists clearly operated under the institutional conditions of partisan media and generally served designated political or military purposes, even though they self-identified their image production as “realist” or “documentary.”³² Sha Fei (1912–1950), one of the best-known wartime photographers, became the first director of the newly created Department of Photojournalism (115th Division) and started to plan *The Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Pictorial*. Due to difficult production conditions and material restrictions, it took Sha and his co-workers almost two years to publish the first edition, a ninety-four-page special issue with over 160 photographs.³³ Since then, *The Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Pictorial* usually included the hand-painted cover and, with captions, a set of about 100 black-and-white photographs in each issue. While other magazines relied on lengthy reports and essays, *The Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Pictorial* was *visual* by nature. It approached storytelling completely through photographic images (and sometimes cartoons), photo collage, and filmic elements, such as montage-like fragmentation, zoom-in framing, drawn-in filmstrip edging, and sequential narrative.

³¹ Shana J. Brown. “Sha Fei, the Jin-Cha-Ji Pictorial, and the Documentary Style of Chinese Wartime Photojournalism.” *History in Images: Picture and Public Space in Modern China*, ed. Christian Henriot and Wenhsin Yeh. Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies China Research Monograph 66 (2012), 57. Also see Jinchaji wenyi yanjiuhui. 晉察冀文藝研究會. Huabei jiefang zhanzheng 華北解放戰爭攝影集 (Photographs about The Liberation War in North China). (Shenyang: Liaoning meishu chubanshe, 1993).

³² Brown. “Sha Fei, the Jin-Cha-Ji Pictorial, and the Documentary Style of Chinese Wartime Photojournalism.” 56.

³³ Ibid.

China's war against the Japanese (1937–1945) and then the Civil War (1945–1949) became wars coded in class as well as wars of images from the CCP's end. As mentioned above, violence, the masses, and justice were interlinked for the sake of class struggle. These connections brought up more questions in the context of total war: How did class struggle intersect with warfare in north China—or rather, which kinds of violence intersected there? How was (class) justice produced through such intersections? Photographic and photojournalistic image production provides a key conduit to explore such questions. In line with its enduring social and political implications during the first few decades of the twentieth century, the camera, again, renewed the vitality of shizhong. The camera's selective gaze and its interaction with people shaped a particular reality during wartime: prisoners, refugees, crowds, and dead bodies on display, all organized in different ways. The reality was circulated and disseminated by mass printing technologies, which brought shizhong of various kinds into play. To explore and understand how class struggle was shaped within the transformation and workings of shizhong, we need to recognize the emergence of a visual system in the wartime period. Emphasizing class confrontation, hatred, and bitterness, the visual schema engages four interrelated categories of images: atrocity images, enemy portraits, crowd shots, and *fanshen* 翻身 as (photo-)montage.³⁴

In what follows, I explore how wartime pidou deprived from and transformed shizhong. I begin with a discussion around the CCP's use of *atrocity images of the nameless* and a model understood as “paper cinema” in wartime pictorials during the Sino–Japanese War. Linked to a web of humanitarian rhetoric, shizhong is conceptually transformed into a mode of cataloged display to create photographic accusations. Then in the following chapter I highlight a shift in the visual system, which characterized the period of Chinese Civil War. By focusing on the

³⁴ *Fanshen*, literally “flipping one's body over,” or “to turn over,” means liberation or emancipation in economic, political, and even cultural terms. I discuss *fanshen* and a type of *fanshen* films in later sections of this chapter.

Democratic Northeast film project and placing it in conversation with other images, I particularly foreground one primary mode of image production—what I call *cinematic (or cine-photographic) policing*—whereby the interlinkage among the four categories of images shaped and enacted the look of class exorcism.

3.4 SHIZHONG AS ATROCITY IMAGES OF THE NAMELESS

The first type of images that dominated CCP's wartime pictorials may be too familiar to evoke shock in contemporary viewers. China's imagery of total war was generally framed in a narrative of *kangzhan daodi* (war of resistance until the end), a powerful phrase endorsed by both the KMT and CCP, which remains a popular term in China today.³⁵ Unlike images of food queues, air aids, refugee shelters, and patriotic demonstrations, which largely articulated the positive side of resistance, what was more important in communist North China was the strategic use of the cruel and the negative in visual mobilization. Many of those in communist pictorials and other similar media products fit with the usual focus of war photography: the presence of women, children, and the elderly in the military sphere; harrowing scenes of injury and death; and people in various states of distress and vulnerability. Contemporary versions of such images in the form of photojournalism, amateur snapshots, and art photography of atrocities, are now even more pervasive. Humanitarian organizations, memorial museums, and activist and pedagogical exhibits have widely circulated and shaped the category often called *images of atrocity*, seeking to encourage public empathy with disempowered victims. Scholars have posed ethical problems in relation to atrocity photographs, including the aestheticization of distant

³⁵ Rana Mitter. "Picturing Victory: The Visual Imaginary of the War of Resistance, 1937-1947." *European Journal of East Asian Studies* 7, no. 2 (2008): 169-70.

suffering, compassion fatigue, and the idea that atrocity images re-victimize or traumatize photographed victims.³⁶ Wartime pictorials in communist-controlled north China shared a similar mission with contemporary players in the making of atrocity images. Yet, they primarily targeted a different kind of viewers, who were neither distant others nor bystanders, but the war's disempowered victims and direct participants themselves: Chinese civilians and soldiers in the area. In other words, for wartime pictorials, the victimization of the target viewers and the inclusive mobilization of even a larger group of viewers were two sides of the same coin, a dual process with an appeal for action on a massive level. More central to the process was the conceptual blurring of the victim–bystander boundary within the workings of atrocity images.

The use and powerful effect of atrocity images at the time is evident in *The Jin-Cha-Ji de kongsu* 晉察冀的控訴 (*Accusations in the Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Pictorial Area*), the second special issue of *The Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Pictorial* in March, 1946.³⁷ The whole issue is a photographic record of Sino–Japanese war atrocities. It gathers an array of close-up and long shots of destroyed infrastructure, burned villages, beheaded corpses, and wounded people (Figure 3-3). Despite the enlarged details with a high level of selectivity in the images displayed, there is a notable sense of ambiguity and anonymity in the visual layout of the collection. No photo credits are provided; in most cases, the viewers are allowed to see nothing but a corpse, an

³⁶ For “compassion fatigue,” see Susan Moeller, *Compassion Fatigue*. (New York: Routledge, 1999). Concerning detailed debates around atrocity images, there are collections of essays that cover multiple images and contexts and pose important questions. See Geoffrey Batchen, Mick Gidley, Nancy K. Miller, and Jay Prosser, eds., *Picturing Atrocity: Photography in Crisis* (London: Reaktion Books, 2012); Di Bella, Maria Pia, and Elkins, eds., *Representations of Pain in Art and Visual Culture*. (New York: Routledge, 2013).

³⁷ It is the second issue of “jinchaji congkan,” 晉察冀叢刊 (Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Series) based on a selection of 46 photos from *The Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Pictorial*. The issue claimed to include three parts: photographs that reveal the atrocities under Japan's Three Alls Policy, photographs of the Pan Jiayu Tragedy 潘家峪慘案 in 1942, and photographs of Japanese atrocities in 1943.

unnamed weeping refugee, a huddled baby, faceless tortured bodies, or unidentifiable sites in the ruined landscape.



用毒瓦斯殺人

日寇在冀中獸蹄橫行殺人盈野，人民最後挖地道堅持不屈，日寇竟用毒瓦斯來對付英勇的人民。一九四二年六月，日寇用毒瓦斯放入地道裏，死定縣北坦村村民八百餘人。圖為被窒死的老婦人之一。



越想越難過

從地裡挖一點山藥蛋，撿一點剝落的豆類，回到家裏沒有鍋，沒有桶，連一個完整的碗都找不見，對着這一堆破亂磚瓦，想起日寇給我們這麼大的破壞，怎不越想越難過！

Figure 3-3 Atrocity images exemplified in *Accusations in the Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Area*: “Killing by Poison Gas” (Left), “The More Thoughts [about the destruction], The More Pain” (Right), *Jin-Cha-Ji de kongsu* 晉察冀的控訴 (*Accusations in the Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Area*), 1946.

Who took the photographs, and who specifically was photographed? We have nothing but a general view of the horror and a set of anonymous photographs packaged together as if they were a collection of amateur snapshots. Placing target viewers mostly at eye level with the subjects of the photographs produces an experiential quality. To walk among or lie down with the photographed people is to *witness* what happens to *them*—and it is meant to happen to *us* as well. To read the titles and captions as the voices supposedly spoken by the photographed people (like an interior monologue) is to hear them and to feel what they experience from their subjective points of view. The “walking-among” or “feeling-with” effect works with the namelessness, thus, leading to a dissolving gap between the camera-holders and secondary witnesses; as Shana Brown remarks, “the [nameless] photographers are everymen—they are us.”³⁸ Likewise, the

³⁸ Shana J. Brown. “Sha Fei, the Jin-Cha-Ji Pictorial, and the Documentary Style of Chinese Wartime Photojournalism,” 77.

nameless photographed subjects, who are referred to as “an old man,” “a woman,” or just “they,” testify to the relatability of the extraordinary violence inscribed on ordinary bodies.

Because the photographs were published in pictorials or pictorial booklets such as *Accusations in the Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Area*, or displayed in temporary exhibitions organized by the CCP’s local military units, mass viewers enjoyed proximity to a large body of “shameful images” of war atrocities (Figure 3-4). “This kind of wartime photographic exhibitions could be small-scale and yet highly attractive to the local people for stirring their empathy with the nameless,” as Li Lijin, one of the photographers in the Jin-Cha-Jia area, describes in his memoir.³⁹ In stirring feelings that the pain of the nameless is one’s own, atrocity photographs serve as vehicles for the dream of action, enforcement, and the people’s power. An exhibition of 100 photographs, which opened right after a Japanese attack in which thousands were killed, “as shizhong, completely changed the local masses who did not understand the cruelty in the beginning.” The masses were drawn to “the images of images,” similar to scenes and images they had encountered.⁴⁰ Much of the illiterate population benefitted from ambiguous treatments of certain photographed subjects and photographers, literally and visually. While contexts and details could differ, there was no change in the shared perception that “all [was] about the same kind of atrocity and cruelty,” here and there, past and present.⁴¹ The absence of clear identification marks in such photographs produces a kind of transference effect by more readily

³⁹ Lijin Li. “Li lijin huiyi,” *Touguo xiaoyan de jingtou* 透過硝煙的鏡頭 (The Lens through the Smoke of War). Edited by Oral History in Still and Moving Images Committee. (Beijing: Zhongguo shying chubanshe, 2009), 275.

⁴⁰ Gu Di. *Touguo xiaoyan de jingtou*, 306.

⁴¹ Ibid.

evoking other images in the mind of viewers, familiar images of violence from the past, from execution grounds, from streets, from newspapers, and from the war.



Figure 3-4 Local villagers at the photographic exhibitions organized in the Jin-Cha-Ji Base area (left); “*The Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Pictorial* were widely circulated among the soldiers in the 1940s” (right), *A Photographic Record of the Liberation War in North China*.⁴²

Indeed, the imaging of “atrocities” in a given case always needs to be situated in comparison with violence from the past decades. *Accusations in the Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Area* produced in communist-controlled north China, in this case, recalls issues implied in the rich political and cultural work of shizhong images during the age of public exposure: Whom did one see and identify when looking at an image of violence and death? How would one distinguish illegitimate violence that threatened the social order from righteous, “just,” and sanctioned uses of force? What role did ambiguity and anonymity play in images of violence, of punishment? Historically, the frequency of socio-political upheaval and chaos in the first decades of the twentieth century (the Boxer Uprising [1900–1901], the 1911 Revolution, the Second Revolution of 1913, Zhang Xun’s staging of a restoration coup in 1917, civil wars among warlords, the

⁴² Jinchaji wenyi yanjiuhui. 晉察冀文藝研究會. *Huabei jiefang zhanzheng* 華北解放戰爭攝影集 (Photographs about The Liberation War in North China). (Shenyang: Liaoning meishu chubanshe, 1993), 117.

Northern Expedition, Chinese communist insurgencies since 1927, Japanese invasion, and the second Sino–Japanese War) contributed to “a myriad of political, quasi-political, and nonpolitical rebellions and turmoil.”⁴³ It is relevant to note that, on the one hand, there was a vague boundary between common violent crimes and social protests or political conflicts; and, on the other hand, the assumed boundary between legal punishment and alternative retributive justice was always challenged and broken down. As examined in Chapters One and Two, violence, obscured by a “Chinese type,” unclear had been unfolding and was reproduceable within *the visual economies of cruelty*; through activating *the mass production of retribution*, different and hybrid media genres anticipated the social imaginary of justice that manifested itself in the ambiguous appearance of violence.

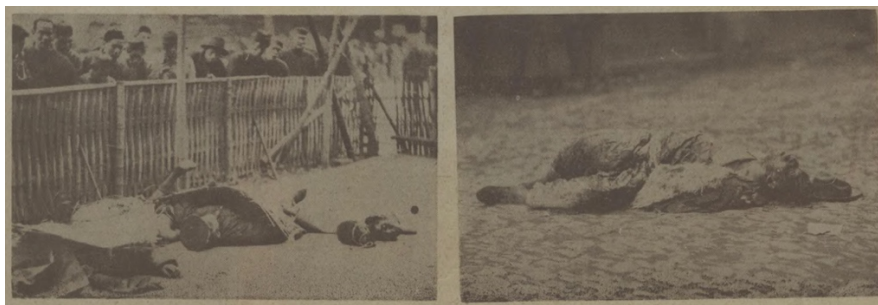


Figure 3-5 “A Beheaded Shandong Soldier” by Lin Zecang and “People Shot by Bullet” by Hui Shan, two photographs of anonymous death during the period of Northern Expedition, *Tuhua shibao* 圖畫時報 (Pictorial Times), Vol. 335, 1927, 1.

The visual excesses of killing and death made real people nameless exemplars of formless horror across the legal and the extra-legal terrains. In many cases, there was no clear-cut boundary between a photograph of the death penalty undertaken through the judicial apparatus and a death that was a result of military conflict. As shown in Figure 3-5, the 1927 photographs of military violence share stylistic similarities with a number of execution images

⁴³ Xiaoqun Xu. “The Rule of Law without Due Process: Punishing Robbers and Bandits in early Twentieth-Century China,” in *Modern China*, Vol. 33, No.2 (2007): 232.

that had constituted the visual economies of Chinese cruelty since the late nineteenth century.⁴⁴ They also resemble some of the atrocity images in *Accusations in the Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Area* (see figure 3). One might never be able to determine the specifics of such a death without detailed textual captions and additional information. This brings us to note that the visual rhetoric of violence as blurred, borderless, and chaotic was nothing new and had just reached its heyday during the wartime period. *Accusations in the Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Area* exemplifies a play with the ambiguity of the visible, which increasingly became part of the visual legacies that continued to flourish during Mao-era image production.

3.5 SHIZHONG AS PAPER CINEMA

Accusations in the Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Area invites a participatory mode of spectatorship through deploying shizhong conceptually. Rather than the public display of and as shameful violence that was once dominant in the visual economy of Chinese cruelty or its deepened crisis in Lu Xun-esque discourses, shizhong at this time served as humanitarian rhetoric and political critique. In *Accusations*, each image is accompanied by a brief pointed caption and an emotionally charged title, often a question or a subjective description (Figure 3-6). The texts given in both captions and titles are far more than descriptive. Among those is sometimes an outcry (“what a massacre!” or “save the children!”), an denunciatory inquiry (“when to end the enmity and injustice?”), a calling on action (“make an indictment [on Japanese atrocities] to the world!”), an interior monologue of the photographed subject (“the more recollections, the more pain”), or a direct address to the viewers (“take a careful look” and “think

⁴⁴ Anonymous. *Tuhua shibao* 圖畫時報 (Pictorial Times), Vol. 335, 1927, 1.

about this [image]”).⁴⁵ As the viewers look through the gallery of images, they are guided by a voiceless, haunting, *voice-over* that emerges out of the interplay between the text and the image within one page as well as between different pages. The separate images do not represent cuts from one kind of view to another but are more like a catalog of moments from a continuous view of the war. As such, those images show and tell in an ongoing conversation with the viewers.

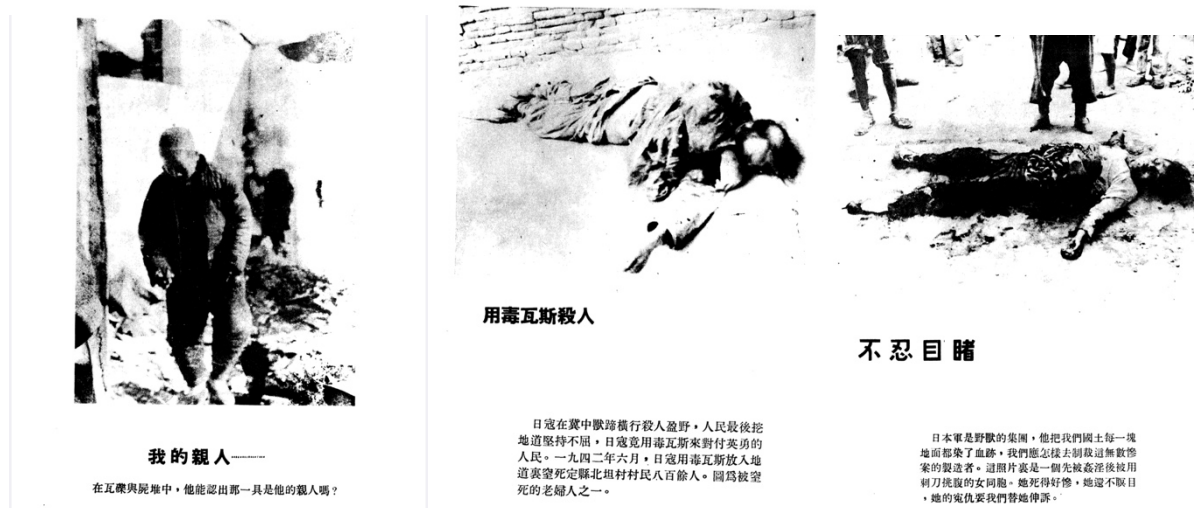


Figure 3-6 Atrocity images exemplified in three pages of *Accusations in the Jin-Cha-Ji Area*: “My Family” (Left), “Killing by Poison Gas” (Middle), “An Unbearable Look” (Right). *Jin-Cha-Ji de kongsu* 晉察冀的控訴 (Accusations in the Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Area), 1946.

One image that stands out is a word play about ethics of spectatorship: *buren mudu* 不忍目睹 (an unbearable look) (see Figure 6, *right*). The image, perhaps one of the most disturbing in the whole collection, shows a disfigured female corpse laying on the ground, surrounded by a crowd, the only visible part of whose bodies are their feet. Its title seems to be at once a subtitled line of the photographed onlookers (“what an unbearable scene to witness”) and a meta-commentary on the viewers’ potential perception (“this is such an unwatchable image”). While it

⁴⁵ Jin-Cha-Ji junqu zhengzhibu 晉察冀軍區政治部, *Jin-Cha-Ji de kongsu* 晉察冀的控訴 (Accusations in the Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Area) (Kalgan: Jin-Cha-Ji junqu zhengzhibu, 1946). For example, the titles in Chinese include “這樣的屠殺!” “救救孩子” “仔細看一看” “老人的殘尸” “母親的骷髏” “中國兒童被這樣殘殺” “越想越難過” “泣不成聲” “此恨難消” “冤仇何時了” “碎尸” “慘案” “數不清的慘案” “更大的慘案” “向全世界控訴”.

is an anonymous image of an unnamed figure that resembles a cutout from those *shizhong* images in circulation since the late nineteenth century, the self-reflexive view produced here delivers a renewed vision of justice. The textual caption ends with a compelling appeal to both emotional reaction and physical action: “[the woman] *her* ‘yuanchou’ —冤 (*yuan*, a moral wrong, a “tort,” an “injustice”— and that of rights) and 仇 (*chou*, vengeance or revenge)— entails *our* ‘shensu’ 伸訴 (basically, *shenzhang* 伸張 upholding and *kongsu* 控訴 accusatory expression) for her.⁴⁶ In other words, as long as *we* take action, we are able to make retributive justice possible and everyone plays a part in its making. An important element of moral agency links *her* as the innocent victim and *us* the large community (namely, as the whole collection of images shows and targets, whoever is also part of the war, as everymen, as civilian victims, as the masses supported by the CCP) to achieve self-empowerment through empathy. If the photographed woman is still a portion of *shizhong* as the age-old spectacle enjoyed by onlookers (the violence of observation itself, just as Lu Xun criticized), *Accusations* set up an alternative *shizhong* in which what Lu Xun might have missed seeing, the physical brutality of the killing, execution and war atrocity is brought back to focus, being shamed, accused, and put on trial. A

⁴⁶ The original line is 她的冤仇要我們替她伸訴. Drawn from the vocabulary of classic Chinese, *Yuan* is part of “a moral counter-tradition related to a cosmology and metaphysics which see human actions and the broader natural order of the cosmos as being two different parts of the same unity, enmeshed in a process of mutual action and reaction.” Unjust actions disrupt the natural order, and the responsibility for restoring the order of nature and punishing its disrupters, lies with the wronged. The concept of *yuan*, as scholars argue, entails an important element of moral agency. For the Chinese notion of *yuan*, see the introduction (“The Expression of Justice in China”) and Delia Lin. “High Justice versus Low Justice,” *Justice: The China Experience*. Eds. Flora Sapio, Flora, Susan Trevaskes, Sarah Biddulph, and Elisa Nesossi. (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 67-91. For understanding *yuan* (*won*, or the sense of being wronged in Korean) as the key to emotions, affect, and justice in legal history, see Jisoo M. Kim. *The Emotions of Justice: Gender, Status, and Legal Performance in Chosŏn Korea*. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2015).

For the revenge tales in Chinese history and literature, see Wang Li, *Zhongguo gudai fuchou wenxue zhuti* 中國古代復仇文學主題 (The revenge theme in traditional Chinese literature) (Changchun: Dongbei shifan daxue chubanshe, 1998); Wang Li 王立 and Liu Weiyang 劉衛英, eds., *Zhongguo gudai xiayi fuchou shiliao cuibian* 中國古代俠義復仇史料萃編 (Selected historical sources of chivalric vengeance in premodern China). (Ji’nan: Qilu shushe, 2009).

practical solution to Chinese popular masses, those “onlookers” accused earlier, is also offered: to fight the war, to accuse publicly, to sanction and to punish the enemies in the name of the people, *under our own power*.⁴⁷

Not only are the images interlinked and arranged like a sequence, but those titles, in larger fonts, could also be and had to be read along with one another successively. The titles, which often take the form of rhetorical questions, are ultimately accusations of the war atrocities: “who made them homeless?” (with a photo of two refugees), “can the torn cloths be worn?” (with the image of two individuals holding piles of clothes in front of a destroyed house), and “can anything be found from the pile of rubble?” (with an extreme-long-shot image of people searching massive piles of rubble).⁴⁸ In another page containing the image of a man lowering his head who seems to be searching, the title is “my family...” and the caption also takes the form of a rhetorical question: “can he recognize the body of his family member among all the piles of corpse and relics?”⁴⁹ The answer is absent on the page and present in the minds of ideal viewers who would think with the collection of photographs, in anger and in pain. No image stands alone in this way, each opening smoothly on to the next one aided by the title-questions and captions. Those images were definitely not shot in the order in which they appear with the titles and textual captions. What matters is the construction of a new synthetic temporality paced by reading and looking back and forth at the assembled sequence. Such refreshing and quite

⁴⁷ A lot of terms share the similar expression: for example, how do we ourselves sanction the perpetrators? See *Jin-Cha-Ji de kongsu* 晉察冀的控訴 (Accusations in the Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Area), 1946.

⁴⁸ *Jin-Cha-Ji junqu zhengzhibu* 晉察冀軍區政治部, *Jin-Cha-Ji de kongsu* 晉察冀的控訴 (Accusations in the Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Area) (Kalgan: Jin-Cha-Ji junqu zhengzhibu, 1946). The titles in Chinese: “誰使他們無家可歸?” “這些爛布條能穿嗎?” “瓦礫堆中能找出什麼?” The montage effect is produced between certain titles and captions of the images, across page, that could constitute a full sentence: “仔細看一看”—“不忍目睹”; “低頭想一想”—“心頭恨。”

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* The original Chinese text is 在瓦礫與尸堆中，他能認出那一具是他的親人嗎?

pioneering deployment of shizhong resonates with what David Company calls “paper cinema”—the mixing of instruction and attraction that leads to the spread of film-strip sequences in print.⁵⁰ Overall, in *Accusations*, shizhong holds some potential for sensible and participatory justice, which is framed through affective assemblies rather than single photographs.

Accordingly, shizhong turned into an intermedia display of atrocity, violence, or any other negative matters. Such a model of cataloguing, reworking, and disseminating via printed pages, or rather, a fundamental reconfiguration of the page prompted by cinematic qualities (elastic construction of time, space, and tension between stillness and movement) that had manifested itself in the CCP’s wartime pictorials to varying degrees. In the December 1945 issue of *the Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Pictorial*, a special photojournalistic report, as indicated in the cover image, showcases a “paper theater” about mass struggles in Zhangjiakou.⁵¹ While the events did not happen in the rural area, the form such a set of mass gatherings and meetings in Zhangjiakou took were likened to be those applied in land reform. Railway workers, hairdressers, education workers, literature-and-art workers, and so on all participated in the mass meetings named “meeting for settling accounts” (*qingsuan dahui* 清算大會) “grand struggle meeting” (*douzheng dahui* 鬥爭大會) and so on. Bridging disconnected places, times, and different events together, the catalog creates a prototypical system of struggle meetings, what

⁵⁰ See David Company. *Photography and Cinema*. (Reaktion Books, 2008), 60-93. In a way, this is also relatable to some other artifacts in the long history in which still and moving images (photography and cinema) have been each other’s muse and inspiration: from flipbooks, film journals, photo-novels, fan magazines, to avant-garde manifestos; for instance, Moholy-Nagy’s reinvention of the print page as a kind of para-cinema that perhaps seemed radical than what it might have inspired and generated as a film. Also, it may recall two profound art-historical projects indebted to cinematic assembly: Aby Warburg’s *Mnemosyne Atlas* (1924-1929) [79 large panels of images from all kinds of sources including news clippings, photographs, postcards, drawings, maps, and commercial cut-pieces from magazines] and André Malraux’s “museum without walls” in the mid-1930s.

⁵¹ Anonymous. “Zhang jiakou shi qunzhong douzheng jiyao” 張家口市群眾鬥爭紀要 (A record of mass struggle meetings in Zhangjiakou). *Jin-Cha-Ji huabao* 晉察冀畫報 (The Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Pictorial). No. 9-10, December 1945.

was later referred to as *pidou* or *pidouhui* through the following decades. In one of the pages cataloged, the hairdressers' two struggle meetings are juxtaposed: one is the actual meetings physically held to struggle against Zhang Ziqing who was labelled as "evil gentry" at the time; and the other one, titled "one plays a role and performs her/his own life" 自己的生活自己來扮演, is a scene where workers play themselves, again, to accuse Zhang on stage (Figure 3-7 right). The composition is clearly performative. Both two scenes involve the stage, even if in distinct ways. In the latter one, located in an auditorium, spatial importance is equally given to what is on the stage and what is off the stage, the mass audiences. By encountering two scenes together and alongside other scenes alike, one could see no boundary between life and stage; therefore, performing the proletarian masses' own life is to perform class struggle. Readers of *the Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Pictorial* were expected to read both the images and texts closely and also read between images to recognize struggle meetings as something manipulatively connected in series and as sequences, which made sense only through groupings, gatherings, and classifications.⁵²

⁵² "Zhang jiaokoushi qunzhong douzheng jiyao" 張家口市群眾鬥爭紀要 (A record of mass struggle meetings in Zhangjiakou). *Jin-Cha-Ji huabao* 晉察冀畫報 (The Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Pictorial). No. 9-10, December 1945.

務漢奸; mass gatherings for dismissing two evil local officials, *paizhang* 撤銷壞牌長 and for women's liberation 婦女的解放婦女自己起來奮鬥.⁵³

Later throughout the Mao era, such *shizhong* models exemplified in “paper cinema” or “paper theater” continued to flourish in different genres and forms of public display serving accusation and denunciation purposes. They reworked and negotiated multiple traditions including the CCP's wartime pictorials, what scholars identified as transnational “kaleidoscopic modernisms” since the 1920s and 1930s, and specifically Soviet photomontage.⁵⁴ Legal literacy (particularly around the counter-revolutionary crimes) was disseminated as a form of documented theatre on page. Land Reform prints could be flipped from left to right to shape graphic and emotional flow. Grouped images were placed side by side to assert contrasts or connections in various exhibition catalogs during the Socialist Education Movement.⁵⁵ Dramatic crops and “zoom in” closeups mobilized the page, for example, in *pipan cailiao* 批判材料 or 黑材料 (materials for denunciation and struggle) or a photographic collage of *zuizheng* 罪證 (incriminating evidence). Films were portable through cinematic illustrated storybooks (電影連環畫) and other kinds of prints (slides, comic strips, posters, or one-page instruction manual for a film 電影說明書), through which certain characters that represent real-life enemies and certain

⁵³ *Paizhang* 牌長 is one kind of title in the local *jiapai* 甲牌 or 牌甲 institution in Kaigan, drawing from the traditional *Baojia* system of collective neighborhood organization, by means of which the government was able to maintain order and control through all levels of local society. *Paizhang* refers to a master over ten households (one *pai* 牌).

⁵⁴ It was later called and used in different ways. One kind was the form of 照片剪輯 or 照相剪輯. For Kaleidoscopic modernism, Soviet photomontage, and their influences in early PRC, see Paul W. Ricketts. “Kaleidoscopic Modernisms: Montage Aesthetics in Shanghai and Tokyo Pictorials of the 1920s and 1930s.” *Liangyou, Kaleidoscopic Modernity and the Shanghai Global Metropolis, 1926-1945* (Brill, 2013), 15-44. “Photo-still versus photo-picture: The politics of (de)framing,” Margarita Tupitsyn. *The Soviet Photograph, 1924-1937*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 66-98. Bo Zhou. “Sulian de zhaoxiang mengtaiqi yu jianguo chu de zhengzhi xuanchuanhua.” 蘇聯的“照相蒙太奇”與建國初期的政治宣傳畫。

⁵⁵ For a case study of pidou as transmedia practice, see “museological warfare” chapter in Part III.

scenes of the films (e.g., climax scene of struggle against the “five black categories,” *hei wulei* 黑五類) were adaptable forms that fitted different needs into a familiar film viewing structure.

The so-called justice was thus produced and reproducible frame by frame.

If we consider the photographic accusations shaped by atrocity images and “paper cinema” in wartime pictorials (e.g., *Accusations in the Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Area*) in the same vein as the shizhong tradition, we must be aware that a shift was already visible in the CCP’s wartime image production of violence. An example occurs in the first issue of *The Hebei-Rehe-Liaoning Pictorial* (following *The Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Pictorial* in 1942, the second pictorial founded in communist-controlled North China). A two-page photomontage titled “The Hell in the Earthly World,” displays an exemplar of atrocity images, a series of fragmentary moments of ruins, remains, and desperate refugees.⁵⁶ More notable shifts occur on the following page. A photograph of two child survivors who “vowed to fight to death,” placed side by side with another photo of a mass meeting being held on the ruins, conveys the war atrocity as a site of reconstruction and rebirth, rather than destruction, in which a new struggle is evoked.⁵⁷ Such a struggle was no longer based on the conflict between the two opposing sides of the war. Rather, it was necessitated by the basic contradictions between peasants and a broader group opposed to the peasants, between the Chinese people and “feudalist forces,” as noted by *The Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Pictorial*, which refers to landlordism and premodern social forms in general.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Guanshan Qi. “Renjian diyu: saiwai wurenqu yu renjuan shenghuo canzhuang,” 人間地獄：塞外無人區與人圈生活慘狀 (*The Hell in the Early World: the Cruel Situation of Depopulated zones and Pigsty-like Areas for People Alive*), *Jireliao huabao* 冀熱遼畫報 (the Ji-Re-Liao Pictorial), July 7th, 1945.

⁵⁷ Jinxue Zhang. “[feixushang] kai jiantaohui,” 廢墟上開檢討會 (Holding the Confessional Meeting on the Ruins), *Jireliao huabao* 冀熱遼畫報 (the Ji-Re-Liao Pictorial), July 7th, 1945.

⁵⁸ “Fengjian shili” 封建勢力 (feudalist forces) or “fengjian dashan” 封建大山 (feudalist mountains) was regularly used in those pictorial reports and captions for the photographs in the communist wartime pictorials. Another widely

Not limited to the war's effects on civilian life, structured uses of atrocity images were designated to raise and shape ordinary people's consciousness of the striking differences between oppression and emancipation.

Records show that *Accusations in the Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Area* was printed for sale, with a circulation of about 5000 copies; it was even put into a global circulation through the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA).⁵⁹ The anti-war and humanitarian agenda is visible and transformative. The camera, the photographic subject, and the witness acquired unprecedented levels of connection and public access to “the mobilization of shame” or in a different way to put it, practices of “mobilizing shame.”⁶⁰ Putting together a set of related powerful metaphors—such as “the light of public scrutiny,” “the exposure of scrutiny,” and in particular, “the eyes of the people” and “the eyeline of the masses” regularly used in the pictorials—the notion of “mobilizing shame” points to ways of exercising the power of mobilizing grass-roots people and communities to speak out. The notion and its special relationship to the mass- and specifically the image-based media help to explain how shizhong served as a conceptual framework in the case of CCP's wartime pictorials. Those mediated accusations, whether of war atrocities or of certain enemies, through strategic uses of atrocity images of the nameless and paper cinema, in fact left much space for the displacement of justice

used, related phrase is “sanzuo dashan” 三座大山 (three repressive mountains) that includes feudalism, capitalism and semi-colonialism.

⁵⁹ Di Gu. *Zhongguo hongse shying shilu* Vol. 1 (The Historical Record of Chinese Leftist Photography), Taiyuan: shanxi renmin chubanshe, 2009, 92.

⁶⁰ The “mobilization of shame” has been a predominant watchword through which international human rights activists and humanitarian organizations claim and understand their work. See Robert F. Drinan. *The Mobilization of Shame: A World View of Human Rights*. (Yale University Press, 2001); Thomas Keenan. “Mobilizing Shame.” *South Atlantic Quarterly* 103, no. 2-3 (2004): 435-49.

(between war justice and justice coded in “class” that was presumed to be a greater one) to play out, which I explore further in the following chapter on cinematic policing.

Chapter 4. CINEMATIC POLICING IN THE 1940S: THE PRODUCTION OF WARTIME PIDOU

4.1 “SHOOTING” THE ENEMIES

[Xu Xiaobing] set up the movie camera toward that bandit and turned it on. The bandit, a fat man, who was shooting his gun while leaning against the tree, all of sudden saw a big “weapon” pointed at himself. He trembled, dropped the gun, and involuntarily held his hands up toward the camera. Soldiers came to tie up the bandit and then realized: Look, this guy is the Great Bandit Xie Wendong!¹

他將攝影機架好對準那個土匪，並打開機器。這個大胖子正靠著樹射擊，猛地看見一只大口徑的“武器”已經瞄準了自己。當時這個胖子餓得頭昏眼花，也沒太看清是什麼東西，嚇得他一哆嗦，槍掉在地上。這個大胖子衝著攝影機不自由自主地舉起了雙手。戰士們上去將這人捆了個結實。一看，這人正是大土匪謝文東。

Capturing the bandit through, rather than merely on, a movie camera was dramatically striking. The cameraman’s moment of *shooting* the enemy was mistakenly perceived by the enemy himself as one of gun-shooting. The key was not the misperception but the arresting effect in the blending of a camera and a gun into one: the weaponized power against the evil other. This ironic and legendary moment supposedly occurred in northeastern China in the 1940s, and it has been repeatedly documented or recounted in memoirs, biographies, literary essays, and anecdotal accounts.² The “great bandit” Xie Wendong (1887–1946), described

¹ Jian Shi. “Sheyingji qin feishou,” 攝影機“擒”匪首 (The Camera Capturing the Leading Bandit). *Dangshi shang de fanren xiaoshi* 黨史上的凡人小事 (Ordinary People and Small Things in the Party History), (Beijing: Zhonggong dangshi chubanshe, 2012), 57-60.

² Xiaobing Xu and Li Meng. “Linhai xueyuan,” 林海雪原 (with Xu Xiaobing’s oral historical record: Tracks in the Snowy Forests). *Maozedong zhilu: hua shuo maozedong he ta de zhanyoumen*. 毛澤東之路 畫說毛澤東和他的戰友 (Wuhan: Changjiang wenyi chubanshe, 2004), 227-32; Junjie Li. *Zai sheyingji houmian guan cha lishi de ren: xuxiaobing zhuan* 在攝影機後面觀察歷史的人 徐肖冰傳 (The Person Who Observes History behind the Camera: Biography of Xu Xiaobing), (Nanjing: Jiangsu renmin chubanshe, 2010), 85; Songgui Zhong. *Shunjian yu yongheng: houbo yu xu xiaobing* 侯波與徐肖冰: 瞬間與永恆 (Moment and Eternity: the Couple Hou Bo and Xu Xiaobing). (Zhengzhou: daxiangchubanshe, 2007), 38. For literary fiction based on the real case of Xie Wendong’s capture, see A Cheng. “Panbianzhe” 叛變者 (The Betrayer) *Shanhua* 山花, No13, (2013): 32-44.

above, was a real person; his arrest by CCP soldiers (and his later execution) happened as well.³ While Xie Wendong's live capture is part of the conflicting narratives, it could be treated as an intriguing moment of media fantasy, a tale of three kinds of media—the cinema, the gun (as a policing tool), and the prisoner's body—that came together in the moment. In her work on the relationship between the secret police and the cinema in the Soviet Union, Christina Vatulescu identifies a type of cinematic practice, “kino policing,” in which filmmakers took on the job of the police force by “experimenting with capturing and editing the image of the criminal/state-enemy” or through “cineinvestigations” to “[track] ‘evildoers’ across the country and landed some of them in jail.”⁴ In wartime, there was no police institution resembling the Soviet counterpart; instead, mainly a mixture of militarized policing and informal justice was at play until the founding of the PRC.⁵ Borrowing Vatulescu's term *kino policing*, but realizing the difference in the case of wartime China, I use *cinematic policing* in this chapter to explore how a CCP film project engaged in policing work in an alternative way.

³ The story of how Xie Wendong was actually captured live has been a baffling mystery, since there were tens of accounts that offered multiple narratives with contradictory details, such as the exact date of the capture, acts of participants in the capturing team (particularly the person who first confronted Xie and got him), and also the involvement of the movie camera. For example, some records show it was Li Huaqing, one of the PLA soldiers from the 359th Brigade in the Eighth Route Army, that held a gun and discovered Xie Wendong. See Wenduo Yin, “Huozhuo feishou xiewendong,” 活捉匪首謝文東 (Capturing the Leading Bandit Xie Wendong Live) in *Heilongjiang wenshi ziliao* 黑龍江文史資料 第 11 輯 (Archives of the Literature and History of Heilongjiang Vol. 11), edited by 中國人民政治協商會議黑龍江委員會文史資料研究委員會. (Har'bin: Heilongjiang renmin chubanshe, 1983), 83-102; Nailiang Zhao and Wenduo Yin (oral historical record), “Huozhuo xiewendong, qiangbi li huatang,” 活捉謝文東，槍斃李華堂 (Capturing Xie Wendong Live, Executing Li Huatang by Shooting), *Beifang wenzue* 北方文學 (North Literature), no. 10, (1984): 54-8.

⁴ Christina Vatulescu. *Police Aesthetics: Literature, Film, and the Secret Police in Soviet Times*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), 77.

⁵ For related criminal law and regulations, see Hua Ouyang, *Kangzhan shiqi shanganning bianqu chujianfante fazhi yanjiu* 抗戰時期陝甘寧邊區鋤奸反特法制研究 (A Study of the Traitor-elimination and Counter-espionage Legal System in the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region during the Second Sino-Japanese War), (Beijing: Zhongguo zhengfa chubanshe, 2013), 155-70.

Before moving to more detailed analysis, we need to understand the historical-specific and site-specific context. The North Manchuria Base area was the location of some of the earliest and most decisive battles during the Chinese Civil War period (1945–1949). During this time, the CCP was trying to consolidate its hold over the area for extracting human and material resources since the U.S.-brokered peace process temporarily brought the KMT offense to a halt.⁶ Part of the CCP’s mission involved military suppression of various groups labeled as bandits, the same antagonistic term that had been widely adopted since the North Expedition period, as discussed in the previous chapter. At the time, this “bandit” label referred to the KMT military and a mix of “landlords’ militia, independent village self-defense corps, large, well-equipped remnant forces of the Manchukuo Army, Japanese Kwantung army stragglers, and various private armies.”⁷ Thus, the CCP’s guerilla operations in this area during the latter phase of the Chinese Civil War were known as *Dongbei Jiaofei* (東北剿匪, the Northeastern Campaign to Suppress Bandits).⁸ Xu Xiaobing (1916–2009), a cinematographer from *Dongbei dianying*

⁶ The North Manchuria Base Area consisted of the territory north of the Songhua River, including the major cities of Harbin, Qiqihaer, and Jiamusi. It included some industrial enterprises and railways as well as extensive rural areas. For related discussion in English scholarship, see Harold M. Tanner, “Guerrilla, mobile, and base warfare in Communist military operations in Manchuria, 1945-1947.” *Journal of Military History* 67 (Oct. 2003): 1177-1222; Victor Shiu Chiang Cheng. “Imagining China’s Madrid in Manchuria: The Communist Military Strategy at the Onset of the Chinese Civil War, 1945-1946.” *Modern China* 31, no. 1 (2005): 72-114; Ed Pulford. “On Frontiers and Fronts: Bandits, Partisans, and Manchuria’s Borders, 1900–1949,” *Modern China* (May 19, 2020):1-36.

⁷ Steven I. Levine, *Anvil of Victory: The Communist Revolution in Manchuria, 1945-1948*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 139-40.

⁸ Concerning records of the “suppressing bandits” campaign in Northeastern China, see Chen Yan, Shen Zhaohuang, and Liu Jinming, “Jianku de zhanlue fangyu: dongbei renmin jiefang zhanzheng shi yanjiu (2)” 艱苦的戰略防禦：東北人民解放戰爭研究 (An Arduous Strategic Defense: Studies in the History of the People’s Liberation War in the Northeast (2)), *Dongbei difang shi yanjiu* 東北地方史研究 (Studies in the Local History of Northeastern China) 1 (1988): 4-10; Wang Yuannian et al. *Dongbei Jiefang Zhanzheng Chujuan Jiaofei Shi* 東北解放戰爭剿奸剿匪史 (A History of Eliminating Traitors and Suppressing Bandits During the Northeast Liberation War). (Ha’erbin: Heilong jiang jiaoyu chubanshe, 1990). For a reflection on such historiographies of suppressing-bandits campaign, see Xu Youwei and Philip Billingsley. “Out of the Closet: China’s Historians ‘Discover’ Republican-Period Bandits,” *Modern China*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (Oct., 2002), 467-499.

zhipianchang (東北電影製片廠, Northeast Film Studio), was enlisted to film activities related to suppressing the bandits.

The camera in the hands of a communist cinematographer functioned as powerfully as a gun for fighting banditry. More than a symbolic act, its use was, materially, an unmotivated exposure of how communist cinema could or should act in wartime China. It provided a paradigm that facilitated further changes in the film industry after 1949. Movie cameras continued to roll *in* warfare and *as* warfare. Filmmakers worked alongside the army and participated in ambushes. Cinema was also a substantial undertaking of policing and justice. Revisiting the scene of Xie Wendong's live capture, one could simply be curious about the whereabouts of *that* film footage of the capture since the movie camera was presumably rolling. Indeed, although the footage was lost, a documentary film, *Huozhuo Xiewendong* 活捉謝文東 (*Capturing Xie Wendong Alive*) (1947), was released one year later. *Capturing*, produced by the CCP's first state-owned film studio *Dongbei dianying zhipian chang* (東北電影製片廠, Northeast Film Studio), is one episode of a multi-film project called *Minzhu dongbei* (民主東北, *Democratic Northeast*, 1947–1949).⁹ Before moving on to the details of the film project, I would like to explore more surrounding conditions of the Northeast Film Studio, which, since its conception, and through the following decades under Mao, laid the foundation for a socialist cinema that displayed a peculiar interest in policing from its conception and eventually developed through the decades under Mao.

⁹ Yaping Ding. *Zhongguo dianying tongshi* 中國電影通史 (A General History of Chinese Cinema), (Beijing: Zhongguo dianying chubanshe, 2016), 256-9.

4.2 NORTHEAST FILM STUDIO IN WARFARE

In 1946, after Japan's surrender at the end of World War II, the CCP took control of the Manchurian Motion Picture Association (滿洲映畫協會, known in Japanese as *Man'ei* 滿映) and merged it with Northeast Film Studio (NFS).¹⁰ The significance of the film industry to the CCP leaders' vision of a socialist state was clearly manifested in the tremendous effort of taking over an existing film studio and building a new one. Zhou Enlai, then Vice Chair of the CCP's Military Committee, was directly involved in planning the takeover of Manchuria Film Studio. Earlier, at the end of September 1945, CCP leaders provided detailed instructions for the takeover and, subsequently, the Yan'an Film Troupe (*Yan'an dianying tuan*, 延安電影團, established in Yan'an in 1938) began its relocation to Northeast China.¹¹ Because the CCP expected additional military engagement with KMT troops in the city of Changchun, film equipment and related resources left by the Japanese at Manchuria Film Studio were urgently sent by train and transferred to Xingshan, a remote coal-mining town in Northeast China. Accordingly, Xingshan became the location where the Northeast Film Studio was first

¹⁰ For scholarship on the role and operation of the Manchurian Motion Picture Association (Man'ei) as the national film company of Manchukuo, see Masako Furuichi 古市雅子, *Manying dianying yanjiu* “滿映”電影研究 (Man'ei Film Studies) (Beijing: Jiuzhou chubanshe, 2010); Pang Zengyu 逢增玉, *Zhimin zhuyi dianying zhengzhi he meixue de meiying* 殖民主義電影政治和美學魅影 (The Politics and Aesthetic Phantom of the Colonial Films) (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2015); Jie Li, “A National Cinema for a Puppet State: The Manchurian Motion Picture Association” in Carlos Rojas and Eileen Cheng-Yin Chow ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Chinese Cinemas*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 79-80; Sookyeong Hong, “Between Ideology and Spectatorship: The ‘Ethnic Harmony’ of the Manchuria Motion Picture Corporation, 1937-1945”, *Cross Currents: East Asian History and Culture Review*, Vol.2, No. 1 (May 2013): 116-138; Jie Li, “Phantasmagoric Manchukuo: Documentaries Produced by the South Manchurian Railway Company, 1932-1940”, *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique*, Vol.22 No.2, (Spring 2014): 329.

¹¹ For the detailed guidelines about CCP's takeover effects, see “Jieshou dongbei diwei dianying shiye, jianli wodang dianying xuanchuan jigou,” 接收東北敵偽電影事業，建立我黨電影宣傳機構 (草案) (Taking Over the Film Industry in Northeast China under the Puppet Regime to Build up the CCP's Propaganda Organization) September 29, 1945, reprinted in Jianzhen Zhang. *Qian xiaozhang dianying zhilu* 錢筱璋電影之路 (Qian Xiaozhang's Path in Film Industry), (Beijing: Zhongguo dianying chubanshe, 2006), 62-6.

established.¹² Multiple groups of filmmakers joined the Northeast Film Studio (NFS) when it was re-organized at Xingshan in the city of Hegang, Heilongjiang Province. One group included filmmakers from *Yan'an dianying tuan* 延安電影團 (Yan'an film troupe), which was established in Yan'an in 1938, the year that marked the beginning of Chinese communist film industry, and another group included filmmakers from *Xibei dianyingdui* 西北電影工學隊 (Northwest Film Team).¹³ The founder of the Yan'an Film Troupe, Yuan Muzhi, became the director of NFS in the spring of 1947.¹⁴ Yuan's wife Chen Bo'er was one of the main figures sent to take charge of Manchuria Film Studio and later served as the party secretary for NFS.¹⁵ Under Yuan and Chen's

¹² There were underground CCP members involved in the long preparation for the takeover, see Daoxin Li. "Dongying zhichu guojia dianying de mengya," 東影之初: 國家電影的萌芽 (The Beginning of Northeast Film Studio as a Conceiving of National Cinema). *Dianying yishu* 電影藝術 (Film Art), no. 1 (2010): 38.

¹³ Jingzhi Zhong. "Cong yan'an dianying zhipian chang dao xibei dianying gongxuedui," 從延安電影製片廠到西北電影工學隊 (From Yan'an Film Trope to Northwest Film Team), *Dianying yishu* 電影藝術, no. 9 (1959). Reprinted in *Jiefangqu de dianying* 解放區的電影 (Cinema in the Liberated Area), (Beijing: Zhongguo dianying chubanshe, 1962), 51-7. Wu Zhuqing and Zhang Dai eds. *Zhongguo dianying de fengbei: Yan'an dianyingtuan de gushi* 中國電影的豐碑: 延安電影團的故事 (Monument of Chinese cinema: Story of the Yan'an Film Troupe) (Beijing: Renmin University Press, 2008). As Chinese film historian Li Daoxin carefully documents, there were thirteen different groups of filmmakers joining the reorganized Northeast Film Studio. For example, most of the technical personnel who had worked in the Japanese-owned Manchuria Film Studio (滿洲映畫) stayed at their positions after the CCP's takeover, including many Japanese technicians. Other groups included the Northeast Literature-and-Art Work Team (東北文藝工作團), the trope of Northeast Military and Political College (東北軍政大學文工團), film professionals from Shanghai, Hong Kong, and other areas gradually joined Northeast Film Studio. See Daoxin Li. "Dongying zhichu guojia dianying de mengya," 39.

¹⁴ Yaping Ding. *Zhongguo dianying tongshi* 中國電影通史 (A General History of Chinese Cinema), (Beijing: Zhongguo dianying chubanshe, 2016), 256-9.

¹⁵ Chen Bo'er and Yuan Muzhi were both movie stars in the 1930s and played couples in the films. They remained close friends since their first film project together. Zhou Enlai invited Yuan to Yan'an to make films. Yuan collaborated with Chen in the production of some stage plays before he went to the Soviet Union to study filmmaking. Chen Bo'er played a major role in the shaping and development of socialist filmmaking in revolutionary China and was one of the most important figures in the early PRC film industry. Apart from her crucial position in the Northeast Film Studio, she also served as the director of the art department of the Central Film Bureau and the founder of the Beijing Film Academy upon the founding of the PRC. However, she had been largely neglected in existing scholarly works. For one exception, a well-documented and inspiring study of Chen Bo'er's biographic life and her work, see Zheng Wang. *Finding Women in the State: A Socialist Feminist Revolution in the People's Republic of China, 1949-1964*. (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2017), 143-69. (the chapter on *Chen Bo'er and the Feminist Paradigm of Socialist Film*).

leadership, *Democratic Northeast* was produced as a multi-film project. It was considered a “large-scale news-magazine collage film” (*xinwen zazhi jijin pian* 新聞雜誌片) composed of seventeen episode-issues in total, with each episode-issue produced every other month.¹⁶ Thirteen of the seventeen episodes were primarily newsreels and documentary films.¹⁷ The multi-film project ended with 106 reels in total, based on a collection of 3,000-foot reels of footage filmed from May 1947 to July 1949.¹⁸

One of the key initiatives of NFS was to organize filmmaking in generic ways through a campaign called “seven-genre-production” campaign (*Qipian shengchan yundong* 七片生產運動): the production of newsreel documentary, drama film, animation (*meishupian* 美術片, including animated film and puppet animation), science-education documentary (*kejiaopian* 科教片), dubbed foreign film (*fanban pian* 翻版片 or *yizhipian* 譯製片), press photo, and lantern slides.¹⁹ Among all the media genres, NFS leaders promoted the documentary as the primary

¹⁶ Weijin Gao. “Zhongguo xinwen jilu dianyingshi.” 東北電影製片廠、民主東北及解放戰爭中的新聞攝影隊 (The Newsreel Cinematographers’ Team in Northeast Film Studio, *Democratic Northeast*, and the Chinese Civil War). *Zhongguo xinwen jilu dianyingshi* 中國新聞紀錄電影史 (History of Chinese Newsreel and Documentary Cinema). (Beijing: Shijie tushu chubanshe, 2013), 71.

¹⁷ In many cases, people have recognized *Democratic Northeast* as a “news documentary film collection” or “multi-episode documentary,” since most episode-issues (at least supposedly) draw on nonfiction filmmaking. Qian Ying notes the ambiguity of naming actualities, documentaries and other related genres. For example, no distinction was made between actuality and reenactments in film catalogs. Both were labeled “news film” (新聞片) or “current affairs documentary” (時事紀錄片) in the Republican period, or “newsreel and documentary” (新聞紀錄片) in the PRC. For an in-depth study of socialist documentaries, see Ying Qian. *Visionary Realities: Documentary Cinema in Socialist China*, 2013, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses.

¹⁸ Chenguang Tang. “minzhu dongbei de xingtaitezheng,” (The Formal Features of *Democratic Northeast*), *Yingxiangzhong de ershishiji zhongguo: zhongguo jilupian de fazhan yu shehui bianqian* 影像中的二十世紀中國: 中國紀錄片的發展與社會變遷 (Beijing: zhongguo dianying chubanshe, 2011), 59-60.

¹⁹ Daoxin Li. “Dongying zhichu guojia dianying de mengya,” 東影之初: 國家電影的萌芽 (The Beginning of Northeast Film Studio as a Conceiving of National Cinema). *Dianying yishu* 電影藝術 (Film Art), no. 1 (2010): 41.

mode of filmmaking in which all other genres should be grounded. The documentary-centered approach is well described in Yuan Muzhi's words:²⁰

In the early years of the Northeast Film Studio, we started to use movie cameras to directly document the struggle in lives of the peasants, workers, and soldiers class, and further turned to the practices of making artistic fiction films with more creative appropriations; on the one hand, our filmmakers in the field of artistic fiction films went to access actual experiences of the masses, to learn, to observe and to conduct interviews [with the peasants, workers, and soldiers] for getting inspirations; and indirectly achieved experiences from their practice of making documentaries at the same time, on the other hand.²¹

As such, documentary-making was practiced as a method and sort of founding practice in an ethnographical sense, namely, a way of collecting and archiving “raw materials” from the front line, where the proletarian class's struggle unfolded. Chen Bo'er later summarized it as a way of “making and developing narrative filmmaking based on documentaries,” a method that remained vital in the early PRC.²² For documentary filmmaking, Northeast Film Studio sent thirty-two teams of photographers and cinematographers to the front line until the end of 1948.²³ Among those film warriors, three cinematographers died on the battlefield during the Chinese Civil War.²⁴ When one of the cinematographers from Northeast Film Studio who survived, Liu Deyuan, recalled his experience of shooting footage in the war with the PLA troops in 1947, one

²⁰ Apart from the political needs, the primary focus on the genre of newsreel and documentary films was also dependent on the scarcity of materials and technological restrictions. See Yaping Ding, “Jiefangqu qunti huayu,” 解放區群體話語與紀錄電影 (The Collective Discourse and Documentary Cinema in the Liberated Area [in China]). *Zhongguo dianying yishushi 1940-1949*. (Beijing: wenhuayishu chubanshe, 2017), 240-1.

²¹ Muzhi Yuan. “Guanyu jiefangqu de dianyinggongzuo,” 關於解放區的電影工作 (About Filmmaking in the Liberated Areas). *Yuanmuzhi wenji* 袁牧之文集. (Beijing: Zhongguo dianying chubanshe, 1984), 595.

²² Bo'er Chen. “Gushipian congwu dao you de biandao gongzuo,” 故事片從無到有的編導工作 (The Editing and Directing Work of Narrative Film). *Yewu tongxun*, January 10th, 1950.

²³ Yaping Ding. *Zhongguo dianying tongshi* 中國電影通史 (A General History of Chinese Cinema), (Beijing: Zhongguo dianying chubanshe, 2016), 356.

²⁴ Weijin Gao. “Zhongguo xinwen jilu dianyingshi,” 75.

of his deepest memories was that seeing the movie camera rolling and people shooting films at the forefront motivated the soldiers to keep fighting.²⁵

4.3 *DEMOCRATIC NORTHEAST ON LOCATION*

Based on documentary-centered instructional principles, it is not hard to understand that the form of a multi-film project, or rather, a film anthology, enabled the *Democratic Northeast* films to offer a panoramic view of the communist-controlled areas of Northeast China. Moreover, *Democratic Northeast* at once fits with and differs from the genre of omnibus film as “transauthorial cinema.”²⁶ NFS’s films (particularly the newsreels and documentaries) were mainly cinematographer-driven productions: the communist cinematographers usually worked as both cameraman and director, and then another editor facilitated the completion of the film. *Democratic Northeast* is not an omnibus film showcasing the work of several teams of filmmakers, but a periodical-style cluster of films of multiple kinds that conceptually celebrate collective production and technically rely on individual cinematographers’ labor. Appreciating the documentary’s value as a “visual configuration of political opinions,” *Democratic Northeast* enjoyed its status as a gradually shaped and ongoing collection as well as a documentary-based experiment blessed with timeliness and liveness.²⁷

²⁵ Deyuan Liu. “Huigu pai minzhu dongbei,” (Recalling the Experiences of Filming Democratic Northeast). *Dianying shijie* 電影世界 (Film World), no.2 (1986): 7.

²⁶ As David S. Diffrient defines, the term of omnibus films denotes “feature-length motion pictures showcasing the contributions of two or more directors (or, more accurately, two or more teams of filmmakers, including screenwriters, cinematographers, and other creative artists responsible for the content and form of their individual episodes)”. See David Scott Diffrient. *Omnibus Films: Theorizing Transauthorial Cinema*. (Scotland: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 3.

²⁷ About “visual figuration of political opinions” 形象化政論 as the value of documentaries in the communist-controlled areas, see Yaping Ding. “Jiefangqu qunti huayu,” 解放區群體話語與紀錄電影 (The Collective Discourse and Documentary Cinema in the Liberated Area [in China]). *Zhongguo dianying yishushi 1940-1949*. (Beijing: wenhuayishu chubanshe, 2017), 247.



Figure 4-1 Posters from *Democratic Northeast* (1947–1949) films: Episode 7. *The Sixth National Congress of Laborers* (全國第六次勞動大會) [1948] (left); Episode 5. *Leave Him to Fight against Chiang Kai-shek* (留下他打老蔣吧) [1948] (right).

Different episodes include films of various topics and genres. For example, the fifth episode contains the very first CCP-produced narrative film, *Leave Him to Fight against Chiang Kai-shek* (留下他打老蔣吧, 1948, Figure 4-1, right). There are two animated shorts: the puppet animation, *Dreaming to Be Emperor* (皇帝夢, 1947) in the fourth episode and *Capturing the Turtle in the Jar* (甕中捉鱉, 1948) in the ninth episode. Also included are the first science and education film, *Plague Prevention* (預防鼠疫, 1948), and many other news documentaries such as *Victory Is on the Home Front* (勝利在後方, 1947), *Return Our Yan'an* (還我延安, 1948), *The Kindergarten in the Northeast Film Studio* (東影保育院, 1948), *Class Education* (階級教育, 1948), *The Last Battle to Liberate Northeast China* (解放東北的最後戰役, 1948), and *Beiping Entrance Ceremony* (北平入城式, 1949).²⁸ Segments of war news, military life, mass education, the laboring process of peasants and workers, and so forth, all contribute to shaping a unified

²⁸ Very little attention in English scholarship has been given to any one of the *Democratic Northeast* films or the project as a whole. On exception is an in-depth study of Chinese socialist animation which includes a discussion about the two animated shorts in *Democratic Northeast*, see Daisy Yan Du. *Animated Encounters: Transnational Movements of Chinese Animation, 1940s-1970s*. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2019), 92-7.

image, at the center of which was a coalition of triple warfare filmed *on location*: on the battleground, on the home front, and at the “front line” of class struggle. Accordingly, those films created a living archive of the multi-layered struggle against various enemies ranging from American imperialists to KMT forces, local (and KMT-affiliated) bandits, and landlords.

4.4 THE ART OF *HUOZHUO* (LIVE CAPTURE)

Of all the films and episodes in *Democratic Northeast*, the twenty-one-minute documentary, *Huozhuo Xiewendong* (活捉謝文東, *Capturing Xie Wendong Alive*, 1947) stands out as the earliest case of cinematic policing in the history of the CCP cinema. As mentioned in an earlier section, *Capturing Xie Wendong Alive* was produced by NFS cinematographer Xu Xiaobing, who accompanied the military to suppress bandits. A brief overview of bandit suppression, the film mainly traces the process of capturing, arresting, and parading several bandits in the northeastern part of China—including Zhang Heizi, Li Huatang, and Xie Wendong as the most powerful of them all—and then putting them on trial. The documentary narrative of *Capturing* is organized as a chronicle of fighting bandit crime around the three major bandits, whose occupation and active control of the area threatened the CCP’s force. The film starts with the big picture of bandit suppression as a response to the phenomena of “bandits’ crime and lawlessness running rampant” in the area.²⁹ The opening sequence builds up a general perception that bandit-initiated violence and other types of behavior considered to be deviant have been on

²⁹ The grand narrative of suppressing bandits is framed mainly through the voice over from the very beginning in the film. The narrated events were in the second phase of the “banditry suppression and struggle in northeast China” 東北剿匪鬥爭 (from June 1946 to April 1947): “quanmian xianqi jiaofei gaochao,” 全面掀起剿匪高潮 (The Full Upsurge of Suppressing the Bandits). For CCP’s detailed policies around the suppressing acts, see Zhongguo renmin jiefangjun lishiziliao congshu bianshen weiyuanhui 中國人民解放軍歷史資料叢書編審委員會. *Jiaofei douzheng dongbei diqu* 剿匪鬥爭東北地區 (Banditry Suppression and Struggles in the Northeastern Region of China). (Beijing: jiefangjun chubanshe, 2001).

the rise and pose a serious threat to collective security. He Jinniang and Tan Youlin, two generals of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) assigned to suppress the bandits, are introduced in the opening sequence, along with the army's preparation for its military-policing acts. Mixing reenactments and observational footage, a set of shots showcases the soldiers' application of tools to search, locate, and identify the bandits: they read a map unfolded on the ground, observe via scopes, set up rifles, and examine suspects in face-to-face encounters. The PLA soldiers work like a group of policemen undertaking the investigation step by step. Such scenes are followed by several animated images and graphics that visualize the bandits' spheres of influence, the progress of the bandit suppression campaign, and a catalog of weapons and material goods confiscated from their bandit-prisoners.



Figure 4-2. Scenes of *jiebao* (捷報, “victory reporting”): handwritten and hand-drawn catalog of confiscated weapons and goods (left), newspaper headline insert reading “Zhang Heizi captured alive” (middle), and scene of crowd reading the bulletin board that announces the arrest of the bandit Li Huatang on the street (right). Screenshots from *Capturing Xie Wendong Alive* [1947].

Such scenes lead up to a sequence of *jiebao* (捷報, “victory reporting”), which includes newspaper headline inserts, crowd shots of people reading the public notice about the captured bandits, and, more importantly, a set of arrest scenes (Figure 4-2). Xie Wendong is the main protagonist and the biggest villain, and is, in fact the first to be captured in the film.³⁰ Similar to

³⁰ “Hufei xiewendong jiuqin” 胡匪謝文東就擒 (The Bandit Xie Wendong Captured), *Dongbei ribao* 東北日報 (Northeast Daily), November 25, 1946; “Hejiangqu silingyuan he jinnia tan yilan jiaofei jingyan” 合江軍區司令員賀晉年談依蘭剿匪經驗 (The Commander of the Hejiang Military District, He Jinnian, Talking about Experiences of Suppressing the Bandits in Yilan). *Dongbeiribao* 東北日報, December 6, 1946.

the arrest of Xie and his son, two other leading bandits, Li Huatang and Zhang Heizi, are also captured alive.³¹ Xu Xiaobing, the cinematographer-director of the film, illustrates the success of bandit suppression as that of crime-fighting: identifying the criminal(ized) profile of the bandits.

The film's central importance lies precisely in the appearance of the bandits, particularly "the great bandit" Xie Wendong, as a prisoner, a criminal, and fundamentally a representative *enemy of the people* (Figure 4-3).



Figure 4-3. The appearance of Xie Wendong tied up in medium closeup shots. Screenshots from *Capturing Xie Wendong Alive* [1947].

The documentary worked as a cinematic journalism program in a form resembling a crime report. Xie Wendong was part of the valuable news expected to be circulated among a wide public. *Capturing Xie Wendong Alive* did not merely take on the exposure of the "criminal body that is marked as news," a task usually performed in conventional press photography or newsreel programs, it also tracked and enacted the criminalization of Xie Wendong as a procedure. By doing so, the film functioned as a redirection toward the conditions of militarized policing (the CCP's official bandit suppression policy and regulations), cinema, and journalism, the

³¹ See Jie Liu. "Zhengzhi tufei xiewendong he lihuatang fumieji" 政治土匪謝文東和李華堂覆滅記 (A Record of the Downfall of the Political Bandits Xie Wendong and Li Huatang). *Dongbei geming shi yanjiu* 東北革命史研究 edited by Jige Tang and Zhifan Wang. (Changchun: Jilin daxue chubanshe, 1993), 244-8.

cooperation of which produced Xie's body *as* news.³² In the film, various portraits of Xie Wendong are shown in conjunction with those of Li Huatang and Zhang Heizi as a catalog of enemies who had no escape from the vast arm of the people's justice, for they embodied the agent who threatens both the identity and the very existence of the proletarian masses (Figure 4-4). Their images echo the enemy portraits that flourished in wartime pictorials.



Figure 4-4. Zhang Heizi (left) and Li Huatang (right) as criminals captured alive. Screenshots from *Capturing Xie Wendong Alive* [1947].

Enemy portraits refer to a body of generic photographs of *fulu* (俘虜, prisoners) published in the pictorials. During the Chinese Civil War period, portraits of prisoners, labeled as enemies “captured alive,” were produced in excess. Such images share several formal characteristics: clear, with a frontal or profile view, showing the head and sometimes also the shoulders, and, where possible, with relatively plain facial expressions, sometimes filled with remorse (Figure 4-5). One may easily relate these photographs to mugshots (also called police portraits) and convict photos, and more generally, to the genre of criminal identification photographs long established and rooted in the photographic portraiture and physiognomic

³² See Jason Hill. “In the Police Wagon, in the Press, and in The Museum of Modern Art (A Note on Weegee’s Frank Pape, Arrested for Homicide, November 10, 1944).” In Mitra Abbaspour, Lee Ann Daffner, and Maria Morris Hambourg, eds. *Object: Photo. Modern Photographs: The Thomas Walther Collection 1909–1949*. An Online Project of The Museum of Modern Art. New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2014, 1-15. For the meanings of criminal body in the Chinese context, see Karen Turner. “The Criminal Body and the Body Politic: Punishments in Early Imperial China.” *Cultural Dynamics* 11, no. 2 (1999): 237-54.

studies of the nineteenth century.³³ Allan Sekula has famously argued for the social invention of the criminal body, involving what he identifies as the “evidentiary promise” of photography (basically the documentary and classificatory functions).³⁴ The technical value of nineteenth-century photographs of criminals, increasingly developed for forensic purposes, was “to prove the existence of innate, visible traits in deviants, or to serve as dispassionate document of their deeds.”³⁵ While the portraits of KMT prisoners by CCP photographers were not produced primarily for forensic purposes, they seemed to resonate with an idea central to modern law enforcement and criminal justice: making the criminal visible.



Figure 4-5. Mugshot-like portraits of KMT officials prisoners: photographs by Zhao Yanzhang et al., *Huabei huakan* (華北畫刊, North China Pictorial) 9 [October 21, 1948]: 1 (left); *Huozhuo feite touzi* (活捉匪特頭子, Capturing the Leading Bandits and Traitors), *Huabei huakan* (華北畫刊, North China Pictorial) 5 [August 21, 1948] (right).

³³ See Suzanne Regener, “Reading Faces—Photography and the Search for Expression” in *Geometry of the Face* (Copenhagen, Denmark: The National Museum of Photography, The Royal Library, 2003), 30-47.

³⁴ Allan Sekula, “The Body and the Archive,” *October*, 39 (1986), 3-64. For other works on the mugshot genre, see David Green. “Veins of resemblance: Photography and eugenics,” *Oxford Art Journal* 7(1985): 3-16; John Tagg. A means of Surveillance: The Photograph as Evidence in Law, in Tagg, J., *The Burden of Representation. Essays on photographs and histories*, (Basingstoke - London, Macmillan, 1988), 60-102; Phillips Sandra S., “Identifying the Criminal,” *Police Pictures: The Photograph as Evidence*. (San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art: Chronicle Books, 1997), 11-31; Jens Jäger. “Photography: A Means of Surveillance? Judicial Photography, 1850 to 1900.” *Crime, Histoire & Sociétés* 5, no. 1 (2001): 27-51.

³⁵ Phillips Sandra S., “Identifying the Criminal,” *Police Pictures: The Photograph as Evidence*. (San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art: Chronicle Books, 1997), 12.

The dual role of criminal photography is manifested in such photographic and cinematic work. Images of KMT officials as prisoners (see Figure 4-5, *left*) function clearly as both a static visual means to identify each individual prisoner in the group of enemies and to distinguish each one as an Other, namely, those who are *not* the CCP soldiers, officials, and the masses.³⁶

Photographic portraits of bandits, warlords, and traitors who were captured alive (*huozhuo* 活捉), like those of Xie Wendong, were all largely produced (see Figure 4-5, *right*).³⁷ The camera was instrumentally brought to bear on the prisoner's body to create images intended to furnish evidence of what turned out to be a criminal body, or rather, the criminalized body of the enemy. With cross-media connections, the concept of *capturing alive* instead had long been produced as a telling discourse on the making, exposing, and punishing of evil others in China. It was often closely related to a dramatized and moralized form of revenge and justice-making when it appeared in literary and theatrical genres.³⁸ The radical difference in live capture that

³⁶ For the double role of such images as mugshots, see Jonathan M. Finn. *Capturing the Criminal Image: From Mug Shot to Surveillance Society*. (Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), XIV. Lourdes Delgado. "Mugshot's Bias: A Semantic History of Guilt." *Photography and Culture* 10, no. 3 (2017): 215-32.

³⁷ There were a large number of photographic portraits of prisoners, marked with the term of "captured alive" (*huozhuo*, or in other ways such as "shengqin" 生擒), including those of Japanese war criminals, warlords, traitors, KMT soldiers, among others, published in wartime pictorials. See "Huo-zhuo Sundianying" 活捉孫殿英 ([The Warlord] Sun Dianying Captured Alive), *The Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Pictorial*, April 15, 1947; "Huo-zhuo jiangfei daliang gaoji junguan" 活捉蔣匪大批高級軍官 (A large amount of high-level KMT military officials captured alive), *Renmin*, October 25, 1947.

³⁸ For example, a play called *Huo-zhuo sanlang* 活捉三郎 (San-lang Captured Alive) was initially written by Xu Zichang 許自昌 in the seventeenth century. Xu's play blends two kinds of narratives: scenes of amorous ghostly visits with a happy ending, (e.g. Tang Xianzu's "Peony pavilion" *Mudan ting* 牡丹亭) and the scenes in which betrayed female ghosts return to exact revenge against their treacherous lovers (such as another "huozhuo" play, *Huo-zhuo Wang Kui* 活捉王魁 [Wang Kui Captured Alive]). "Sanlang Captured Alive" eventually became the most famous one involving the *huozhuo* scenes, overshadowing previously more classic plays. *San-lang Captured Alive* is also called *Zhang San-lang Captured Alive* 活捉張三 or *San-lang Captured Alive* 活捉張三郎. For the reception and study of the *huozhuo* play in the Republican era, see Huogong Liu. "Huo-zhuo zhangsan" 活捉張三 (Zhang San Captured Alive) in *Xixue daquan* 戲學大全 (The Complete Studies of Opera). (Shanghai: Dadongshuju, 1920), 13-8.

photographic media, particularly, cinema, enabled was a sense of liveness through the visibilities of being captured.³⁹ This links back to the narrated moment of Xie Wendong's live capture.

Seemingly, it occurred through the camera in Xu Xiaobing's hand, as I show at the beginning of this chapter, and could be regarded as one of the primal scenes in the marriage between war and cinema, guns and cameras.

This moment of capturing alive distinguishes itself from other remarkable ones in the long history of collaboration between cameras and guns.⁴⁰ Whether Étienne-Jules Marey's photographic rifle (direct translation of *fusil photographique* or chronophotographic gun), the instrumental "soldier's camera" used in World War I; Dziga Vertov's arrangement of the camera as "gun apparatus directs its muzzle towards the city" in his storyboard; or Susan Sontag's view of the camera as "a sublimation of the gun," the camera-gun relationship involved is far more a conceptual interlock than a simultaneous co-presence of the two material forms.⁴¹ Xu Xiaobing's narrative of the camera and/as the gun most closely echoes the Soviet filmmaker Aleksandr Ivanovich Medvedkin's coupling of the camera and the gun. Medvedkin was a young soldier,

³⁹ I am indebted to some scholarship to think about liveness, see Philip Auslander. *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture*. (Routledge, 1999); Cormac Power. *Presence in Play: A Critique of Theories of Presence in the Theatre*. (Amsterdam; New York, NY: Rodopi, 2008).

⁴⁰ In some way, this history is a familiar one of metaphors and concepts. "The camera is a gun which shoots twenty-four frame a second," see Julianne Burton. "The Camera As 'Gun': Two Decades of Culture and Resistance in Latin America." *Latin American Perspectives* 5, no. 1 (1978): 49.

⁴¹ Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1990), 15. Marey's chronophotographic gun was the first portable hand-held motion picture camera. In a letter he wrote that had been "dreaming of a kind of fusil *photographique*, to seize the bird in a pose or, even better, in a series of poses marking the successive phases of the movement of its wings." This is quoted in Martha Braun, *Picturing Time: The Work of Etienne-Jules Marey (1830-1904)*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 47. A detailed description of the camera-gun by Marey can be found in Etienne-Jules Marey, "le fusil photographique," *La Nature*. no. 444 (1881). Dziga Vertov. "Kiev 1 Sept[ember] [19]28," *Storyboard for Man with a Movie Camera (1928)*. http://www.rouge.com.au/9/vertov_storyboard.html (accessed on March 20th, 2020); "Kiev 1 sept. 28g. chelovek s kinoapparatom," 72. Apart from the illustrated notes in his storyboard, Vertov also wrote about the "kino-machine-gun." Other filmmakers who have blended the camera and the gun also include Sergei Eisenstein, Adachi Masao, and so on.

like Xu Xiaobing. He used to cooperate with his comrades in ambushing the enemy to film capturing the enemy live. As Chris Marker's documentary *The Last Bolshevik (Le tombeau d'Alexandre, 1992)* records, Medvedkin came up with a practical solution for this kind of act: a camera-gun. To make it, he mounted his camera on a gun so he could point them both at the enemy at the same time. Medvedkin's dual role in warfare recalls Xu Xiaobing's shooting act in the case of *Capturing Xie Wendong Alive*: they technically point the gun (camera) at the enemy while filming his capture. (In Medvedkin's case, he had to cover his fellow soldier by using the camera-gun). Furthermore, the live capture of the enemy is supposed to be a double act on the spot, defined by *the live* and *the instant*, bodily and cinematically. In this regard, even though the documentary *Capturing Xie Wendong Alive* contains no shots of the exact moment of capturing any bandit, the film itself prolongs the capturing act and creates a lively process of tracking, seizing, and cleansing the purported bandit-criminals. Bandit suppression thus constituted class warfare in the name of the people's justice, both within and much beyond the Chinese Civil War.

Seeing cinema as a weapon in its material and symbolic forms, Medvedkin kept and valued his camera-gun throughout his life. Likewise, Xu Xiaobing and other cinematographers consistently activated the power of the camera's gunlike precision in policing and partaking in the exorcism of *class enemies* for years. Paul Virilio argues throughout his *War and Cinema* that the history of war is fundamentally a history of transforming fields of human perception, whereby vision has increasingly been a key site of power.⁴² In line with Virilio's ideas, one might note that *Capturing Xie Wendong Alive* perhaps reveals a merging of the gun sights and the camera's viewfinder to situate the battlefield of class struggle, or rather, the all-encompassing realm of class warfare, as a field of vision that can be calculated, measured, and *shot*.

⁴² Paul Virilio. *War and Cinema: The Logistics of Perception*. (London; New York: Verso, 1989).

4.5 PRODUCING WARTIME PIDOU

4.5.1 *Persecution by Cinematic Means*

The recurring appearance of the bandits in *Capturing Xie Wendong Alive* shapes another kind of liveness, putting the target audiences in *living contact* with the enemies on trial. Xie Wendong goes through the procedure of *shizhong*, including parading, interrogation, and trial in the film (Figure 4-6 and Figure 4-7).



Figure 4-6. Scenes of interrogating Xie Wendong. Screenshots from *Capturing Xie Wendong Alive* [1947].



Figure 4-7. Scenes of pidou without being named as such: the public trial of Li Huatang (left); Xie Wendong in the mass trial (middle); Xie at once on trial and on stage, as wartime pidou, which was held before the execution (right). Screenshots from *Capturing Xie Wendong Alive* [1947].

Shame parades and public trials of Xie Wendong were held multiple times after his arrest. Local newspapers provided ongoing reports about his case and especially “the exhibition of Xie

Wendong that attracted ten thousand people to watch.”⁴³ On December 3, 1946, Xie was publicly tried and sentenced, both being filmed; then executed in public a few days later, however, which happened offscreen.⁴⁴ In the crowd scene, the visual echo of Mao’s 1927 report is, again, clearly shown: a mass of the peasants gather with their red-tasseled spears (Figure 4-7, *middle*).



Figure 4-8. Crowd shots: kongsu tanbai suku dahui (控訴坦白訴苦大會, The Mass Meeting of Accusation, Confession, and Speaking Bitterness; left); cinematic shizhong of the bandit (right). Screenshots from *Capturing Xie Wendong Alive* [1947].

Xie Wendong is brought to a stage occupied by only a few people (supposedly the local Party cadres or soldiers), who are standing, shouting, and guiding the masses to follow the procedure (Figure 4-7, *right*). While there was no paradigmatic vocabulary of *pidou* as such at the time, there had been an extensive set of practices that technically fit what was widely called *pidou* throughout the years to come. What Xie Wendong and other bandits went through was a series of public shaming punishments based on mass gatherings at different scales (Figure 4-8). Almost the entire, if not strictly defined, criminal procedure is visualized *in* and reenacted *through* the documentary.

⁴³ “Yilan zhanlan hufei tou wanren zhengkan xiewendong” 依蘭展覽胡匪頭萬人爭看謝文東 (The Exhibition of Xie Wendong Attracted Ten Thousand People to Watch in Yilan). *Hejiang ribao* 合江日報 (Hejiang Daily). December 6, 1946.

⁴⁴ “Qingzhu jiaofei shengli, qiangjue xie ni wending” 慶祝剿匪勝利，槍決謝逆文東 (Celebrating the Victory of Bandit Suppression, Executing Xie Wendong by Shooting). *Dongbeiribao* 東北日報, December 14, 1946.

Cinema puts Xie Wendong's body on display and on trial at the same time. Stated differently, a cinematic form of *shizhong* enabled the mass audiences to encounter a cross-over between the so-called "live" and the recorded. The actual spectacular event of the time, known as the public trial of Xie Wendong (*gongshen Xie Wendong* 公審謝文東), was a hybrid one, spanning multiple trial-like occasions that mixed accusation and confession meetings, the so-called mass trial, public sentencing, and *huobaoju* play (活報劇, living newspaper, adapted from Xie's case and scheduled after the sentencing).⁴⁵ As recounted by Li Juliang, who was a middle school student in Boli county at the time and witnessed how Xie Wendong stood on trial, the mass audiences who participated in the public trial were not only well aware of the presence of a film crew (led by Xu Xiaobing) sent by Northeast Film Studio; rather, soon afterward they were also able to watch the documentary *Capturing*, included in the second episode of *Democratic Northeast*.⁴⁶ The film was widely screened and circulated in the communist-controlled Northeastern part of China known as The Liberated Area in the Northeast (*dongbei jiefangqu* 東北解放區), in tandem with cross-media forms of adaptation and oral performance such as *dagushu* (大鼓書, Chinese ballad with drum accompaniment) and revolutionary opera with the same title, *Capturing Xie Wendong Alive*.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ See Juliang Li. "Gongshen Xie Wendong jishi" 公審謝文東紀實 (A Truthful Record of the Public Trial of Xie Wendong). *Boli wenshi ziliao* 勃利文史資料 第 12 輯 (Literary and Historical Archives of Boli County Vol. 12) edited by Zhongguo renmin zhengzhi xieshang huiyi heilongjiang bolixian weiyuanhui wenshiziliao yanjiu weiyuanhui. 中國人民政治協商會議黑龍江勃利縣委員會文史資料研究委員會編 (1995): 67-72.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 70.

⁴⁷ The revolutionary opera, written by Wu Yinglin, reenacted the arrest, accusation meeting, public trial and execution of Xie Wendong. Its first showing took place in the City of Jiamusi in February 1947. See Lianjun Zhang (eds). "Geming xiandai jingju huozhuo xie wending (1947)" 革命現代京劇《活捉謝文東》1947 (Revolutionary Modern Opera *Capturing Xie Wendong Alive*) in *Dongbei sansheng geming wenhuashi* 東北三省革命文化史 (The History of Revolutionary Cultures in the Three Provinces in Northeast China, from May 4th 1919 to October 1, 1949), (Har'bin: Heilongjiang renmin chubanshe, 2003), 302-3.

4.5.2 *Wartime Pidou: A New Look of Shizhong?*

If we understand the penal and punitive encounters in Xie Wendong's case depicted in *Capturing* as wartime *pidou*, it bears noting that in wartime pictorials also lay the emerging form and style of *pidou* in its extensive visual records of *shizhong*-related occasions. Those records mostly belonged to the image category I call crowd shots, which compellingly illustrated and mediated the correlation between *shizhong* and *pidou* (for example, see Figure 4-9, *right*).



Figure 4-9. Xiaomie renmin zhanzheng de dujun (消滅人民戰爭的毒菌, Eliminating the Toxic Bacteria in the People's War), *Minzhu de Jinchaji* (民主的晉察冀, Democratic Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei) [May 1946].

The twin images entitled *Eliminating the Toxic Bacteria in the People's War* were published in the third special issue of the *Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Pictorial* called *Democratic Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei* (Figure 4-9).⁴⁸ Echoing the film project *Democratic Northeast, Democratic Shanxi-*

⁴⁸ Whether the terming of *Democratic Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei* or that of *Democratic Northeast*, the notion of “democratic” or “democracy” was key to the “mass democracy” as the core issue of the Chinese revolution. As scholars like Li Fangchun have suggested, “democracy” was an “important discursive-historical axis of the process of revolution.” An understanding of “class struggle” should not be limited to political mobilization, rather, land reform has to be considered in connection with the practice of “democracy.” See Fangchun Li. “Mass Democracy,

Chahar-Hebei took the form of an image anthology, in which *Eliminating* images were two in a series of visual accounts of how the masses participated in “building up the democratic life and justice making.”⁴⁹ The two images as shown above reveal two eventful shaming parades, in other words, something so familiar that nobody would oppose its origin in and refreshment of *shizhong*. Encircling crowds, criminal bodies tied with ropes (in the same way as bandits like Xie Wendong), and material elements like dunce caps and placards announcing the conviction are explicitly visible. One distinction from the case of Xie Wendong is the caption that labels the condemned in the images as *dite hanjian* (敵特漢奸, enemies, spies, and traitors) without their actual names. The enemies are not individually identified but given the trope name of “toxic bacteria.” They are turned into an abstract non-human category, through which the rhetoric of purity and danger gets its productive power.⁵⁰ To evoke “class” purity, the enemies as the toxic and the dehumanized have to be cleared out. Then the people’s war is largely displaced and transformed from a war between two opposite parties to one between people and non-people. Two images present two modes of wiping out the “injurious pests” and “bad elements” defined by different types of crime: one as “executing [the accomplices who helped the evildoer] by shooting” (Figure 4-9, *top right*) and the other referring to “punishing the traitor who offered

Class Struggle, and Remolding the Party and Government During the Land Reform Movement in North China.” *Modern China* 38 (4). (2012): 411–45.

⁴⁹ Unnamed author(s). “Xiaomie renmin zhanzheng de dujun,” 消滅人民戰爭的毒菌 (Eliminating the Toxic Bacteria in the People’s War), *Minzhu de Jinchaji* 民主的晉察冀 (Democratic Jin-Cha-Ji), May 1946.

⁵⁰ This is much relatable to Mary Douglas’s well-known work *Purity and Danger* that opens up the concern for purity to interdisciplinary thinking, while many intersections that scholars made between Douglas’ work and critical theory and debates around Douglas’s approach (such as the problem of polarizing the binary between “dirty” and “clean”) remain unresolved. See Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*, London: Routledge, 2000 (first published 1966). For other work related to the rhetoric of purity/purifying I found useful, see Jacques Sémelin. *Purify and Destroy: The Political Uses of Massacre and Genocide*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

material goods to support the enemy” (Figure 4-9, *bottom right*).⁵¹ Nevertheless, both share the fundamental policing framework that honored shameful publicity as part of justice-making (war justice mixed with “class” justice) in the name of people and coded everything as either the people or the (class) enemy.

Wartime *pidou*, in either photojournalistic or cinematic forms, reminds us that China’s Communist cultural production was largely inspired by earlier popular press practices and image-making efforts first seen in the KMT areas. The elimination of *hanjian* (漢奸, traitors) was an integral part of China’s total war (1937–1945). In response to the increasing Japanese threat, in the early 1930s, *hanjian* was resurrected as a popular term that had lost its original and complex historical connotations. Since then, it has been primarily aligned with the Japanese invasion but remains an evolving notion with rich ethnic and political implications since its first recorded use during the Yuan Dynasty.⁵² A series of morally and politically charged laws specifically against *hanjian* (also called anti-*hanjian* laws) were enacted by the KMT’s Nationalist government during the eight-year war.⁵³ Ordinary people were mobilized to search for, identify, and strike down the enemies, those who were likely to betray the nation and the people. As the KMT military, intelligence, police forces, and affiliated patriotic groups executed countless *hanjian*, they utilized *shizhong* as integral to a systematic process of legalizing popular

⁵¹ Unnamed author(s). “Xiaomie renmin zhanzheng de dujun,” 消滅人民戰爭的毒菌 (Eliminating the Toxic Bacteria in the People’s War), *Minzhu de Jinchaji* 民主的晉察冀 (Democratic Jin-Cha-Ji), May 1946.

⁵² For a detailed introduction of *hanjian* as an evolving concept, a historical construct prior to the war of resistance, see Yun Xia. *Down with Traitors: Justice and Nationalism in Wartime China*. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2017), 15-22.

⁵³ Including “Xiuzheng chengzhi hanjian tiaoli” 修正懲治漢奸條例 (*Revised Regulations on Punishing Hanjian*) issued on August 15, 1938; “Fangzhi hanjian jiandie huodong banfa dagang” 防治漢奸間諜活動辦法大綱 (Resolutions on Preventing Hanjian Activities and Espionage) stipulated by the Ministry of Internal Affairs in 1939; and “Chuli hanjian anjian tiaoli” 處理漢奸案件條例 (Regulations on Handling Hanjian Cases) issued on December 6, 1945.

vigilantism in their criminalization and prosecution.⁵⁴ Photography went hand in hand with anti-*hanjian* penal spectacles.



Figure 4-10. The Execution of Traitors, *Kangrihuabao* (抗日畫報, anti-Japanese pictorial) no. 12 [1937]: 15 (left); Such a Consequence [of Their Lives]: Death Penalties to the Traitors after Shizhong on September 19, *Kangrihuabao*, no. 8 [1937]: 3 (right).

Revealing examples are the two images of the *hanjian* execution in 1937 (see Figure 4-10). *Hanjian* are not named in the photographs but, through conceptual and rhetorical grouping, are identified as violators of the Chinese nation and transgressors of the collective well-being. Such photos of the executed, echoing atrocity images of the nameless and those unfolding within the visual economies of Chinese cruelty as discussed earlier, were publicized to deter potential traitors and cleanse the national soul.⁵⁵ The condemned *hanjian*-traitors were usually photographed during the parade and then right before the execution. The popularity of “enemy

⁵⁴ For example, see “Hanjian shatou wuren hanjian yi ying zhuyi” 漢奸殺頭誤認漢奸亦應注意 (Executing Hanjian: those wrongfully recognized as hanjian also need to be cautious), *Shenbao* 申報, August 20 (1937): 6; “Qiangjue hanjian erming” 槍決漢奸二名 (Executing Two Hanjian by Shooting), *Shenbao* 申報, September 28 (1937): 5.

⁵⁵ For example, the photographic practice of hanjian execution was publicized and remediated as part of the mass spectacles of justice based on the unity of the civic and ethnic Chinese identity. See “zhixing sixing hou zhi hanjian” 執行死刑後之漢奸 (The Body of a Traitor after being Executed), *Dongfangzazhi* 東方雜誌, Vol. 34, no. 13 (1937): 1.

portraits” defined and was defined by the sensationalistic and nationalistic rhetoric as part of the larger mediated spectacle of popular justice. Images of executions mainly legitimized themselves through the statement that “traitors are doomed to die,” buried in which was the dominant logic of mass production of retribution, as discussed in Chapter 3. A list of titles and captions of the images can give us an overview of how justice was morally popularized beyond the anti-*hanjian* laws: “The end of *hanjian*” (漢奸之收場, doomed to death), “betrayal and retribution” (漢奸末路), “This is the fateful consequence of those who betrayed the nation: a batch of *hanjian* executed and *shizhong*-ed [exposed in public]” (出賣民族如斯下場: 被槍決之漢奸一羣暴露示衆), among others.⁵⁶

On the one hand, both the material and stylistic legacies of anti-*hanjian* campaign-style activities and image production from the 1930s and 1940s remained vital. They cultivated the CCP’s wartime *pidou* and its photographic and cinematic encounters. In some way, the criterion of state-directed mass movements against perceived internal enemies in the ensuing decades of the PRC (even across the Taiwan Strait) had roots in both parties’ anti-*hanjian* campaigns (Figure 4-11). On the other hand, the central difference between those anti-*hanjian* cases occurred in the communist-controlled areas during the civil war period and the earlier KMT’s anti-*hanjian* cases resided in the CCP’s effective and controlled use of popular energy and interaction devoted to punishing *hanjian*. Two key elements were involved. One is the organization of mass trials and trial-like occasions as lively performances of justice, out of which wartime *pidou* was born as a massive presence; and the other is the integration of the *hanjian*

⁵⁶ For example, see “Chumai minzu rusi xiachang beiqiangjue zhi hanjian yizhong baolu shizhong” 出賣民族如斯下場:被槍決之漢奸一羣暴露示衆 ([English translation offered in the pictorial itself] A batch of traitors shot and held for exhibition; such is the fate of a traitor) *Kangdi huabao* 抗敵畫報 (Anti-Enemy Pictorial), no. 9 (1937): 11.

label into a catalog of different types and categories of class enemies.⁵⁷ Fundamentally, while the Nationalist government shaped *hanjian* crime as a violation of the nation, the CCP's undertaking was distinctly and fundamentally grounded in the exorcism of class enemies (even if it retained a certain degree of nationalism).



Figure 4-11. The mass trial of Xie Wendong, a photographic version of the scene in the film *Capturing* [see Figure 11, right] (left); Anti-hanjian campaign in 1937 under the Nationalist regime, Gatherings of students in the eliminating-hanjian campaign, Taiyuan), *Zhongguo xuesheng* (中國學生, Chinese students) 7 [1937]: 1 (right).

Linking back to the imagery of bandits in *Capturing Xie Wendong Alive* and particularly in Xie Wendong's case, one might note that a model was shared in dealing with both the bandits and *hanjian*: the so-called mass trials as an assemblage of hybrid and mixed practices, mostly held on a large scale for locally known and widely hated enemies, and audiences filled with their direct victims as highly emotional witnesses. Another film included in *Democratic Northeast*,

⁵⁷ Concerning the elimination of hanjian in the CCP's laws and legal regulations during the wartime, see Hua Ouyang. *Kangzhan shiqi shanganning bianqu chujianfante fazhi yanjiu* 抗戰時期陝甘寧邊區鋤奸反特法制研究 (A Study of the Traitor-elimination and Counter-espionage Legal System in the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region during the Second Sino-Japanese War), (Beijing: Zhongguo zhengfa chubanshe, 2013), 163-70. As for the CCP's anti-hanjian campaign and legal practices with the mass-participatory dimension, one of the most telling examples is the 1938 mass trial of hanjian Jisigong in Yan'an. See Chunqiao Zhang. "Hanjian jisigong women gongshen le ta" 漢奸吉思恭我們公審了他 (Hanjian Jisigong, We Put Him on Trial in Public), *Kangzhan wenyi zhoukan* 抗戰文藝周刊 (Literature and Art Weekly for Resistance of War), Vol. 1, no. 5 (May 21, 1938).

The Great Contributions (1947), features a public trial of KMT spies and *hanjian* altogether, which provides a model and also echoes the trial of the bandits in *Capturing* (Figure 4-12).



Figure 4-12 Scenes of the public trial of *Tewu Hanjian* (spies and traitors). Film stills from *Great Contributions* (偉大的貢獻, 1947) by Wang Decheng and Xu Xiaobing, included in Episode 4 of *Democratic Northeast*.

The documentary indicates that such a model is vaguely located at the intersection of popularized criminal procedure (including legal punishment/persecution) and legally or semi-legally organized popular justice. No clear-cut line was drawn between what was legal and what was not. That being said, the handling of *hanjian* and bandits through spectacular trials and executions in the communist-controlled area set the pattern and dynamics of what flourished and more intensely developed as *pidou* in the decades to come. Indeed, some of the CCP's filmmakers and photographers attended public trials and executions of *hanjian* and war criminals. One NFS cinematographer, Li Guanghui, participated in the filming of a public trial of Japanese war criminals when a gunshot incident took place. On that day, Li witnessed six war criminals and one *peibangde* (陪綁, an individual taken to be executed with other prisoners only for intimidation) executed by shooting on the spot.⁵⁸ *Capturing Xie Wendong Alive* ended up as the very first film production to render the prototype of *pidou* visible. In a way, *Capturing* appeared to resemble the “true crime documentary” genre—a heterogeneous series of individual

⁵⁸ See Guanghui Li. “Wo pai minzhu dongbei de jingli,” 我拍《民主東北》的經歷 (My Experiences of Filmmaking in *Democratic Northeast*). Interview conducted by Yang Xiyan and Chen Baolin. *Hegang wenshi ziliao* 鶴崗文史資料, 135.

texts based on “the current documentary obsession with true crimes” that “share common concerns around the law and how it can be represented, the truth, evidence and miscarriages of justice.”⁵⁹ However, what makes *Capturing* different is its lack of interest in exploring crime scenes or the crime itself, and in something often ambitiously promised in many true crime documentaries: space to question the institution of policing and criminal justice. Carrying guilt as ready-made, *Capturing Xie Wendong Alive* is a self-evident performance of “truth” in action, the mass-participatory aspects of which are given to a cycle of persecution. An ensured cycle of justice is always being done. Overall, the essence of *Capturing*, as part of a larger rhetorical and media network that links the cinema with policing, is already well informed by its own title.

4.5.3 *Wartime Pidou: Making Sense of Fanshen*

To understand wartime *pidou*, *Capturing Xie Wendong* needs to be contextualized among other films in *Democratic Northeast*: in particular, as a type of what I call *cinema of turning over*, or *fanshen* (翻身) films. *Fanshen*, literally “flipping one’s body over,” or “to turn over,” means liberation or emancipation in economic, political, and even cultural terms. One of the most-discussed works on the subject must be William Hinton’s *Fanshen: A Documentary of Revolution in a Chinese Village*.

It meant to throw off superstition and study science, to abolish “word blindness” and learn to read, to cease considering women as chattels and establish equality between the sexes, to do away with appointed village magistrates and replace them with elected councils. It meant to enter a new world.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Stella Bruzzi. “Making a Genre: The Case of the Contemporary True Crime Documentary.” *Law and Humanities* 10, no. 2 (2016): 249-80.

⁶⁰ William Hinton. *Fanshen: A Documentary of Revolution in a Chinese Village*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), vii. For other detailed and in-depth discussions about fanshen, see Brian DeMare. *Land Wars: The Story of China's Agrarian Revolution* (Stanford University Press 2019), 130-57.

Hinton's poetic description helps to envision a popular understanding of Mao's agrarian revolution and yet ends in a view shared with Mao, a justification of class struggle through the peasants' liberation. In other words, *fanshen* was key since it best described and did justice to the foundational logic of how the revolution had transformed rural China.

Similar to the role of *Capturing Xie Wendong* in enacting warfare against class enemies, *fanshen* films involve another group of enemies: the landlords. Three of the *fanshen* films I identify already have the main theme in their titles: *Nongmin Fanshen* (農民翻身, *Peasants' Liberation*, 1947) and *Fanshen Nian* (翻身年, *The Year of Turning Over*, 1947), included in the third episode; and *Fanshen Qu* (翻身曲, *The Repertoire of Fanshen*, 1948), in the sixth episode. Another one is *Weida de gongxian* (偉大的貢獻, *Great Contributions*, 1947), in the fourth episode. What all these four films share is a cinematic pattern related to the Land Reform Movement: (1) filming dramatic scenes of struggle against the landlords as necessary for enacting and performing class justice, (2) adopting "speaking bitterness" (*suku* 訴苦, which I discuss in more details in next section) as a narrative structure, and (3) featuring *fanshen* as something structural that has to be done in a sequential narrative, more precisely, as montage. *Fanshen* was produced and rendered visible in the changing relationship between images, successively, in anything other than one individual image. Whereas the camera caught the landlords unawares, such films exposed their evildoing mainly by some staging and manipulative editing. As Wu Guoying, the editor of *The Repertoire of Fanshen* (1948) recalls, the aim of the film was to give visual meaning to the notion of "down with local bandits and redistribute the land," mobilization of the masses, peasants' act of farming the land, and the achievement of a plentiful harvest—through which the manufacture of *fanshen* depended on the editing process

rather than any one single point.⁶¹ The filmmakers were compelled to emphasize the creation of atmosphere for “struggling against the landlords” since this documentary took a relatively complete form enabled by collaboration between multiple cinematographers scattered over many different shooting locations.⁶²



Figure 4-13. The key of fanshen as a process: mugshot-like portrait of the landlord and the scenes of struggle against the landlords in *The Repertoire of Fanshen* [1948].



Figure 4-14. Enacting *class exorcism* and performing justice: scenes of struggle against the same landlord in footage from two different films. Screenshots from *The Year of Turning Over* [1947] and *Peasants' Fanshen* [1947].

To shoot such films, NFS cinematographers technically worked on an alternative kind of battlefield: the front line of land reform for winning popular support. The most revealing crowd

⁶¹ Wu Guoying's oral historical record. “Women zhexie dong youbudong de ren zuoshang jianjitai,” 我們這些又懂又不懂的人坐上剪輯台 (We were These People Who Both Knew a Lot and Knew too Little Working with the Editing Bench). *Shidai yingzhi, xinwenjilu dianying juan* 時代影志: 新聞紀錄電影卷 eds. Li Yu (Beijing: Zhongguo dianying chubanshe, 2018), 50-2.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 52.

shots in these *fanshen* films are usually scenes of struggle against landlords. Notably, on some occasions, the mass gatherings were called *fanshen* meetings and peasants struggles against the landlords were integral to the *fanshen* ritual.⁶³ In some cases, footage of the same event of struggling against landlords or of trials could be included in different films (Figure 4-14). For example, the mugshot-style scenes of Xie Wendong, Zhang Heizi, and Li Huatang, examined in previous sections, were recycled and inserted in *The Year of Turning Over* (1947) as part of its *fanshen* sequence. For the masses who partook in *fanshen*, bandits were those who were fundamentally opposite the peasants as a class; only the downfall of those enemies led to the peasants' struggle, search for justice, and fundamental liberation. In this way, these films enjoyed the flexibility of organizing and reorganizing footage as currency for new and various purposes. A fluid, living archive was unfolding within the large filmic corpus of *Democratic Northeast* in its own right.⁶⁴ Through montage, the mutual references between films in *Democratic Northeast* reinforce the significance and iconicity of certain scenes of struggle against the landlords, as well as certain ways of staging.

The presence and participation of filmmakers among the masses were crucial to the process of justice-making that *fanshen* films and *Capturing Xie Wen Dong Alive* sought to engage. Those NFS filmmakers, basically cinematographers, attended a variety of *pidou*, including both struggling-against-the-landlord gatherings with local peasants and speaking bitterness meetings in the PLA, to archive “first-hand images of class struggle” and put the

⁶³ For example, one of the eventful gatherings recorded in *Capturing Xie Wendong Alive* is such a meeting that was given a title with “fanshen” in it. (“kongsu tanbei fanshen dahui” 控訴坦白翻身大會). There were more in the CCP’s wartime pictorials.

⁶⁴ *Democratic Northeast* also recycles previous footage produced before the establishment of Northeast Film Studio. See Daoxin Li. “Dongying zhichu guojia dianying de mengya,” 東影之初: 國家電影的萌芽 (The Beginning of Northeast Film Studio as a Conceiving of National Cinema). *Dianying yishu* 電影藝術 (Film Art), no. 1 (2010): 41.

landlords on the spot.⁶⁵ Their experiences of working in the field, with the peasants, and through the camera as a weapon gave them the opportunity to coproduce *fanshen* as a set of sequential acts together with local communities. Jiang Yunchuan, one of those filmmakers, attributed his later work on the significant documentary *Great Land Reform* (1953), which depicts the continued Land Reform of the early PRC years, to his work experiences at Northeast Film Studio.⁶⁶ Xu Xiaobing, the cinematographer-director of *Capturing Xie Wendong Alive* (1947), also participated in the making of *fanshen* films such as *Peasants' Fanshen* (1947) and *Great Contribution* (1947). In many cases, Xu at once filmed footage and took photographs (not in the usual way film crews intentionally created production stills, but technically similar) on location, which usually offered a double archival record of *fanshen* and struggle-against-the-landlord events (see Figure 4-15).



Figure 4-15. A scene of one peasant's struggle against the landlord. Screenshot from *Peasants' Fanshen* [1947] (left); *The Masses Struggle against the Landlords* (群眾鬥地主), photograph of the same event taken by Xu Xiaobing (middle); and *The Poor Peasant Exposing the Landlords on Their Crimes* (貧苦僱農揭發地主罪行), another photograph by Xu Xiaobing (right).

⁶⁵ Guanghui Li. "Wo pai minzhu dongbei de jingli," 我拍《民主東北》的經歷 (My Experiences of Filmmaking in *Democratic Northeast*). Interview conducted by Yang Xiyan and Chen Baolin. *Hegang wenshi ziliao* 鶴崗文史資料, 136.

⁶⁶ Yunchuan Jiang. "Zai dang de huaibao zhong chengzhang," 在黨的懷抱中成長 (Growing up, caught in the Party's Embrace). *Jiefangqu de dianying* 解放區的電影 (Cinema in the Liberated Area), (Beijing: Zhongguo dianying chubanshe, 1962), 26-8.

Furthermore, periodic serialized screenings and circulation of these films facilitated communication and interactional responses. Different episodes of *Democratic Northeast* were screened widely in different locations as a way of further publicizing and modeling the peasants' major part in accusing, judging, and struggling against the landlords and other enemies.⁶⁷ Certain responses from the filmed peasants themselves or the general audiences allowed the filmmakers to make adjustments or deploy new footage accordingly, perhaps for another *fanshen* film in later episodes.⁶⁸ *Fanshen* became an ongoing process of making, remaking, and perception, composed of different cinematic fragments and occasional moments. After 1949, *Democratic Northeast* was also distributed and circulated outside Mao's China. A few episodes were brought to Hong Kong, Macao, and other non-PRC areas; the first two episodes, including *Capturing Xie Wendong Alive*, were sent to the Prague International Youth Film Festival. The entire eighth episode, which included the *fanshen* film *Peasants' Fanshen* (1947), was made to intentionally appeal to international audiences and circulated in the Soviet Union, and a few screenings of the film were arranged in North Korea.⁶⁹ The cinematic construction of *fanshen* in *Democratic*

⁶⁷ For example, the NFS leader Yuan Muzhi assigned Zhai Chao who worked in the sound recording department to organize local screenings of *Democratic Northeast* in Changchun. Those screenings lasted for a week, much welcomed by local mass audiences. See Chang Hu. *Xinzhongguo dianying de yaolan* 新中國電影的搖籃 (The Cradle of New PRC Cinema). (Changchun: Jilinwenshi chubanshe, 1986), 55-7; Weijin Gao. "Zhongguo xinwen jilu dianyingshi." 東北電影製片廠、民主東北及解放戰爭中的新聞攝影隊 (The Newsreel Cinematographers' Team in Northeast Film Studio, *Democratic Northeast*, and the Chinese Civil War). *Zhongguo xinwen jilu dianyingshi* 中國新聞紀錄電影史 (History of Chinese Newsreel and Documentary Cinema). (Beijing: Shijie tushu chubanshe, 2013), 67-76.

⁶⁸ Guanghui Li. "Wo pai minzhu dongbei de jingli," 我拍《民主東北》的經歷 (My Experiences of Filmmaking in *Democratic Northeast*). Interview conducted by Yang Xiyan and Chen Baolin. *Hegang wenshi ziliao* 鶴崗文史資料, 133-40.

⁶⁹ Additionally, *Democratic Northeast* was released in Macao at the end of 1949; one of the short documentaries 東北三年解放戰爭 was sent to the 1950 Karlovy Vary International Film Festival in Czech Republic and won the Documentary Honor award. See Hu Chang. "Minzhu dongbei de shezhi," 《民主東北》的攝影 (Cinematography in *Democratic Northeast*). *Dianying wenxue* 電影文學. No. 6 (1986): 80.

Northeast did not merely embody what class struggle should look like and how the exorcism of landlords worked for the Chinese proletarian masses. Rather, it also expanded as a calling from the newborn socialist state, through international distribution, to be part of a global vision of socialism and class justice.

4.5.4 *Wartime Pidou: Performing Class Trauma*



Figure 4-16. Typical shots of the peasants in scenes of struggle against the landlords. Screenshots from the fanshen film *Peasants' Fanshen* [1947], by Wang Decheng and Xu Xiaobing.

Images of peasants in Xu Xiaobing's photographic and cinematic work, as shown in Figure 4-16, were affiliated with a large category of images that also proliferated in the CCP's wartime pictorials (first during the years of total war and especially during the Civil War, when the CCP's central agenda shifted): portraits of suffering individuals. In one way, the photographic portrait called *Nongmin ku* (農民苦, *Bitterness of the Peasants*) could be displayed alone on a full page (Figure 4-18, *left*); in another way, portraits of individual peasants and child sufferers were compiled and organized in parallel with other images, such as execution images (photograph of nameless beheading, attributed to warlord Fu Zuoyi, Figure 4-18, *right*).⁷⁰

⁷⁰ See "Fu zuoyi zuie taotian," 傅作義罪惡滔天 (The Extreme Crime and Evil of Fu Zuoyi). *Jin-Cha-Ji huabao* 晉察冀畫報 (The Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Pictorial), April 28th, 1948.



Figure 4-17. Xuehuo choushen (血火仇深, Bloody Fire, Deep Hatred), *Jin-Cha-Ji huabao* (晉察冀畫報, The Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Pictorial) 4 [September 1943] (left); Fuchou, Kongsu (復仇控訴, Revenge, Accusation), *Jin-Cha-Ji huabao* (晉察冀畫報, The Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Pictorial) 5 [March 1944] (right).



Figure 4-18. An enlarged portrait of an unnamed peasant on a full page as part of the collection of sufferers' portraits, *Nongmin ku* (農民苦, Bitterness of the Peasants), *Huabei huakan* (華北畫刊, North China Pictorial) October 21, 1948] (left and middle); and the merging of individual sufferers' nongminku portraits and execution images, *Fu zuoyi zuie taotian*, *Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Pictorial*, [April 28, 1948] (Right).

In this case, suffering could be at once individualized and generalized. Without the presence of enemies, atrocities and crimes were exposed through an accumulation of images that set a backward society, namely old China, and an envisioned progressive one in forceful contrast. The

textual captions accompanying the images, in one way or another, tell tales of suffering and made denunciatory claims. Metaphors of blood, fire, waves, storms, and so on manifested their expressive power in imaging a kind of natural law that defined the revolution; the image and the text spoke to each other in emotionally appealing ways. The notions of “evil,” “hatred,” “bitterness,” “revenge,” “retribution,” and “no forgiveness,” were pervasive, on the one hand envisioning retributive justice in the name of the people, and on the other hand echoing the vocabulary of retributive causality that dominated earlier mass cultural production.⁷¹ Popular belief in the inevitability of retribution, as examined in previous chapters, remained vital and even reinforced. However, one big difference essentially lay in the empowering change of upholding justice: immediate retribution, in this life, against enemies could be in the people’s hands. What is called “struggle” in the name of “class” is already part of the process of natural change, as Mao’s report and its visual echo claimed; “upholding justice for heaven” is not only a hero’s mission, but the power of the masses.⁷² Such photojournalistic stories in the pictorials were visual as much as textual, offering a pool of foundational materials for practical uses and references in land reform.

Furthermore, the production of those images, whether photographic or cinematic, engaged one of the key foundations of the CCP’s successful mass mobilization—its capacity to tap into human feelings and emotions. It effectively functioned through well-known practices like *suku* (訴苦, “speaking bitterness”); in Figure 4-8, *suku* appears in the title of that trial-like

⁷¹ See “Nongmin ku,” 農民苦 (bitterness of the peasants), *Huabei huakan* 華北畫刊 (North China Pictorial), October 21st, 1948.

⁷² Basically, class as a schema was used to reorganize human relations in terms of what class was made to mean within the Chinese historical context, which needs to be problematized and deserves further discussion beyond the scope of this chapter.

meeting). Speaking bitterness, in which individuals narrated and spoke about memories of their personal sorrow in public places, was initially adopted as a political technique for inciting villagers to pursue land reform.⁷³ The intent was to evoke and cultivate at once sympathy toward the speaker (*kuzhu*, 苦主, subject of bitterness) and outrage against those who had caused their suffering. As speaking bitterness ran through the fabric of a series of political campaigns and events during the Mao era, it was central to a complex of *pidou* practices and occurred on a variety of scales ranging from face-to-face meetings, group gatherings, communal meetings, and mass rallies to public trials and sentencings. Its meaning in practice was given in the CCP's official dictionary:

訴說自己被階級敵人迫害、剝削的歷史，因而激起別人的階級仇恨，同時也堅定了自己的階級立場，就叫“訴苦”。

Suku means to share an oral personal history of being persecuted and exploited by class enemies for the dual purposes of inspiring class hatred among the audience and reaffirming one's own class standing.⁷⁴

⁷³ For scholarship on *suku* as a technique for shaping political identities, as political movement, and people's daily experience during the land reform, see Feiyu Sun. *Social Suffering and Political Confession: Suku in Modern China*. (Singapore: World Scientific, 2012); Guo Wu. "Speaking Bitterness: Political Education in Land Reform and Military Training under the CCP: 1947-1951." *The Chinese Historical Review* 21, no. 1 (2014): 3-23; Guo Yuhua and Sun Liping. "Suku: yi zhong nongmin guojia guannian xingcheng de zhongjie jizhi" 訴苦:一種農民國家觀念形成的中介機制 (Speaking bitterness: A mediated mechanism for the shaping of the peasants' idea of the state). In *Xin shi xue: duoxueke de tujing* (New historical studies: scenes of interdisciplinary dialogue). Edited by Yang Nianqun, Huang Xingtao, and Mao Dan. (Beijing: Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe, 2003), 505-24; Lifeng Li. "Tugai zhong de suku: yizhong minzhong dongyuan jishu de weiguan fenxi" 土改中的訴苦:一種民眾動員技術的微觀分析 (Speaking bitterness in land reform: a micro analysis of a mass mobilization technique)," *Nanjing Daxue Xuebao (Journal of Nanjing University)*, 44 (5), (2007): 97-109; Guo Yuhua 郭于華. *Shoukuren dejiangshu: jicun lishi yizhong wenming luoji* 受苦人的講述:驢村歷史與一種文明的邏輯 (Narratives of the Sufferers: The History of Ji Village and a Cultural Logic). (Hong Kong: CUHK Press, 2013). There are other works that recognize the importance of speaking, speech act, verbal rhetoric or oral history as a regime of social disciplining ("the regime of oral history") in China, see David Apter and Tony Saich, *Revolutionary Discourse in Mao's Republic*, (Cambridge Mass., 1994), 263-85; Uradyn Bulag, "Can the Subalterns Not Speak? On the Regime of Oral History in Socialist China," *Inner Asia* 12: 1, 2010, 95-111; Alexander Freund. "Long Shadows over New Beginnings? Oral History in Contemporary China." *The Oral History Review* 46, no. 1 (2019): 1-25.

⁷⁴ Beiou Chen. *Renmin xuexi cidian* 人民學習辭典 (Dictionary for People's Study). (Shanghai: Guangyi chubanshe, 1952), 331. Scholars have pointed out rich meanings and employment of speaking bitterness in various cases (understood as "oral performance," "Chinese political confession, or collective confessions on social suffering," "mobilizing instruments," "act of political speech," etc). Beyond the material practices, speaking bitterness has been recognized as a kind of "popular melodramatic moral theater" and "narrative paradigm" in literary, theatrical, and media cultural production. Also see Li Li, "Desires, Bodily Rhetoric and Melodramatic Imagination: Women in the

Personal suffering is drawn into a flow of collective feelings. Shaped by and operating through both sympathy and outrage, speaking bitterness provided safe spaces for those who were previously silenced, namely poor peasants and middle peasants, to speak up and share their memories of “bitterness” in focus group–like settings before fellow villagers. Such gatherings embodied what Susan Buck-Morss points out, the act of “defining the enemy [as] the act that brings the collective into being.”⁷⁵ Practices of speaking bitterness brought the collective of peasants as class subjects into being by building hostility toward an outgroup of class enemies and solidarity among the ingroup of local villagers.



Figure 4-19. *Kuqing yao xiang qinren su* (苦情要向親人訴, [We Must] Speak Bitterness to Our “Family Members”), *North China Pictorial* [August 21, 1948] (left); *Shuoli shensu nongmin de zhengyi douzheng* (說理申訴: 農民的正義鬥爭, Reason and Appeal: The Peasants’ Struggle for Justice), *North China Pictorial* [October 21, 1948] (middle); *Su buwan jiangfei shaosha xueleichou* (訴不完蔣匪燒殺血淚仇, Too Much Hatred in Blood and Tears to Be Cannot Be Spoken), *Jizhonghuabao* (冀中畫報, Middle Hebei Pictorial) 5 [1948]: 1 (right).

Making of Revolutionary Myth in Three Chinese Films of the Seventeen Years,” *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies* 12.1 (June 2020): 54-5; Mary Farquhar and Chris Berry. “Speaking Bitterness: History, Media and Nation in Twentieth Century China.” *Historiography East and West* 2, no. 1 (2004): 116-43; Charlene Makley. “Speaking Bitterness”: Autobiography, History, and Mnemonic Politics on the Sino-Tibetan Frontier. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*. Vol. 47, No. 1 (Jan 2005), 40-78; Aminda Smith, “Remoulding Minds in Postsocialist China: Maoist Reeducation and Twenty-first-century Subjects,” *Postcolonial Studies* 15: 4, 2012, 453–66.

⁷⁵ Susan Buck-Morss. *Dreamworld and Catastrophe: The Passing of Mass Utopia in East and West*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2002, 11.

The late 1940s saw an increasing body of photographic portraits and cinematic images of speaking peasants (either in a one-on-one encounter or among a group; see Figure 4-19), after the monumental *Outline of Chinese Land Law* was promulgated in 1947, marking the beginning of nationwide mobilization for land reform.⁷⁶ The prevalence of speaking bitterness in photojournalistic creation was embodied in a large number of scenes of talking with or to others.⁷⁷ Bitterness had to be spoken to make sense of justice; and speaking out needed to be seen on a massive level. Cameras recorded such moments, in which the key is always the look, gesture, and facial expressions of the speaking subject. What connected those visual elements was the “voiceover” off the frame, in a displaced language of class.⁷⁸ In one photograph, a seventy-five-year-old man called Meng Dinghai, a *fanshen* peasant, talked to the soldiers who

⁷⁶ The CCP’s National Land Conference was held in Xibaipo Village, Hebei Province, from July to September 1947. The conference announced the radical Zhongguo tudifa dagang 中國土地法大綱 (Outline of the Chinese Land Law), which stipulated that all (instead of the excessive part) of landlords’ land and property should be confiscated, that land should be redistributed equally, and that rich peasants should be treated as landlords. *The Land Law* also abolished the exceptions previously given to middle peasants and to the families of martyrs and those in the Communist army. See “Zhongguo tudi fa dagang” 中國土地法大綱 (Outline of the Chinese Land Law) in *Jiefang zhanzheng shiqi tudi gaige wenjian xuanbian* (1945-1949) 解放戰爭時期土地改革文件選編 (1945-1949 年) (Selected Documents on Land Reform during the Period of the Liberation War, 1945–1949), edited by Zhongyong dang’an guan 中央檔案館. (Beijing: Zhonggong zhongyong dangxiao chubanshe, 1981), 85–88.

⁷⁷ For a photographic record, see Jinchaji wenyi yanjiuhui. 晉察冀文藝研究會. *Huabei jiefang zhanzheng* 華北解放戰爭攝影集 (Photographs about The Liberation War in North China). (Shenyang: Liaoning meishu chubanshe, 1993), 94-136. “訴苦運動是一種通過群眾自我教育、提高階級覺悟的最生動、最有效的教育方法..挖苦根、算細賬,進行兩個階級、兩種社會、兩種軍隊的對比教育” (94).

⁷⁸ As mentioned in earlier sections, “class” functioned at the core of the land reform. The process of mass mobilization during the land reform operated at three levels: first, land reform itself, which revolved around the redistribution of resources and was basically interest-oriented; second, class classification and categorization aiming at distinguishing the enemy from “us,” which was a mobilization based on identity politics coded in “class”; and third, the struggle of speaking bitterness, a kind of mobilization based on emotions and affect. For scholarship on the Land Reform and how “class” worked in the process at the time, see Lifeng Li. “Rural Mobilization in the Chinese Communist Revolution: From the Anti-Japanese War to the Chinese Civil War.” *Journal of Modern Chinese History: From the Second World War to the Cold War* 9, no. 1 (2015): 95-116. Another helpful analysis of the mobilization is Jeffrey Javed’s work around “moral mobilization,” namely, a process that drew new social boundaries that “separated out a morally suspect landlord class from the virtuous and oppressed masses”; these moral boundaries became “the basis for ingroup and outgroup collective identities that the state leveraged for future mobilization.” See Jeffrey Javed. “Moral Mobilization: Morality and Mass Violence in the Forging of State Authority after the Chinese Communist Revolution,” 13-4.

had “liberated Taigu county” about his own experiences of suffering caused by the bandits (Figure 18, *left*). For Meng, the soldiers were “like Meng’s family members.”⁷⁹ Speaking bitterness had materially shown its efficiency in “soliciting tales of suffering for mobilizing the masses” through “spectacularizing the [peasant] body in pain.”⁸⁰ In this conversational encounter, the energy of speaking bitterness went beyond the bloodline and produced kinship-like sentiments: class feelings between an old father, who represented the peasants as a class, and two young soldiers, the embodiment of the CCP as a moralized agent for the proletarian masses.

Meanwhile, the hatred and outrage ultimately point to the temporarily absent enemies, the warlords and bandits who had already lost the battle, as well as landlords, who were emerging as the biggest and most visible villains compared to others (particularly Japanese war criminals). Speaking bitterness was a matter of publicity and emotionality, in part fitting into what Christian Sorace terms as “affective sovereignty” generated by the CCP through its ability to “adapt confessional practices to fit its governing needs.”⁸¹ Not necessarily confessional (although some of the speaking bitterness events were labeled *tanbai* [坦白, confession] for its inclusion of the

⁷⁹ “Kuqing yao xiang qinren su,” 苦情要向親人訴 ([We must] speak bitterness to our “family members”), *Huabei huakan* 華北畫刊 (North China Pictorial), August 21st, [1948].

⁸⁰ Feiyu Sun. *Social Suffering and Political Confession: Suku in Modern China*. (Singapore: World Scientific, 2012), 45; Ann Anagnost. *National Past-Times: Narrative, Representation and Power in Modern China* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 18. As for the use of suffering for mobilizing and activist purposes, see Richard Ashby Wilson and Richard D. Brown (eds). *Humanitarianism and Suffering: The Mobilization of Empathy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

⁸¹ Christian Sorace. “Extracting Affect: Televised Cadre Confessions in China.” *Public Culture* 31, no. 1 (2019): 147. Christian Sorace’s notion of “affective sovereignty” is built on Elizabeth Perry’s “emotion work” and Dutton’s “political-affective Flows,” which suggests that the CCP party-state “claims sovereign jurisdiction over people’s emotional life and that the party-state’s sovereignty is revitalized through its extraction of affective energy.” (150). For more works that engage the CCP’s affective approaches, see Elizabeth Perry. “Moving the Masses: Emotion Work in the Chinese Revolution.” *Mobilization* 7, no. 2 (2002): 111–28; Yu Liu. “Maoist Discourse and the Mobilization of Emotions in Revolutionary China.” *Modern China* 36, no. 3 (2010): 329–62; Andrew Mertha. “‘Stressing Out’: Cadre Calibration and Affective Proximity to the CCP in Reform-era China.” *The China Quarterly* 229 (2017): 64–85.

enemies' confessions, Figure 8) on the peasants' end, the speaking bitterness meetings and the images they produced were affectively structured, drawing on the "obscured agency" of a spectrum of negative or undesirable emotions.⁸² As Michael Dutton notes "a more affective approach to the question of the political" applied in the Cultural Revolution, the CCP had experimented with "the channeling of affective flow" in the land reform much earlier, through which the political agenda and ideas could be "intensely felt."⁸³ The principal purpose of speaking bitterness images was, through publicizing, to leverage and communicate emotions (pain, fear, anger, hatred, shame, etc.) among the masses and to sustain collectivities through the mediation of those emotions as "shared." Therefore, the new class identities that accorded with the ideology of class struggle and the working of class exorcism were created and gradually reinforced through the repeated and multi-layered reproduction of images.

By the time of the Chinese civil war, the greatest atrocity was no longer the Japanese imperialist invasion, attack, and torture. Rather, it boiled down to the atrocity of class injustice. While the individual experiences and memories of suffering resulting from the Sino-Japanese war were not actually gone, the potential emergence of *that war* as a collective memory and a cultural trauma had been profoundly inhibited and displaced by the trauma of class struggle in the immediate aftermath of the war.⁸⁴ The substitution of trauma is part of the larger problem of

⁸² I borrow the term "obstructed agency" from Sianne Ugai's work that insightfully sees affects as indexes of social conditions of powerlessness and frustration and holds potential for social critique and action. See Sianne Ugai, *Ugly Feelings*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004). For other useful works in affect studies, see Philip Fisher, *The Vehement Passions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002); Kathleen Stewart, *Ordinary Affects* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007); Ruth Leys, "The Turn to Affect: A Critique," *Critical Inquiry* 37, no. 3 (2011): 434–72; Melissa Gregg and Gregory Seigworth, eds., *The Affect Theory Reader* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010).

⁸³ Michael Dutton. "Cultural Revolution as Method." *The China Quarterly* Vol. 227 (2016): 719.

⁸⁴ Rui Gao. "The Paradoxes of Solidarity: Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity in Mao's China." *Shehui/Society: Chinese Journal of Sociology* 35, no. 3 (2015): 67-94. For other works concerning collective memory and cultural trauma I have benefitted from, see Maurice Halbwachs. *On collective Memory*. Edited and translated by Lewis Coser. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Paul Connerton. *How Societies Remember*. (Cambridge, UK:

memory politics. It helps to explain the long-term disremembrance of the Sino-Japanese War in Mao-era China, especially the puzzling story, as many noticed, of how the Nanking Massacre “all but disappeared” from public view (“only to storm back to prominence in the 1980s and 1990s”).⁸⁵ All in all, “the truth of class antagonism” and the necessity of class exorcism was fruitfully achieved through what Ann Anagnost calls “the language of the body and its pain” as well as the creation of a certain kind of trauma, what may be called class trauma.⁸⁶ Posing a fundamental threat to the collective identity of the proletarian masses, or rather, the Chinese people, class trauma developed into cultural trauma of all and for all.

4.6 DISPLACEMENT OF JUSTICE

I would like to conclude this chapter with an allegorical moment in one film from the *Democratic Northeast* cluster, *Leaving Him to Fight against Chiang Kai-shek* (1948), the only fiction piece in the series and the CCP’s very first narrative film. Based on a real case, the film tells a story of forgiveness and displaced justice. A young PLA soldier accidentally shoot an old villager’s son to death and is put on trial; and yet, during the trial, the old man decides to forgive the soldier because of their shared class identities and “class feelings” (the soldier’s family origin

Cambridge University Press, 1989); Elizabeth Jelin. *State Repression and the Labors of Memory*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003); Jeffrey Alexander, Ron Eyerman, Bernhard Giesen, Neil J. Smelser, and Piotr Sztompka. *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); Hiro Saito. 2006. “Reiterated Commemoration: Hiroshima as Cultural Trauma.” *Sociological Theory* 24:353–376.

⁸⁵ Daqing Yang. “Convergence or Divergence? Recent Historical Writings on the Rape of Nanjing.” *The American Historical Review* 104, no. 3 (1999): 842-865; Daqing Yang. “The Malleable and the Contested: The Nanjing Massacre in Postwar China and Japan.” In *Perilous Memories: The Asia-Pacific War(s)*, edited by T. Fujitani, Geoffrey M. White, and Lisa Yoneyama, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 50-86. Margaret Hillenbrand calls it “secrecy that shrouded the Nanjing Massacre” and offers useful discussion, see Margaret Hillenbrand. *Negative Exposures: Knowing What Not to Know in Contemporary China*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2020), 47-48.

⁸⁶ I found Anagnost’s discussion especially inspiring. See Ann Anagnost. *National Past-Times: Narrative, Representation and Power in Modern China* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 18.

also fits with the class category of poor peasants) and asks for an exemption of the young soldier's death penalty. In the end, the film title best expresses the old man's will to keep the young man alive to win the civil war and achieve fundamental liberation.



Figure 4-20. Alternative *pidou*: the public trial of the young soldier. Screenshots from *Leave Him to Fight against Chiang Kai-shek* [1948].



Figure 4-21. Criminal Justice Displaced with Class Justice as a Greater Justice: the scene of the old peasant's forgiveness as a way of speaking bitterness. Screenshots from *Leave Him to Fight against Chiang Kai-shek* [1948].

Leaving is essentially about displacement and the hierarchy of justice. The most remarkable scene in the film is one in which the public trial of the young “killer” is held within a typical *pidou* setting (see Figure 4-20). The accused is tied up, his head lowered as he stands on the stage; meanwhile, the old man, also on the stage, appears to speak bitterness while pointing at him. A purely visual reading of the scene very possibly drives audiences to misrecognize it as a wartime *pidou* event as discussed throughout this chapter. However, this is a radically different moment when both the accused and the victim turn out to be in the same camp of the greater class war (rather than merely the civil war). Their reconciliation, as shown in the medium two shot (Figure 4-21, *left*), takes place based on their shared class status and suffering. The public

trial becomes a stage on which class trauma is performed through an alternative practice of speaking bitterness, speaking about the suffering of the peasant class as an affective community. While the real condemned man (Chiang Kai-shek, president of the Nationalist Party, KMT), the absolute greatest enemy of the CCP, is absent, he is symbolically put on trial. War justice and criminal justice are merged and must be displaced by a greater justice in the name of class struggle. Justice is served in the sense that class exorcism is much more urgent and important than anything else.

This film was well received and served as perhaps the best example of *translating* justice in terms meaningful to the Chinese populace.⁸⁷ *Leaving* specifically excited the masses and heightened their hatred of the old society and the KMT when the first five episodes of *Democratic Northeast* were screened in the city of Dalian, Liaoning Province.⁸⁸ Films like *Capturing*, *Leaving*, and the *fanshen* films, in tandem with photographic accusations in the CCP's wartime pictorials, functioned pedagogically and criminologically to locate, research, expose, and persecute the class enemies (whether with distinguishing marks or not, whether present or absent) to the public. On the one hand, they meticulously policed the mass viewers and their reaction toward class enemies. On the other hand, they brought filmmakers, photographers, and mass viewers alike close to the actual work of police and served a shared fundamental goal: class exorcism as a public security agenda. As the co-player in the process of criminalization, mass viewers were, both technically and cognitively, induced to conduct

⁸⁷ Weijin Gao. "Zhongguo xinwen jilu dianyingshi," 78. I am indebted to Alexander Hinton's term of "justice in translation" to explore the discourse of justice during and after the wartime. See Alexander Laban Hinton. *The Justice Facade: Trials of Transition in Cambodia*. (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2018).

⁸⁸ Yu Li and Chao Zhai. Zhai Chao's oral historical record. "Ju Xingshan jian dongying," 聚興山建“東影” (Gathering in Xingshan, Building up the Northeast Film Studio). *Shidai yingzhi, xinwenjilu dianying juan* 時代影志: 新聞紀錄電影卷 eds. Li Yu (Beijing: Zhongguo dianying chubanshe, 2018), 202-4.

searches on each other and within themselves lest they mingle with the class enemies. As an emotional collective, they practiced a vigilant mode of watching and participated in the daily performance of class trauma and class justice.

What I call *the look of class exorcism* thus worked in a dual form: the essential visibility of class warfare and the weaponization of looking produced across a variety of *pidou* occasions. To summarize, cine-photographic policing went far beyond identifying or creating the look of class enemies and criminals on-screen and within the photographic frame. Such a kind of policing shaped wartime *pidou* and engaged in an ongoing redefinition of the place of the camera, the filmed or photographed subject, and the mode of participatory (and performative) spectatorship beginning in wartime and toward the foundational decades of the Maoist state.

Chapter 5. MUSEOLOGICAL WARFARE: CINE-EXHIBITION OF THE SOCIALIST EDUCATION MOVEMENT

On July 11, 1965, a young man named Zhang Daocheng wrote in his diary with enthusiasm, about a film screening he had just attended at Xinhua Theater. He had finally been able to watch the film, which he regretting missing when his classmates had seen it together at a temporary exhibition in Shandong half a year before.¹ Produced by Shanghai Science and Education Film Studio in 1965, the film Zhang Daocheng referred to is a documentary called *Buwang jieji ku, yongji xuehai chou* 不忘階級苦，永記血海仇 (*Never Forget Class Bitterness, Forever Remember the Hatred in the Sea of Blood* [1965]), about a Shandong class education exhibition that opened in 1964.² At that time, the class education exhibition was a didactic genre intended for the masses, and visits to the exhibitions were often “ritualistic.”³ Shandong Class Education Exhibition was one such exhibition promoting class education in Shandong province during the Socialist Education Movement 社會主義教育運動 (1962–1966). For Zhang Daocheng, cinema became an archive that *saved* the no-longer-accessible class education exhibition and a reparative medium that ritualistically reconstructed his lost experiences. Zhang

¹ Daocheng Zhang. “Guan dianying buwang jieji ku yongji xuehaichou: yijiu liuwu nian qiye shiyi ri” 觀電影《不忘階級苦，永記血海仇》(Watching the film *Never Forget Class Bitterness, Forever Remember the Hatred in the Sea of Blood*, diary on July 11th, 1965, Sunday), *Shenghuo de langhua*. (Beijing: Shenghuo de langhua. Zhongguo wenshi chubanshe, 2007), 347.

² It was circulated and perceived, as well as has been remembered with another slightly different title: “buwang jieji ku, yongji xuelei chou,” 不忘階級苦，永記血淚仇 (Never Forget Class Bitterness, Forever Remember the Hatred in the Blood and Tears). Multiple accounts from both the 1960s and beyond refer to this film by the “Hatred in the Blood and Tears” version. Both two expressions were widely circulated slogans in various occasions. One of the best know revolutionary songs is called *buwang jieji ku, laoji xueleichou* 不忘階級苦，牢記血淚仇 (Never Forget Class Bitterness, Firmly Remember the Hatred in the Blood and Tears), also very similar to and interchangeable with the film title in people’s daily uses of the term.

³ Denise Ho. *Curating Revolution: Politics on Display in Mao’s China*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 141.

was just one among the countless people who were either allowed to “visit” the exhibition through cinematic experience if they had not had a chance earlier, or to revisit it by watching the documentary on repeated occasions. One group of spectators were villagers in the Nanhanji agricultural production team near Beijing. They also watched *Never Forget Class Bitterness* in 1965 and organized a mass struggle meeting aligned with the screening. According to those Nanhanji participants, the film made the screening space the most powerful site for multiple kinds of *struggle meetings* (*pidou* 批鬥) to penetrate into their daily practice of class struggle.⁴



Figure 5-1 *Never Forget Class Struggle*: Exhibition Catalog of the Shandong provincial class education exhibition, October 1964 (Left); *Never Forget Class Bitterness, Forever Remember the Hatred in the Sea of Blood*, Shanghai Science and Education Film Studio, 1965 (Right).

Questions arise: Why such a film about the exhibition and how did *pidou* work with it? What enabled such forms of *pidou*? Moreover, what was the relationship among exhibition/museum, cinema, and *pidou*? In this chapter, I explore the mutually constitutive dynamics between socialist *zhanlanhui* 展覽會 (exhibition) and cinema vis-à-vis *pidou*. Built on existing studies such as the work of Denise Ho, who insightfully sees the Mao-era exhibitionary culture as key to reflecting and making Chinese socialist revolution, the chapter specifically turns

⁴ Unnamed reporter from *Dianying yishu*. “Yibu jieji jiaoyu de haojiaocai,” *Dianying yishu* 電影藝術 (Film Art). No. 4, 1965, 54.

to the little studied exhibition-cinema dynamics in a cultural movement that celebrated the mass historiographies based on supposedly crowdsourced archiving, collecting, curating, writing, and storytelling since the 1950s.⁵ Through the case study of the 1964 Shandong class education exhibition as intersected with cinematic institution (what I term a “cine-exhibition”), I look into the variety of acts of exposure, denunciation, and struggle that emerged in museum exhibits, film, and other kinds of moving images in 1960s China. The aim of the chapter is to examine how the genre *jieji jiaoyu zhan* 階級教育展 (class education exhibition) lived out its cinematic and transmedia life, transforming familiar phenomena that had not been named in a single unified way, but which consequently, grew into their extreme forms: a complex of *pidou* practices during the decade of the Cultural Revolution. I argue that the operation of what I call *museological warfare* at the center of the phenomena was crucial to the shaping of class struggle in socialist China through *exhibition making*; “class struggle” was thus constructed as a memory project aimed at convincing people of the misery of the old society and the legitimacy of the new Maoist regime. Museological warfare points to the in-combat, networked mode of mass cultural production that performed the musealization of class struggle. Put it in a different way, museological modes of thinking and doing were enacted into media warfare against class enemies, rhetorically and practically. Recognizing these practices as museological warfare helps

⁵ See Ho, 2018. Other works about museums and exhibition practices in China I have benefitted from include Jie Li. *The past Is Not like Smoke: A Memory Museum of the Maoist Era (1949–1976)*, unpublished dissertation, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, 2010); Chen Yunqian. “Local Exhibitions and the Molding of Revolutionary Memory (1927-1949).” *Chinese Studies in History*. 47, No. 1 (2013): 29-52; Kirk A. Denton. *Exhibiting the Past: Historical Memory and the Politics of Museums in Postsocialist China*. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2014); Amy Barnes. *Museum Representations of Maoist China: From Cultural Revolution to Commie Kitsch*. (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2014; Denise Ho and Jie Li. “From Landlord Manor to Red Memorabilia: Reincarnations of a Chinese Museum Town.” *Modern China* 42 (1) (2016): 3–37; Diana Lary, Mark R Frost, Daniel Schumacher, and Edward Vickers. “Memory Times, Memory Places: Public and Private Commemoration of War in China.” in *Remembering Asia’s World War Two*, Vol. 1. (Routledge, 2019), 56-71; Kir A. Denton, “Can Private Museums Offer Space for Alternative History? The Red Era Series at the Jianchuan Museum Cluster.” In *Popular Memories of the Mao Era*, Popular Memories of the Mao Era, edited by Sebastian Veg. Hong Kong University Press, 2019, 80-111.

us to rethink the functioning of pidou: rather than occurring only within site-specific spatial arrangements, pidou is essentially an unfolding system of transmedia practices.

In what follows, my discussion is divided into four parts. First, I situate the Mao-era case of cine-exhibition within a global history of the interaction between cinema and museums/exhibitions. I also place it in conversation with the ongoing convergence between cinema/media studies and museum studies. Second, I contextualize the cine-exhibition project in relation to the Socialist Education Movement during which exhibitions and exhibition-making proliferated; and, more specifically, around class education exhibitions as a genre and the eventful practice of Shandong class education exhibition, as I discuss in the third section. Configured in three aspects, the final part analyzes how the exhibition and cinema defined each other and performed jointly.

5.1 CINEMA AND/AS EXHIBITION IN HISTORY

The mutual embrace between cinema and museum/exhibition is nothing novel and has been increasingly recognized as a matter of conceptual, institutional, and disciplinary interplay. Cinema has haunted the corridors of museums and exhibition halls since its earliest invention.⁶ Museums (or rather, a broader category of exhibitions, including world fairs, great exhibits, and amusement parks) enjoy a rich history of appearances in films across the globe. Cinematic visions of world's fairs are as old as the cinematic medium itself. World's fairs were captured in early actualities such as *A Trip around the Pan-American Exposition* (1901) and *Mob Outside*

⁶ For example, Dimitrios Latsis notes the ignored history of exhibits and displays in galleries and museums of all kinds that showcased cinema as a visual technology well before the 1930s. See Dimitrios Latsis. "The Beginnings of Cinema as a Museum Exhibit: The Cases of the Smithsonian Institution and the Science Museum in London." *Moving Image: The Journal of the Association of Moving Image Archivists* 16, No. 1 (2016): 17-34. For the interplay between museums and early visual culture in a broader sense, see Mark B. Sandberg. *Living Pictures, Missing Persons: Mannequins, Museums, and Modernity*. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2003).

the Temple of Music at the Pan-American Exposition (1901). In films like *The Egyptian Mummy* (1914) by Lee Beggs, or *A Criminal's Diary* (1916) by Alexander Christian, the museum already began to occur as an unusual and even strange space with symbolic significance far beyond the places of daily life. The imagery of exhibitions/museums was not lost in socialist cinema. Films such as *At the All-Union Agricultural Exhibition* (1940) to *Posetitel Muzeya* (1989) [A Visitor to a Museum] are examples of two concurrent “exhibitions,” the exhibition of one medium within another. Not to mention classics like *Vertigo* (1958) and popular films, including *Bringing up Baby* (1938), *Dressed to Kill* (1980), *Stealing Rembrandt* (2003), and *Musée haut, Musée bas* (2008). Among those films that feature a museum or an exhibition event, whether drama or documentary, few move beyond cinematic representations of the museum or exhibition space as a setting or a site of dramatic struggle. Even fewer have produced the exhibition space as a struggle itself, as *Never Forget Class Bitterness* does, in an enduring and performative interaction with the physical museum and its audiences.

An increasing body of cinematic images of museums have been made more recently: *Museum Hours* (2012), *The New Rijksmuseum* (2013), *Vatican Museums 3D* (2014), *The Great Museum* (2014), *National Gallery* (2014), *Francofonia* (2015), *The Square* (2017), *Museo* (2018), and so forth. Some of these films operate within the confines of the documentary genre: they are site-specific, and they basically eschew conventional devices such as formal “talking head” interviews, voiceover narration, and non-diegetic sound. For some others, the museum is a place not only for multimedia display and audiovisual exhibition but also for filmmaking—a relational and experimental space to explore new cinematic styles. Tsai Ming-liang’s *Stray Dogs at the Museum* (2016) and Russian auteur Alexander Sokurov’s “museum trilogy” (including *Elegy of a Voyage* [2001], *Russian Ark* [2002], and *Francofonia* [2016]),

which draw on hybrid forms at the interstice of narrative, documentary, and gallery film, stand out, bringing a welcome emphasis on discussions around “museum film” or “museological cinema.”⁷ Placed in conversation with this lineup of films, *Never Forget Class Bitterness* is a hybrid case that fuses the categories of narrative, art, and documentary film (even docudrama) concerning museums. It creates interaction through exhibitions, which allows for conceptual remapping and thought experiment. Based on these considerations, can we understand an ideologically charged film of the Mao era as a museological project and a potential antecedent of today’s participatory media largely assumed to be defined by digitality?

Connections of cinema (as media, as space, as institution, and as idea) to the institutional, spatial and conceptual contexts of the museum have primarily been seen as an issue of contemporality. One of the significant approaches at the intersection between cinema studies and museology may be seen as a cine-museological one, through which film historians, media scholars, museum professionals, and archivists seek to make sense of a growing convergence between two trends. One trend is shown in recent exhibition and curatorial practices that have increased the visibility of film and moving images on display, both within the museum space and as objects in their own right. The other one points to an ongoing and evolving scholarly interest in the spaces of film exhibition and preservation and the “death” or the futures of cinema.⁸ Part

⁷ Alex Munt. “Alexander Sokurov’s Francofonia: Museum Studies.” *Senses of Cinema*, no. 86 (2018); Jordi Balló and Ivan Pintor Iranzo. “Exhibition Cinema: A Crossroads between the Cinema and the Museum in Contemporary Spanish Filmmaking.” *Hispanic Research Journal* 15, No. 1 (2014): 35-48. For a case study of filmmaking and the museum, see David Pascoe. *Peter Greenaway: Museums and Moving Images* (London: Reaktion, 1997).

⁸ About cinema and museum (mainly about the migration of moving images into museums and art exhibitions), see John Kuiper, “Film as Museum Object,” *Cinema Journal* 24:4 (Summer 1985), 39-42; Paolo Cherchi Usai. “Film as an Art Object” in *Preserve Then Show*. Dan Nissen, Lisbeth Richter Larsen, Thomas C. Christensen, and Jesper Stub Johnsen eds. (Copenhagen: Danish Film Institute, 2002); Maeve Connolly. *The Place of Artists’ Cinema: Space, Site and Screen* (London: Intellect, 2009); Christine Sprengler. *Hitchcock and Contemporary Art*. (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Angela Dalle Vacche. *Film, Art, New Media: Museum without Walls?* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Giuliana Bruno. *Surface: Matters of Aesthetics, Materiality, and Media*. (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 2014); Andrew V. Uroskie. *Between the Black Box and the White Cube: Expanded Cinema and Postwar Art*. (University of Chicago

of the convergence shows that cinema museums and film archives have attracted special attention (e.g., the Museum of Modern Art's Film Library, Henri Langlois's Cinémathèque Française, and the Nederlands Filmmuseum).⁹ In sum, a group of studies have either critically reflected on the intersection between cinema and museum/exhibition—two territories that are being transformed—or developed refreshing inquiries into museum encounters imagined in films.¹⁰ For both groups, however, little attention is given to non-Euro-American cases or historical cases outside of the digital context and contemporary moving image art.¹¹

Rather than limit our consideration to the obvious contemporary examples of cinema and museum, it is more vital to search for historical precursors that have informed or problematized what is at stake in current exhibition practices that defy the binary cinema–museum divides.

Press, 2014); Peter M. McIsaac and Gabriele Mueller. *Exhibiting the German Past: Museums, Film, and Musealization*. (Toronto [Ontario]; Buffalo [New York]: University of Toronto Press, 2015); Jenny Chamarette. “Visible and Invisible Institutions: Cinema in the French Art Museum. Museum Media,” in *The International Handbooks of Museum Studies*. Sharon Macdonald, Helen Rees Leahy and Credo Reference eds. (Chichester, West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons, 2015), 95-119. For recent scholarship about moving-images installations in non-artistic museums, see Elisa Mandelli. *The Museum as a Cinematic Space: The Display of Moving Images in Exhibitions*. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019).

⁹ Haidee Wasson. *Museum Movies: The Museum of Modern Art and the Birth of Art Cinema*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); Emily Hall and Cassandra Heliezer, *Still Moving: The Film and Media Collections of the Museum of Modern Art* (New York: MOMA, 2006); Bregt G. Lameris. *Film Museum Practice and Film Historiography: The Case of the Nedelands Filmmuseum (1946-2000)*. (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2017). Also, alongside the work of museums of cinema, film historians and archivists have also sought to reconstruct filmgoing experience via the paratextual world of cinema and extra-filmic paraphernalia of film: posters, flyers, merchandising, costumes, and props.

¹⁰ For the first group, see Giuliana Bruno. “Sites of Screening: Cinema, Museum, and the Art of Projection.” *The Moving Eye: Film, Television, Architecture, Visual Art, and the Modern*. edited by Edward Dimendberg. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2019); for images of the museum in narrative films, see Kimberley Louagie, “‘It Belongs in a Museum’: The Image of Museums in American Film, 1985-1995,” *Journal of American Culture* 19:4, 41-50; Janice Baker. *Sentient Relics: Museums and Cinematic Affect*. (London; New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2017). Brigitte Peucker. *The Material Image: Art and the Real in Film* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006); Norbert M. Schmitz. “Sees Beauty-Representations of the Museum in Classic Cinema,” in *Images of the Art Museum: Connecting Gaze and Discourse in the History of Museology*. edited by Eva-Maria Troelenberg and Melania Savino. (Berlin; Boston: De Gruyter, 2017), 289-300.

¹¹ There are a few exceptions (that I have benefitted from), see Alison Griffiths. *Shivers down Your Spine: Cinema, Museums, and the Immersive View*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008). Part of Elisa Mandelli's book deals with the historical practices of how film was displayed in exhibitions in the pre-digital context. See Mandelli, 2019.

Because it features a class education exhibition, *Never Forget Class Bitterness* holds potential not merely to enrich our understanding of socialist cultural and media production, but also to help us formulate new ways of thinking about cinema and museum that cannot be explained within existing theories and dominant conceptual frameworks. To that end, the chapter rethinks the mutual embrace and dynamics between cinema and museum through such a historically specific case of *cine-exhibition*—the intersection between a temporary exhibition and an alternative “museum film” in the Mao era—that exemplifies what I call *museological warfare*.¹² Ultimately driven by the project of class struggle as a war against class enemies, the relationships and relevance of cinema to museum in this case can be categorized in the following ways:

- filming in the museum/gallery space; the museum as a site of both class struggle and filmmaking
- cinema as archive of the exhibition, an archival account of the masses’ experience of the museum
- cinema as architectural exploration and performance of the museum’s spaces and other spaces (e.g., sites of mass struggle meetings, pidou)
- cinema as virtual museum of class struggle (documenting the exhibition and its objects through film; creating portable exhibitions through the cinematic medium and film-related prints)
- cinema as exhibition/curatorial practice (film as a virtual pidou; film screening as a physical pidou)
- cinema as museology, a mode of thinking about and practicing the politics of collecting, curating, and displaying

Inevitably, these relationships overlap with one another, and with other media and art forms of the Mao era. To understand how such relationships work, we must be clear about the historical and political context.

¹² Overall, for me, *the museological warfare* helps to show a conceptual move away from the “mobilization of exhibitions” (usually attached to the dominant notion of propaganda for thinking about socialist media) to the “weaponization of museums, exhibition practices, and museological inquiries,” which opens up space for breaking down the binary thinking (either top-down or bottom-up approaches to socialist or leftist cultural production).

5.2 THE MUSEALIZATION OF CLASS STRUGGLE IN THE 1960S

The Shandong Class Education Exhibition was a product of the Socialist Education Movement (社會主義教育運動) that had just gotten underway with “a heightened and intensified propaganda on class” and a proliferation of “class education” in spectacular forms like exhibitions and public displays.¹³ As historians have noted, the Socialist Education Movement cannot be treated solely as a political campaign with anti-bureaucratic focus beginning in 1962.¹⁴ Instead, it should be understood within a longer history and in terms of broader ideological concerns beyond the much discussed economic, organizational, and institutional ones, such as those involved in Four Cleanups (四清運動).¹⁵ The scope of the Socialist Education Movement was “at once specific and broadly ideological,” since the movement began with issues of official corruption and concerns about the threat of revisionist

¹³ The Socialist Education Movement (1962-1966) has been readily considered as “a precursor to the Chinese Cultural Revolution.” See Ho, 144. The origin of the Socialist Education Movement has been debatable. The core of the classist ideology Mao articulated and strengthened at the time was mainly about the necessary and urgent recognition of “[the continuation of] classes for a long time,” “the existence of a struggle of class against class” and “the possibilities of the restoration of reactionary classes.” See Mao Zedong, *Chairman Mao Talks to the People: Talks and Letters, 1956-1971*. Edited by Stuart R. Schram. (New York: Pantheon, 1974), 189.

¹⁴ For scholarship that shares this view, see Guo Wu. “Recalling Bitterness: Historiography, Memory, and Myth in Maoist China.” *Twentieth-Century China* 39, No. 3 (2014): 245-68.

¹⁵ The “Four Cleanups” is the term used during the socialist education movement—namely, cleaning things up in the political, economic, organizational and ideological fields—carried out between 1963 and May 1966 in rural areas and a small number of urban factories, schools, and other enterprises. Examples of the earlier works about the Socialist Education Movement and the Four Cleanups include Jacques Guillermaz and Anne Destenay. “The Socialist Education Movement,” in *The Chinese Communist Party in Power, 1949-1976*. (Routledge, 1972), 343-58; Richard Baum, *Prelude to Revolution: Mao, the Party, and the Peasant Question, 1962-1966* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975); Jeremy Brown. “Burning the Grassroots: Chen Boda and the Four Cleanups in Suburban Tianjin.” *The Copenhagen Journal of Asian Studies* 26, No. 1 (2008): 50; Henrietta Harrison. “Chinese Catholic Visionaries and the Socialist Education Movement in Shanxi (1963-65).” *The Catholic Historical Review* 100, no. 4 (2014): 748-770. Unlike most works about the Four Cleanups that focus on the economic and organizational dimensions, Richard Madsen points out the importance of the political rituals and cultural systems in the Four Cleanups movement, including both the small and big levels of Four Cleanups (such as the “three together” practice in Chen Village); one of the “mean-filled actions” he talks about is struggle sessions in varying forms (pidou). See Richard Madsen. *Morality and Power in a Chinese Village* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1984), 84-95.

forces from powerholders, but it essentially ended up attacking both old and new class enemies in political and cultural terms.¹⁶ The broader context of the whole movement of reenacting and “continuing” class struggle dates back to the 1950s. The key moment was marked by the radicalization of historiography, an upsurge of *shixue geming* 史學革命 (historiographic revolution) within Chinese academia.¹⁷ As part of the historiographic revolution, young students in history departments of the universities played a major role in experimental and practical forms of historical writing. What is noteworthy but readily neglected in this materialistic historiographic turn is the rise of mass-produced writings of *sanshi* 三史 (three histories), including family history (家史), village history (村史), and commune history (社史) or in some cases, *wushi* 五史 (five histories), which also encompassed factory history (廠史) and street history (街史) at the height of the Great Leap Forward (大躍進).¹⁸ A number of publications were circulated as instructive readings and practical manuals for people’s reference. One example was a book called *Zenyang xie gongchang shi* 怎樣寫工廠史 (*How to Write the History*

¹⁶ Ho, 2018, 143-144.”

¹⁷ The key of *shixue geming* was an emphasis on the way how historical research should meet the ideological needs and foreground class struggle. See Huaiying Li, *Reinventing Modern China: Imagination and Authenticity in Chinese Historical Writing* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2013), 132-3.

¹⁸ There were different ways of naming those “histories.” (in other cases, also called 村史, 廠史, 社史, 老工人家史 and 老貧下中農家史). For example, see Shiqian Xu. “Dao laodong zhong qu he laodong renmin yiqi xie gongnongshang xuebing de lishi” 到勞動中去和勞動人民一起寫工農商學兵的歷史 (Going to the laboring people to write with them the histories of workers, peasants, businessmen, students and PLA soldiers). *Guangming ribao*, October 27th, 1958. For the case of factory history, see Group of students in History Department at Peking University. “Qinghe zhini chang wushinian” 清河製呢廠五十年 (History of Qinghe nylon factory in fifty years), 1958; concerning the review of the factory history, see Bozan Jian. 翦伯讚. “Lishixue de xinfangxiang xin daolu jieshao qinghe zhini chang wushinian,” 歷史學的新方向新道路: 介紹《清河制呢廠五十年》 (The new direction and path of History Studies: An Introduction of the history of Qinghe nylon factory in fifty years). *Renmin ribao*. December 4th, 1958. It was originally printed in *Dushu zazhi* Vol.21, 1958, 35-6.

of a Factory) published in 1958.¹⁹ Such mass historiographies were not formally and systematically promoted until May 10, 1963, when Mao Zedong issued a report about the Socialist Education Movement from Northeast Bureau of the central committee and Henan province with the instruction: “it is generally feasible to educate the young generation of the masses through writing the village history, family history, commune history, and factory history.”²⁰ Since then, the writing of mass historiographies was known as *sishi yundong* 四史運動 (Four Histories Campaign).²¹ In conjunction with the Four Histories, other practices, such as oral storytelling, folk songs, and communal rituals and performances (e.g. recalling-bitterness meals) were encouraged.

As part of the larger cultural movement of “writing, speaking, and staging history from the bottom up” through the 1950s and 1960s, Four Histories activities set the foundation for

¹⁹ Zhongguo zuojia xiehui Tianjin fenhui 中國作協天津分會. *Zenyang xie gongchang shi* 怎樣寫工廠史 (how to write the history of a factory). Baihuawenyi chubanshe, 1958. The first wave of factory-history writing emerged in the Chinese literary field, influenced by Soviet writers such as Maxim Gorky (1868-1936) who initiated the series *A History of Factories and Foundries* in September 1931 (After Gorky announced the project, a publishing house with the same name was founded to produce such publications). For other related books at the time in China, see Boji Jiang. “Xiechu zuixin zuimei de gongchangshi,” (Write the best and most stunning history of factories) 寫出最好最美的工廠史. *Wenyibao* 文藝報, no. 22, 1958.

²⁰ Zedong Mao. *Jianguo yilai maozedong wengao* Vol. 10. (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe), 1996, 297. Mao’s original words: 建國以來毛澤東文稿用村史、家史、社史、廠史的方法教育青年群眾這件事，是普遍可行的。Concerning the contemporary memoir account about the role of Four Histories practices in the Four Cleanups, see Youfu Zhao. “Nongcun siqing yundong zhong xiecheng,” 農村“四清”運動中寫“四史”的成效和啟示 (The effect and inspiration of writing Four Histories in the Four Cleanups campaign in rural areas). *Beijing dangshi*. No.6, 2006, 52-3. Zhao was one of the cadres who were in charge of the Four Cleanups in the rural areas near Beijing.

²¹ For the Four Histories campaign at the time, see Youfu Zhao and Li Kai. “Yaowei sishi de bianxie kailuomingdao.” 要為四史的編寫和研究開鑼鳴道 ([We must] pave way for the editing, writing, and research about Four Histories), *Renminribao*. December 8th, 1964, 5; Shungbi Su. “Beijing lishi xuehui zuotan cunshi taolun le bianxie cunshi de yi yi fangfa neirong tili deng wenti” 北京歷史學會座談村史討論了編寫村史的意義方法內容體例等問題 (A Record of the Beijing History Society meeting on the meaning, methods, contents and style of writing and editing village histories), *Beijingribao*, January 18th, 1964, 3; Editorial. “Zhongshi bianxie sishi de gongzuo.” 重視四史的編寫工作 ([We must] emphasize the editing and writing of Four Histories), *Renminribao*, October 26th, 1965.

practices of collecting needed for the class education exhibition.²² In response to Mao's call for continuing class struggle, the local museums and exhibition halls were committed to dealing with the collections of individual experiences and family histories teased out by work teams, who structured them into exhibitable stories and items, and then put them on display. The aim was to convince and educate the masses, particularly the young, about the misery in Old China and the legitimacy of the new Maoist state. The Four Histories-style artifacts were produced on a massive level, contributing to all three main duties of museums, and, more specifically, socialist class education exhibitions: collecting (e.g., acquiring, storing, researching, reworking), exhibiting, and communicating. Artifacts and stories were collected as the main source materials for making such exhibitions, but exhibitions were not the only way to keep them alive. Multiple kinds of "histories" continued to be circulated and reproduced in various media.

As the socialist class education movement developed, class struggle was musealized *through* and *within* a media network that enjoyed the reciprocity between exhibitions and print culture. A large number of Four Histories texts had to be presentable and exhibitable to be printed. They were published either as one individual case in the form of booklet and illustrated storybook, or as multiple pieces compiled into a book that fitted into the category of "socialist class education readings." In either case, the publications used the "incriminating catalog" form. For example, a book entitled *Kegu chou* (literally, bone-inserted hatred) brings together twelve cases of personal life histories about "the evil of capitalists." All the included pieces seem to be a product of an oral history project guided by the Four Histories style, since credit for each piece goes to two individuals, one as author of the testimonial account and the other as

²² For the larger cultural movement around "recalling bitterness" and "writing, speaking, and staging history from the bottom up", see Guo Wu. "Recalling Bitterness: Historiography, Memory, and Myth in Maoist China." *Twentieth-Century China* 39, No. 3 (2014): 245-68.

editor/collector.²³ Some Four Histories publications contain photographs and pictures of objects and “incriminating evidence” related to the stories, thus resembling an exhibition catalog or a portable “paper museum.” This style is exemplified in *The Living King of Hell Shao Zhancheng*, a 46-page book of five chapters (Figure 5-2), which is a microhistorical “museum” shaped by a collection of cases all about “the criminal history of one evil landlord.”²⁴

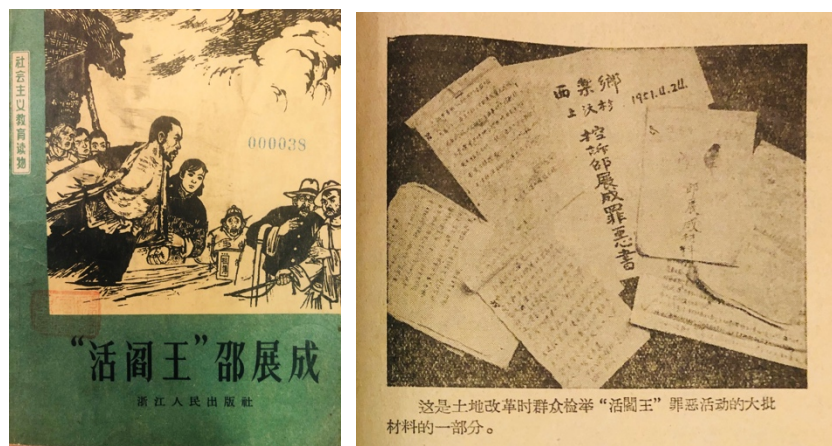


Figure 5-2 Cover of *The Living King of Hell, Shao Zhancheng*; one of the photographs included in the book shows the mass-produced materials for reporting Shao’s crime, from *Huo yanwang shaozhancheng* (The Living King of Hell Shao Zhancheng), 1964, 41.

As stated in its preface, the book is only one of a series of socialist class education readings that cover: family histories, country histories, and criminal histories of class enemies.²⁵ The book is mass-produced and claimed to “take an approach to writing and editing based on *qunzhong de ziwojiaoyu* 群眾的自我教育 (the self-education of the masses).”²⁶ Originally published in

²³ Baihua wenyi bianjibu editorial. *Kegu chou* 刻骨仇: 資產階級的罪惡 (Bone-inserted Hatred: the Evils of the Capitalists), (Tianjin: Baihuawenyichubanshe, 1965). For a study about the oral-historical (without being named as such at the time) approaches to mass writing/storytelling in the socialist era, see Uradyn E. Bulag. “Can the Subalterns Not Speak? On the Regime of Oral History in Socialist China.” *Inner Asia* 12, No. 1 (2010): 95-111.

²⁴ She Cai eds. *Huo yanwang shaozhancheng* 活閻王邵展成 (The Living King of Hell Shao Zhancheng), (Hangzhou: zhejiangrenminchubanshe, 1964), preface.

²⁵ She Cai eds. *Huo yanwang shaozhancheng* 活閻王邵展成 (The Living King of Hell Shao Zhancheng), (Hangzhou: zhejiangrenminchubanshe, 1964).

²⁶ Ibid, note from the publisher.

November 1963, the book was reprinted four times, and its fourth edition had a print run of 235,000 copies in 1965.²⁷ It is important to note that popular texts such as *The Living King of Hell Shao Zhancheng* are usually beyond the purview of classic literary studies, given that they were born of the grey area at the intersection of the journalistic and the literary. They play with the mixing of fact and invention. Indeed, from the beginning, Four Histories writings emerged as artifacts that merged or transformed multiple genres: scholarly writing, historiography, memoir, (journalistic or legal) investigation, ethnography, folklore (the new *gushi* genre), reportage, and so forth.²⁸ With a set of visual elements, *Living King of Hell* further blurs the border between exhibition text/catalog and a group of other forms, including illustrated storybook, pictorial folktale, biography, and crime report. On the one hand, the inclusion of photographic records of Shao's life and crimes was intended to popularize class education by targeting young people and also a wider audience with limited literacy. On the other hand, involving the rich visual (and also literary) details, such as denunciatory materials and personal files, testifies to the criminalization of the landlord within a popular cultural realm. For such a printed microcosm of class education exhibitions, both educational and entertainment values were intersected and fulfilled.

In turn, class education exhibitions, particularly local exhibitions drawing on site-specific cases, communicated with their target audiences through creating popular prints. One of the most famous cases is the Liu Wencai landlord courtyard exhibition located at Dayi county in Sichuan province. A booklet entitled *Evil Courtyard of the Landlord*, produced by the exhibition, was

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ziyang You examines the New *Gushi* movement during the Socialist Education Movement. The revolutionary *gushi*- or *xin gushi*-telling events were carried out in the countryside of Shanghai starting as early as 1958, but they were only widely promoted in 1962 with the beginning of the Socialist Education Movement. See Ziyang You. "Tradition and Ideology: Creating and Performing New *Gushi* in China, 1962-1966." *Asian Ethnology* 71, No. 2 (2012): 259-280.

widely circulated, not as the exhibition catalog, but more like a visual storybook.²⁹ In other words, there is no clear-cut stylistic difference between this kind of derivative product of the museum/exhibition and *Living King of Hell*. Individual stories as reproducible artifacts and catalogable mass-historiographic texts, as discussed above, participated in the creation of museums and exhibitions, both physically (on the spot) and rhetorically (in print). The flexibility of those exhibitions was enabled and even intensified by a kind of meta-exhibition and its afterlife in prints: the exhibition about exhibitions. Xinhua News Agency, the largest state-run press agency, sent reporters to photograph class education exhibitions at various levels, and then published those press photos in different sets specifically for public display uses: for example, a collection of exhibitable images entitled *Remember the Class Hatred Firmly, Never Forget the Resentment in Blood and Tears* (see Figure 5-3).³⁰ As such, photographic records of local exhibitions were used to create new photographic exhibitions mainly in rural areas in which mass viewers were able to see and visit “mobile” exhibitions from different provinces all over China.

²⁹ See *Wan'e de dizhu zhuangyuan* 萬惡的地主莊園 (Evil Courtyard of the Landlord). (Beijing: wenwu chubanshe, 1965). Another key element that made this Liu Wencai courtyard exhibition famous is the Rent Collection Courtyard, a collection of 114 life-sized clay sculptures (divided into seven themes). For detailed contexts of the Rent Collection Courtyard and its legacies, see *Rent Collection Courtyard: Sculptures of Oppression and Revolt*. 2nd ed. (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1970); Britta Erickson. “The Rent Collection Courtyard, Past and Present,” in *Art in Turmoil: The Chinese Cultural Revolution, 1966-76*. (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010), 121-35; Denise Ho and Jie Li. “From Landlord Manor to Red Memorabilia: Reincarnations of a Chinese Museum Town.” *Modern China* 42 (1) (2016): 3–37.

³⁰ “Laoji jieji hen, buwang xuelei chou, zhanlan yongtu (nongcun pujiban)” 牢記階級恨，不忘血淚仇展覽用圖(農村普及版) (Remember class hatred firmly, never forget the resentment in blood and tears, images for the exhibitions in rural areas), *Xinhua News Agency*, 1964.



Figure 5-3 The first exhibitable image from the set, a photograph of people viewing and talking an exhibition (a woman speaking-bitterness and showing the exhibition object, a shirt as incriminating evidence) in an unidentifiable location (Left); the fourth image from the set, a photo of the exhibition object, “dog monument” (as incriminating evidence of the landlord in Shandong) from the 1964 Shandong class education exhibition discussed in this chapter (Right). “Laoji jieji hen, buwang xuelei chou,” 牢记階級恨,不忘血淚仇 (Remember class hatred firmly, never forget the resentment in blood and tears), Xinhua News Agency, 1964.

In the context of exhibitions about exhibitions, the meaning of museum or exhibition was expanded. While they are spatially defined, museums and temporary exhibitions could be reproducible and portable. Not only could individual memories be incorporated into a coherent museum narrative within a space, various local museum narratives and spaces could also be condensed and integrated into a larger one. Overall, the reenactment and reconstruction of class struggle was fundamentally a memory project and operated as a process of the making, remaking, and transformation of exhibitions. The Four Histories framework structured the mode of mass production and participation, the limits of which were rooted in its origin.

With all these factors in mind, the Shandong class education exhibition stands out as a manifestation of class struggle as exhibition-making. What merits special attention is the transformative power of its cinematic and transmedia engagement. We can see this by examining the class education exhibition as a genre, and the 1964 Shandong class education exhibition, especially, as a cinematic event.

5.3 CLASS EDUCATION EXHIBITION AS A MOBILE GENRE

The opening of the Shandong Class Education Exhibition at Shandong Provincial Museum on October 5, 1964 was a high-profile event. The highest-level Party officials in Shandong province attended the opening ceremony. According to the opening speech, the exhibition, “composed of a large amount of material objects, photographs, pictorial artifacts, sculptures, mockups, films, and glass-fronted billboards,” was timely and much needed in the “battlefield of the education for continuing class struggle.”³¹ There were 2,215 material objects, 789 photographs, and 248 pictorial artifacts exhibited within the 12,00 square-meter space.³² As one of the best received class education exhibitions, with a total of over 330 thousand visits within one year, Shandong Class Education Exhibition attracted much attention and was made into a film in 1965.³³ In a recent historical overview of museums and exhibition histories in Shandong, the 1964 Shandong Class Education Exhibition remains a great achievement today.³⁴

³¹ *Buke wangji jieji douzheng Shandongsheng jieji jiaoyu zhanlanhui huikan* 不可忘記階級鬥爭：山東省階級教育展覽會 (Never Forget Class Struggle: Exhibition Catalog of the Shandong provincial class education exhibition), October 1964, 1-3.

³² Shandong bowuguan (Shandong Provincial Museum). “*Bu wang jieji chouhen jiang geming jinxing daodi*” 不忘階級仇恨,將革命進行到底:山東省階級教育展覽會選記 (Never forget class hatred, carry the revolution through till the end: A selected record of the Shandong Class Education Exhibition), *Wenwu* 文物. No.1, 1965, 5.

³³ Shandong shengwei yanjiushi.山東省委研究室, “yiji liusi dashi ji” 1964 大事記 (Big events in 1964), *Shandong sishinian jishi* (Archives of Forty Years in Shandong). Ji’nan: Shandong renmin chubanshe, 1989, 98.

³⁴ See Sike Guo. “Bilu lanlv xinhua xiangchuan shandong bowuguan fazhanshi” 篳路藍縷, 薪火相傳: 山東博物館發展史 (The History of the Development of Museums in Shandong). *Zhongguo bowuguan*. No.2 (2010): 22-29. The most updated version of this essay is published in the official website of Shandong Provincial Museum on July 18th, 2020. <https://www.zz-news.com/com/zhongguobowuguan/news/itemid-637777> (accessed on July 18th, 2020).



Figure 5-4 Visual layout of the exhibition catalog (Part II that is not included in the documentary): various cases of criminalized enemies that encompass exhibition texts paired up with photographs of the exhibition objects and billboards, including sections of “wiping out the enemies who are confidants within ourselves, purifying the class ranks” 清除心腹之患,纯洁阶级队伍 (top left); “As sugar-coated bombs make a breach, ‘ox demons and snake spirits’ gradually emerge” 糖衣炮弹打开缺口,牛鬼蛇神相继而来 (top right); “Enemies disavow by every means, with no escape from the arm of the people’s justice” 敌人百般狡辩,难逃人民法网 (bottom left)³⁵; “The female spy took action and got captured” 女特务出巢落网 (bottom right).

Only a selected version of the 1964 Shandong class education exhibition shaped the film *Never Forget Class Bitterness*. Indeed, the exhibition comprises three parts: “Never Forget Class Bitterness, Forever Remember the Hatred in the Sea of Blood,” “Enemies Will Not Give up, We Need to Keep Our Watchful Eyes,” and “Strongest Wind Tests the Strength of Grass, Struggle Exposes the [politically righteous] ‘Red Heart’.”³⁶ While the third part shows a series of positive

³⁵ The term “nantao fawang” is widely phrased and used in different forms such as *Fawang huihui, zuize nantao* 法網恢恢, 罪責難逃 (The arm of the law is extensive, criminal responsibility is hard to escape).

³⁶ See “An introduction of the Shandong class education exhibition,” *Never Forget Class Struggle: Exhibition Catalog of the Shandong provincial class education exhibition*, October 1964, 8-15. The original Chinese text: 敵人心未死,我們要警惕; 疾風知勁草,鬥爭見紅心. The actual subtitles of each part in the exhibition, as shown in the

models who stand firm in class struggle, the majority of the exhibition, points to the dark side of the Chinese socialist revolution. The first part, mainly about “an accusation, filled with tears and blood, on the evil old society,” is a form of *shizhong* that exposes the crimes of multiple enemies including the imperialists, KMT bandits, landlords, and capitalists.³⁷ “As the core of the exhibition,” the second part centrally displays “the ongoing evils” in response to the urgent question of the time: is there still class, class conflict, and class struggle? The answer of “yes” is certainly offered in what was on display within the exhibition itself.³⁸ Thus, the central difference between the two parts lies in the temporality of display items and exhibition narratives. In the first part, the display of historical evils and suffering in the pre-1949 past is the main focus. Criminal cases of spies and counterrevolutionaries understood as current events of the time constitute the second part. In spite of their equal importance, the two parts were developed into completely different products for circulation and public access. The first part was made into a documentary by Shanghai Science and Education Film Studio, as mentioned in the opening of this chapter, appealing to a wider public; however, the second part was only recorded and kept in the exhibition catalog and intended only for internal circulation. The preface of the catalog states that most of the materials and display items in the exhibition are “compiled and published [in this catalog] as a collection for cadres and masses to view when needed for class struggle education”; some *dianxing cailiao* 典型材料 (materials about model cases) in the second part “would not be a good fit for public release,” and accordingly, the catalog was “only

table of content of exhibition catalog, are different from what is introduced in general. Particularly the last two parts: 在社會主義社會中還存在著階級和階級鬥爭 and 在階級鬥爭激流中的好榜樣.

³⁷ See *Never Forget Class Struggle: Exhibition Catalog of the Shandong provincial class education exhibition*, October 1964, 9-10.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 11.

for internal circulation” with a demand “for careful storage.”³⁹ The Shandong Class Education Exhibition was experienced in its entirety only at the local level, and then, as a result of selection and limited access, more widely known through its cinematic aftermath.

Images mattered for the entire exhibition and its dissemination. The visual style of exhibition-making and spatial design in each part remained consistent. Each section was chronologically structured through smaller subsections that were mostly individual cases. Material objects and documents (often shown as incriminating evidence), exhibition texts (introduction and victims’ testimonies), and photographic artifacts (including collages and photomontage), and pictorial reenactments (paintings, drawings, sequential cartoons, etc.) presented on billboards shaped an individual case, several of which were put together into a single subsection. The overall style was not unique to the Shandong case, but rather applied to local exhibitions at different levels all over China. As shown in a Hunan exhibition catalog compiled and published in 1965 (see Figure 5-5), the curatorial logic shaped by a case-based linear narrative, multi-section form, and media modalities was also at play in the Class Education Exhibition held at the Hunan Provincial Exhibition Hall.⁴⁰ Some other provincial class exhibition halls, local galleries, and museums turned the exhibition catalog into shorter pictorial prints and more circulatable booklets as teaching materials for class education. One such textbook-style publication is embodied in a Yunnan example of “the introduction to the Yunnan Class Education Exhibition Hall,” which was reproduced and reprinted in multiple times.⁴¹

³⁹ See the preface, *Exhibition Catalog of the Shandong provincial class education exhibition*, October 1964.

⁴⁰ Hunan zhanlanguan 湖南展覽館 eds. *Qianchou wanhen lu hunan shehuizhuyi jieji jiaoyu tupian ji* 千仇萬恨錄：湖南省社會主義階級教育圖片集 (A catalog of thousands of hatreds: visual records of the Hunan socialist class education exhibition), Hunanrenmin chubanshe, 1965.

⁴¹ *Qianwan buyao wangji jieji he jieji douzheng: Yunnansheng jieji jiaoyu zhanlan- guan neirong jianjie* 千萬不要忘記階級和階級鬥爭：雲南省階級教育展覽館簡介 (Never forget class and class struggle: An introduction to the contents of Yunnan Province’s Class Education Exhibition Hall). Reprinted in January 1966.



Figure 5-5 *A catalog of thousands of hatred: visual records of the Hunan socialist class education exhibition, 1965 (Left); Never forget class and class struggle: An introduction to the contents of Yunnan Province's Class Education Exhibition Hall. Reprinted in January 1966 (middle); Poster for Never forget class struggle: Santiaoshi History Museum in Hongqiao District of Tianjin, Class Education Exhibition, 1965 (Right).*

Class education exhibitions were not solely produced in visual forms. Rather, they were also disseminated and experienced as a growing vocabulary of visual knowledge related to class struggle. Exhibition catalogs were popularized in wide-ranging forms including pictorial collections, posters, booklets, and flyers. Thus, display items and media components both scattered and structured in circulation, made the class education exhibitions *mobile* and *flexible*, to be enjoyed in daily encounters. Through images set in motion, class education was transformed into an assemblage of experiences with *moving* images, images that migrated across form and moved the masses.

5.4 A CINE-EXHIBITION OF CLASS EDUCATION

What made the Shandong Class Education Exhibition significantly distinctive was not its multimedia components within the exhibition space but its floating life *across* media, fundamentally a cinematic one—to put it more precisely, a cine-exhibition of class education. I

develop three key conceptual terms to approach how the cine-exhibition worked: the witness as exhibition object, archivable scenography of struggling against landlords, and curating the masses. These concepts help to explain the complex intersection between two modes of public exhibitions (namely, museum and cinema), and also draw attention not only to the ways in which both still and moving images enter the musealization of class struggle and are contested by different actors, but also to the historically specific ways those images were produced, circulated, and consumed.

5.4.1 *The Witness as Exhibition Object*

As mentioned in previous sections, the class education exhibitions shared the trend of making the memories of local individuals and their families part of the grand historical narrative of class struggle. Material products of individual memory, such as diaries, letters, paintings, files, or other personal belongings, have for a long time had a place in museums, particularly in memorial museums and human rights exhibitions. The Shandong class education exhibition went further: laboring tools and handwritten files, including land titles and *maishen qi* 賣身契 (slavery contracts or contracts of forced prostitution), were displayed along with photographic portraits of the sufferers. What is striking in the Shandong class education exhibition was its inclusion of some victims' body parts as proof of the "class crime" committed by landlords, imperialists, capitalists, and other counterrevolutionary enemies. The arm of a villager from Linqu county, Wei Xuede, shot off by the evil enemies, was kept by Wei himself and became part of the exhibit.⁴² Other objects on display included the frozen-off feet of Zheng Shutai ("perpetrated by

⁴² *Buke wangji jieji douzheng Shandongsheng jieji jiaoyu zhanlanhui huikan* 不可忘記階級鬥爭：山東省階級教育展覽會 (Never Forget Class Struggle: Exhibition Catalog of the Shandong provincial class education exhibition), October 1964, 56.

the landlords”); the heart of Zhao Zhujun, “murdered by the imperialist Ernest Black Struthers,” stored in a glass jar as a medical specimen; and the frontal bone of a woman (introduced as the wife of a villager called Guo Fazheng) who was “beheaded by the military group Home Returning Corps run by local bandits” in Gaomi county, Shandong.⁴³ Local exhibitgoers, accompanied by trained guides, were able to take a close look at the objects. The guides provided narration and introduction loaded with ideological vocabulary. Both the associated exhibition texts and onsite guides’ oral narration verbalize each individual case into a seemingly coherent speaking-bitterness narrative.

Never Forget Class Bitterness is more than a cinematic documentation of the 1964 Shandong class education exhibition; it creates a virtual museum in its own right. The exhibition and its objects are explored and reorganized through film. The film does an exceptional job with footage of the sufferers recalling events, integrating the footage into a coherent narrative. It also reinforces the speaking-bitterness tone through a highly emotional God’s-eye-view voiceover. Thus, moments of remembrance and narrated memory of suffering become legitimate objects of display. A woman named Fang Yongxiu is one of the most fitting “objects” for the exhibition, which is displayed in a before-and-after mode. Fang offers a compelling testimony of class struggle as a necessary process and an allegory of exposure. In the old society, Fang used to be blind due to ocular injuries after her husband died. She had even attempted suicide. It is the Chinese Communist Party’s (CCP’s) “liberation of China and Chinese people” that brings her life from dark to light, both physically and symbolically: she regains sight, sees the new society, and starts a new laboring-class career under the Maoist regime.⁴⁴ In the exhibition, a key

⁴³ Ibid., 71, and 92-93.

⁴⁴ The voice-over narration literally says that “Fang Yongxiu cried from day to night, from her home to the factory. In the end, she turned blind and got fired by the merciless capitalist. In front of her eyes was nothing but darkness.

testimonial moment is shown in the photograph of Fang performing herself and, with two young people, relating her traumatic past on the river bank, the exact place of her first “death” where her suicide attempt took place. Cinema animates the original photographic form of Fang Yongxiu’s testimony through pictorial reenactment. Then a fade-in transition happens, cinematically modelling a gradual vision change from blurry to clear. As viewers see changes in what Fang Yongxiu perceives from a subjective point of view, the sobbing tone of the voiceover also shifts radically to an exciting and energetic tone.⁴⁵ For Fang, death was supposed to be only way of accusing the evil capitalist system and class conflict in the old society.

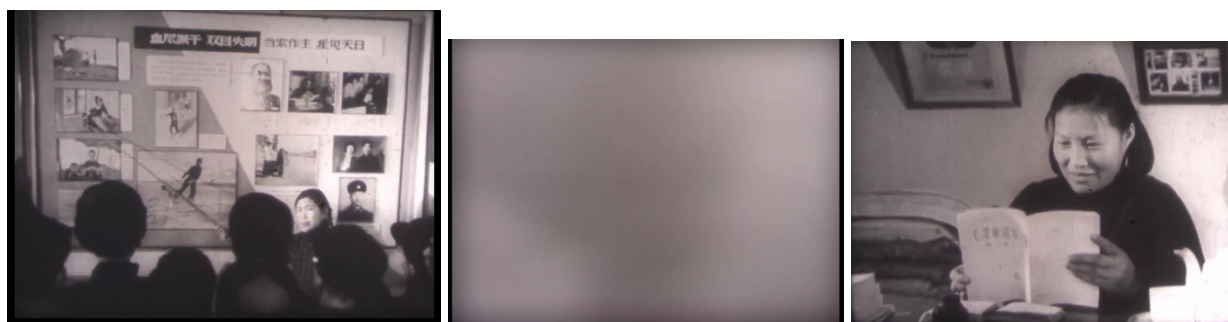


Figure 5-6 The witness as exhibition object: Fang Yongxiu’s case on display in the exhibition (Left), Fang’s gradual vision change, cinematically made through fading-in effect, in a subjective POV shot (middle), and the following scene of Fang regaining sight and reading Mao’s words (Right), film stills from *Never Forget Class Bitterness, Forever Remember the Hatred in the Sea of Blood*, 1965.

There is no way to survive!” See Unnamed author(s). “Buwang jieji ku yongji xuehaichou, jilupian juben” 不忘階級苦,永記血海仇 (紀錄片劇本) (Never Forget Class Bitterness, Forever Remember the Hatred in the Sea of Blood, screenplay of the documentary), *Dianying wenxue* 電影文學. No. 4 1966, 29.

⁴⁵ A central claim of the documentary is addressed in the voice over at this moment: “as China is liberated, miserable and painful days are gone. The Party and people helped [Fang Yongxiu] to cure her eyes and recovered from blindness. Fang is able to see a new society. The Old and the New societies are two completely different worlds. The past is about bitterness and the present is one of sweetness. The slaves in the past now become the masters of their own country.” 解放了, 苦難和心酸的歲月一去不復返了。共產黨和人民幫助她治療好眼睛, 使她重見光明, 看到了一個嶄新的社會, 新舊社會兩重天, 過去苦,現在甜, 過去的奴隸現在成了國家的主人。In the shooting script of the film, “fade in” transitional technique is marked in the category of special effect for this scene of “blurry image” as Fang Yongxiu’s subjective vision. See Shanghai Science and Education Film Studio. *Buwang jieji ku yongji xuehaichou, wancheng taibei*. 不忘階級苦, 永記血海仇 (完成台本) (Never Forget Class Bitterness, Forever Remember the Hatred in the Sea of Blood, completed shooting script), April 1965.

Then she realized that rebirth would be possible through turning the “class evil and crimes” of the society inside out. Coming to terms with her bitterness in blood and tears allowed her to work with hatred, to expose the evil by speaking out about the past, and ultimately to keep struggling against the enemies. The continuation of class struggle is therefore reinforced in its musealization: the most expressive format of presentation proves to be the organized exhibition of sufferers and their bodily testimonies.



Figure 5-7 The witnesses' exposure of their scars and wounds as incriminating evidence on display, film stills turned into images in the cinematic illustrated storybook with the same title: Ting Lei (eds). *Never Forget Class Bitterness, Forever Remember the Hatred in the Sea of Blood*, Beijing: Zhongguo dianying chubanshe, 1966.

More crucially, cinematic organization turns the sufferers into witnesses. If “witnesses of the past” refers to people who have witnessed—in the sense that they have seen, heard, or experienced—an event of historical importance, they could become “witnesses to history” once they give testimony of their personal experiences in a public setting in which their addressees intentionally encompass individuals beyond the circle of their family, friends, and local

community.⁴⁶ In the film, the peasants, workers, and their families from different areas of Shandong fit the category of witnesses to history. Their entry into the virtual museum through cinematic means allows them to perform themselves (in conjunction with other display items in close-up shots) as exhibition objects. They willingly or unwillingly consolidate and participate in the creation of a certain narrative of the past, namely, *class struggle* as undoubted history.

5.4.2 *Archivable Scenography: Struggling against the Landlords*

One of the most crucial dimensions for both the exhibition and its documentary version is an emphasis on the CCP's land wars—the agrarian revolution. The film mainly draws on the subsection called “the peasants entangled in the yoke of the landlord class,” in which an array of landlords are named and identified as perpetrators with a list of criminal evidence.⁴⁷ The profile of figures including “evil landlord” Hu Dejiang, “the lead landlord of Qixia county” Mou Molin, the landlord named “Yama (known as the King of Hell) Zhuang,” and the “local evil gentry and landlord” Zhang Fengkai are specifically highlighted in the film. The narrative power of this part lies in its catalog form.



Figure 5-8 One of the billboard about the evil of landlords in the old society (Left), exhibited photograph of the landlords (middle), and a reenacted scene of the landlord through sculpture (Right), film stills from *Never Forget Class Bitterness, Forever Remember the Hatred in the Sea of Blood*, 1965.

⁴⁶ Steffi Jong differentiates “the witness of the past” and “witnesses to history” in his work about video testimonies exhibited in museum settings. See Steffi De Jong. *The Witness as Object: Video Testimonies in Memorial Museums*. (New York: Berghahn Books, 2018), 32-3.

⁴⁷ See the catalog, *Buke wangji jieji douzheng Shandongsheng jieji jiaoyu zhanlanhui huikan*, 1964.

Landlords are cataloged within a structure in which certain accounts of their victims as survivors are literally placed in a one-to-one correspondence. Different individual cases of the landlords and their criminal labels are assigned different functions in the film. For instance, Hu Dejiang's case is about murder, which essentially revolves around the violence inscribed on the victims' bodies. Hu Zhaoying is the only survivor in her family; her other family members were all killed by Hu Dejiang and his followers. In order to denounce and struggle against the landlord, Hu Zhaoying shows a scar on her head as the "firm evidence of the evil landlord's intentional crimes."⁴⁸ In the film, while Hu Dejiang's case focuses on the landlord's crime toward one family, Mou Molin's case more generally explains the basic logic of exploitation undertaken by the landlords.



Figure 5-9 A film still animating the data of lands owned by Mou, from *Never Forget Class Bitterness, Forever Remember the Hatred in the Sea of Blood*, 1965 (Left); The exhibition text about Mou's case takes a form of *zuieshi* 罪惡史 (history of crimes), from the exhibition catalog of the Shandong class education exhibition, 1964 (Right).

⁴⁸ This is from the voice-over narration. The original line is "Look, this is the firm evidence of the evil landlord's intentional murder."

Maps, charts, animated pictures, and a combination of data, photos, and texts work together to create “demonstrative evidence” of the eight ways Mou made a family fortune and persecuted the poor tenants. Mou’s part in the exhibition clearly follows the Four Histories approach and presents a familiar “incriminating-catalog” (罪惡錄 or 罪惡史) history. Mou’s section presents a family history of the landlord rather than the peasants or workers. The film goes beyond its assumed function of documentation. It reworks the existing records about Mou’s family that were archived and curated through the exhibition. The sequence about Mou’s case ends up as a multimedia commentary and indictment of the Mou family, as well as the entire landlord class, that represents the larger and more abstract group of enemies.

The film does not fully follow the chronological order of the exhibition, but instead reorganizes the visual and spatial components based on an accumulation of emotional effects evoked around the peasants’ suffering as a result of land reform. Liu Zhenhai, one of the victims, a tenant of landlord Mou in the 1940s, appears in a shot of a mass struggle meeting. In an occasion of speaking-bitterness that is not included in the exhibition (and likely staged for the film), Liu tells his family history (“jiangshu jiashi,” as described in the screenplay) among a crowd and near the grinding stone that used to be his laboring tool.⁴⁹ The footage is followed by a montage sequence that intercuts between a set of hand-drawn pictures that reenact Liu’s story with a slideshow effect and several scenes of people in the exhibition (e.g., an extreme close-up of a soldier who wipes away his tears or a medium close-up of the weeping face of one woman among a small group of exhibitiongoers). While the filmed exhibitiongoers might be actually watching certain items on display and listening to the introduction given by the onsite guide, they

⁴⁹ Unnamed author(s). “Buwang jieji ku yongji xuehaichou, jilupian juben” 不忘階級苦, 永記血海仇 (紀錄片劇本) (Never Forget Class Bitterness, Forever Remember the Hatred in the Sea of Blood, screenplay of the documentary), *Dianying wenxue*. No. 4 1966, 26-36.

appear to be present among the crowd listening to Liu Zhenhai and denouncing the landlord Mou Molin. In such moments, reaction shots are displaced artifacts that transform time and space. The merging of the exhibitionary space and cinematic space results in a subjective temporality through which the film viewers are put in a direct conversation with the witnesses like Liu Zhenhai. In order to expose, accuse, and judge the landlords, a collective is accordingly brought into being.

The placement of landlords in the cine-exhibition exemplifies a scenography of *pidou*. The film's climax moment occurs when the people's power is manifested in a crowd scene of countless peasants with red-tasseled spears in their hands. In the exhibition, a few *pidou* images take the form of speaking-bitterness meetings (as historical photographs) or the recalling-bitterness meetings (as current events), in which the presence of the target (landlords and other kinds of enemies) is not always necessary.



Figure 5-10 Struggling against Landlords, film stills from *Never Forget Class Bitterness, Forever Remember the Hatred in the Sea of Blood*, 1965.

As a privileged way of archiving land reform and its effects, the film throws its energy into a set of unspecified scenes of struggling against landlords. The landlord surrounded by a crowd of peasants is a recurring motif. “The villagers gather to struggle against the landlord under the tree, and then they execute the evil gentry and landlord who committed murder,” says the voiceover

narration.⁵⁰ For another scene, the weapons held in the peasants' hands are noted in its literary description in the screenplay: hoes and spades.⁵¹

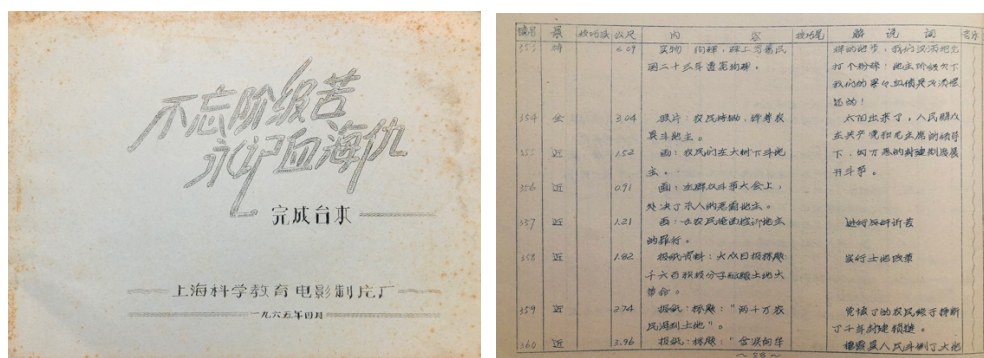


Figure 5-11 The cover and one page (showing arranged images of struggling against the landlords) of the shooting script for making *Never Forget Class Bitterness, Forever Remember the Hatred in the Sea of Blood*, 1965.

A series of inserted newspaper headlines shows the progress of land reform in Shandong: “thousands of activists are preparing for the land reform,” “lands were returned to twenty million peasants,” “injustice-redressing and reasoned discussion to the landlord Mou,” and “putting the landlords on trial at the people’s court.” With a certain degree of visual importance given to the justice-making process, the display of photographs and pictures of struggling against the landlords from the 1940s and 1950s serves a dual agenda: one concerned with transitional justice and the other with recalling the past (land reform) as a frame of reference for the present (the Four Cleanups and socialist education movement).

⁵⁰ In both the literary screenplay and complete shooting script of the film, the sequence of images of struggling against the landlords is noted only as “the moment of qunzhong douzheng dahui” 群眾鬥爭大會 (mass struggle meetings) or “doudizhu” 鬥地主 (struggle against the landlords) without further information. Any image concerning struggling against the landlords would generally fit. In another word, no evidence has sufficed to show the demand for a specific selection of certain images.

⁵¹ See Unnamed author(s). *Never Forget Class Bitterness, Forever Remember the Hatred in the Sea of Blood*, screenplay of the documentary, 1966, 34.



Figure 5-12 Shots of newspaper headlines about the public trial/execution of the landlords in Shandong province, film stills from *Never Forget Class Bitterness, Forever Remember the Hatred in the Sea of Blood*, 1965.

Indeed, in terms of how to stage the target of a struggle, the imagery of struggling against the landlords in the documentary echoes the pidou encounters in the Four Cleanups activities of the time. “To struggle against the class enemy just as if the peasants struggled against the landlords”—this was what people could learn from watching the documentary, and they could further learn to *buzhi* 佈置 (arrange and stage) pidou and exhibitions in their own communities.⁵² Many local counties and work units intentionally arranged their own class education exhibitions with or immediately after a pidou against certain “class enemies,” since the incriminating evidence used in a pidou would be a good fit, and much needed for exhibitions and displays.

⁵² I was actually introduced to the film by one of my interviewees who recollected certain ways of learning to stage a pidou from films during the 1960s, particularly the Four Cleanups and the Cultural Revolution. Also see “Buwang jieji ku guanhou jiaoyu gongzuo huiyi cailiao” 《不忘階級苦》觀後-教育工作會議材料 (ideas after watching the film *Never Forget Class Bitterness, Forever Remember the Hatred in the Sea of Blood*, materials for the meeting on education), 1965, 346.

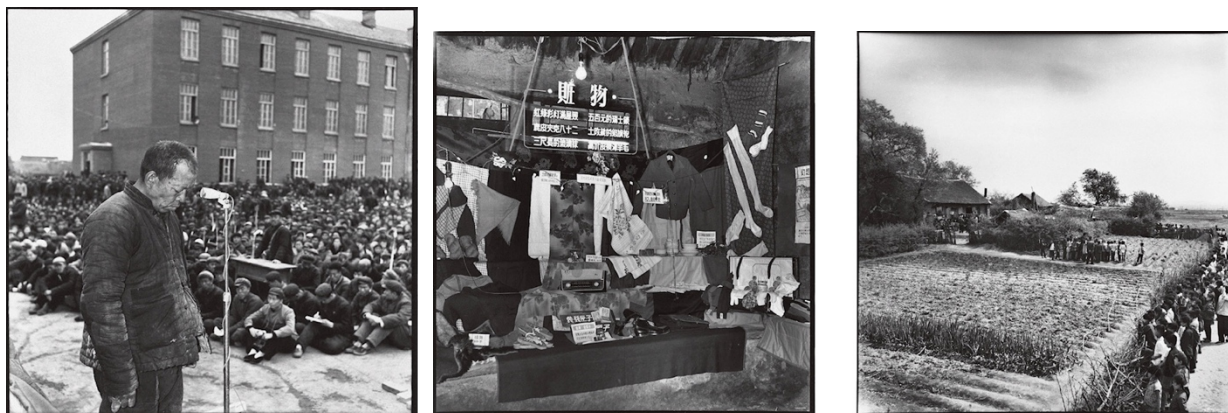


Figure 5-13 The scene of struggling against the “louhua funong fenzi” 漏劃富農分子 Yuan Fengxiang, May 12th, 1965 (Left); Yuan’s personal properties as incriminating evidence turned into the objects on display in the exhibition, May 13th, 1965 (middle); Yuan’s house, as “dizhu zhuangyuan” 地主莊園 is part of the exhibition for public views, May 13th, 1965 (Right). Photographs by Li Zhensheng, from *Red-color News Soldier*, 36 and 44.

As is well shown and documented in Li Zhensheng’s account, the personal property of a class enemy made material connections between a pidou and the class education exhibition in Ashihe Commune, Acheng County, Heilongjiang Province in 1965. In both cases, incriminating objects (previously owned by class enemies) and the class enemies themselves were put on display and on trial at the same time. In other words, there was no clear-cut boundary between two kinds of display: a pidou, per se, as an exhibition, and the class education exhibition as (part of) pidou. How to collect, curate, and exhibit was crucial for the mutual constitution of pidou and the exhibition. The way local organizers thought and worked around pidou was a museological question. In this sense, the cine-exhibition of *Never Forget Class Bitterness* offered a timely response and commentary.

5.4.3 *Curating the Masses*

Another remarkable dimension of the cine-exhibition is the organization and “curation” of the masses. Both the film crew and organizational team of the exhibition shared the mode of anonymous collective production. There was no authorship other than the title of the organization.⁵³ People worked as a team on all levels. At least in the exhibition texts and the exhibition catalog published afterwards, little information could be found about the photographers or artists who created pictorial artifacts for the exhibition, while there were a group of artists known as “Shandong fine-art team” perhaps involved.⁵⁴ Neither labor division nor credits are shown in the film and its other archival records, such as the hand-written shooting script.⁵⁵ It is not hard to understand the popularity of mass-produced projects in the field of literature and arts beginning in the Yan’an years and through the Mao era, as well as its centrality, particularly in the context of mass historiographic writings and the Four Histories

⁵³ Shandong provincial museum or “Shandong class education exhibition”, and Shanghai science and education film studio.

⁵⁴ Kong Ling writes about how a group of artists as “Shandong fine-art team” 山東美術隊伍 got involved in the class education art exhibition 山東階級畫展 in 1965. It was a kind of diverse and hybrid team including art professionals, local folk artists, and peasant artists. One of the drawings by two artists from the team was published with Kong’s essay. The style of the drawing resembles the pictures on display in the Shandong Class Education Exhibition. See Lin Kong. “Wei geming peiyang geming meishu rencai, zuzhi Shandong sheng jieji jiaoyu meishu chuanguo de yixie tihui” 為革命培養革命美術人材——組織山東省階級教育美術創作的一些體會 (Cultivating the revolutionary artists for the revolution: some ideas about organizing the fine-art projects for class education in Shandong). *Meishu*, No. 2, 1966.

⁵⁵ In Shanghai film archival records and film-historical accounts, no individual has been given credits for the documentary. According to *Record of Shanghai Film*, two other films were produced by Shanghai Science and Education Film Studio in the 1960s: *Minban xiaoxue de hongqi* 民辦小學的紅旗 (1960) and *Ba qingchun xiangei talimu* 把青春獻給塔里木 (1963). The information about the directors, cinematographers, and editors of both two films is visible; while the former one is mass-produced work and marked with collective directorship (“sanba zu jiti chuanguo” 三八組集體創作), Miao Zhenhua as the director and cinematographer is still included in the credits record. As for the documentary *Buwang jieji ku yongji xuehaichou, jilupian juben*, we are not allowed to anything about the crew. See Yigong Wu eds. *Shanghai dianying zhi* 上海電影志 (Record of Shanghai film). Shanghai: Shanghai shehui kexue yuan, 1999, 463.

campaign.⁵⁶ The shared collectivity and anonymity of the exhibition-making and filmmaking reveals something both historically specific and site-specific. The cine-exhibition, technically (even if not claimed to be) a collaborative project between two public institutions, the museum and the film studio, was intended for the shaping of “the masses”: drawing from the masses, produced by the masses, and serving as “a grand class-education classroom” on a massive level, providing “living textbooks” for the masses.⁵⁷

What the documentary project archived was not just the Shandong class education exhibition as a display of objects and images but also people’s experiences *within* and *of* it as a public space. What centrally defines the museum experience, as noted by Norbert M. Schmitz, is the space for visitors not only to “expose [themselves] to the exhibited artefacts” but also “[to rehearse] a specific, precisely distant-reflexive attitude to perception.”⁵⁸ In the documentary, there are many scenes of exhibition-going and exhibition-goers’ behaviors and reactions. The exhibitiongoers consciously expose themselves as the perceiving bodies engendered and required by the exhibition and also rehearse their perception. As museum historian Helen R. Leahy addresses, practices of ordinary museum visitors are never just about viewing, but also encompass a whole set of “bodily techniques that is both distinctive and mundane” (e.g.,

⁵⁶ For a study about the Mao-era mass writing and collective literary production (mostly referring to “worker-peasant-soldier writing”), see Baojie Xie. *Zhuti xiangxiang yu biaoda* 主體、想象與表達—1949-1966年工農兵寫作的歷史考察 (Subject, Imagination, and Expression: A Historical Examination of the Worker-Peasant-Soldier Literary Writing, 1949-1966). Beijing: Peking University Press, 2015.

⁵⁷ See Shandong Provincial Museum. “*Buwang jieji chouhen jiang geming jinxing daodi*” 不忘階級仇恨,將革命進行到底:山東省階級教育展覽會選記 (Never forget class hatred, carry the revolution through till the end: A selected record of the Shandong Class Education Exhibition), *Wenwu* 文物. No.1, 1965, 5-13; “*Buke wangji jieji douzheng Shandongsheng jieji jiaoyu zhanlanhui huikan*” 不可忘記階級鬥爭: 山東省階級教育展覽會 (Never Forget Class Struggle: Exhibition Catalog of the Shandong provincial class education exhibition), October 1964, 1.

⁵⁸ Norbert M. Schmitz. “Sees Beauty-Representations of the Museum in Classic Cinema,” in *Images of the Art Museum: Connecting Gaze and Discourse in the History of Museology*. edited by Eva-Maria Troelenberg and Melania Savino. (Berlin; Boston: De Gruyter, 2017), 290.

accessing, walking, talking, reading, looking, and being looked at).⁵⁹ In this case, exhibitiongoers of the class education exhibition have more components in their bodily practice: listening to the tour guide, giving facial expressions, acting as a feeling subject, noticing others' reactions, and participating in the group response. A crew sent by Shanghai Science and Education Film Studio worked in the exhibition to film how the masses perceived the exhibition in such ways. The movie camera helps to show how the exhibition constructs and manages its intended audience, including those who watch the film. The crew's acts of "shooting on location" put *teaching* on display. Filmed exhibitiongoers perform themselves to model the right reaction to the exhibition and its objects.



Figure 5-14 Scenes of exhibitiongoers, film stills from *Never Forget Class Bitterness, Forever Remember the Hatred in the Sea of Blood*, 1965.

Then, watching the film also teaches the audience how a class education exhibition functions, how fascinating it is to be at one, and how one should act as part of the group exhibitiongoers.

⁵⁹ Helen Rees Leahy. *Museum Bodies: The Politics and Practices of Visiting and Viewing*. (Farnham, Surrey, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), 13.

The onscreen exhibitiongoers are in fact a certain kind of *masses on display*. A sequence about the landlords is followed by a scene of peasants as exhibitiongoers on the spot. The facial expressions of both the young and the elderly are rendered visible in parallel with the reenacted pictures of child laborers in the old society. Several extreme closeup shots of an individual's weeping face or tearful eyes in the film recall what Giuliana Bruno calls “museum sensibility,” a kind of intimacy that occurs in public, or rather, the relatively private dimension shared by visual spaces of public exhibition “visited in spectatorial itineraries that trigger private, affective response.”⁶⁰ However, it is also notable that such moments when individuals show strong emotional reactions could be staged and structured. The cinematic documentation of certain looks and gestures of exhibitiongoers at once shapes and exposes the performative nature of viewing, hearing, and (not) moving within the space of the class education exhibition.



Figure 5-15 One page from the shooting script, marking one shot of “the resentful faces of the audiences [in the exhibition]” (left); two images of the exhibitiongoers accompanied by the guide delivering a speech and the showing-and-telling of an exhibition object, the old-fashioned clock, both from the cinematic illustrated storybook based on the film *Never* (1965) (right).

⁶⁰ Bruno notes that “intimate form of public exhibition activates journeys of memory and projections of the imagination. In such as intimately public way, the museum and the cinema share a cultural sensibility that is tangibly modern.” For more details, see Giuliana Bruno. “Sites of Screening: Cinema, Museum, and the Art of Projection.” *The Moving Eye: Film, Television, Architecture, Visual Art, and the Modern*. edited by Edward Dimendberg. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2019).

Further, the performance of the masses occurs at the interface between *the exhibition as a cinematic event* and *the documentary as human encounters with (multiple kinds of) exhibitions*. The camera recorded a special event from the Shandong Class Education exhibition: one of the “witnesses as exhibition objects” is an old woman called *Wang daniang* (Aunt Wang). Her testimony of bitterness is about the forced separation of her and her youngest son by poverty twenty-three years ago.⁶¹ Aunt Wang had told her story at all kinds of speaking-bitterness occasions and pidou meetings since the beginning of the Socialist Education Movement. After being displayed at the exhibition, her case became more widely known. The local cadres who were aware of the situation searched for Aunt Wang’s lost son in early January of 1965, and were finally able to discover his whereabouts.⁶² On the afternoon of January 24, 1965, the reunion between mother and son (who was a PLA soldier at the time) was arranged to take place at the Shandong Class Education Exhibition. The camera captured the miraculous moment when the exhibition served as a site of reunion.

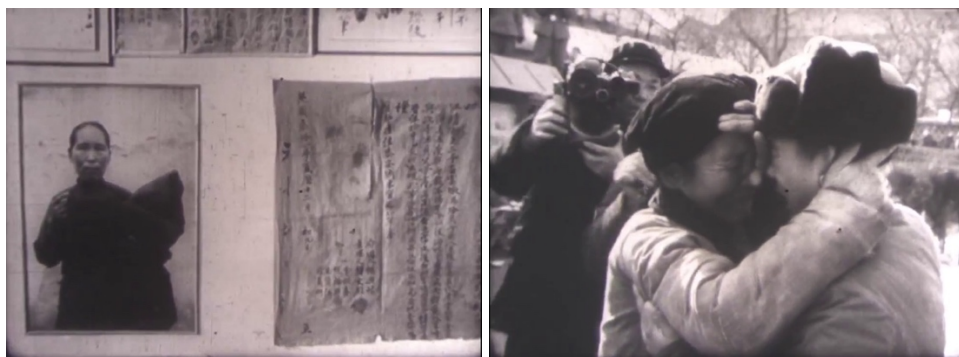


Figure 5-16 The photograph of Aunt Wang and the maishenqi file (forced contract to sell her 11-month-old son Fu Yu) on display in the exhibition (Left); the scene of the mother-son reunion at the exhibition, film stills from *Never Forget Class Bitterness, Forever Remember the Hatred in the Sea of Blood*, 1965.

⁶¹ The forced separation between families is one of the most recurring themes not just in class education exhibitions but also in all kinds of Four Histories accounts and speaking-bitterness narratives across genre and form. There are two inter-relatable kinds of basic plots: for paying her family’s debts to the landlord, a sister, daughter, or wife is forced to prostitute herself; children are sold to a human trafficker.

⁶² *Buke wangji jieji douzheng Shandongsheng jieji jiaoyu zhanlanhui huikan* 不可忘記階級鬥爭：山東省階級教育展覽會 (Never Forget Class Struggle: Exhibition Catalog of the Shandong provincial class education exhibition), October 1964, 149-51.



Figure 5-17 The scene of the mother-son reunion in which the exhibitiongoers are all witnesses on the spot (Left); the scene of Aunt Wang and her son viewing display items at the exhibition (Right), film stills from *Never Forget Class Bitterness, Forever Remember the Hatred in the Sea of Blood*, 1965.

The moment recorded by the camera breaks down the boundary between staged and nonstaged, between profilmic and cinematic. The reunion is exposed as a dual process of curation and exhibition in the exhibition catalog.⁶³ Aunt Wang places herself at the core of the performative power of the exhibition: the witness as an exhibition object, a participant in the making of the exhibition, and an ideal exhibitiongoer all at once. Also stunning is that, in the film's reunion scenes, the presence of the cinematographer marks a self-reflexive exposure of the cinematic medium itself. The film viewers are thus directly encouraged to recognize the mutual performance between exhibition and cinema. The appearance of both Aunt Wang and her son redefines the meaning of the masses as the target audience for both the exhibition and the documentary. They could be filmed and put on display; they watch and act, moving in and out of the intersected spaces of exhibition and cinema. They are installed as part of *the masses*, who are fundamentally curatable according to different agendas and arrangements.

⁶³ The whole set of events around the reunion is documented in the exhibition catalog, considered as part of the exhibition. Aunt Wang and her son were also arranged to meet the high-level provincial Party cadres. Their story of being reunited at the exhibition was made into a documentary play and they were invited to view the play. See *ibid*, 152.

Returning to the film screening mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, the exhibition of *Never Forget Class Bitterness* in Nanhanji intersected with pidou, practically and conceptually. Emotions played a major role in the film screening. The theme boiled down to two keywords: *ku* 苦 (bitterness) and *chou* 仇 (hatred). “Watching the film with *jieji ganqing* 階級感情 (class feelings),” was one of the key elements observed by the unnamed journalist.⁶⁴ As Lee Haiyan notes, the work of class feelings is essentially dialectic:

On the one hand, it is comradely love for brothers and sisters from one’s class. It is a horizontal, fraternal feeling that extends equally to all members of the proletariat but finds its most intense and sublime expression in the love for the supreme leader, Mao Zedong. On the other hand, it is hatred and resentment for the class enemy, usually belonging to the former propertied classes.⁶⁵

In Nanhanji, the documentary based on the Shandong Class Education Exhibition provided a test case where the masses, as film spectators and virtual exhibitiongoers, were examined and tried, especially in terms of the second kind of class feeling: resentment of the class enemy. The screening was not a silent and disciplined viewing situation as normalized in many dominant theories of film spectatorship. The villagers sighed and cried during scenes such as the one of Fang Yongxiu being compelled to attempt suicide and leave her children behind; during the mother-son reunion scene, some of them “comforted each other and felt gratifying,” and some loudly made resentful comments on the source of evil. More importantly, recalling the shared “painful and miserable memories,” they ended up angry at the depicted class enemies and the darkness and evil rooted in the past under the old regime.⁶⁶ For the villagers, the cinematic

⁶⁴ Unnamed reporter from *Dianying yishu*. “Yibu jieji jiaoyu de haojiaocai,” 54.

⁶⁵ Haiyan Lee. “Class Feeling,” *Afterlives of Chinese Communism: Political Concepts from Mao To Xi*. eds. Christian P. Sorace, Ivan Franceschini, and Nicholas Loubere. (Australia: ANU Press: Verso, 2019), 23-8. For what Lee calls the “socialist grammar of emotion” that characterized the structure of feeling in the Mao era (1950s-1970s), see Haiyan Lee. *Revolution of the Heart: A Genealogy of Love in China, 1900-1950*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press), 2007), 286-96.

⁶⁶ Unnamed reporter from *Dianying yishu*. “Yibu jieji jiaoyu de haojiaocai,” 54.

display of class enemies was emotionally charged and denunciatory in nature. Meanwhile, the collective and active mode of viewing made the screening space an ongoing and more productive site of “deep class feelings.”⁶⁷

The post-screening discussion in a pidou setting acted as the sublimation of class education in Nanhanji. Both the local cadres and the masses gathered to share their ideas about the film in detail.⁶⁸ The main consensus among the participants was to see the film as “a criminal charge [filed by the people] of the landlords and capitalists” as well as “a record in blood and tears of the debt those class enemies owe to the laboring people.”⁶⁹ Sun Fengfu, one of the villagers, gave a testimony of the past related to what was shown in the film. An exhibition object that served as the incriminating evidence in the film triggered the memory of another villager, Sun Fenghe. Some other villagers shared more testimonial stories and denounced the evil of landlords they encountered in the past. The villagers who watched the documentary not only (re-)visited the Shandong exhibition, but also reenacted the most connected events both within the exhibitionary space in Shandong a year before and in their own living space on a daily basis: pidou, struggling against the class crime and evil enemies among the community and in themselves.⁷⁰ Their film-watching practice concerning the Shandong exhibition turned itself into

⁶⁷ Ibid, 54-6.

⁶⁸ There were a lot of post-screening discussions organized at the time when this documentary was screened widely. In most cases, there were local cadres monitoring and performing as the agent of the state policy; sometimes the discussions took place in schools and in the classroom, specifically intended for the students. See “Yongyuan buwang jieji ku, yongyuan gendang nao geming,” 永遠不忘階級苦，永遠跟黨鬧革命—觀眾座談紀錄片《不忘階級苦，永記血海仇》(Never forget the bitterness of class struggle, forever continue the revolution with the Party: a record of the film spectators’ meeting about the film *Never Forget Class Bitterness, Forever Remember the Hatred in the Sea of Blood*), *Dazhong ribao*, July 11st 1965, 3.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Unnamed reporter from *Dianying yishu*. “Yibu jieji jiaoyu de haojiaocai,” 一部階級教育的好教材. *Dianying yishu* 電影藝術 (Film Art). No. 4, 1965, 53.

a new form of exhibition where their encounters with the film (both the screening and post-screening meeting) and pidou were intertwined with each other.

Through enacting the pidou practice in its different modalities, the Shandong class education exhibition and the documentary fundamentally transform each other. In the Nanhanji villagers' summary, "creating a class education exhibition [like the filmed one in Shandong] and making a film as such are a kind of *pidou*, struggling against the class enemies and denouncing the old society." The ways in which the villagers watch the film, organize the post-screening discussion, and organize pidou meetings share the same paradigm.⁷¹ This view is also supported by other film spectators' reviews and some of the recorded exhibitiongoers' comments.⁷² The exhibition, the cinema, and pidou are all understood as both a practice of exposing, denouncing, and struggling against the class enemies in a public setting (with or without them present) and an idea of exposure, namely, making class enemies public. Such encounters reorganize the masses as participants and make their affective participation visible. Failing to show expressive and correct emotional reactions ("bitterness," "hatred," or "anger") might put a participant at risk of being excluded from the community built upon shared class feelings. More crucial for the cine-exhibition, or broadly, the museological warfare, than the sight of class struggle as something spectacular on display inside the exhibition and on the screen is the spectacle made by the

⁷¹ Ibid, 54.

⁷² People made connections between either the exhibition, or the film, and pidou to varying degrees. One example is shown in the review by a local author who watched the film in Jiangsu province. See Bingxun Cao. "Cong jilupian buwang jieji ku yongji xuehaichou suo lianxiang dao de," 從紀錄片《不忘階級苦，永記血海仇》所聯想到的 (What I think about after watching the documentary *Never Forget Class Bitterness, Forever Remember the Hatred in the Sea of Blood*), *dianying wenxue*, No. 2-3, 1966, 108. For more reviews, also see Yingzhou Qin. "Dui jiushehui qianglie kongsu, dui xinshenhui reqing gesong," 對舊社會強烈控訴，對新社會熱情歌頌 介紹影片《不忘階級苦，永記血海仇》 (Strongly denounce the old society, passionately praise the new society: an introduction to the film *Never Forget Class Bitterness, Forever Remember the Hatred in the Sea of Blood*), *Shanxi ribao*, July 6th 1965, 3. More examples are scattered in the comments left by the exhibitiongoers, some of which are documented in the exhibition catalog.

constant stream of masses as visitors, as viewers, and as pidou practitioners that crowd through it. The masses witness themselves as sufferers exhibited, potentially exposable targets, and also an emotional, performative collective invited to persecute class enemies and “judge for themselves,” under what the Party had ensured were the enduring binary identification system coded in “class.”⁷³

5.5 CONCLUSION

Overall, *Never Forget Class Bitterness* is strikingly identical to an alternative form of what Nora Alter calls an “essay film.” Based on highly layered texts and complicated arrangements of montage, it is a social or political critique that “uses sounds and images in unpredictable ways to *produce theory*.”⁷⁴ The film *Never Forget Class Bitterness*, an in-between, hybrid form that transgresses and dissolves generic parameters (feature, art, and documentary film) as much as institutional parameters (museum and exhibition), acts as a process of theoretical production around class struggle and pidou.

In contrast with conventional views, which see socialist museums and films as the leading forces in a top-down state propaganda system, or as idealistic imaginaries of bottom-up exhibition practices in contemporary human rights activism and grassroots protests, this chapter stresses the complexity of the mutual working of exhibition and cinema within a (Maoist) mass-

⁷³ I have been inspired by historiographies and studies around socialist exhibition practices in other national contexts and also National Socialist cases in Germany. For example, “German *Volk*, come and judge for yourselves!” was a slogan clearly stated for the Nazi exhibition *Degenerate Art* opened in Munich’s newly consecrated House of German Art on July 18, 1937. Goebbels’ Ministry for Propaganda and Popular Enlightenment planned it as a counter-exhibition to the first annual exhibition of *Great German Art*. For detailed analysis of this exhibition as a “counter-exhibition” and its implications, see Neil Levi. “Judge for Yourselves!”-The “Degenerate Art” Exhibition as Political Spectacle.” *October* 85 (1998): 41-64.

⁷⁴ Nora M. Alter. *The Essay Film after Fact and Fiction*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 10.

produced media network.⁷⁵ I suggest that neither top-down nor bottom-up frameworks can fully explain how the Mao-era practice of cine-exhibition performed *pidou* and complicated the role of mass participation in comparison with its contemporary counterparts. A close look at the Chinese case of the cine-exhibition offers a test case in the history of socialism and an opportunity to problematize the propositions, tactics, potentials, and limits of what has recently been called “curatorial activism,” “activist exhibition,” “activist museology,” or “museum activism.”⁷⁶

Additionally, the Maoist cine-exhibition draws our attention to a type of cinematic encounter that is revolutionary not in the sense that it was produced and used for socialist revolutionary purposes but in terms of its articulation of interactive, participatory, and possibly immersive experiences that resonate in so many ways with contemporary examples.⁷⁷ Such a case may seem, paradoxically, both familiar and alien to the Mao era informs contexts that need to be fully grasped before we can begin to appreciate twenty-first-century examples of participatory media.

⁷⁵ For instance, the issues of mass-produced archive, public displays, and mass participation in contemporary memorial museums and activist collections/exhibitions in the Occupy Wall Street movement are crucial and deserve much reflection. See Amy Sodaro. *Exhibiting Atrocity: Memorial Museums and the Politics of Past Violence*. (Rutgers University Press, 2018); Kylie Message. *Collecting Activism, Archiving Occupy Wall Street: Archiving Occupy Wall Street*. (Taylor and Francis, 2019).

⁷⁶ See Barry Bergdoll. “In the Wake of Rising Currents: The Activist Exhibition.” *Log*, no. 20 (2010): 159-67; Maura Reilly and Lucy R. Lippard. *Curatorial Activism: Towards an Ethics of Curating*. (London: Thames & Hudson, 2018); Robert R. Janes and Richard Sandell. *Museum Activism*. (Taylor and Francis, 2019); Olga Zabalueva and Armando Perla. “Activist Museology: Implementing Museum Theory Through Action.” *Future of Tradition in Museology*, 2019, 189-94.

⁷⁷ I borrow the notion of immersion or immersive from Alison Griffith’s historical work of media. It refers to “the sensation of entering a space that immediately identifies itself as somehow separate from the world and that eschews conventional modes of spectatorship in favor of a more bodily participation in the experience, including allowing the spectator to move freely around the viewing space (although this is not a requirement).” See Alison Griffiths. *Shivers down Your Spine: Cinema, Museums, and the Immersive View*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 2.

Chapter 6. ARCHIVEOLOGY OF PIDOU: FOUND

IMAGE/FOOTAGE AS MAOIST ARCHIVE

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Twentieth-century art made use of the archive and ready-mades in a variety of ways, ranging from El Lissitzky's *Demonstration Rooms* (1926), Marcel Duchamp's "museum in a box," *Boîte-en-valise* (1935–1941), and Bruce Conner's experimental art film, *A Movie* (1958), to the compilations of photographs by artists such as Gerhard Richter, Christian Boltanski, and Susan Hiller. As Sven Spieker remarks, the archive served as "a crucible of twentieth-century modernism"; Dadaists, Constructivists, and Surrealists in particular fashioned nonlinear, discontinuous archives that resisted hermeneutic reading and ordered presentation.¹ During the past decades, there has been a growing preoccupation with the idea of "the archive" in and across art worlds, screen cultures, mediascapes, and academia. More recently, theoretical fascinations with and interpretations of the archive, influenced by Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida, have shaped and been shaped by artistic, curatorial, and critical practices.² While film history has long

¹ For detailed discussions about multiple art practices that pitched themselves against the codes and institutions of bureaucracy, see Sven Spieker, *The Big Archive: Art from Bureaucracy*. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2008). Ingrid Schaffner and Matthias Winzen, eds., *Deep Storage: Collecting, Storing, and Archiving in Art* (Munich: Prestel, 1998); Rebecca Comay, ed., *Lost in the Archives* (Toronto: Alphabet City Media, 2002); David Company, ed., *Art and Photography* (London: Phaidon, 2003); Charles Merewether, ed., *The Archive* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006); and Okwui Enwezor, *Archive Fever: Uses of the Document in Contemporary Art* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2008.)

² For instance, influential articles by critics Benjamin Buchloh and Hal Foster, museum exhibitions such as *Deep Storage: Collecting, Storing and Archiving in Art*, and the anthology *The Archive: Documents of Contemporary Art* reflect this trend; public scholarship and activist archival projects such as *Multitude.asia* (諸眾之貌), a digital archive initiated by Taiwanese scholar Huang Sun-quan, who has worked in collaboration with students, artists, and researchers from the PRC and Taiwan in sorting, interviewing, editing, and sharing videos and texts about alternative cultural activities and space in Asia. Other examples of activist archival practices include "Archive of the People" (人人檔案), and "Umbrella Movement Visual Archive" (UMVA 雨傘運動視覺庫存) in Hong Kong.

been enmeshed in a complex relationship with archives, archival practices continue to influence contemporary filmmaking, cinephilia, and film historiographies in fundamental and refreshing ways. Fragments of filmed history, either fiction or nonfiction, are constantly being reassembled and restructured into new audiovisual encounters to animate the past and to create living archives of the present. Recent scholarship has brought the (re-)use of archival images in cinema—and specifically found footage filmmaking—to the foreground and thus problematized the essence of photographic media as preeminent forms of archival material.³ In line with such intellectual moves, my research explores the (post-)Maoist echo of the ongoing global phenomenon that many scholars identify as “archive fever” at the intersection of art/film production, media historiography, memory studies, and archival studies.⁴

Maoist icons and visuals have been repackaged into political pop art and avant-garde moving images with irony and cynicism. A body of artifacts and material objects labelled “Mao’s China” come to be on view in art galleries, museums, movie theaters, and consumer spaces around the world. Among all the capitalizable showcase items, what stands out as manifesting the intertwined violence and spectacle vis-à-vis Maoist class struggle is the image of *pidou* 批鬥 (literally, denouncing and struggling) or *pidouhui* 批鬥會 (struggle sessions), as I discuss in all previous chapters, a constellation of the generic mass gatherings in which those

³ See William C. Wees. *The Art and Politics of Found Footage Films*. (Anthology Film Archives. New York City. 1993); Jaimie Baron. *The Archive Effect: Found Footage and the Audiovisual Experience of History*. (London; New York: Routledge, 2013); Catherine Russell. *Archiveology: Walter Benjamin and Archival Film Practices*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018).

⁴ See Douglas Crimp. *On the Museum’s Ruins* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993); Jacques Derrida. *Archive Fever: a Freudian Impression*. (University of Chicago Press, 1996); B. H. D. Buchloh, “Gerhard Richter’s Atlas: The Anomic Archive,” *October* 88 (1999), 117-45; Hal Foster, “An Archival Impulse,” *October* 110 (Fall 2004), 3-22; Charles Merewether. *The Archive*. (Whitechapel; MIT Press, 2006); Jaimie Baron. “Contemporary Documentary Film and ‘Archive Fever’: History, the Fragment, the Joke.” *Velvet Light Trap*, no. 60, 2007; Okwui Enwezor. *Archive Fever: Uses of the Document in Contemporary Art*. (International Center of Photography; Steidl Publishers, 2008).

labelled as class enemies were accused and tormented in public. Pidou is well known as the landmark of a bygone era and a politically verboten image. Pidou have proliferated as a web of reused and recreated images that are scattered in recycled folk materials, autobiographical accounts, testimonial artifacts, and marketplaces of unofficial Maoist memories.⁵ The chapter looks at how a collection of “lost” footage and images about pidou “found” through border-crossing film and media production have shaped the need for us to rethink the question of *recycling* and *circulation* as central to intersecting histories of Maoist imagery and global cinema. I propose that we must read *found image/footage* as integral to a “history of cinema without names,” widely acknowledged but rarely treated as a “history.”⁶ As film scholar Catherine Russell notes, “archiveology” is a mode of critical thinking derived from Walter Benjamin’s work. It provides valuable tools for grasping the implications of the practice of remixing, recycling, and re-configuring the image bank.⁷ I borrow the term as a working concept to renew the notion of “the archive” (檔案, 資料, 文獻, 或 庫存 in Chinese) in order to rethink the multiple uses of both archival image and its recycled form (found image/footage 舊片衍用, 拾得影像) through the cinematic.⁸ The term allows me to draw out and explore particular threads of engagement between the archive and moving images.

⁵ As for studies around unofficial archives and popular memories of the Mao era, see Sebastian Veg. *Popular Memories of the Mao Era from Critical Debate to Reassessing History*. (Hong Kong University Press, 2019).

⁶ See Film Forum 2015 Udine; Görz, et al. *A History of Cinema Without Names: A Research Project*. Mimesis, 2016.

⁷ See Catherine Russell. *Archiveology: Walter Benjamin and Archival Film Practices*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018).

⁸ For discussions about the vocabulary and translation of “the archive” in the Chinese-language context, see Lu Pan. “Translating Visual Archives: On the Making of the New through Three Cases of Hong Kong.” *Journal of Visual Art Practice* 18, no.1 (2019): 81-98.

Acknowledging the crucial role of *found image/footage* in transnational visual economies and historiographic inquiries enables access to a *new* past and calls into question the old cinematic medium itself. With a focus on archival images around pidou, this chapter is an attempt to present a new way of thinking about moving images beyond both the national cinema paradigm and the familiar terrain of film and art historiography—auteurs, masterpieces, genres, major studios, aesthetic trends and movements.

In what follows, I describe the limited and changing visibility of pidou in contemporary Chinese films and mediascapes through the first two sections: pidou as *images lost and found* and as *visual knowledge*. Then I look at the enduring reproduction and border-crossing circulation of pidou images, which connects and mediates the past and the present in a global context. Reflecting on archival work for my dissertation project, the third section re-archives my self-ethnographic encounters with the flows of an assembly of still and moving images concerning pidou both in their archival and recycled forms. Found footage serves both as archival genre and methodological framework for me to explore the enduring reproduction and global circulation of pidou images. Through exploring cases of pidou as *found scene/footage*, the chapter also elucidates how, paradoxically, such images have been integral to both the making and unmaking of justice, as they were—and are—circulated, recycled, appropriated, and deployed in the transnational context at various moments. I argue that pidou has been, *in and of* itself, an image-making machine across borders, times, and genres, as well as a regime of visibility not necessarily coded in “class.”

6.2 PIDOU AS IMAGES LOST AND FOUND

The violence of the Maoist era is well known, but the (audio)visual form of its cruelty as exemplified in pidou is not. Pidou somehow survives as a history of “the missing pictures.”⁹ To put it differently, the violence of Chinese class struggle was and is visible in limited ways, mostly documented *without living images* in a chronicle of events and practices involving certain individuals as targets. This statement brings to life classic issues raised by the fields of genocide studies and Holocaust studies.¹⁰ The term of “without living images” could be interpreted on two levels that are not necessarily contradictory. First, the actual performing of the cruelest dimensions of pidou seem to have almost entirely escaped the movie cameras *or* remained invisible due to the concealment and closure of filmed records and audiovisual materials. Second, no footage whatsoever succeeded in depicting pidou and its violence properly; scholars have always questioned whether any image or film can adequately represent or reenact a catastrophic event such as mass killings. Thus, *found footage* offers a renewed methodological possibility for approaching pidou through living images. It is worth noting that the image of pidou could be fully produced and known only through an ongoing process of its dynamic and even belated circulation, recycling, and re-circulation. Without such recycling and reproduction

⁹ The phrase of “the missing picture” is borrowed from Rithy Panh’s autobiographic animated documentary *The Missing Picture* (2013) about the violence and trauma of the Khmer Rouge ruled Cambodia.

¹⁰ Similar claims have been made or noted in historical scholarship and mass media accounts. See Leshu Torchin, “Since We Forgot: Remembrance and Recognition of the Armenian Genocide in Virtual Archives,” in *The Image and the Witness: Trauma, Memory and Visual Culture*, Frances Guerin and Roger Hallas. (London: Wallflower Press, 2010), 82-97; Vicente Sánchez-Biosca, “Non-Author Footage, Fertile Re-Appropriations. On Atrocity Images from Cambodia’s Genocide,” in *A History of Cinema Without Names*, ed. Diego Cavallotti et al. (Udine: Mimesis, 2015), 137-45; Lior Zylberman, and Vicente Sánchez-Biosca. “Reflections on the Significance of Images in Genocide Studies: Some Methodological Considerations.” *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal* 12, No. 2 (2018): 1-17.

across temporal and generic divides, the moving images of pidou would have all but disappeared and perhaps never have become available for viewers and scholars today.

Pidou has been accessible with varying degrees of recycling and restricted circulation across time. Due to lack of mainstream access, Chinese people would generally find examples of pidou only via unofficial sources and unauthorized films, most of which revolve around the Chinese Great Cultural Revolution (1966–1976). Apart from *Farewell, My Concubine*, examples include a set of films marked as “the underground”: banned features such as *Hibiscus Town* (1986), *Blue Kite* (1993) and *To Live* (1994); independent documentaries like *1966 My Time in the Red Guards* (1993), *Searching for Lin Zhao’s Soul* (2004), and *Though I am Gone* (2006); and dissent artists’ personal testimonial artifacts, such as Wang Shui-bo’s *Sunrise Over Tiananmen Square* (1998), Liu Dahong’s *Childhood* series (2013), and Zhang Xiaotao’s *The Spring of Huangjueping* (2016).¹¹ Non-China-based audiences are readily able to visualize pidouhui through various sites: within a history classroom, in archives and libraries, through popular prints, or on the screen. A visual economy of pidou is shaped through overseas pedagogical materials about Chinese revolution and Maoism; mass-mediated archival images, including Maoist newsreel footage and amateur photographs; and non-PRC epic film productions concerning the Cultural Revolution, such as *The Last Emperor* (1987) and *The Red Violin* (1998), among others.¹²

¹¹ It would be difficult to suggest that their cumulative effect has been to endow that image with any kind of mass viral visibility, let alone the sort of iconic status that certain *pidou* images might possess in terms of political violence and human-rights activism. Rather, my argument is that these images, in part because of their fugitive, ephemeral character, perform a crucial role within the context of ongoing memory politics.

¹² For examples, documentaries such as *Morning Sun* (2003) that include actual scenes of *pidou* have been distributed outside of China. While these are hardly accessible in China, Chinese people who live or travel abroad are still able to watch. Features films including *The Last Emperor* (1987), *The Red Violin* (1998), and so forth (partially featuring scenes of *pidou* during the Cultural Revolution) are well-known examples that many Chinese people have been allowed to get the access through online film piracy.

The changing visibility of pidou shows a testing ground of people's access to archival materials of the Mao era. New and diverse forms of *unofficial memories* (or what people call “popular memories”) of the Mao era have appeared over the last decade in print and online publications, on film, and among personal collectors and amateur historians.¹³ Pidou has become even more visible and materially accessible, with the ascendancy of the digital era and the pervasive use of electronic images. An increasing body of historical images (mostly undated or unauthored, from untraceable sources) have appeared on media websites, in public WeChat accounts, and in digital flea markets, particularly among the stock photos of e-commerce platforms like *Kongfuzi* or *7788*. One of the most eye-catching examples from Chinese websites hosted overseas is a set of undated photos with “Anti-Party Element Xi Zhongxun” being paraded through the streets by Red Guards.¹⁴ Another domestically circulated example is a list of unsourced photos from *Sohu*, including one with the sensational title *Shameful Struggle Sessions in the Cultural Revolution: Pushing and Struggling against People into the Mass Grave*.¹⁵ Pidou is a visual cue of how accessible and speakable the Maoist (violent) past can be for both popular culture consumers and historians. It becomes a recurring label on memorabilia that capitalizes on nostalgia within the post-socialist mediascape. Images about pidou can command record prices at

¹³ Amateur historians can refer to journalists or other people without formal academic training in history departments or to historians whose field of study is not officially the Mao era—some of whom conduct independent investigative research, oral history and/or testimonial filmmaking projects (often among family members or local community witnesses).

¹⁴ “Scenes of Cultural Revolution Denunciation: 11 Photos of Xi Jinping's Father Xi Zhongxun, etc. Being Paraded Through the Streets” [*Wenge Pidou Changjing Xi Jinping zhi Fu Xi Zhongxun youjie deng 11 zhang tu*], *Boxun News*, January 11, 2012. http://boxun.com/news/gb/z_special/2012/01/201201110210.shtml. (accessed on December 21, 2018).

¹⁵ See “Shameful Struggle Sessions in the Cultural Revolution: Pushing and Struggling against People into the Mass Grave”, *Sohu, Culture Channel*, April 25, 2013. <http://cul.sohu.com/20130425/n373885613.shtml> (accessed on Sept 5, 2018).

online bidding sites, but it also tests the boundary of scholarly knowledge amidst increasing censorship and information control in the official archives and textbooks. Scholars have noted the Maoist or post-Maoist period's popular cultural fascination with pidou on different occasions, but rarely as the primary concept of historical analysis, hardly as an art history or a broader (audio)visual media culture of its own, and never in terms of the interrelated socio-cultural and judicious functions so often assigned to it. Few scholars address pidou directly as something beyond the chaotic violence of the Great Cultural Revolution, and fewer make it a specific subject of their research inquiry.¹⁶ Susie Linfield is an exception among the few scholars whose work sheds light on visual representations of pidou. While Linfield turns to the newly released photographic records of pidou, she considers pidou merely as “the calling card of the Cultural Revolution,” namely, the legitimized lawless encounter during the specific decade-long period—a kind of public humiliation marked by the “rule of the mob” in opposition to legal punishment.¹⁷

¹⁶ Most of scholarly attention paid to *pidou* partially touches on its different components and associated practices and is fixed to the field of Cultural-Revolution studies: for example, about criticism and “self-criticism”, see Lowell Dittmer. “The Structural Evolution of ‘Criticism and Self-Criticism’.” *The China Quarterly* 53 (1973): 708-29; for linguistic practices of denunciation, see Fengyuan Ji. “The Public Criticism Meeting: Discourse, Ritual, and Formulae,” in *Linguistic Engineering: Language and Politics in Mao's China*. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004), 161-72; as for rituals and symbolic practices, see Daniel Leese. *Mao Cult: Rhetoric and Ritual in the Cultural Revolution*. (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Tuo Wang. “Enfranchised Violence: Public Struggle Meetings,” in *The Cultural Revolution and Overacting: Dynamics between Politics and Performance*. (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2014), 103-26; and many other works.

¹⁷ See Susie Linfield. “China: From Malraux's Dignity to the Red Guards' Shame.” *The Cruel Radiance: Photography and Political Violence*. (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2010), 101-23. Victoria Gao is another exceptional scholar and she also writes about one single photograph of *pidouhui* (by the same photographer Li Zhensheng as Linfield discusses in her work). See Victoria Gao. “Chinese Political Persecution, Red Square, Harbin, 1966,” in *Getting the Picture: The Visual Culture of the News*. edited by Jason E. Hill and Vanessa R. Schwartz (Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), 88-90.

6.3 PIDOU AS VISUAL KNOWLEDGE?

While images of pidou are so often logically related to the Cultural Revolution, I would like to highlight a visual that reveals the suspicious nature of this “bloodline.” The image is derived from *Forever Young* (2018), a Chinese film that sparked debate. While the film was completed in 2012 to celebrate Tsinghua’s hundredth anniversary in 2011, censors blocked release until January 2018. The film became a box-office hit when it was finally released. Based on real cases, and spanning a hundred years of modern Chinese history, the film is stunning not because of its over-the-top craft and sensationalist approach, nor the multi-perspective, intertwined storylines about four generations of Tsinghua University graduates (played by an all-star cast). Rather, it is because of one episode that traces the life of a young woman whose accidental mistakes lead to political charges resulting in social ostracism, humiliation, torture, and eventually another woman’s suicide. One of the most controversial moments in the film is a scene of the young woman being cruelly shamed in public (Figure 6-1). Through the formal details of the scene, people could easily identify the image as pidou that is supposed to be politically sensitive and previously unachievable in a film for public release throughout China.

The questions that Chinese audiences’ debates have raised about the film remain unsolved: Is it really a reference to the Cultural Revolution if the scene that seems to be pidou is set in 1962, five years before the start of the Revolution?¹⁸ Is the scene historically authentic or not?¹⁹ Is such representation a form of “historical nihilism” due to the general lack of factual

¹⁸ While this episode of the film is set in 1962 before the Cultural Revolution, there have been noticeable misunderstandings and misrecognitions such as: “*Forever Young* straight-forwardly depicts innocent people falsely accused of spying being beaten to death by an angry mob during the Cultural Revolution.” See <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1085539.shtml> (accessed Sept 30, 2018)

¹⁹ Most of the debates took place online, for example, people discussed via Zhihu platform “Is that true or not: The *pidouhui* in which a person could be tortured to death happened in 1962?” See <https://www.zhihu.com/question/266219355> (accessed August 15, 2018)

rigor, intellectual sophistication, and historical reflection? Or is it instead a filmmaker's bold move through playing with censorship policy and making sensitive subject matter somewhat explicit? Or is the scene merely a byproduct of the negotiations between the filmmakers and censors? Some of the debates were expanded to the generic pattern of pidou in comparable films, historical photographs, and vernacular printed illustrations. People discussed how other viewers would take a political stance, or they evaluated a person's attitude toward the history of socialism according to that person's response to the scene of pidou in *Forever Young*.²⁰



Figure 6-1 The pidou scene (film still) in *Forever Young* (2018)

Whether or not one can consider the pidou scene as integral to a wider history of images, *Forever Young* makes *pidou* an *image of images* rather than just one single kind of Maoist visual icon in its own right. The image endorsed in the scene from *Forever Young* shows both a reflection and refraction of pidou at the same time. In either case, it is less about the actual practice of pidou than how pidou was experienced and is remembered, and how its images have been archived, circulated, and remade. As such, the *Forever Young* debate is built through the mutual contradiction between two versions of pidou: one as conventionally perceptible and the other as unimagined beyond Cultural Revolution discourses. The twin images remind us of a

²⁰ During my field work and oral historical project in China, more than five interviewees immediately asked me about my opinions about or talked to me about their or their friends' various reaction to the scene of *pidou* in *Forever Young*, once they noticed *pidou* as one of the most key topics and concerns in my research.

possible parallax history—rather than a parallel one—of pidou as visual knowledge beyond the Cultural Revolution paradigm. It is not my intention to supply any essentialist response to the *Forever Young* debates by correcting the “authentic” image of pidou or restoring a more valid version of filmic and historical analysis. My aim is rather to show how a global perspective on pidou and cinema helps us to free the notion of pidou from the confines within which the prevailing historiographies and representations have imprisoned it.

6.4 SEEING PIDOU THROUGH MOVING IMAGES

While historians usually hold on to an obsession with *the very original* at the core of a historical investigation, *the allure of the archives*, as Arlette Farge argues, is that meaning is discovered through the act of copying and recopying.²¹ Furthermore, *recycling* echoes and goes beyond copy-making by making sense of the fragments of a past time *lost and found* from the archives. Recycling promises a journey where meanings are rediscovered and remade through the gap and negotiation between the new and the old. How does a piece of footage turn into an archive or a document? It does so when it is excised from its original documentary form and narrative origins. In other words, recycling is necessary. If a previously filmed material is lost by being either hidden, overlooked, or underexamined, it is *found* once its temporality is shifted. Found footage can be understood as a kind of human encounter with moving images, or rather, one’s relationship to the archives, which defines and mediates itself in the intertwined act of recycling and circulation. Such a relationship fundamentally communicates different temporalities and blurs their boundaries.

²¹ Arlette Farge. *The Allure of the Archives*. (New Haven: Yale University Press), 2013, 17.

My own archival encounters with pidou and its images define and, in turn, are shaped by ways of rethinking found footage. From 2017 to 2019, I conducted archival fieldwork for my dissertation and travelled to a variety of archival sites at universities (e.g., Hoover Institute at Stanford), Asia Art Archive, museums, smaller municipal archives, local and national libraries, and so forth. Scholars have widely cited Derrida's words in *Archive Fever* that the archivization "produces as much as it records the event."²² If such a description of archivization points to the nature of knowledge production by archivists, librarians, news media, and professional institutes for archival preservation, I seek to highlight archival research less as a project of factfinding through textual examination and more as co-production, self-archivization, and fundamentally ethnographic encounter. An ethnographic understanding of archival research serves to honor the voices of the people with whom I speak within and beyond archival sites. It honors both the original and mediated voices of the archives themselves, and also the uncanny, parallel, and contradictory elements in our encounters with spaces, materials, and people. Due to ongoing restrictions in the access to certain archival materials (1949–1976) housed in China's official sites (such as Beijing Municipal Archives and Sichuan Provincial Archives) or the site-specific closure of film archives (the Central Newsreel and Documentary Film Studio and China Film Archives), I had to (re-)discover and work in a set of unconventional archival sites. Those sites included non-official library, private museum, industrial repository, flea market, and personal storage room.

With both personal and social stakes in mind, I intended to shift my focus from what was officially claimed to be *the unavailable* to personal items and visual ephemera overlooked, forgotten, and/or suppressed from dominant official narratives. During the whole process, the

²² Jacques Derrida and Eric Prenowitz, "Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression," *Diacritics* 25, no. 2 (July 1, 1995): 17.

notions of “archive,” “archival genre,” and “archival site” remained in flux and were redefined all the time. Apart from the written sources in multiple physical sites, I also looked into online image databases, oral historical accounts, and other virtual archives (of nonfiction artifacts including newsreel footage, photo essays, documentary clips, and audiovisual memoirs), and I considered those as both primary and secondary sources. As I placed the recycled (audio)visual materials side by side with their archival source films and images, *found footage* became one of the most crucial and stimulating archival genres, as well as a mode of thinking.

In my archival exploration, I always “found” and re-discovered pidou through my encounters with images in motion. During my archival research trip in China in 2017, I was introduced by a colleague friend to a relatively recent English-language documentary, *Mao in Colour: A Study in Tyranny* (2015), released through the *Discovery HD World* channel.²³ This friend emphasized the film as “a piece of unusual material with rare color footage of an interesting crowd scene” (Figure 6-2). I found their description stimulating in terms of vocabulary. “It looks like pidou. It’s not from the Cultural Revolution, though. It is too ‘*real*’ to be *true*. Maybe because it is in color, quite unprecedented[ed] at that time. Or because I never saw this kind of footage before. Part of the documentary was claimed to be from the newly declassified CIA archives. That would be great if you could take a look and let me know if it was a *real pidou* scene,” they said.

²³ The documentary was made by Big Ape Media, a media company in UK. Not surprisingly, *Mao in Colour*, with official Chinese subtitles available, was easily accessible on YouTube afterward and attracted more Chinese-speaking audiences to view and leave various, conflicting comments.



Figure 6-2 A scene of struggling against the landlord in an extreme long shot, screenshot from *Mao in Colour: A Study of Tyranny* (2015).

The terms “looks like,” “true,” and “real” were remarkable. I was curious about how the scene could be at once *fake* and *true*, *known* and *unknown*, as *pidou*, to a Chinese scholar trained in anthropology and filmmaking. My friend gave me the “authority” to examine the authenticity of a film scene as actual *pidou* practice. More precisely, it is neither the film scene nor my knowledge of *pidou* that needs to be tested. Rather, it is the boundary of the dominant definition and reception of *pidou* aligned to its conventionally assumed appearance that is being questioned and contested. The hidden artificiality of documentary filmmaking in dual temporalities (one profilmic in the Maoist past and the other, in the present, the making of *Mao in Colour* without actual filming) and potential behind-the-scenes dynamics across time also need to be brought to the testing ground. This contestation became a task for the visual literacy of people like me in search of the so-called historical facts of Maoist class struggle through *pidou*.

After watching the documentary, I understood why my friend had questioned the authenticity of the film. What confused her and made me hesitate to make any conclusions was the ambivalent quality of the footage, which seemed to be both a *familiar* and *defamiliarized* image of struggling against the landlords (*doudizhu* 鬥地主) as discussed in previous chapters. As shown in the textual information of the onscreen banner, the filmed event is a “struggle meeting for liberating peasants” (*nongmin fanshen douzheng dahui* 農民翻身鬥爭大會).

Meanwhile, elements such as camera angle, costume, gesture, overacted facial expressions of the masses, and the seemingly choreographed movement of the crowds all point to the performative nature of both the depicted event and the filming itself. Among the scholars who have emphasized the theatricality of Chinese revolution and Maoist political campaigns, Wang Tuo specifically regards pidou as one of the many ways in which the masses lived out revolutionary “scripts.”²⁴ For Wang, pidou is integral to “the overacting phenomenon,” the internal mechanism that mobilized Chinese people’s revolutionary acts and contributed to their eagerness to continue performing ideal Maoist subjects. The ambivalent image of pidou in *Mao in Colour*, as both “true” and “fake,” exposes what Wang Tuo describes as the paradox between the performative nature of *overacting* and the necessity for Maoist performers not to appear to be acting.²⁵

This “problem footage” served as found footage again, traveling from my archival collection to the corpus for my presentational and pedagogical experiments. Later that year, I recycled the footage in conjunction with clips and images from other source films to make a videographic essay called *Cinema as Show Trial* for a visual anthropology workshop in which a group of us worked with the Cambodian filmmaker Rithy Panh. My work juxtaposed two sets of footage and played with split screen and audiovisual dissonance (Figure 6-3). The footage from *Mao in Colour* was shown in parallel with footage from the Maoist documentary *Great Land Reform* (1953), which was replayed and repackaged via the Nostalgia Theater Channel (*huaijiu juchang* 懷舊劇場) of the Chinese Central Television Station (CCTV) in recent years. I see both

²⁴ For more detailed discussions about the performative nature of Chinese revolution and continuous class struggle, see Xiaomei Chen. *Acting the Right Part: Political Theater and Popular Drama in Contemporary China*. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002); Leese, 2011; DeMare, 2015.

²⁵ Tuo Wang, 105-8. According to Wang, overacting means the way of acting in an effort to “compensate for the existential gap between performer and character with more action,” which shuts down any space for spectators’ imaginations and interpretations (97).

pieces of recycled archival footage as mutually resonant in the aftermath of their ideologically antagonistic production. The two films were shot more or less in the same period—on the one hand, supposedly from two fully opposed perspectives within the Cold War context, and yet, on the other hand, with highly similar compositional details and emotionally charged human looks. In some ways, the two pieces of footage speak to and testify to each other, as two possible versions of the pidou event.

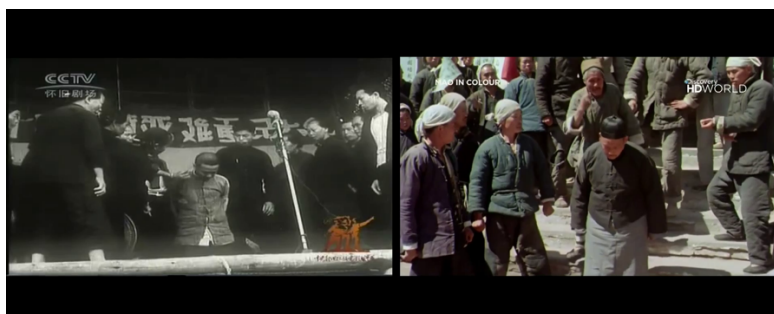


Figure 6-3 Two Versions of Pidou in Parallel: Still from the video essay I made: *Cinema as Show Trial* (2017)

Cinema as Show Trial is more an invitation to a thought experiment than a found footage film. A collaborative project of self-theorizing is at play for viewers and videomaker (myself). I hoped the film would be a rhetorical “show trial” in which contemporary viewers could watch and rethink pidou without being trapped in the Cold War ideological framework. One year later, at a conference presentation in Germany, the found footage clip from my video essay became one of my show-and-tell items to demonstrate visually what pidou might have looked like in the Maoist past. During the dinner conversation, a senior historian shared their concerns about the artifice of *pidou* footage with me: “Do you think the footage really represents pidou? Was everything possibly staged for the camera or not? Did the so-called CIA official who travelled to China at that time, or the filmmaker of *Mao in Colour* somehow ‘fake’ it? It just looks very artificial to me.” We discussed our shared experiences of examining the archives of Mao-era materials and

finding an overall lack of audiovisual evidence of pidou.²⁶ The discussion ended with strategies and suggestions for me to keep exploring the original sources of the footage and comparing it with other photographic and filmic materials I have collected and will access in the future.

As my archival work further developed, the following questions found their way into my renewed and ongoing research agenda and methodological commitments. What can we learn from such questionable footage about pidou as addressed above? What happens when scholars flock to flea markets and roam in moving image archives? How do they develop proprietary relationships to their sources in circulation? My gradual examination of the archival materials and their recycled forms across border and genre revealed both the hybrid looks and the common visual mechanisms (including framing strategies, spatial order, figure placement, etc.) of pidou. The comparative analysis of a handful of images and scenes render pidou even more visible, technically and intellectually. Months later, I took a big step forward when I found access to soviet documentaries and newsreel footage via a Russian archival site. I came across a familiar face in the soviet documentary *New China* (1950). While other parts of the two scenes are different, the two share certain aspects of *mise-en-scène* and are perhaps based on the same *pidou* event shot from different angles. I was able to capture at least one single screenshot of each with almost the same look (Figure 6-4).



Figure 6-4 Two scenes of the pidou event, respectively from *New China* (1950, Soviet Union) and from *Mao in Colour: A Study of Tyranny* (2015, USA/UK).

²⁶ The very few exceptional cases included one occasion when this historian visited a collector friend's house and happened to watch rare documentary footage of the actual *pidou* meeting against Wang Guangmei during the Cultural Revolution.

A few more interesting findings need to be noted. The Chinese documentary *Great Land Reform* (1953) and *A Night over China* (1971), a Soviet documentary by Aleksandr Medvedkin share some scenes related to pidou, which is recognizable through the same object of struggle: the landowner, with a small cap, tied up on a stage surrounded by the masses. In this case, most likely, Medvedkin and his crew were able to access the footage from the Chinese documentary, and they reused it in a different context. Produced after the Sino-Soviet Split, *A Night over China* generally offers critical engagement with the militarization and aggressive foreign policy of China.²⁷ A variety of images of pidou featured from time to time in the Soviet film serve a purpose opposite of that in the source film in 1950s China. In addition, I gave photographic archives further examination and thought in conjunction with my collection of moving images. One of the most famous Mao-era photos that depict land reform and pidou in the form of struggling against the landlords is by Chinese photographer Qi Guanshan: *A Landlord is Publicly Criticized* (1950). As I looked through multiple scenes of *The New China*, I noticed a resemblance between the man being struggled against in this film and the landlord figures in Qi's photo and in *Mao in Colour*. Through a close reading of visual details, it appears, also, that one of the male peasants (noticeable throughout a close-up shot) in *Mao in Colour* appears to be the same one photographed by Qi Guanshan.

²⁷ Concerning Cold War-era filmmaking as a window into collaboration and confrontation across the Sino-Soviet split, see Elidor Mëhilli. "Globalized Socialism, Nationalized Time: Soviet Films, Albanian Subjects, and Chinese Audiences across the Sino-Soviet Split." *Slavic Review* 77, no. 3 (2018): 611-37. For some more (and recent) scholarship on the Sino-Soviet split, see Lorenz M. Luthi. *The Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the Communist World*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008); Mingjiang Li. *Mao's China and the Sino-Soviet Split: Ideological Dilemma*. (London; New York: Routledge, 2012); Donald S. Zagoria. *Sino-Soviet Conflict, 1956-1961*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015); Austin Jersild. "Socialist Exhibits and Sino-Soviet Relations, 1950-60." *Cold War History* 18, no. 3 (2018): 275-89; Danhui Li and Yafeng Xia. *Mao and the Sino-Soviet Split, 1959-1973: A New History*. (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2018).

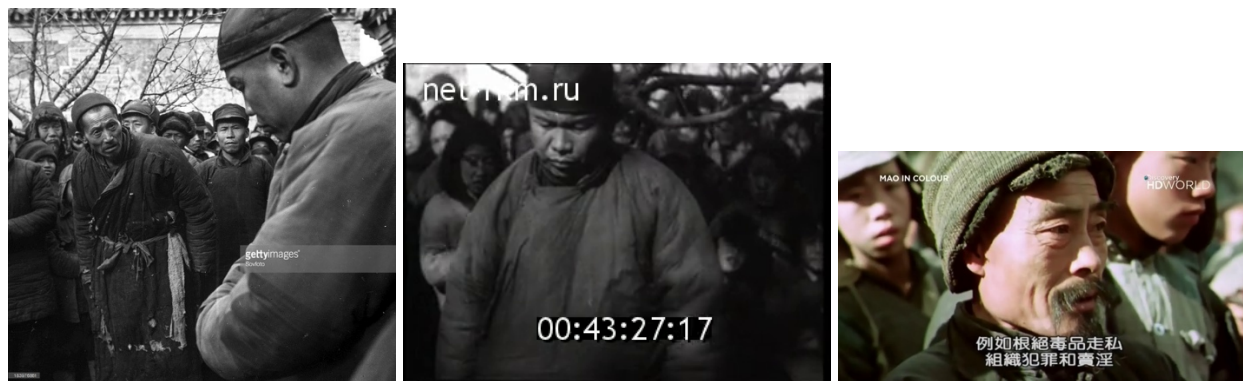


Figure 6-5 The same 1950 pidou event depicted across different photographic and filmic images: Qi Guanshan’s photographic work *A Landlord is publicly criticized* (1950, China) (left), documentary *The New China* (1950, USSR) (middle), and documentary *Mao in Colour* (2015, USA/UK) (right).

Likewise, another landlord as an object being struggled against in *Mao in Colour* appears across a series of films: the Maoist feature film *Blood Monument* (1964), Japanese TV documentary *Mao Tsetung and the Cultural Revolution* (1969) made by Nagisa Oshima, and again the Soviet documentary *A Night over China* (1971) (Figure 6-6 and 6-7).



Figure 6-6 Pidou as found footage, with the same landlord, in feature film *Blood Monument* (1964, China) (Left and Middle) and documentary *A Night over China* (1971, USSR) (Right).



Figure 6-7 Pidou as found footage, with the same landlord, in *Mao Tsetung and the Cultural Revolution* (1969, Japan) (Left) and *Mao in Colour* (2015, USA/UK) (right)

Yet limited access and lack of archival evidence prevented me from further investigating a set of key questions: Which individuals/group(s) originally filmed the footage? Who set up the filming event, and in what way and for what purpose? What enabled the transnational flow of the footage? (Was there a footage database not only sharable between China and its Soviet brother, but also accessible in countries beyond the Communist Bloc—for example, Japan? How did it work?) Did the depicted pidou scenes across those different films really refer to the same event(s)? Was it staged specifically for the (movie) camera? If so, how? Were there multiple cameras at work at the same time as the event took place? If so, what role did the Chinese cameramen, filmmakers, crew members, and non-Chinese crew play, and how did they work both individually and together? Although the original source and background of the footage, as well as the specific contexts and actual processes of its production, reproduction, and circulation across borders are unknown and have yet to be clarified, seeing pidou *through* and *as* found footage in this case enables us to develop the analytical notion of “recycling.”²⁸ Recycling breaks down the separation of old and new and instead stresses a dialectic and dynamic relationship between the two.²⁹ Through various modes of recycling, archival images and footage thus stay in constant flux between use, storage, reuse, and rediscovery. Recycled images are *moving* to constitute “a laboratory of gazes dedicated to the idea that it is possible to rework buried

²⁸ Other works concerning “recycling” that I have benefitted from include Helen Siu, “Recycling Rituals,” in *Unofficial China: Popular Culture and Thought in the People’s Republic*, ed. Perry Link, Richard Madsen, and Paul Pickowicz (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1989), 132–34; Prasenjit Duara. *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China*. (University of Chicago Press, 1995); Ravi Sundaram. “Recycling Modernity: Pirate Electronic Cultures in India.” *Third Text* 13, no. 47 (1999): 59-65; Madeleine Yue Dong. *Republican Beijing: The City and Its Histories*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); and Sarah Hill. “Recycling History and the Never-Ending Life of Cuban Things.” *Anthropology Now* 3, no. 1 (2011): 1-12.

²⁹ As Prasenjit Duara insightfully explains, “Neither the notion of simple continuity nor that of invention can do justice to the subtle transactions between the past and the present. The past does not shape the present simply by persisting in it. It enables the transformation of the present and in that transformation, is itself transformed.” See Prasenjit Duara. *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China*. (University of Chicago Press, 1995), 76. Cited in Dong 2003, 11.

fragments, to fill the gap between distant acts of seeing and a more recent eagerness to know.”³⁰ “Recycling” describes and conceptualizes the primary mode of material and media cultural production and circulation that came to characterize filmmaking in or about the Maoist lifeworld, historical research on Maoist China, and even the potential that the cinematic medium holds for the global leftist imaginary.

A recent Russian documentary about Mao’s China and its Chinese reception partially solves the problem revealed in my earlier archival work and inquiries. In late September of 2019, the Rossiya TV Channel of the All-Russia State Television and Radio Broadcasting Company (VGTRK) aired a six-episode documentary, *The Rebirth of China* (2019), dedicated to both the seventieth birthday of the PRC and the seventieth anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Russia.³¹ Featured in the documentary is rare color footage about the founding of the PRC, released for the first time, though it was originally shot by a group of seventeen soviet documentary cameramen sent to China in 1949. For several months, the soviet group was filming a documentary about the establishment of the PRC and the victory of the Chinese people under the CCP’s leadership in the war with the Kuomintang (KMT) Chinese

³⁰ Marco Bertozzi. “The Poetics of Reuse: Festivals, Archives and Cinematic Recycling in Italian Documentary.” *Studies in Documentary Film* V, no. 2-3 (2011): 99.

³¹ The documentary is also translated in other titles such as “*The Second Birth of the Celestial Empire*” in some media reports. In China, it is called *zhongguo de chongsheng* 中國的重生. The six mini episodes were aired on the Russia 24 channel beginning from September 16 and then on September 29, a documentary summarizing the most valuable colored shots were released. According to the director Alexey Denisov, the film “was a symbolic memorial to Soviet documentary cameramen, and a present to the viewers and Chinese people.” See Umer Jamshaid, “Rossiya TV Channel to Air Unique Color Footage About Birth of People’s Republic of China,” UrduPoint. Sept 14, 2019. See <https://www.urdupoint.com/en/world/rossiya-tv-channel-to-air-unique-color-footag-711440.html> (accessed on October 15th, 2019); Xu Fan, “Restored version of Soviet-made documentary on China screened in Beijing,” China Daily, Sept 23rd, 2019. See <https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201909/23/WS5d8872a8a310cf3e3556cfla.html> (accessed on October 5th, 2019); Alexander Balitsky, Mikhail Artyukhin, Inna Kazantseva, “Communist China Rediscovered With Lost Soviet Footage! Classified Scenes Seen for the First Time!” *Vesti* (Russian TV news program), October 23rd, 2019, See <https://www.vesti.ru/doc.html?id=3202479&cid=4441> (accessed October 25th, 2019).

Nationalist Party. Some of the footage was later used in the black-and-white documentary *The Victory of the Chinese People* (1950).³² In other words, the Russian televisual documentary *The Rebirth of China* recycles footage that is both new and old from the 1950s. The recycled parts include footage of at least two different pidou events. A few Chinese Internet users celebrated the release by initiating discussions about related historical issues and making a variety of media byproducts via social media. Some of them who spoke Russian offered free Chinese subtitles for each episode, and they posted the video links for public views and downloads.



Figure 6-8 Film stills from *The Rebirth of China* (2019, Russia)

Many of the online comments on Episode 5 specifically resonated with the *Forever Young* film debate discussed earlier. Some comments show concerns about justice that link the past and the present. For instance, one commenter wrote that the footage is so rare and valuable that it allows us to see “how to put Old China on trial (*shenpan jiu zhongguo*),” in color, with the actual soundtrack of that time. Other commenters wrote: “It is just a pidou, isn’t it? It must be

³² For an in-depth case study of reenactment in the 1950 documentary from a comparative perspective, see Ying Qian. “Crossing the Same River Twice: Documentary Re-enactment and the Founding of PRC Documentary Cinema,” *The Oxford Handbook of Chinese Cinemas*, edited by Carlos Rojas and Eileen Cheng-Yin-Chow. (Oxford University Press, 2013), 590-609.

earlier than the chaotic time depicted in *Farewell, My Concubine*”; “I know little about the Cultural Revolution but I would read this [pidou] as the archetype of what happened later then”; “Why don’t we do a pidou nowadays to struggle against those rich real estate developers and seek justice?”; “It looks like the public trial of corrupt officials in Henan.”³³ The Chinese viewers assigned different meanings to the footage depending on how much they did or did not recognize with respect to other images of pidou, canonized pictures in award-winning films, historical textbooks and monographs, or non-iconic family photos. Paradoxically, for those who primarily encounter pidou in its linguistic afterlives, the less they know about the iconography of the Cultural Revolution, the more they possibly recognize pidou, as evidenced in Episode 5 of *The Rebirth of China*, as integral to a much longer history than assumed. In this sense, the reception of found footage is a matter of recycling and (re-)making. Found footage cannot be simply considered in reference to widely discussed avant-garde and experimental cinema practice, but more deeply, it has to do with the everyday engagement with media fragments.³⁴ People make use of such found footage for their social commentary, repurposing a variety of, in Yomi Braester’s terms, “images made for occasion other than the ones in which [found footage] is used”.³⁵ Diverse and even historically ignorant understandings of the footage help to create

³³ One of the examples is from a microblog post of the video link with threads of discussions and comments on Chinese social media: A’Tai. “A Rare View: Episode 5 of *The Rebirth of China*, the scene of *pidouhui* against the landlords during the Land Reform with the original soundtrack,” *Sina weibo*, September 25th, 2019. See <https://m.weibo.cn/status/4420760988287985> (accessed on October 10th, 2019).

³⁴ For more discussions about spectatorship and popular cinephilia as found footage practices in contemporary China, see Belinda Q. He. “Animating Herstory? Stillness/motion, Popular Cinephilia and the Economy of the Instants in the Post-cinema Age.” *Journal of Chinese Cinemas* 11, no. 3 (2017): 243-58.

³⁵ Yomi Braester. “The City as Found Footage: The Reassemblage of Chinese Urban Space.” In *Global Cinematic Cities: New Landscapes of Film and Media*, edited by Johan Andersson and Lawrence Webb, (New York: Wallflower, 2016), 157.

alternative spaces to redefine what pidou is about and to break the monopoly of dominant interpretations.

Despite the fact that pidou remains a mystery for many people, it can be characterized as more a kind of mental construct based on sensorial knowledge than a paradigmatic still or moving picture. In other words, pidou is often something intangible, understood emotionally and viscerally, even if it cannot be strictly defined in visual terms. Both filmmakers and viewers deal with problems of the present, not necessarily about the Maoist legacy, by (re-)collecting and recycling material and symbolic elements of pidou as hybrid pasts, in order to gain and maintain some control over the ongoing transformation and changes. As a “fluid archive” that points to the multi-layered signification of the pidou images, Chinese viewers’ discussions and cinephiliac quotations surrounding films like *The Rebirth of China* denote, in Braester’s terms, “an auteurial agency behind the use of readymade images.”³⁶ It practically applies to film scholars and historians as well. Due to the pervasiveness of digital reproduction, repositioning, and re-distribution, the interstice between archival footage and found footage is a central facet of the mediascape from which my self-reflection on methodologies of both archival work and film studies has drawn. It illuminates the potential ways in which scholar-spectators may partake in the making and recycling of archival materials serving purposes of historical detection and public engagement.

6.5 CONCLUSION

Film scholar Jaimie Baron proposes a new way of understanding the multiplicity of terms for both source materials and for the films into which source materials are incorporated. The

³⁶ Ibid, 158-9.

term “appropriation film,” serves as a category for cinematic objects as well as a mode of film reception.³⁷ Pidou as found footage/images under discussion seems to fit into Baron’s reformulation because it produces particular self-reflexive effects, and it evokes in viewers a variable consciousness about the (Maoist) imaginary of justice in different periods of time. But approaches to recycling are much more than appropriation. As the filmmaker Mark Rappaport notes on his own work *Rock Hudson’s Home Movies* (1992), one of the functions of recycling footage from existing films is to offer a revisionist film history that re-examines certain films in light of our subsequent knowledge about filmmakers, films, and film history.³⁸ Likewise, by reworking a corpus of pictorial, filmic, and photographic fragments, and referencing the originals, found footage as artifact, as archive, and as archival thinking discussed in this chapter, are at the very least an anti-traditional effort to stage images about history and to make alternative (art/media) histories. What merits closer consideration, however, is neither merely careful re-enactment and localized *tableau vivant*, nor conceptual echoes of Rappaport’s film, but the role of found footage in providing transnational samples of cinematic experience that challenges the dominant discourses and theories of the *apparatus*.

The cinematic *dispositif* today is no longer apprehended in the abstract or ideal terms elaborated by Jean-Louis Baudry.³⁹ Nonetheless, we cannot lose sight of the essential elements of film and image production that offer what we might call an *installation* with which every film must work, whether it chooses to or is even aware of it. Thus, each medium (cinema,

³⁷ Jaimie Baron. *The Archive Effect: Found Footage and the Audiovisual Experience of History*. (London; New York: Routledge, 2013), 8-9.

³⁸ Mark Rappaport. “Mark Rappaport’s Notes on Rock Hudson’s Home Movies.” *Film Quarterly* 49 (4), (1996): 16.

³⁹ See Jean-Louis Baudry, “The Apparatus: Metapsychological Approaches to the Impression of Reality in Cinema,” in Philip Rosen (ed.), *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology: A Film Theory Reader*, (New York, Columbia University Press, 1986).

photography, theatre, archive, art gallery/museum) has a broad *dispositif*—arising from a wealth of aesthetic properties and social-historical conditions—and each particular work can create its own rules of the game, its own *dispositif*. With this in mind, the visual practice in these cases breaks free of its limitation merely as *representation*—both literally and rhetorically—and instead becomes a particular mode of justice-making and a way of putting ourselves on trial. In this process, “exposure” through visual media is the “law”; imaging is given the meaning of “witnessing” to history and to its own artificiality, the product of which is to show and tell the “testimony” of the history of Maoism, violence, performance, and even the absence of the truth. Found footage as Maoist archive helps to remind us of the power of the archivable, the recyclable, and the circulatable, which potentially enables us to cross-examine the past and the present in the courtroom of history. What we can learn from the Chinese moving images and global films in this case is also to turn the *dispositif* notion—which, in past decades, has been widely explored—into an analytical tool and a mode of thinking beyond the dominant theorization in the European-American contexts. This chapter aims to open up further steps in that direction.

Chapter 7. CONCLUSION

My dissertation shows a story of *the exposure complex*, in an attempt to free the image of pidou from the confines within which various historiographies and works have imprisoned it. As discussed earlier, the exposure complex that socially and culturally enacted pidou blurred the boundary between people as perpetrators, victims, or bystanders, by making them categorizable into the twin groups: the exposer and the exposed that were never mutually exclusive and yet dynamically interchangeable. The pairing of the exposer and the exposed fits with what Michael Rothberg calls “the implied subject.”¹ The implied subject is neither a victim nor a perpetrator, but rather a participant in the shaping and social workings of pidou that generate the changing positions of victim and perpetrator, and yet in which most people do not occupy such clear-cut roles.² However indirect or belated, their actions and inactions help to produce and reproduce the categories and positions of victims, bystanders, and perpetrators that shape a broad spectrum.

Creating a judgmental space that allows nothing outside of itself to exist, pidou realized the highly condensed form of both sides of the same coin, the Maoist and the Cold-war ideologies in China, which were mutually constitutive to *perform a total struggle of all oppositions against each other*. Overall, exposure has been a state of *becoming* rather than being, an act of turning inside out. The exposure complex constitutes an ambiguous borderland and a mutable horizon where the invisible becomes visible, where dark and light battle for supremacy, and where meaning struggles to announce itself. My dissertation aims to open up and continue asking the question that speaks to a blind spot in both Chinese cultural history and visual theory:

¹ Michael Rothberg. *The Implied Subject: Beyond Victims and Perpetrators*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2019).

² *Ibid.*, 1-2.

what does it mean *to expose*, much more than just to show, to visualize, or to disclose? As different chapters have shown, the conceptualization of *exposure* helps us to read shizhong as integral to a media history widely acknowledged but never treated as *a history*. Such a history has linked pidou and shizhong in the ways that have yet to be fully recognized and understood. The two are epistemologically intertwined and thus must be studied together to examine the changing relationships and dynamics between them, which have been long encapsulated in the social imaginary of justice in China.

I understand pidou beyond the widely used concepts such as propaganda, pedagogy, or mass mobilization, and read *show trial as method* to rethink (audio)visual encounters with divides, boundaries, and opposites invested in laying claim to contested cultural meanings. Contrary to the conventional view that sees pidou as simply the iconic form of violence during the Chinese Cultural Revolution, pidou needs to be understood from a long historiographical and boundary-crossing perspective as shown in Chapter 2. From the Republican period (particularly the Northern Expedition era) in which the Chinese Communist party emerged and gradually acquired power to the early post-Mao years (e.g., the Strike Hard era), the practice of pidou (not necessarily as a physical session) has been a fluid presence in wide-ranging forms. In Chapter 3 and Chapter 4, pidou as photographic and cinematic policing went far beyond identifying and creating the look of class enemies and criminals on-screen or within the print frame. What I call the *look of class exorcism* shows a dual form out of which pidou had been born and transformed. Both the essential visibility of class warfare and the weaponization of looking produced across a variety of pidou occasions worked together and enacted the displacement of wartime justice.

In a way, there has never been a pidou in the singular sense; rather, it was and remains a multiplicity of complex historical and visual phenomena understood, experienced, and enacted

within everyday space and in myriad ways. Chapter 5 especially points to the functioning of pidou as an unfolding system of transmedia practices, at the center of which lied what I call *the museological warfare*. Rooted in China's long and ongoing history of shaming, scapegoating, and mob violence, pidou has become a shifting dynamic rather than a fixed set of social institutions. Likewise, Chapter 6 suggests that pidou has to be understood through an ongoing process of its dynamical and even belated circulation, (re-)mediation, reproduction, and re-circulation. The analytical concept of recycling reminds us of pidou as found image, as well as a regime of visibility not necessarily coded in class. Throughout the dissertation, I argue for pidou as an imaginary structure of justice defined by the naming, shaming, and criminalization of certain enemies, one that could be and needs to be located much beyond the Cultural-Revolution paradigm particularly associated with a myth of lawlessness and the overall communist framework. Those transnational found footage around pidou are even more intriguing when we see them as self-contradictory encounters that open up social space and stimulate a kind of creativity in the search for justice and a calling for legal reckoning as much as they curtail both within the prolonged binary framework of the Cold War. Notably, recycled images of pidou, in part because of their fugitive, ephemeral character, perform a key role within the context of ongoing memory politics.

There is also a broader history of shizhong revealed here and yet deserves further exploration. Compared with the visual patterns of *supplice* around European executions, the Chinese counterparts (potentially traceable as an iconography of shizhong, shown in Jérôme Bourgon's discussion) are singled out by four main differences: the absence of any scaffold or stage, no plot and no roles, no religious background, and no public/communion.³ Furthermore,

³ The *supplice* pattern, discussed by Bourgon, refers to a complex model that European executions obeyed by adopting religious deeds, aesthetic devices and performing art techniques which themselves called for artistic

what centrally differentiates the visual pattern of pidou from that of shizhong is a pedagogy of watching as judging-act. The older practices and images conventionally labelled as shizhong mainly served a pedagogical function in the context of what legal historian Børge Bakken calls “the exemplary society”: to educate people not to be a criminal or wrongdoer that the condemned individual on display has been.⁴ In other words, the spectators in the context of *shizhong* view executions and penal spectacles to learn from *what they are seeing*. Taking action is not necessary. They gather in mostly unorganized ways to do nothing but just watching in an occasion within which moral instruction is conveyed through bodily torment alongside other components of the punitive ritual initiated by the authority. A complete understanding of shizhong requires us to situate it in the colonial setting that has to be understood much beyond China and on a global basis. Shizhong as a mode of enacting pedagogical executions or other forms of shaming punishment was not unique to China, but rather shared by colonial encounters where punitive violence saturated was not just commonplace but an essential tool of empire in maintaining the colonial order. Aligned with both legal and educational agendas, the colonial modes of *seeing justice done* function to rationalize any acts that might seem transgressive, excessive, or brutal.⁵ Shizhong works as a communal catharsis. What is key for those colonized people is to see and feel the object lesson of cruelty, as a warning about further transgressions, so that the colonizers reassure themselves that they maintain the authority and power.

representations through painting, sculpture, theatre, etc. See Jérôme Bourgon, “Chinese Executions: Visualizing their Differences with European *Supplices*”, *European Journal of East Asian Studies* 2 (2003), 151–82.

⁴ See Børge Bakken. *The Exemplary Society: Human Improvement, Social Control, and the Dangers of Modernity in China*. (Oxford University Press, 2000).

⁵ Michael G. Vann. “Of Pirates, Postcards, and Public Beheadings: The Pedagogic Execution in French Colonial Indochina.” *Historical Reflections* 36, no. 2 (2010): 39-58.

In the case of pidou, nevertheless, people learn more from the act of *seeing* itself, namely, how the fellow viewers see, or how they perform to see, than what is actually shown to them on the spot. Apart from the modeling effect (through the condemned body and bodily torment) promised by previous forms of shizhong and its imaging, pidou-images hold a different and even more vital kind of educational function: *to visualize and model a specific way of crowding and watching as acting*. People are not educated to watch passively as the spectators; rather they are compelled to perform among the popular masses by actively partaking in the collective act of seeing, shaming, and judging *together*, as well as imitating how others present and perform themselves while reacting to the condemned body. In this regard, mutual watching becomes a judging-act and an incriminating look, namely, evaluating and examining who would be qualified as an ideal revolutionary subject of class struggle and justifying the violence of exposing and shaming who is not. In doing so, mass performances, rather than the conventional corporeal spectacle (distinguishable from the spectators), define a kind of (class) justice that has to be *spectacular, watchable, and performative*. There is no clear boundary any more between the on-stage and the off-stage, the spectacle and the spectators, the physical and the representational.

My dissertation also suggests that the modes of *exposure* are at once informed by and enact *seeing as punishing*. The dynamics between the two speak to “the conceiving of punishment as a mode of image-production” and “the punitive performance of disfigurement [through the images]” identified by Phil Carney. It is understandable in conversation with those insightful inquiries into the relationship between *the visual* and *the punitive* from an array of scholars who have proposed visual criminology as an emerging and promising discipline.⁶ At the

⁶ See Phil Carney. “How Does the Photograph Punish?” *Routledge International Handbook of Visual Criminology*, (Taylor and Francis, 2017), 280–292. Visual criminology emerges from a calling for rethinking the manner in which

core of “struggling against [the landlords]” as *iconography* lies the question of *how does the image punish* in a performative way. The question is part of an ever-lasting tradition of disfiguring image-punishment and punitive pictures, “a tradition which can be opened up through a genealogical consideration of the *longue durée* of state power.”⁷ Such framing shown in the artifacts under discussion (*Capturing Xie Wendong Alive* in Chapter 4 or *Never Forgetting Class Struggle* in Chapter 5) seems to be a visible structure of the assumed people’s power. In the name of class justice, a privileged position is made available for the “encircling crowd” both within and off the pictorial frame to be imagined as people-as-one that is opposed to the evil others. Yet the Chinese case is different from what is called state power in the case discussed by Carney. It served the Maoist designation of “the people’s democratic dictatorship” from the beginning and was practiced afterwards, with a face of “the dictatorship of the masses,” as a matter of the party-state’s outsourcing (in the name of “mass line” *qunzhong luxian* 群眾路線).⁸ In the case of *pidou*, as people performed the act of *watching as judging* and *seeing as punishing*, according to models and “model scripts,” they drew on a structure of feeling that was authorized by the CCP to create identities of revolutionary subjects masked in culturally coding *class*

images are reshaping the world and criminology as a project. For others works concerning visual criminology, see Katherine Biber. *Captive Images: Race, Crime, Photography*. (Abingdon, OX, UK: Routledge-Cavendish, 2007); Michelle Brown. *The Culture of Punishment: Prison, Society, and Spectacle*. (New York: New York University Press, 2010); Sarah Armstrong, “Seeing and seeing-as: Building a Politics of Visibility in Criminology. In M. Brown & E. Carrabine (Eds.), *Routledge international handbook of visual criminology*. (London: Routledge, 2017, 416-26), among many others.

⁷ Ibid., 281.

⁸ See Zedong Mao. *On People’s Democratic Dictatorship; and, Speech at the Preparatory Meeting of the New PCC*. (New China News Agency, 1949). According to historian Michael Schoenhals, one important and yet little-known component of the “dictatorship of the masses” designated by Mao is about “*the outsourcing by the supreme state leadership of selected surveillance, inquisitorial and other violent tasks to what in a different political system would have been regarded as simply members of the public and/or non-governmental organizations*”. See Michael Schoenhals. “Outsourcing the Inquisition: ‘Mass Dictatorship’ in China’s Cultural Revolution.” *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, vol. 9, no. 1, 2008, 3–19.

categories. Significantly, pidou functioned as a way of imaging as much as modelling within the spatial and affective entouner, to portray an old society and a new one through the search for class justice locked in an absolutely moral drama of good versus evil.

The enduring pidou mechanism, as the dissertation explores, serve to demonstrate that despite the end of the Cultural Revolution and the years of high socialism, the binary opposition between the people and the enemies has remained highly functional in changing contexts (for example, in the form of an emerging tendency towards “*qingsuan* [settling accounts 清算/算賬]” in the 1980s). In the immediate aftermath of the Mao era, the sustaining cultural politics of class exorcism became more complicated with a new face: “exposing and denouncing ‘the Gang of Four’” (*jiēpī sirenbang* 揭批四人幫) and the Gang’s followers.⁹ In October 1976, the Gang of Four, like their many predecessors, became public enemies of the revolution after being in the vanguard of a revolutionary campaign. Ironically, they were condemned as “ultra-rightist,” “revisionist,” “counter-revolutionaries,” who represented “all the domestic and foreign class enemies” in their long-term attempt to “restore capitalism.”¹⁰ To this end, however diverse the occasions for different periods, the practical mechanism of identifying the enemies and enacting the essential rhetoric of the people-enemy dichotomy retained its remarkable validity and visibility. Through pidou and its images, we are allowed to rethink such an enduring framework complexly imbricated in the certain period’s ways of political othering and its moral imagination.

⁹ Anne Kerlan. “The Trial of the ‘Gang of Four’: Visibility and Invisibility of the Cultural Revolution.” *The Scene of the Mass Crime: History, Film, and International Tribunals*. edited by Christian Delage and Peter Goodrich. (London and New York: Taylor and Francis, 2013), 89-99.

¹⁰ *Zhongguo gongchandang di shiyi ci quanguo daibiao dahui wenjian huibian* 中國共產黨第十一次全國代表大會文件彙編 (Collection of documents of the eleventh national congress of the CCP), (Beijing: renmoin chubanshe, 1977), 17.

The dissertation offers one step in the direction from which we can see transitional justice as a mode of thinking, which is not confined to the dominant framework applied to western liberal democracies. Thus, one may see the PRC as a rare case that the same regime in power has two different instances of *transitional justice*: the familiar one, a transitional era marked by the Trial of the Gang of Four 審判四人幫 and rehabilitation in the immediate aftermath of the Cultural Revolution, and the other one that performed comparable forms of transitional justice in late 1940s and early 1950s in the *trials* against landlords, KMT officials, and collaborators with the Japanese. As part of the making of transitional justice, the working of pidou and its images entails four kinds of *show trials* that are interrelated to one another: the staging of pidou as *show trials* within the frame; the practice of image-making itself as a procedure of pidou as *show trial*, namely, of performing justice; the execution of images that define and enforce (class) justice; and the use and reuse of images (about or for pidou) as the means to test the spectators and to put them on trial both perceptually and symbolically. Understanding pidou through *show trial* holds much potential for further steps toward reworking a shared living archive of pidou and shizhong from a transnational perspective. Such an archive has to be read “from a position of solidarity with those displaced, deformed, silenced or made invisible by the machineries of profit and progress,” as Allan Sekula suggests for reading the ordinary pictures.¹¹ As a tale of multiple show trials, the media history of pidou has been complicated in the form of a Chinese response to the global constant reasoning, arguing, and struggling about the adequate and legitimate images of violence and atrocity in the era of conflict and witness.

¹¹ Allan Sekula, “Photography between Labour and Capital,” in *Mining Photographs and Other Pictures*, ed. Benjamin H. D. Buchloh and Robert Wilkie (Halifax: Press of Nova Scotia College of Art and Design; Cape Breton: University of Cape Breton Press, 1983), 202.

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