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**GRAPHIC MEANS OF ADVERTISING COMMUNICATIONS  
IN CHINA (1950 – 2010)**

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## CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>CHAPTER I. HISTORY OF DEVELOPMENT AND FEATURES OF GRAPHIC ADVERTISING IN CHINA.....</b>	<b>12</b>
1.1. Social and technical prerequisites for the development of graphic advertising.....	12
1.2. Classification of graphic advertising in media.....	32
1.3. Graphic design in advertising and its history in China.....	39
<b>CHAPTER II. GRAPHIC ADVERTISING IN THE CONTEXT OF DEVELOPING MASS CULTURE.....</b>	<b>55</b>
2.1. Features of visual and graphic communication in advertising in initial period after the founding of the People's Republic of China (1949–1965) .....	56
2.2. Graphics in political posters of the period Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) .....	85
2.3. Trends and concepts for the development of graphic advertising in communicative practice of the late 20-th – early 21-st centuries. ....	108
<b>CHAPTER III. DEVELOPMENT TREND OF GRAPHIC COMMUNICATION AND ITS FUNCTIONS.....</b>	<b>134</b>
3.1. The development trend of graphic design style in China.....	135
3.2. Functions of graphic design in Chinese advertising.....	151
 CONCLUSION.....	 177
REFERENCES .....	180
APPENDIX I. ILLUSTRATIONS.....	191

## INTRODUCTION

### **Relevance of the Research Topic**

The second half of the 20th century to the first decade of the 21st century is an important period for China's development. During this period, China has experienced a series of important historical events, e.g., post-war reconstruction, the Cultural Revolution, the New Policy of Reform and Opening Up, the Integration Of Economy And Culture Into The International Community, which have had a far-reaching impact on all aspects of society. The development of advertising in this period laid the foundation of modern Chinese advertising industry. Graphic advertising, as one of the most active media, has witnessed the changes of Chinese society, culture and politics, as an indispensable part of Chinese journalism. Visual communication has unique characteristics and expressive force in different historical stages, whose use also has different functional preferences. The analysis of graphic means is helpful to improve understanding of the history of advertising and improve the effectiveness of communication strategies in advertising.

Due to the lack of systematic research on graphic communication of print advertisements, the necessity of theme turning of the thesis has been updated. Considering the factors of history, culture, politics and economy, the graphic language in advertisements reflects the development of Chinese advertisements, the characteristics of Chinese graphic design, and the relationship between the public and the media.

**Object** This scientific research is the sample of Chinese graphic advertisements from the second half of the 20th century to the beginning of the 21st century, including periodical advertisements, poster advertisements and outdoor advertisements.

**Subject** The specific characteristics of graphic communication in Chinese advertisements during the study period, which are based on the changes of politics, economy, and social culture.

**Aim** To determine the development characteristics of Chinese graphic advertising in a specific historical period, which is the basis of effective communication in advertising strategies, to reveal the functions of graphic advertising in mass communication.

**Goals** To achieve the following tasks:

- Identify the development of graphic advertising in China in the context of political and cultural changes.
- Identify and classify graphic advertisements.
- Describe the samples examples of Chinese graphic advertising from the second half of the 20th century to the beginning of the 21st century.
- Explore the features of graphic communication in Chinese advertising.
- Show the styles of graphic tools at different stages of development in advertisements.
- Analyze the function of graphic communication in advertisement.

### **Scientific Background**

The research topic of graphic communication in advertising is interdisciplinary, encompassing research in advertising, media, Chinese history, art history, politics and other disciplines. Theoretical preparation for this research involves studying classical texts on communication theory, culture, and political science, including the works of M. Horkheimer, A. Tocqueville, K. Marx, K. Geertz, V. I. Vernadsky, Liu Yang, Liu Shaoqi, Clifford G., Cao Tianquan, and Cheng Hong. <sup>1</sup>Theoretical

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<sup>1</sup> Horkheimer M. *Dialectics of Enlightenment. Philosophical fragments*, M.-SPb.: Medium, Yuventa, 1997. 312 p.; Clifford Geertz. *Interpretation of cultures: [trans. from English]* M.: ROSSPEN, 2004. P. 557; Liu Yang. *Research on symbols interpretation of interaction between the design and Political: dis. ... of PhD in Philosophy / Yang Liu. – Wuhan, 2012. – 233 p;* Vernadsky V.I. *Selected works on the history of science*. M.: Nauka, 1981. 357 p.; Liu Shaoqi. *The Party's Tasks on the Propaganda Front // Central Documentary Publishing House, Vol. 6(1), 1992. Pp. 294;* Cao Tianquan, *Introduction to Art and Design*. Shanghai: Shanghai People's Fine

and practical issues related to advertising activities are explored through scientific works by I.A. Golman, N.S. Dobrobabenko, Armand Deilyan, V.S. Ivanova, I.Ya. Rozhkov, O. Lidovskaya, P. Wells, W. Burnet, D. Moriarty, S. Chen Peiai.<sup>2</sup> Theoretical aspects of graphic design are examined in works by Glinternik E.M., Romanovsky V.G., Cen Ming, Wu Jijin, and Wang Shouzhi.<sup>3</sup>

Currently, existing research on Chinese graphic advertising can be categorized into three main areas.

Firstly, theoretical studies on the history of the advertising industry and graphic design include the works of Gao Hua, Wang Jing, Cheng Hong, J. Li, G. Puppini, J. Bilby, M. Reid, L. Brennan, H Yu, Z. Deng, Wang Yang, Xu Junji, and Lu Hong.<sup>4</sup>

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Arts Publishing House, 2005. Pp. 175; Cheng Hong, Advertising and Chinese Society: An Overview. In Advertising and Chinese Society: Impacts and Issues, edited by Hong Cheng and Kara Chan, Gylling: Copenhagen Business School Press. 2009. pp. 23–44.

<sup>2</sup> Golman I.A., Dobrobabenko N.S. Advertising practice: ten lessons for the Soviet businessman. Novosibirsk: Interbook, 1991. 142 p.; Deilyan Armand, Advertising: trans. from fr. M.: Progress. Univers., 1993. 175 p.; Ivanov, V.S. Soviet political poster // Art, No. 5(4), 1952. P. 68; Rozhkov I. Ya. International advertising business. M.: Banks and exchanges, 1994. 174 p.; Lidovskaya, O. P. Assessing the effectiveness of marketing and advertising. Ready-made marketing solutions. St. Petersburg: Peter, 2008. 141 p.; Wells W., Burnet D., Moriarty S. Advertising: principles and practice. St. Petersburg: Peter, 2001. 797 pp.; Chen Peiai, Guide to Advertising. Beijing: Higher Education Press. 2004. pp. 265; Chen Peiai. Introduction to Modern Advertising. Beijing: Capital University of Economics and Business Press, 2013. Pp. 300.

<sup>3</sup> Glinternik, E. M. Russian design graphics in art historical research of the 19th-21st centuries // Bulletin of St. Petersburg University. Art History, T. 13, No. 1, 2023. P. 166-187; Romanovsky V.G. Graphic design: textbook. Novosibirsk: NGAKhA, 2005. P.152; Cen Ming. Urban outdoor advertising planning and design. Wuhan: Huazhong University of Science and Technology Press. 2012, 189 p; Wu Jijin. Art during the Cultural Revolution // Hundred Year Tide, Vol. 9, 2003. Pp. 56; Wang Shouzhi. World Graphic Design History. Beijing: China Youth Press, 2002. 269p.

<sup>4</sup> Gao Hua. The age of revolution. Guangzhou: Guangdong People's Publishing House, 2010; Wang Jing, Brand New China: Advertising, Media, and Commercial Culture. London: Harvard University Press. 2008. pp. 432; Cheng Hong, Advertising and Chinese Society: An Overview. In Advertising and Chinese Society: Impacts and Issues, edited by Hong Cheng and Kara Chan, Gylling: Copenhagen Business School Press. 2009. pp. 23–44; Giovanna Puppini G., Forty Years of the Return of Advertising in China (1979–2019): A Critical Overview // JOMEC Journal, Vol. 15, 2020. Pp. 1-19; Bilby, J., Reid, M., Brennan, L., The Future of Advertising in China: Practitioner Insights into the Evolution of Chinese Advertising Creativity // Journal of Advertising Research, Vol. 56, 2016. Pp. 245-258; Yu H., Deng Z., The history of contemporary advertising in China. Changsha: Hunan Science and Technology Press. 2000. pp. 49; Wang Yang. General History of Chinese Advertising. Shanghai: Shanghai Jiaotong University Press. 2010; Xu Junji. Chinese advertising history. Beijing: Beijing Communication University of China press. 2006; Lu

Secondly, empirical materials on the practical application of graphic advertising in China can be found in the works of Lu Ning, Ma Ke, Wu Yun, Zhu Guoqin, Huang Fengyi, Sun Si, Xiao Jianchun, Wang Fei, Cen Ming, Li Ting, Jin Dinghai, and Wu Bingbing.<sup>5</sup> Thirdly, comparative analysis methods of graphic communication in developing sociocultural contexts are explored in the works of Song Zheqi, Chen Shanjiang, Pang Jinlong, and Gu Yuanming.<sup>6</sup>

Regarding the analysis of the practical significance of advertising from political, cultural, and economic perspectives, important foundational materials are provided by E. M. Ginternik, E. V. Martynov, E. E. Bochkareva, N. V. Danilevskaya, I. B. Davydkina, Kazakova K. A., Zou Can, and Wang Yingxin.<sup>7</sup>

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Hong. 30 Years of Chinese Contemporary Art: 1978-2008. Changsha: Hunan Art Publishing House. 2013.

<sup>5</sup> Lu Ning. Study of a propaganda poster for 17 years after the founding of the People's Republic of China: PhD dis. ... / Ning Lu. – Shanghai, 2014. – 140 p; Ma Ke. Political Propaganda Paintings of China in the Decade Since the Founding of the People's Republic // Art Studies, Vol. 1, 1959. Pp. 105-198; Wu Yun. A selection of propaganda paintings in the past ten years. Shanghai: People's Art Publishing House. 1960; Zhu Guoqin. Modern Poster Art History. Shanghai: Shanghai Publishing House. 2000; Huang Fengyi. Research on political propaganda posters during the Culture Revolution: Master dis. ... / Fengyi Huang. – Changsha, 2019. – 71 p; Sun Si, Xiao Jianchun. The Status of China's Advertising Activities During the Cultural Revolution and Analysis of Its Causes // New Media, Vol. 6(1), 2013. Pp. 46-47; Wang Fei. Study on 1980s graphic advertising in China: Master dis. ... / Fei Wang. – Beijing, 2014. – 33 p; Cen Ming. Urban outdoor advertising planning and design. Wuhan: Huazhong University of Science and Technology Press. 2012, 189 p; Li Ting. Advertising Modern: A Study of Modern Chinese Commercial Advertising Posters. Shanghai: Shanghai Jinxiu Press, 2011. 637 p; Jin Dinghai, Wu Bingbing. A review of classic Chinese advertising cases. Beijing: Higher Education Press, 2012. 265 p.

<sup>6</sup> Song Zheqi. Design culture development research of ZHUANGSHI magazine (1958-2018): Master dis. ... / Zheqi Song. – Hangzhou, 2020. – 145 p; Chen Shanjiang. Research on the application of Chinese calligraphy art in modern graphic advertising: Master dis. ... / Shanjiang Chen. – Qingdao, 2018. – 31 p; Gu Yuanming. Culture marks of an Era – the window advertising in Shanghai No. 1 department store during 1950s to 1970s // Public Art, Vol. 11(1), 2013. Pp. 13-17.

<sup>7</sup> Ginternik E. M. Advertising design graphics as a sociocultural phenomenon in Russia in the 1880s - 1910s // International Journal of Cultural Research, No. 4 (25), 2016. P. 89-111; Martynov, E. V. Social advertising in solving the problems of patriotic education and propaganda: comparative political analysis // Bulletin of the Moscow State Regional University, No. 4, 2018. P. 97-110; Bochkareva E. E. Functions of advertising in the field of culture and art // Bulletin of MGUKI, No. 4 (54), 2013. P. 222-225; Davydkina I.B. Social advertising in public administration: dis. ...cand. sociol. Sci. Volgograd, 2009. 278 p.; Zou Can. Posters in the Great Leap Forward: an analysis of political socialization: Master dis. ... / Can Zou. – Tianjin, 2011. – 91 p; Wang Yingxin. Research on the mental function of popular culture: dis. ... of PhD in Philosophy / Yingxin Wang. – Tianjin, 2014. – 183.

There are many studies related to graphic media in Chinese advertising, but they are insufficiently specialized and systematic, especially insufficient research on the practical significance of graphic communication. In addition to a comprehensive and systematic analysis of the development of print advertising in China, generalization of the characteristics and styles of graphic design in different periods, in this thesis attention is paid to the following issues: analysis of the historical prerequisites for the formation of modern graphic design in advertising, identification of the specifics of visual images of graphic design in traditional print media, and the influence of print advertising on socio-culture.

### **Scientific Novelty**

From many representative examples (157 graphic advertising items), this thesis attempts to conduct a comprehensive analysis of graphic means in advertising communication from the second half of the 20th century to the beginning of the 21st century. For the first time, it is devoted to considering social, cultural, and economic factors in the evolution of advertising design, thus revealing the functional significance of graphic advertising in different stages of the history of China's development.

### **Empirical Base**

It is made up of samples of graphic advertising used in traditional media, mainly in magazines, newspapers, posters, outdoor advertising boards, as well as papers related to graphic advertising or the history of visual communication in China.

The time frame of empirical research: From the mid-20th century to the first decade of the 21st century.

In this thesis, the 50s of the twentieth century are the beginning of the time of research when the People's Republic of China was established in 1949. At that time, all industries officially embarked on a new path of development. China urgently needed to establish a new social order, so propaganda paper was especially important at this stage. In addition, when television and radio were not yet popular in China, and the level of education of the population was quite low, images were an effective medium of information. Due to the development of the economy and

the growth of the culture of the population, computer communications and graphic design passed the stage of imitation and learning, self-reflection and progress and entered a stable stage of development in accordance with the world market at the beginning of the 21st century.

In general, the timing covers a relatively complete trajectory of print advertising development in China, while each individual stage has extremely rich, complex and vivid characteristics and trends, so it's vital to consider complete and systematic cases. It should be noted that due to the peculiarities of the proper laws of evolution of some objects, the study time may not be limited by time.

### **Theoretical and Practical Significance**

The theoretical significance lies in the need for a conceptual study of the concept of graphic advertising and the definition of the style of graphic design in Chinese advertising at different historical stages, as well as the disclosure of the mechanisms of functioning of the media direction in question, including the historical, political, national and cultural context of its development. The practical significance of the research lies in the possibility of using the materials of the thesis when writing scientific papers and when developing training courses in advertising.

### **Methodological Basis**

The methodological basis is a set of theoretical and empirical methods and techniques:

- Theoretical analysis.
- Synthesis.
- Generalization of experience.
- Descriptive method.
- Comparative analysis.
- Content analysis.
- Typological method.



### **Approbation**

The author has published 3 (three) publications on the key aspects of the thesis. These 3 (three) articles have been included in the list of the Higher Attestation Commission, which recommends peer-reviewed publications under the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation.

### **Structure**

The thesis comprises an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, a list of references, and a list of illustrations. It includes 157 illustrations showcasing samples of Chinese advertising graphics of the time under consideration.

The first chapter examines the development of advertising and graphic design since the establishment of new China. It provides definitions and classifications of graphic advertising, while presenting the visual elements of graphic design in print advertising.

The second chapter categorizes the evolution of graphic communication in print advertising into four stages, while considering historical, political, economic, and cultural factors. It delves into the characteristics of advertising communication within the context of a dynamic mass culture.

The third chapter identifies the main styles and trends in the development of graphic design across different stages of print advertising. Furthermore, it attempts to uncover the functions of graphic means in the media at various times and their connections with the mechanisms of media functioning in China.

The appendices provide a list of examples of graphic design, posters, press advertising, magazine advertising, outdoor advertising in China from the middle of the 20th century to the first decade of the 21st century.

### **Main Scientific Results**

1. The author's approach to the periodization of the development of graphic advertising in China is proposed.<sup>8</sup>
2. For the first time in Russia, the history of the development of Chinese graphic advertising from traditional to modern has been comprehensively analyzed.<sup>9</sup>
3. The high role of Chinese culture and tradition in the graphic design of Chinese advertising has been revealed.<sup>10</sup>
4. The main functions of graphic communication in Chinese advertising at each stage of its development are highlighted. This reflects the openness of the media environment in China and the change in the functioning of Chinese media.<sup>11</sup>

### **Findings to be Defended**

1. The concept of graphic advertising lacks a clear definition, with varying interpretations in scientific literature. In this study, graphic advertising is understood as a media direction that focuses on art and literature as its primary objects of attention. The main forms include posters, advertisements in newspapers, magazines, and outdoor media. With this interpretation, graphic advertising serves various functions, including cultural and educational, advertising, informational, referential, ideological, and even scientific research to some extent.
2. The period from the mid-20th century to the early 21st century represents a significant era for the development of print advertising in China. Firstly, the implementation of new policies and social changes after the establishment of the People's Republic of China directly influenced media system reforms and design style transformations. Secondly, this period marked the golden age of Chinese print media,

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<sup>8</sup> Guo, H. Development of Chinese advertising and its influence on forms of mass visual communication // *World of Science, Culture, Education*, No. 3 (94), 2022. pp. 274-277.

<sup>9</sup> Guo, H. Revival of graphic advertising design in China in the 1980s // *Advances in the Humanities*, No. 08, 2022. pp. 39-41.

<sup>10</sup> Guo, H. Concepts of visual communication in gender advertising in China (late 19th - early 20th centuries) // *International Scientific Research Journal*, No. 5 (119), 2022. pp. 61-72.

<sup>11</sup> Guo, H. Ideological function of graphic advertising in China // *Humanitarian, socio-economic and social sciences*, No. 3, 2022. pp. 39-45.

which possessed a relatively mature communication system and did not face the crisis brought about by online media in the 21st century. Print advertising, characterized by timely information dissemination, low cost, and ease of production, played a crucial role in China during that time.

3. The change of graphic means in advertising depends on the specific cultural, artistic, political, and economic environment. In the context of such a complex system, China's graphic communication demonstrates a unique style and independent development trend, whose media functions at various stages reflect the relationship between society and government, which is of research value and is relevant for the development of modern communication practice.

## **CHAPTER I. History of Development and Features of Graphic Advertising in China**

### **1.1. Social and technical prerequisites for the development of graphic advertising**

There are many definitions of advertising in modern science. In accordance with the established today the main schools of marketing and historiography of advertising: North American, Western European, Russian and Chinese, the following classification of definitions of advertising can be justified.

According to F. Kotler of the North American School: "Advertising is any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods or services that is commissioned and financed by a specific sponsor".<sup>12</sup> His later definition: "advertising is a non-personal form of communication through paid media with a clearly identified source of funding".

Deylian A., who belongs to the Western European school, defined: "Advertising is a paid, unidirectional and non-personal appeal, carried out through mass media and other forms of communication, propaganda in favour of some product or service."<sup>13</sup> He pointed out the most direct purpose of advertising.

Russian researcher I. Ya. Rozhkov noted the social significance of advertising, i.e. its influence on people's consciousness. In his opinion: "Advertising is a type of activity or a product produced as a result of it, the purpose of which is the implementation of sales and other tasks of industrial, service enterprises and public organisations through the dissemination of information paid for by them, formed in such

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<sup>12</sup> Kotler F., Armstrong G., Saunders D., Wong W. Fundamentals of Marketing: per. from Engl. 2nd Europ. Izd. M.; SPb.; Kiev: Publishing House "Williams", 2002. C. 813.

<sup>13</sup> Deylian Armand, Advertising: per. from Fr. M.: Progress. Univers. 1993. 175 c.

a way as to have an enhanced impact on the mass or individual consciousness, causing a given reaction of the selected consumer audience."<sup>14</sup> And Golman N. A. emphasised creativity in advertising: "Advertising is any form of non-personal presentation and promotion of commercial ideas, goods and services paid for by a clearly specified advertiser."<sup>15</sup>

In the 1980s, with the revival of the advertising industry in China, professional research on advertising gradually attracted yo attention. The definition of advertising in Qihai (Chinese Encyclopedia of Chinese Vocabulary): "advertising is a way of promoting goods, services and entertainment programmes to the public."<sup>16</sup>

The above definitions generally refer to commercial advertising. Broadly speaking, the dissemination of information about all social movements and opinions, as well as entertainment and leisure activities, are also categorised as advertising.

Chen Peiyai, vice president of the Chinese Society of Journalism, defines advertising as follows: "Advertising is an open, non-face-to-face and paid form of mass communication in which advertisers, individuals or organisations repeatedly transmit coded specific information to the target audience through certain mass communication media in the form of appropriate symbols in order to influence or change the concept or behaviour of the target audience."<sup>17</sup>

As far as graphic advertising is concerned, these are advertisements made graphically. We can say, graphic advertising is a dissemination activity that uses graphic means to establish a psychological connection with the target audience in order to achieve profit or non-profit objectives.

The history of Chinese advertising broadly dates back to the Song Dynasty, when shops used signs and words to advertise services.<sup>18</sup> In the 1920s and 1930s, advertising was already a vibrant industry in Shanghai, with foreign advertising

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<sup>14</sup> Rozhkov I. Ya. International advertising business. M.: Banks and Exchanges, 1994. 174 c.

<sup>15</sup> Golman I.A., Dobrobabenko N.S. Practical Advertising: Ten Lessons for the Soviet Businessman. Novosibirsk: Interbuk, 1991. 142 c.

<sup>16</sup> Cihai. comp. Z. Xia, Z. Chen. Shanghai: Shanghai Lexicographical Publishing House. 2019.

<sup>17</sup> Chen Peiai. Guide to Advertising. Beijing: Higher Education Press. 2004. Pp. 265.

<sup>18</sup> Wang Jing, Brand New China: Advertising, Media, and Commercial Culture. London: Harvard University Press. 2008. Pp. 432.

agencies and brands competing with their Chinese counterparts before World War II.

After the Communist Party of China came to power in 1949, the next decade (1950s) was a period of active transformation of China due to the change of socio-political system (socialism became the dominant ideology): all aspects of life faced new challenges and development goals. The government gradually abolished commercial advertising, believing that a centralised socialist economy did not need advertising. Due to the lack of access to television and radio, the main communication channel for advertising was print advertising, especially social and political posters, which were the most active form of advertising at the time.

According to traditional communism, advertising is an integral evil of capitalist countries, the reason for which is the inability to compare production volumes with consumption volumes. Karl Marx called advertising a "parasite," while Lenin argued that it could only deplete the economy. They both believed that advertising was unnecessary in the socialist world, since careful planning would help produce enough products to satisfy the needs of the population. Their attitude towards advertising can be expressed with the phrase: "Advertising is an unproductive waste of resources."

Despite the fact that there is no official advertising philosophy in China, the country's leaders do not adhere to the views of Marxists-Leninists. Rather, they followed Mao Zedong's instruction "... at all costs, reduce cost, increase productivity and stimulate sales."<sup>19</sup>

During the Cultural Revolution (1966 – 1976), the development of the advertising industry was in a state of stagnation. Most of the ads have acquired a purely political color, appearing in the form of propaganda posters and posters.<sup>20</sup> There was

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<sup>19</sup> Li Shengchuan. Discussion on Soviet Aesthetics and Chinese Aesthetics in the 1950s and 1960s – Interview with Mr. Tu Tu. <http://www.chinawriter.com.cn/GB/n1/2022/0816/c405057-32503698.html>. (date accessed 18.08.2022).

<sup>20</sup> Xiao Jie, A review of advertising research during the Cultural Revolution // Beijing: Advertising Panorama, Vol. 10. 10. 2016. Pp. 96-100.

almost no commercial advertising, except for limited commercial information about exports to foreign countries, but the unofficial ban on it was lifted.<sup>21</sup>

The revival of the Chinese advertising industry occurred after the end of the Cultural Revolution. In 1978, at the Third Plenum of the Eleventh Convocation of the CPC Central Committee, then Chairman Deng Xiaoping declared that China would shift from a political orientation center on class struggle to a more pragmatic approach to governing the country based on economic reform and opening the economy to foreign capital.<sup>22</sup> Since then economic order has been gradually restored in China, this has also led to the rapid development of commercial advertising. The political changes at this stage provide an ideological basis for the development of commercial advertising, which is no longer regarded as a product of capitalism. From the legal point of view, the basic advertising regulations and operational management system are established to form the mechanism of advertising market. Traditional advertising activities were restored to meet the needs of the simple market. At the same time, foreign advertising theories and experience were actively studied, foreign brands entered the Chinese market, and the number of joint ventures increased. The domestic advertising industry was being revitalised: advertising agencies were set up in various cities, foreign advertising agencies began to experiment with Chinese companies. This is how the aesthetic orientation of the public gradually changed: studying and imitating Western art and picking up new trends in the world.<sup>23</sup>

In the early 1980s, newspaper and radio were the main means of accessing information, with newspapers in particular being the most massive and effective of all advertising media during this period. On 4 January 1979, the Tianjin daily newspaper published an advertisement for Lantian toothpaste, the very first commercial

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<sup>21</sup> Cheng Hong, Advertising and Chinese Society: An Overview. In Advertising and Chinese Society: Impacts and Issues, edited by Hong Cheng and Kara Chan, Gylling: Copenhagen Business School Press. 2009. Pp. 23-44.

<sup>22</sup> It's Good for Newspapers to Carry Ads // Xinwen Zhanxian, Vol. 6. 1979. p. 5-13.

<sup>23</sup> Hao, X.S., Shen F.Y., Audience Reaction to Commercial Advertising in China in the 1980s // International Journal of Advertising, Vol. 14, No. 4, 2015. Pp. 374-390.

advertisement published after the Cultural Revolution, which marked the beginning of the prelude to newspaper advertising in China after the Reform and Opening-up policy (see Figure 1.1).



Figure 1.1 - Commercial advertisement for Lantian toothpaste in the Tianjin Daily newspaper, 1979.

On 14 January 1979, the Chinese newspaper Wenhui published an article by Ding Yunpeng. The author observed that in economically developed countries, the design of advertisements was based on careful market research, taking into account objective factors such as consumer psychology. The design of advertisements was mainly with clear, simple text and attractive image to direct the flow of customers and promote the sale of goods. Also for socialist economy in China, advertising can be used to promote higher quality products and stimulate consumption.<sup>24</sup> After that, advertising campaigns became popular and were considered important in society. On 23 January 1979, the first foreign advertisement was published in Shanghai's Wenhui newspaper (see Figure 1.2). In 1983, newspaper advertising already accounted for 31.3 per cent of the national advertising turnover, and from then until 1990, the newspaper led the country in terms of the percentage of advertising turnover.

<sup>24</sup> Yu H., Deng Z., The history of contemporary advertising in China. Changsha: Hunan Science and Technology Press. 2000. Pp. 14-16.





Figure 1.2 - Commercial advertisement for Rado watches in the Wenhui newspaper, 1979.

Newspaper advertisements at this stage mainly used simple text and graphics to attract potential consumers. In the recovery phase of the advertising industry, newspaper advertisements had a uniform form and their design was limited to product demonstration, that is, the appearance, attributes and uses of the products are indicated. Although photography technology was already in use in the 1980s, the graphic technology used was very simple, with no special strategies or creative solutions. The job of the newspaper's advertising department was also relatively simple: add text to the picture. Moreover, in the early 1980s, because of the low level of advertising design and printing, newspaper adverts were almost always black and white. Only some were printed in red text, but the cost of advertising had to be increased by 20 – 30 per cent. Colour newspaper ads started to appear only in 1990.

The revival of magazine advertising in the 1980s lagged slightly behind newspaper advertising, but as periodicals were printed on better quality paper, by the mid to late 1980s most graphic advertising was printed in colour. As a result, periodical advertising in the 1980s was generally more visually effective and artistically expressive than newspaper advertising. Because periodicals were publications and were carefully read by readers, they carried more information than other types of advertising. Advertisements often contained the name of the company, its merits,

and a brief description of the product and its features. In the early 1980s, the design of periodical advertisements was mostly simple, black and white. In the middle of the period, some magazines began to feature colour inserts, but most often these pages contained fine art or photographs, as the demand for high quality advertising was still low. In the late 1980s, periodical advertising switched to colour printing and began to use colour images that best reflected the true appearance of the product.

In the choice of advertising media during this period, outdoor advertising was also the main type comparable to the newspaper. In 1979, an advertising wall appeared in Beijing to symbolise the official resumption of the development of outdoor advertising. At that time, famous brands such as Rado watches, Panasonic, Nestle Coffee, etc. launched outdoor media. Road signs were the main form of outdoor advertising. Although the overall level of development of the advertising industry was low, outdoor advertising played an important role in promoting the development of the advertising industry. A notable phenomenon during this period is the increase in outdoor advertising of foreign products. From 1978 to 1988, a total of 35 outdoor advertisements of foreign goods were launched in Guangzhou, most of which were Japanese goods.<sup>25</sup> However, outdoor advertising did not develop significantly until the early 1990s. The "China Advertising Yearbook 1991" pointed out that outdoor advertising is more widespread than other media and the turnover is small, but it is still indispensable in the overall development of the advertising industry.<sup>26</sup>

In August 1979, the first professional advertising agency in Beijing, the Advertising Art Company, was established. Under its influence, many advertising agencies were established in other Chinese cities. In 1981, 25 advertising agencies across the country formed China's first advertising association, the China National United Advertising Corporation. In the same year, China's first foreign trade advertising organisation, the China Trade Advertising Association, emerged, which was mainly

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<sup>25</sup> Chen Gang, *History of Contemporary Chinese Advertising*. Beijing: Peking University Press. 2010. 294 p.

<sup>26</sup> Zuo Jing, Chu Hongwei. 1979-2003: Twenty-five years of outdoor advertising in China // *Advertising Pointer*, Vol. 8, 2004. Pp. 150-155.

concerned with the advertising of imported and exported goods. In 1983, at its first meeting, the China Advertising Association (CAA) announced its official establishment, focusing on domestic commercial advertising. Since then, the connection between the Chinese and overseas advertising industry has become closer. In 1981, China Advertising, a magazine sponsored by the China Advertising Association, was launched in Shanghai. It was the first professional advertising magazine in mainland China after the 1950s. (See Figure 1.3) In October 1984, a Chinese delegation travelled to Japan to attend the 29th World Congress of the International Advertising Association (IAA), the first time China participated in an international advertising event. In 1987, the first international advertising organisation in China, the China Chapter of the International Advertising Association, was established in Beijing. These professional advertising organisations formed the original Chinese advertising market and set the stage for the development of modern advertising design in China.<sup>27</sup>

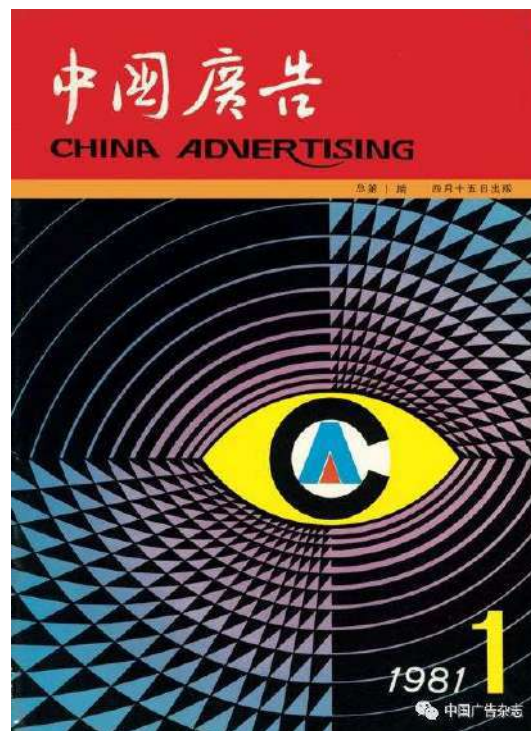


Figure 1.3 - Cover of China Advertising magazine, No. 1, 1981.

<sup>27</sup> Ding Yunpeng. 40-year history of Chinese advertising companies.  
[https://www.sohu.com/a/374165185\\_298352](https://www.sohu.com/a/374165185_298352) (date accessed: 19.02.2020)

Culturally, under the influence of Western modern art, the New Wave movement (Chinese modern art movement, its aim is to utilise the experience of Western European art and develop its own) emerged in art circles in 1985, which brought the art styles of realism, romanticism and impressionism to China.<sup>28</sup> Innovations in drawing techniques and concepts have greatly changed people's understanding of visual communication.<sup>29</sup>

The 1980s of the twentieth century was the boom stage for China's advertising industry, commercial advertising activities took the road of development, during this period, the joint practice between Chinese and foreign advertising gradually expanded.

In 1979, a Shanghai television programme aired the first foreign advertisement for a Swiss Rado wristwatch in China. The one-minute advert, in English with product information, was broadcast only twice, but made a huge impression on the Chinese population. Over the next few days, hundreds of people travelled to state-run local shops to learn about the product. Interestingly, the product did not appear on the Chinese market until four years later, suggesting that the advertiser was initially more interested in image advertising than in selling products, as China did not yet have a developed consumer market.<sup>30</sup>

With the growing influence of foreign advertising practices, Chinese advertisers later adopted soft selling strategies centred on various values such as family bonds, individualism, romance, adventure, love, beauty, modernity, novelty, masculinity and femininity.<sup>31</sup>

Many exchange programs have been created for Chinese advertising professionals so that they can learn the latest advertising techniques. Professionals working

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<sup>28</sup> Tai, S.H.C., Correlates of successful brand advertising in China // *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, Vol. 19 No. 1, 2007. Pp. 40-56.

<sup>29</sup> Zhao, X.S., Shen F.Y., Audience Reaction to Commercial Advertising in China in the 1980s // *International Journal of Advertising*, Vol. 14, No. 4, 2015. Pp. 374-390.

<sup>30</sup> Giovanna Puppini G., Forty Years of the Return of Advertising in China (1979-2019): A Critical Overview // *JOMEC Journal*, Vol. 15, 2020. Pp. 1-19.

<sup>31</sup> Liu, W., Advertising in China: product branding and beyond // *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, Vol. 7 No. 2, 2002. Pp. 117-125.

in overseas advertising agencies were constantly invited to give presentations on overseas advertising. Through various efforts to professionalise advertising, including the establishment of professional associations, the opening of degree programmes at renowned universities and the publication of advertising books, advertising has gradually become an attractive profession.

Over the past decade, foreign and Chinese advertising cooperation has become closer, mainly due to the constant exchange of advertising experts, advertising theories and ideas. Since the 2000s, advertising in the Chinese market involving foreign and Chinese brands appears to be very similar. Both types of advertising emphasise affective connections with consumers to create demand.<sup>32</sup>

Entering the 21st century, economic and cultural integration under the influence of globalisation has accelerated the development of China's advertising industry, and there is a gradual trend of internationalisation of domestic advertising.

The Chinese advertising industry faces new opportunities and challenges in the new century. First, should the advertising style become national or international? In the twentieth century, advertising gradually transformed from imitation of Western forms to innovation and promotion of national culture. An important topic of Chinese advertising is patriotism and globalization. Both foreign and Chinese brands resort to promoting these concepts in their advertising.<sup>33</sup> However, there are some subtle differences that lie in their different origins, perceptions and attitudes towards modernity. One obvious difference is that Chinese brands are more likely to resort to patriotism as a sales strategy. Chinese brands such as Li Ning (Chinese sportswear brand) and Hai'er (household appliance brand) have long demonstrated national pride by promoting their products. Li Ning, in particular, is inherently associated with the Olympic glory of China and its "Chineseness". Hai'er has repeatedly presented its overseas expansion as a successful story in the Chinese market, not only

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<sup>32</sup> Giovanna Puppini G., *Forty Years of the Return of Advertising in China (1979-2019): A Critical Overview* // *JOMEC Journal*, Vol. 15, 2020. Pp. 1-19.

<sup>33</sup> Li, H., *Advertising and consumer culture in China*. Cambridge: Polity Press. 2016. Pp. 97.

to confirm the quality of its products, but also to assert itself as a pioneer in increasing China's global influence. The development of patriotism is associated with the reconstruction and strengthening of traditional images, symbols, rituals, myths and customs in the context of China's search for national identity and modernity in an increasingly globalized world. Advertisers appropriate and reinterpret Chinese symbols, images, rituals, historical heroes, and China's anti-imperialist history to create a story of patriotism, loyalty, and national glory.<sup>34</sup>

The promotion of Chineseness is particularly noticeable when China hosts global events such as the Beijing Olympics, the World Expo and the Asian Games. During the Beijing Olympics, foreign brands also celebrated their ties to China. For example, McDonald's stated, "I like it when China wins." Coca-Cola staged a record-breaking marketing blitz with the musical themes "China Red" and "China Fashionable." Olympic sponsor Adidas did its best to establish its connection to Chinese culture and national pride. Unofficial sponsors such as Pepsi and Nike have also made efforts to link their products and brands to China's growing patriotism. This focus has met with consumer approval.<sup>35</sup> In addition, in order to compete with foreign brands, Chinese companies have tried to integrate ethnic elements into the trend of internationalization.

Chinese advertisers use a variety of strategies to establish international connections and sell foreign images to Chinese consumers. Often this global positioning is seen as a contrived "Westernness", this is done by appropriating Western symbols including Western languages, Western models, European-style architecture, sculpture and famous tourist sites (such as the Seine River, Arc de Triomphe, Louvre, Château de Versailles, Eiffel Tower, Cambridge, Paris and Rome, etc.) – or by selling values associated with Western modernity (such as individualism, freedom, novelty and the pursuit of pleasure). In China, "Westernness" is often associated with product quality and prestige. Products with foreign names are sold at higher prices

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<sup>34</sup> Tai, S.H.C., Correlates of successful brand advertising in China // *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, Vol. 19 No. 1, 2007. Pp. 40-56.

<sup>35</sup> Li, H., *Advertising and consumer culture in China*. Cambridge: Polity Press. 2016. Pp. 97.

many times than brands with Chinese names. As a result, many clothing brands use foreign-sounding names. Some products also make false claims about their foreign origin.<sup>36</sup>

Chinese advertising often juxtaposes foreign and Chinese cultural symbols, projecting the triumph of universal humanity through the meeting of East and West. Chinese advertising also sells dreams of humanity and the Chinese desire to be recognised in the global marketplace. The combination of foreign and Chinese elements means that Chinese brands target the growing middle class in China, which often harbours a strong desire for more global connections while cherishing its roots in Chinese culture.

However, global brands often have more advantages in building such a convergent identity. After all, their cosmopolitan identity has been established in their origin and international success. Instead, Chinese brands are often seen as cosmopolitan identity builders.

The second challenge for the advertising industry is the onslaught from online media. Since China joined the World Trade Organisation, Chinese advertising has been shaped not only by the relaxation of government control, but also by digital technology. Companies are now devoting more money to digital advertising in response to rising TV advertising prices and declining print media readership.

The rapid development of digital and mobile advertising has posed a major challenge to traditional advertisers. For example, Baidu, a major online platform in China, has already surpassed CCTV to become the largest advertiser in the country, forcing CCTV to cooperate with new players.<sup>37</sup>

Digital advertising focuses more on consumer engagement, branded entertainment and fan-focused advertising strategies. The ubiquitous use of digital advertising also means that it is becoming increasingly difficult for Chinese regulators to

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<sup>36</sup> Li, H., *Advertising and consumer culture in China*. Cambridge: Polity Press. 2016. Pp. 97.

<sup>37</sup> Bilby, J., Reid, M., Brennan, L., *The Future of Advertising in China: Practitioner Insights Into the Evolution Of Chinese Advertising Creativity* // *Journal of Advertising Research*, Vol. 56, 2016. Pp. 245-258.

manage advertising, leading to an increase in illegal and controversial adverts in China. Controversial adverts include not only problematic products, but also the inappropriate use of questionable symbols, images and words.<sup>38</sup>

Although there is hope that digital advertising will smooth the advertising gap between Chinese and foreign advertisers and between Chinese and foreign advertising agencies, as currently foreign brands and their agencies still enjoy some advantages due to their extensive networks, expertise and capital.

A huge number of Chinese advertising agencies and brands still do not compete tangibly with Western advertising firms, but the global economic downturn of 2008, as well as developments in the international arena in the 2010s, have influenced an increase in the size of the Chinese market. This had a significant impact on changing the dynamics of the Chinese advertising market, which has not stopped evolving since then.

Over the past few decades, Chinese advertising has experienced a tortuous development. The advertising market has experienced recovery in the 1980s, development in the 1990s and maturity in the early 21st century. Chinese advertising enterprises are gradually moving towards specialisation and scaling up in an open economy. At the initial stage of the reform and opening-up policy, society faced a transformation centred on economic construction. The market economy, which replaced the planned economy, provided an important market environment for the development of advertising. Transnational advertising campaigns entered the Chinese market, accelerating the development of the national advertising industry. Foreign advertising agencies encouraged their global clients to come to China in 1979, just after the country opened its doors to the outside world. Foreign brands and advertising have now become an integral part of Chinese consumers' daily lives.<sup>39</sup> However, the overall overall level of advertising during this period was low, and a systematic

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<sup>38</sup> Bilby, J., Reid, M., Brennan, L., *The Future of Advertising in China: Practitioner Insights Into the Evolution Of Chinese Advertising Creativity // Journal of Advertising Research*, Vol. 56, 2016. Pp. 245-258.

<sup>39</sup> Zhao, X.S., Shen F.Y., *Audience Reaction to Commercial Advertising in China in the 1980s // International Journal of Advertising*, Vol. 14, No. 4, 2015. Pp. 374-390.



concept of domestic advertising had yet to emerge. Combined with the imbalance in regional economic development, the best advertising enterprises were concentrated in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou. In terms of political factors, national advertising-related policies and regulations were still inadequate.

The rapid development of the media and the adoption of the Advertising Law in the 1990s gave a new impetus to advertising activities during this period. This led to advertisers' growing awareness of the need for marketing integration and the gradual expansion of their business into various areas such as advertising, PR, promotion and product packaging. The promulgation of the PRC Advertising Law in 1995 clearly defined advertising, established the basic principles of advertising business and strictly regulated the behaviour of advertising entities to provide a legal guarantee for the standard development of advertising enterprises.

Since China's accession to the WTO in 2001, the pace of opening up the advertising industry to the outside world has accelerated further. Technological innovation, upgraded communication channels and changes in audience groups brought challenges and opportunities to the advertising industry. Diversification, innovation and reform were the keywords of this stage. Domestic advertising campaigns have adopted digital management, created an international concept and improved overall competitiveness.

The development of graphic advertising is not only closely linked to economic, political and cultural development, but also due to the renewal of printing technology and the improvement of the organization of publishing.

Printmaking is the entire process of printing and reproducing information in visual and tactile effects, including pre-press, printing and post-press. It is a technology that combines the disciplines of photography, craftsmanship, aesthetics, art and computer technology.

The history of printing began in the same place where paper was invented, i.e. in China. The first printing technology appeared by the end of the second century. By this time, the Chinese already had paper, ink and the ability to cut (or engrave)

texts on various surfaces. This was an important step in the development of media, which contributed to the development of crafts, industry, science, technology and culture.<sup>40</sup>

Since the invention of printing in China during the Sui and Tang dynasties, the publishing and printing industry was well developed, the woodblock printing method of book printing spread not only to Korea, Vietnam and Japan, but also to Europe through the Arab countries of West Asia.

While the Chinese had been using their unique discovery since the 2nd century, the technology of papermaking reached Europe only thanks to the close connection of Italy and Spain with the Arab world. Fortunately, favourable cultural and economic conditions allowed Europeans to master and develop printing skills. The key elements without which printing would not have been possible were slowly, one by one, created in medieval Western Europe.

In the early nineteenth century, together with Western religion and advanced technology, modern printing technology was brought back to China from Europe, thus starting a new process of developing modern printing technology in China.

In the 1840s, the American church founded The Chinese and American Holy Classic book establishment in Ningbo, which moved to Shanghai in the 1860s. China began using metallographic printing, which is considered the direct predecessor of modern printing in the world. They created sets of copper or bronze moulds for characters and set the text in lead type. This technique can be used to create better and more durable printing plates than those carved from wood. Metallographic printing is believed to have been invented in Holland around 1430. Also, Gutenberg's printing press, a method of printing books with movable letters, appeared in China, which undoubtedly served the development of printing. However, these printing methods were expensive due to the special nature of Chinese characters. By the 1870s, the Shanghai Dianshizhai Printing House used lithography, which was the beginning of

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<sup>40</sup> Vernadsky V.I. Selected works on the history of science. Moscow: Nauka, 1981. 357 c.

modern graphic printing in China. In 1897, the Commercial Printing House was established in Shanghai and in 1905, the Jinghua Printing House in Beijing, where they continued to adopt advanced Western printing techniques and introduce new printing equipment.

In the 1930s, in addition to Shanghai, which at that time had the largest printing plant in China, there were also some facilities for printing books and periodicals in Changchun, Shenyang, Beijing, Tianjin, Guangzhou, Chengdu and Xi'an. However, after the Japan-China War (1937 – 1945), the printing industry in China was destroyed and the publishing industry fell into depression. By 1949, there were fewer than 4,000 workers in the printing industry nationwide.

Since the 1950s, the country has been actively developing all spheres of society. In 1953, China launched the "First Five-Year Plan" project to focus on economic development and nation-building. Book and magazine printing, as part of cultural construction, also began its systematic development. The 17 years from 1949 to 1966 were the stage of active development of China's printing industry. The progress is mainly reflected in the adjustment of the planning of the printing industry, the expansion of types of printed products and the growth of the scale of printing.<sup>41</sup>

1. In the past, China's publishing and printing industry was mainly concentrated in the eastern coastal cities. According to 1955 statistics, a few coastal cities owned about half of the country's stereotype presses. Many inland provinces had almost no book-printing capacity. To change the irrational distribution of the printing industry, the General Administration of Publications and the Ministry of Culture in China devised a series of plans to transfer some printing equipment and technicians from Shanghai and Beijing to the mainland. According to 1964 statistics, more than 100 printing presses from Shanghai and Beijing were used to support the mainland, and about 2,000 management personnel and technicians were relocated.

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<sup>41</sup> Guo, H. Development of Chinese advertising and its influence on forms of mass visual communication // World of Science, Culture, Education, No. 3 (94), 2022. pp. 274-277.

2. In order to meet the needs of the growing development of the publishing industry, the General Directorate of Publications and the Ministry of Culture took measures to accelerate the development of the state book and magazine printing industry on the one hand, and the socialist transformation of the private printing industry on the other.<sup>42</sup>

3. In Beijing, the centre of the publishing and printing industry, a number of state printing houses were established to meet the requirements of various types of professional publishing activities, such as the Central National Printing House in 1950, the Diplomatic Printing House in 1951, and the Fine Arts Printing House in 1958, which mainly printed picture albums.

By 1964, the total production capacity of the printing industry had increased significantly, with the number of employees rising to 36,000. The 17 years after the founding of the country can be called the golden age for the development of China's printing industry.

Unfortunately, however, the Cultural Revolution (1964 – 1974) was a disaster that seriously damaged China's printing industry. During the Cultural Revolution, the development of the printing industry was in a state of stagnation. Attention was only paid to improving the productivity of printing, while the corresponding development of typography was ignored, resulting in an imbalance between typesetting, printing and binding in the printing industry.

After the Third Plenum of the Eleventh Convocation of the CPC Central Committee, publishing activities became active again. Although the production capacity of books and periodicals has improved, it still could not meet the needs of the rapid development of the publishing business. There is a high concentration of publishing houses in Beijing. So the increase in printing production capacity did not keep pace with the increase in the number of publishers.

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<sup>42</sup> Pang D., *The Development of the Book Printing Industry in the People's Republic of China* // *China Publishing Journal*, Vol. 8. 8. Pp. 33-47.

With this in mind, the General Administration of Press and Publication of the People's Republic of China held a national conference in Taiyuan in 1979, at which it became clear that the printing industry was distinguished from general industry by the special nature of spiritual production. Thus, after the 1980s, China's printing industry developed steadily, with the strengthening of industrial management, the introduction of more modern production equipment, and the expansion and construction of new printing plants. By 1988, there were about 200 printing houses in the national publishing system.

With the social informatisation and globalisation of the economy, printing is also undergoing tremendous progress. While traditional printing has evolved, electronic printing has also emerged, which has brought about changes in printing technology, processes, methods and objects. Digital network technology has opened up unimaginably convenient and high-speed access for the dissemination of human knowledge, the exchange of information, the sale and circulation of goods, and all aspects of daily life, and the distance between time and space has been greatly reduced.

After 40 years of construction and development, China's printing industry, despite the setbacks that befell during the Cultural Revolution, has made great progress: the productivity of printing has greatly increased and its distribution tended to be more reasonable, and a large printing labour force has been formed. At the same time, research and education in the field of printing have been greatly developed.

The global third technological revolution that took place in the 1950s penetrated all sectors of society and had a profound impact on social development worldwide. Since the 1990s, information technology and the publishing and printing industry have been closely linked. Digital printing no longer requires manual labour, but can be automated by simply entering digital information.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> China Printing and Equipment Industry Association: China Printing Yearbook 2009. Beijing: China Printing Yearbook Society. 2009. Pp. 562.

Digital publishing is fuelling the development of print-on-demand. This publishing technology, in which new copies of a book are printed only when there is a corresponding request from the customer, makes printing simpler and more flexible. The state supports the development of digital printing enterprises. For more transparent financing and taxation: In 2009, the Ministry of Finance, the General Administration of Customs and the State Tax Administration issued a circular to include book, newspaper, periodical and electronic printing enterprises equipped with digital printing technology, high-speed automatic printing presses and other high technology and equipment in the scope of preferential tax policy (the income tax rate was reduced from 25 per cent to 15 per cent). As of 2009, the total number of high-speed colour digital printing machines reached 354, up 31% from last year. But compared with foreign countries where digital printing has gained some scale, China is still far behind. The first book printed digitally is considered to be the book "F1 Kuangbiao", presented at the Shanghai Book Fair in 2007 and published by the Shanghai Children's and Youth Publishing House.

Digital printing has not formed a certain scale and commercial exploitation in the publishing industry in the early 21st century. In 2010, the output value of all digital printing in Shanghai accounted for only 1% of the total output value of the city's printing industry, while that of Beijing accounted for 1.2%, for a number of reasons:

1. Need for financial support for equipment and training of technical staff.
2. The cost of printing on demand is much higher than traditional printing.

In the 21st century, with the growing maturity of the market economy, China's printing industry is facing the saturation of the publication market, fierce competition in the industry and the decline of paper publications. The cost of printing has risen, but the price of printed products has not followed suit, and the profit of the traditional printing industry is gradually declining. In *The Wealth of Nations*, Adam Smith mentions that in a certain industry, when many rich merchants invest their capital, the profitability of that industry naturally decreases due to competition with

each other. Due to the rapid technological innovation in printing, the development of digital printing has forced traditional printing companies to accelerate their transformation.

In general, the development of printing technologies from the 1950s to the beginning of the 21st century contributed to the spread of print advertising, but printed products also began to be influenced by online media.

The development of the printing process affects not only the efficiency of distribution of printed products, but also graphic design. Updating technology in the printing process can often inspire designers, for example, to use multiple colors accurately. In the early 1950s, when photo-engraving technology was not yet widespread, most colour engraving was produced by manual colour separation. An experienced operator would copy the original by hand, decompose it into the three basic printing colours and produce a composite colour plate. By the end of the 1950s, most printers had mastered photographic colour separation. In 1964, Xinhua Printing House and Beijing Foreign Language Printing House introduced an electronic colour separating machine from Germany. By 1987, the national publishing system already had 102 electronic colour separating machines, practically realizing electronic colour separation.

In the 1980s, the electronic colour separating machine was gradually replaced by the colour electric pre-printing system (CEPS) in colour image production. It is an integrated electronic computer processing system that can simultaneously perform text input and editing, graphic design and production, and image processing. Since the advent of CEPS, it has largely replaced traditional photographic and colour separation processes in publishing, packaging and advertising. This technology not only provides the advantage of high efficiency and accuracy, but also gives access to both traditional print media and online media. A number of new developments

have also been developed on this basis, including database creation, personalised printing and print-on-demand.<sup>44</sup>

Graphic design ultimately serves production. Consequently, the design must meet the needs of production, which is related to the printing process and principle. In the case of limited technological conditions, in order to fully demonstrate the visual expressiveness of graphic design, graphic design must take into account the conditions of the printing process. Thus, in addition to paying attention to the soul of creativity, graphic design can serve as a more effective use of printing technology.

To summarise, it must be said that every innovation in printing technology has had a huge impact on the printing industry: improving print quality, increasing print speed and reducing printing costs. Printing technology has evolved from lead printing, an offset printing technology that became popular in the 1980s, to digital printing technology today. Typesetting technology has evolved from manual typing to photographic typing. There have also been a number of changes in technical equipment to improve automation and information technology. These technological improvements became the direct driving force behind the spread of print advertising, but also contributed to the development of graphic design.

## **1.2. Classification of graphic advertising in media**

In the world practice there is no unified system of classification of types of graphic advertising. The following is an example of classifications by the Chinese advertising theorist Chen Peiyai in his book "Introduction to Modern Advertising".

1. By breadth of audience coverage:

- international advertising is print advertising that goes beyond the borders of a country. It emphasises not the reach itself, but mainly the differences in culture, customs, language, writing, etc...;

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<sup>44</sup> Sixty years of development of color image printing. URL: <https://www.guayunfan.com/baike/893724.html> (date accessed: 31.10.2022).



- national advertising- this refers to advertising distributed in national media that aims to elicit a common response from consumers across the country;
- local advertising, also known as retail advertising, uses local media such as local newspapers to promote intensive marketing strategies;

## 2. By audience focus:

- industrial enterprise advertising, the purpose of which is to disseminate information to industrial enterprises, often published in professional journals or specialised media;
- Dealer advertising is advertising directed at distributors in order to obtain large transaction orders;
- consumer advertising is product advertising published by a manufacturer or distributor to attract consumers;
- professional advertising, which presents professional products and is published in professional media. It mainly targets professionals such as doctors, beauticians, architecture designers, etc.

## 3. By distribution channel:

- newspaper and magazine adverts;
- outdoor advertising (signs, signposts, billboards);
- point of purchase advertising;
- direct advertising (DM);<sup>45</sup>

### **Newspaper adverts**

After the founding of the PRC, the Chinese newspaper industry completed the transition from wartime to peacetime, creating the era of the people's press. In the mid-twentieth century, newspapers became the mouthpiece of the Party and the people, as well as a tool for channelling public opinion. Newspapers played an important

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<sup>45</sup> Chen Peiai. Introduction to Modern Advertising. Beijing: Capital University of Economics and Business Press, 2013. Pp. 300.

role in reporting Party policies, disseminating news, and uniting and educating the people.

In 1950, the annual circulation of newspapers was about 800 million copies, and by 1998 it had reached 30 billion copies, increasing more than 37 times in 50 years. The development of the newspaper business is closely linked to the economic and political conditions of society. Having experienced progress and stagnation, in general, China's newspaper industry has made rapid progress.

The quality of newspapers should be judged by both social and economic benefits. The social benefits of newspapers are mainly manifested in meeting people's information needs in terms of politics, economics, culture, life, leisure, etc., with the aim of promoting the formation of spiritual culture. The economic benefits of newspapers are mainly due to advertising revenue. Newspaper advertising is a distribution channel for printed advertising media on A3, A2 newsprint. Newspapers are selected as the national mass media.

Chinese newspapers officially resumed commercial advertising activities in 1983, with advertising revenue that year totalling 70 million yuan. In the mid to late 1990s, newspapers became a major source of advertising. By 1996, the industry's advertising revenues had grown to 7.76 billion yuan, up 20.3% from 6.46 billion yuan in 1995, accounting for 21.2% of the nation's total advertising. By 2000, the national advertising business was 71.5 billion yuan, of which 13.5 billion yuan was newspaper advertising, accounting for 18.9 per cent. There are 25 newspapers with newspaper advertising turnover over 200 million yuan, 10 with turnover over 300 million yuan and 6 with turnover over 500 million yuan. It is found that newspapers with content close to readers and market, large amount of information, beautiful layout, strong visual impact and exquisite printing are becoming more and more popular.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Qin Jian. China's newspaper advertising market at the turn of the century // Newspaper Industry. 2001. No. Z1.112-113 p.

To find out what attracts advertisers to print media, let us consider the advantages and disadvantages of press advertising. W. Wells, D. Burnett and S. Moriarty share the advantages and disadvantages of newspapers and magazines. The researchers highlight the following advantages of newspapers:

- extensive coverage of the information market, allowing access to various broad audiences.
- price comparison facility.
- positive attitude of consumers towards newspapers in general.
- flexibility geographically and in the production of adverts.

Among the disadvantages of newspapers, researchers highlight:

- the short life cycle of a newspaper issue.
- limited ability to appeal to certain audiences.
- the poor print quality encountered.<sup>47</sup>

### **Magazine adverts**

While the newspaper industry is growing, the various types of magazines are also growing rapidly. By 1998, a total of 7,999 magazines had been published nationwide, with an average of 209.28 million copies printed per issue and a total of 2.537 billion copies printed.<sup>48</sup>

Magazine advertising is a channel for distributing advertising information. Advertising in weekly, monthly, fortnightly, quarterly and semi-annual magazines is distinguished depending on the size of the page and periodicity.<sup>49</sup>

Depending on the sign of editorial orientation, advertising in magazines of general importance or in sectoral editions is distinguished. Depending on the geo-

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<sup>47</sup> Wells W., Burnett D., Moriarty S. Advertising: principles and practice. SPb.: Peter, 2001. 797 c.

<sup>48</sup> Liu Baoquan. 50 years of media career in New China // NEWS AND WRITING, 1999. № 10. 3-6 p.

<sup>49</sup> Li Yanzu. Advertising culture and advertising art // Literary Studies, Vol. 5. 1988. Pp. 12.

graphical coverage of the magazine, demographic characteristics and content, advertising in demographic publications, which group subscribers according to age, income, profession and other characteristics, is distinguished.<sup>50</sup>

To be more competitive in the fierce market competition, newspapers and magazines continuously invested in upgrading and improving printing technology. By the early twentieth century, the press in China had narrowed the gap with the advanced international level in terms of technology, and the introduction of advanced technology had greatly improved the printing speed and quality of periodicals.

The merits of the journals are cited by researchers as:

- the ability to address narrow audiences that are singled out on a specific basis:
- high level of audience receptivity.
- longer life cycle than newspapers.
- increased visual quality.
- wide opportunities for promotion of goods.
- among the disadvantages of journals, researchers highlight:
- limited flexibility.
- relatively high cost.
- difficulty of distribution due to the narrow specialisation of some journals.<sup>51</sup>

### **Outdoor advertising**

It is worth emphasizing that print advertising is not only published in newspapers and magazines, but also in outdoor advertising such as posters, billboards, etc. In the early days of the founding of the PRC, outdoor advertising was the main form of advertising, similar to newspaper advertising. However, in the context of the

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<sup>50</sup> Rudenko T. Yu. Advertising as an object of graphic design // Bulletin of the Moscow University of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia. 2010. №10. URL: <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/reklama-kak-obekt-graficheskogo-dizayna> (date accessed: 08.07.2023).

<sup>51</sup> Wells W., Burnett D., Moriarty S. Advertising: principles and practice. SPb.: Peter, 2001. 797 c.

rapid development of the advertising industry in the 1980s, outdoor advertising did not achieve results. Before 1992, the turnover of outdoor advertising mainly accounted for about 20 per cent of the country's total advertising business; however, from 1992 to 1998, it dropped to about 10 per cent. The "China Advertising Yearbook. 1992" noted, "Compared with other media, outdoor advertising locations are more dispersed, the more the turnover is small, but in the overall development of the advertising industry, it still cannot be replaced by any other mass media."<sup>52</sup> Outdoor advertising has an important social value because it has the following advantages over the distribution of print advertisements: "Outdoor advertising is more dispersed than other media, especially the turnover is small, but it still cannot be replaced by any other mass media.

- Outdoor advertising is attractive and easy to remember with a prominent image and distinctive theme.
- Advertising is not limited by time and space;
- Large audiences and long-term placement reduce the cost of advertising;
- The long-life cycle favours information that needs to be amplified multiple times;
- The visual impression is better. Huge coloured outdoor advertising signs are unconsciously a must.

### **Point-of-sale advertising**

This applies to all forms of advertising around a retail outlet, such as billboards, window advertising, posters, etc. The advantages of this kind of graphic advertising are:

- reduce the distance between consumers and goods;
- no time limit for advertising.
- beautify the environment.

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<sup>52</sup> China Advertising Yearbook.1992. Beijing: Xinhua Publishing House, 1992. Pp. 689.

- simple and clear content is suitable for different consumers.

Limitations are:

- The sphere of influence is small, unlike newspaper advertisements, which can be distributed.
- high environmental requirements: a disordered environment will have a negative impact on the efficiency of visual information transmission.<sup>53</sup>

### **Advertising sheet**

Advertising sheet – periodically issued printed advertising media that are provided to residents of a certain area free of charge at the initiative of the advertiser.

Depending on the information orientation, there are three main forms:

1) consumer advertising, containing mainly information for consumers, editorial advertising.

2) non-political local advertising containing information about local cultural, social and sports life.

3) political local advertising, discussing local political topics.

It can be said that print media, characterised by high activity and wide penetration rates, consistently have a wide audience. There is no doubt that newspapers and magazines are the best medium for advertising. According to the data collected by the team of the research project "40 Years of Chinese Advertising" of the School of Advertising, Communication University of China, compared with other forms of advertising in China, print advertising revenue has always been in the lead until the 1990s, and it has been a steady growth trend until the 2010s.

Print advertising has the following obvious advantages: the possibility of repeated reference to the advertisement; no time limit for advertising; direct access to

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<sup>53</sup> Fan Zhiyu, Fan Zhen. *Outdoor Advertising*. Shanghai: Shanghai People's Publishing House, 2003. Pp. 264.

the target audience that fits the consumer profile of the advertised product or service.<sup>54</sup> However, its disadvantages should also be highlighted: low creative potential and poor polygraphic quality of some media; short-lived advertising in the media; advertising in the press may be ignored by readers; high level of competition, especially when placing ads in thematic headings; uncertainty of places of publication: sometimes the ad may be invisible behind more bulky or brightly coloured materials.<sup>55</sup>

### **1.3. Graphic design in advertising and its history in China**

An early form of advertising dates back to ancient China, but the advertising industry in its modern sense first attracted attention only when commercial advertising was officially introduced in Shanghai in the 1840s. From that point on, graphic design as one of the ways to improve the effectiveness of advertising communication became highly valued. In the late nineteenth century, new printing technologies that had emerged in Europe were introduced in China and contributed to the development of Chinese design graphics.

Graphic design is a term widely used in the media industry today. Graphic design uses a "visual language" as a means of communication, conveys ideas or messages by creating and combining symbols, images and text. In 1922, Deviggins first used the term to describe his work on bookbinding design. It was not until after World War II, especially after the 1970s, that the term became accepted in the international design community. Graphic design encompasses many fields and utilises a wide range of aspects including layout design, typographic design and advertising design.

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<sup>54</sup> Lidovskaya, O. P. Evaluation of marketing and advertising efficiency. Ready marketing solutions. SPb.: Piter, 2008. 141 c.

<sup>55</sup> Nazaykin, A. N. Media Planning. Moscow: Eksmo, 2010. 400 c.

The author V.G. Romanovsky defined in the textbook: "Graphic design is a field of design related to artistic and graphic design and design of visual and communicative objects of the subject environment. The purpose of graphic design is to form a comfortable visual environment with high aesthetic and communicative qualities."<sup>56</sup> The main means of graphic design are fonts, signs, symbols as standard and individual; drawing; geometric figures, photography. The main types of design techniques for graphic design elements are typographic typesetting (metal, photographic, laser), sticker layout, photomontage, airbrush, stroke, line and other types of drawing.

And if mathematics is the language in which the book of nature is written, then graphic design is the language that underlies the entire modern information culture and is represented by a multitude of "dialects".<sup>57</sup>

Design theorist Wang Shouzhi defined: "Graphic design is the activity of visual communication in graphic space, that is, the design of visual elements in two-dimensional space and the composition of these elements, including font, illustration and photography. The essence of design is to convey information, guide, persuade the audience, etc. Its expression is achieved through modern printing technology."<sup>58</sup>

### **1.3.1. Development of the graphic design industry**

The origin of graphic design in China can be traced back to the 1920s and 1930s. At that time, the colonisation of Western countries and the penetration of political, economic, cultural and other aspects led to the modernisation of Chinese cities represented by Tianjin, Beijing, Guangzhou and Shanghai. Changes in people's lifestyles and improved aesthetics have contributed to the transformation of the graphic design industry. "Advertising Calendar" was created in this context. It is a

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<sup>56</sup> Romanovsky V.G. Graphic design: textbook. Novosibirsk: NGAHA, 2005. C.152.

<sup>57</sup> Mantorova A. V. Fundamentals of graphic design [Electronic resource]: textbook // Perm State National Research University. V. Fundamentals of graphic design [Electronic resource]: textbook // Perm State National Research University. Perm, 2021. 89 c. URL: <http://www.psu.ru/files/docs/science/books/uchebnie-posobiya/mantorova-osnovy-graficheskogo-dizajna.pdf> (date accessed: 12.29.2021)

<sup>58</sup> Wang S., The History of World Graphic Design. Beijing: China Youth Publishing House, 2002. Pp. 323.



product of European and American capitalists dumping goods in Shanghai in the late 19th century. Its form is the integration of advertising into Chinese mass folk art with the calendar attached. By the mid-1930s, the "advertising calendar" was applied to national enterprises as a business strategy to promote local goods and revitalise the national economy. (See Figure 1.4) By the early 1940s, as the most localised work of graphic design, the development of the "Advertising Calendar" had reached its peak. Before the establishment of New China, the graphic design industry was at a stagnant stage due to the war.<sup>59</sup>



Figure 1.4 - Chinese trading company advertising calendar in 1914.

There were many schools of Western aesthetics in the twentieth century. In the 1950s, an international typographic style emerged in Switzerland. This style can be regarded as the foundation of the modern graphic system and the platform on which the major trends of modern design were formed. Modernist graphic design gradually covered the whole world, and Chinese design, based on its own traditional culture, also began to try to integrate international elements. In the 1950s and 1960s,

<sup>59</sup> Cao Tianquan. Introduction to Art and Design. Shanghai: Shanghai People's Fine Arts Publishing House, 2005. Pp. 175.

China's modern graphic design imitated the "Soviet model" and lacked its own creativity. Especially after the Cultural Revolution in design, creative ideas were restricted, and traditional culture was abandoned. The achievements of China's graphic design industry have been negated. Art and design communication at this time was characterized by modularity and revolutionary spirit and conveyed more political information.

The revival of modern graphic design in China is primarily due to the implementation of the Reform and Opening-up Policy. In December 1978, the convening of the Third Plenum of the CPC Central Committee was a great turning point of great significance in the history of the People's Republic of China since its founding. On the one hand, such a turn put an end to the unrest that followed the Cultural Revolution. On the other hand, the establishment of the basic national policy of "economic construction as the center" promoted the revival of various industries. On the other hand, the establishment of a basic national policy of "economic construction as a center" contributed to the revival of various industries.

The opening of the economy and trade contributed to the development of art and design. Firstly, the awakening of the consciousness of modern advertising design in China has been influenced by modern Western advertising theory and the pressure of market-oriented economic development. Design was publicly recognized as a sector capable of driving social and economic development, mainly due to the emergence of a design market in the cities present in Guangdong. The period of economic development from 1979 to 1988 was characterized by the expansion of consumer demand, during which the following changes occurred: the production of consumer goods grew rapidly; more and more similar products appeared; mass consumer groups with purchasing power began to form; and market competition intensified. Under such pressure, traditional advertising could no longer satisfy companies, advertisers and consumers. Commercial design became a key marketing strategy to promote products and improve corporate image. A number of advertising design companies and agencies, such as White Horse, have emerged in Guangdong.

Second, modern advertising theory was introduced to China in the early 1980s: in 1984, China Advertising published two consecutive lectures: a lecture on advertising and marketing and a lecture on modern design. The lecture on modern design had a great influence on the transformation of Chinese advertising: it introduced the idea of modern design to Chinese advertising circles for the first time and addressed aspects such as graphic images, color design, logo design and font design respectively.

In the preface of the lecture "What is meant by modern design?" written by the teachers of Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts, it is pointed out that: advertising design refers to the design of visual communication, the object of which is the product as well as sales, it depends on the market, production cost, profit, relevant law, consumer psychology and other factors. Advertising and design activities are consumer-oriented and determined by the market. It can be argued that modern design activity has gone far beyond fine art and craft.<sup>60</sup> This article offers a glimpse into the modernity of advertising by re-examining the nature and function of advertising from the perspective of contemporary design. In 1987, China Advertising magazine published an article entitled "Conceptual Change and Renewal Facing Advertising Professionals", which first clearly articulated the basic concept of modern advertising. After that, several academic monographs related to modern advertising appeared, the most representative of which were "Modern Advertising Design" written by Ding Yunpeng and "Modern Advertising Studies" edited by Zhao Yujie. These works collected and presented Western modern advertising theories from different perspectives, which had great influence on the advertising community at that time.<sup>61</sup>

Thus, after the 1980s, it was clearly realized that traditional graphic advertising is the art of painting, while modern graphic advertising is a comprehensive application of the sciences of marketing, psychology, mass communication and visual

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<sup>60</sup> Yin Dingbang, Wang Shizhi, What does it mean to be a modern design // Chinese Advertising, Vol. 1, 1984. Pp. 32.

<sup>61</sup> Yu H., Deng Z., The history of contemporary advertising in China. Changsha: Hunan Science and Technology Press. 2000. Pp. 49.

design. An example of this is that the graphic advertisement of "Shuangling" watch by Beijing Advertising Company started the design creativity by considering the different characteristics of female consumers seeking beauty and male consumers seeking strength. (See Figure 1.5)<sup>62</sup>



Figure. 1.5 - Commercial graphic advertisement for Chinese "Shuangling" watches.

Since the 1990s, professional graphic design activities have taken place in China one after another. In 1992, a group of outstanding early Chinese graphic designers in Shenzhen planned and launched the first major exhibition of professional graphic design in mainland China, the "Graphic Design in China" exhibition. Some ambiguous concepts in graphic design were clarified in this exhibition, previously disparate departments had a unified theoretical basis. Throughout the competition in the exhibition, the overall level of design has improved qualitatively compared to the 1980s. The exhibits included packaging design, logo design, advertising design, layout design, framing design, illustration design, posters and posters, and other

<sup>62</sup> Guo, H. Concepts of visual communication in gender advertising in China (late 19th - early 20th centuries) // International Scientific Research Journal, No. 5 (119), 2022. pp. 61-72.

types of graphic design work.<sup>63</sup> The design industry is finding more and more applications, acquiring a deeper social and economic base and accelerating the professionalization of graphic design in China. (See Figure 1.6)

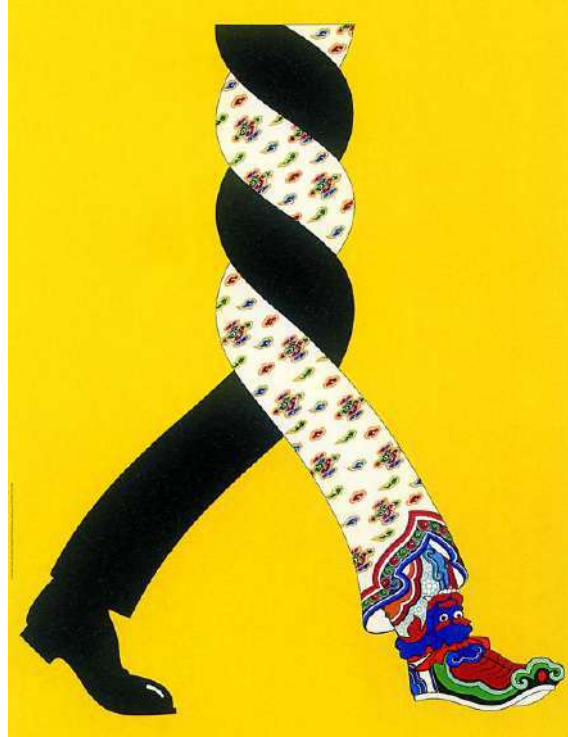


Figure 1.6 - Chen Shaohua's poster at an exhibition in 1992.

The "Graphic Design in China" exhibition was the first ever graphic design exhibition in China and had a wide resonance both at home and abroad, marking the rise of graphic design in China. Since 1992, various graphic design exhibitions have started to be organized, the graphic design industry in China is flourishing and the team of professional designers is constantly growing.

In 1995, the initiators of the "Graphic Design in China" exhibition established the Shenzhen Graphic Design Association, the first professional design organisation in China, to showcase outstanding achievements in design and promote social awareness of art. In 1996, this association held the second "Graphic Design in China" exhibition in Shenzhen. (See Figure 1.7)

<sup>63</sup> Tong Yijie. Research on the development characteristics of art and design in our country since the reform and opening up: PhD dis. ... / Yijie Tong. - Wuhan, 2012. - 151 p



Figure 1.7 - Graphic Design in China exhibition in 1996.

The establishment of the first graphic design association has encouraged other Chinese cities to set up their own design organizations. From a socio-economic point of view, it can promote local economic development and strengthen the competitiveness of enterprises. From a cultural perspective, deeper exploration of folklore by graphic design organizations helps to enrich visual communication as well as the form of design expression.

In the mid-1990s, a new technology, the computer, began to enter the lives of the Chinese people, quickly spreading into all areas of society. It also provided an environment for artists and designers to combine science, technology and art to create a unique visual language. At the same time, the birth and use of the Internet brought about dramatic changes in the media. Computer programmers for graphic design first began to appear in China in the mid-1980s, and by the late 1980s, 3D animation programmers had emerged in China and were being used to produce outdoor television programmers and commercials.

In short, the specialization of graphic design in the 1990s was mainly manifested in the following ways: professional design organizations continued to grow; academic research in media arts increasingly appeared in professional publications; the theory of applying graphic design to computers was introduced in China; and

new media and tools of information dissemination, such as mobile phones and the Internet, began to appear. The use of computers in graphic design freed designers from hard, monotonous work, expanded their creative thinking in graphic design and created new ways of visual communication.

In the early 20th century, China's accession to the WTO posed the challenge of transforming the design, production, and sales of products for Chinese companies. Original design must meet the needs of a competitive market. When modern companies paid attention to advertising and marketing, they often neglected the impact of design on brand value. And in global competition, brand value wins. Thus, high-quality design has become an important competitive tool for all businesses in the 20th century.<sup>64</sup>

In addition, in the early 20th century, China hosted an increasing number of international graphic design events, such as the International Graphic Design Biennial Ningbo and the China International Poster Biennial, which promoted the development of design and the exchange of graphic design. On the other hand, the presence of many prestigious international design exhibitions in China has enabled Chinese designers to better understand international design trends. For example, Beijing hosted the ADC (Art Directors Club of New York) travelling exhibition in 2002 and the 53rd AGI (Alliance Graphic International) annual conference in 2004.

AGI was founded in 1951 in Paris, spearheading the direction of contemporary graphic design. About 100 foreign designers attended the AGI conference in Beijing, giving national designers a unique opportunity to learn: from blind imitation to focus on their own design, from constant pursuit of fashion to focus on traditional culture. As of 2021, 21 outstanding graphic designers from China have already joined this association, proving that the achievements of Chinese graphic design are internationally recognised.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Zhang Siyao. 30 years of graphic design in China. Wuxi: Jiangnan University. 2009. Pp. 83.

<sup>65</sup> AGI Website. URL: <https://a-g-i.org/members/>

With the trend of globalization, the design industry, as an emerging interdisciplinary, plays a key role in corporate competition. Mature consumer markets continue to demand more and more from brands, services, product packaging and advertising design.

### **Development of design education**

The development of any industry is accompanied by the training of professional talents. After the 1980s, the education industry in China gradually recovered, but the old education system could no longer adapt to the needs of social development. Deng Xiaoping's reform and modernization of Chinese education in 1983 gave impetus to the development of art education. On the one hand, the government attached more importance to art education, which helped it transform from traditional industrial art to modern art design. Many institutes of technology and teacher training colleges began to open faculties for arts and crafts related specialties.<sup>66</sup> On the other hand, reforms were made in university management mode, talent training, specialty setting, curriculum structure and teaching methods.

In April 1981, a conference on teaching arts and crafts in higher education was held in Beijing by the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Light Industry and the Academy of Art and Design. It was the first arts education event in more than 30 years since the founding of the PRC. Having analyzed and summarized the practice of arts education over the past 30 years, the conference discussed the status and existing problems of applied arts education and considered suggestions for its improvement. The conference was regarded as an important milestone in the development of arts education in China.

However, neglect of practical art and over-emphasis on artistic skills remained common problems in design education, and specialization in graphic design had not yet been achieved in most institutions. For example, advertising design subjects were

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<sup>66</sup> Li Shihui, The innovative development of visual communication design in the digital era // Art Education Research, Vol. 19, 2020. Pp. 86-87.



limited to poster design, and the teaching of modern techniques such as the designer was often neglected. In the late 1990s, the Central Academy of Fine Arts reformed the mechanism of design education by putting innovation at the center, emphasizing the development of design thinking, and contrasting it with the mere acquisition of artistic skills. It has established a mixed system of basic knowledge teaching and studio teaching, and conducts research in graphic design, typography and urban image design. Especially studio teaching mainly serves the specialization of graphic design and focuses on international teaching. In 1996, the Central Academy of Fine Arts developed a new graphic design curriculum including basic courses in typeface design, printing technology, consumer psychology and specialized courses in advertising design, mass communication, trademark law, commercial photography, corporate image design. Later in 2001, subjects were added to the basic courses: fundamentals of photography, fundamentals of design, advertising, etc.

By the 21st century, China has basically established a design education system in line with global standards, laying the foundation for the specialization of the design industry.

### **1.3.2. Visual elements and composition in graphic advertising**

Composition is an important element of all art forms; it plays a major role and should be considered as the basis of all types of visual communication. In the visual arts, composition is the placement or arrangement of visual elements or ingredients in a work of art. Advertising design is a type of visual communication that conveys a message through a skillful combination of images and words to provide viewers with information to persuade them to act on the advertised idea or product, which would not be possible without a strong composition.

Composition refers to the visual structure and organization of elements in design. Its essence refers to the process of combining individual parts or elements into

a whole. Composition involves seeing the whole as greater than its parts and is as important as the individual elements that make up a design.<sup>67</sup>

From a design perspective, composition is the bringing together of individual parts or elements into a coherent whole. The basis of compositional techniques is how design elements are arranged/used to enhance the overall aesthetics of an image.<sup>68</sup>

Understanding the design elements together with the design principles and rules of Gestalt theory are the main keys to creating simple and creative professional advertising. In the absence of a strong composition, even the use of the most beautiful graphic elements cannot guarantee the success of an advertising campaign. If design is the process of turning an idea into art, then composition is the rules for creating it. Successful composition means that you have organized, distributed, aligned and compiled your design in such a way that it not only looks good, but is also highly functional and effective.

### **Visual elements in design**

Visual elements are the "alphabet" or "basic building blocks" that a designer uses to create their work. Composition is the foundation of any visual work; it establishes the relationships between the objects in the frame.

The compositional toolkit includes:

1. line

The first and most basic element of design is a mark that describes a shape or outline. Lines in graphic design can be used for a variety of purposes: highlighting a word or phrase, connecting content, creating templates, and more.

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<sup>67</sup> Zempol, D. D. *Graphic Design School*. London: Thames & Hudson Ltd. 2014.

<sup>68</sup> Lupton, E., & Phillips, J. C. *Graphic Design the New Basics*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press. 2015.

## 2. Color

Color is used to create emotion, define importance, create visual interest and create a memorable brand image. Color is one of the most obvious elements of design, both for the consumer and the designer. It can be used on its own, for example as a background, or used with other elements such as lines, shapes, textures, or typography. Colour creates a mood within a product and tells a brand story. Each color says something different, and combinations can further change that impression.<sup>69</sup>

## 3. Form

Shapes are at the heart of graphic design. They include the shapes and forms that make up logos, illustrations, and many other elements in all types of design. Everything is ultimately a shape, so you should always be thinking about how the different elements of your design create shapes and how those shapes interact. The three main types of shapes are geometric (circles, squares, triangles, etc.), natural (leaves, trees, people, etc.) and abstract (icons, stylizations, and graphics). These elements can be used to create a visually pleasing and attractive design.

## 4. Space

Space is a vital part of any good graphic design. It is essentially an unfilled space around other graphic elements. It can be used to separate or group blocks of information. The use of space is an effective technique to give the eyes a rest, to determine importance and to emphasize the main blocks of information.

## 5. Size

In graphic design, size is used to convey importance, attract attention, and create contrast.

## 6. Brightness

Brightness refers to the degree of light and dark in a design. It is the contrast between black and white and all the shades in between. The concept of luminance can be applied to both color images and black and white images. Contrast is the

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<sup>69</sup> 10 Basic Elements of Design & Their Importance. URL: <https://hapy.design/journal/elements-of-design/> (date accessed: 09.03.2024).

extreme change between two degrees of luminance, where luminance is the relative degree of lightness and darkness in a design element. Line, color, texture, and shape need luminance contrast to be seen. Brightness is used to describe objects, shapes, and space: dark areas tend to denote gloom, mystery, drama, while light areas tend to denote happiness, fun, warmth, intimacy. When used correctly, brightness creates depth, contrast, and emphasis.<sup>70</sup>

### 7. Texture

Texture is defined as the surface characteristics of a material that can be read through touch or the illusion of touch. Texture can be used to highlight an area in an image. Textures can create a more three-dimensional look in a two-dimensional picture. Using texture in graphic design adds depth and visual interest. The texture effect can be achieved graphically by depicting the features of a particular material in a drawing or by selecting a material to print.<sup>71</sup>

### 8. Typography

Typography includes the font chosen, its color, size and placement of text on the page.<sup>72</sup>

## **Print fonts in graphic design**

A typeface is an expression of the structure of letters or hieroglyphs and an integral part of graphic design. On the one hand, it must conform to the writing of the text and the features of the printing press, but at the same time it must adapt to people's visual aesthetics.

As Chinese woodblock printing became more widespread during the Song dynasty, a script that was separate from the handwritten script and designed for printing was gradually developed. By the Ming dynasty, an official printing style, the

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<sup>70</sup> The 7 Elements of Good Graphic Design. (n.d.) from Una Healy Design. URL: <http://www.unahealydesign.com/elementsof-good-graphic-design/> (date accessed: 04.2019).

<sup>71</sup> Lupton, E., & Phillips, J. C. *Graphic Design the New Basics*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press. 2015.

<sup>72</sup> *Visual Design Basics*. Retrieved from Usability.gov. URL: <https://feldkampmoments.wordpress.com/2019/10/27/elements-of-visual-design/> (date accessed: 27.10.2019).

Songti style, was developed (see Figure 2). It was the first printed script to appear in China and was used for centuries. At the end of the Qing Dynasty, printing with lead type was introduced in China. The typeface design of this period must conform to the aesthetics of Chinese characters as well as the technological requirements of lead printing. In 1909, a set of Kaiti style typefaces (see Figure 2) was created, which has the calligraphic character of Chinese characters. In 1916, combining the characteristics of Songti and Kaiti styles, the commercial press in China engraved the Fangsongti style typeface (see Figure 2). Subsequently, the modern Heiti style of font emerged in China, based on the rules of Latin script (see Figure 1.8). By the 1930s and 1940s, the most common modern print fonts including Kaiti, Fangsongti, Heiti, etc. had appeared.<sup>73</sup>

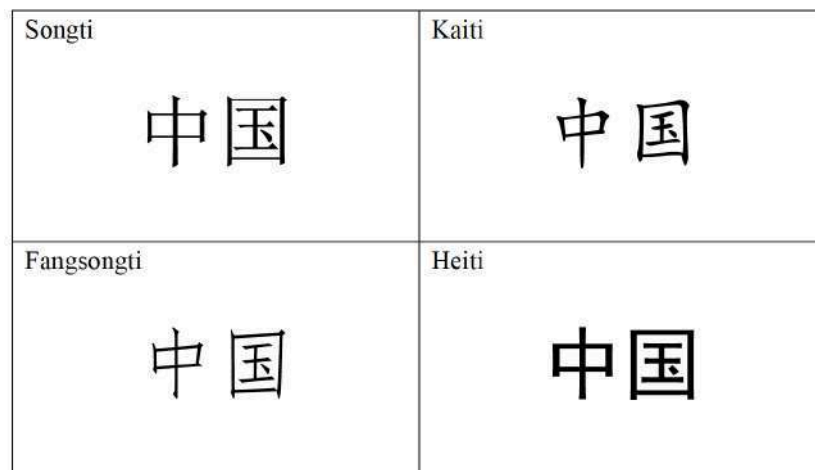


Figure 1.8 - Chinese font styles Songti, Kaiti, Fangsongti and Heiti.

After the establishment of the PRC, although adjustments were made to the fonts, the four fonts could no longer meet the development needs of the publishing and printing industry. In October 1960, the Ministry of Culture issued a document to organize relevant departments to create new fonts.

As part of the promotion of simplified Chinese characters, in 1965, the Ministry of Culture and the Text Reform Committee issued a joint circular to promulgate

<sup>73</sup> The relationship between graphic design and printing technology. URL: <https://www.wenshubang.com/meishuxuebiyelunwen/191305.html> (date accessed: 05.10.2022).

the Table of Common Chinese Characters for Printing, which contains 6,196 characters in the Songti printing script.

After the Cultural Revolution, the study and creation of fonts was revived. In December 1982, an exhibition of new printed fonts was held at the National Art Museum of China. Until now, with the help of computer technology, graphic design allows fonts to become more and more rich, personalized, and attractive.<sup>74</sup>

Thus, composition plays a key role in advertising design. Successful composition means that you have organized, distributed, aligned, and compiled your design in such a way that it not only looks good, but is also highly functional and effective.

Understanding the concept behind the idea of advertising helps an experienced marketer to choose design elements effectively, resulting in a clear and understandable visual language of advertising, and a consistent and elegant design that plays a major role in influencing the minds of consumers.

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<sup>74</sup> Li J., A brief discussion on type design in modern graphic design // Journal of Hunan Light Industry Higher Institute, Vol. 2, 2017. Pp. 165-167.

## CHAPTER II. Graphic Advertising in the Context of Developing Mass Culture

In the 1990s, to solve the problem of explaining the impact of advertising and graphic communication on society, patterns of its development, etc., advertising studies was born as a new scientific discipline. As a theoretical generalization and summary of advertising practice, the discipline gradually turned into an independent and highly developed tool. With the enrichment of advertising science and the development of the advertising industry, advertising research gradually deepened, and the system of scientific disciplines of advertising science was established. In general, practical advertising activities have gained a stronger theoretical basis and a clearer scientific rationale.

To date, this long historical experience has led to the existence of many studies related to advertising in China. This statement is especially relevant to articles and books on analyzing the historical development of the industry. In addition, often as part of the research process, researchers have turned their attention to individual examples of advertising product design to establish the specifics of how a particular image influences audience.

Based on the history of Chinese advertising and existing relevant studies, it is proposed to categorize visual communication in print advertising into four stages:

1. From 1949 to 1965. – From 1949 to 1965, the stage from the formation of the PRC to the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, the active growth of all kinds of advertising.

2. From 1966 to 1976. – Decade-long Cultural Revolution, loss of commercial function of advertising, propaganda tool.

3. From 1978 to 1990. – The end of the Cultural Revolution and the introduction of the Reform and Opening-up Policy" (a program of economic reforms undertaken in the People's Republic of China aimed at establishing the so-called socialism with Chinese characteristics, or socialist market economy), a new stage in the development of all kinds of advertising.

4. From 1990 to 2010. – Mature advertising activities taking into account marketing strategies and graphic design emphasizing visual elements of national culture.

Studies of graphic media in print advertising began mainly after the Reform and Openness policy; at the end of the twentieth century, however, their number increased significantly. According to the research method, they can be divided into two main directions:

1. Empirical research: studying the impact of social and historical changes on advertising science and design as it relates to graphic advertising.
2. Comparative-historical research: dynamic analysis of graphic advertisements in one magazine or newspaper during half a century.

This thesis combines the above two research methods to analyze the visual characteristics of graphic media advertising in terms of economics, culture and politics and identify its styles in different historical stages.

### **2.1. Features of visual and graphic communication in advertising in initial period after the founding of the People's Republic of China (1949–1965)**

The People's Republic of China was founded in 1949. The next decade (1950s) due to the change of socio-political system (socialism became the dominant ideology) became the stage of active transformation of China: all aspects of life faced new problems and development goals.<sup>75</sup> During this period, a standardized trade market had not yet been formed. The advertising industry under these conditions functioned

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<sup>75</sup> Gao Hua. The age of revolution. Guangzhou: Guangdong People's Publishing House, 2010.



more in a synthesis of political propaganda and commercial marketing ideas. The purpose of advertising increasingly shifted toward inculcating political values in society, thereby contributing to the formation of social and political culture. During this period, Chinese media was regulated by the government, as the state theory holds that the state government plays an active role as an economic conductor and has absolute power as a cultural dominator, especially for the formation of cultural identity and ideology.<sup>76</sup>

Some scholars conclude that from 1949 until the Reform and Openness Policy, there was no advertising activity at all. However, in fact, a small number of advertising products existed at this stage; however, the advertising industry was indeed in its infancy. This situation leads to the fact that the material available for research is extremely limited.<sup>77</sup>

### **2.1.1. Graphic communication in political posters**

Posters are printed, spray-painted, hand-drawn or other form of graphic advertising placed in public places and are a type of outdoor advertising. Poster advertising is characterized by timely dissemination of information, low cost, and ease of production.

After the establishment of the People's Republic of China, the question of how to give legitimacy to the new regime and ensure that the communist regime was accepted by the whole society became acute. The ruling party needed to build a new social culture to support its political system, forming an identification system based on its class consciousness in terms of collective identity, social values, and even ways of thinking and acting so that the party's ideology would become the only official ideology. As a result, great importance was attached to political propaganda during this period.

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<sup>76</sup> Liu Yang. Research on symbols interpretation of interaction between the design and political: dis. ... of PhD in Philosophy / Yang Liu. - Wuhan, 2012. - 233 p

<sup>77</sup> Lu Ning. Study of a propaganda poster for 17 years after the founding of the People's Republic of China: PhD diss. ... / Ning Lu. - Shanghai, 2014. - 140 p.

Political posters emerged during World War II as an offshoot of the modern poster art that emerged in the late nineteenth century. In fact, posters of different countries appeared in Chinese magazines as early as the 1930s, and after the 1950s, the propaganda poster became the most representative medium of the time due to its ability to express abstract political theories and political attitudes figuratively in graphic form with simple text, as the poster was well suited to the cultural and educational level of the Chinese people at that time. It should be kept in mind that in the early 1950s, China had only about 300,000 elementary schools with about 20 million students, 5,000 high schools with 1.5 million students, and 200 colleges and universities with 140,000 students. This was an extraordinarily small proportion of the educated population compared to China's then population of 475 million. According to statistics, in the early years after the founding of the PRC, more than 80 percent of the population was illiterate, the elementary school enrollment rate was only 20 percent, and only 110,000 people were enrolled in higher education.<sup>78</sup> Therefore, advertising in the form of posters was particularly suited to the mainstream national context. In addition, at that time, mass media such as radio and television were not widespread, and the poster had characteristics such as low cost and high popularity, which made it possible to expand the influence of political propaganda to a greater extent.

### **The development of visual styles of political posters**

In May 1951, Liu Shaoqi (statesman, Chairman of the PRC, 1898 – 1969), in a report to the first national conference of the Communist Party of China (hereinafter: CPC) on propaganda work, noted that propaganda is basically ideological work, that it is a prerequisite of the entire revolutionary struggle, that it cannot be conducted without propaganda of Marxism-Leninism. .... Every member of the CPC should explain the Party's ideas and policies to the people and propagandize the Party's basic

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<sup>78</sup> Lu Dingyi, Education and Culture in the New China // Yu Nan Zheng Bao, Vol. 3, 1950. Pp. 5-8.

views from a Marxist-Leninist perspective.<sup>79</sup> Zhou Yang, Vice Minister of the Propaganda Department of the CPC Central Committee, further pointed out that our writers and artists have a great responsibility to educate the whole nation on Mao Zedong's advanced thought. We should strive to become, as Gorky said, "the eyes, ears and voice of the class."<sup>80</sup> This shows the importance China attached to propaganda work in the early years after the founding of the PRC.

The CCP's literary and artistic policies established during the War of Resistance against Japan (1937 – 1945) imposed a class imprint on art. The artwork of the 1950s and 1960s, including posters, largely inherited the guiding ideology and creative approach of the war period, namely "art in the service of politics." Of course, as the political situation changed, so did the subject matter, which can generally be summarized as propaganda for the "movement to resist American aggression and to help the Korean people," land reform, socialist transformation, and so on. In addition, the positive portrayal of communist leaders and stereotypical fixation on the image of workers and peasants were also characteristic of the propaganda advertisements of this period, which were inextricably linked to the influence exerted by the Soviet Union.

Soviet artist Viktor Semenovich published an article entitled "Soviet Political Poster" in the Soviet journal *Art* in 1952, in which he systematically summarized the skills, technique, style, and aesthetic characteristics of the Soviet propaganda poster: convincing action, clear compositions and images, a powerful palette; concise and memorable slogans; characters mostly heroic and positive, especially the faces of figures, which should not be smaller than their actual size. This type of propaganda was "the most popular form of art" in the Soviet Union; it became firmly entrenched in the public life of the Soviet people, gaining admiration and sympathy.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Liu Shaoqi. *The Party's Tasks on the Propaganda Front* // Central Documentary Publishing House, Vol. 6(1), 1992. Pp. 294.

<sup>80</sup> Zhou Yang. *Speech at the Mobilization Meeting of the Literary and Artistic Community in Beijing on November 24, 1951* / edited by Luo Junze // People's Literature Publishing House, Vol. 10(1), 1985. Pp. 127-128.

<sup>81</sup> Ivanov, V. S. *Soviet political poster* // *Art*, No. 5(4), 1952. C. 68.

Inspired by the successful experience of the Soviet Union, the CCP, which shared the same needs, actively promoted the exchange of poster art between the two countries based on political alliance with the Soviet Union. This took the form of organizing special exhibitions of Soviet painting, inviting famous Soviet artists to visit China, and featuring Soviet artists and their works in Chinese magazines.

On April 3, 1951, the "Exhibition of Soviet Posters and Cartoons" organized by the Sino-Soviet Friendship Society, the Union of Chinese Artists, and the Central Academy of Fine Arts of China was opened in the halls of the Central Academy of Fine Arts of China (Beijing). This is the first large-scale exhibition since the establishment of New China, so it attracted great attention from the public. There were 348 works in this exhibition, most of which were printed posters, some were original caricatures.<sup>82</sup> These posters of the Soviet Union are very distinctive, they had political coloring and were not related to trade or advertising themes. Depending on the content, they were either characterized by solemnity and enthusiasm or resembled satirical comic strips. The posters represented the following main themes: "Lenin and Stalin – the world's first creators of a socialist republic", "The Civil War and the struggle against counter-revolutionaries", "The peaceful labor of the Soviet people", "The Great Patriotic War", "The restoration of the national economy after the war", "The victory of democracy in the USSR", "For world peace", "Happy childhood and youth", "Forward to the victory of communism!", "The Red Army – Defender of Peaceful Life" (see Figure 2.1).

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<sup>82</sup> Exhibition of Soviet propaganda and caricatures, 1951. <https://3g.163.com/dy/article/H3ST5A520511RVG1.html> (date accessed: 01.04.2022).



Figure 2.1 - Introduction to the exhibition of Soviet posters and cartoons in 1951.

As noted by the The People's Daily (from 4.04.1951), these works are "diverse, militant, have high ideology and artistry, their plots are serious. With sharp satire, the caricature carried out a harsh struggle against the enemies of the revolution and reactionary thoughts. And the poster cheerful, bright, solemn tone sang the heroes and events of Soviet history, expressing the great dream and idea of the Soviet people". Unique books were also presented at the exhibition. Three months later (14.06.1951) the exhibition moved from Beijing to Shanghai.

The exhibition elicited a lively response from viewers and art critics. Zhong Dianfei in his article "Learning from Soviet Artists! – Impression of Soviet posters and caricatures" wrote: "I believe that the reason why both the poster and the caricature touch us deeply is because of the magnificent political scope, boundless devotion to the peaceful cause of mankind, sincere love for the Soviet Motherland, and the skilled technique of Soviet artists – all this convinces both the ordinary viewer and the artist".

In 1958, The People's Daily newspaper mentioned for the first time that all construction work should be carried out quickly, well and economically, and emphasized that our country was facing a new situation in which industrial construction and production, agricultural production, culture, education, and health care should be developed at a tremendous pace. In May of the same year, at the second session of the Eighth Party Congress held in Beijing, Mao Zedong put forward the general line of "building socialism better and more economically" (hereinafter: the general line). This was the beginning of the "Great Leap Forward" (China's economic and political campaign from 1958 to 1960). This period was a turning point in the development of the propaganda poster, changing both its content and form.

First, from 1951 to 1957, the development of Chinese poster art was a process of studying and imitating Soviet poster art, and its main characteristics were internationalization and urbanization. The Soviet style was very prominent in Chinese posters of the 1950s in terms of color scheme, figure representation and painting style (see Figure 2.2). After 1958, together with the "Great Leap Forward" campaign, poster art underwent a national and rural transformation, the main feature of which was the stylization of folk art. Mao Zedong proposed that proletarian literature and art should use a combination of revolutionary realism and romanticism.<sup>83</sup> This set a new direction for the development of propaganda poster, distinguishing it from the Soviet style. Summarizing the development of poster art in the first issue of Chinese Art Research in 1959, author Ma Ke noted that the pursuit and exploration of national style was one of the characteristics of Chinese political propaganda poster art, and further cited examples such as Jiang Zhaohe's "Towards Socialism" poster (see Figure 2.3) and Ha Qiongwen's "Welcome to the Second Spring" poster (see Figure 2.4). Combining folk art, decoration and symbolism, these posters were popular with the public.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Zou Can. Posters in the Great Leap Forward: an analysis of political socialization: Master dis. ... / Can Zou. - Tianjin, 2011. - 91 p.

<sup>84</sup> Ma Ke. Political Propaganda Paintings of China in the Decade Since the Founding of the People's Republic // Art Studies, Vol. 1, 1959. Pp. 105-198.



Figure 2.2 (part 1) - Chinese and Soviet propaganda poster on military themes.



Figure 2.2 (part 2) - Chinese and Soviet propaganda poster on military themes.



Figure 2.3 - Propaganda poster "On the Road to Socialism" by Jiang Zhaohe.



Figure 2.4 - Ha Qiongwen's "Welcome to the Second Spring" propaganda poster, 1957.

Secondly, caricature was another characteristic feature of propaganda posters in the period of the "Great Leap Forward". The emergence of this style was influ-



enced by the folklorization of art on the one hand and the artist's desire for decorativeness on the other.<sup>85</sup> A set of posters published by the Shanghai Painting Printing House in 1958 are typical examples (see Figures 2.5, 2.6, 2.7).<sup>86</sup>



Figure 2.5 - General Line propaganda poster, Shanghai Pictorial Printing House, 1958.



Figure 2.6 - General Line propaganda poster, Shanghai Pictorial Printing House, 1958.

<sup>85</sup> Guo, H. Updating graphic content in Chinese advertising at the turn of the 20th – 21st centuries // Media in the modern world. Young researchers: materials of the 21st international conference of students, undergraduates, graduate students and applicants: St. Petersburg. state Univ., 2022. pp. 66-75.

<sup>86</sup> Yi Xin, Xiao Aozi. Chinese folk art. Changsha: Hunan University Press, 2004. 166 p.



Figure 2.7 - Propaganda poster "Ride the East Wind, Leap Forward", Shanghai Pictorial Printing House, 1958.

There was also a tendency to simplify posters from this period, the main reason being that the excessive desire for speed and quantity in poster production was beyond the capabilities of the paper and printing industry of the time, and these works were often printed in black and white monochrome.<sup>87</sup>

The period from 1961 to 1965 was a period of national economic adjustment, elimination of the budget deficit and market stabilization. During this period, the propaganda poster entered a period of hiatus in its development, and under the influence of the class struggle, it began to take on shades of the Cultural Revolution. Firstly, due to paper shortages, the publication of posters was greatly reduced and its diversity decreased during this period, mostly reverting to the style of the period before the Great Leap Forward. However, there are some beautifully depoliticized works, such as Pan Yipeng and Pan Ka's "Love the Village, Love Labor" published by the Hube People's Publishing House in 1963, in which the images of young women create a relaxed and happy atmosphere (see Figure 2.8).

<sup>87</sup> Historical Materials on Publishing in the People's Republic of China, edited by China Institute of Publishing Science and Central Archives. Beijing: China Book Publishing House. 2007. 39 p.



Figure 2.8 - "Love the Village, Love Labor" social poster by Pan Yipen and Pan Ka, 1963.

Second, at the end of this period, the subject matter of posters began to shift toward the class struggle, and the sprouting of Cultural Revolution emerged. The greatest variety of posters was published on the theme of anti-imperialist struggle, for example, the political poster "Supporting the Peoples of the World in their Struggle against Imperialism", by Yu Lungu, was published by the Shanghai People's Art Publishing House in 1963 (see Figure 2.9).



Figure 2.9 - Political poster "Supporting the Peoples of the World in their Struggle against Imperialism" by Yu Lungu in 1963.

## **Character as the main visual element on the poster: its features and importance**

In 1960, the Union of Chinese Artists and the Renmin Meishu Publishing House jointly organized the exhibition "Propaganda Posters in a Decade" in Beijing, collecting some of the posters published throughout the country after the establishment of New China. The exhibition was followed by the publication of the book "A Compendium of Propaganda Posters of a Decade" (hereafter: the "Compendium"), which included 135 creative works. The preface to the book notes that "at least a thousand posters have been created and published nationwide in the past ten years," so the number of works included in this book must account for about 10% of the total number of posters published nationwide between 1950 and 1960. The contents of the collection are exemplary and have some reference value. The collection of graphic material on posters from this period in this paragraph is based on this work.<sup>88</sup>

New China posters were characterized by the use of figures as the main object of political propaganda. People are the subject of political activity and the object of political propaganda, so the presence of figures in the image can add credibility to the abstract propaganda content, effectively captivate and inspire the viewer.

The central feature of the poster character was political identity and class affiliation, so the posters clearly distinguished between positive and negative images in terms of class. In the new social sequence, workers, peasants, and soldiers were seen as the leading force of the revolution, so their images appeared most often on posters. Take, for example, "The Gathering." The image of the worker appears 27 times, the peasant 34 times, and the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) 22 times, significantly more than other characters. Their image often appeared in a fixed form, in the visual center, emphasizing their position (see Figures 2.10, 2.11).

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<sup>88</sup> Wu Yun. A selection of propaganda paintings in the past ten years. Shanghai: People's Art Publishing House. 1960.



Figure 2.10 - Political poster "Gather All Energy and Strive for Success", by Yang Wenshu, Ha Qiongwen, 1958.

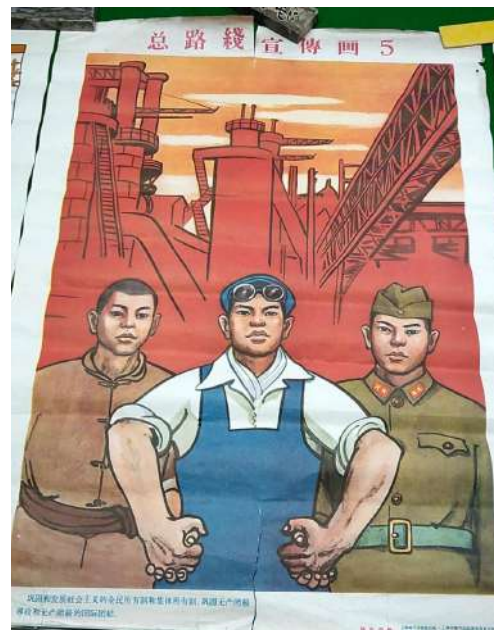


Figure 2.11 - General Line propaganda poster, Shanghai Pictorial Printing House, 1958.

Other positive figures that appear most often in the Compendium are children and youth – 13 times, people of all nationalities – 9 times, women – 9 times, people from all over the world – 5 times and intellectuals – 5 times. From this we can conclude that the image of children was also a key figure in the visual communication of the time, both for the purpose of educating minors and because their cute image

could infect the audience. In modern advertising theory, there is a strategy – "Baby, Beauty, Beastie" who are the eternal adorable heroes of advertising images, and this rule is also used in political propaganda (see Figure 2.12).



Figure 2.12 - Propaganda poster "We live in a new happy China"  
by Zhang Leping in 1953.

Images of women in posters from this period emphasized the role of women in production, called for gender equality, encouraged women to participate in the workplace, and emphasized their political status (see Figure 2.13). It is worth noting that the society of the time encouraged revolutionary will, so the image of women was masculinized and even militarized, as the female tractor driver was a frequent image on posters (see Figure 2.14).



Figure 2.13 - Propaganda poster by Ha Qiongwen and Yu Lungu, 1956.



Figure 2.14 - Women tractor drivers on propaganda posters of the 1960s

Other positive characters in the Compendium include heroic role models, grassroots cadres, Mao Zedong and the Soviet people, who appear less frequently. The intelligentsia were neutral figures during this period because they were in the gray zone of the class camp and had a blurred image in the political storm. For example, the intelligentsia appears only four times in the collection. Soviet propaganda posters published in Beijing in 1955 depict scientists, writers, musicians, teachers, engineers, and other types of intellectuals. In contrast, only three intellectuals in the “Compendium” posters are technical workers, which means that humanities intellectuals were completely excluded from the posters. For example, a poster by Weng Yizhi, published by the Shanghai People's Art Publishing House in 1955, shows a

young man concentrating on his studies, who is encouraged to participate more in group activities (see Figure 2.15).



Figure 2.15 - Propaganda poster "Go to a group class!" Wen Yizhi, 1955.

In addition to positive images, another group of propaganda posters of this period is characterized by negative figures, which can be divided into two categories: national villains, i.e., landlords, capitalists, and other counter-revolutionary figures (see Figure 2.16). The other category is foreign villains, i.e., capitalist countries led by the U.S. empire. These "villains" appear 16 times in the Compendium, and half of them are U.S. imperialism (see Figures 2.17, 2.18).



Figure 2.16 - Propaganda poster "Beat the landlord" from the 1960s.





Figure 2.17 - Propaganda poster "US imperialism is the public enemy of the peoples of the world", 1964.



Figure 2.18 - Propaganda poster "Peoples of the world unite to defeat US imperialism!", 1965.

By examining the above propaganda posters, we can determine the order of people's political identity through graphic language, as these images have already

been symbolized and typified. Firstly, the position of the figures in the picture reminds us of the social status of the time, as in poster 2.10 and 2.11, the worker is always in the center of the image, while the soldier, peasant, technician, etc. occupy secondary positions. Second, the physical size of the figures plays the same role: the worker is always the tallest. Third, the artistic technique highlights the figures, using light and dark contrasts to emphasize the positive image (see Figures 2.16, 2.17).

### **Symbolism of graphics in posters**

Symbols and graphics with specific symbolic meaning are also important graphic elements in poster design that can serve to further emphasize and reinforce a theme, as well as enrich and make an image more appealing. Symbols are a consensus developed over time through inductive use. By reinforcing the ideographic function of symbols, political advocacy themes can be expressed more accurately and powerfully. It is for this reason that symbols should be used with caution so that misunderstandings do not arise.

First, socialist symbols, namely the red flag, the five-pointed star, and the sickle and hammer, are the most common symbols found on posters of this period. These imported socialist symbols were later officially applied to the Chinese symbol system and became important material for posters.

1. The sickle symbolizes the peasant class, and the hammer symbolizes the working class. These two symbols are combined to become the emblem of the CCP. For example, the propaganda poster "Always Follow the Communist Party" published in the 1960s during the Great Leap Forward period combined the emblem with the sun, comparing the party to the eternal sun (see Figure 2.19).



Figure 2.19 - Propaganda poster "Always follow the Communist Party" from the 1960s

2. The red flag appeared on posters more often than the CCP emblem, and its symbolism is broader: party leadership, patriotism, the will of revolutionaries, and all elements related to communism, as in the painting "The Soviet Union – Great Standard Bearer of Communist Construction", where the red flag symbolizes the worldwide struggle for national liberation and independence (see Figure 2.20). In poster 2.21, the three red flags, an important graphic element of the period, symbolize Mao Zedong's "General Line," the People's Commune (a production and administrative unit of the PRC), and the Great Leap Forward campaign. Due to their graceful shape and bright colors, red flags are widely used in posters.



Figure 2.20 - Propaganda poster "The Soviet Union – the great standard-bearer of communist construction" from the 1960s



Figure 2.21 - Propaganda poster, 1958.

3. Party and national flags appeared infrequently because they indicate a limited number of subjects to which they can be applied. As in poster 2.22, the national flag, accompanied by a dove of peace, expresses the country's call for peace.

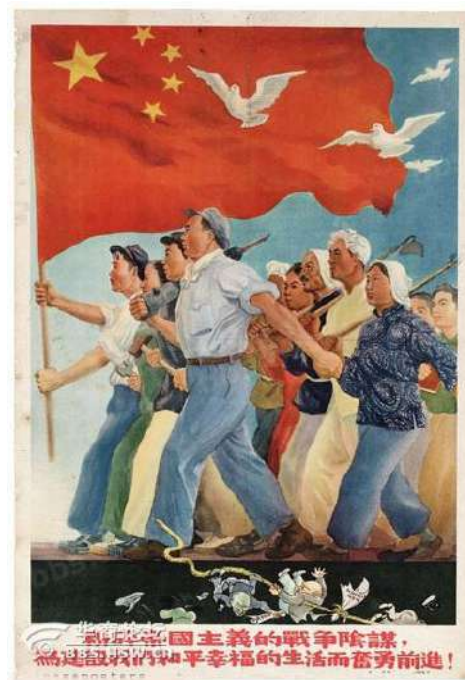


Figure 2.22 - Propaganda poster from the 1960s

4. The grain ears and the cogwheel are graphic elements of the coat of arms, symbolizing the peasant class and the working class, respectively. This group of symbols during the "Great Leap Forward" period was important for advancing communist reforms and accelerating the development of productive forces (see Figure 2.23).



Figure 2.23 - Social poster from the 1960s

Second, national symbolic elements are also frequently used in posters, the earliest example of which is the poster "The First Session of the First National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China" published in 1954. The author, Zhou Lingzhao, used traditional architectural motifs to create this poster (see Figure 2.24).

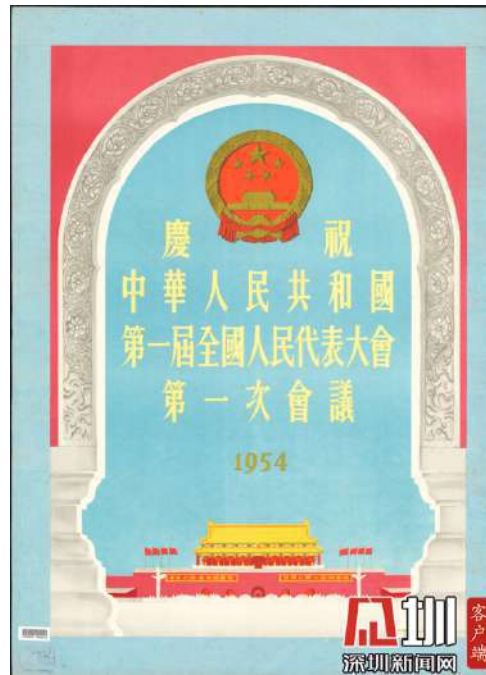


Figure 2.24 - Social poster "The First Session of the First National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China," 1954.

It is worth noting that the Soviet style was dominant in the first half of the 1950s. The influx of traditional Chinese graphics and symbols into posters occurred after Mao Zedong proposed "nationalization" in 1958. The poster design "Celebrate International Labor Day!", conceived by Feng Jiangqing in 1960, originally featured a birch forest in the background, but the birches were later replaced by pine trees to emphasize the Chinese style (see Figure 2.25). In traditional Chinese culture, the pine tree symbolizes elevation and purity. For example, the "Party Glory" poster from the 1960s combined pine trees, the party flag, and a PLA soldier (see Figure 2.26).



Figure 2.25 - Social poster "Celebrate International Labor Day!", 1960.



Figure 2.26 - Propaganda poster "Glory of the Party" from the 1960s.

To reinforce the ethnic character of the image, some posters also use traditional calligraphic scripts. For example, the Li Shu style in Qian DaXin's "Long Live the Unity of the Socialist Camp" (see Figure 2.27).



Figure 2.27 - Propaganda poster "Long Live the Unity of the Socialist Camp" by Qian Dasin, 1957.

Third, the graphic elements on posters from this period also include a small number of the leadership symbols discussed here and refer exclusively to Chairman Mao Zedong. Among the visual language of poster propaganda, there are graphics specific to Mao Zedong, and these graphics have the character of a trinity, symbolizing the national leader Mao Zedong, the supreme political status of the CCP leader, and Mao's ideology and political program. During this period, the use of the leader symbol was not yet frequent; for example, out of 210 works by four major Shanghai artists, including Ha Wenqiong, only seven posters (3%) contain the leader symbol. For example, in Figure 2.28, Mao Zedong is likened to a leadership banner.<sup>89</sup>

<sup>89</sup> Zou Yuejin, *Art of the Mao Zedong Era*. Changsha: Hunan Fine Arts Publishing House, 2005. 485 p.





Figure 2.28 - Propaganda poster in the magazine.

In addition, the book "Selected Works of Mao Zedong" was used as a visual symbol (see Figure 2.29). Its cover has a special color scheme and typographic format, so it is not necessary to draw very clearly to indicate the main idea of propaganda. In short, in terms of political subtext, the presentation of leadership symbols in this period is relatively subtle compared to the Cultural Revolution.



Figure 2.29 - Propaganda poster with the graphic "Selected Works of Mao Zedong"

### 2.1.2. Folk art in graphic design

Although the design of propaganda posters of this period had more political and propaganda character, but at the same time has significant artistic and stylistic features, which forms its cultural and historical value. But there is not enough data to study the propaganda posters of this era, which are essentially at the intersection of two disciplines – art history and publishing, according to Lu Ning, so the author did not conduct a more in-depth study.

In addition to political symbols in the graphic communication of advertising, in this period, folk art was also an important visual element of design. For example, in 1958, the Art Institute of Technology founded the magazine *Decoration* (Zhuangshi). At that time, it was the only academic periodical of arts and crafts that provided theoretical support for industrial art and opened new horizons for designers. Song Zheqi's dissertation, "A Study of the Development of the Design Culture of *Decoration Magazine* (1958 – 2018)," analyzes the relationship between the design of this magazine and the cultural development of society from the publication's inception to 2018. The author points out that the cover is one of the most important components of magazine design to attract the audience. Therefore, this paper emphasizes on the study of graphic advertising communication, in the context of which the changes of the magazine are divided into three phases. In the first phase, namely from 1958 to 1961, the main visual feature of the magazine design is the use of traditional folk-art elements such as embroidery. The title uses predominantly direct text writing and a simple visual layout. As the author of this paper wrote: "It is not difficult to notice that the covers of the magazine “*Decoration*” at the initial period of publication presented mainly handmade items of traditional folk art; colors typical of folk-art items were actively used: red, green and black. This shows the peculiarities of the time and national aesthetics and awakens people's awareness of beauty" (see Figure 2.30).<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Song Zheqi. Design culture development research of ZHUANGSHI magazine (1958-2018): Master dis. ... / Zheqi Song. - Hangzhou, 2020. - 145 p.



Figure 2.30 - Cover of the magazine “Decoration”, No. 7, 1959

### 2.1.3. The emergence of commercial advertising in the context of political struggle

In the early years after the founding of the PRC, there were still a small number of commercial advertisements, mainly foreign trade advertisements and advertisements of domestic products with political overtones. Therefore, the research on this issue is very limited. Including one noteworthy work is Gu Yuanming's article "Cultural marks of an Era – the window advertising in Shanghai No. 1 department store during 1950s to 1970s", published in 2013 in the Chinese journal *Public Art*.

The window advertising poster is a form of commercialized visual communication used to promote and induce consumers to make purchases in the era of commodity economy. However, during the period of the planned economy in China in the 1950s and 1970s, as noted in previously reviewed works, it diminished its purely commercial purpose while gaining elements of political and cultural propaganda.<sup>91</sup>

The author divides the window advertising in Shanghai No. 1 Department Store into three independent themes: product advertising, political propaganda advertising, and cultural propaganda advertising. Accordingly, they reflect the social

<sup>91</sup> Zhu Guoqin. *Modern Poster Art History*. Shanghai: Shanghai Publishing House. 2000.

perspectives and changes in both Shanghai and China during this period. The author noted that the window advertisement posters of this period were both a "mirror of the times" and a "window for political propaganda" (Gu Yuanming, 2013: 13-17).

An excellent example given by Gu Yuanming of the synthesis of propaganda and commerce, which is worthy of mention in this paper, is the window poster for the famous domestic brand of fountain pens "Yingxiong" (from the Chinese "Hero"), which reflected the social, political, and cultural atmosphere of the time. At that time, the American brand "Parker" (Parker) pen was undoubtedly the world's leading pen brand and became the strongest competitor of the domestic brand "Yingxiong" pen. In the image, a Chinese worker with a huge "Yingxiong" pen defeated Parker. Together with the text: "Heroes scared Parker", it is easy to see behind the advertisement not only commercial promotion and counter-competition, but also quite a political subtext, in which Parker represents the capitalist United States and "Yingxiong" represents communist China, i.e. the national brand outperformed the American brand (see Figure 2.31).



Figure 2.31 - Window advertising poster for Shanghai Department Store No. 1, 1960.

On the other hand, the author of the work notes that the window advertising poster is also "a stage for spreading social culture".<sup>92</sup> Social culture determines the

<sup>92</sup> Gu Yuanming. Culture marks of an Era - the window advertising in Shanghai No. 1 department store during 1950s to 1970s // *Public Art*, Vol. 11(1), 2013. Pp. 13-17.

quality of people's spiritual life. Cultural propaganda in any period can exaggerate the positive or negative aspects of the social life of the society. Shanghai in the 1950s – 70s was no exception. In the era of lack of better means of communication, window advertising, as a special and effective public image of the time, created a platform for cultural communication.

It can be said that public images are a good platform for communication between individual and society. Today we have better media such as television and the Internet, but the social role played by public images is still high. Through it, people can get a real and clear picture of the current economic, cultural, and political aspects of society.

## **2.2. Graphics in political posters of the period Cultural Revolution (1966–1976)**

In the early 1960s, there were sprouts of Cultural Revolution that hindered the development of various societal aspects. The advertising industry was no exception. During this period, commercial advertising was considered a product of the capitalist system and was completely banned. Advertising, on the other hand, took on a purely political coloration, manifesting itself in the form of propaganda posters and posters.<sup>93</sup> Research on advertising during the Cultural Revolution is still in its infancy, and most research findings are relatively similar. Although the form of graphic advertising during the Cultural Revolution was singular, if its research during this period is ignored, it will inevitably affect the formation of the overall picture of the evolution of Chinese advertising.

The decade-long Cultural Revolution that began in 1966 dealt a huge blow to the economic and cultural development of Chinese society. Many periodicals stopped publishing. Sun Zheqi's "A Study on the Development of the Design Culture of Decoration Magazine (1958 – 2018)" mentioned earlier mentioned, "Due to the

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<sup>93</sup> Sun Si, Xiao Jianchun. The Status of China's Advertising Activities During the Cultural Revolution and Analysis of Its Causes // *New Media*, Vol. 6(1), 2013. Pp. 46-47.

country's economic difficulties and the impact of the Cultural Revolution, the magazine was forced to suspend publication activities and did not resume until 1980.”<sup>94</sup> Accordingly, the source of research on the design of graphic advertising in this period is very limited and most of them are related to the study of political symbols.

Among the most prominent scholarly works studying this period, Huang Fengyi's dissertation, *Research on political propaganda posters during the Cultural Revolution*, shows us the characteristics of Chinese graphic design during this period. The paper mainly explores the formation, function and purpose of political propaganda posters during the Cultural Revolution. The author carefully analyzed the elements of advertisements of this period: fonts (Mao Zedong's Calligraphic style and bold style), colors (mainly red, complemented by yellow, green and blue), graphics (characters include typical positive and typical negative characters; objects include: five red stars, red flag, Tiananmen Square, etc.), composition (pyramid with upward angle, radial shape with protruding central position) and their connotations. The author mentions, "The Cultural Revolution period was a history of China's political, cultural and economic regression, but the distinctive visual symbols it left behind have had a profound influence on contemporary Chinese design and even formed the special visual art of the Cultural Revolution."<sup>95</sup> In the works of many Western and Chinese designers after the 1990s, the Cultural Revolution style has often been used to represent the contemporary features of Chinese graphic design style. The author concludes that art is always created in the context of an era and constantly evolves with the changes of society.

The discursive and symbolic behavior of political movements is inextricably linked to the cultural context of a country. In Mao's view, ideological purity was more important than the country's economic problems, and in 1957 he launched a series of corrective movements and campaigns that sent China through political and

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<sup>94</sup> Song Zheqi. *Design culture development research of ZHUANGSHI magazine (1958-2018)*: Master dis. ... / Zheqi Song. - Hangzhou, 2020. - 145 p.

<sup>95</sup> Huang Fengyi. *Research on political propaganda posters during the Cultural Revolution*: Master dis. ... / Fengyi Huang. - Changsha, 2019. - 71 p.

social upheaval. The Cultural Revolution in China from 1966 to 1976 was a major political event initiated by Mao Zedong that led to the radicalization of China's political environment. Some researchers attribute the origin of the Cultural Revolution to international political events and intra-party struggles. In terms of the doctrine of state and political revolution, it can be explained by Mao's doctrine of revolution, that is, his reference to the fact that "revolution is the means by which people achieve their goals, and the road to socialism had to be constantly articulated with violence."<sup>96</sup> In short, the Cultural Revolution, like all political movements, was a movement that tightly controlled people's ideology in terms of their thoughts and behavior. Artistic design, in accordance with the role of power, has the ability not only to influence and change the social environment, but also to control the thoughts and behaviors of social actors. Literature and art as an important part of ideology, close to the masses and conducive to propaganda, in the indication of which Mao in 1963 and 1964 established a close connection between artistic works and politics. In 1966, Mao Zedong published a newspaper article entitled "Fire on the Staffs," a political event that became the driving force behind the Cultural Revolution. During the decade of the Cultural Revolution, the media and popular culture were guided by totalitarian politics, art was seen as a tool of state revolution, and public ideology remained highly unified.

### **2.2.1. Graphic objects and their symbols in propaganda posters**

Print advertising at this stage is presented mainly in the form of propaganda posters, in which graphic objects have pronounced characteristics and specific symbolic meanings.

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<sup>96</sup> Leon P. Baradat. *Ideological Origins and Influences*. Beijing: World Book Publishing Company, 2010. 215 p.

A graphic object is any form visible, which the human consciousness distinguishes among other forms as an independent entity. A graphical object can be simple, and can be composite, that is, be combined from other graphical objects. Graphic objects are widely used in advertising, for example, in print advertising, etc.

Posters are usually displayed in public places with large crowds of people. When the content and artistic expression of posters are attractive enough, they have a great impact. This is fully reflected in the propaganda posters of the Cultural Revolution. In practice, artists have mastered the relevant artistic techniques and laws to create posters. These are mainly the overall composition of the poster, the choice of the title, the contrast of colors and the formation of patterns. Through these techniques, posters of that period were attractive enough that their contents could be fully disseminated to achieve the goal of influencing popular ideology.<sup>97</sup>

### **Character Graphics**

During the Cultural Revolution, political posters strove for typicality in character building. The tall stature and spirit of presenting characters formed the strength of the samples to inspire people and praise socialism. The largest number of them were works with Mao as the main image, with Mao's image being a typical political symbol of the Cultural Revolution. The work "Mao Zedong Goes to Anyuan" was the most influential and widely distributed oil painting of the time, with over 900 million copies published nationwide, and was used in many posters. As more political messages were conveyed, Mao's image became formulaic and standardized, devoid of artistic creativity and aesthetic value. As shown in Figure 2.32, red is used in perspective to highlight the grandiose image of Chairman Mao, an exaggerated, visually striking technique that had an inspiring effect on the public. Mao Zedong's image as a visual symbol became a form of worship as it spread.

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<sup>97</sup> Chen Guangming, Wen Jinguen. *History of Chinese propaganda Painting*. Guiyang: Guizhou Education Press. 2010. 292 p.



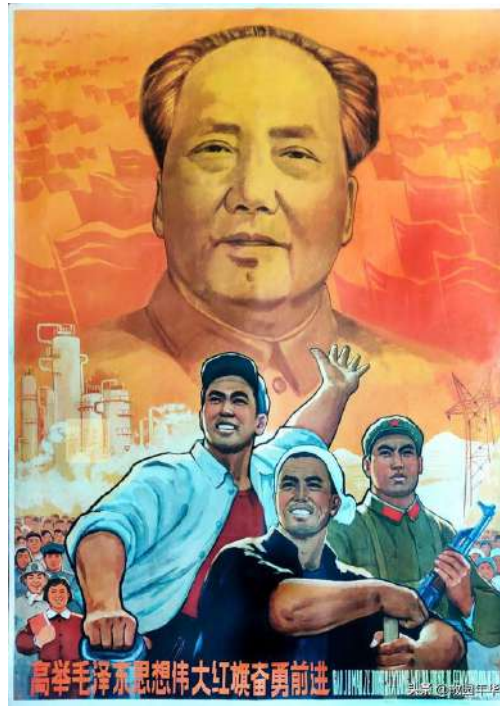


Figure 2.32 - Wen Yizhi propaganda poster, 1966.

Mao Zedong combined the fact that the working masses are the main force for social change with Marxism and developed the theory of populism, giving the peasantry and proletariat an important place in society. He proposed that all our literature and art should be for all the people, above all the workers, peasants and soldiers. Therefore, in addition to heroes, ordinary workers, peasants, soldiers, intellectuals, etc., were also typified, with determined or joyful facial expressions reflecting the determination of the revolution and the satisfaction of the new life: the image of workers was strong with tools in their hands; farmers usually held sickles, wore simple clothes and towels on their heads; soldiers were usually dressed in military uniforms with weapons; the typical image of intellectuals also became tall, with a pen or red book in their hand. These character images were based on personal characteristics and close to people's lives. However, compared to the images of the 1950s and 1960s, the traits of these figures were intensified during the Cultural Revolution: their social status was constantly emphasized with contrasting, high-purity colors and single repetitive graphics. For example, the red cheeks and strong body (see Figures 2.33, 2.34).

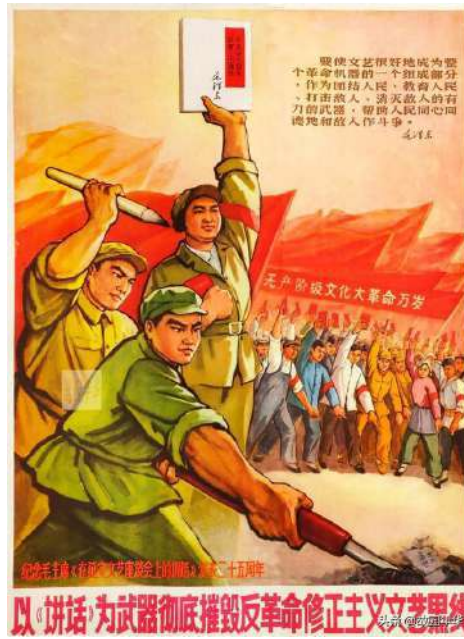


Figure 2.33 - Propaganda poster, Shanghai Zhengmei Publishing House, 1967.

During this period, there is a sharper contrast between negative and positive characters in the posters. The negative ones made up a relatively small part of the image, their gray and pathetic appearance attracting attention and mobilizing critical emotions (see Figure 2.34). This period saw opposition to all foreign cultures, arts and religions, as in the poster "Let's destroy the old world and build a new one", where a Hongweibin with a hammer in his hands smashes records, books and a Buddha statue (see Figure 2.35). Here the goal of the Cultural Revolution is evident – to destroy the old culture and create a new one.



Figure 2.34 - Propaganda poster at the exhibition, 1967.

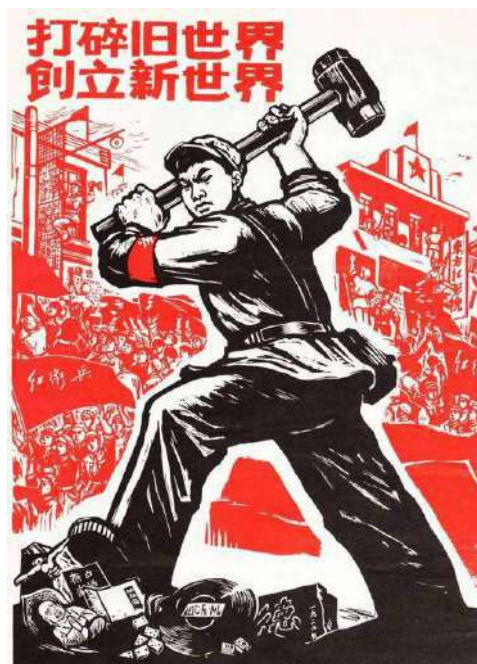


Figure 2.35 - Propaganda poster "Let's destroy the old world and build a new one", 1966.

During the Cultural Revolution, the artist's work used a combination of reality and ideals to form an image of dewy, determined, and righteous. The images in these

propaganda posters have a strong political coloration and evolved into an art direction influenced by social culture.

### **Color**

Color is one of the most intuitive visual elements in posters. Color is relatively abstract and cannot convey the meaning of an image on its own. Therefore, it must be attached to graphics and fonts and combined with psychological emotions and symbolic meanings to achieve the goal of conveying information. The color design of propaganda posters of the Cultural Revolution period is characterized by strong visual effects and passionate emotional expression. In the visual composition of political posters, special attention was paid to the contrast of colors to create visual effect as well as emotional expression to appeal to people's great resonance. It can be found that the most frequently used color in the posters is "red", representing the image of revolutionary justice. Against this background, auxiliary colors such as yellow, blue and green, with different symbolic meanings, are complemented to achieve a complete, active, vibrant and passionate unified visual effect.<sup>98</sup>

"Color should serve ideology" was the basic concept followed in the color design of propaganda posters during the Cultural Revolution. To extol the great achievements of Chairman Mao and the bright future of socialism. Red was considered by default to be the representative color of truth because of its revolutionary, festive and noble characteristics. Based on this, the "red, bright, light" color model of visual communication became the standard of propaganda posters: "red" carried a positive psychological connotation; "bright" implied a better life under the construction of socialism; and "light" embodied the spirit of boldly moving forward.<sup>99</sup>

Red graphic objects can be seen almost everywhere in the political poster works of this period. For example, in the performance of characters, especially righteous heroes, their skin is usually bright red, which gives a sense of fighting spirit

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<sup>98</sup> Wu Jijin. *Art during the Cultural Revolution // Hundred Year Tide*, Vol. 9, 2003. Pp. 56.

<sup>99</sup> Huang Song, *Color design*. Beijing: China Textile Press, 2001. 295 p.

and vitality (see Figures 2.33, 2.36, 2.37). On the one hand, such graphics responded to the aesthetic psychology of the public; on the other hand, they stimulated the revolutionary enthusiasm of the people. At the same time, they were metaphors for the victory of the revolution and a better future for China.

In addition to red, which represented revolution, justice and sublimity, the visual culture of the Cultural Revolution also tended to favor bright folkloric colors such as yellow, green, blue, etc. The use of these auxiliary colors, on the one hand, creates a contrast with red, making the picture richer. On the other hand, it responds to the aesthetics of the public and carries the symbolism of the time. During the Cultural Revolution, the slogan "Don't love cosmetics, love the armed forces" was popular among young people, so the characters of many political posters wore blue and green military uniforms (see Figures 2.36 – 2.39). It is worth noting that the gender characteristics of the characters on posters from this period are not obvious, and both men and women represent tall and powerful images (see Figures 2.33, 2.36, 2.37). Blue and green also symbolize peace, hope and youth, and represent the vitality and broad future of New China (see Figure 2.38). Bright yellow gives people warm feelings, symbolizes light, and is a metaphor for Mao Zedong's idea of lighting up the earth (see Figure 2.39).



Figure 2.36 - Propaganda poster "We Love the Village"



Figure 2.37 - Propaganda poster "Attacking the class enemy"



Figure 2.38 - Propaganda poster "To give all our strength to the construction of the homeland"



Figure 2.39 - Propaganda poster "Long Live Chairman Mao"

### Fonts

The typefaces created during the Cultural Revolution were a fixed model and compared to the typefaces of the 1930s and 1940s, the typefaces of the Cultural Revolution lost the variety of decorative styles brought about by the intervention of Western art and culture. During this period, the direction of type development narrowed. Mao Zedong's calligraphic style, the Meiheiti style, and the simplified Heiti style were the most common in posters of this period, which were entirely a product of the political environment. The use of these fonts was often a radical and powerful revolutionary slogan that directly and positively influenced public sentiment, such as "Down with all those who oppose Chairman Mao".

The first common typeface was Mao Zedong's Calligraphic Style, also known as "mad cursive" (no rules, with arbitrary abbreviations), characterized by long, thin strokes, slightly larger character size, and free brush movements. Many memorable slogans have become famous in this script, such as "Study hard, strive for the best every day" and "Serve the people" (see Figures 2.40 – 2.43).



Figure 2.40 - Mao Zedong's calligraphic style, "Study well, strive for the best every day"

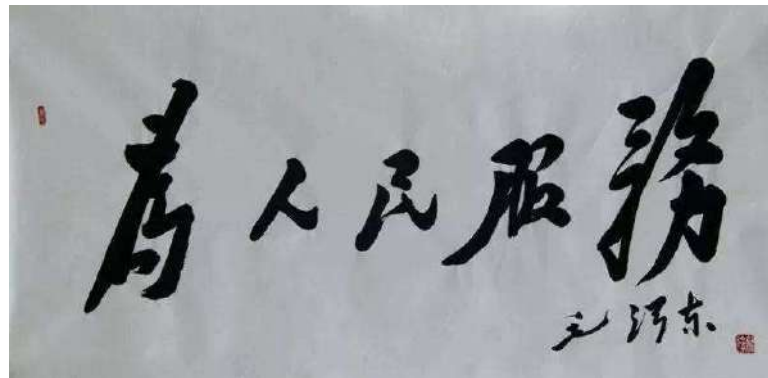


Figure 2.41 - Mao Zedong's calligraphic style, "Serving the People"





Figure 2.42 - Mao Zedong's calligraphic style in the August 1966 issue of the Guangming Daily newspaper



Figure 2.43 - Mao Zedong's calligraphic style in a propaganda poster

The second common typeface is known as Meiheiti style and is characterized by square and drop-shaped strokes with an upper center of gravity, which creates a sense of tension (see Figures 2.44, 2.45). The Meiheiti style font used in political context is a new font that was created after the founding of the PRC because when the size of propaganda poster was limited, a long and thin font could accommodate

more content. Plus, the high center of gravity of this font creates a sense of pressure, so it is considered a politically charged font.<sup>100</sup>



Figure 2.44 - Meiheiti style font on a Cultural Revolution poster



Figure 2.45 - Meiheiti style font in the Guangming Daily Newspaper, No. 5, 1967

During the Cultural Revolution, a culture of simplicity and rejection of capitalism was being promoted. The decorative Meiheiti style shifted to a simpler and more powerful font of simplified Heiti style with a square tail from the drop shaped Meiheiti style for greater visual recognizability (see Figure 2.46). Its use in posters

<sup>100</sup> Li Shaobo. Investigation on the Origination of Chinese Heiti // Zhuangshi, Vol. 3, 2011. Pp. 38-43.

suggested a stronger and more direct political stance. Unlike Mao's style, this typeface represented the public in China and had a more popular meaning.



Figure 2.46 - Heiti's simplified style on a poster, 1968.

In addition to the main graphics, political posters also use some indispensable auxiliary graphics with certain symbolic meaning, including red sun, red five-star star, light, sunflower, red flag, red citation (Mao Zedong's citation), Tiananmen Square, sickle and hammer, etc.<sup>101</sup>

Although the supporting graphics are not the main part of the poster, they are also an important element for the organization and layout of the image. Influenced by politics, these graphics during the Cultural Revolution had a clear political meaning that were tacitly accepted by people, such as the sun is a metaphor for the leader of the country (see Figure 2.47).

In addition to the image of Mao Zedong, sunflowers represented the love and support of the public for Chairman Mao (see Figures 2.48, 2.49); red and yellow colors symbolized the spirit of revolution and holiness, respectively (see Figures 2.50 – 2.53). It is noteworthy that during this period, the graphic symbol, Mao Zedong's red quotation book, which is held in the hands in a standard pose, appeared

<sup>101</sup> Chen Wenyan. The formation and development of art symbols in the Cul-tural Revolution // Art Education, Vol. 8, 2013. Pp. 141-142.

much more frequently (see Figures 2.52 – 2.54,). On closer inspection, this period saw the creation of a new graphic medium, namely the use of elements of the traditional folk art of paper cutting Jianzhi in a poster style that was unique to the Cultural Revolution period (see Figure 2.54).



Figure 2.47 - Propaganda poster "Always be loyal to the great leader Chairman Mao", 1968.



Figure 2.48 - Propaganda poster "Sunflowers blooming towards the sun"



Figure 2.49 - Propaganda poster "Sunflowers blooming towards the sun"



Figure 2.50 - Propaganda poster "Learning from revolutionaries"



Figure 2.51 - Propaganda poster "Mao Zedong's Thought is the pinnacle of Marxism-Leninism"



Figure 2.52 - Propaganda poster "We warmly welcome the great victory of the proletarian revolution", 1968.



Figure 2.53 - Propaganda poster published by the Hubei People's Publishing House, 1969.



Figure 2.54 - Jianzhi's art on the theme of the Cultural Revolution

The most important feature of artistic creation during the Cultural Revolution was the use of symbols to express emotions and political meanings. The image of Mao Zedong, the red sun, Tiananmen Square, and the red flag all carried a specific political message, symbolizing the image of the new Chinese state and regime.

In general, during the Cultural Revolution, the main form of print advertising was propaganda posters with clear political positions, which were characterized by an exaggeratedly romantic style. In contrast to the visual language of posters in the 1950s and 1960s, the graphic expression of posters during the Cultural Revolution

was more enthusiastic and the designs consisted of repetitive and formulaic images. These visual symbols became a single standardized aesthetic standard, forming the "Cultural Revolution style". Propaganda posters created during this phase bear the deepest political imprint, accompanied by the sole purpose of serving the government.

### **2.2.2. Composition of propaganda posters during the Cultural Revolution**

The composition on the propaganda poster is also of great political significance and has outstanding recognizability.

Composition is accomplished through an appropriate set combination of graphics, fonts, colors, and other visual elements to achieve an overall coordinated and unified effect of the final flat image. As a representative of visual design, Cultural Revolution political posters, like other art forms, must pay attention to the coordination and integrity of composition. The expedient composition gives the whole picture a sense of balance and contrast and can achieve the effect of emphasizing the theme and enhancing the artistic appeal.

The central idea of the composition of propaganda posters at this stage is to emphasize the courageous and high image of the revolutionary leader, thus expressing deep respect and aspiration for socialism. The composition style in Cultural Revolution was developed in accordance with the policy requirements for art, which are the principle of "three main features": positive characters in ordinary characters; heroic characters in positive characters; and important central characters in heroic characters.<sup>102</sup> According to the geometric figures formed by the representation of the main characters in the picture, the main compositional techniques of Cultural Revolution posters are summarized into the following three types:

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<sup>102</sup> Gu Yuanqing. *Literary Criticism during the Cultural Revolution* // *Journal of Hubei Institute of Education*, Vol. 02, 2005. Pp. 9.



## Pyramidal composition

Posters praising a theme usually use a pyramid style composition method. It gradually expands from top to bottom. An upward viewing angle is used, and the line of sight is centered in the middle and top of the whole poster, creating a stable and wholesome atmosphere, which makes people feel admiration. In some works, to emphasize the image of a single character, the hero is usually placed in the center of the poster screen, resulting in a strong contrast, and the background is mainly majestic rivers, mountains, and seas (see Figure 2.55). If the image consists of several people, it is divided into several two situations: if one of them is highlighted, the image will have a clear idea of layering, for example, the leaders will be placed in the very center, while others are mainly used as background (see Figure 2.56); in addition, it can be independent of the major and minor, in order to praise a group of revolutionary heroes, then it will focus on reflecting personal coloration, and the contrast on the level will be weakened (see Figure 2.57).



Figure 2.55 - Propaganda poster from the 1960s.



Figure 2.56 - Propaganda poster from the 1960s.



Figure 2.57 - Propaganda poster from the 1960s.

### Radial composition

“Radial” refers to a point as the center, extending in a hierarchical manner to surrounding areas. The center is a visual focal point that gives tension and movement to the picture, reflecting a strong visual contrast. Regarding the theme of highlighting leaders or heroes, there are countless posters that utilize this compositional method and use other people or landscapes of the homeland as a background to create a strong contrast that emphasizes the courageous image and high status of great

people. This image became a permanent template for posters at the time (see Figure 2.58).



Figure 2.58 - Propaganda poster from the 1960s.

### Linear composition

This method of composition allows the depth of the subject matter in the picture to be fully emphasized. The main character in the picture beads the rosary with strong effect, creating a solemn and deep feeling in people (see Figure 2.59). The arrangement of the main characters in the linear composition mainly follows the golden ratio. This composition avoids the aesthetic fatigue inherent in the other two methods.<sup>103</sup>



Figure 2.59 - Propaganda poster from the 1960s.

<sup>103</sup> Shi Daqian. 1949 – 2009 Propaganda Painting Volume-Shanghai Modern Art History Department, Shanghai: Shanghai People's Fine Arts Publishing House, 2012. 367 p.

The narrative ideas expressed by the artists are different, and the choice of composition is different. The same is true for the audience: the visual effect created by different compositional forms is not the same. Therefore, the choice of composition of propaganda posters was not always unique. They often used several methods of composition to achieve the best communicative effect.

Propaganda posters during the Cultural Revolution used unique Chinese-style visual images, distinctive and concise themes, vivid colors, and short and powerful slogans to express content closely related to society, politics, economy, and culture. At the same time, a national visual system was established that captured the trajectory of social development and carried historical and cultural connotations. What distinguished propaganda posters during the Cultural Revolution was that cultural connotation had an indelible impact on the humanistic thought of the time. Consequently, the cultural connotation of political propaganda posters was not abstract, but figurative expression under the interaction between socio-cultural environment and poster art, which is of great significance to the integrity of the study of Chinese graphic design style.

### **2.3. Trends and concepts for the development of graphic advertising in communicative practice of the late 20-th – early 21-st centuries**

Э. М. Глинтник noted in the article "Advertising design-graphics as a socio-cultural phenomenon in Russia 1880–1910-ies": the analysis of the socio-cultural significance of design-graphics as a phenomenon of mass artistic communication shows that it to a certain extent contributed to the establishment of consumer priorities and determined the nature of consumption. .... The dual utilitarian and aesthetic nature of design graphics already at an early stage determined the process of its formation in the conditions of mass consumption. The dominant task of advertising

graphics, as a means of establishing the most active communication between the producer and the consumer, entailed the development of a decorative-graphic system, easily perceived, with visual appeal or novelty. This purely consumerist approach to applied graphics is a phenomenon characteristic not only of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but also of our time.<sup>104</sup> Since the late 1980s in China, under the influence of socio-economic changes, a trend of development of graphic advertising like the Russian one in the late 19th – early 20th century has been revealed.

The development of graphic advertising design in China has been closely related to the market economy. In the late 1980s, with the implementation of the Reform and Opening-up policy and the improvement of the economic situation, the advertising industry in China showed new promise. The graphic advertising of this period is different from the propaganda posters of the 1960s and 1970s. It observes the idea of modern design influenced by Western art. As for the design itself, the 1980s was a turning point for Chinese design from traditional to modern. Modernity in graphic design of this time was the study and imitation of Western design.<sup>105</sup>

This was followed by a phase of reflection and innovation in graphic design. One of the interesting scientific studies on this period is the thesis "Wu Guanzhong's painting graphic language research and its application in plane advertisement design" (Wu Guanzhong is a Chinese contemporary artist and art teacher). Author Wang Jinxu believes that successful design cannot be developed separately without utilizing national motifs. If foreign art is not used rationally, it will inevitably lead to boring imitation in visual communication.<sup>106</sup>

Until the beginning of the 21st century, Chinese advertising design was mainly an independent system with national cultural characteristics and international design concepts. Scientific research in this field has gradually gained attention.

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<sup>104</sup> Glinternik E. M. Advertising design graphics as a socio-cultural phenomenon in Russia 1880 - 1910-ies // International Journal of Cultural Research, № 4 (25), 2016. C. 89-111.

<sup>105</sup> Wang Yang. General History of Chinese Advertising. Shanghai: Shanghai Jiaotong University Press. 2010.

<sup>106</sup> Wang Jinxu. Wu Guanzhong's painting graphics language research and its application in plane advertisement design: Master dis. ... / Jinxu Wang. - Guilin, 2014. - 52 p

### **2.3.1. Changes in the concept of graphic advertising after economic reform**

To make a good study of graphic communication in advertising in the 1980s, it is necessary to analyze the background of that time: economically, China moved from a planned economy to a market economy and embarked on a path of rapid economic development. Many companies realized that advertising played an important role in forming sales channels, promoting products and establishing consumer culture. Commercial advertising as a means of market competition has gained a new round of widespread use.<sup>107</sup> Culturally, the introduction of foreign advertising theories and design concepts led to the emergence of new artistic thinking. In 1985, the New Wave movement (Chinese contemporary art movement, its aim is to utilize the experience of Western European art and develop its own) emerged in art circles, which brought artistic styles of art such as realism, romanticism, and impressionism to China.<sup>108</sup> Innovations in drawing techniques and concepts have greatly changed people's understanding of visual communication. As well as technological innovations and training, such as the use of photography and computer programs, have significantly enriched creative techniques and graphic expressiveness in print advertising. Educationally, the emphasis on art education allowed students to actively incorporate modern design thinking. During this period, many advertising agencies and design organizations appeared, and various exhibitions on advertising design were held. And also the transformation of modern lifestyle led to changes in people's aesthetic and visual perception, which led to a change in the way graphic advertising was presented. As Clifford Geertz remarked: lifestyle is the concrete content and form of culture, as well as an important starting point and basic concept of modern design.<sup>109</sup> Therefore, the transformation of graphic advertising expression from painting to

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<sup>107</sup> Xu Junji. *Chinese advertising history*. Beijing: Beijing Communication University of China press. 2006.

<sup>108</sup> Lu Hong. *30 Years of Chinese Contemporary Art: 1978-2008*. Changsha: Hunan Art Publishing House. 2013.

<sup>109</sup> Clifford Geertz. *Interpretation of Cultures: [translated from English]* M.: ROSSPAN, 2004. C. 557.

design in the 1980s. This was in response to the changes in material consumption, cultural entertainment and people's aesthetic perception in that period.<sup>110</sup>

Attention should be paid to the dissertation "Research on the Development of Advertising Design after the Reform and Opening-up Policy in China", successfully defended by Shi Yue at Suzhou University in 2014. The author chose this active period as the object of study to analyze the development of Chinese advertising design in the context of the state's history with a periodization also built on the highlighted historical milestones of the PRC's development. Despite the fact that the present study also touches upon this period and has a pronounced historical context, the focus of the work is shifted towards the history of advertising itself, highlighting the main milestones and periods of development of graphic design, with indirect or no reference to the periods of PRC development highlighted by historians and taking into account a broader set of factors for the formation of periodization.<sup>111</sup>

First, the author analyzed the impact of social change on advertising design before and after the Reform and Openness Policy from the perspective of politics and public opinion. For example, he wrote: "The state media's positive attitude towards the development of commercial advertising played a role in facilitating the full recovery of the national advertising industry. The author further separately identified the development of advertising design in traditional media during this period: television, radio and periodical advertising. With regard to the design of graphic advertising, the author has emphasized the influence of printing techniques on it, as well as creative techniques in it. The author concludes:

1. Social economy and national politics directly affect the level of advertising design.

2. The concept of advertising design began to change from simple exposition to consumer oriented.

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<sup>110</sup> Ding Yanjing. Analysis of the reasons for the conversion and development of commercial posters after the reform and opening up // Journal of Jingchu Institute of Technology, Vol.3,2013. Pp. 89-91.

<sup>111</sup> Shi Yue. The research on China's advertisement design development after the Reform and Opening up: PhD dis. ... / Yue Shi. - Suzhou, 2014. - 203 p.

### **Moving from "manual style" to "creative style"**

Graphic advertising in the 1980s broke free from the shackles of political posters and took on a new look. Its design evolved from a painting model to a modern design concept combining figurative and abstract graphics. Yin Dingbang and Wang Yuzhi mentioned in "What is Modern Design", "Our activities in modern design, including advertising design, have gone far beyond fine arts and crafts". In the mid to late 1980s, graduates from Guangzhou colleges and universities, which were the first to be reformed by Hong Kong design education, were actively involved in advertising-related work. They demonstrated a level of specialization, exported Western ideas of modern design to the society and began to practice the concept of modeling "composition" was extended to the whole design community in the mainland. Because the visual level of information is important for the dissemination of information to consumers, advertising, visual composition is particularly important: reasonable planning of graphic objects creates a more harmonious and contagious image effect.<sup>112</sup>

From a comparison of print advertising from the early 1980s and the late 1980s, we can get an idea of the contemporary visual effects brought by the principle of "composition" to graphic advertising.

For example, advertisements for Maxam care products and Yuipai Castle in the early 1980s used a hand-drawn style (see Figures 2.60, 2.61).<sup>113</sup> A print ad for Feiyu TV in 1982 highlighted an advancement in ad creation – photography was used (see Figure 2.62). In addition to the photographic tool, a graphic toothpaste advertisement on the cover of China Advertising magazine in 1983 also used computer software to process the image (see Figure 2.63).<sup>114</sup> However, as in advertising using painting, the actual reproduction of advertising objects lacks ideas and creativity.

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<sup>112</sup> Guo, H. Revival of graphic advertising design in China in the 1980s // *Advances in the Humanities*, No. 08, 2022. pp. 39-41.

<sup>113</sup> China Advertising Union Corporation. *The First National Advertising and Decoration Design Exhibition*. Beijing: China Business and Industry Press. 1984.

<sup>114</sup> China Advertising magazine website. URL: <http://www.ad-cn.net>





Figure 2.60 - Printed advertisement for Maxam cosmetics from the 1980s.



Figure 2.61 - Printed advertisement for Yupai padlocks, 1982.



Figure 2.62 - Printed advertisement for the Feiyu TV set, 1982.



Figure 2.63 - Cover of China Advertising, No. 1, 1983.

In terms of picture composition, although the advertising theme stands out, it still gives people a feeling of excessive visual saturation. After a period of study and practice, advertisers in our country began to introduce the concept of composition in the mid to late 1980s, paying attention to the creativity of printed advertising images, not only to reproduce the product in a new form, but also to give viewers more room

for imagination. The magazine advertisements published after the completion of Pepsi's bottling plant in Guangzhou in 1986 demonstrated the designer's deep understanding of the concept of "composition". The entire picture is composed of physical objects, but it shows the basic elements of dots, lines, and faces. The Pepsi bottle does not fill the whole picture, but its top half is inserted obliquely into the picture, breaking the rigid arrangement of rules (see Figure 2.64). The arrangement of bottles, bottle openers, and plant plays a role in stabilizing the effect of the image and emphasizes the theme. Today it still seems to be a masterpiece of advertising using creative concepts. Another good graphic design is the Rubik's cube advertisement designed by Hui Yining, which skillfully uses the arrangement of dots, lines and faces to create a mysterious and magical feeling to stimulate the readers' curiosity and imagination (see Figure 2.65).<sup>115</sup>



Figure 2.64 - Pepsi advertisement, 1986.

<sup>115</sup> Luo Yi. Pursuit of Modernization in Modern Magazine Advertisements // Contemporary Communication, Vol.4, 2013. Pp. 89-92.

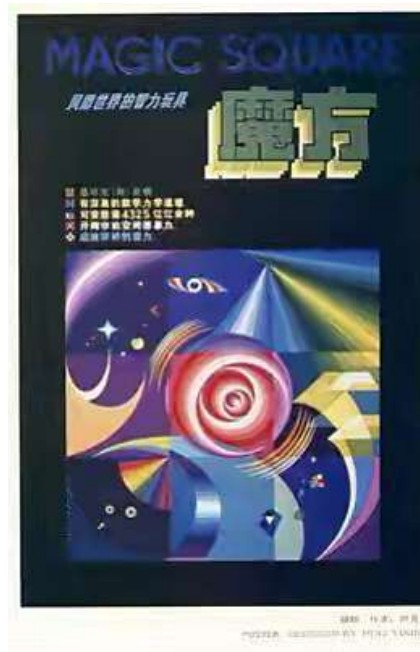


Figure 2.65 - Magazine advertisements for the Rubik's Cube from the 1980s.

### **Generating consumer-oriented advertising awareness**

After the 1980s, modern design concepts were introduced into advertising art and design. Yin Dingbang and Wang Yuqi were invited to write the foreword "What is modern design" for the first issue of China Advertising magazine in 1984. The article noted, "The object of modern design is products and product sales .... It must be consumer-oriented and market-oriented. It is all based on careful market research and market forecasting." At this stage, a large amount of graphic advertising from Hong Kong made its way to mainland China. People found that the creative concept of advertising in Hong Kong has the characteristics of humanization, which makes local citizens feel very close to the advertising content, such as using local language as advertising text. Because they not only pay attention to meeting market demand, but more importantly, through in-depth consumer research, they created a modern consumer-oriented advertising concept, which has also deeply influenced the mainland's advertising industry and promoted the development of creative design.

Among the many "informational" and "evaluative" advertisements in Mainland China, several "persuasive" advertisements that are creative and designed from

the consumers' point of view stood out.<sup>116</sup> These advertisements drew attention to the uniqueness of consumer groups and seek to make products resonate with them. For example, in the late 1980s, outdoor print ads for Baili soap targeted the psychology of female consumers seeking a youthful and beautiful appearance. The advertisement focused on the image of beautiful women and was accompanied by the slogan "20 years old this year, 18 next year" (see Figure 2.66). There is also outdoor advertising that targets male groups. A young man showing off his figure, suggesting that consumers can also have a strong figure by consuming the health drink in the advertisement (see Figure 2.67).<sup>117</sup>



Figure 2.66 - Outdoor advertising for Baili soap.

<sup>116</sup> Huang Yong, *A brief history of Chinese and foreign advertising*. Chengdu: Sichuan University Press. 2003. Pp. 104.

<sup>117</sup> Jin Dinghai, Wu Bingbing. *A review of classic Chinese advertising cases*. Beijing: Higher Education Press, 2012. 265 p.



Figure 2.67 - Outdoor alcohol advertisements of the 1990s in Qingdao.

In addition to this, graphic advertising at this stage often uses language and images to create a plot that evokes certain emotions in the audience, and successfully achieves psychological resonance. As in Figure 81, a shampoo advertisement shows a man washing a woman's hair, evoking in the audience a longing for sweet love and a desire to imitate, which in turn leads to a preference for the shampoo (see Figure 2.68).<sup>118</sup>



Figure 2.68 - Magazine advertisements for shampoos in the 1990s

<sup>118</sup> Li Ting. Advertising Modern: A Study of Modern Chinese Commercial Advertising Posters. Shanghai: Shanghai Jinxiu Press, 2011.637 p.

It is worth noting that a more overt cultural change can be observed from the graphic communication of female images in print advertising. The image of women in the 1950s and 1970s was mostly characterized as working class: they held tools in their hands and dressed simply. Some women had masculine features: they were strong with hard eyes. The image of women weakened the gentle and sexual characteristics. However, after the 1980s, especially after the 1990s, it gradually conforms to the general aesthetic of the world, with graceful figure, exquisite face and sexy clothes. For example, the outdoor advertisement of Chinese-French pharmacies in Shanghai (see Figure 2.69) and magazine advertisement of dietary supplements (see Figure 2.70). This not only reflects the diversification of aesthetics after reform and opening up, but also shows that the concept of advertising has changed from a top-down guiding role to catering to consumers' psychology.<sup>119</sup>



Figure 2.69 - Outdoor advertising of Chinese-French pharmacies in Shanghai 1980s.

<sup>119</sup> Lu Hong. Chinese avantgarde art. Shijiazhang: Hebei Arts Publishing House. 2006.



Figure 2.70 - Magazine advertisement for dietary supplements from the 1980s.

The changes brought about by economic development also include the updating of printing equipment. In the early 1980s, due to the low level of printing, all newspaper advertisements were almost black and white. Only some were printed in red text, but the cost of advertising had to be increased by 20 – 30%. Color newspaper ads did not start to appear until 1990. Sun Zheqi mentioned in "Study on the Development of the Design Culture of Decoration Magazine (1958 – 2018)": the most obvious is the change of visual elements: less black and more bright colors, which reduce the serious feeling and enhance the influencing power of art.<sup>120</sup> Only after the 1990s, black and white images gradually disappeared from print advertising due to technical limitations.

In the thesis "A Study of Chinese Graphic Advertising in the 1980s" defended by Wang Fei at Beijing Institute of Graphic Communication in 2014, it was mentioned that this decade is a turning point for Chinese design in its movement from

<sup>120</sup> Song Zheqi. Design culture development research of ZHUANGSHI magazine (1958-2018): Master dis. ... / Zheqi Song. - Hangzhou, 2020. - 145 p.



traditional to modern, providing a progressive foundation for the formation of an independent style.<sup>121</sup>

Thus, combined with the above description and research, it can be concluded that due to technological innovation, cultural openness and the renewal of artistic concept caused by economic reform, graphic advertising in the 1980s underwent the following changes: use photography and computer technology to reasonably compose the picture; change the creative concept from simply describing the product to creating emotional resonance with the audience; add stylish and fashionable graphic elements. The importance of creativity in graphic advertising has already been demonstrated, which has opened up broad prospects for advertising and given a new impetus to its continuous development.

### **2.3.2. Features of graphic communication in advertising at the turn of the century**

With the advent of the twenty-first century, print advertising has become even more creative and diverse. As noted by Chinese artist Tian Yong, after 2000, Chinese advertising agencies began to split into different functional companies, some of which were media agencies, some were design studios, and some were outdoor advertising companies. It was only since then that creative ideas in advertising began to be charged separately for their services. In general, the creative approach to graphic advertising design at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries can be broadly characterized as follows:

#### **1. Creativity of emotional perception**

Print advertising can be created from an emotional point of view, so that the work can allow the audience to have a certain emotional experience, touch the depths of the soul and change the original behavior or attitude. The emotional way of advertising can begin with positive subjective experiences such as caring, love, etc.

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<sup>121</sup> Wang Fei. Study on 1980s graphic advertisement in China: Master dis. ... / Fei Wang. - Beijing, 2014. - 33 p.

Successful expression of emotion can often reach people's hearts. It can also be from a negative emotional perspective. For example, compassion can make the audience empathize with the encounters of others; fear can scare the audience with certain pictures and words and this can act as a warning. For example, negative emotion can be used in social advertising that encourages the public to help certain groups or prevent bad habits and social ills.

In 1991, a photograph in a public service announcement titled "I want to go to school" was popular throughout China. A little girl with a pencil in her hand and eyes full of thirst for knowledge evoked people's sympathy for out-of-school children in poor areas (see Figure 2.71). This picture was quickly reprinted and became the propaganda symbol of the "Hope Project" (a public charity project in China aimed at helping out-of-school children in poor areas).



Figure 2.71 - Social advertisement "I want to go to school", 1991.

## 2. The creativity of rational communication

When advertising is placed in large quantities, exaggerated headlines are no longer enough to attract the attention of consumers who have begun to look at advertising with a rational eye. However, straightforward presentation of information can easily become abrupt, boring, and even turn into preaching. Therefore, modern

advertising design is increasingly focused on rational expression, that is, taking psychology into account, using sincere communicative attitude and arousing psychological resonance to get closer to the audience. <sup>122</sup>

As shown in Figure 2.72, it is a famous social print advertisement. In 1999, it won many advertising awards in China, such as the Guangzhou Daily Gold Award and the Yangcheng Evening News Award. The advertisement depicts a large-scale flood that hit most of southern China in 1998. Armed police soldiers, led by their generals, responded to the call and were on the front line of flood relief to save people's lives and property. There are no didactic slogans or grand heroic images in this creation. Instead, Chinese chess was used as a metaphor for the flood, soldiers and generals. Contrary to the rule that the higher the level of the pieces in chess, the safer their position, the generals in the advertisement are at the forefront of danger, which emphasizes their brave spirit, makes the theme of the advertisement clear and strengthens the image in the hearts of the audience. <sup>123</sup>

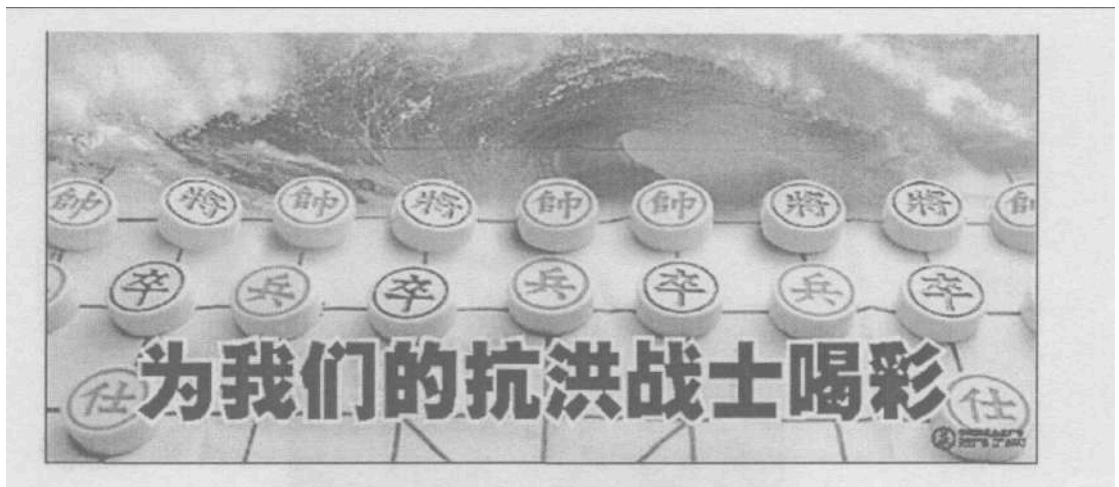


Figure 2.72 - Social advertising on flood prevention.

<sup>122</sup> Ma Mouchao, Lu Yuexiang, Advertising and Consumer Psychology, Beijing: People's Education Press, 2000. 424 p.

<sup>123</sup> Zhang Mingxin. "The Mystery of Public Service Advertising". Guangzhou, Guangdong: Guangdong Economic Press, 2004. 350 p.

### 3. Formation of imaginary space

Using creativity, indirectly conveying information or opinion to the audience, subtly expressing intent. Some advertising experts call this creativity a "hidden incentive." In response to people's general aversion to sermons, the best advertising strategy is to use artistic imagination to draw people's attention to the implied meaning.

In Figure 2.73, an award-winning work from the 7th China Advertising Festival, the zipper is missing one post, and this visual symbol attracted people's attention. The text in the advertisement is "It can't be lacking", which implies that not being honest in construction projects will lead to a series of undesirable consequences. From this, it can be seen that creating a space of imagination enables the audience to extract the meaning of the advertisement from the implied logic. Such advertisements are more interesting than direct narratives.

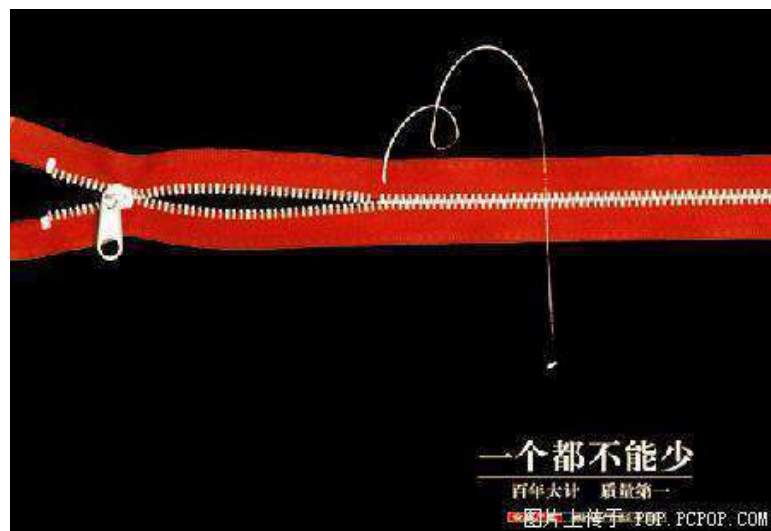


Figure 2.73 - Graphic advertisement "There can be no flaw in it", 2007.

### 4. Inspiration from Chinese culture

Chinese graphic designer Wu Guanzhong believes that at the end of the 20th century, the national cultural innovation is the integration of art and commerce, and print advertising needs new aesthetic elements. In addition, he believes that the use of drawing techniques in modern graphic advertising design is an innovation that can better convey non-verbal emotion to achieve the main purpose of advertising

communication: to stimulate sales.<sup>124</sup> Hosting the 2008 Olympic Games in China for the first time is a major event and has attracted the attention of various industries. The advertising industry is no exception. How to use advertising to better communicate Chinese culture internationally is an important area of graphic design. During this period, many excellent print advertisements related to Chinese traditional culture appeared.<sup>125</sup> For example, the Tony advertisement compares noodles to the strings of the pipa, a traditional Chinese musical instrument, emphasizing the delicious taste of noodles (see Figure 2.74). And the social advertisement combines the athletes' poses with the Chinese character "永" (Russian for "always"), which is used as a metaphor for the Olympic athletes' spirit of "always persevere" (see Figure 2.75), and promotes national culture.<sup>126</sup>

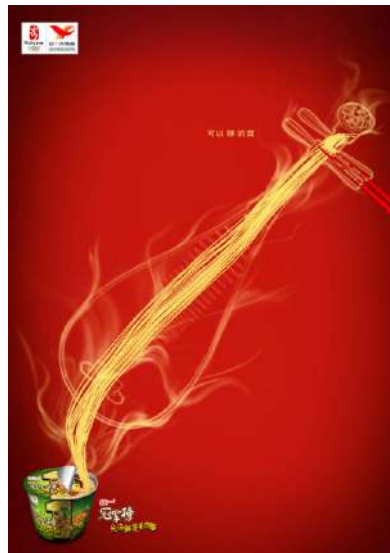


Figure 2.74 - Graphic advertisement for Tony's noodles.

<sup>124</sup> Wang Jinxiu. Wu Guanzhong's painting graphics language research and its application in plane advertisement design: Master dis. ... / Jinxiu Wang. - Guilin, 2014. - 52 p.

<sup>125</sup> Xu Mingxing, Wen Yuanzhong. The fusion of traditional Chinese culture and modern advertising design // Hundred Schools in Arts, Vol. 7, 2008. Pp. 101-102.

<sup>126</sup> Wang He. A Brief Discussion on Creative Ideas of Commercial Type Poster Design // Art and Literature for the Masses, Vol. 10, 2013. Pp. 113.



Figure 2.75 - Social advertising of the Olympic Games in Beijing.

The research paper "Research on the application of Chinese calligraphy art in modern graphic advertising" written by Chen Shanjiang in 2018 is also worth mentioning within this period. Modern graphic advertising is mainly a combination of text and images, and calligraphy, as a symbol of traditional Chinese culture, contains the dual meaning of text and images (the character itself is a design object) and has a unique aesthetic value. The purpose in this study is not only to offer designers new ideas, but also to show the unique artistic connotation of China in contemporary design works. As an example, the author cites the design work of Han Jiaying (Han Jiaying is a Chinese graphic designer) for Tian Ya's End of the World magazine. "We deeply feel that calligraphy uses the transformation of lines to give vitality and resonate with the viewer" (see Figure 2.76).<sup>127</sup> Chinese calligraphy, as a representative element of Chinese culture, has practical and aesthetic value that can be utilized in graphic design, and is an innovative idea that combines national traditions and modern industrial aesthetics.<sup>128</sup>

<sup>127</sup> Chen Shanjiang. Research on the application of Chinese calligraphy art in modern graphic advertising: Master dis. ... / Shanjiang Chen. - Qingdao, 2018. - 31 p.

<sup>128</sup> Chen Ruilin. Beyond the confrontation between China and the West-A first look at Hong Kong's art and design, *Decoration*, Vol. 4, 2002. Pp. 56-57.



Figure 2.76 - Han Jiayin's End of the World magazine covers, 1998.

### 5. Use of bright and saturated colors

The quality of printing and the development of computer design programs have made it possible to use an increasing variety of colors in advertising design. Studies have shown that the use of red font in newspaper advertisements can increase attention span by 50% compared to conventional black and white ads, and full color ads can increase attention span by 70%.<sup>129</sup> The right combination of colors is used to emphasize the creative effect of the advertisement. For example, the cover of the first issue of Chinese Graphic Design magazine uses images of faces drawn with different colored lines and geometric shapes (see Figure 2.77), which indicates the professional direction of the magazine and effectively attracts readers interested in graphic design. Also, the covers of China Advertising magazine prefer to use bright colors (see Figure 2.78). The figure uses different colors to represent natural and processed foods to encourage people to focus on healthy eating (see Figure 2.79).

<sup>129</sup> Fang Qi. The use of color in print advertising, *Modern Decoration (Theory)*, Vol. 6, 2014. Pp. 103-104.

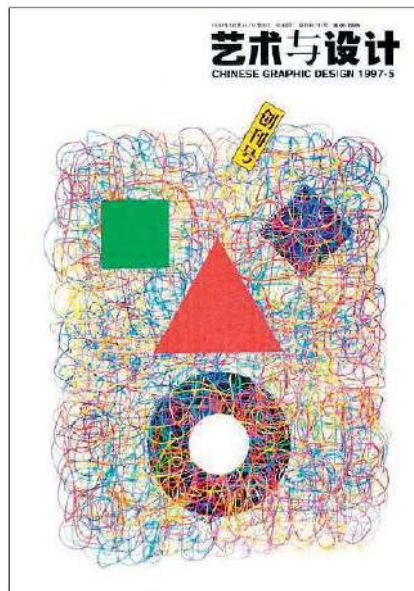


Figure 2.77 - Cover of Chinese Graphic Design magazine, 1997.



Figure 2.78 - Cover of China Advertising magazine, 2013.





Figure 2.79 - Cover of China Advertising magazine, 2019.

## 6. Innovative concepts in graphic advertising layout

Graphic advertising after the 1990s was bolder and more creative in terms of layout, violating the original old-fashioned design rules.<sup>130</sup> More visual elements in advertising are not necessarily better, and that it takes some skill to make an advertising message stand out through design.

First, graphic elements are arranged according to the position and size of the layout, with strict hierarchical relationships between images and text, which are also coordinated with each other. Second, the rational use of space to regulate the relationship of the composition. When there is a lot of text in a print advertisement, a composition that is too rich can cause interference between visual elements. A sparse composition is more likely to arouse the viewer's curiosity and direct the viewer's eyes to the place where the information is collected.<sup>131</sup>

For example, an advertisement for Midi kitchen appliances in the People's Daily newspaper uses the large character "家" (the Chinese word for family) to attract attention without requiring complex graphic information (see Figure 2.80).

<sup>130</sup> Cen Ming. *Urban outdoor advertising planning and design*. Wuhan: Huazhong University of Science and Technology Press, 2012, 189 p.

<sup>131</sup> Liu Wenpei, Ying Yilun. *Interactive Advertising Creativity and Design*. Beijing: China Light Industry Press, 2007. 206 p.

There is also an advertisement for Baixiang salt that cleverly connects three separate advertising boards with long sticks to emphasize the temptation of eating with this salt (see Figure 2.81). At first glance, a lot of space on the plane was wasted, but this innovation in layout design made passersby stop for a longer time.



Figure 2.80 - A commercial advertisement for Midi kitchen appliances in the People's Daily newspaper in 2000



Figure. 2.81 - Outdoor advertising of Baixiang salt in the 2000s

In the 1990s, China's design concepts became more open and visualization styles and forms more diverse, facilitated by increasingly extensive cultural exchanges with world art. This not only made us think about the impact of the integration of Chinese and foreign cultures on design, but also prompted us to consider the application of ethnic characteristics in the work of modern art. In addition, the maturity of advertising photography and the processing of graphics through computer technology has allowed images to carry more information, providing greater scope for the artist's creativity in advertising.<sup>132</sup>

Chinese design in the early twenty-first century, influenced by the Beijing Olympic Games in 2008, focused more on the promotion and development of traditional Chinese culture. The integration of traditional visual elements with Western design concepts has become a major research issue in this period. In graphic design, we should always look for the advantages of thinking and the unique style of traditional national art culture that other nationalities do not have. Since art has inherent continuity, it requires a certain historical and cultural background for its creation and realization, including the people's lifestyles, customs, ethics, aesthetic habits, etc. However, at the beginning of the 21st century, China's original design ability was still weak, and innovation is a prerequisite for Chinese design to be unique in the field of world design.<sup>133</sup>

On the other hand, the Internet began to spread in China at the turn of the century, which greatly promoted the development of advertising graphic design. As Shi Yue pointed out: the integration of traditional and Internet media is the current and future development trend in advertising communication.<sup>134</sup> The emergence of online media has had a revolutionary impact on the form of print advertising and its communication media. However, among the many types of advertising, traditional

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<sup>132</sup> Shi Yue. The research on China's advertisement design development after the Reform and Opening up: PhD dis. ... / Yue Shi. - Suzhou, 2014. - 203 p.

<sup>133</sup> Xu Mingxing, Wen Yuanzhong. The fusion of traditional Chinese culture and modern advertising design // Hundred Schools in Arts, Vol. 7, 2008. Pp. 101-102.

<sup>134</sup> Shi Yue. The research on China's advertisement design development after the Reform and Opening up: PhD dis. ... / Yue Shi. - Suzhou, 2014. - 203 p.

media advertising is still the main force in the development of advertising creativity and is trying to reinvent itself according to the overall social environment. Even with the rampant online media, traditional print advertising still plays an indispensable role in this period. This study only examines the visual communication of graphic advertising in traditional media such as newspapers, magazines, and outdoor advertising.

After the formation of New China, print advertising reached a new peak of development under the leadership of the state. A group of famous artists invested in print advertising, which greatly contributed to the improvement of Chinese design level and aesthetic awareness. The level of graphic design in many socialist countries reached a considerable height during this time. They held large-scale design exhibitions in China, such international exchanges promoted the development of Chinese posters. At this stage, the creative style of graphic advertising was mainly influenced by socialist countries such as the Soviet Union, and usually embodied a realistic style expressing special environments and classical characters. Many Chinese designers adhered to this style and continued to innovate, such as combining traditional drawing methods with advertising to produce good cultural visual effects. One can see from the graphic works of that time the endless pursuit of a better society in the future.

In the late 1960s, the Cultural Revolution broke out in China. The economy, culture and the arts suffered more than ever before, stagnating, or even regressing. In the late 1960s, Cultural Revolution broke out in China. The economy, culture and the arts suffered like never before, stagnating or even regressing. At that time, print advertising was closely linked to politics, especially the political function of advertising was extremely enhanced. The advertising style of this era was exaggerated, and the elements of composition tended to be fixed and formulaic. However, as a social phenomenon, advertising design still had its unique creative thinking and concepts but seemed very boring and rigid. At that time, visual communication and design thinking were separated from real life and lacked vivid vitality. This form went

into decline with the end of the Cultural Revolution in the late 1970s. By the 1990s, graphic advertising in China showed two main characteristics: first, it developed international design skills based on Western creative thinking, with economic development as the main goal; second, it worked hard to overcome cultural boundaries, communicated with the world through communication design, and strived to develop a visual language with Chinese elements.

From the second half of the 20th century to the beginning of the 21st century, the development of advertising graphic communication followed a winding path, but it has generally achieved positive results. Whether used as a commercial marketing tool or as a social and cultural communication tool, graphic advertising relies on social development trends and witnesses the times. Although graphic advertising in China has developed under the strong influence of Europe, it has strong national characteristics and high contextual significance because of its special cultural and historical path.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Guo, H. Updating graphic content in Chinese advertising at the turn of the 20th – 21st centuries // Media in the modern world. Young researchers: materials of the 21st international conference of students, undergraduates, graduate students and applicants: St. Petersburg. state Univ., 2022. pp. 66-75

### **CHAPTER III. Development Trend of Graphic Communication and its Functions**

Graphic advertising is an important cultural tool in social development, and plays an important role in shaping new behavioral attitudes in society, creating positive attitudes toward government structures, etc. The development of the graphic advertising industry in China can be divided into four stages: the initial construction of the country; the period of Cultural Revolution in China; the implementation of the Reform and Opening-up Policy and the emergence of market economy; the era of globalization and consumption. In each stage, graphic advertising, including commercial, political and social advertising, has its own mission and function. In practical application, analyzing graphic media helps print advertising keep up with social trends and play a more effective ideological role as a tool for future social and cultural studies.

After the founding of the People's Republic of China, with the social and economic development, the people's perception and behavior are also constantly changing. In addition to the factors of politics, economy in the evolution of ideology, the role of graphic advertising, which is a special form of culture, cannot be ignored. Graphic advertising, as one of the carriers of ideology, is conducive to strengthening the position of the new regime, building a positive image of the government and enterprises, changing people's social behavior, value orientation, consumer concept, etc.

At present, advertising is an important media in all spheres of society. Its functions have become the subject of numerous scientific studies in political, cultural, economic fields. For example, E. V. Martynov focuses on the ideological functions of social advertising, proves the close connection between social advertising and

ideological positioning of states;<sup>136</sup> E. E. Bochkareva in her work studies the specificity of the functional orientation of advertising activity in the sphere of culture and art, considers social, educational, ideological role as key functions.<sup>137</sup> However, from the point of view of graphic advertising activity the analysis of its ideological function is very limited, only in the work of E. M. Glinternik the development of advertising design-graphics in Russia at the early stage of development and its function in the formation of a new layer of visual culture in society are considered.<sup>138</sup>

### **3.1. The development trend of graphic design style in China**

The Chinese graphic design style was developed under the influence of traditional painting and has realistic characteristics such as brush and ink style and the influence of calligraphy, forming a unique style. With the advent of the industrial era, the emergence of Western posters and posters influenced the advertising design of traditional Chinese painting styles. Chinese designers are based on traditional painting arts and have widely absorbed the characteristics of Western art, giving graphic design both aesthetic and practical value.

#### **Art Deco influence**

Cai Zhenhua received his international design education at the National Art College of Hangzhou in the 1930s. At that time, the starting point of his art was the popular Art Deco style in Europe. The group of artists who received international art education directly influenced the development and trends of graphic design in China in the 1950s.

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<sup>136</sup> Martynov, E. V. Social advertising in solving the tasks of patriotic education and propaganda: comparative-politological analysis // Bulletin of Moscow State Regional University, No. 4, 2018. C. 97-110.

<sup>137</sup> Bochkareva E. E. Functions of advertising in the sphere of culture and art // Vestnik MSUKI, № 4 (54), 2013. C. 222-225.

<sup>138</sup> Glinternik E. M. Advertising design graphics as a socio-cultural phenomenon in Russia 1880 - 1910-ies // International Journal of Cultural Research, № 4 (25), 2016. C. 89-111.

“Art Déco” as a design movement swept the world in the 1920s and 1930s and was accompanied by the blossoming of “Modernism” (Modernism) design. This strong wind of design and fashion originated in Paris in the early 20th century and quickly spread to European countries. At the same time, China's major cities, led by Shanghai, were deeply influenced by architectural design, interior design, industrial and product design, graphic and art design, etc., and spread to many aspects of people's daily lives. The popularity of the “Art Deco movement” in China had a particularly profound influence on the work of Chinese designers at that time, which directly contributed to the transformation of modern Chinese design into “modernity”.

In 1955, Cai Zhenhua created and published the poster “Happy Labor Day, for our achievements!” (See Figure 3.1). It did not use realistic techniques, and it did not depict the image of workers, peasants, and soldiers. This work demonstrates a strong Art Deco advertising style: it shows several symbolic images – red flags, white doves, a chimney, etc. replacing characters; the image structure is dense, gradient, overlapping, expressive glow, airflow and smoke. The book “A selection of propaganda paintings in the past ten years” includes three works by Cai Zhenhua,<sup>139</sup> which is strong evidence that this style was supported by the state and welcomed by the people. After the founding of the PRC, he also did a series of exhibition design works for overseas exhibitions. After the mid-1950s, Cai Zhenhua responded to the call for “nationalization”: in terms of composition, many straight lines were eliminated; in terms of modeling style, the rigid mechanical sense was relaxed; as for color, popular colors such as red and green were used. For example, Cai Zhenhua's work “Working together, sharing results” (see Figure 3.2). In 1962, the foreign propaganda magazine China Construction commissioned him to create a group of advertising works that combined China's beautiful natural scenery, long-standing culture and art, and scenes of modern industrial construction (see Figure 3.3). It is not only in the Western Art Deco style, but also contains traditional Chinese patterns. Cao

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<sup>139</sup> Wu Yun. A selection of propaganda paintings in the past ten years. Shanghai: People's Art Publishing House. 1960.



Zhenhua pointed out that it not only reflects the achievements of China at that time, but also has a national style.



Figure 3.1 - Cai Zhenhua's work on graphic design, 1955.



Figure 3.2 - Cai Zhenhua's work on graphic design, 1957.

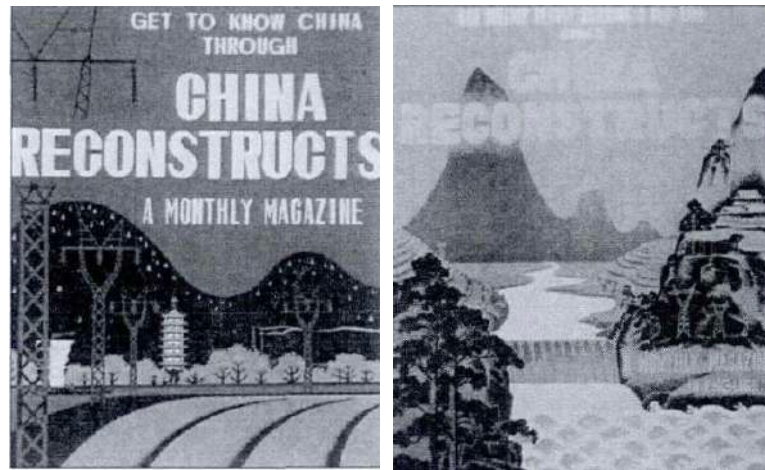


Figure 3.3 - Graphic advertisement in China Construction, 1962.

### **The influence of Russian Constructivism**

In the 1950s and 1960s, Chinese graphic design was influenced by Russian Constructivism, which was a movement initiated by artists, designers and other intellectuals to explore art and design after the October Revolution in Russia. They emphasized that "art should serve the practical purposes of the proletariat" and urged artists to refuse to create "useless things."<sup>140</sup> From the point of view of graphic design, the constructivist style stands for a simple and understandable design, abandons the traditional decorative style and forms graphics with rational and concise geometric shapes. All fonts in the layout use non-decorative lines, focusing on physical, rhythmic and abstract beauty. A characteristic feature of the constructivist design concept is the use, firstly, of abstract graphics and photographic synthesis, and secondly, of a new design layout method and new fonts."<sup>141</sup> But until the end of the Cultural Revolution, Chinese graphic design continued to consistently follow the "Soviet model", experiencing a lack of its own creative thinking and expression of its own characteristics. Especially during the Cultural Revolution, creativity was suppressed, and traditional culture was destroyed. Graphic design at this time demonstrated the characteristic features of the revolution. The graphic works were political in nature and were full of red flags and various political slogans.

<sup>140</sup> Wang Shouzhi. *World Graphic Design History*. Beijing: China Youth Press, 2002. 269p.

<sup>141</sup> Zhu Guoqing. *Modern Poster Art History*. Shanghai: Shanghai Publishing House. 2000.

Under the influence of a special era, the political posters of the Cultural Revolution emphasized the dominance of political thought and formed a special creative concept. But in terms of visual language, it is this kind of didactic universal visual language that makes it unique in the history of visual art and still has an indelible influence on Chinese postmodern art. With the end of the Cultural Revolution at the end of 1976, China embarked on a policy of reform and opening up. Artistic creation initiated the liberation of thought and the practice of changing the purpose of creation. Under the influence of Western modern art, domestic artists use the expressive techniques of Western art, extract interesting elements from Cultural Revolution works for reconstruction and assemblage, and shift from propagating the high ideals of the revolution to expressing the artist's personal thoughts. The heritage and application of Cultural Revolution styles in contemporary graphic design are mainly reflected in two aspects: on the one hand, the artist extracts the elements of Cultural Revolution, which can express personal emotions, for artistic creation, and on the other hand, it combines the modern model of commodity economy operation and uses modern design methods to deconstruct the visual elements of Cultural Revolution for visual communication and redesign.

### **The influence of Cultural Revolution posters on contemporary graphic design**

After the end of the Cultural Revolution, many artists still used the visual symbols of the Cultural Revolution period as their creative objects. The goal was to evoke a deep emotional resonance in the viewer to gain visual and psychological recognition. For example, in the political pop art that prevailed in the 1990s, works created with the emergence of the visual symbols of the Cultural Revolution that deeply influenced the artistic image of contemporary China.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> Zhao Fang, Yang Jie. Purification of visual expression in Cultural Revolution poster design changing from political pop to commercial pop // *Sheji*, Vol. 19(1), 2016. Pp. 126-127.

Pop art emerged in Europe in the 1960s. It is a sign of Western art's entry into postmodern art. Its expression lies in collaging and combining popular and commercial image-symbols to dispel the elegance and sublimity of art. In the 1990s, in the context of global efforts to promote diversification, the combination of pop art in Europe and the United States and the visual symbols of the Chinese Cultural Revolution led to the emergence of an important form of avant-garde art - "political pop art". Political pop art in China is a combination of visual symbols of Cultural Revolution with its distinctive political meanings and popular symbols of Western culture. The representative designers of political pop art in China are Wang Guangyi, Wu Zhanshan, Zhang Xiaogang, etc., all their works have the visual meaning of the Cultural Revolution.

Wang Guangyi's characteristic works *Mao Zedong and Mass Criticism and Renunciation* from the early 1990s are known for their distinctive visual characteristics of the Cultural Revolution. Among them, the designs of the "Mass Criticism and Denial" series utilized the characters of workers, peasants, and soldiers in the political posters of the Cultural Revolution, as well as graphic elements such as red flags and five-pointed stars, and they were combined with classic brand logos in Western commerce such as "Coca Cola," "Gucci," and "Marlboro," forming a double visual effect, and it also became the most classic popular art of socialism (see Figure 3.4). In this series of posters, Wang Guangyi combined Chinese and Western cultures and weakened the differences between them. It not only shows characteristics about poster design in the new period, but also expresses his own approval of the commodity economy and critical reflections on the Cultural Revolution. This kind of replacement of visual symbols in different historical periods in the cultural context of different nation-states has led to the revival of the meaning of visual modeling language and eliminated the seriousness of political posters of the past.



Figure 3.4 - Design works of Wang Guangyi's "Mass Criticism and Denial" series.

The political pop art in Zhang Xiaogang's works also has the hallmarks of a special era. He borrowed the basic principle of pop art relying on mass culture, and used many symbolic civilian portraits and graphic languages in his work. Many symbolic images came from the Cultural Revolution period, such as military uniforms, red armbands, etc., which reflect collective memory (see Figure 3.5).<sup>143</sup>



Figure 3.5 - Zhang Xiaogang's "Big Family" graphic design

<sup>143</sup> Sun Wanshu. The application of political symbols in creative design during the Cultural Revolution // Art and Technology, Vol. 6, 2014. Pp. 303-304.

In Interviews in the 1980s, Chen Danqing noted, "Important works of the 1980s seem rebellious and new, but in fact they are simply rebellious in nature. Chinese design only changed in the 1990s."<sup>144</sup> It can be said that the Cultural Revolution period was a history of political and economic stagnation or even regression in China, but the visual symbols with distinctive Chinese characteristics left from it had a profound influence on the ideological field of Chinese contemporary art, shaping the visual art of the Cultural Revolution. After the 1990s, the works of many Western and Chinese designers often used the design style of the Cultural Revolution to express Chinese characteristics. Ethnic expression in design, in addition to the use of ancient Chinese traditional elements, is the design style of Cultural Revolution propaganda posters.

The contemporary context has been replaced by the question of how to make the visual elements of the Cultural Revolution free from political restrictions and retain their original graphics, colors, text and other elements to convey the original spirit of the time in contemporary design. For example, expressing the theme of national characteristics and even the theme of shopping and promotion in a market economy, the visual elements of the Cultural Revolution with radical connotations can be applied to modern poster design to reflect the progress of society and people's spirit. The combination of modern design and Cultural Revolution graphics has not only caused visual inertia and awakened nostalgia in the depths of viewers' hearts, but also turned into a fashionable mass culture under commercial consumerism. Nowadays, the visual elements of the Cultural Revolution have imperceptibly separated from the utilitarianism of the revolution and become the localized and national language of design in China.

For example, borrowing the original constituent elements of the visual system of the Cultural Revolution, such as symbols, fonts, colors, etc., and rearranging them

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<sup>144</sup> Cha Jianying. Interviews in the 1980s. Shanghai: Life-Reading-Xinzhi San-lian Bookstore, 2006, Pp. 277.

with modern design techniques. For example, the following advertising posters borrowed the images of workers, peasants, soldiers, and Reds, skillfully changed the communication objectives and expressed the themes of group shopping and festival celebrations in an interesting way (see Figure 3.6, 3.7).



Figure 3.6 - Advertising design for furniture companies



Figure 3.7 - Chinese takeaway food company advertisement

"Are you hungry?"

In addition, borrowing the meaning of the graphic symbols of the Cultural Revolution is also a new design idea.<sup>145</sup> As shown in the picture, the most attractive

<sup>145</sup> Xiao Ying. A brief analysis of propaganda posters from New China to the Cultural Revolution and their influence on Chinese contemporary art: Mas-ter dis. ... / Ying Xliao. - Xi'an, 2014. - 40 p.

thing in KFC advertisement is the fist in the center of the picture. The fist in the Cultural Revolution posters is a symbol of strength and authority. The picture advertisement is precisely designed with the symbolic semantics of the fist to emphasize KFC's leading position in the fast-food industry and its determination to create a new fast food in China (see Figure 3.8).



Figure 3.8 - KFC advertisement in China.

Art has always been created in the context of its respective era and has continued to evolve with the development of society. In the more than 50 years since the Cultural Revolution, the style of graphic design has also constantly evolved and changed. In the context of ethnic art, designers have turned their attention to the historical political posters of the Cultural Revolution and strive to refine the visual elements and apply them to contemporary design, giving viewers a sense of visual interest.

### **The development of graphic design since reform and openness**

In the 1960s and 1970s, Western design made the transition from modernism to postmodernism. Building on its own traditional culture, Chinese graphic design also began to try to integrate international elements. In 1978, with the implementation of the reform and opening-up policy, a market economy emerged in China, and the Chinese graphic design industry was also revitalized and entered a new development process. The market relationship changed from the traditional "seller's market"



to "buyer's market". The concept of Chinese graphic designers started to change to "consumer-oriented". Chinese graphic design began to pay attention to consumer preferences and consumer needs. Designers at that time painted graphics and fonts by hand, and graphic design works of this period had obvious characteristics of decorative painting.

Advertising methods and concepts in the early 1980s were conservative, and one important reason was that advertising designers at that time were not aware of modern advertising. Most people involved in advertising design are folk artists or female artists from professional colleges. They have solid drawing skills and strive for subtle and elegant image effects. They believe that the main role of design is to embellish a product. This decorative style was very popular in the early 1980s. As shown in Figure 3.9, these are typical representatives of this kind of graphic design, which shows only the product, with the product name and a simple background.



Figure 3.9 - Graphic design in Chinese advertising in the early 1980s.

Graphic design in the mid-1980s was mainly color photography. The holding of various exhibitions in China promoted the development of photographic print advertising. For example, in Figure 3.10 we can see the designer's mastery of photography skills, and we can also see how the designer manages color contrast. The contrast of warm and cold tones creates the effect of highlighting the theme and makes it unforgettable.



Figure 3.10 - Graphic design in Chinese advertising in the mid-1980s.

By the late 1980s, the earliest group of design students at various universities had graduated. They quickly demonstrated the power of specialization. Thanks to this strength, the level of print advertising design in China has rapidly improved. Graduates of arts and crafts colleges continue to export Western modern design ideas to society. However, all of this is far from the speed of social development but can further improve the level of domestic graphic design. Print advertising in this period was mainly based on compositional design. This form consisted of disassembling and combining objects represented by the relationships between points, lines, and faces to create a rational, sexy and correct image effect. As shown in the "Xixi Lipstick" advertisement in Figure 3.11, this photograph demonstrates the designer's excellent understanding of composition as he skillfully combined the character's face with the product name and turned it into a background, highlighting the character's lips and the Xixi brand name, achieving a strong visual effect. His skillful use of composition and the novelty of the concept are commendable. This work from the

1980s is certainly a masterpiece even 40 years later. In addition, the graphic design of this period added elements of abstract style, giving the painting a deeper rational meaning and leaving the reader with more possibilities for associations (see Figure 3.12).



Figure 3.11 -Advertisement for "Lipstick Xixi"



Figure 3.12 - Graphic design in the late 1980s

It is worth noting that the use of large blocks of color stood out among outstanding graphic media in the 1980s. Figure 3.13 is a typical representative of this category: this work is a print advertisement for a sun hat. It uses two large contrasting colors, cool and warm, to create a sense of coolness under the sun hat. Graphic design works also emerged because of different consumer preferences, and many styles emerged, and the expressive techniques of graphic design became richer and richer.

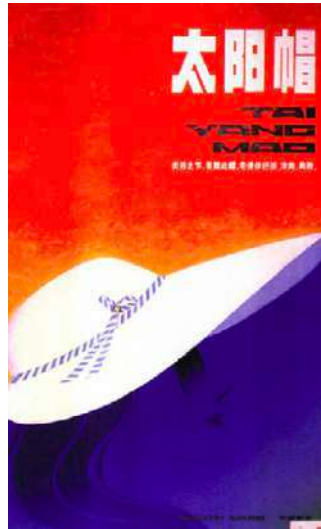


Figure 3.13 - Graphic advertisement for a sun hat.

In the 1990s, computers became an important tool in graphic design. Designers relied on high-tech image stitching and other graphic design techniques to make images more graphic and layered. Graphic design works from this period said goodbye to the monotonous image segmentation methods of the past. At the turn of the century, China's graphic design industry showed rapid development. Especially with the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, China's tradition-based graphic design remained a masterpiece. The emblem of the 2008 Olympic Games, "Chinese Seal, Dancing Beijing", was designed based on traditional cultural creativity using computer technology (see Figure 3.14). As in the public service announcements created during the

Olympic Games, the number 2008 is creatively combined with the brush style (see Figure 3.15).<sup>146</sup>



Figure 3.14 - Emblem of the Olympic Games 2008  
"China Seal, Dancing Beijing."



Figure 3.15 - Social advertising, 2008.

In addition, there are all sorts of creative graphic designs that give away the traditional culture.<sup>147</sup> As shown in Figure 3.16, the books are shaped like a dragon. In Chinese culture, "Becoming a dragon" is every parent's dream to their children. The rising "Soaring Dragon" created by countless books is full of the family's hopes

<sup>146</sup> Qin Xin. Interpretation of the "Chinese Dream, My Dream" series of public service advertisements: Master dis. ... /Xin Qin. - Shanxi, 2013. - 71 p.

<sup>147</sup> Yuan Yuwen. Application of Chinese Element in the Plane Public Service Advertisements - Taking the new wind of civilization as an example: Master dis. ... / Yuwen Yuan. - Nanchang, 2018. - 46 p.

and the child's efforts. In the Li Ning sports shoe advertisement, an energetic athlete stepped on an ink-painted lotus pond, which fully reflects the lightness of the shoes (see Figure 3.17). This advertisement combines the static characteristics of ink painting with the dynamic characteristics of running full of vitality. At the same time, traditional art is contrasted with modern elements, but harmoniously combined, emphasizing its subject matter and giving people an exciting aesthetic experience.



Figure 3.16 - Chinese graphic design of the early twenty – first century.



Figure 3.17 - Li Ning sports shoe advertisement.

In short, from the middle of the 20th century to the beginning of the 21st century, Chinese graphic design has the following development trends: nationalization in the 1950s; influenced by European art in the 1960s and 1970s; the emergence of innovative consciousness with domestic characteristics in the 1980s; and by the beginning of the 21st century, Chinese design has finally caught up with the pace of international development and exerted great influence on the world. We realize that the pursuit of fashion and imitation cannot ensure the continuous vitality of the Chinese design industry. Only by fully unlocking the treasures of national culture, deeply refining the elements of Chinese culture, and timely updating modern design technology Chinese design can have unique features and long-term communication power.

### **3.2. Functions of graphic design in Chinese advertising**

The main purpose of using various graphic media is to draw the audience's attention to specific information through a memorable image. For an advertising message to be active, easily perceived and persuasive, graphic design must be expressed in an aesthetic or artistic form. This is accomplished by the means of graphic design. Graphic images contain the ability to remain in consciousness for a long time, as they affect the feelings and imagination of man. Aesthetic images have a hedonistic function – they can give a person pleasure, enjoyment. These feelings can arise in the perception of an advertising object, causing surprise and admiration for the skill of its execution.

Graphic tools simultaneously solve two tasks: aesthetic and functional. This is due to the competent selection of fonts and colors, a wide range of graphic elements selected and combined into an original bright picture. Beautiful design is able to have a strong impact on the audience, forming its opinion about certain goods, services or creating the necessary atmosphere.

First of all, the most basic function of graphics in advertising is to convey information and even tell stories in the form of symbols. The common denominator between images and text is that they are both used as a means of disseminating information and even creating cultural value. They represent a symbolic system with a specific meaning. The difference is that the amount of information conveyed by graphic means of communication is much larger than text and the exchange of information can be completed in a shorter period. The advantage of graphic storytelling over textual storytelling is that it removes the seriousness and stereotypicality of text and replaces it with casual, lively and rich visual elements that continue to stimulate the audience's thinking in an entertaining state, evoking rich imagination and innovative thinking.

In fact, graphics are informational symbols that came before words. For example, in the ancient Chinese culture of the Book of Changes, simple graphics were first used to build models to explain the understanding of everyday life and the universe. The graphic method uses dots, lines, plane, colors, and image structures to combine visual elements to convey certain informational connotations to the audience. Later, with the improvement of human abstract thinking ability and the development and mastery of text, textual narrative gradually became the main tool for information dissemination. However, in modern society, the increased attention to images in postmodern culture and the rapid development of information technology have given graphics new advantages and practical value in the field of mass communication.

According to the incomplete collection of print advertisements, in the early days of the establishment of the new Chinese society, the information dissemination function of print advertisements mainly manifested itself in the following aspects: to stimulate production, to promote national policies, and to praise the ruling party and the proletariat (see Figures 3.18 – 3.23).





Figure 3.18 - Posters on the theme of a bountiful harvest in the 1950s.



Figure 3.19 - Posters on the theme of promoting reform policies, 1947.



Figure 3.20 - Zhu Zhangchao's "Tibet is China's Tibet" poster, 1959.



Figure 3.21 - Poster "The Road to a Happy People's Commune" by Xu Qixiong, 1958.

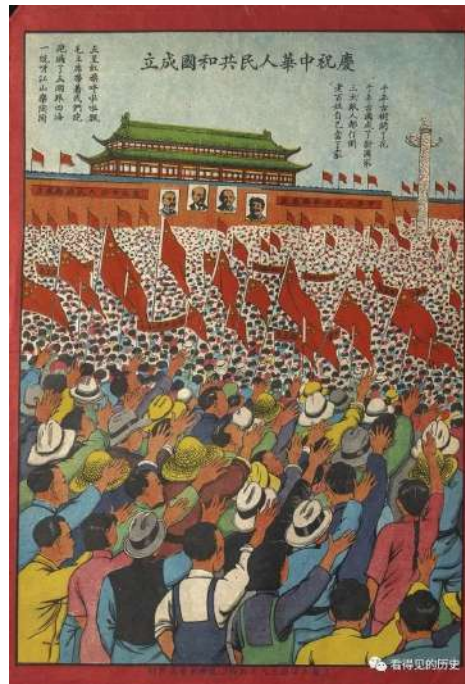


Figure 3.22 - Posters on the theme of praising the government of the 1950s.



Figure 3.23 - Posters on the theme of praising the heroes and workers of the 1950s.

Graphic advertisements of this period conveyed a clear message, simple themes and distinctive characters that were easy for the public to understand and disseminate. But the content is singular and lacks creative imagination. Thus, the graph function mainly manifests itself as the transmission of information. However,

due to the lack of mass media at that time and the general low level of educated people, this type of ethnic style graphic posters gained wide popularity.

The graphic design of the Cultural Revolution period was momentary in nature, as design at this time was tied to a particular environment in the art world. The representation of design in the political environment was not only influenced by Western design thinking, but also created an artistic fixation that was born out of the Chinese political environment. The visual elements in each of the poster works could be disrupted and reorganized to form new meanings (which makes this style related to constructivism). The overall design of the image revolved around the law of repetition of a single copy, which then carried out mechanized production to create an artwork that was socially representative of a particular period. The visual paradigm utilized by the Cultural Revolution still extends to the creation of modern artwork and is still borrowed by artists today. Although the development of art and advertising in this period was negative, the propaganda posters of the Cultural Revolution represent the spontaneous creativity of the masses with Chinese characteristics, have distinctive features of the time and important research significance.<sup>148</sup>

The poster graphics of the Cultural Revolution period have strong symbolic meaning and suggestive function. The purpose is to form a great hero image, strengthen people's faith in a better life and encourage labor. During the Cultural Revolution, political posters followed the guiding ideology of "literature and art serve the workers, peasants and soldiers" in terms of creation methods and choice of themes, forming a unique form and style and creating typical visual graphics. Looking back through history, the study of color, graphic elements, and cultural connotations in political posters presents a diverse and objective perspective on understanding and appreciating the art form of this era. Even with obvious flaws such as boilerplate, homogeneity, and lack of artistic message, we can still get a glimpse of what history really looks like. As pop art artist Wang Guangyi said, "The meaning of the

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<sup>148</sup> Zhu Yan. The characteristics of the era of aesthetic consciousness in graphic design: Master dis. ... / Yan Zhu. - Wuhan, 2009. - 69 p.

Cultural Revolution is different for me than for an ordinary person, and the meaning that the Cultural Revolution has for China's political and economic development is also different. For an artist, it provides a visual style of a certain period, and while from an ordinary person's point of view, the Cultural Revolution may have had a stagnant influence on political and social development, I think it's different."<sup>149</sup> It can be said that the poster of the Cultural Revolution period is the essence of art, which combines philosophy, aesthetics, and media studies to represent the artistic characteristics and emotions of the era.

The above analysis from a design perspective shows that the graphic techniques in the Cultural Revolution posters have a unique aesthetic value. However, from the perspective of journalism, such top-down visual monopoly lacks communication with the audience when receiving information. This one-way output of information played an effective role in a short time. In that era, it became fashionable to send out posters, and even at weddings, posters were used as gifts.<sup>150</sup>

The graphic design of the Cultural Revolution period was momentary in nature, as design at this time was tied to a particular environment in the art world. The representation of design in the political environment was not only influenced by Western design thinking, but also created an artistic fixation that was born out of the Chinese political environment. The visual elements in each of the poster works could be disrupted and reorganized to form new meanings. It is a style that has a strong character of constructivism. The overall design of the image revolved around the law of repetition of a single copy, which then carried out mechanized production to create an artwork that was socially representative of a particular period. The visual paradigm utilized by the Cultural Revolution still extends to the creation of contemporary artwork and is still borrowed by artists today. Although the development of

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<sup>149</sup> Wang Guangyi. Wang Guangyi // Timezone, Vol. 8, 2002. Pp. 79.

<sup>150</sup> Beijing News: Memories of the times when blood is boiling. URL: <http://www.sina.com.cn> (date accessed: 30.12.2009). Years of burning passion: Red posters in the 1960s. URL: [http://www.360doc.com/content/23/1107/12/13326414\\_1103093562.shtml](http://www.360doc.com/content/23/1107/12/13326414_1103093562.shtml) (date accessed: 7.11.2023).

art and advertising in this period was negative, the propaganda posters of the Cultural Revolution represent the spontaneous creativity of the masses with Chinese characteristics, have distinctive features of the time and important research significance.

It can be concluded that political posters during the Cultural Revolution, as a means of ideological propaganda, served directly to promote the political ideas of new China and mobilize the masses. During the Cultural Revolution, political posters followed the guiding ideology of "literature and art serve the workers, peasants and soldiers" in terms of creation methods and theme selection, forming a unique form and style and creating typical visual graphics. Looking back through history, the study of color, graphic elements, and cultural connotations in political posters presents a diverse and objective perspective on understanding and appreciating the art form of this era. Even with obvious flaws such as boilerplate, homogeneity, and lack of artistic message, we can still get a glimpse of what history really looks like. As pop art artist Wang Guangyi said, "The meaning of the Cultural Revolution is different for me than for an ordinary person, and the meaning that the Cultural Revolution has for China's political and economic development is also different. For an artist, it provides a visual style of a certain period, and while from an ordinary person's point of view, the Cultural Revolution may have had a stagnant influence on political and social development, I think it's different."<sup>151</sup> It can be said that the poster of the Cultural Revolution period is the essence of art, which combines philosophy, aesthetics and media studies to represent the artistic characteristics and emotions of the era.

The information function of graphic advertising in this period has two main characteristics. Firstly, the mode of communication is abrupt, which is mainly reflected in the poster slogan, single character images, fixed style and so on. As shown in Figures 3.24 to 3.27, directive advertising slogans have created a serious and unquestionable feeling in people. And in these drawings, images with a determined

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<sup>151</sup> Wang Guangyi. Wang Guangyi // Timezone, Vol. 8, 2002. Pp. 79.

facial expression have an intimidating power. These images enhanced the transmission of information during the Cultural Revolution, but such a technique gradually could not satisfy a psychologically complex audience. Secondly, the level of coverage of graphic information on the posters was high. In the 1950s and 1960s, people's access to information was poor. Posters were one of the main media outlets. Thus, the speed of distribution and coverage of the posters were very wide, which was determined by the specific media environment in China.



Figure 3.24 - Posters on the theme of defense of the country of China's Cultural Revolution.



Figure 3.25 - Poster "We are boundlessly loyal to the great leader Chairman Mao!".



Figure 3.26 - Poster "Long live the invincible Mao Zedong and his great ideas!".



Figure 3.27 - Poster "Struggle for a rich harvest and revolution!".

With the improvement of people's education level and the market competition caused by the commodity economy, the communication function of graphic advertising has gradually gained importance. Visual symbols in print advertising have a communicative function. There are similarities between the communicative function



of visual symbols and text, but the former is mainly achieved through the viewer's subjective experience and cognition. Moreover, communication with visual symbols is very concise compared to text, which takes more space and requires more time to read.

Two-way communication between print advertisers and readers has become an increasingly interesting phenomenon since the 1980s. For example, a social graphic advertisement in the 1980s promoting the Family Planning Policy says: adhering to the Family Planning Policy is the responsibility of every family (see Figure 3.28). The characters in this advertisement are close to life and give people heartfelt and warm feelings. Compared to the hard advertising copywriting, the text in it is also softer and has a communicative touch. Also in this period, other print advertisements used cheerful, cute characters and advertising texts with a soft tone of exhortation to achieve the goal of communicating with the audience (see Figures 3.29, 3.30).



Figure 3.28 - Posters on the promotion of family planning policies in the 1980s.



Figure 3.29 - Poster "Doing Sports Every Day" 1980s.



Figure 3.30 - "Please drink Chinese white wine" advertisements from the 1980s.

Before the twenty-first century, based on research on consumer psychology, graphic media in advertising already served the following functions. First, advanced design software and printing technology allowed advertising objects to appear in

increasingly refined images, arousing the audience's attention and curiosity, and even imitating behavior. Second, simple and creative copywriting with font design can influence the audience's consciousness, allowing them to understand the deep meaning conveyed by the advertisement in a shorter time, and evoke a strong emotional response, which plays a certain role in enhancing the communicative effect. The two tea advertisements are good examples of graphic design. Tea is considered a symbol of traditional Chinese culture, so modern visual elements should not be abused in promoting products. The designers combined Chinese pictograms with images of mountains, sun and huts, giving the audience a natural, simple and rustic feeling, which matches the characteristics of the product and directly reflects the psychology of tea lovers (see Figure 3.31). In Figure 3.32, cigarettes are used to form the Chinese character "井" (Russian for "trap"), which means that excessive addiction to smoking is a trap. In addition, the black background brings heavy negative emotions; in Figure 3.33, green plants are compared to hair, accompanied by flames burning on the eyebrows, which echoes the Chinese phraseology "Danger burns the eyebrows". It is a metaphor for a very urgent situation, meaning that protecting the forest is a very pressing issue. The clever graphic design arouses curiosity and unconsciously leads the audience to think.



Figure 3.31 - Graphic advertisements for tea, 2013.



Figure 3.32 - Advertising on the topic of smoking cessation



Figure 3.33 - Advertisement "Forest protection is an urgent necessity"

In addition to the functions of conveying information communication, graphic media in Chinese advertising from the mid-twentieth to early twenty-first century has clear functional characteristics: guidance and enlightenment.

After the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the next decade – 1950s – due to the change of socio-political system (socialism became the dominant ideology), was a period of active transformation of China: all aspects of life faced new problems and development goals.

At this stage, social construction in China was influenced by Marxism. Basically, the ideology of that time was a criticism of capitalism. Also at this stage, a standardized trade market had not yet been formed.<sup>152</sup> In this context, the advertising industry played a combined role of political propaganda and commercial marketing. Therefore, the graphic advertisements of that time mainly performed the following ideological functions: first, to inculcate political values in society and influence the behavior of the population, thereby promoting a social and political culture that strengthened the regime.<sup>153</sup> For example, posters in China in the 1950s often show a contrast between the tall figure of a peasant and the low figure of a landowner to emphasize the status of the proletariat (see Figure 3.34); second, poster advertising has an educational function, enabling citizens to observe public order.<sup>154</sup> Figure 3.35 shows two pioneers as an example and says: "Let's improve ecological sanitation and keep the city clean and orderly";<sup>155</sup> thirdly, advertising of that time has a critical function, as the article says: "a certain ideology can oppose and reject heterogeneous ideologies".<sup>156</sup> For example, in the poster, a strong worker wants to crush the representatives of American imperialism with steel and grain (see Figure 3.36).<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> Song Huichang. Huichang Song. Beijing: Zhonggong Zhongyang dangxiao chubanshe, 1993. 24p.

<sup>153</sup> Wang Yingxin. Research on the ideological function of popular culture: dis... .. of PhD in Philosophy / Yingxin Wang. - Tianjin, 2014. - 183p.

<sup>154</sup> Louis Althusser. Ideology and the ideological state apparatus translated by Yinghui Meng. Nanjing: Nanjing daxue chubanshe, 2002. 254 p.

<sup>155</sup> Lu Hong. 30 Years of Chinese Contemporary Art: 1978-2008. Changsha: Hunan Meishu Chubanshe, 2013. 45p.

<sup>156</sup> Wei Qionglue. Research on the changing functions of the Marxist state // Social Science II Series, No. 10, 2015. Pp. 14-16.

<sup>157</sup> Lu Hong. 30 Years of Chinese Contemporary Art: 1978-2008. Changsha: Hunan Meishu Chubanshe, 2013. 45p.



Figure 3.34 - Propaganda poster "The peasant said to the landowner: who maintains whom?", 1950.



Figure 3.35 - Social poster "Let's improve environmental sanitation and keep the city clean and tidy" from the 1950s



Figure 3.36 - Propaganda poster against US imperialism in the 50s

Then, in the early 1960s, due to the Cultural Revolution, during this period commercial advertising was considered a product of the capitalist system and was completely banned. Advertising, on the other hand, took on a purely political coloration, manifesting itself in the form of propaganda posters and posters.<sup>158</sup>

In Communist China, patriotic propaganda has traditionally been given high priority. The Constitution of the People's Republic of China contains the guideline of educating the people in the spirit of patriotism.<sup>159</sup> Since the early years of the founding of the People's Republic of China, one of the oldest functions of state social advertising has been to carry out patriotic propaganda. On the one hand, several stable images and elements such as images of workers, peasants and soldiers, the red flag and Chairman Mao have been repeatedly used. The patriotic theme, as in other countries, was not directly limited to the armed forces, but was transferred to peaceful niches of life, including domestic life. Patriotic considerations of fighting an external enemy were used to justify, among other things, the need for inoculation

<sup>158</sup> Xiao Jie. A review of advertising research during the Cultural Revolution // Advertising, No. 10, 2016. Pp. 96-100.

<sup>159</sup> Constitution of the People's Republic of China. URL: <https://worldconstitutions.ru/?p=31&at-tempt=1> (date accessed: 05.09.2018).

among the Chinese population. A 1952 poster articulated this as follows: "Everyone should be inoculated against epidemics to thwart the American imperialists' plans for bacteriological warfare" (see Figure 3.37).<sup>160</sup>



Figure 3.37 - Propaganda poster, "Everyone must be inoculated against epidemics to thwart the American imperialists' plans for bacteriological warfare," 1952.

On the other hand, at the same time, a certain stability of the images of "their own" and "strangers" applied within the national traditions of patriotism can be traced. The images of "their own" are mainly workers, peasants, and soldiers, while the "strangers" are American imperialism, class enemies, etc. (See Figures 3.38 – 3.40).<sup>161</sup>

<sup>160</sup> Guo, H. Ideological function of graphic advertising in China // Humanitarian, socio-economic and social sciences, No. 3, 2022. pp. 39-45.

<sup>161</sup> "Defense" Posters of the People's Republic of China. URL: <http://propagandahistory.ru/112/Oboronnye-plakaty-Kitayskoy-Narodnoy-Respubliki> (date accessed:05.09.2018).





Figure 3.38 - Positive images in propaganda posters.



Figure 3.39 - Propaganda poster "Reactionaries must be suppressed!" 1960s.



Figure 3.40 - Propaganda poster "Long Live the Great January Revolution!", 1967.

As mentioned earlier, the graphic means of China's postwar posters were largely borrowed from the USSR. Thus, Chinese patriotic advertising has its own national specificity, just like Russian advertising. On the one hand, it is characterized by a special expression, emotional concentration, which can be explained by the historical experience of China itself. On the other hand, it expressed the theme of racial labeling of the enemy to the least extent than patriotic advertisements of other states. As noted by E. V. Martynov in his article, the line between patriotism and nationalism that the Russian President spoke of was more consistently and clearly maintained in Russian patriotic advertising than in the traditions of political advertising of all the other countries being compared.<sup>162</sup>

It is worth noting that Martynov's work comparing patriotic political advertising in different national state models concludes that while the Soviet political poster

<sup>162</sup> Martynov, E. V. Social advertising in solving the tasks of patriotic education and propaganda: comparative-politological analysis // Bulletin of Moscow State Regional University, No. 4, 2018. C. 97-110.

evolved toward stencil-like images, the Chinese poster was highly artistic and expressive.<sup>163</sup> Vivid images of heroes of the Chinese National Liberation Army were created, holding a battle with the enemy or ready to engage in it. A number of posters agitated to join the PLA, to conduct military training among civilians, including women (see Figures 49, 53, 55).<sup>164</sup> After the introduction of Deng Xiaoping's policy of reform and opening up, i.e., after the 1980s, the political sharpness of Chinese political posters waned. The themes of education and culture came to the forefront in Chinese social advertising.

After the 1980s, the political acumen of Chinese posters weakened. Among print advertisements, commercial advertisements promoting consumption and updating consumption concepts, and social advertisements with educational and cultural themes stand out.<sup>165</sup> Their graphic method is characterized by the use of more intense characters and rational copywriting, as well as the use of different compositions, color combinations, etc. to adapt to different audiences. This effectively builds a communication contact between the advertiser and the audience. After all, the main prerequisite for the realization of the educational and guiding function of the media is emotional feedback from the audience. For example, on poster 3.41, the girl proudly showed the boy the empty dishes, and the boy's eyes were full of approval. The characters' facial expressions and movements convey the idea of not wasting food. The use of children's images not only can shorten the distance with the audience, but also makes people think children still know this truth, let alone adults. The composition on poster 3.42, which broke through the traditional graphic design of

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<sup>163</sup> Martynov, E. V. Social advertising in solving the tasks of patriotic education and propaganda: comparative-politological analysis // Bulletin of Moscow State Regional University, No. 4, 2018. C. 97-110.

<sup>164</sup> Chinese posters of the Cultural Revolution: art on the verge of madness. URL: <https://visualhistory.livejournal.com/134341.html> (date accessed: 05.09.2018).

<sup>165</sup> Pan Zehong. Introduction to China Public Service Advertisement. Beijing: China Radio and Television Press. 2001.

the time, was also created by the artist to engage the audience: the shadow artfully connects pedestrians and traffic lights.<sup>166</sup>



Figure 3.41 - "Treat Food Carefully and Economically" poster from the 1980s.



Figure 3.42 - "Follow the rules of the road" poster from the 1980s.

<sup>166</sup> Red posters in the times when blood is boil-ing.1960s. URL: [http://www.sina360doc.com.cn/content/23/1107/12/13326414\\_1103093562.shtml](http://www.sina360doc.com.cn/content/23/1107/12/13326414_1103093562.shtml) (date accessed: 7.11.2023).

According to Adorno and Horkheimer, the mass production of cultural forms presupposes the unification of individual characteristics. The latter relates to the predominant vision of the audience as a homogeneous mass, which is offered "stamped" and pre-tested materials. Another important circumstance, to which the authors draw attention, is the emphasis on the formation of passivity and conformism in the audience. That is, the cultural industry exercises control over people's thoughts and behavior.<sup>167</sup> Horkheimer's view of the mechanism of "manipulation" stems from the Frankfurt School's critical attitude to culture. In fact, such ideological leadership is indeed present in the history of any country. In ancient societies, the authority of culture was traditional and conformed to a well-known model. In the current post-industrial society, that is, the information society, leadership becomes authority to create a sense of belonging and guide people to find their community. Graphic advertising can be used to create an emotional resonance with the audience, thereby engaging them and influencing their values. In addition to richer and bolder design ideas and more advanced drawing techniques, print advertising in the 21st century pursues a deeper educational value. As shown in the outdoor mineral water advertisement in Figure 3.43, the eco-friendly natural environment on transparent billboards is used to represent clean water sources. This also implies the importance of environmental protection, which stimulates people to think deeply, a function not available to advertising in the twentieth century. And in Figure 3.44 of the messaging page between friends in the advertisement for Jiangxiaobai vodka represents a memory of youth and old friends, and it is obvious that this is an advertisement aimed at young people, which corresponds to the attributes of the product. And the social advertisement shown in Figure 3.45 is aimed at the public, it is designed in a more minimalistic style without losing the content, the soft colors and simple

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<sup>167</sup> Horkheimer M. *Dialectics of Enlightenment. Philosophical Fragments*, M.-SPb.: Medium, Juventa, 1997. 312 c.

sketches easily turn the book into a light bulb illuminating the road, with the aim of educating and guiding the whole nation to improve the level of knowledge.<sup>168</sup>



Figure 3.43 - Outdoor advertising of drinking water in 2010



Figure 3.44 - Advertisement of Chinese vodka "Jiangxiaobai"

<sup>168</sup> Wang Huiwen. Research on the social education function of public service announcements: Master dis. ... / Huiwen Wang. - Qiqihar, 2014. - 50 p.



Figure 3.45 - Social graphic advertisement in Chinese subways

Thus, the following conclusions can be drawn: first, since the 1950s, the graphic distribution of print advertising in China has been characterized by one-sided top-down propaganda by the government. After the 1980s, advertising communication has gradually transformed into interactive communication, which is reflected in character images, copywriting, design style, etc. Second, education and guidance have always been the main functions of Chinese print media. The development of graphic design presents different styles according to historical background and has great communication value. Thirdly, the graphic language in print advertisements in different periods is always related to the characteristics of communication that affect the operation of media. Since the founding of the PRC, the media has contributed to the construction of the country mainly at the socio-political level. Under the government propaganda, print advertising has high communicative power and aesthetic value based on national style; during the Cultural Revolution, the media became a pure political propaganda medium. Printed advertisements, mainly in the form of propaganda posters with the design styles of the Cultural Revolution, were widely distributed. Beginning in the late 1980s, economic reforms led to a more open media system. The emergence of private advertising associations and design companies promoted an increasingly rich graphic message in advertising, and the advertising concept of establishing a psychological connection with the audience began to be reflected in advertising creativity. By the beginning of the 21st century, graphic advertising showed a variety of styles to enhance appeal. The integration of

Chinese graphic design with global graphic design allowed for a better connection with the audience, but due to the influence of online media, the distribution capability of print advertising gradually declined.



## CONCLUSION

After the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the advertising industry faced significant challenges during its early recovery phase. Economic and political system changes, as well as the influence of leftist ideology, has hindered development. Graphic advertising primarily consisted of politically oriented posters, heavily influenced by the Soviet poster style and incorporating elements of national art. However, these designs were relatively simplistic by featuring monochromatic colors, low image quality, and unambiguous propaganda messages. With the limited popularity of radio and television at the time, posters became the primary means of information dissemination.

Unfortunately, the Cultural Revolution in the 1960s and 1970s significantly stifled this development. Print advertising transformed into a tool for class struggle, resulting in more formulaic use of graphic elements and colors. While some argue that there was no "graphic design" during this period, the unique style and symbolism of the Cultural Revolution brought modern design ideas, distinct from traditional art to graphic designers.

It was only in the 1980s that the advertising industry began to recover from political and economic restrictions, leading to the emergence of various categories such as commercial advertising and social advertising. The share of advertising in newspapers and magazines increased, and commercial posters, like movie posters, became prevalent in public spaces. However, commercial advertising design merely involved overlaying product images by lacking creativity in color usage and layout.

In the 1990s, the introduction of Western design ideas and the emergence of talented domestic designers injected new life into Chinese print advertising. During this period, the graphic advertising style became diverse and creative. In addition to informative role, advertising also served an artistic function by providing visual pleasure to viewers. As the 21st century began, the development of photography and

computer technology further diversified advertising design graphics, ideally combining visual communication with the designer's imagination. The convergence of online and traditional media has opened greater potential for the evolution of print advertising.

After analyzing the development of graphic design in Chinese advertising from the mid-20th century to the early 21st century, the conclusions are as follows:

1. The development and innovation of Chinese graphic design is rooted in traditional national art.

This includes the influence of Soviet structuralism on Chinese graphic design in the 1950s and 1960s, the design style shaped by the specific historical context of the Cultural Revolution in the 1970s and 1980s, also the study of innovation and integration in modern graphic design. Throughout these periods, Chinese graphic artists have consistently drawn inspiration from national art.

2. The development of visual concept in advertising is generally from preserving national tradition to Western education and to its own innovations.

After the establishment of the People's Republic of China, there was a strong emphasis on reviving national culture and art, resulting in graphic design with distinct traditional cultural characteristics. This included the use of visual elements like paper-cutting art, calligraphic fonts, and national colors such as red and yellow. However, this period also saw a lack of creativity in poster design.

After the 1980s, the introduction of Western culture and design concepts led to the adoption of international trends in Chinese advertising design, with diverse portrayals of characters, use of color, and creative approaches.

In the 21st century, the fusion of Chinese and Western visual elements in advertising design brought deep inspiration, as Chinese designers recognized the importance of promoting their own art and culture.

3. The use of graphic means reflects the features and functions of media communication at different stages of history.

In the early stages, China's advertising industry had a limited development, with a one-way information flow that rarely considered audience reactions. In the 1960s and 1970s, graphic information transmission was heavily guided by the government and subjected to strict censorship due to limited media development. In the late 1980s, graphic elements in advertising began to be used to communicate with consumers and establish emotional connections. By the early 21st century, advertising concepts had matured, utilizing different graphic media to target specific audiences and engage on a deeper level. Another notable feature of Chinese graphic communication is the governmental educational leadership function. The evolution of graphic media in Chinese print advertising reflects the communication characteristics of media in China.

China's advertising industry experienced a brief period of development in the 1950s, but the concept of advertising based on the seller's market has always been a one-way information outlet, rarely considering the reaction of the audience. In the 1960s and 1970s, due to the limited development of the media, the transmission of graphic information was always based on government guidance and was subject to strict censorship. In the late 1980s, graphic elements in advertising began to be used to communicate with consumers and establish emotional connections. Before the beginning of the 21st century, the creation of advertising was skillful by using various graphic means for different types of audience and even communicating with them at a deeper level of consciousness. Another obvious feature of Chinese graphic communication is the function of educational guidance at the government level, hence the evolution of graphic media in Chinese print advertising also reflects the communication characteristics of the media in China.

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## Appendix I. Illustrations

Figure 1.1. Commercial advertisement for Lantian toothpaste in the Tianjin Daily newspaper, 1979. ....	16
Figure 1.2. Commercial advertisement for Rado watches in the Wenhui newspaper, 1979. ....	17
Figure 1.3. Cover of Chine Advertising magazine, No. 1, 1981. ....	19
Figure 1.4. Chinese trading company advertising calendar in 1914 .....	41
Figure 1.5. Commercial graphic advertisement for Chinese "Shuangling" watches .....	44
Figure 1.6. Chen Shaohua's poster at an exhibition in 1992.....	45
Figure 1.7. Graphic Design in China exhibition in 1996 .....	46
Figure 1.8. Chinese font styles Songti, Kaiti, Fangsongti and Heiti .....	53
Figure 2.1. Introduction to the exhibition of Soviet posters and cartoons in 1951. ....	61
Figure 2.2. (part 1) Chinese and Soviet propaganda poster on military themes.....	63
Figure 2.2. (part 2) Chinese and Soviet propaganda poster on military themes.....	63
Figure 2.3. Propaganda poster "On the Road to Socialism" by Jiang Zhaohe.....	64
Figure 2.4.. Ha Qiongwen's "Welcome to the Second Spring" propaganda poster, 1957 .....	64
Figure 2.5. General Line propaganda poster, Shanghai Pictorial Printing House, 1958.....	65
Figure 2.6 General Line propaganda poster, Shanghai Pictorial Printing House, 1958. ....	65
Figure 2.7. Propaganda poster "Ride the East Wind, Leap Forward", Shanghai Pictorial Print-ing House, 1958. ....	66
Figure 2.8. "Love the Village, Love Labor" social poster by Pan Yipen and Pan Ka, 1963. ....	67
Figure 2.9. Political poster "Supporting the Peoples of the World in their Struggle against Imperialism" by Yu Lungu in 1963. ....	67
Figure 2.10. Political poster "Gather All Energy and Strive for Success", by Yang Wenshu, Ha Qiong- wen, 1958. ....	69
Figure 2.11. General Line propaganda poster, Shanghai Pictorial Printing House, 1958.....	69
Figure 2.12. Propaganda poster "We live in a new happy China" by Zhang Leping in 1953. ....	70
Figure 2.13. Propaganda poster by Ha Qiongwen and Yu Lungu,1956. ....	71
Figure 2.14. Women tractor drivers on propaganda posters of the 1960s.....	71
Figure 2.15. Propaganda poster "Go to a group class!" Wen Yizhi, 1955. ....	72
Figure 2.16. Propaganda poster "Beat the Barin" from the 1960s. ....	72
Figure 2.17. Propaganda poster "US imperialism is the public enemy of the peoples of the world", 1964. ....	73
Figure 2.18. Propaganda poster "Peoples of the world unite to defeat US imperialism!", 1965. ....	73
Figure 2.19. Propaganda poster "Always follow the Communist Party" from the 1960s. ....	75
Figure 2.20. Propaganda poster "The Soviet Union – the great standard-bearer of communist construc- tion" from the 1960s.....	75
Figure 2.21. Propaganda poster, 1958. ....	76

Figure 2.22. Propaganda poster from the 1960s.....	76
Figure 2.23. Social poster from the 1960s.....	77
Figure 2.24. Social poster "The First Session of the First National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China," 1954. ....	78
Figure 2.25. Social poster "Celebrate International Labor Day!", 1960. ....	79
Figure 2.26. Propaganda poster "Glory of the Party" from the 1960s.....	79
Figure 2.27. Propaganda poster "Long Live the Unity of the Socialist Camp" by Qian Dasin, 1957. ....	80
Figure 2.28. Propaganda poster in the magazine.....	81
Figure 2.29. Propaganda poster with the graphic "Selected Works of Mao Zedong" .....	81
Figure 2.30. Cover of the magazine "Decoration", No. 7, 1959.....	83
Figure 2.31. Window advertising poster for Shanghai Department Store No. 1, 1960 .....	84
Figure 2.32. Wen Yizhi propaganda poster, 1966. ....	89
Figure 2.33. Propaganda poster, Shanghai Zhengmei Publishing House, 1967. ....	90
Figure 2.34. Propaganda poster at the exhibition, 1967. ....	91
Figure 2.35. Propaganda poster "Let's destroy the old world and build a new one", 1966. ....	91
Figure 2.36. Propaganda poster "We Love the Village" .....	93
Figure 2.37. Propaganda poster "Attacking the class enemy" .....	94
Figure 2.38. Propaganda poster "To give all our strength to the construction of the homeland" .....	94
Figure 2.39. Propaganda poster "Long Live Chairman Mao" .....	95
Figure 2.40. Mao Zedong's calligraphic style, "Study well, strive for the best every day" .....	96
Figure 2.41. Mao Zedong's calligraphic style, "Serving the People" .....	96
Figure 2.42. Mao Zedong's calligraphic style in the August 1966 issue of the Guangming Daily newspaper.....	97
Figure 2.43. Mao Zedong's calligraphic style in a propaganda poster.....	97
Figure 2.44. Meiheiti style font on a Cultural Revolution poster.....	98
Figure 2.45. Meiheiti style font in the Guangming Daily newspaper, No. 5, 1967.....	98
Figure 2.46. Heiti's simplified style on a poster, 1968. ....	99
Figure 2.47. Propaganda poster, "Always be loyal to the Great Leader Pre-Chairman Mao", 1968. ....	100
Figure 2.48. Propaganda poster "Sunflowers blooming towards the sun" .....	100
Figure 2.49. Propaganda poster "Sunflowers blooming towards the sun" .....	101
Figure 2.50. Propaganda poster "Learning from revolutionaries" .....	101
Figure 2.51. Propaganda poster "Mao Zedong's Thought is the pinnacle of Marxism-Leninism" .....	102
Figure 2.52. Propaganda poster "We warmly welcome the great victory of the proletarian revolution", 1968. ....	102
Figure 2.53. Propaganda poster published by the Hubei People's Publishing House, 1969. ....	103
Figure 2.54. Jianzhi's art on the theme of the Cultural Revolution. ....	103
Figure 2.55. Propaganda poster from the 1960s. ....	105
Figure 2.56. Propaganda poster from the 1960s. ....	106



Figure 2.57. Propaganda poster from the 1960s. ....	106
Figure 2.58. Propaganda poster from the 1960s. ....	107
Figure 2.59. Propaganda poster from the 1960s. ....	107
Figure 2.60. Printed advertisement for Maxam cosmetics from the 1980s.....	113
Figure 2.61. Printed advertisement for Yupai padlocks, 1982. ....	113
Figure 2.62. Printed advertisement for the Feiyu TV set, 1982. ....	114
Figure 2.63. Cover of China Advertising, No. 1, 1983. ....	114
Figure 2.64. Pepsi advertisement, 1986. ....	115
Figure 2.65. Magazine advertisements for the Rubik's Cube from the 1980s. ....	116
Figure 2.66. Outdoor advertising for Baili soap. ....	117
Figure 2.67. Outdoor alcohol advertisements of the 1990s in Qingdao. ....	118
Figure 2.68. Magazine advertisements for shampoos from the 1990s ....	118
Figure 2.69. Outdoor advertising of Chinese-French pharmacies in Shanghai 1980s. ....	119
Figure 2.70. Magazine advertisement for dietary supplements from the 1980s. ....	120
Figure 2.71. Social advertisement "I want to go to school", 1991. ....	122
Figure 2.72. Social advertising on flood prevention. ....	123
Figure 2.73. 2007 Graphic advertisement "There can be no flaw in it", 2007. ....	124
Figure 2.74. Graphic advertisement for Tony's noodles. ....	125
Figure 2.75. Social advertising of the Olympic Games in Beijing. ....	126
Figure 2.76. Han Jiaying's End of the World magazine covers, 1998. ....	127
Figure 2.77. Cover of Chinese Graphic Design magazine, 1997. ....	128
Figure 2.78. Cover of China Advertising magazine, 2013. ....	128
Figure 2.79. Cover of China Advertising, 2019. ....	129
Figure 2.80. A commercial advertisement for Midi kitchen appliances in the People's Daily newspaper in 2000 ....	130
Figure 2.81. Outdoor advertising of Baixiang Salt 2000. ....	131
Figure 3.1. Cai Zhenhua's work on graphic design, 1955 ....	137
Figure 3.2. Cai Zhenhua's work on graphic design, 1957 ....	137
Figure 3.3. Graphic advertisement in China Construction, 1962.....	138
Figure 3.4. Design works of Wang Guangyi's "Mass Criticism and Denial" series.....	141
Figure 3.5. Zhang Xiaogang's "Big Family" graphic design.....	141
Figure 3.6. Advertising design for furniture companies.....	143
Figure 3.7. Chinese takeaway food company advertisement "Are you hungry?" ....	143
Figure 3.8. KFC advertisement in China ....	144
Figure 3.9. Graphic design in Chinese advertising in the early 1980s... ..	145
Figure 3.10. Graphic design in Chinese advertising in the mid-1980s.....	146
Figure 3.11. Advertisement for "Lipstick Xixi" ....	147
Figure 3.12. Graphic design in the late 1980s ....	147

Figure 3.13. Graphic advertisement for a sun hat .....	148
Figure 3.14. Emblem of the Olympic Games 2008 "China Seal, Dancing Beijing" .....	149
Figure 3.15. Social advertising, 2008 .....	149
Figure 3.16. Chinese graphic design of the early twenty-first century .....	150
Figure 3.17. Li Ning sports shoe advertisement .....	150
Figure 3.18. Posters on the theme of a bountiful harvest in the 1950s. ....	153
Figure 3.19. Posters on the theme of promoting reform policies, 1947 .....	153
Figure 3.20. Zhu Zhangchao's "Tibet is China's Tibet" poster, 1959.....	154
Figure 3.21. Poster "The Road to a Happy People's Commune" by Xu Qixiong, 1958 .....	154
Figure 3.22. Posters on the theme of praising the government of the 1950s.....	155
Figure 3.23. Posters on the theme of praising the heroes and workers of the 1950s.....	155
Figure 3.24. Posters on the theme of defense of the country of China's Cultural Revolution.....	159
Figure 3.25. Poster "We are boundlessly loyal to the great leader Chairman Mao!" .....	159
Figure 3.26. Poster "Long live the invincible Mao Zedong and his great ideas!" .....	160
Figure 3.27. Poster "Struggle for a rich harvest and revolution!" .....	160
Figure 3.28. Posters on the promotion of family planning policies in the 1980s.....	161
Figure 3.29. Poster "Doing Sports Every Day" 1980s. ....	162
Figure 3.30. "Please drink Chinese white wine" advertisements from the 1980s.....	162
Figure 3.31. Graphic advertisements for tea, 2013 .....	163
Figure 3.32. Advertising on the topic of smoking cessation.....	164
Figure 3.33. Advertisement "Forest protection is an urgent necessity" .....	164
Figure 3.34. Propaganda poster "The peasant said to the landowner: who maintains whom?", 1950.....	166
Figure 3.35. Social poster "Let's improve environmental sanitation and keep the city clean and tidy" from the 1950s .....	166
Figure 3.36. Propaganda poster against US imperialism in the 50s .....	167
Figure 3.37. Propaganda poster, "Everyone must be inoculated against epidemics to thwart the American imperialists' plans for bacteriological war-fare," 1952.....	168
Figure 3.38. Positive images in propaganda posters .....	169
Figure 3.39. Propaganda poster "Reactionaries must be suppressed!" 1960s.....	169
Figure 3.40. Propaganda poster "Long Live the Great January Revolution!", 1967.....	170
Figure 3.41. "Treat Food Carefully and Economically" poster from the 1980s .....	172
Figure 3.42. "Follow the rules of the road" poster from the 1980s. ....	172
Figure 3.43. Outdoor advertising of drinking water in 2010 .....	174
Figure 3.44. Advertisement of Chinese vodka "Jiangxiaobai" .....	174
Figure 3.45. Social graphic advertisement in Chinese subways .....	175