

# Images of a Free World Made in Hong Kong: The Case of the *Four Seas Pictorial* (1951–1956)

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## Introduction

Previous studies of newspapers and magazines have largely focused on text publications. Few have examined and analysed pictorials. The images contained in pictorials provide an alternative perspective on time and history. One of the most renowned scholars in pictorial research is Chen Pingyuan 陳平原, a professor at Peking University. Chen is known for his research on late Qing dynasty pictorials, particularly the *Dianshi zhai huabao* 點石齋畫報 (*Dianshi Studio Pictorial*, first publication in 1884). He has published a number of studies since the 1990s. His findings are consolidated into *Tuxiang wan-Qing: Dianshi zhai huabao* 圖像晚清：《點石齋畫報》 (with Xia Xiaohong 夏曉虹) and *Zuotu youshi yu xixue dongjian: Wan-Qing huabao yanjiu* 左圖右史與西學東漸：晚清畫報研究。<sup>1</sup> Besides Chen, other scholars have also adopted the late Qing dynasty as the research period for analysing Chinese pictorials,<sup>2</sup> with studies concerning the *Dianshi Studio Pictorial* and *Liangyou*

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<sup>1</sup> Chen Pingyuan and Xia Xiaohong, *Tuxiang wan-Qing: Dianshi zhai huabao (Images of the Late Qing: Dianshi Studio Pictorial)* (Tianjin: Baihua wenyi chubanshe, 2001); Chen Pingyuan, *Zuotu youshi yu xixue dongjian: Wan-Qing huabao yanjiu (Images and History: and the Spread of Western Learning to the East: A Study on Late Qing Dynasty Pictorials)* (Hong Kong: Sanlian shudian, 2008).

<sup>2</sup> See Wang Ermin 王爾敏, “Zhongguo jindai zhishi pujihua chuanbo zhi tushuo xingshi—*Dianshi zhai huabao* li” 中國近代知識普及化傳播之圖說形式——點石齋畫報例 (The Use of Images in the Spread of Modern Knowledge in China: The Case of the *Dianshi Studio Pictorial*), *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan jindaishi yanjiushuo jikan* 中央研究院近代史研究所集刊 19 (1990), pp. 135–72; Kang Wuwei 康無為 [Harold Kahn], “‘Hua zhong you hua’: *Dianshi zhai huabao* yu dazhong wenhua xingcheng zhiqian de lishi” 「畫中有話」：點石齋畫報與

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*huabao* 良友畫報 (*The Young Companion*, first publication in 1926) being the most prevalent.<sup>3</sup> By comparison, studies on pictorials in regions other than Shanghai and Beijing are scarce. This is primarily because publishers and readers of pictorials had already emerged in Shanghai and Beijing in the late Qing dynasty.<sup>4</sup>

Hong Kong's pictorials were merged into the *Gang Yue juan* 港粵卷 (*Hong Kong and Guangdong Volumes*) of the *Minguo huabao huibian* 民國畫報匯編 (*Collection of Pictorials of the Republican Period*). In comparison to pictorials published in Shanghai and Beijing, those from Hong Kong and Guangdong manifested greater potential and experienced fewer publishing restrictions. Chen asserted that among the various pictorials of the late Qing dynasty, the *Shishi huabao* 時事畫報 (*Current Affairs Pictorial*)—a pictorial published in the more liberal Guangzhou (and Hong Kong)—expressed the most radical political views.<sup>5</sup> A comparison between Hong Kong's pictorials and those from other parts of Guangdong showed a distinct history in the development of Hong Kong's pictorials. A number of pictorials were already published in Hong Kong before 1945, including the *Yinguang* 銀光 (*Silver Light*, 1926), *Feifei huabao* 非非畫報 (*Feifei Pictorial*, 1928), and *Shaonian huabao*

(Note 2—Continued)

大眾文化形成之前的歷史 (Drawing Conclusions: Illustration and the Pre-History of Mass Culture), in idem, *Dushi oude: Xueshu yanjiang sanpian* 讀史偶得：學術演講三篇 (*Excursions in Reading History: Three Studies*) (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan jindaishi yanjiushuo, 1993), pp. 89–100; Ye Xiaoqing 葉曉青, “Dianshi zhai huabao zhong de Shanghai pingmin wenhua” 《點石齋畫報》中的上海平民文化 (Shanghai Popular Culture in the *Dianshi Studio Pictorial*), in *Shanghai: Chengshi, shehui yu wenhua* 上海：城市、社會與文化 (*Shanghai: City, Society and Culture*), ed. Wang Hui 汪暉 and Yu Guoliang 余國良 (Hong Kong: Zhongwen daxue chubanshe, 1998), pp. 133–49.

<sup>3</sup> See Gao Yuya 高郁雅, “Cong *Liangyou huabao* fengmian nülang kan jindai Shanghai de ‘modeng gouer’” 從《良友畫報》封面女郎看近代上海的「摩登狗兒」(Modern Girl) (“Modern Girl” of Shanghai as Seen from Cover Girls on *The Young Companion*), *Guoshiguan guankan* 國史館館刊 26 (June 1999), pp. 57–96; Li Oufan 李歐梵, *Shanghai modeng: Yizhong xin dushi wenhua zai Zhongguo 1930–1945* 上海摩登：一種新都市文化在中國 1930–1945 (*Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China, 1930–1945*), trans. Mao Jian 毛尖 (Hong Kong: Niujin daxue chubanshe, 2006), pp. 75–80; Yu Fangzhen 余芳珍, “Yueshu xiao yongri: Liangyou tushu yu jindai Zhongguo de xiaoxian yuedu xiguan” 閱書消永日：良友圖書與近代中國的消閑閱讀習慣 (Reading for Pleasure: Young Companion (Liangyou) Publishing House in Modern China (1926–1941)), *Si yu yan* 思與言 43, no. 3 (September 2005), pp. 191–282.

<sup>4</sup> See Chen Pingyuan, *Zuotu youshi yu xixue dongjian*, p. 241.

<sup>5</sup> See Chen Pingyuan, *Tuxiang wan-Qing: Dianshi zhai huabao zhi wai* 圖像晚清：《點石齋畫報》之外 (*Images of the Late Qing: In Addition to the Dianshi Studio Pictorial*) (Beijing: Dongfang chubanshe, 2014), p. 42.

少年畫報 (*Youth's Pictorial*, 1937). The pictorials focused on providing knowledge and entertainment. Several notable particularities were observed when examining the development of *Sihai huabao* 四海畫報 (*Four Seas Pictorial*) in the historical development of Hong Kong's pictorials.

Not only did *Four Seas Pictorial* inherit the characteristics of China's pictorials (Shanghai's pictorials) in Hong Kong, it was also influenced by the propaganda ideology of American power during the Cold War period. The United States aimed to transform *Four Seas Pictorial* into the *Life* of Southeast Asia and increased the influence of American power in the historical development of Hong Kong's pictorials. Propaganda research by the United States of Information Service (USIS) is published in books, journals, and pictorials. Books and journals are "printed text" propaganda, whereas pictorials are "image-based" propaganda. "Pictures" were considered the *qingqibing* 輕騎兵 (light cavalry) in wartime propaganda. In the arsenal of propaganda, pictures were lively, direct, and to-the-point.

In a broader perspective, *Four Seas Pictorial* is evidence of American power after World War II. Unlike publications produced by the Book Translation Program that undergo review and approval by the United States Information Agency (USIA), magazines produced by the USIS Press and Publication Service only require approval from the USIS for publishing. The most popular publication of the Hong Kong USIS (USIS-HK) was *Jinri shijie* 今日世界 (*World Today*, 1952–1980). Other pictorials jointly published by USIS-HK and local publishers include *Zhongguo xuesheng zhoubao* 中國學生周報 (*The Chinese Student Weekly*, first publication in July 1952), *Zuguo zhoukan* 祖國周刊 (*China Monthly*, first publication in January 1953), *Ertong leyuan* 兒童樂園 (*Children's Paradise*, first publication in January 1953), *Yazhou huabao* 亞洲畫報 (*Asia Pictorial*, first publication in May 1953), and *Daxue shenghuo* 大學生活 (*College Life Monthly*, first publication in May 1955). The purpose of the present study was to compare U.S. graphics-based pictorials with the popular *Asia Pictorial* and *Four Seas Pictorial* (the first Chinese pictorial of the liberals in Southeast Asia published by the USIS-HK in 1951). The present study aimed to examine influences that U.S. factors had on the development of Hong Kong's pictorials by evidencing the development of *Four Seas Pictorial*.

In addition to the significance of *Four Seas Pictorial* on the development of Hong Kong's pictorials, the present study aimed to determine the influences that *Four Seas Pictorial* had on Taiwan-Hong Kong relations and Southeast Asia's cultural domains. *Four Seas Pictorial*, particularly its "Short Stories" segment, expands our understanding of Hong Kong's history and culture in the 1950s. To a certain extent, the factual descriptions presented in the "Short Stories" segment embody the lifestyles of the Hong Kong people before and after 1950. Moreover, *Four Seas Pictorial's* ideologies encompass all of Southeast Asia. Therefore, it can reflect the cultures of