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University of Hawaii, 1991
CHANGING AMERICAN IMAGES OF CHINA
AS REFLECTED IN
THE NEW YORK TIMES, THE WASHINGTON POST
AND THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR
1972 - 1985

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE DIVISION OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII IN PARTIAL FULLFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
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MAY 1991

By
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This dissertation is an investigation of the changing American images of China seen in three major newspapers -- The New York Times, the Washington Post and the Christian Science Monitor -- over a period of 14 years following Nixon's visit to that country in 1972. Research questions were designed to identify the changing images over time and evaluate their accuracy from a Chinese perspective.

A total of 508 news stories were selected for analysis that were fundamentally of a descriptive nature portraying lives of ordinary Chinese people. They covered a wide range of subject matter including material and economic conditions, social morale and morality, youth and education, arts and entertainment, and other major events that had a great impact on people's lives.

Research findings showed that American reporters improved markedly their understanding of China during the period of study. The images of China during the early stage reflected an obvious signs of uncertainty, with some unrealistic views. During the short transitional period after the Gang of Four was overthrown, the news articles portrayed quite
accurately the mood and anticipations of the Chinese despite insufficient historical and social contexts. In the reform period, most of the articles described each specific topic with basically realistic views. However, many lacked an adequate social context and over emphasized the positive side of the reform program. As a result, the picture as a whole became unbalanced and at times contained conflicting messages. The over-optimistic views of the reform program poorly prepared Americans for the bloody Tiananmen incident of June 1989. The tendency to focus on dramatic and easily accessible events while leaving some important social trends untouched was also characteristic of the reporting in general.

Another finding of this investigation was the gap between the images found in the three newspapers and the views of American China experts. While China experts identified Americans' perception of China in the early 70s as euphoric, the prevailing messages in the three newspapers, however, were negative.
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PREFACE

My interest in conducting this study stemmed both from personal observations and from academic experiences. During my first few years in the United States when I was a grantee of the East-West Center and a graduate student at the University of Hawaii, I found the course of adjusting to a new culture both pleasantly amusing and, at times, frustrating. I was also amazed at how the lack of mutual understanding among people from different social and cultural backgrounds could easily lead to misunderstandings or even animosities. The East-West Center and the University of Hawaii provided an excellent setting to encounter and observe the elements of cross-cultural differences at work and the process of adjustment among the participants coming from various countries of the world. My interest in cross-cultural perceptions gradually increased, and the initial stage of my academic life in Hawaii turned out to be an embryonic stage of my preoccupation in this subject.

The books I read in the courses offered by the Department of American Studies, especially those on comparative cultures under Dr. Seymour Lutzky further
fueled my curiosity in mutual images varying peoples hold of one another. I was introduced to works such as *The Americans and Chinese* by Francis Hsu, *The Silent Language* by Edward Hall, and *Images of Asia* by Harold Isaacs. The cross-cultural insights set forth by these authors not only advanced my pursuit in this subject, but also exposed me to possible academic research and study.

American scholars have conducted numerous studies on American perceptions of China. But many find it hard to explain "the notable swings, the violent ups and downs, in American attitudes toward China" (Thompson, *American Heritage* Aug. 1972, p.4) over the past two centuries. China seemed to be a country Americans found difficult to understand. This was especially true during the two decades between the "loss" of China in late 1940s and Richard Nixon's visit in the early 1970s. Complaining about the lack of direct information on China, many blamed the press for not providing enough accurate news about this country. Felix Greene, in his controversial book *A Curtain Of Ignorance* (1964), scathingly criticized American reporters for presenting to their readership what he considered biased and totally inaccurate and therefore misleading information, despite the fact that he himself was also criticized for being biased
and inaccurate in presenting evidence for his arguments in the book. Still, his basic idea of the inadequacy of the media's China reporting was shared by others. A.T. Steele concluded after interviewing a number of people that "there was an evident feeling that the news is incomplete, that it is not always to be trusted" (Steele 1966, 142). He suggested that in order to improve media reporting, one of the remedies was for American correspondents to report directly from Communist China (ibid., 143). Criticism of the press stimulated my urge to explore its role in the years after Nixon's visit to find out whether coverage had become more realistic now that journalists were able to visit China more freely and stay there for longer periods as resident correspondents.

The process of this research was arduous, but rewarding. In the course of this academic discipline, I have acquired a great deal of knowledge of U.S.-China relations, which is most useful in my present career as a Chinese-American journalist broadcasting to China. This project also convinces me that with a generation of committed and mature China experts here in the United States, there is a great potential for better understanding between Americans and Chinese. I hope that this study from a Chinese point of view
will contribute to the efforts of American China experts and journalists in this respect. However, I hesitate to look upon my work as "watching the China watchers," as John Williams did in granting me the first Women in Journalism Award for research on this project (Williams, East West Summer 1985, p.67). I consider this study only "another picture" for the simple reason that each individual, whether outsider or native, is limited by his/her own experience, involvement, and environment. More important is the fact that in conducting this investigation, I share with American scholars the desire to enhance mutual understanding between the two great peoples.

I feel greatly honored to have been the first recipient of the Women In Journalism Award, which was instrumental in making this research possible. I am also fortunate to have had support from the Altrusa Club and C. K. Huang Foundation in Honolulu. I made extensive use of the Library of Congress and the library of the George Washington University for my initial research. Without the help of these facilities, my research would have been impossible. I want especially to extend my deep appreciation to my friends Rhoda Miller and Dolly Strazar who have spent considerable time in editing this work and offering me valuable suggestions. Many other friends have also
rendered me great assistance either in securing research material or providing me with their insights on specific Chinese events. This study, therefore, is a product of many people's efforts.
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This dissertation examines American newspaper images of China during the fourteen-year period from 1972, when President Nixon made his historic trip to China and changed the course of U.S.-China relations, to 1985, when China was in the midst of economic reform. It also aims to analyze and evaluate, from a Chinese perspective, the changing images emerging from the newspaper articles collected for this study. With Nixon's visit, U.S.-China relations entered a new era. Instead of "China watching" from Hong Kong and other peripheral areas during the years of separation between the two countries, American correspondents began to do "China touching." This dramatic change in bilateral relations raised some questions: under the new circumstances, were American newspapers presenting the public with adequate and accurate information about China and the Chinese? Did the images evoked by the newspaper reporting reflect the realities of how the Chinese lived, worked and thought? Did the interpretations conform to Chinese cultural and social realities? In short, what were the images the newspaper stories offered their readership, and how close were these images to real life from a Chinese point of view? The goal of this dissertation is to try to answer these questions.
The term "image" connotes "the character projected by someone or something to the public, especially by the mass media" (Webster's II New Riverside University Dictionary 1984). Working with this definition, this study explores what American newspapers projected in their news stories about China and Chinese life. The news articles selected for this study contained various kinds of information, not only valid facts, but also messages that writers of the news reports believed to be true, but, in fact, might be otherwise. Nevertheless, valid or not, the information readers received from the newspapers helped to form their images of China and the Chinese people. On the significance of images, Kenneth Boulding sees the whole movement of society "as a process of image formation under the stimulus of messages transmitted by the networks of communication" (Boulding 1956, 98). In his view, the information or message received may affect a person's image in three ways: 1. the former image is unchanged when the messages conform to one's original perceptions; 2. the former image is reevaluated when the information differs from one's former beliefs to a certain degree; and 3. the image undergoes revolutionary changes when the messages are drastically different from one's previous views. The information from the media becomes more important when images concerning something new, remote and ambiguous are involved, such as images about foreign countries. In such
cases, according to Berelson, one may create his own image of the object or fall in with the prevailing stereotypes that are predominately provided by the media (Berelson 1965, 349-50). Based on the definitions and theories stated above, this study is to find out that, by reading newspaper stories about China regularly, what kind of images readers would form in their minds about life in China. Particularly for those who did not have opportunities to visit China and come into direct contact with Chinese people, newspapers served to be their major source of information on which their images of China were built. It is the aim of this study to identify those commonly hold images as reflected from the source materials and analyze them with a Chinese point of view.

Perhaps no culture would claim that it understands other cultures and peoples fully and accurately. Yet, Americans seem to be more self-conscious in this respect. There has been considerable acknowledgement by the American public that it does not have sufficient knowledge about people in other parts of the world, and it demonstrates a sense of eagerness to learn more. American scholars have probed the cause for this lack of understanding, or misunderstanding, and they have looked for ways to enhance their perceptions of other cultures. They have conducted numerous studies of images from various angles and with different emphases. Unlike many
previous studies that have focused on politics and
government or foreign relations, this study is unique in
its emphasis on average Chinese people. While most of the
studies have been done by Americans, this project was
undertaken by a Chinese national born and reared in China
and resident in the United States for almost a decade. It
is, in fact, a study of "double images" -- using the
researcher's Chinese "lens" to focus upon images seen
through the "lens" of American journalists.

The process of image formation involves information
one receives from various channels. As Harold Isaacs
demonstrated in his book *Images of Asia* (1962), an image
of a country depends on a myriad of special contacts
including the perceiver's childhood experience, family
influence, education received, novels read, and movies
seen. Source materials for many image studies include
novels, dramas, TV programs, and other forms of
literature. Similarly, each American forms his impression
about China on the basis of special knowledge derived from
diverse origins. Newspapers are only one of many channels
of information that serve as components of the image of
China in people's minds. In this sense, this study does
not aim to examine American images of China in general,
but centers on images gleaned from selected newspapers.
These images, therefore, only represent a part of
Americans' general perceptions of China.
The mass media have been an important source of knowledge about foreign countries for the interested American public. Among the various forms of American mass media, newspapers have enjoyed a unique position from the very beginning of the nation. They served as an arena for political debate which led to the adoption of the Constitution of the country. They have been influential in forming people's perceptions and views of both national and international affairs. However, the pivotal status of newspapers in the United States began to diminish with the growing popularity of television during the 1960s. The question of whether newspapers or television have more influence on the American public has become a controversial issue. Surveys and polls on this subject have been conducted and the results are mixed. Scholars seem to agree, however, that each medium has its unique function and should concentrate on what it can do best. The various media should complement each other while competing.

Newspapers have certain advantages. The most obvious is that the printed press can provide a wider variety of news and information than other media. It can encompass far more detail than television. Hynds notes that "a half hour news program on television does not cover the equivalent of a full page of news and information in a newspaper" (Hynds 1980, 24). Although many people watch
television news, they often still read newspapers for
details. The sheer volume of information newspapers carry
can satisfy peoples' psychological needs to link
themselves with the outside world. In addition, newspapers
are better able to provide linear, sequential information
than the spoken word and can fit into a reader's schedule
more easily and flexibly.

Each medium serves people with different needs.
Opinion surveys show that most Americans depend strongly
on television as the "most common leisure-time diversion"
(Bogart 1981, 182). Dr. Ruth Clark maintains, however,
that newspaper readers, who are often more sophisticated
and better educated, rely on newspapers for information
about national and international affairs (Hynds 1980, 18).

Among the thousands of newspapers in the United
States, Hynds suggests, only a few can be considered
"quality" newspapers. By "quality" newspapers he refers to
those newspapers that seriously report and explain
important national and international issues. "Quality"
newspapers all have, he says, "serious intent, all appeal
to educated readers, all deal with national and
international affairs, and all seek to influence opinion
and action" (ibid., 94). These newspapers transcend such
factors as frequency of publication and interest served as
they are different from those that carry stories only to
meet popular interest. Included in this category, Hynds
maintains, are five major American newspapers -- The New York Times (NYT), the Washington Post (WP), the Wall Street Journal (WSJ), the Christian Science Monitor (CSM) and the Los Angeles Times (LAT).

The present study focuses on three of these widely read and influential American newspapers -- the NYT, the WP and the CSM. Hynds' survey provides the basis for the selection of source materials. The WSJ and the LAT are not included since the former is an acknowledged business-oriented paper and the latter is still basically a regional newspaper. The LAT admits itself that it did not have a foreign staff 25 years ago (Shaw, LAT 2 July, 1986).

The NYT is a highly regarded newspaper read not only throughout the United States but all over the world. Among Harold Isaacs' 181 interviewees, 126 said that they read the NYT for information about daily news (Isaacs 1962, 21). The paper is known for its tradition of printing the news with completeness and integrity. The paper and its staff had won a record 53 Pulitzer Prizes by 1983. More important to this study is the fact that the NYT has historically given a high priority to foreign coverage. It daily devotes all the news space in the first ten to twelve pages of its front section to foreign news. Its total foreign budget ranked highest among all U.S. newspapers in 1986. The NYT is among only a few newspapers
that spend time and money preparing foreign reporters for overseas assignments (Shaw, LAT 2 July, 1986).

The WP has risen swiftly in recent decades to become one of the most highly regarded newspapers in the country. Its rapidly rising esteem might be due in part to the unraveling of the Watergate scandal in the 1970s by two of its young reporters. In addition, it is noted for its large volume of foreign news and, partly due to its location, its strong internationalist outlook. It has become "must reading in the nation's capital, at the United Nations, and in the world's great chanceries from London and Moscow to Tokyo and Peking" (Hohenberg 1978, 89). The WP sends its foreign reporters to Stanford or the University of Michigan to take courses in the languages and culture of countries to which they are assigned (Shaw, LAT 2 July, 1986). Its foreign budget in 1986 ranked second after the NYT.

Founded in 1908, the CSM is an international newspaper. Its worldwide outlook and its serious intent are embodied in the paper's statement of purpose: to injure no man, but to bless all mankind (Hynds 1980, 288). Emphasizing indepth coverage of national and international affairs, the CSM is also known for its pioneering interpretive reporting and analysis of national and world affairs. More than ten national polls have selected the CSM as one of the top two or three newspapers in the
United States, and one of the top four or five newspapers in the world (ibid., 288). It has won hundreds of journalistic awards, including Pulitzer prizes. However, the CSM did drop in standing among of the nation's best ten newspapers from second in the 1960s to tenth in the 1970s. This might have been due to financial difficulties that resulted from its refusal to accept tobacco, alcohol, or drug advertisements. But this drop in ranking did not affect its prestige as a national and international newspaper (ibid., 290). Hynds points out that surveys indicate that the CSM is read by most Congressmen, many government officials, foreign diplomats, editors, school teachers and students in the United States and overseas.

Using the source materials gathered from the three newspapers selected, the major task of this investigation is to discover what kinds of images began to take shape in their coverage of China during the post-1972 period of U.S.-China relations. It also aims to identify trends and patterns in the images of China as reflected through the eyes of American correspondents and other visitors to China. It should be emphasized at the outset that this study is of a qualitative, descriptive, and interpretative nature. Source materials have not been collected by sampling techniques, and conclusions are not based on statistics or percentages. Figures are used only to
provide a sense of proportion concerning the components of the images and to demonstrate correlations among them.

Many scholars have pointed out that an image is a product that combines the views, opinions, and mentalities of both the perceived and the perceiver. In the present case, each article in the three newspapers selected tells people about Chinese society while reflecting the writer's values and interpretations of social phenomena based on his own cultural background. However, the primary focus of this study will not be so much analysing the perceiver's value concept and background as the accuracy of the images they created through their writing.

A total of 508 news stories were chosen from the three target newspapers. The fundamental criterion for selection was whether an article illustrated the central theme of this inquiry -- perceptions of the lives of ordinary men and women in China. Those articles that directly depicted Chinese life were selected, irrespective of their length and placement in the newspapers or who their authors were. One outstanding feature of the source material is that most of the articles were written from first-hand experience or contact. They were either filed by resident correspondents or written by people who visited China.

It was now commonly known that daily life in China under Communist rule is intertwined with politics and,
therefore, most stories that portray peoples' lives also mention government policies or changing political directions. The yardstick in this respect was to determine whether the news article's primary theme was portraying people's lives. Articles that mainly discussed or analysed Party and government policies were not included. Also not included were those articles which described minorities in China, ethnic as well as population segments representing small groups, such as Party and government officials or criminals.

The number of news articles from the three newspapers were distributed as follows:

- The NYT: 169
- The WP: 140
- The CSM: 199

To facilitate analysis of the source material, the period under study was divided into three segments according to landmark events that occurred in China:

1. The initial period: from 1972 at about the time of Nixon's visit to late 1976 after the death of Mao Zedong and the fall of the Gang of Four;

2. The transitional period: from late 1976 after the overthrow of the Gang of Four to the end of 1978 before Deng Xiaoping started his reform program;

3. The reform period: from the beginning of 1979, when the economic reform started, until 1985 when research
for this project commenced and China was in the midst of its economic reform.

The three newspapers' stories were distributed by periods as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>NYT</th>
<th>WP</th>
<th>CSM</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial (1972-76)</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitional (1976-78)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reform (1979-85)</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>299</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The periodization is mainly for convenience of analysis. It does not mean that images that emerged within one specific period are totally different from those of other periods. Images from a previous period lingered into the next and overlapped with new images.

The source materials as a whole are composed of news stories written not only by journalists, but also by scholars, professionals, teachers and other Americans who went to China for short visits. However, among the 508 news articles, approximately 400 were written by experienced, professional journalists. The most productive among them were the resident correspondent of the CSM Takashi Oka (52), the NYT correspondent Fox Butterfield (46), the WP correspondent Jay Mathews (39) and the NYT correspondent John Burns (37). Scholars and academics who contributed articles in the three newspapers included
In order to code the messages from the source materials systematically and consistently, a series of questions were asked:

1. What are the author's views toward the lives of the people in China? Mainly positive or negative?

2. What is the primary subject of the article, and what are the secondary ones? What are the major descriptions?

3. What are the author's interpretations of the social phenomena seen in China? Do these reflect the basic reality at the time of reporting?

4. Is enough social and historical background provided? If yes, does it conform to historic developments? If no, what is lacking?

5. Do the images presented by the article conform to the researcher's Chinese images? If not, what are the discrepancies?

The source materials thus collected have been used mainly to examine the images which emerged from the three newspapers. However, for analysis and comment on these images, this study relied on works by American scholars and journalists as well as the researcher's own experiences in China supported, whenever possible, by published sources. Also included were interviews with a
number of noted China experts among American scholars and journalists, including John King Fairbank, John Service, Doak Barnett, David Lampton, Harrison Salisbury and Stanley Karnow.

The major difficulty in this study was the lack of reliable Chinese written records to support the researcher's assessment of the American newspaper interpretations. Under the totalitarian rule of the Chinese Communist Party, freedom of expression does not exist. In most cases, what really happened in a specific period was not made known until leadership and policies were changed in the next stage. The best example is the Cultural Revolution. Foreign visitors had no idea what was really going on before the Gang of Four was ousted and the new leadership allowed people to criticize the Cultural Revolution. During the reform period, when the Chinese government focused on publicizing the successes of its economic policies, problems and conflicts resulting from reform were obscured and did not become clear until the pro-democracy movement of the spring of 1989. Thus the true nature of a specific period is more often than not evidenced by materials of a later date.

One characteristic of this study is the use of personal experience as a research tool. Born and educated in Shanghai where I still have contacts with family members, relatives, former schoolmates and friends, I was
assigned to work at Radio Beijing as a broadcaster in English after graduating from college in 1960. As a journalist, I had contacts with people in different segments of the society. Although I was mostly surrounded in Beijing by intellectuals such as professors, teachers, doctors, engineers, I also had friends who were government officials, members of the military and workers in factories and service trades. Apart from some of my relatives who are peasants by origin, I also made some peasant friends in 1964 and from 1969-71 when I was sent by Radio Beijing to the suburbs of the capital to take part in manual labor. Several of my nieces and nephews were educated youths who had been sent to the countryside; one stayed in Northeast China for eight years. My colleagues at Radio Beijing came from different family backgrounds and various locations and provided constant information about the mood of the populace at the local level. Because of this network, I am familiar with the content of the source materials for the present study. This increased my sense of confidence in analyzing the data. However, using personal experience as a research tool does raise the question of objectivity of analysis. In an effort to reduce possible subjectivity and personal bias in my analysis, I have also relied on Chinese materials, including a few magazines published in Hong Kong and several books by Chinese authors. I have also
discussed many of the subjects with Chinese friends in the United States as well as with visitors from China. Letters from China also served as valuable sources of information. All of these were used, directly or indirectly, to support my analysis of the data.

This dissertation is divided into six chapters, including an introduction as the first chapter. The second chapter deals theoretically with image study in foreign relations and Americans' historic perceptions of China and the Chinese. The third, fourth and fifth chapters examine the images that emerged from the three newspapers' coverage of China during the initial period (1972-1976), the transitional period (1976-1978), and the reform period (1979-1985). Image formation and transformation are analyzed and comments are offered on the data from the researcher's Chinese point of view. The sixth chapter summarizes the broad characteristics of the changing images which emerged from the three newspapers' coverage of China during the period under investigation. Before the dissertation was completed, the bloody Tiananmen massacre in June of 1989 occurred. In view of the relevance of the Tiananmen incident to the present investigations, an epilogue was added to the dissertation. It was written on the basis of supplementary research on the three newspapers' coverage of China immediately after the event. This coverage buttressed my assessments of the American
images of China contained in the source materials during the period under study.

The findings of this investigation reveal that American images of China and the Chinese as seen in the three newspapers are a microcosm of a broader pattern of American perceptions of the Chinese. These perceptions changed drastically in accordance with the radical changes which occurred in these years in China. In the early 70s, there appeared in the three newspapers a romanticized and idealized image that resembled the characteristics of what many American China experts call the phase of "euphoria" ushered in by Nixon's visit (Fairbank 1987, 66). A more prevailing image was purely negative, and there also existed a mixed picture containing both euphoric and negative images. As unrealistic as it was, the euphoric image reflected a tendency in American society at that time to romanticize China. Representative of this view in the source materials was a small group of people who, oblivious to what happened during the two decades of Communist rule, compared what they saw at the time of renewed contact with their memories of the China in the late 40s. The reports with negative views during the initial period outnumbered the positive ones by a significant margin and focused on political control and material destitution. Despite the fact that the negative image was more realistic, it was vague in its descriptions
and conveyed a sense of groping uncertainly in the dark. However, the idealization that characterized the euphoric image and the ambivalence shown in the negative portrayals were both influenced by the manipulative efforts of the Gang of Four to disguise the realities of Chinese life and create false images in foreigners' minds. This state of affairs persisted until their fall from power.

During the transitional period, which lasted for only two years from the fall of the Gang of Four in 1976 to the eve of Deng Xiaoping's reform program, the euphoric image almost disappeared. In its place were the images of the Cultural Revolution, the Chinese people's hope for a better life, and their lingering fear and uncertainties concerning the new regime. The glorification of the achievements of the Chinese Communist Party as heralded during the earlier period was replaced by unfavorable portrayals of numerous problems and the realization of what the Cultural Revolution had done to the lives of the Chinese. There was also a sense of hope for a better life under the new regime of Hua Guofeng and later Deng Xiaoping. The images in the three newspapers during this period became much more realistic and explicit than those of the initial period. This was due to the fact that the new regime, in trying to justify itself, put the blame entirely on to the Gang of Four and did not seek to hide the country's deplorable situation. The policies regarding
foreigners' movements and contacts with local people also became more liberal and open. Therefore, transformed images resulted not only from the changed realities, but also from changed political motivations.

The reform program initiated by Deng Xiaoping stimulated Americans' imaginations. Optimism and hopefulness surged to become the characteristics of the new images set forth by the three newspapers, especially in the economic field. China was seen through news stories as moving closer and closer to the capitalist system and resembling more and more the countries of the West. Its promising future dominated the three newspapers' coverage. The focus on the bright side of the reform and the expectations that China would finally come to embrace the capitalist system fully reflected Americans' thinking and basic values. They chose to believe and exaggerate the achievements of the reform and ignored the problems created by it. Although a number of news articles were extremely negative but realistic, their impact was comparatively insignificant. The distorted images seen in this period ill prepared Americans, journalists and scholars included, for their shock at the cruelty of the Deng regime when the Chinese military cracked down on the pro-democracy movement in June of 1989.

However, along with the radical changes in the positive images, a continuous and enduring negative image
persisted all through the period under study. This negative image realistically reflected China's problems in the economic, social, and cultural fields. News stories described Chinese life as poor, primitive, and lacking in adequate material comforts; the Chinese people as disillusioned, uncertain about their future, distrusting of the Party and more and more rebellious; and Chinese education and artistic creativity as exploited for Party propaganda and permeated with political indoctrination. News stories also reported on the increasing social evils which resurfaced in the wake of the more liberal and open policies of the reform period.

Apart from the early euphoria and the excess of optimism about China's reform program, the images of the three periods, both positive and negative, provided a basically accurate picture of the major events in China during these fourteen years under study. However, the lack of sufficient historical and social context in most of the individual articles created problems in balance and proportion, as a Chinese saying describes: seeing only individual trees without a clear vision of the forest. There was a lack of information that could knit various social and historic currents together. Not only did this insufficiency create conflicting messages for those who were not familiar with China, but it also accounted for
the superficiality of the newspapers' outlook on Chinese matters.

One interesting finding of this study is the gap between the newspaper images and the perceptions of American China experts and journalists. While most China experts and journalists said that the prevalent trend of American perceptions of China in the early 70s was euphoric (Harding, Asian Survey Oct. 1982, p.936), the prevailing image in the source materials was negative. Further research is needed to find out the reasons why this discrepancy existed. However, it certainly proves the contention that image is the result of personal experience; what to believe and what to ignore is purely one's own choice, for whatever reasons.
The study of image in international relations has made vast strides during the past half century. Perceptions and misperceptions of other countries have been the subjects of many important books and articles. There have been works on the American self-image and studies of American images of Japan, France, the Soviet Union, China, and Italy, to name but a few. Studies have also included the images that other countries have had of the United States. Universities have added courses such as "How Others See Us" to the curriculum and symposia and conferences on mutual images have been held in many parts of the world. Image study has become an interdisciplinary field that involves scholars in political science, sociology, psychology, anthropology, and other social sciences. Thus scholars and students have recognized the fundamental importance of image study in interactions among peoples. An impressive number of scholars in the United States are currently engaged in exploring and refining the field of image study for the purpose of examining United States' foreign policies at different historical junctures. Iriye says that "it seems possible to say that the importance of studying images is now taken for granted as a starting
point for any study of foreign relations..." (Iriye 1975, 8).

It is noteworthy that during the 1930s when the study of U.S. diplomatic history made rapid progress, "some of its most illuminating works were analyses of images" (Ibid., 1). These included Charles Beard's *The Idea of National Interest* (1934) in which the author attempted to discern Americans' concepts of their own image in the world, Albert K. Weinberg's *Manifest Destiny* (1935) and Harley Notter's *Origins of the Foreign Policies of Woodrow Wilson* (1937). After World War II, efforts to search for American perceptions of the world continued. Relying on literature, drama and newspapers as source materials, and employing diverse methodologies, scholars and students in international politics produced a number of works in an effort to understand other countries or cultures in a more realistic way. Among them are Henry Nash Smith's *Virgin Land* (1950), John Higham's *Strangers in the Land* (1955), Frederick Merk's *Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History* (1963), Peter Filene's *Americans and the Soviet Experiment* (1967), *Mutual Images* (1975) edited by Akiri Iriye, and *Images and Reality in International Politics* (1984) edited by Nissan Oren.

Image studies of American perceptions of China have also been numerous. One of the most outstanding works in this respect, Harold Isaac's *Images of Asia*, provides an

Works based on research in newspapers and media reporting, however, are limited. One of them is Edward W. Said's *Covering Islam* (1981), an illustration of how the media and experts determine the ways in which the American public sees the rest of the world. *Orientalism* (1979) is a further propounding of Said's concepts about Americans' negative approach to the Islamic and Arab world. Among others are "Portrayal of American Image Through PAK Press 1947-1971" (Malik) and "Image of America in Iranian Mass Media" (Motamed-Nejad), two papers delivered at the

However, despite the progress made in the past few decades during which our understanding of the process of image formation has grown immensely, image study is still a relatively new field of academic inquiry (Oren 1984, 7). The discrepancy between what is real and concrete and what is imagined and perceived remains a controversial issue. Michael Nacht writes that "few scholars have been able to make much headway in developing a theory or set of theories that convincingly explain behavior among states" (Nacht in Oren 1984, 186).

One aspect that needs to be clarified at the outset of this study is the loose application of the term "image." Image study in international relations, Isaacs points out, is still "an inescapably loose and ambiguous subject" (Iriye 1975, 258). Probably because of this, the term "image" has also been used to refer to stereotypes, perceptions, attitudes, opinions, and propaganda creations. A review of the articles in the book Mutual
Images proves this. Though each of these terms has its own specific meaning, it is undeniable that there are interrelated or overlapping meanings as well. Peter Filene explains in his *Americans and the Soviet Experiment* that while opinions are "explicit statements about a situation, attitudes are the implicit mental reservoir from which opinions derive" (Filene 1967, 2). Scholars of other works on image study also use these terms interchangeably, and so will the present study.

On the question of what is image and what is reality, Isaacs suggests that there is no ready answer for this "old philosophic riddle" (Iriye 1975, 258). Plato, in *The Republic*, explains that to human beings, "the truth would be literally nothing but the shadows of the images" (Translated by B. Jowett, 254). Boulding, in his book *Image*, offers his definition of image as subjective knowledge one believes to be true. It is built upon, he maintains, "all past experience of the possessor of the image," and in turn governs his/her behavior (Boulding 1973, 6). Scholars and students of image study have expounded their views on this question from different angles, but their theories have shown a degree of consensus. The differences lie in their distinct emphases, rather than in disagreements.

The intellectual antecedents for this dissertation are varied. Isaacs's *Images of Asia* is considered one of the
most authentic works in image study even today, more than thirty years after its publication. Isaacs has been frequently cited by scholars in the field of image study, especially those focusing on U.S.-China relations. In conducting his investigation of American images of China and India, Isaacs interviewed 181 people, representing different ages, occupations, and life experiences, with the aim of identifying what are the factors that form one's image. By doing this, the author "contributed a methodological innovation" (Iriye 1975, 4). His historic overview and chronology of American perceptions of China has been widely accepted as the basic pattern in the love-hate relationship between the two countries.

Referring to the differences between image and reality, Isaacs points out that no image is "pure fantasy," but each image is the result of specific encounters between the perceiver and the perceived, and therefore, the "truth" of someone's perception never tells the whole story (Isaacs 1962, 380). He describes image as "a revolving column of mirrors under moving lights" (Isaacs in Iriye 1975, 259). He emphasizes that images change not because of the "attributes that are changed by circumstances," but by how they are seen. It is a matter, Isaacs notes, "of those lights shining at different times from different directions on different facets of what there is to see" (Isaacs 1962, 383).
Mutual Images, edited by Akira Iriye, is another important work for this study. It contains several articles by both American and Japanese scholars, who examine images Americans and Japanese have of one another. Like Isaacs, Iriye also maintains that individual images do not "represent the whole but only segments of the whole" (Iriye 1975, 17). Yet he emphasizes the notion that each individual may have contradictory images at different times or have these images at the same time but on "different levels of consciousness" (Ibid.). This, he points out, is because "an individual relates himself to the world in a number of different contexts and from a combination of various motives and preconceived notions" (ibid.). Iriye contends that to study images is to "engage in symbolic analysis" (ibid., 23).

Echoing the views of Isaacs and Iriye, Jean-Pierre Lehmann in The Image of Japan states that a person's impression only relates to one aspect of reality, excluding other aspects of that reality. However, Lehmann maintains that an image of a country changes with time as well as with the perceiver; that is, an image one holds of another country does not only tell people about the perceived country, but it also tells something about the perceiver. Lehmann holds that one sees and believes largely what one wants to see, believing in the messages that seem to confirm one's preconceptions. This view is
also reflected in Durand Echeverria's *Mirage in the West*. On the French image of the United States, the author wrote: "[The French] always saw not what is there, but what, consciously or unconsciously, they were compelled to see" (Echeverria 1957, 281).

Peter Filene's *Americans and the Soviet Experiment* is a study of American attitudes toward the Soviet Union from the Russian revolution in 1917 to the American recognition of the Soviet Union in 1933. The author cites the variety of conflicting images held by Americans toward the Russians, such as "the newest democracy and a bestial tyranny, or as an adolescent capitalism and a laboratory in social justice" (Filene 1967, 275). To him, "truths" about Russia all depend on the observer's preconceptions. Filene believes that these pairs of negative and favorable images replaced each other because Americans' concerns changed due to their own national situation.

Edward W. Said in *Orientalism* analyzes and describes the rise, development, and consolidation of Orientalism in the West. It is a history, in Said's view, of how the West looked upon the Muslim world from a vantage point of a hegemonic cultural system and treated it with condescension. Said's major theme is that in Western writing about the Orient, there exists a prevalence of negative images. He suggests that the Orientalists of the present time try to see the Orient as an "imitation West"
that can only be improved by following the Western model (Said 1979, 321). Said reduces all intercultural distortions and negative images of the Orient to economic and power motives on the part of the West. A similar view is expressed in a paper on the Filipino image of America (Samson in Kato 1977, 79-115). The author argues that images can be "mass-produced, packaged, and promoted just like merchandise" (ibid., 81).

Images and Reality in International Politics, edited by Nissan Oren, consists of a number of articles analyzing the relationship between image and reality under different circumstances in the international arena. In the article "History as Reality Shaped by Images," Yehoshua Arieli provides a succinct explanation of image and reality. He writes that "images... are products of the mind. They are integrative: out of a multitude of cognitive, perceptual and emotional elements drawn from experience, memory, tradition and language, fashioning an integrated whole -- a view" (Arieli in Oren 1984, 58). Reality, Arieli notes, is the "object of knowledge and cognition, the criterion of truth, the opposite of illusion" (ibid., 57). The author stresses that when images gain power over human minds and affect behavior, they can become so influential as to change human reality. He believes that "the tension between image and reality is permanent. Out of this
tension the existence of human life is dialectically
developed" (ibid., 69).

Research for this study provides evidence for the
theories summarized above. However, this researcher sees
the divergent causes for changing images differently.
Among the theories of the scholars cited, there emerges a
shared theme: image changes are prompted mainly by
political and economic variables, as well as by the needs
of the perceiver. This is true in many cases in the
present power-and-politics-oriented world. This study
shows, however, that a transformation of reality can still
be considered as a basis for changes in images. A change
in reality as a cause for perception change may not apply
to all circumstances, yet the effects of a changed reality
on image formation should not be neglected or downplayed.
The creation of images not only involves politicians or
decision-makers. All people participate, including those
who are interested in promoting mutual understanding among
peoples.

Research for this study shows that, despite the fact
that U.S.-China relations remained friendly during the
time period under study, American images of China and the
Chinese underwent drastic changes. Perceptions reflected
in news reports on the whole illustrate a process by which
reporters moved from seeing China in the manner of "a
dragonfly skimming the surface of the water" -- a Chinese
saying implying shallowness -- to a point where they began to understand what was beneath the surface. They appear to have changed their minds often. In reality, the revision of their views reflected the fact that most of the reporters' perceptions drew closer to the realities of Chinese society. In order to discern the truth, some went to great lengths to search for reliable information, even at the risk of being expelled by Chinese authorities. There was a strong commitment among the reporters to find out the truth for American readers though they may not have always been successful. American perceptions of China seen during the fourteen years covered by this study became more realistic and accurate. This serves as evidence that changes in images is not necessarily always dictated by political and economic needs, but is often led by changing realities.

During the course of U.S.-China relations, which goes back to America's beginnings as a nation, American attitudes toward China have undergone enormous changes. Considering political environment and transformation and each interviewee's experience and contact as factors of image change, Isaacs divides the whole spectrum of U.S.-China relations into six separate, yet overlapping phases:

1. The Age of Respect (Eighteenth century)
2. The Age of Contempt (1840-1905)
3. The Age of Benevolence (1905-1937)
4. The Age of Admiration (1937-1944)
5. The Age of Disenchantment (1944-1949)
6. The Age of Hostility (1949--)
   (Isaacs 1962, 71)

Based on images, these six phases do not necessarily represent the real China of any given time. How much the above images reflected Chinese realities is open to question. For instance, the Age of Admiration was purely a myth. Manipulated by Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek) and his wife out of their own political and economic needs, Americans looked upon this couple as two national heroes of China leading the whole country in fighting against Japanese aggression. Yet this image was quite different from the realities of the time. This will be discussed in detail later in this chapter.

The path-breakers of the United States' contact with China were the merchant mariners. The Empress of China, the first American clipper ship, sailed from New York in 1784 (Bicentennial Almanac 1975, 35), and started trade between the two countries. The traders were soon followed by missionaries and subsequently by American officials who came upon the scene much later than the Europeans. It was in 1861 that Anson Burlingame, a former Massachusetts congressman, became the first United States' minister to China (Thompson, American Heritage Aug. 1972, p.5).
The initial American image of China was an unrealistically positive one. Attracted by China's ancient history and civilization, its culture and inventions, and other admirable qualities, Americans viewed the Chinese as a "superior people." These were the days, as James C. Thompson wrote, when "every Salem housewife had ambitions for a chest of hyson tea, a China silk gown, and a set of Canton chinaware" (ibid., 8). Such admiring attitudes still affect American perceptions about China.

The image of the Chinese as a "superior people" faded at the beginning of the 19th century. The Western countries, with Great Britain in the lead, were eager to pry open China's door for free trade while China tried every means to resist. Defeated by the British in the Opium War and confronted with increasing revolts at home, the Chinese government became more and more dependent on the assistance of the Western powers in quelling rebellions, including the most serious, the Taiping Rebellion against the Manchu Dynasty. By the end of the 19th century, China was on the verge of being carved up by the Western nations. Under the circumstances, the spotlight began to move from Chinese silk and art, civilization and culture to China's poverty, its "incredible, unbelievable, incomprehensible poverty" as many people interviewed by Isaacs stated (Isaacs 1962, 99). The image of a "superior people" was replaced by one
based on contempt. This unfavorable image was further reinforced by the changing American attitude toward Chinese immigrants in the United States. During the latter part of the 19th century after railroad construction had been completed, Chinese immigrants suddenly were considered the cause of unemployment in the eyes of Americans. Seen as a racially inferior people, inscrutable and heathen, they were attacked and discriminated against, and even murdered.

The United States was at the end of its Westward expansion at the end of the 19th century and the country was confronted with the problems of surplus production and limited domestic markets as well as a severe depression. Overseas markets became essential to ensure the continuous development of the country, and 400 million Chinese customers became a lure for American businessmen. Meanwhile, China was in danger of being partitioned by the great powers with their unequal treaties and "gunboat policy" after the Boxer Rebellion. To avoid America's exclusion from the scene, American Secretary of State John Hay issued his famous Open Door Notes in 1899 and 1900, which declared that the United States stood for the territorial integrity of all China and for commercial equality in all parts of the Chinese Empire. This made the United States appear to have assumed the position of an altruistic protector of China's interests and its
territorial integrity, thus inspiring a sense of sympathy and affection among the Americans for the Chinese. The United States' decision to use the Boxer indemnity for educating Chinese students also strengthened the image of the Chinese as beneficiaries of American patronage.

The Boxer Rebellion revealed that the Chinese effort to resist foreign aggression was futile. This reality awakened the Chinese and made them realize that they had to rid themselves of their former arrogance and be more humble toward the foreigners. Also, the Chinese began to be aware that they had to learn from those technically advanced countries so as to build up their own strength. Thus, a friendlier atmosphere developed between the Westerners and the Chinese. Missionary activities flourished and businessmen enjoyed an unparalleled freedom and high profits. Americans in China belonged to the respected elite and they came to like the Chinese. A businessman among Isaac's interviewees said:

In my time everybody loved China. The white man was respected to a high degree. We loved the way of life. Business was good. The white man was master. It was a cheap place to live. There were varying views of the Chinese, but generally people were pretty fond of them (Isaac 1962, 151).

Pearl Buck's novel *The Good Earth* also greatly influenced a sense of benevolence among Americans towards
the Chinese. In the novel, Chinese peasants were portrayed as "hardworking, strong, persevering, and able to withstand the most severe adversities, kind toward children, respectful toward elders..." (Isaacs 1962, 157) These qualities won the admiration and sympathy of the Americans.

Japan's attack on China in 1931 further intensified Americans' feelings of sympathy for the Chinese, especially after Japan launched its large-scale attack on China in 1937. Japanese brutality in killing and looting in China was fully reported by the news media, which mustered American opinion against Japan. Jiang Jieshi, under the circumstances, began to look to the West for support in resisting the Japanese aggression. Instantly, he and his wife became heroes in the eyes of Americans for leading the vast nation to resist the cruel Japanese. *Time* magazine named the couple "Man and Woman of the Year" in 1937. The climax came in 1943 when Madame Jiang visited the United States to plead for more American aid.

Meanwhile, a campaign initiated by and closely linked with people in the missionary circle was launched to stimulate more sympathy for China's plight. These people advocated a boycott of Japanese goods, circulated reports based on eye-witness accounts of Japanese cruelty and Chinese heroism. By putting pressure on the Congress and using the influence of important leaders, they assisted in
changing American perceptions in favor of the Chinese (Isaacs 1962, 169). However, the image of Jiang jieshi and his wife as the nation's heroes was simply a fantasy. The Jiang government was, in reality, extremely ineffective and corrupt. Besides its squabbling with the Communists, its resistance against the Japanese was in disarray.

When the United States formally entered the war against Japan after the Pearl Harbor incident, large numbers of American soldiers, officers, government representatives, and journalists went to China to help in the resistance. Many became disappointed when they saw China in vast disarray and disunity; government officials greedy and insensitive to the sufferings of the people; the army, recruited by forced conscription, ragged and exploited, and weary of fighting for a corrupt government. The American ambassador in China, Clarence Gauss, reporting to Washington in July 1942, said:

"...It is unfortunate that Chiang and the Chinese have been 'built up' in the United States to a point where Americans have been made to believe that China has been 'fighting' the Japanese for five years, and that the Generalissimo, a great leader, has been directing the energetic resistance of China to Japan and is a world hero. Looking the cold facts in the face, one could only dismiss this as 'rot' (Greene 1964, 22).

News about the ineptitude, paralysis, and outright corruption of the Jiang government gradually appeared in
American newspapers during the years before the war ended. Americans' sense of admiration swiftly dissipated and a sense of disenchantment began to take its place. The defeat of the Guomintang (Kuomintang) government by the Chinese Communists at the end of the 40s destroyed the fantasy of a heroic country. The favorable impressions about the Chinese Communists some Americans obtained from their visits to the Communist-controlled areas further damaged the previous image. By the time Jiang Jieshi fled to Taiwan and the Chinese Communists took over the country, Americans were deeply disappointed in Jiang Jieshi and his government and filled with dislike of communism. They felt the pain of having lost the China that they had been able to control.

After the Chinese Communists conquered China, U.S.-China relations assumed an entirely different posture. It was hard for Americans to accept the fact that China, which America had always helped, suddenly became a Russian ally and joined the enemy camp. As the Chinese Communist government sealed itself off from the outside world, especially from the Americans, they had to rely on information from journalists of other countries. The inaccessibility of direct information from China naturally caused a certain degree of distortion of Chinese reality. "We see it only from afar," Isaacs notes, "the atmosphere is murky, the light is bad, and the visibility often nil."
Our imaginations are left to supply the details of outlines we can barely see..." (Isaacs 1962, 215). In the minds of Americans, China under Communist rule had lost all the charm and attractiveness of the past. Thought control and mental torture were seen as the norm of daily life of the people under Chinese Communist rule. There were even news accounts about how the commune system destroyed the family unit that Americans admired so much. "As first reported," Francis Hsu points out, "not only were children taken from parents, but also husbands were permanently separated from wives" (Hsu 1983, 419). Being afraid of the Communist system, Americans considered China a threat by simply belonging to the Communist camp. One of Isaacs' interviewees said: "I think of a solid Communist bloc from Germany to the Pacific. Fear is the honest word..." (Isaacs 1962, 222).

The Korean War served as another factor in furthering the transformation of American views of China. Though China sustained a total of 900,000 killed, wounded, or missing (Dietrich 1986, 67), it succeeded, by using the "human sea" tactics, in smashing the center of the UN line and pushing the American troops south of the 38th parallel. This ended a whole epoch of American views of the Chinese army as weak and ineffective. The sheer number of troops and their weaponry led Americans to look upon the Chinese as a formidable enemy that posed a great
danger to American security. Americans even went so far to regard them as "better artillerymen than the Germans" (Isaacs 1962, 236).

In 1958 the Chinese Communist leadership launched the Great Leap Forward campaign. With the aim of increasing production on all economic fronts at an unprecedentedly high rate its slogan was "overtaking England in fifteen years in industrial production." At the same time the organization of people's communes was completed. For a time, production figures soared and China appeared to be developing fast. Americans seemed to believe that the Communist policies were working in China and that China would soon become a major power of the world. The *Far Eastern Survey* reported that production of some key commodities, such as pig iron and steel, coal, grain, cotton and other industrial and farm products, in 1958 exceeded the totals achieved during the First Five-year Plan started in 1953 (Shabad, *Far Eastern Survey* June 1959, p.89). *Life* magazine stated that "if it reaches its set goals, Communist China, by 1962, will rank among the world's ten top industrial powers" (Isaacs 1962, 223). However, the favorable impact of the Great Leap Forward and the people's communes on the American people turned out to be brief. The folly of rejecting scientific and technological methods and stressing indigenous and primitive ways of production during the Great Leap Forward
campaign, such as smelting iron by tiny backyard furnaces, caused severe setbacks in the country economy. The people's communes dampened the peasants' enthusiasm, and the bad weather in 1959 led the whole nation into a man-made famine. Praise of the people's communes and the Great Leap Forward in the American media declined and horror stories began to emerge. Newsweek reported that "...two years after establishing the communes, their grandiose experiment in slave labor is failing in one basic objective: The nation's 670 million people do not have enough to eat. The basic rice ration has fallen to 11 ounces a day, and in some communes even that is not available" (Newsweek, 15 Aug. 1960, p.34).

What shook the Americans next was the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution initiated by Mao Zedong in 1966. The "gigantic upheaval," John Fairbank points out, "was from any point of view one of the most bizarre events in history. To Western observers it made China even more mysterious than usual" (Fairbank 1986, 316). Although American journalists were still barred from entering China, news reports about the Cultural Revolution from Hong Kong and other sources filled the American media. Reporting on a fight between workers and the Red Guards in the east China city of Nanking, Time magazine, based on information from the Czechoslovakian news agency, reported that some had their "fingers, noses and ears chopped off,
their tongues cut out" (Time 13 Jan. 1967, p.20). U.S. News & World Report wrote: "Chinese men and women were tied to street poles and had their heads shaved and their clothing ripped off." The article added that "attacks were even made on the pets of the 'bourgeois class,' with thousands of dogs and cats killed (U.S. News & World Report, 12 September 1966, p.49).

These descriptions about what was going on in China after 1949 did mirror some aspects of Chinese reality. Like other images, they were not pure fantasies, as Isaacs' theory indicates. However, as the information had come from second hand sources, it contained misconceptions and distortions. A good example was the killing of pets in the cities during the Cultural Revolution. Since 1949, the Communist government had forbidden city residents to raise dogs and cats partly for sanitary reasons and partly because it considered the nurturing of pets at home a bourgeois practice. It was against this background of a mixture of truth and myth about China that the initial contacts for a renewed relationship between the United States and China were made. "A Cycle of Cathay" had come full circle. Many of Americans' old images of the Chinese began to resurface.

Before examining the three newspapers' coverage of China during the period under study, it is necessary to obtain a more realistic view of the life of the Chinese
after 1949 and the mood of the public at the time of Nixon's visit in 1972. Life for the Chinese people under the Guomintang regime after the Second World War was miserable due to the mismanagement of the government and corruption of its officials. Inflation was so rampant that many people found it hard to cope. Wage earners had to change paper money into silver dollars immediately after they were paid their monthly salary; otherwise a whole month's income could become waste paper at the end of the day. Under the circumstances, the Chinese public welcomed the Communists, though not without apprehension, hoping that the new regime would be able to lift China from the abyss of misery and improve people's livelihoods. The Communist Party and government did win respect and trust from the public during the first few years of their governance with their pronounced idealistic goals and basic achievements in the socio-economic and socio-political areas.

Upon their assumption of power, the Communists started to adopt measures to improve the living conditions of those who were on the bottom rungs of the social ladder under the previous regime and provided jobs for the majority of able-bodied citizens. The deplorable scenes of people dying in the streets from hunger and cold disappeared. Food was abundant and prices were low. Working people enjoyed free medical care and primary
education became compulsory. Social evils such as gambling and prostitution were eliminated and the rate of crime was greatly reduced. Attracted by the Party's moral principles and its exhortation to serve the people and its well disciplined military, people did have a sense of national harmony and national purpose. With trust in the Party and hope for the future, they thought that the Communist Party might turn out to be the answer to China's problems. These few years were what the Chinese call "the Golden Age" under Communism. In analyzing the early period of the Chinese Communist rule, Fairbank wrote that "the initial phase of public sentiment in the cities after 1949 was one of euphoria, based on growing confidence in the CCP" (Fairbank 1986, 279). Yet, he also pointed out that "only later did they [the Chinese] see that the Promised Land was based on systematic control and manipulation" (Ibid.).

The Golden Age proved to be short-lived. The Chinese Communist Party, following Mao Zedong's theory of "continuous revolution," initiated one political campaign after another from the time it assumed power.

A brief explanation of how the political campaigns were conducted will show what kind of pressure they exerted on the people. The basic social structure under Communist rule formed an encompassing network that linked every working person, except a small number of old people and children, to his/her working unit. Every work unit served
as the starting point of a political campaign to mobilize the masses to expose their questionable colleagues, though the Party branch usually had a few targets identified beforehand. Then, the early victims would be pressured to confess their own "mistakes" and expose others be they colleagues, friends working elsewhere, or even family members, as a way to demonstrate their repentance. At the same time, those who had been fortunate enough not to be targeted were also under pressure to continue exposing whoever they thought qualified for attacks. The more one exposed, the more one would be deemed loyal to the Party. This practice of "following the vines to reap the fruits" (a term the Chinese authorities used) made most people nervous about the possibility of being singled out at any moment. Struggle meetings were held day after day during which victims were forced to make self-criticism and non-victims made speeches condemning the victims. Fairbank notes:

In nationwide campaigns certain evils of conduct were targeted in the abstract and then found in individuals who were victimized in a massive procedure. In each case a campaign was nationally organized and promoted by activists in each locality, who were sometimes instructed to find a certain quota of victims. Public struggle meetings and humiliation were on a massive scale, with thousands of participants in the audience who were set a warning example of what not to be and do (Fairbank 1986, 289).
During each political campaign, incidents of suicide were not unusual. In the end, all the victims were punished according to the degree of their "mistakes." Some were forbidden to continue their professions, or were exiled; others were even imprisoned or executed. Their family members, including children, were all ostracized from society. Thus suspicion prevailed in human relationships. Friends stopped talking to one another and relatives discontinued contact.

Without going into details, a chronological review of the political campaigns during the more than two decades after 1949 provides a clear picture of people's mood around the time of Nixon's visit.

In 1951, shortly after China entered the Korean War, a campaign to eliminate counterrevolutionaries was waged against those who had joined the Guomintang and its Youth League during the rule of Jiang Jieshi. Those who were charged with the crime of infiltrating the Party and government to spy for the Jiang Jieshi government were sent to labor camps or imprisoned. Those with minor problems became outcasts.

Toward the end of 1951, the Party orchestrated a campaign against national capitalists, who were allowed after 1949 to continue their private businesses. During this campaign, they were accused of evading taxes and cheating the government. With token compensation, their
businesses were bought up by the government and they became government employees serving as puppet executives of state industries.

Full-scale agricultural collectivization was carried out in 1953. Peasants were forced to join agricultural cooperatives to which they had to give their private property, such as animals and farm tools, for collective use. Stanley Karnow described the situation:

...many peasants destroyed their farm implements, neglected their confiscated fields, and slaughtered their draft animals and livestock rather than surrender them to the collective (Karnow 1972, 84).

This dampened the enthusiasm of the peasants for production and created a class of local officials in the countryside who rode roughshod over ordinary people.

The Anti-Hu feng campaign in 1955 was the first gigantic campaign aimed at Chinese intellectuals. Asking for more freedom for artistic creativity from the Communist Party, Hu feng and his group of writers were denounced and suppressed, together with large numbers of intellectuals nationwide who were assumed to have similar ideas. This served as a warning to Chinese intellectuals at large.

In 1956, Mao started the "Hundred Flowers Campaign" which encouraged intellectuals to offer suggestions and criticisms to improve the Party's work. With the Hu feng
incident fresh in mind, intellectuals were at first hesitant to speak up. However, they became outspoken after the Party's repeated exhortations. A few months later, the Party ended the "Hundred Flowers Campaign" and started the Anti-Rightist Campaign that labeled those who spoke up as "rightist," meaning taking a stand in opposition to the Party and, therefore, belonging to the category of counterrevolutionaries. It was reported that between 400,000 and 700,000 were removed from their jobs (Fairbank 1986, 293). This campaign marked the beginning of the decline of the Chinese people's trust in the Party.

What followed was the disastrous Great Leap Forward Campaign from 1958 to 1960. Aiming to improve China's economy and speed up modernization, the regime dismissed the intellectuals' potential and rejected their scientific approach. Instead, the Party decided to mobilize the whole country to apply indigenous and unscientific methods to raise productivity. The peasants were forced to work round the clock with unconventional farming methods while cadres faked production figures in their reports to higher authorities. The most conspicuous feature of this movement was the organization of people nationwide to produce steel in their backyard furnaces with pots and pans and iron gates as raw material. But the steel they produced was mostly useless. "The major fallacy in the GLF," Fairbank stated, "was the assumption that socio-political
mobilization could help the economy" (ibid., 299-300). Manpower and material were thus wasted and the economy was severely set back.

Bad weather in 1959 on the heels of this disaster caused the country's agricultural production to plummet. With local cadres still falsifying their yield reports to the central government, the farmers were left without enough food to survive after the government's requisition. Malnutrition and hunger took a toll of millions of people. During an investigation trip to Hunan Province in 1961, Liu Shaochi, first Vice Chairman of the Communist Party, was appalled by the food shortages and decrease of population (Karnow 1972, 127). City people were given tree leaves to eat and a rationing system was started across the country.

Mao's failure in this endeavor made him lose face and power in the Party. However, while other leaders such as Liu Shaochi and Deng Xiaoping embarked on a program of economic rehabilitation, Mao was preparing for another man-made catastrophe -- the Cultural Revolution.

Many Americans are familiar with the behavior of the Red Guards and the horrors of the Cultural Revolution -- the closing of schools and factories and the factional fighting and persecution. However, the widespread impact of the Cultural Revolution may need some emphasis. It was Mao's slogan at that time that "the Cultural Revolution is
a revolution that touches the souls of everyone." As factional struggles for power went on at the top levels of the hierarchy, the political status of grass-roots factions changed swiftly too. The faction that was considered to represent the correct Party line today could be victims tomorrow. The number of people who were attacked was enormous. A common Chinese saying of the time went: "if one could survive the Cultural Revolution, one can survive anything." By the early 1970s, the momentum of the Cultural Revolution had been reduced and certain aspects of life, such as the reopening of the schools, were returning to normal. However, the power struggle at the top level was still going on and factional fighting at the lower levels also continued. Fairbank noted that "finally at the Ninth Congress of the CCP in April 1969 the Cultural Revolution was declared to have ended. In fact some of the worst excesses occurred under the military in 1970-71, and Mao's faction (later stigmatized as the Gang of Four) remained in power until his death in 1976" (Fairbank 1986, 317).

The Cultural Revolution inflicted severe damage on every aspect of Chinese society. It broke the myth of the Communists' claim to have the people's interests at heart. The public's trust and confidence in the Communist Party dropped to the lowest point since 1949. Under the repressive rule of the Gang of Four, people were cautious,
guarded, disillusioned, and uncertain of their future. The Red Guards' hooliganism influenced other young people and caused social morality to deteriorate with the crime rate soaring as never before. The cumulative effect of the unending campaigns, especially since the Great Leap Forward, seriously affected people's material lives. There was a serious shortage of daily necessities and the variety of ration coupons increased. "Chinese intellectuals of today," Fairbank wrote more than a decade later, "portray this era as the lowest point of their experience" (Fairbank 1987, 68). It was during such social and political conditions that Nixon paid his visit to China. The majority of the news stories selected from the three newspapers under study will also prove that reality mocked the euphoric views of Chinese conditions in early 70s.
CHAPTER III
AMERICAN IMAGES OF CHINA
THE INITIAL PERIOD: 1972-1976

Nixon's visit to China in 1972 symbolized a new "cycle for Cathay," the beginning of another swing of the pendulum in the love-hate relationship between the United States and China. The two countries finally renewed contact with one another after more than two decades of separation, during which the multitudinous involvements that Americans formerly had with China and the Chinese people had been cut off. Having little direct information about China and Chinese life under Communism, Americans relied heavily on syndicated news reports occasionally filed by newspaper correspondents from other countries that had diplomatic relations with China. However, owing to the historic xenophobic mentality of the Chinese Communist leadership and its totalitarian control of media content, foreign correspondents who were allowed to go into China had few chances of direct contact with ordinary people except those who were chosen by the authorities. As a result, the contents of the reports they wrote were not only fragmentary but also distorted to varying degrees.

When Americans went to China in the early 1970s, China was still under the rule of the Gang of Four and the Cultural Revolution had not yet ended. The Chinese regime
restricted the activities of the visiting Americans, and thereby manipulated the process of image-making. For the Americans, irrespective of their background, profession, and knowledge, to visit China was like landing on the moon. They did not know what to expect and what they would find. China seemed to be an entirely different world to them and the Chinese people living under Communism a different human species. Yet, among these Americans, perceptions varied greatly.

American scholars and journalists believed that around the time of Nixon's visit, Americans' views toward China were predominantly euphoric in that they saw everything Chinese as rosy and admirable and Chinese society as something of a utopia. To those who held this euphoric view, the previous images of hostility, bitterness for the "loss of China," fear of Communism, and the nightmarish vision of the Cultural Revolution seemed suddenly to have evaporated or to have been forgotten or forgiven.

Research in the three newspapers included in this study produced evidence of over-optimism among the newspaper writers. Particularly during the first few years of the 1970s, there were a number of articles that portrayed China in the most glorifying terms. Nevertheless, these source materials also demonstrate that existing at the same time with the euphoric image were
large numbers of newspaper stories that portrayed China from negative viewpoints. They not only reflected the old images of China held by Americans in the past such as poverty and backwardness, but they also contained new elements that were seen as major ingredients of life under the Communist rule, such as thought control. The existence of a more prevailing negative image during the initial period was a fact that many scholars and journalists have overlooked, or dismissed consciously or unconsciously.

During the period from 1972 to 1976, a total of 136 news stories were selected from the three newspapers. Among them, three different types of images emerged -- a euphoric image, a mixed image, and a negative image. News stories with euphoric views focused on the material well-being of the Chinese and the social ethos. The weight on the positive or the negative side of the mixed views varied according to the different points of views of the authors. Some saw the positive side of Chinese life as basic and treated what they deemed negative aspects lightly as though they were minor faults in a beautiful vase. Others believed that poverty and primitiveness were the common fare of people's daily lives, but they pointed out that life was much better than before and people were happy and contented or alternately, that though life was still poor, it was a good life for the Chinese. The negative image centered on the dark side of Chinese
society, especially the poor living conditions and the political indoctrination imposed on the people by the Chinese authorities. Among the 136 news stories of this initial period, only 21 articles described China in purely euphoric terms, whereas reports with negative views totalled 87 and the mixed ones 28. These findings contradict the views of scholars and journalists that the early image was basically euphoric.

Before probing the American images of China reflected in the three newspapers during the initial period, it is necessary to have a closer look at the relevant news stories and then analyze them from a Chinese perspective.

THE EUPHORIC IMAGE

News stories with euphoric views focused basically on two aspects of Chinese society -- the mental and moral attitude of the Chinese and their material well being. Articles in this category portrayed a generalized social atmosphere and recorded the writers' overall impressions. Selig S. Harrison, writing for the WP began an article by declaring that "China has come out of the Cultural Revolution with a new burst of national confidence..."

(Harrison, WP 13 Aug. 1972). He also wrote:

The moment I arrived in China I had a sense of a confident, secure nation, anxious to make the most of a visitor in propaganda mileage but not
unduly bothered by criticism and too proud to act as if it has anything to hide (ibid.).

John Service, who was once a leading China specialist of the State Department and a victim during the McCarthy era, visited China, where he was born, after 26 years in early 1972. He wrote that "with everybody able to read, the historic gulf between the uneducated and the educated, between the peasants and the old literati, has been narrowed -- and self-confidence increased" (Service, NYT 26 Jan. 1972).

Marquis Childs described his own experience by saying that "the first impression is of energy, drive, ancient work habits harnessed to new goals" (Childs, WP 12 May 1973).

Charles W. Yost commented on Chinese society in comparison with Western societies:

Certainly most striking in the People's Republic is the sense of purpose, of direction, of unity. Of course the West cherishes and must continue to cherish its diversity and freedom. But neither should be incompatible with a stronger sense of moral purpose or with a greater degree of economic and social equality... (Yost, CSM 12 July 1973).

He also pointed out that "Serving the people" is more than a slogan; it is, at least in the modern world, an essential ingredient of any political system which can hope to long endure" (Ibid.).
In more concrete terms, egalitarianism was a frequently reported subject. John Service, when describing the atmosphere and quality of life in China, wrote:

Perhaps the single word that best describes it [the prevailing attitude] is egalitarian. It is exemplified, of course, by everyone being a 'comrade' (Service, NYT 26 Jan. 1972).

Richard Joseph expressed his belief that the spirit of egalitarianism "contributes to the pride and self-respect evidenced by all the Chinese with whom I've come in contact on two visits here" (Joseph, WP 18 May 1975). He said:

Top-party politicians, army brass, professors and engineers are all expected to put in a few days of digging ditches and helping with the harvests every so often so that they won't forget what hard physical work is like (ibid.).

On moral standards and the hard-working spirit of the Chinese, Service commented that "the atmosphere is comfortable, relaxed and free of tension. Everyone works hard. If any people have a work ethic, it must be the Chinese (Service, NYT 27 Jan. 1972).

Service said that "crime and robbery do not seem a problem." In addition, he observed that "in all our traveling, we never saw an adult strike a child; and only very seldom did we hear a child cry" (ibid.) He was
surprised that he had not even heard any swearing and cursing during the whole month in China.

Lloyd Shearer wrote:

They are friendly, healthy, industrious, and motivated by the widely fostered principle, 'Serve the People,' which they constantly put into execution (Shearer, WP Parade 17 June 1973).

Material well-being was also a major theme in the euphoric image. In most cases, writers tended to compare the China they saw with the old China they remembered.

Hunger, disease and misery are being combatted--a long stride has been taken in abolishing China's ancient plagues (Childs, WP 12 May 1973).

Lloyd Shearer wrote:

The most important practical achievement of Communist China has been the feeding, clothing, and housing of some 800 million people. At a cost of personal freedom, a right they never knew in any previous regime, they now enjoy what they never had before--security from cradle to grave, but security with dignity (Shearer, WP Parade 17 June 1973).

In describing the frequently mentioned topic of Chinese clothes in Western reports, Service had this to say:

One may miss the brightly gowncd upper-class women and entertainers (of various now vanished types) of old Shanghai days; but the people are reasonably well and neatly clothed.
Notwithstanding those who have written about the land of 'blue ants,' there is more color in Chinese clothing now than there used to be (Service, *NYT* 24 Jan. 1972).

Joseph Alsop, in his reports for the *WP* after his visit to Beijing in 1972, wrote:

More striking still, there are no queues in Peking of the sort that still spring up automatically in Moscow, on the slightest rumor that scarce goods are obtainable (Alsop, *NYT Magazine* 11 Mar. 1973).

There were not as many euphoric descriptions of rural life as there were of city life. People familiar with the persistent poverty and backwardness of the Chinese countryside may easily find this understandable. However, two articles with euphoric views on rural life in China during the 1972-76 period offered somewhat different pictures. John Gittings writing in the *CSM* said that "here the visitor with other experience of the third world looks in vain for the familiar 'great divide' between city and countryside" (Gittings, *CSM* 17 Feb. 1972). He wrote:

Those tell-tale signs of rural poverty...are rarely to be seen. Health facilities in the countryside include clinics at the basic 'brigade' level where semi trained medical aides, known as 'barefoot doctors,' can treat common ailments, give inoculations, and teach hygiene. Standards of clothing and diet are only slightly lower than in the towns, housing is perhaps in advance, with more land to build on and cheap materials (mostly mud brick) and labor available (Ibid.).
Joseph Kraft, reporting on his visit to Dazhai, a model agricultural production brigade in Shanxi Province, praised it as "another Eden" (Kraft, WP 19 Mar. 1972). He wrote:

Thus my impression is that Tachai is a true model of what has happened all over this country. There has been a vast improvement in agriculture everywhere, and famine is no longer a specter stalking China (ibid.).

He reported that he found it "hard to imagine that the transformation of the countryside -- the true Chinese miracle -- could have been worked so quickly or effectively by any other regime" (Ibid.).

The euphoric image appearing in the source materials presented a picture of a New China and the "New Maoist Man" that people in the West had never known. In these pictures, China was seen as a country that had solved the worse problems -- hunger and poverty -- of the old China and where the people were leading a materially content and socially uplifted life. There is no doubt that the news reporting with overly optimistic views had exaggerated China's achievements and resembled the "Rip Van Winkle syndrome." According to the World Bank figures, a comparison between the growth rates of China and India, two countries of similar size, showed that net domestic product grew 2.3 percent in China annually during 1952-70.
and 3.7 in India. The per capita growth rate for China from 1960-70 was much lower than Thailand, Malaysia, South Korea, Taiwan as well as two other Communist countries, North Vietnam and North Korea. (Zagoria, Dissent Spring 1974). Yet the picture of a highly successful China was shared by many at the time including those who also found fault with the reality of Chinese society.

THE MIXED IMAGE

The mixed image was a combination of the old and new, favorable and unfavorable opinions. Unlike the euphoric and negative outlooks that were more singular in their themes and approaches, the mixed image was composed of varying perceptions that differed with each individual writer. Some argued that though living conditions for the Chinese public hardly approximated Western standards, it was still a good life for the Chinese. Chinese standards, so they believed, were different from those of the West or much better than what had been experienced during the years under the Guomindang rule.

A more significant feature of this mixed image was the fact that several writers raised very perceptive questions or doubts about what they saw, though they were not able to provide answers given the political climate of that time. A young girl, who was a member of a group of young Americans who visited China in mid-1972, doubted
that they had been shown by the Chinese authorities the true reality of Chinese life. She said that "she was not so certain that the over-all picture in China was as positive as it seemed from the group's contacts with young people" (Salisbury, NYT 26 June 1972). Unlike those which expressed a basically negative attitude toward China, many news stories in this mixed group offered a euphoric view as well. Their observations of the negative aspects of the Chinese society did not mean that their positive appraisal of China was less in degree than those who were purely positive about China. Jerome Alan Cohen, a Harvard Law School professor serves as an example. He described Chinese society and Chinese life with views identical to those in the euphoric image. He pointed out that "the economy appears to be flourishing," people are "busy, yet seemingly relaxed," the masses "look well-fed and there is plenty of food in shops" (Cohen, CSM 2 Aug. 1972). The difference lay in his portraying the negative elements in the Chinese system at the same time, though in most cases, he had a ready apology for the undesirable aspects of Chinese society. For example, when he pointed out that "China is still very poor," he argued that all those who knew pre-Mao China were impressed with the economic progress of the past two decades (Ibid.).

Cohen described in detail the political control imposed on the Chinese people by the authorities:
...the basis of the entire well-regulated society is a public security system that unobtrusively extends to every household and worksite and that has subjected millions of people to an efficient spectrum of sanctions (ibid.).

Cohen added that in China "one works where he is told. If he refuses, he will be 're-educated' and eventually forced to work" (ibid.). He said that "political dissent is not tolerated," and "higher education is now only for politically reliable workers, peasants, and soldiers" (Ibid.). While admitting that this would be appalling to Americans and even to some Chinese, he also had a ready excuse:

Yet many from the former privileged classes have adjusted to and even welcomed the revolution as necessary for 'the greatest good for the greatest number' and for restoring China's unity and independence (Ibid.).

Another approach in this mixed image assumed that one should not measure China by Western standards. Though certain socio-political and socio-economic conditions were appalling to most Americans, commentators believed that it was a good life for the people by Chinese standards. Marilyn Berger, reporting on her interview with a Chinese farmer in a commune near Beijing, said that the 65-year-old farmer "has to get up before sunrise," "works seven
days a week" and "there is no retirement in the
countryside" (Berger, WP 25 Feb. 1973). Berger wrote:

Now he has such luxuries as a single bare
electric light bulb, a public address system that
he can switch on and off for news and music, an
outhouse and a water faucet that he shares with
his neighbors and a small plot of land, for
growing vegetables... (ibid.)

Against this background, Berger concluded that "by
any standard Wang is a very poor man. But he leaves no
doubt that he is a contented one..." (ibid.).

Reporting on the Kuntong Village in Kwangtong
Province, Jonathan Unger wrote that "Kuntong's villagers
look as though they have stepped from a primordial peasant
past" (Unger, CSM 8 June 1972). However, he said that the
"villagers remain poor, but they do not seem any longer to
lack life's necessities or even some of its main luxuries"
(ibid.).

Richard Dudman described "a tour of the market, with
its lavish display of fish, some of them four feet long,
meat and vegetables that would put California to shame..."
(Dudman, WP 30 Mar. 1972). He reported on his visit to the
Kung Kiang Workers' Residential Quarters in Shanghai where
a female worker told about her life:

She and her husband sleep in one of the two rooms
and their five children, ranging from 10 to 24
years of age, sleep in the other. They share a
kitchen, bath and single flush toilet with two
other families on the ground floor of the five-story apartment house (ibid.).

Dudman went on to comment: "A hard life, not to hear her tell it. She called it 'a happy life'" (ibid.).

Harrison Salisbury, writing about his visit to Linhsien County not far from Beijing, acknowledged that life in this place was very primitive. During threshing time, he saw "hundreds of men and women and children winnowing the wheat, tossing it into the air with wooden shovels and letting the wind separate the grain from the chaff, just as Americans did before the days of the threshing machine" (Salisbury, NYT 27 June 1972). During the harvest season, he saw people "bowed to the waist stride swiftly through the high golden grain, cutting it with their scythes and quickly binding the sheaves with a strand of fiber, just as Americans did before the days of the McCormick reaper" (ibid.) He noted that "men are pulling wooden plows through the brown clay soil and cows are endlessly circling the wells to pump up the water. The houses are built of stone or adobe, with women visible at their hand looms...." (ibid.) Salisbury commented that "the American sees all this and feels transported into the past although even in the American past it is doubtful that such a labor intensive life ever could have existed" (ibid.) But, he argued, "Chinese eyes see Linhsien County as a land of promise" (ibid.).
Barbara Tuchman, in a series of articles written after she visited China, also offered very favorable comments. She reported that "there is no sense of pressure or tension in the air" and people had a remarkably healthy appearance. Tuchman wrote:

The running noses of children, that endemic companion of poverty, has vanished, at least in the main cities. There are no cripples, no beggars, no open sores or disease (Tuchman, NYT 6 Sep. 1972).

She added that "opium smoking, prostitution and venereal disease...have been wiped out (ibid.). Nevertheless, she also perceived the repressive political atmosphere

The most obvious negative aspect of the process is the mental monotone imposed upon the country. All thought, all ideas--past, present and future--not to mention the historic record, are twisted, manipulated, rolled out and flattened into one, expressed in half a dozen slogans dinned incessantly and insistently into the heads of the people. The life of the mind has rigid limits in China" (Tuchman, NYT 4 Sep. 1972).

Similar opinions were expressed by several other writers. David Rockefeller, Chairman of the Board of Chase Manhattan Bank, was very impressed by the achievements he observed during a ten-day trip to China and shared much of the euphoric view. However, he also saw "some gray areas and basic contradictions":

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The enormous social advances of China have benefitted greatly from the singleness of ideology and purpose. But a stiff price has been paid in terms of cultural and intellectual constraint. There are only eight different theatrical productions in the entire country. The universities are rigorously politicized, with little room for inquiry unrelated to Chairman Mao's thought. Freedom to travel or change of jobs is restricted (Rockefeller, *N.Y.T* 10 Aug. 1973).

This prompted him to question if the Chinese system would be able to last.

**THE NEGATIVE IMAGE**

Compared to the euphoric and mixed images, the negative image covered a broader range of Chinese society. Apart from the subjects mentioned in the euphoric and mixed views, a substantial amount of the negative reporting on Chinese society dealt with cultural matters. As a matter of fact, among news reports with a negative outlook, the majority focused on the subjects of education and the life of the Chinese youth. There were also a sizable number of news stories featuring the return of Chinese life to normal after the upheavals of the Cultural Revolution as Party and government policies oscillated between liberal and conservative tendencies. An interesting finding of this research is the fact that for each subject touched upon positively in the euphoric image, its counterpart is certain to be found in the
negative image. A good example is the subject of the egalitarian spirit. In "Egalitarian China Still Abides Elitist Tendencies," John Burns listed the privileges allowed the Chinese officials:

Curtained limousines, sumptuous banquets, exclusive recreational facilities, access to special trains and aircraft, salaries five to ten times those of average workers--such are the perquisites of authority in China, where the Communist Party press is forever caricaturing the inequalities of life in the capitalist West (Burns, _WP_ 18 May 1975).

On the topic of crime, that the euphoric view holders claimed to be non-existent in China, Fox Butterfield reported on an incident of bank robbery in Chenchow, Honan Province. Based on Chinese sources, he wrote that "the robbers, who killed a bank guard with a submachine gun, have become something like folk heroes." This was, he said, "illustrative of a growing sense of malaise, a breakdown in public discipline..." (Butterfield, _NYT_ 23 Aug. 1976).

John Burns reported about a Chinese swindler who:

...'loafed about' in four Chinese provinces for more than five years, 'frantically buying up' quantities of such scarce materials as fishing net cord and reselling them on the black market for an astonishing $11,350 profit, about what an average Chinese worker would earn in 35 years" (Burns, _NYT_ 23 Jan. 1974).
As to the material aspects of Chinese life, Frank Ching explained in an article on the nationwide rationing system entitled: "Despite Shortages, the Chinese Cope and Then Some." He wrote that "...an average person is allowed slightly more than a pint of oil a month and about enough cloth to make a suit of clothes a year" and "only more than a pound of meat a month." He added that "no ordinary family has its own telephone" and "owning a refrigerator or a television set is virtually unheard of." In the cities, he said, "families are cramped into one or two rooms, often with children sleeping on the floor" (Ching, NYT 24 Aug. 1973). Ching also pointed out that "beggars are no longer seen in the streets, although in Canton Chinese visitors from overseas are sometimes approached for money (ibid.).

Political control, as in the mixed images, was also a major subject for the negative perception. William S. White called China "the world's most forbidding prison camp of the human spirit" (White, WP 26 Feb. 1972). He wrote:

Their [the visitors'] shock at the vista they see, a vista of a society dragooned from cradle to grave and extending the harsh hand of a one-idea indoctrination right down to the tiniest of children, is in some instances ironically amusing (ibid.).
In the communes, as in the schools, he wrote, "discipline is a yoke of iron and any shadow of free thought or action utterly out of the question" (ibid.) He criticized China for having "blotted out even that essential uniqueness of one man from another that is commonly called the human soul" (ibid.).

Henry S. Hayward enumerated in his article "A Darkness Lingers Behind China's Smile" the commonplace restrictions on freedom which included "birth control and late marriage, compulsory political indoctrination sessions of everyone, strict rationing of food, clothing, bicycles, radio and television sets, and ordinary household items" (Hayward, CSM 26 Feb. 1972).

Numerous articles indicated that political indoctrination penetrated into every corner of Chinese cultural life -- education, the schools, and even the content of entertainment and the leisure life of the public. Frederic A. Moritz wrote in a story titled: "Chinese comics teach Mao's lessons":

...there are stories of revolutionary heroes battling off the agents of Chiang Kai-shek, and simple South Vietnamese peasants foiling the wily schemes of American imperialists. Or in a quieter vein, a peasant woman raising the 'social consciousness' of her comrades in the commune (Moritz, CSM 15 Aug. 1973).

Robert M. Press quoted the chief librarian of the Shanghai Public Library as saying that 'the task of this
library is to propagate the thoughts of Mao, Lenin, and Marx and serve the three great movements: class struggle, production, and scientific experiments' (Press, CSM 23 March 1976). Press pointed out that among the 6.5 million books in the library, there was none criticizing Mao, and some of the foreign periodicals like the NYT were locked somewhere.

Describing a typical TV program in the evening, John Burns wrote:

a half hour of news, mostly of Chinese leaders greeting foreign dignitaries, perhaps another 30 minutes of carefully scripted political 'debate'...then a revolutionary opera, ballet, or film, often one that has been shown dozens of times before (Burns, CSM 27 Jan. 1975).

In an article describing Guangzhou's Cultural Park, Jonathan Unger pointed out that in this Disneyland-like amusement park, "themes invariably concern heroic hardships and eventual triumph in the Chinese revolution" (Unger, CSM 28 June 1972). He added:

Only half-a-dozen full-length plays, ballets, and operas since the cultural revolution have received Peking's official approval. Repeated excerpts from this slim repertoire compose the meat and potatoes of the Cultural Park's fare (ibid.).

Among all the source materials with negative views during the early 1970s, a great quantity centered on the
Chinese educational system. It is assumed that the reason for this rested on the importance of culture in the eyes of the Chinese Communist authorities, who started most of the political campaigns, including the Cultural Revolution, among the intellectuals. Chinese intellectuals had often been the targets of these campaigns and students played a significant role in all political events. H.D.S. Greenway wrote that the constant change in education policies of the Chinese authorities "is one of the barometers by which China watchers measure political pressure in China" (Greenway, WP 15 Feb. 1974).

When the Cultural Revolution started in 1966, Mao and his followers claimed that the educational system under the "revisionist line" of the Party chief Liu Shaoqi was favorable to the children of intellectuals who, they said, had more chances of getting into universities because of a better cultural and material home environment. In order to change this tendency, Mao and his cohorts made unprecedented changes to the system.

Measures were taken in several areas of education to meet the needs of the children of the laboring people. The length of schooling was reduced to a kind of accelerated and shortened teaching system. Students had to spend considerable time in manual labor and courses were simplified for practical needs. Doak Barnett wrote:
The length of study in universities has been drastically cut, on an 'experimental basis' -- in most places from five to three years. The time devoted to traditional classroom work has been curtailed, too, and everyone is required to spend a substantial portion of time in practical work, in factories, communes or elsewhere (Barnett, NYT Magazine 8 April 1973).

All exams, tests, and grades were eliminated and were replaced by "automatic grade promotions," which, a CSM's article noted, "guaranteed a student regular advancement toward graduation whatever his academic performance" (Burns, CSM 26 Sep. 1972). College entrance examinations were abolished, with the criteria for admission being changed "from academic performance to a candidate's political background" (Butterfield, NYT 22 Dec. 1975). This resulted in a change in the character of the student body. A NYT article quoted Ross Terrill as saying that almost all students getting into higher education institutions were "either members of the Communist Party or of the Communist Youth League" (Durdin, NYT 27 Aug. 1973).

Writing on the saturation of political and ideological content in education, Doak Barnett said that "ideology and politics are injected in fairly extreme and overt ways into every conceivable course" (Barnett, NYT Magazine 8 April 1973).
Stanley Karnow's report "Seeing China Isn't Understanding It" cited a dialogue in a French class at Beijing University:

Teacher: What are you doing these days?
Student: I am trying to study the works of Chairman Mao in French, but I am having trouble with the language. Why is it that I have trouble with foreign languages?
Teacher: I have studied foreign languages for 30 years. I used to have trouble too. But I studied the works of Chairman Mao, and I overcome all my difficulties.
Student: But you are a poor peasant.
Teacher: Yes, but thanks to Chairman Mao, I learned to struggle against my difficulties.
Student: I must study the works of Chairman Mao even harder, and I must work for Chairman Mao... (Karnow, WP 8 March 1972).

Another feature in the print medium's coverage of Chinese education during this period was that combining theory with practice had resulted in a low quality of education. John Gittings noted:

If he [a student] reaches college, it may not be so very different from his place of work. As an engineering student, he will learn how to make machine tools with his own hands. If he studies architecture, he will spend time as an apprentice builder on a construction site. Hydraulics? Then he can go and help build a dam" (Gittings, WP 17 Feb. 1972).

Merle Goldman wrote that "the level of the mathematics and science we saw was more comparable to
high-school level in the United States" (Goldman, CSM 13 Jan. 1975).

Along with the changes in the educational system, the traditional social status of teachers was seen as having been fundamentally altered. News stories reported on a peasant student Zhang Tiesheng, who, being unable to answer the questions on physics and chemistry in an entrance examination for colleges, wrote at the back of the exam paper a letter condemning the system. Another incident involved a 12-year-old girl Huang Shuai, who wrote a letter to the People's Daily openly criticizing and challenging her teacher. The Party newspaper, the People's Daily, John Burns wrote, made heroes of these two students and called on other young people to join them in the educational struggle (Burns, NYT 2 Jan. 1974). Recanting their ideological errors was depicted as routine for university professors and well-known scholars under Communist rule (Sheldon, CSM 24 Feb. 1972).

Ironically, Chinese youth did not seem to fare any better than their teachers, at least according to the sources used in this research. The three American newspapers reported frequently on the gigantic rustication movement that followed the call by Mao Zedong in the late 1960s for youths to contribute their talents and knowledge to the building of the Chinese countryside. In essence, it was a way to disperse the Red Guards over whom Mao had
lost control. American reporters described this as "the largest movement of population any government has attempted to organize since Stalin's notorious mass deportations... (Lelyveld, NYT Magazine 28 July 1974).

Colina MacDougall described the life of these young people in the countryside: "the hard physical work exhausted them, and the minimal amusements available in China's cities were non-existent in the countryside" (MacDougall, CSM 16 March 1973).

News reports pointed out that the youths were unhappy about having their education cut off and saw no future in collecting night soil in rural communes. Many risked their lives swimming across the Pearl River to Hong Kong. Lelyveld quoted two youths who fled to Hong Kong as saying:

That life, as they generally describe it, is oppressive only in its privations and its dullness; in their own terms, in its lack of future (Lelyveld, NYT Magazine 28 July 1974).

American journalists also reported that the rusticated young people tried every possible way to get back to the cities by delaying graduation, forging I.D.s, sneaking back home without taking leave, going through the back door; some even staged an uprising in Guangdong Province. This movement tapered off, some stories indicated, after the Party changed its policies.
A group of negative articles reported on efforts of the Chinese Communist government to steer the country away from the upheavals of the Cultural Revolution. Under a set of new policies, the educational system and the scope of people's leisure life were all described as returning to normal, despite the oscillation of policies from liberal to conservative and back. It was reported that bookstores began to sell the books banned during the Cultural Revolution, such as works by Montesquieu, Rousseau, Kant, and the Chinese classic, *The Three Kingdoms*.

James Pringle wrote about the changes in the movies shown in Beijing. He said that "during the past few weeks, cinema-goers in Peking have been flocking to see two nature films which are both low on ideological content and high on human interest and scenic beauty" (Pringle, WP 22 March 1973). However, the return of Chinese life to normal was portrayed as being subjected to policy changes arising from the struggles between the liberal and conservative factions within the top Party hierarchy. In 1974, Jonathan Sharp, a Reuters correspondent, wrote that the People's Daily had criticized Western classical music:

Observers recalled a very different Chinese attitude toward Western music last year. The Western orchestras played to packed houses and won warm applause not only from the audiences but also from Chinese critics, who described the music in markedly nonpolitical terms (Sharp, CSM 28 Jan. 1974).
Similar changes appeared in descriptions of education. John Burns pointed out that "examinations, condemned at the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution as 'an instrument for fooling the people and for grooming successors for the ruling classes,' are to become a basic feature of the Chinese educational system once again" (Burns, CSM 26 Sep. 1972). Tillman Durdin quoted Ross Terrill as saying:

...Chinese authorities were struggling with the problem of how to abide by the principles of the Cultural Revolution, which prescribe a new proletarian schooling; while also providing students with sufficient academic knowledge to enable them to cope with modern problems (Durdin, NYT 27 Aug. 1973).

The negative views created an entirely different picture from the euphoric image. These portrayals also provided detailed information on cultural aspects of Chinese society which the euphoric views lacked. However, as one can see from the stories, the negative image was also quite fluid as it responded to instability in the political situation in China at that historic moment. Moreover, the Chinese government under the Gang of Four was at a crossroads regarding the direction of the country.
A CHINESE PERSPECTIVE

The images of China that emerged from the three American newspapers from 1972 to 1976 can indeed be categorized into two basic perspectives -- a euphoric attitude and a negative assessment, with the mixed one sharing the views of both. It is quite apparent now that the euphoric image was unrealistic and romanticized. The negative image was closer to the reality of Chinese society of the time, but it was insufficient. The unfavorable descriptions of basic socio-economic and socio-political conditions in China did reflect, to a great extent, the fundamental reality of Chinese life, in the cities as well as in rural areas. Unlike the short-lived euphoric image, the negative image of China not only lingered from 1972 to 1985, but also prevailed and became more and more forceful in the three newspapers' coverage of the country as a whole. However, due to the political atmosphere under the rule of the Gang of Four which treated foreigners with their "techniques of hospitality," there were instances in the negative reporting where the writers could not answer the questions their observations raised and where they revealed their lack of understanding of the implications of social phenomena they came into contact with in China.

The euphoric image proved to be simply a myth, "castles in the air," as far as social and economic
Many of those who were once strong advocates of the euphoric view have long since realized that their assessment of the Chinese situation at that time was over-optimistic. John Service admitted in an interview that "what was written in the early 1970s was exaggerated," and "a great deal said about China then was wrong" (pers. interview, 1985). The short life-span of the euphoric image itself also attested to its vulnerability. News stories praising Chinese society were concentrated in the first two years following Nixon's visit to China. The number of such articles declined markedly even before the Gang of Four was overthrown. This means that the euphoric image could not stand the test of both time and close scrutiny. Moreover, this researcher's personal experience in China also testifies to the wide disparity between euphoric descriptions and Chinese realities in the early 1970s. The question naturally arises: why did the euphoric image, limited and short-lived, attract so much attention and have so much influence, while negative reporting that was quantitatively greater and steadily growing was not duly acknowledged. The answers to this question are varied and inconclusive.

One can only assume that at the time of the renewal of friendship between the United States and China the mood in the United States understandably focused on the more favorable aspects of the other party in order to justify
the diplomatic move. This is not uncommon when relations between countries are undergoing dramatic change. The swift change of perceptions toward China, Stanley Karnow noted, was a display of America's "traditional proclivity for finding positive virtue in foreign nations with which the U.S. establishes a relationship, however expedient" (Karnow 1972, viii). This also Testifies to Isaacs' theory that image change is a matter "of those lights shining at different times from different directions on different facets of what there is to see" (Isaacs 1962, 383).

A more direct factor might have been the influence of a group of prominent China specialists and journalists. When interviewed, John Fairbank said:

> The American public opinion really comes from a fairly small group of people...Together with the media they have a significant influence. The same thing about them is that they show tremendous capacity for fluctuations. They may at one time be very down on something and when the situation changes they will be very high on it (pers. interview, 1985).

An often cited example in the euphoric view was the description by the NYT correspondent James Reston, who had his appendix removed during his visit in China and was accorded very friendly treatment. He was so impressed that he wrote that the Chinese seemed to be engaging in a "national barn raising." In a similarly positive approach, John Fairbank, the dean of China studies in the United
John Fairbank, the dean of China studies in the United States, also wrote that the United States seemed to China "out of date, backward, lacking in moral self-discipline and addicted to evils of affluent waste, individual license, and public violence that mankind can no longer afford to tolerate" (Fairbank 1975, 78). Stanley Karnow pointed out that during the early years of the 1970s, Harrison Salisbury, Ross Terrill, and Han Su-yin had a great deal of influence in forming American images of China (pers. interview, 1985).

A special characteristic of the euphoric image was the "Rip Van Winkle syndrome." Those who had close ties with China and the Chinese people before 1949 were most inclined to be overly optimistic in their views of China and were more trusting about what they were shown and told by the Chinese. John Service said that during his trip to China in the early 1970s, "I was completely struck by the changes" (pers. interview, 1985). This remark reflected the special mentality of this group of individuals who still had fresh memories of the deplorable social conditions they had personally experienced during the declining years of Guomintang rule. They skipped over all the turmoil that had happened in China during the two decades of separation between the United States and China, and their immediate impression upon their first visit to Communist China after over twenty years was that of a
healthy and progressing new country. Like Rip Van Winkle, they compared the China they saw after a long period of slumber with what they remembered and excluded the historical facts they had failed to experience. This "Rip Van Winkle syndrome" provides evidence for the theory acknowledged by many scholars that one's image is the result of one's special encounters in the past. To these old "China hands," their ties with China in the past were at work in the formulation of their new image of China.

Another important factor that led to the creation of the euphoric image was the Chinese government's attempts to manipulate the image-making process by officially arranging every detail in the schedule of a foreigner's visit -- what places to see and whom they should meet. Chinese manipulation thus misled those who lauded Chinese society under Communist rule and blurred the vision of those who were more suspicious and inquisitive. This evidences the assumption that image formation can be manipulated for political and economic reasons. The analysis of newspaper reporting later in this dissertation will demonstrate the results of manipulation by the Chinese authorities.

The reality of Chinese society was not easily discerned by Americans who had not been in contact with China for more than two decades. Neither was it possible to obtain a clear view of an unfamiliar political and
economic system in a few weeks time and under rigid restrictions on one's activities. As a matter of fact, life for the Chinese public before the death of Mao was quite different from what the news stories with euphoric views portrayed.

Before discussing in detail the images described above, it is necessary to look at the Chinese Communist Party's accomplishments during the early years of its governance. The euphoric image was not entirely "pure fantasy." The progress made under Chinese Communist rule was not only recognized by those who romanticized China, but even by critics of the Chinese Communist regime. A. M. Rosenthal, executive editor of the NYT, acknowledged that China's achievements filled him "with admiration, plain and simple admiration" (Rosenthal, NYT Magazine 26 July 1981). Donald S. Zagoria acknowledged:

...the Chinese have cut off the extremes of income distribution. There is no class of the very rich, nor is anyone allowed to fall below a certain minimal standard of living. As a result, there is no grinding, mass poverty, hunger, and destitution; this undoubtedly is one of the notable achievements of the Communist regime" (Zagoria, Dissent Spring 1975, p.139).

However, an important point that one should be aware of is the fact that these achievements were made during the few years immediately after the Chinese Communist Party assumed power, and that the quality of material life
remained understandably low. For the next two decades not only did people fail to see a continued and steady rise in their living standards, but they were burdened by more and more difficulties as a result of the endless political campaigns, some of which led to economic disasters. The destructive Cultural Revolution represented the culmination of these upheavals during which political control and lawlessness ironically intensified at the same time. Rosenthal wrote that "China had gone hugely, spectacularly wrong for two decades, beginning in the late 1950's" (Rosenthal, *NYT Magazine* 19 July 1981). Resentment and disillusionment toward the Communist Party deepened, but people dared not speak up for fear of persecution. It is now clear that if the euphoric image had ever had any validity, it was two decades before Nixon's visit. Therefore, the euphoric image, at best, was an outdated perception.

The improvement of life for those who were at the bottom of the society was only achieved by lowering the living standards of a large number of the formerly rich as well as large numbers of the middle class. The *CSM* correspondent Charlotte Saikowski pointed out with insight that in raising the living conditions of the people, "the West's way is to let the upper strata take off, pulling up the segments left behind. China's way is to lift the bottom and hold down the top until there is equity"
(Saikowski, CSM 9 July 1975). There was actually not much resentment from the middle class at the beginning, both because of the political control that silenced dissent and because people trusted the Communist Party's ability to improve the life of the people at large as the more imminent problems were solved. Yet anticipation was shattered by the continuing political campaigns and upheavals. The situation was like a group of people riding in an elevator toward the top of a high building. In order to let those at the bottom floor get in so that they could also reach the top, those already in the elevator agreed to go back to the first floor and ride upwards again together with those at the bottom. But when people on the first floor got in, they all found that there was a power shortage and the elevator never moved. Furthermore, the air in the elevator was suffocating, and people were not only threatened not to voice complaints, but they had to pretend that they enjoyed the dilemma and were prepared to stay there forever. This state of affairs lasted for two decades. By the time the momentum of the Cultural Revolution began to wane in the early 1970s, the majority of people had become weary of political repression and were disillusioned about the Communist Party. Americans only saw those who benefitted from the Communist revolution. They had no opportunity to meet the great
number of the middle class whose living standards had deteriorated.

A more important reason for the poor living standards, often overlooked by foreigners, was the fact that raising people's material conditions was not the Communist Party's priority in the first place. Under Chinese Communist rule, the pursuit of material comfort was considered a deviation from the proletarian way. Bourgeois and capitalist thinking was subjected to condemnation and criticism. The theme of political indoctrination in this respect, as pointed out by Lucian W. Pye, was that "everyone should sacrifice for the economic growth of the state and not expect a higher individual standard of living" (Pye 1972, 189).

What life was really like during the first half of the 1970's was something few American journalists and visitors had access to, except the officially arranged visits to worker's or peasant's families during "stage-management tours." Much was reported on the primitiveness and poverty of Chinese life in this period, both in the negative image as well in the mixed images. Even those with euphoric views had to admit that life in China was still poor. But, what American visitors were able to see was only a part of what existed. There were many difficulties in daily life that they were unable to view or hear about.
A Chinese saying goes that human life contains four basic aspects -- clothing, food, housing and transportation. All of these aspects of life were difficult in China during the initial period. While the workers and other government employees (everyone in China was in fact working for the government as there were no private enterprises to speak of) had not had an increase in salary for more than twenty years, inflation in a disguised form (such as less toilet paper in a roll, smaller bars of soap, inferior quality of fabric selling at the price for better quality fabrics, fewer matches in a box) in effect lowered people's incomes. The nationwide rationing system made life even harder with a long list of daily necessities in short supply. Then what made some of the writers with euphoric views describe the Chinese stores as full of merchandise and markets as full of abundant and inexpensive food? This was where the manipulation and image creation came into effect.

Much has been written about the arranged tours foreigners were given in China, particularly under the rule of the Gang of Four. A common practice at that time, on the part of the Chinese authority, was to make careful preparations before the visit took place. In the case of the grocery store, thorough cleaning would be done; varieties of food would be shipped to the store and nicely arranged simply to impress the foreign visitors. A story
written by the American Chinese writer Chen Johsi titled "The Big Fish" reflected exactly the same situation. The story tells of an old dock worker in Nanking named Kuai who was very glad to hear the news that to prepare for the visit of some American newspapermen the markets would be better stocked than usual. Riding his bicycle to the market, the first thing he noticed was:

...the entire street had been renovated since his last visit. The grounds had been swept clean and the walls had been washed...the shops on both sides of the street looked as though they had all been carefully rearranged. The windows shone, and even the door fronts had been scrubbed until the bricks were bright red (Chen 1978, 142).

Kuai bought a big fish at a dear price. But he still felt happy as the opportunity was rare. However, just when he was about to go home with the fish, a cadreman forced him to return the fish saying "if they're all sold out, what'll be left to show the foreign visitors when they arrive?" (Chen 1978, 148).

Life for the farmers was still worse. They did not even have enough food grain to feed themselves. To supplement what was available, they had to save every egg they had from the chickens they raised and secretly exchange them for grain coupons with the city folks who could only purchase about ten eggs a month for a whole family. Reminiscing about the years shortly before the Cultural Revolution started, when government policy
forbade peasants to engage in any sideline occupations, a peasant in Shanxi Province said:

Officials came to investigate us and wrote a report about how we were selling persimmons to buy our food instead of making fields on the mountainsides. They said we needed socialist education. Before they'd got that started, the Cultural Revolution came along. Even the old society wasn't that bad as that. At least there was no one to push us around in those days (Zhang and Sang 1987, 125).

The life of the Chinese during the early 1970s evidenced the failure of the Chinese economy, rather than the claims of some Americans that the Chinese economic system "worked" or "succeeded." Simon Leys, who first "demystified China," in the view of Stanley Karnow, wrote in his book Chinese Shadow that in Guangzhou (Canton), one of the most prosperous cities in China, "shop windows are almost bare" and "rather coarse food offered in ordinary restaurants." He suggested that "this leveling down which brings urban life to the level of the impoverished countryside is not unique to Canton but is happening all over China" (Leys 1977, 37).

Evidence has clearly destroyed the myth of egalitarianism, so much lauded by those with euphoric views. The Chinese Communist Party professed that the goal of a Communist society was to reach a classless society. It preached Mao's dictum of "serving the people," "being
one with the masses," and "having the welfare and interest of the broad masses at heart." Despite all the rhetoric, the structural organization of the Chinese Communist Party and government and the privileges officials were entitled to enjoy led people to believe that the Chinese Communists were more class conscious than were the privileged classes in the capitalist system, which the Party denounced as the root cause of exploitation of man by man.

Within the Party and government hierarchies in China, there existed a rigid grade system regarding the prestige and material provisions given to officials at various levels. Accessibility to different degrees of classified documents, the number of servants and maids assigned to officials, the quality and space of housing, the brand of cars one was given...were all decided according to one's rank and position. Among the public, one's social status involved numerous factors. There were wide differences between Party members and non-Party members, between those from worker's or peasant's families and those from intellectual, former capitalist, or even worse, from former landlord's backgrounds. These were all factors that directly determined the future of each individual and his descendants. Zagoria pointed out that "China has become, in the words of Barrington Moore, Jr., 'a system of organized social inequality' in which the greatest gap is between the new bureaucratic ruling class and the masses.
As early as 1967, based on information from several Western studies and the Chinese press, Doak Barnett succinctly wrote that by the 1960s:

...the relative egalitarianism of earlier years had been...replaced by a system in which ratings [of cadres] indicated very great differentials in power, prestige, salaries, and other prerogatives--and also involved great psychological distance between those at the top and those at the bottom (Barnett 1967, 43).

Simon Leys called those Communist officials "those-who-ride-in-cars," as compared to "those-who-eat-the-meat" in old China." He reported that in China there were no cars except "mandarinal cars." Ordinary people, he pointed out, both old and young, and no matter how sick one was, had to use a "wheelbarrow or cart pushed by parents or friendly neighbors" (Leys 1977, 115).

A great deal was written by the three newspapers under study on the subject of the plight of Chinese youth as a result of the rustication movement -- their difficulties in their effort to return to the cities and their predicament after their return. One important aspect of inequality between ordinary people and the officials was obviously lacking. When Mao called on the young to face the countryside and contribute their knowledge and talent to the building of China's rural areas in late
1960s, the Cultural Revolution was still in its early stage and many officials at all levels were under attack. Without the power of their parents, the children of these officials had no alternative but to accept their rural assignments. However, by the early 1970's many of the officials were rehabilitated and their positions restored. With their newly gained power and using their connections, they managed to transfer their children from the countryside to the military which was still a prestigious institution. On the other hand, children of ordinary people without influential connections were barred from this opportunity. The majority could not return to the cities until several years later when the government changed its policy. As the move from the countryside to the cities involved young people's futures, antagonism between officials and the public greatly deepened. Many American journalists reported on the rustication movement and the desire of the "educated youths" to return to the urban areas, but they missed the growing popular resentment concerning social inequality.

The negative image seen in the newspaper reports during the first few years following Nixon's visit presented a very realistic picture as far as the basic texture of Chinese life was concerned, including material conditions, political control, and the politicizing of every aspect of society. These descriptions, nevertheless,
tended to be superficial due to the restrictions imposed by the regime of the Gang of Four upon the activities of American journalists and other visitors. Some reports manifested the writers' inability to step beyond the limit of what they saw and heard. Others showed their lack of understanding of the implications which the behavioral patterns of the Chinese demonstrated. For example, in the cultural arena, many of the newspaper reports mentioned the political content that seeped into every form of artistic expression, such as the eight model revolutionary operas, comic books, and all kinds of performances and exhibits. Meanwhile, they expressed their surprise as to why Chinese seemed to enjoy such heavily politicized entertainment. Unger, in reporting on "China's 3-cent Disneyland" pointed out that "the crowd seem to love it," noting that on an average autumn or spring evening, 20,000 Cantonese jammed the Amusement Park to "see live performances of the same themes and tunes they had already enjoyed a half-dozen or more times in the movie versions" (Unger, CSM 28 June 1972). Writing about the comic books, Moritz described passengers on a train ride from Hangchow to Shanghai as being "poured through comic after comic mindless of the lurching of the train. Time was forgotten, as the books passed from one pair of hands to another throughout the night" (Moritz, CSM 15 Aug. 1973).
In fact, the majority of the Chinese disliked the limited repertoire full of political slogans, and they resented, in secret, the rigid control of their cultural life. However, there were reasons why people went to see the same things repeatedly. It is not hard to imagine, when viewing the whole of Chinese life, that when there was no other cultural life to speak of, it was a way to kill time, especially for families with children. With living space so cramped, people would naturally take advantage of the cheap fare to have some fun. The fun part, however, was not the political slogans in the performances, but the amateur performers. Unger described the ballet performance in the Guangzhou Cultural Part in these words:

The audience, packed with kids, roared approval when the ballerina heroine successfully navigated several difficult leaps. There was all the camaraderie of an enjoyable small-town theatrical, and the crowd shared acutely the discomfort of a bit player who tripped over his own feet and fell off the stage (Unger, CSM 28 June 1972).

During the Cultural Revolution, anything with a Western touch was looked upon as decadent, and therefore Western style singers were encouraged to change their ways of vocal projection into indigenous ways of singing, such as the Beijing Opera. Yet, the styles of Western singing and the Beijing Opera belonged to two entirely different
schools of art, and voice training had been based on entirely different principles. Those Western style singers who had the courage to try Beijing Opera, under pressure of course, made fools of themselves and the audience found themselves both sympathetic to their plight and at the same time amused. Comic books on the train served the same purpose. Compared with Mao's books and the theory of Marxism and Leninism, comic books were certainly more interesting. The authors were right in describing Chinese enthusiasm, but they missed the point of the reasons behind it.

Some of the writers with negative views, or mixed views, were sharp enough to sense signs of social undercurrents which they were not able to distinguish at the time. They raised very pertinent questions on the basis of their analysis of what they saw, yet they admitted they had no answers, at least for the time being. For example, Barbara Tuchman found during her visit to China in the early 1970's that the Chinese referred so frequently to the term "the People," which appeared to be the "subject and object of every political slogan in China" (Tuchman, NYT 6 Sep. 1972). This led her to probe the question as to who actually belonged to "the people." After analyzing Mao Zedong's definition that 95 per cent of the population who support the revolution belong to "the people," and the rest belong to the category of
"class enemies," Tuchman came to this conclusion that "workers, peasants and soldiers are automatically people" (ibid.) However, she added:

Those who come from landlord, rich peasant, merchant-capitalist or bourgeois origin are automatically out or at least not full members of society, until they have proved by deed and attitude that they have repudiated their class values and whole-heartedly adopted Chairman Mao's 'correct revolutionary line' of service to the people (ibid.).

Tuchman commented that "what this requires in outward conformity for those with inner reservations can only be conjectured" (ibid).

Tuchman raised a very sensitive question, for family background was a crucial aspect of one's life under Communist rule. It affected one's opportunities to receive an education, pursue a career, and even determined the future of one's children. Discriminated against on almost every issue, those who had an "unfavorable" background dared not complain, especially to foreigners. Revealing such problems came only after the Gang of Four was overthrown, when the Chinese government under Deng Xiao-ping became more liberal, and foreigners were allowed more freedom in their contacts with ordinary Chinese.

Two basic images emerged from the three newspapers' coverage of China during this initial period -- a euphoric image and a negative image, with a group of writers
sharing the views of both. The euphoric views represented a "Rip Van Winkle syndrome" and were partly the result of the Gang of Four's policy of manipulation by restricting foreigners' freedom of movement and erecting facades in order to impress them. However, the euphoric image proved quantitatively weak and comparatively short-lived. The news stories with negative views, much more in number than those with positive portrayals, covered a wide range of subject matter including poor living conditions and political control in almost every aspect of life. Despite the fact that the negative portrayals more truly described Chinese realities, they tended to be superficial and left many doubts about Chinese society unanswered. Apparently, this was due to unfamiliarity with the Chinese situation on the part of Americans after two decades of separation and also the result of restrictions imposed on them by the Chinese authorities. However, this situation soon changed with the downfall of the Gang of Four.
The death of Mao Zedong and subsequent arrest of the Gang of Four in late 1976 marked a crucial turning point in Chinese history under Communism. These two closely linked events brought to an end the chaotic and disastrous Cultural Revolution that had lasted for ten years. The turmoil, terror, suppression, and persecution imposed on the Chinese people during that decade were finally alleviated. The news about the arrest of the Gang of Four released a tide of joy and relief among the people nationwide. For the first time since the Communists' takeover in 1949, people thronged the streets spontaneously to take part in parades, singing, and dancing to celebrate their second "liberation." Parties held among friends, colleagues, and families emptied the liquor stores and markets. Rejoicing at the end of the nightmare, the Chinese people began to see a ray of hope for a possible better life under the new regime of Hua Guofeng and Deng Xiaoping, to which the public gave due credit for overthrowing the Gang of Four.

However, the new regime under Hua Guofeng, and later, Deng Xiaoping, was confronted with herculean tasks, as the economy, after the destructive ten years, was on the verge
of collapse and the public's confidence in the Communist Party had dwindled to very low level. To revitalize the country with the people's support, the new regime started to change a whole set of repressive policies enforced during the Cultural Revolution and replaced them with policies that were more liberal and open than at any time during the more than two decades of Communist rule.

Politically, the new regime denounced the Gang of Four for plunging China into a decade of turbulence. The repudiation of the Gang of Four represented a significant shift in the political climate. Since the Chinese Communist Party had assumed power in 1949, Party and government policies changed frequently, due to political needs, misjudgments or mismanagement. "Oscillations between policy extremes," John Fairbank stated, "have been a Chinese specialty" (Fairbank 1986, 353). A rhyme that circulates among the public goes that "the policies of the Communist Party are like the moon, the shape of which changes so soon." Nevertheless, the Communist Party heretofore had under no circumstances admitted its mistakes and at no time allowed the masses to criticize without inviting troubles. Instead, the Party ruled that different circumstances called for different policies, meaning, in essence, that Party policies could never be wrong no matter how frequent or how extreme the changes were. For example, the Great Leap Forward created serious
problems for China economically. To avoid further disaster, the leadership had no way out but to retreat from its reckless policies even though, as Lucian Pye pointed out, "failure was not publicly acknowledged" (Pye 1972, 200). The public could only secretly vent anger among close friends, family members, or trusted colleagues. Now, for the first time after more than two decades, not only did the new regime openly criticize the Communist Party's policies, but it also allowed or even encouraged the public to expose and condemn the Gang of Four. For a brief moment, Deng even allowed dissidents to air their views at Democracy Wall in downtown Beijing. Clear signs indicated that the new regime was moving toward a more liberalized political atmosphere and the people welcomed it warmly.

Another major step the new regime took shortly after the fall of the Gang of Four was the Party's acknowledgment of the need to raise people's living standards. As mentioned earlier, the Communist Party had always advocated a plain and puritanical lifestyle. It warned that a better material life would lead to revisionism that would induce people to forsake the proletarian revolution and the goal of saving those still suffering under the capitalist system. Thus, any expression of desire for a better life would meet criticism. The new leadership's acknowledgment of the
people's poor living conditions and its promise to work for the betterment of their lives was refreshing and long overdue. Despite the fact that the new regime was largely making promises at the moment without much practical change in people's lives, the rhetoric itself was enough to kindle their enthusiasm for the future and for the new leadership.

The changes facilitated by the regime under Deng brought more immediate and visible effects in the cultural field than in improving people's material lives. Many art forms, including books, movies, and music banned during the Cultural Revolution began to resurface. The new regime even permitted the public to enjoy Western music and literature. People's leisure lives thus became more lively and colorful compared to the days when only eight model revolutionary operas were allowed. Intellectuals, writers, and artists were again able to engage in creative work and their social status gradually improved. Changes in the educational field also returned the ways of teaching to a more conventional system.

If there was ever a period of time under the Communist rule in China during which the country had a common national purpose, it would have been either the first few years of the Communist rule in the early 1950s or the brief period after the death of Mao. It was definitely not at the beginning of the 1970s as the
euphoric image indicated. With the Party and the public sharing a negative view of the Gang of Four and the Cultural Revolution and with the Party's new policies aimed at meeting the aspirations of the people, past animosities between the leadership and the public stemming from the repeated political campaigns receded, at least for a brief period. Both sides supported the same goal -- a better life and a strong country. The source materials cited in this chapter will provide clear evidence of this sentiment.

However, the situation was more complicated than that. The Chinese people had experienced too many hairpin turns along their political path under the Communist government. Their experience taught them to be cautious and not to place their trust lightly in the new leadership, as they were not sure about its sincerity and ability to overhaul the country and improve the economy. They were also uncertain whether the new regime would also change Party policies in the same sporadic ways as the previous regimes both before and during the Cultural Revolution. Therefore, while a strong note of hope and optimism rang in the air during these two years, there was also a persistent and prevalingly cautious reserve among the people due to what Chinese call "past fear still lingering." John Fraser wrote about the situation:
Although Chinese people seemed genuinely relieved that the latest batch of monsters and devils had been removed from office, life had not changed very much. There had been too many political campaigns, too many lies in the past twenty years for the people to respond with anything but weary cynicism. They were resigned, not stupid. (Fraser 1980, 55)

Two secret polls taken among students at Shanghai's prestigious Fudan University, conducted by the Federation of Students, showed that 78% of the students had a 'wait-and-see' attitude when asked the question of whether the current leaders were able to achieve the four modernizations -- of agriculture, industry, science and technology, and national defense. In answering questions on whether people like the Gang of Four could return to power in the next ten years, only 5.4% of the respondents were positively negative. More than half said that such a return was 'possible,' and 39% said that it would be 'difficult to avoid.' Among the respondents, 54% said that they felt "uncertain" about their own futures (Time 10 Nov. 1980, p.57). The performance of the new leadership with its sharp shifts in policies in the years to follow proved that the "lingering fear" on the part of the Chinese was justified.

The time covered in this chapter -- from the fall of the Gang of Four in late 1976 to the beginning of 1979 when the reform program started -- should be viewed only as a brief transitional period, during which another power
struggle was conducted resulting in Hua Guofeng's ouster and Deng Xiaoping's consolidation of his political position. This two-year period served as a prelude to the reform program that began in early 1979. Many of the new policies and trends that started in these two years set the stage for further development and expansion in the years to follow.

The three major American newspapers under study basically reflected the transformations that followed the dramatic events in China after the death of Mao. The euphoric image seen in the previous period left its traces in the images found in this transitional period. However, if the voices of euphoria in the early 1970s resembled a chorus, they had certainly declined to a few soloists by now. They also seemed out of place at a time when the new regime itself admitted openly that the living standards of the people were low and the economic problems of the country serious.

The news stories about China found in this transitional period can be basically divided into two images -- an image of life returning to normal after the Cultural Revolution and a negative image of the social, economic and political aspects of Chinese life. Mixed with these two images, however, was a retrospective view of the Cultural Revolution, a belated image in that the events and incidents reported were no longer news but something
that was already recent history. Fairbank called the failure of American journalists to report the Cultural Revolution while it was still going on in early 1970s, a "signal defeat." He wrote:

"Our best-qualified observers went to Peking in late 1971 before the Nixon visit of February 1972, and then with Mr. Nixon went our top commentators on evening television. Yet all this combined talent was unable to pick up any newsworthy indication of the Cultural Revolution. It happened that this attack by Chairman Mao, university professors and professional and artists, together with bureaucrats of the party and government, had reached a particularly venomous climax in 1971-1972 (Fairbank 1987, 67).

As the Cultural Revolution came to a close in 1976, stories about torture, imprisonment, and suicide began to pour out. However, these portrayals were not presented by the newspapers in a comprehensive and concise form. Rather, they were mostly scattered in reports and served as background material for portraying the ongoing reality. This is understandable in that the Cultural Revolution was a complicated subject which defies a short summary in newspaper articles. A comparatively detailed portrayal of the experience of some cultural figures during the Cultural Revolution was found in Harrison Salisbury's lengthy article "Now is the Time For Cultural Thaw" in the NYT Magazine (Salisbury, NYT Magazine 4 Dec. 1977). Salisbury included many anecdotes about the experience of
individuals in the cultural circle during the dark decade. He also depicted their relief at the arrest of the Gang of Four and how they enjoyed their renewed ability to engage in their creative work. This late image about the Cultural Revolution served as the foundation of most reports that portrayed Chinese life at this particular historic moment.

The return-to-normal image seen in the newspaper stories during the 1976-78 period focused almost entirely on cultural aspects of Chinese life. Its basic theme was the trend toward liberalization in artistic circles as well as in the educational field. Yet, among the happy tidings, a strong note of uncertainty sounded as people suspected the endurance and consistency of the new political orientation. The negative image of news articles in this transitional period was in fact a continuation and expansion of the negative image of the initial period. In addition to the content contained in news reports of the preceding period, articles in 1976-78 also touched upon other aspects of Chinese life, such as the shortage of food and daily necessities, unemployment and underemployment, as well as the poor work ethic of Chinese workers.

The three major American newspapers under study presented a more accurate picture of Chinese life in this short time span. When the components of an over-idealized and over-romanticized image in the initial period vanished
from sight, images came much closer to the realities of Chinese life. In discussing the change in American images from the euphoric to the more negative, Doak Barnett held that the negative views of the late 1970s were "more realistic, not uncritical, not extreme" (pers. interview, 1986). However, a closer scrutiny of the source materials showed that news reports, as a whole, lacked a historic perspective and in some cases lacked a basic understanding of Chinese culture and Chinese society. Research findings also gave evidence that certain important developments of Chinese life in the coverage at large were missing.

THE IMAGE OF LIFE RETURNING TO NORMAL

Many of the three newspapers' reports during this transitional period focused on the social atmosphere in China in the two years following the arrest of the Gang of Four. A microcosmic view of Chinese society was found in a story by Jay Mathews entitled "One Year After Mao: China Seems Calmer and Happier" (Mathews, WP 11 Sep. 1977). Comparing the atmosphere of "fear and tension" at the Monument of People's Heroes in central Beijing a year before, Mathews portrayed a different scene in the autumn of 1977:

Today that same monument has all the intrigue and tension of an Iowa county fair. Bright-colored umbrellas shade relief and refreshment stations for thousands of Chinese sightseers. Sidewalk
cameramen do a thriving business photographing beaming teenagers against the background of the Great Hall of the People just across Tian An Men Square (ibid.).

At the same time, Mathews called attention to less positive signs. He pointed out that "there are pulls in other directions," "disputes between political factions," and workers defying "superior authority when they see fit" (ibid.).

Portraying the atmosphere of the "cultural thaw," Harrison Salisbury wrote that "Chinese writers, editors, composers, poets, performing artists and intellectuals are emerging from the shadows" of the Cultural Revolution and are "luxuriating in their physical release and in their renewed ability to hold up their heads and perform publicly, to write, to compose" (Salisbury, NYT Magazine 4 Dec. 1977). Salisbury quoted a well known pianist Zhou Xiaoyen who was trained in the West: "Now, I am so happy. We can play almost anything -- Bach, Beethoven, Handel, Mozart. We have all of the 18th and 19th centuries back again" (ibid.). A prominent bamboo flute player Lu Changling, reported Salisbury, was forbidden to play by the Gang of Four during the Cultural Revolution. His 100-year-old grandmother said after the fall of the Gang of Four that "not only people are being liberated, but also your bamboo flute" (ibid.). Yet, despite all these encouraging changes, Salisbury also cautioned that no one in China was
ready to answer the question as to whether the black days of the past decade would happen again. He said that "the 'thaw' is too new, its extent is too uncertain, the evolution of internal policies in the post-Mao era too untested" (ibid.).

Frederic A. Moritz wrote in the CSM that the new regime was "relaxing the reins" on its control of the traditional art forms:

In China, Beethoven is back. So are the translations of William Shakespeare and Mark Twain. Love stories are said to be acceptable once more, as are lengthy, richly costumed dramas known as classical opera. Popular landscape painting, local plays, and folk music are to be rejuvenated (Moritz, CSM 6 March 1978).

Yet he concluded that despite the liberal changes, "art is not to become a means for expressing social tensions and frustrations. Instead it is to remain firmly in the service of the Communist Party" (ibid.).

John Fraser reported on the return of body-contact dancing in China, which, he explained, was attacked as decadent and bourgeois during the Cultural Revolution. But now, he noted, "it seems that Western social dancing is already being tried out at private Chinese parties, and that there was some dancing recently at a popular social club in the city" (Fraser, NYT 19 July 1978). But he
pointed out that "Rock music is still considered decadent here..." (ibid.).

On the same subject, Fox Butterfield noted the liberal tendency in people's leisure life in "First Cautious Steps: Dancing in a Changing China." However, he wrote:

Some Chinese seem bemused by the sheer speed of the change, some are testing the limits of the new policies, and others, recalling the abrupt shifts of the party line in the past, are cynical. But changes, some of them small, have crept into many people's lives nonetheless, bringing a sense of better times to come (Butterfield, NYT 31 Dec. 1978).

Butterfield also wrote about the specific changes in the educational field:

For the first time since Mao overhauled China's schools during the Cultural Revolution, examinations are being reinstated, teachers are being given power to discipline students and high school graduates are being admitted directly to college without having to spend at least two years working in the countryside (Butterfield, NYT 2 Sep. 1977).

Yet he also cautioned:

Despite these indications of change, however, some Western students who have attended college in China caution that they have seen little evidence of the new policies being actually carried out. They are also skeptical about how successful Peking will be in transforming the education system, given the political constraints in China (ibid.).
The picture of young people that emerged in this period seemed quite different from the time when young people were packed off to the countryside during the rustication movement of the early 1970s. Now they were busily preparing for college examinations. Ross Monro described it this way:

With as many as 25 million young people competing for a limited number of college openings, some residential and work units in Peking, and presumably elsewhere in China, have set up 'cram schools' in factory workshops and even unused temples to help their young people get an edge (Monro, CSM 28 Nov. 1977).

However, Monro pointed out that among all those who took part in the examinations to China's institutions of higher learning, only about one or two percent would be admitted. "As for the others," he said, "they are being told that factory and farm work is also glorious" (ibid.).

Beatrice Mills, an American educator who visited China in early 1978 with a professional group of fellow educators, wrote a letter to a friend back home about the "turnabout in China Schools." Mills explained in the letter:

This fall the graduates of the senior middle schools can go straight to university without first spending two years at manual labor. They will now devote five-sixths of their time learning theory and only one-sixth in practical
application, the opposite of the recent past (Mills, CSM 5 June 1978).

In a series of articles on the changes in the educational system, Jay Mathews expressed a strong sense of reservation. A year after the death of Mao, he wrote that "...China is still a politicized state, both the arts and science sections of the new entrance exams will have questions on politics..." (Mathews, WP 8 Nov. 1977). He also reported on the controversy surrounding the changes in the educational system between those who were selected on political grounds and the new class admitted on the basis of test scores. He quoted one foreign traveler as saying that 'the worker-peasant students are not happy with the new breed' (Mathews, WP 23 June 1978).

THE NEGATIVE IMAGE

The negative picture of China that appeared in the three American newspapers during this transitional period involved the same perceptions as in the earlier period, with poverty and deprivation as a continuing theme. However, a distinct feature of the negative image at this time was the fact that though the quantity of source materials was much less than in the initial period, it covered grounds hitherto untouched. Furthermore, with the mitigation, at least in part, of the government's inclination to create a distorted image, the features of
this negative image became much clearer and more straightforward. A sharp contrast in descriptions of the food markets in these two periods best illustrates this point. The picture of the myriad varieties of good quality vegetables, "four-feet long fish," and abundant fruits seen in the picture of the food markets in the early 1970s suddenly became dismal. Ross Monro wrote "...a visit to the markets finds that the pork is extraordinarily fatty, and most of the fish is salted, bony, long, and thin and appears to have been in storage for a long time" (Monro, CSM 22 Feb. 1977).

The euphoric views described the nationwide rationing system as generous without adding much burden to the lives of the people, while the negative reports on the same subject in the earlier stage lacked enough information to show the real impact of this system on the public life. Although the rationing system was a complicated subject and few writers provided an all-embracing description, an article by Monro in this period became more realistic:

...China is a poor country where almost everything is in short supply, a country which produces 6 million bicycles a year for a population of 900 million, a country which in many regions can guarantee its citizens only 9 ounces of meat a month (Monro, WP 1977).

In a more comprehensive report on the rationing system, Monro quoted a poster at Beijing University that
"the rationing system had become so central to the Chinese economy that ration coupons had become a second currency more important than money." Monro listed more than 16 items that could only be obtained with coupons, including grain, cotton, certain fabrics, television sets, bicycles, meat, cooking oil, sugar, bean curd, soap, toothpaste, light bulbs, electricity, pottery, hardware, and furniture. Minor discrepancies did exist in his story, but the article revealed the quintessence of the rationing system.

Jay Mathews, writing on the same subject in "Television: A Symbol of China's Desire for Consumer Goods" pointed out:

Peking leaders appear to be trying to restrict consumer appetites to the few items that are already on every family's shopping list -- wristwatches, radios, electric fans, bicycles, television sets and sewing machines...(Mathews, WP 1 Aug. 1978).

A news story by Dennis Bloodworth about the experience of some American Chinese who visited their relatives and friends in China was also highly relevant to the topic.

The cousin from overseas loaded with gifts finds himself still acting as banker and benefactor and purchasing agent for his poor relations, for one of his main tasks is to buy goods in Chinese stores which appear to be readily available, but which in reality are not sold over the counter to
local people -- starting with the better brands of Chinese cigarettes (Bloodworth, WP 25 Sep. 1977).

On the subject of living conditions of the Chinese, the basic features in the newspaper reports were identical with the picture at the beginning of the 1970s. For example, Chalmers M. Roberts shrewdly pointed out that the "typical" homes of the workers and peasants shown to foreigners were "a lot better and more spacious than the average." Even so, the scenes he described were also grim:

...we found one 10-year-old girl who had to sleep on a closet floor. The apartment we were shown had piped gas for cooking, either squat or western toilets and heat only from cooking. In the commune, floors usually were simply packed earth" (Roberts, WP 31 Dec. 1978).

On the primitive way of farming, Roberts wrote:

...a mass of humanity slowly eating away at a hillside like the proverbial ants. Men and women, using largely spade, hoe and woven basket...cutting and filling, leveling off hilltops and filling in valleys to create new terraced land on which to grow food (ibid.).

Compared to the interviewees in the initial period, those whom foreign correspondents talked to in the transitional period spoke more frankly. Fox Butterfield revealed that a Chinese tour guide in Guangzhou conceded to her Japanese visitor that "her family's income was not really enough to make ends meet" (Butterfield, NYT 23 Sep.
Butterfield quoted the woman as saying that "she and her husband each made about $33 a month -- a relatively high salary in China -- but that with four children to feed, they had not been able to save any money" (ibid.).

The image of a people working hard for a common cause was replaced by quite a different image. Jay Mathews noted:

After a decade of being told monetary rewards lead straight to capitalism, and the love of Mao and socialism should be enough to motivate anybody, Chinese factory workers have become lackadaisical and unproductive (Mathews, WP 30 Dec. 1977).

Mathews also stated that workshops in China "are often overstaffed and some appear to have little to do." He quoted a foreign resident in a large Chinese city as saying that "there is kind of a WPA atmosphere, at least here. Three people will come to do a job that needs only one" (Mathews, WP 15 May 1977).

Taking the place of the egalitarianism that was much lauded in the earlier stage was a privileged class. Ross Monro, in his "Top China Aides Enjoy Luxuries Other Can't Get," wrote that Chinese officials of certain levels could shop at stores exclusively for them, even at the Friendship Stores for foreigners only. These officials, Monro noted, enjoyed large apartments, luxurious furniture
at low prices; some even built their own houses with otherwise unobtainable materials acquired through illegal or semi-illegal ways (Monro, NYT 27 Nov. 1977).

The slogan of "serving the people" that was looked upon as a sign of high morality in the euphoric image was now replaced by the "back door," -- meaning using cultivated contacts, connections and relations to get what was hard to obtain by normal channels. Fox Butterfield vividly recounted in "Buddy System Eases Austerity in China" the way the cafeteria of the Central Newsreel and Documentary Film Company got sizable quantities of spareribs by providing free tickets to employees in the food store. A nurse who asked her neighbor, a pianist, to give lessons to her son arranged for the mother of the pianist to be admitted to a good hospital when the old lady fell sick. A certain amount of peanuts for some officials brought back from the countryside by a rusticated youth could get him a green light to stay in the city illegally. Butterfield pointed out that "whatever the abuses of backdoor deals, the system has become so widespread that it has spawned its own jokes" (Butterfield, NYT 11 Dec. 1977).

Another continuing theme of the negative image was social control. A NE news story about an Amnesty International report pointed out that the Chinese
government was charged with denying human rights to the people. The report said:

...large numbers of Chinese have been subjected to extreme social and mental pressures; imprisonment, often without anything resembling due process; and even execution -- all because they expressed beliefs that differed from the group in power in Peking or because of their social origin (Weintraub, WP 28 Nov. 1978).

When Barbara Tuchman had raised the question of "who are the people," she was unable to provide details. Now Ross Monro was able to fill the gap for her. He described how children of "rich peasants" background were discriminated against, such as getting less pay, not being allowed to enjoy free medical care, and being forbidden to participate in political activities. He wrote about children with unfavorable class backgrounds in general:

Children with the wrong class background have only a very slim chance of being selected to attend a school of higher learning even if they have proved their ability. Visits by this correspondent to Chinese colleges and universities during the last two years provided evidence that there was some sort of regulation that restricted the number of students with a "bad class background" to a maximum of 5 percent of the enrollment. It is also evident that the actual proportion is well below 5 percent" (Monroe, NYT 13 Oct. 1977).

Average citizens were also seen as having many restrictions on their daily lives. In "Compounds Shepherd
Chinese Workers," Monro said that all Chinese were expected to live in the same compound as their workmates. The compounds, he said, "are literally behind high walls with a single guarded gate." The inhabitants "send their babies to the compound nursery, their children to the compound schools, and their shopping lists to the compound stores" (Monro, CSM 13 Oct. 1977). Social control has been commonly acknowledged as a persistent practice of the Chinese Communist Party. However, Monro's description of people living "behind high walls" with "a single guarded gate" did not reflect the reality, at least the prevailing reality.

A CHINESE PERSPECTIVE

Three major images surfaced from news articles during the transitional period -- the image of the Cultural Revolution, the image of life returning to normal, and the negative image. The description of the Cultural Revolution was obviously a belated one. The limited information about what was going on in the initial period and the belated emergence of an image of the Cultural Revolution illustrate the effect of manipulation on image formation. These developments prove that given manipulation by those in power, aspects of Chinese social reality could be entirely hidden from the view of outsiders, at least for a period of time. In this limited
sense, the theoretical concept that images can be "mass produced, packaged, and promoted just like merchandise" (Samson in Kato 1977, 81) demonstrated its validity. As a matter of fact, the revelation of the horrors of the Cultural Revolution by news stories during the transitional period was also made possible by the political needs of the new regime in the post-Gang of Four era.

The image of life returning to normal after the Cultural Revolution and the negative image of the period quite realistically reflected the general features of Chinese life at this time. They mirrored the major social trend of moving away from the repressive era of the Cultural Revolution and manifested the expectations and hopes of the Chinese people. As John Fraser pointed out:

It was a moment for hope and great expectations, the best of times since the heroic decade of the fifties, when the population had been widely united with the common purpose of rebuilding its shattered and humiliated land. The awesome patience and endurance of the Chinese people had initially been rewarded by Mao and then betrayed. Now it seemed time for at least a modest dividend (Fraser 1980, 65)

Meanwhile, the three newspapers under study also depicted uncertainty and ambivalence among the Chinese about trusting the new regime and anticipating their future. On the negative side, not only did the news
stories continue to report on the puritanical living environment of ordinary Chinese and the atmosphere of social control, as in the preceding period, but they also covered some new ground that the earlier negative image had not touched upon, such as widespread underemployment. Congruent with the reality of the time, these portrayals demonstrated the gap between liberal changes promised by the new regime and the few real improvements in people's lives, particularly their material lives. Thus the three newspapers did in some respect reflect the existing situation of China during the transitional period.

The more accurate descriptions in this transitional period can be attributed to the policy changes of the new leadership and the different political circumstances of the time. During the initial period, the Gang of Four, in order to hide the havoc they had wrought on Chinese society and life, resorted to deception in creating images in their favor. The new regime, however, changed some of the policies to suit its own specific political needs. The more the Gang of Four was discredited, the more justified it was in taking action in rounding up the members of the Gang and imprisoning them. The exposure of the existing deplorable conditions favored their policy of placing responsibility entirely upon the Gang of Four. William Safire pointed out that "the campaign to blame all shortcomings in Chinese society on a despised scapegoat is
transparent" (Safire, NYT Magazine 19 June 1977). Under the circumstances the authorities stopped maintaining a facade, to a certain degree, and began to allow foreigners more leeway in their contacts with ordinary Chinese.

This liberal policy happened to correspond with the desire of the Chinese to vent their frustrations at their plight. The compatibility of the approaches of this leadership and the public led to the removal of the wool, at least in part, from the eyes of foreigners. Though the motivations of the public and the new regime might be different, the effect was the creation of a more realistic picture. The Gang of Four tried to create images to its liking by obscuring the realities of the Cultural Revolution, while the new regime resorted to exposing, within limitations, the Cultural Revolution to legitimize its power. This phenomenon reinforces the concept that images can be produced through ideological and political mechanisms. The realities of China had not changed, only the focus of the "moving lights" was changed due to different political circumstances.

However, despite the more truthful portrayals of specific events during the two-year period after the death of Mao, the picture as a whole seems to have lacked a tangible historical continuum linking the three phases of Chinese history under Communism -- the seventeen years from 1949 to the beginning of the Cultural Revolution in 124
1966; the ten years of the Cultural Revolution, and the two years immediately following the fall of the Gang of Four. Some news stories gave readers the impression that though the Cultural Revolution was a nightmare for the Chinese people, life before the Cultural Revolution had been different and the policies of the new regime were seen as indications of a possible new lease of life for the Chinese. Hence, the Gang of Four should bear sole responsibility for the present deplorable conditions. This assumption is highly debatable.

There is no doubt that Mao was the initiator of the successive political campaigns during the seventeen years under Communist rule before the Cultural Revolution. He was also the one who started, and orchestrated, the Cultural Revolution. John Fraser contended that the mass ideological campaigns conducted during the period that followed the establishment of the People's Republic "culminated in the Cultural Revolution" (Fraser 1980, 353). However, the Cultural Revolution was carried out on a much broader scale and in a much wilder form. It was conducted "shapelessly," in the words of Stanley Karnow. Careful study shows that each political campaign before 1966 had a given segment of the population as its specific target. Ripples of the campaigns might affect those at the periphery, but they seldom touched the Party leadership at different levels, particularly the top hierarchy. Instead,
the Party leadership were always advocates of Mao's theory of "continuous revolution" and in most cases active accomplices in his political campaigns.

The fundamental difference between the Cultural Revolution and the previous political campaigns was that the major targets of the former were a number of high-ranking Party officials, including Liu Shaochi and Deng Xiaoping. Obviously, the Gang of Four was formed to take over the power of those Party leaders who happened to be on Mao's black list. The power struggle at the top was a unique characteristic of the Cultural Revolution. It would be safe to say that it was precisely this struggle that pushed the Cultural Revolution toward a chaos. The horror stories that were revealed after the fall of the Gang of Four regarding imprisonment, labor camps, and suicides were, in fact, not anything unusual. They had occurred in all of the previous campaigns but on a much smaller scale and could not be told as the stories of the Cultural Revolution were. Fairbank wrote that "since the history of a revolution is replete with figures totaling the victims of one aspect or another of the violent and sudden changes, one has trouble identifying with the situation" (Fairbank 1986, 294). The three examples Fairbank cited in his book The Great Chinese Revolution all happened in the 50s. The motivation behind the Cultural Revolution has been a controversial subject among American academics and
journalists. "The Cultural Revolution," wrote Lucian Pye, "defies full explanation, and many interpretations of it are possible" (Pye 1972, 293). In Pye's view, it was a combination of various factors:

Some scholars have seen it as an ideologically inspired event in which those who shared a Maoist vision set out to destroy all who did not. Others have treated the Cultural Revolution as a power struggle over succession to Mao's leadership. The truth no doubt is that the Cultural Revolution is a blend of ideological and power considerations, but in what proportions and in what forms it is impossible to say (ibid.).

However, one thing that is certain, and history has already proved, is that neither Mao nor the survivors of his Cultural Revolution in the new regime intended to relinquish the rule of the Communist Party in China and its control over the Chinese people. There might be controversies among them about how to govern the country, but certainly not about the substance of political control. In discussing the similarities of Mao and Deng in their thinking, Fairbank held that "the about-face in CCP policy from class struggle to economic reform was a startling change in the means, if not the ends, of the Chinese revolution" (Fairbank 1986, 343). Hua Guofeng was Mao's hand-picked successor and Deng Xiaoping was Party Secretary General at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution and was active in political campaigns before
1966. Fairbank pointed out that "if one looks back one finds that these prominent victims like Deng Xiaoping had been full and active supporters of the Anti-Rightist Campaign of 1957-59" (ibid., 338). Therefore, he said, Americans might have too easily idealized the prominent individuals destroyed by Mao.

Ample evidence of the identical political goals of Mao and Deng can also be found in the policies of the new regime after 1976. For example, despite headlines and subheadings in American newspapers -- such as "More Cultural Freedom For China," "Social Notes From China: Revival of Body-Contact Dancing...," "Popular Western Novels Made Available in China," and "Ban on Shakespeare Removed by Chinese..." -- the policy that art and literature should serve politics remained in force. The Democracy Wall that was started by Deng shortly after he was rehabilitated is not part of this study as it deserves a more extended discussion, but it can serve well to illustrate the issue at hand. In 1978, under Deng's encouragement, a Democracy Wall was set up in downtown Beijing for people to plaster posters to air grievances and vent criticisms. It quickly attracted more and more people and the posters raised pointed questions concerning the Party's corruption and failures. In the end, it was Deng himself who in late 1979 ordered the removal of the Democracy Wall from downtown Beijing to a secluded
location. A number of activists were arrested, among them Wei Jingsheng who was sentenced to 15 years of imprisonment.

So far, there is no written record of the real motivation behind Deng's initiation of the Democracy Wall. However, an analysis of the changing political situation in China may shed some light on this question. Deng Xiaoping started the Democracy Wall in 1978 when he had not yet consolidated his control after his re-ascendancy and was still engaged in a power struggle with the Hua Guofeng faction. By initiating the Democracy Wall he, in fact, increased political pressure on his opponents, thereby strengthening his own political position. By the time the dissidents directed their criticism at the Communist Party leadership and raised the question of human rights at the beginning of 1979, Deng had already ousted Hua and firmly secured his leadership position. It was then that he clamped down on the Democracy Wall with a cruelty and ruthlessness no less than that of Mao (Dietrich 1986, 248). The farce of a Democracy Wall only proved that the new regime still operated within the old parameters. John Fraser pointed out "when they [Deng and his cohorts] returned to power, they simply turned the clock back to 1966, when they had last been at work, and began to pick up the pieces to put them in the old puzzle" (Fraser 1980, 64).
It is now clear that the three stages of Chinese political development under Communism can be seen as a circle. Despite differences from period to period, the essence of Chinese life remained the same -- control by the Party. Later developments in China also provided strong evidence for this interpretation.

Lack of knowledge about China was evidently the cause of the misperception that life under the Deng regime was fundamentally different from the previous decades of Communist rule. An examination of the sources used for this study shows that American journalists' understanding of China was weakest in the first stage of the Communist rule in China -- the seventeen years between 1949 and the beginning of the Cultural Revolution. This was a period during which bilateral relations between the two countries were non-existent and American journalists were barred from entering China. Since a person's image of a country is based on his knowledge and special encounters with that country, the lack of direct contact for two decades would no doubt create misperceptions.

Ironically, the messages foreign correspondents received from their direct contact with the Chinese during these two years also played a role in misleading them. Foreigners were perhaps unaware that the Chinese were limited in expressing their grievances. Criticism of the Cultural Revolution and the Gang of Four was allowed, but
any directed at Mao Zedong and the Communist Party per se, including the present leadership, was forbidden. Obviously, this was aimed at saving the reputation of the Party and justifying its continued rule. To explain the principle, the Party used a Chinese proverb which says: to kill the mice without damaging the precious tray on which the mice stands. Under the circumstances, people did not dare to put Mao on a par with the Gang of Four or to express their doubts about the new regime. What foreign correspondents heard on the one hand was censuring of the Cultural Revolution and the Gang of Four and on the other praise of the new regime. The Cultural Revolution and the Gang of Four were thus singled out and the historic links among the three closely-knit periods were thus broken.

During this period the three newspapers' coverage of some major social trends was inadequate. An outstanding example was the issue of pay raises in 1978, the first pay raise for Chinese workers in twenty years. A year after Mao's death the Deng regime, in a gesture aimed at improving people's lives, decided to lift the pay freeze that had been in effect since the late 1950s. Fox Butterfield called the move "one of the most far-reaching and controversial changes China's new leaders have undertaken" since the epoch year of 1976 (Butterfield, CSM 9 Oct. 1977). A CSM article "Wages: A Tale of Two Countries" said that "it would take a great leap backward
of the imagination for Americans to think of themselves in the positions of China's workers who are about to get their first pay raises since the late 1950s" (CSM 19 Oct. 1977). It is not difficult to imagine that this meant a great deal for Chinese urban dwellers who depended on salaries. After the government announced the decision, it instantly became the topic of daily conversation everywhere. However, for an issue that had such widespread social repercussions, the amount of coverage turned out to be minimal. The passages by Butterfield and the CSM article were written shortly after the government announced the decision to lift the wage freeze in 1977, but the actual pay raise was carried out in the following year of 1978. Research shows that few articles reported on the ripple effects during and after the event.

Another widespread social phenomenon with a far-reaching impact on people's lives was the "back-door" system, which the Chinese described as: "it is difficult to move forward even for an inch without the back door". This system was a direct result of the shortage of supplies and social services which prompted people to cultivate connections to get what they could not obtain through regular channels. A joke that ridiculed the situation told about an old woman who was standing in line to buy fish when it was a rare commodity in the market. When she saw several customers not in line but carrying
fish in their baskets, she asked: "Comrade, where did you get the fish?" "The back door," they told her. Being out of touch with current realities due to her age, she naively took the "back door" literally and began inquiring "where is the back door?" In his book *The Chinese*, John Fraser stated that "on all levels of Chinese society, the most significant and potentially destructive response to Communism is 'the back door' -- the euphemism for all transactions between people that are not countenanced by the State" (Fraser 1980, 409). Yet, in the source materials for this period, few reports specifically described this widespread social practice.

Among news stories during this transitional period, some misinterpretations of Chinese social phenomena and culture were also found. Take the poor work ethic of Chinese workers as an example. In explaining the causes of an "unchinese" behavioral pattern, a few American journalists suggested that the lackadaisical attitude was the result of the shortage of consumer goods. Jay Mathews wrote: "The attitude appears to be -- why work hard for more money if there is nothing to spend it on?" (Mathews, WP 30 Dec. 1977). Ross Monro, after quoting the official Chinese press about peasants' not showing up to work in the fields, explained: "There is not much point in working to save money if there is nothing to spend the money on"
This perception needs some clarification.

It is commonly acknowledged that a basic feature of the pay system in China under Communist rule is that everyone is given a fixed salary without taking into consideration one's efficiency, skill and conscientiousness. In other words, nobody was rewarded with higher pay just because of his dedication and expertise. The twenty-year wage freeze also indicated that no matter how hard one worked, there was no promotion in sight. American journalists and other visitors did realize that this system was unfair. Jay Mathew himself pointed out in the same article:

> Whether on strike or at work, whether playing poker or exceeding the production target, every Chinese worker gets paid every month a salary that is rarely more or less than that received by the next fellow in the assembly line (Mathews, WP 30 Dec. 1977).

The Chinese ridiculed the system by saying that the man who does work gets $16 a month; the one who doesn't gets $17 a month because the latter could save the bus fare (ibid.). This suggested that the nonchalant attitude of the Chinese workers had nothing to do with material benefits because hard work would not bring extra income. Therefore, whether consumer goods were available or not was not the point. It was simply the unreasonable and
unscientific pay system that dampened the workers' productive enthusiasm. "But the system," Fox Butterfield argued, "makes it hard to work hard" (Butterfield, *NYT* 1 Jan. 1981). Though changes in people's income came along with Deng's reform, the pay system proved to be hard to change. Orville Schell wrote as late as 1984 when Deng's reform program was in full swing that "workers had for years received a flat salary of between thirty to fifty-five yuan a month (two yuan are approximately equivalent to one United States dollar) no matter how efficiently they produced" (Schell 1984, 13).

The social climate under Mao's principle of "putting politics in command" was also a factor contributing to the lackadaisical attitude among workers. "Putting politics in command" in effect meant that those who showed the slightest interest in improving their work or advancing their professional skills were labeled "white expert," in contrast to "red and expert," as advocated by the Party. "Red" symbolized whole-hearted loyalty to the Party and "white" meant the opposite. To avoid being the target of criticism and trouble, people either tried to improve themselves in secret or simply gave up their urge to develop themselves professionally. A Hong Kong man who had relatives in China and visited them often said: 'Why should anyone work hard? There's no real incentive. Until recently, if you tried extra hard to do a good job, you
might be accused of putting profit ahead of politics' (Fraser 1980, 354).

As for the farmers, no work did mean no work points. So why did they stay home and not show up for work? The answer is simple. The Cultural Revolution's destructive impact affected the whole country, including the rural areas. With the drop in productivity, the value of the work points for the farmers also decreased from their already very low level. In addition, the policies of the Gang of Four forbade peasants to engage in all kinds of side occupations. The two debilitating factors combined meant starvation for many. Under the circumstances, some peasants would take leave from time to time in order to find miscellaneous jobs to make extra money. As a matter of fact, the official Chinese press Monro quoted had provided the answer for the peasants' unenthusiastic behavior: "The official press is telling stories of rural work units where peasants are staying at home or wangling some other jobs that will keep them out of the fields" (Monro, CSM 20 July 1977). At any rate, the life of the peasants at this point focused more on survival than on making more money for consumer goods. The latter was to happen for some peasants during the reform period a few years later.

Ross Monro's report on compound life quoted earlier is also a case of misconception as well as exaggeration.
It was true that most people lived in the housing compound which belonged to either the husband's or the wife's work unit. Some of the residential complexes were built by the city and shared by different factories or institutions. Anyone who has been to big cities in China like Beijing and Shanghai could not miss seeing that some groups of residential complexes occupy so much land, sometimes stretching as long as several blocks, that this made the building of walls around them unfeasible. Usually, each residential area had a neighborhood committee manned on a voluntary basis by elderly housewives. One of their tasks was to be vigilant about signs of criminal or politically suspect behaviors within their jurisdiction and report them to the security bureau. But certainly this was vastly different from life in a concentration camp behind high walls. The neighborhood committee also had many other tasks including organizing political studies for housewives, providing services such as laundry and simple tailoring and alterations. Takashi Oka in his story of his visit to the Tianqiao neighborhood committee in Beijing reported what he was told by two of the committee members:

"As the neighborhood committee, we are responsible for finding jobs for anyone who is registered as a resident of our area. Last year, for example, we had to take care of 3,046 young people waiting for employment" (Oka, CSM 14 April 1981).
Residents of a neighborhood compound had choices as to how to take care of their children. Some left them at home with their grandparents; some sent their children to individuals who offered care. Most people would vie for the vacancies in the nursery run by their own work unit, if they had one, because it was closeby and less expensive. Children of school age as a rule were sent to schools in the district where they lived, but exceptions did exist. The truth was that most of the neighborhood areas had neither their own nurseries and schools nor their own stores. People had to stand in lines several times a day just to buy food and groceries as refrigerators were still considered a luxury. They would have been very happy if "compound stores" had existed to take care of their shopping needs.

A less consequential example of misconception involved Chinese eating habits. At one point in 1978 Chinese authorities called for increasing supplies of low-priced bread to save people's time in their daily cooking. In reporting this, John Fraser wrote in "China's New Revolution, Bread" that "...the patient Chinese are waiting for a strange new kind of food they have been told will soon become a regular staple in their daily diet" (Fraser, CSM 8 Sep. 1978). It is uncertain as to when bread was first introduced to China. But one thing is sure: long before in 1949, bread had already become a
familiar food for the Chinese. It had come along with the establishment of foreign concessions in major Chinese cities. It is true that southern Chinese tend to use rice and northern Chinese wheat flour as their staple food. But bread had become a common item for breakfast, afternoon tea, or snacks. Restaurants serving Western food had been in business long before 1949 and some of them remained in business under Communist rule. If Mr. Fraser meant by calling bread "a strange new kind of food" that it would take Chinese some time to adjust themselves to substitute bread for rice and wheat as a basic staple, it would be quite acceptable. But to call bread a "strange" food for the Chinese sounds strange to Chinese ears.

In the same article, Fraser reported that "the Chinese also eat out more than any other people," and the authorities had become distressed because "the government feels they [the people working at restaurants] could be better employed elsewhere" (ibid.). It is doubtful that the Chinese rank the "first" among those in the habit of eating out, but whether they do or not at a time when unemployment in China had become serious, with rusticated youths streaming back to the cities, the government would have been more than happy to find jobs for the unemployed. As a matter of fact, the Chinese government later provided loans for young people to open restaurants simply to solve the unemployment problem.

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From the vantage point of studying culture, it is clear that these misinterpretations were quite unavoidable. First of all, one should remember that the two-year period under discussion served as a transition between the Cultural Revolution and the period of reform. It was only the beginning of all the transformations China was to experience in the years to follow. Restrictions on foreigners' contact with ordinary Chinese had just started to ease and genuine contact between the two sides had not yet, if ever, been truly established. Clifford Geertz points out that "the whole point of a semiotic approach to culture is...to aid us in gaining access to the conceptual world in which our subjects live so that we can, in some extended sense of the term, converse with them" (Geertz 1973, 24). Lacking this tool, correct interpretation of a strange culture is difficult even when one is physically amongst the perceived and even knows the native language. Furthermore, in interpreting a culture, the perceiver tends to analyze it unconsciously in terms of his own understanding of social behavior and his own value concepts derived from his own cultural background. As Geertz argues, "analysis penetrates into the very body of the object -- that is, we begin with our own interpretations of what our informants are up to, or think they are up to, and systematize those..." (ibid., 15). For example, in the minds of Westerners immersed in
the capitalist system, being hard working and being rewarded are always closely linked and in direct proportion to one another. One would be stepping on thin ice to interpret Chinese phenomena in terms of one's own cultural expectations. This also explains why an image says something about the mentality of the perceiver as well as the perceived.

The three newspapers' coverage of China during this two-year period presented three different pictures. It revealed the horrors of the Cultural Revolution that were previously unseen as a result of the cover up by the Gang of Four. Against the background of a ruinous decade, the news stories reported China's efforts at pulling back from many of the radical practices that had been enforced during the ten dark years. Reports also vividly described how China was heading toward a political environment that was unprecedentedly open and liberal, with the leadership moving forward in a tug-of-war manner and the public being cautious and suspicious. However, despite the more relaxed atmosphere and encouraging signs of progress, deplorable material conditions remained. The important message these news reports sent to American readers was that China was at a crucial juncture ready to steer away from the rigid Communist rule of the past and adopt an open door policy that was more favorable in the eyes of the Western
countries. Under the new political circumstances, the images that appeared in the newspapers became much clearer and more realistic. The three newspapers' coverage of this transitional period, as a whole, marked a step forward in American journalists' understanding of China and the Chinese. However, irrespective of increasing knowledge about China, perceptions at this point remained superficial. Since the period from 1976 to 1978 was only the beginning of a new era of hitherto unknown liberalism in the history of Chinese Communist rule, genuine contact between foreign correspondents and ordinary people was still in an embryonic stage. Most of the descriptions turned out to be quite accurate. But interpretations disclosed that the conceptual response to what foreign journalists saw lacked depth and historic comprehension.
CHAPTER V

AMERICAN IMAGES OF CHINA

THE REFORM PERIOD: 1979-1985

The development of Chinese society during the reform period between the years of 1979 and 1985 -- the last stage of the present study -- was a continuation, on a gigantic scale, of the more liberal and open policies of the Chinese government that started after the death of Mao Zedong in 1976. In the power struggle between the liberal faction headed by Deng Xiaoping and the Maoists with Hua Guofeng at the lead, Deng emerged as the winner and became the "paramount leader" of the country, thus enabling him to fulfill his ambition to overhaul China's calamitous economy and strengthen the rule of the Chinese Communist Party. With the Party's approval at the Third Plenum of its central committee convened at the end of 1978, Deng proceeded full speed ahead with his reform program.

To set the stage for the radical change in Party policies, Deng sought to transform totally basic values regarding individual pursuit of economic advancement and material betterment. The Chinese public was instilled with the idea that "it is glorious to be rich," which was an apparent deviation from the Party's fundamental doctrine of the past three decades. The new concept prepared the way for the dramatic transformations of economic system.
The Deng regime also took concrete steps to stimulate the Chinese economy. Under Mao and the Gang of Four, material incentives were taboo, for the Communist leadership claimed that political consciousness, meaning loyalty to the Communist Party and Mao, would provide enough motivation for people to work hard. The thrust of Deng's changes in economic policies, however, was to use material incentives to stimulate people's enthusiasm to produce more. Representative of these changes was Deng's drastic move to dismantle the commune system set up by Mao in the 1950s and replace it with the "responsibility system." Under the new system, individual peasants or groups of families were held responsible for producing grain on the land assigned to them by government contract. They were required to deliver to the government a set amount of grain at the official price and could keep the rest for themselves, no matter how much they produced. The government also allowed the peasants to sell their surplus produce in the free market and pocket the money. The "responsibility system" kindled the fervor of Chinese peasants to raise productivity and did help to increase their incomes remarkably.

The "responsibility system" was also applied, to a certain extent, to government-owned factories, enterprises, and other institutions. This led to booming bonuses that in some cases doubled or even tripled
people's basic salaries. At the early stage of the reform program, the government also gave the green light to people to engage in moonlighting as a means to earn extra income with their skills. This was unprecedented in post-1949 China. Practically every working person had become a government employee from the time that the government nationalized all privately owned enterprises left over from the Guomindang regime in the mid-1950s. The implementation of these new policies, therefore, affected almost all working citizens in the urban areas.

Deng's decision to establish private enterprises, deemed by Mao to be the hallmark of capitalism and the cause of exploitation of man by man, was an even more drastic move that stunned many both in China and abroad. The reemergence of private enterprise in China was a clear indication of how far the Communist Party under Deng Xiaoping was willing to go in changing the economic system. At the same time, the growing number of private businesses provided needed services and products for the people and a partial solution for the unemployment problem among the youth.

Accompanying dramatic changes in the economic field was a trend towards liberalization in other aspects of people's lives, especially in the cultural and leisure arena. On the basis of the "cultural thaw" that followed the fall of the Gang of Four, Chinese authorities under
Deng Xiaoping further relaxed restrictive policies regarding Western cultural forms and entertainment. The scope and speed of change were astonishing. As with economic policies, Chinese authorities also deviated from many of the principles and rules that they had adamantly adhered to in the past. Jazz and rock 'n roll, for example, were labeled as decadent music as late as the early 1980s. In a few years, however, Chinese authorities not only endorsed these musical forms, but they even took the initiative to invite rock'n roll groups from the West to perform in China. The public welcomed these open-door policies and took advantage of the rare opportunity to enjoy cultural diversity.

If one assumes, however, that the more relaxed political atmosphere and the rising living standard which resulted from the new policies had fundamentally changed the basic conditions of the Chinese economic life, one would be in danger of taking a euphoric view of the Chinese situation again. The problems of over-population and lack of material comforts are historic, deep-rooted and hard to change. Also, the reforms created new problems such as the polarization of rich and poor and the resurfacing of social evils. Particularly damaging were spiralling inflation and rampant corruption among Chinese officials and their children. Public resentment abounded and restlessness among young people became vocal.
To put the Chinese situation during the reform period in perspective, it is also important to remember that despite the propensity toward liberalism and openness, political control remained the essence of Party policy. Admittedly, people enjoyed more freedom of speech and expression during the reform period. However, the Party leadership had set clear limits that forbade people to step beyond their criticism of the Cultural Revolution and the Gang of Four to include Mao, the Communist Party, its leading role, the socialist system, or the present leadership. The policy shifts between more liberal approach and tighter control as seen in the previous period showed that the degree of freedom permitted was at the discretion of the Party and determined by the outcome of factional bickerings. Yet neither the liberal faction nor the conservative faction had the intention of giving up the Communist Party's control and steering China toward a democratic system. Events of the late 1980s testify to this assessment.

The images of China during the reform period reflected in the three American newspapers under study can be divided into two groups -- positive and negative. The former centered on two major aspect of Deng's reform program -- the economic changes and cultural liberalization. The negative view, however, applied to more areas of Chinese society. It continued the same theme
of the previous two periods -- China's inadequate and deplorable material conditions; but it also depicted the new social problems that resulted from the adverse effects of the reform policies.

THE POSITIVE IMAGE

Of the 139 news reports in the source materials with positive views during this period, about half were devoted to the successes of the economic reform program, the benefits it brought the public, and the changes in people's lifestyles that followed. The other half portrayed the lively cultural activities that flourished as a result of the liberalism and openness of this specific historical period.

The three major American newspapers studied depicted the reform period of China in a very favorable light. They viewed the reform program of the Deng regime as a popularly supported effort to provide long overdue opportunities for the Chinese people for a better life. "People are fed up with ideology," a Chinese woman told Christopher Wren (Wren, NYT 16 Dec. 1984). Ellen Wallace wrote that "since Deng Xiao-ping came to power in 1978 and instituted economic reforms, the Chinese have embraced change enthusiastically" (Wallace, CSM 6 Nov. 1985).

One of the main subjects of this favorable image of the reform program was the change in social values and
concepts among the Chinese. Jude Wanniski was surprised at the "total absence of interest in the communist idea among the people and in the government." She said that "never once during nine days in Peking and Shanghai did I feel I was in a Communist country. China is running, not walking down the capitalist road" (Wanniski, NYT 25 Oct. 1983). Daniel Southerland, writing about his visit to the Xingang Shipyard and a plastic factory near Tianjin, declared that "gone is 'egalitarianism" (Southerland, WP 4 April, 1985). He noted that now "the emphasis is on increasing efficiency, and giving bonuses to those who produce" and "it was difficult to find much evidence of the once all pervasive Communist ideology" (ibid.).

An outstanding theme in the portrayal of the reform program was that the Chinese were "getting rich fast." In his article "Enterprising Chinese Peasants Edge Toward $5,000-a-year Incomes," Takashi Oka exclaimed that "Horatio Alger is alive and well and living in a Chinese village" (Oka, CSM 17 Nov. 1983).

Christopher Wren wrote that in Sichuan Province "...per capita income in one area village has reached $170 a year, more than double what it was five years ago before the responsibility system was officially sanctioned" (Wren, NYT 14 June 1982).

Harrison Salisbury reported that "the press has begun to publicize authentic examples of '10,000 yuan'"
families," adding that "there are even cases of families earning 30,000 or 40,000 yuan a year" (Salisbury, NYT Magazine 18 Nov. 1984).

The establishment of private enterprises and their rapid development attracted much of the spotlight from the three American newspapers. According to John Burns, there were 66,000 private businesses in China by 1980 and they had increased to 9.3 million by the end of 1984. A year later, they totalled 10.6 million (Burns, NYT 3 Oct. 1985). He wrote that many of the private entrepreneurs admitted to earning 500 yuan, about $170 a month and more, which was about five times the city's average wage (ibid.). News stories continuously recounted the experience of individual entrepreneurs who found new wealth under the new policies. A few examples will suffice to illustrate.

Christopher Wren reported on a Mr. Liu, a peasant in Guangdong Province:

[Mr. Liu] made his money, which by Chinese standards is equivalent to an American six-figure income, by raising 7,500 plump ducks for export to the dining tables of Hong Kong. Last year he built another two-story house and gave one of his daughters a generous wedding dowry. He bought three more bicycles and a hand tractor to replace the water buffalo that plowed his rice paddies (Wren, NYT 10 April 1983).
Takashi Oka wrote about a woman by the name of Liu Guixian, who was formerly a chef in a Peking hotel where she was making $40 a month. However, after she started her own restaurant with a loan of 500 yuan from the government bank, she made $20 profit in a day. She repaid the loan in five months. So popular was her restaurant that the customers had to have reservations and paid in advance (Oka, CSM 24 Feb. 1981).

Daniel Southerland's Horatio Alger story was about a street peddler in Wuhan. Wang Chunzhi, a widow, started out with $62 as her capital, selling wares like buttons, thread, and hairpins. Seven years later, according to Southerland, Mrs. Wang built a three story house for $7,800, with six rooms and 200 square feet of space for each person in her family (Southerland, WP 12 Nov. 1985).

As a part of the "getting rich" image, news reports also described the changing lifestyle of the Chinese. Christopher Wren reported:

China's drab cities have taken on new vivacity in the last few years. Billboards on the streets hawk television sets, cassettes, recorders and cameras. The frugal habit of wearing clothing for 'three years new, three years old and three years of sewing and mending' has given way to colorful new jackets and jeans for many young people and Western business suits for some if not all of their elders (Wren, NYT 16 Dec. 1984).
Fashion was reportedly one of the new social hits. A Reuters article noted that China until recently was dominated by the Mao suit in greens and blues. But now, "along Nanking Road, the main shopping street in trend-setting Shanghai, young women are wearing hems ranging from a conservative midi-length to seven inches above the knee" (Reuters, CSM 15 July 1985).

A United Press International article on the opening of the first fashion school in China quoted a model and dress designer as saying "the whole idea of having fashion is to show off the beauty of the female figure." The article commented that "remarks like that a few years ago could have landed her in reform school" (UPI, CSM 12 Jan. 1981).

Other reports on this subject described the Pierre Cardin Fashion show (Fraser, CSM 21 March 1979), cosmetic surgery and diet (Weisskopf, WP 15 Feb. 1982) and the return of the maids for housework (Wren, NYT 24 March 1984).

Accompanying descriptions of the economic revitalization were depictions of a sweeping liberalization in the cultural area. This was seen as a further step forward on the basis of the changes made in the transitional period. Not only were traditional Chinese pursuits of leisure revived, such as nurturing plants and flowers and raising pet birds, but Western cultural forms
of entertainment were also imported on a large scale. The

_{CSM}'s music critic Thor Eckert Jr. reported in 1979 that

"the Boston Symphony Orchestra trip to the People's

Republic of China was, obviously, a historic event - the

first official cultural exchange with the United States

since the normalization of relations (Eckert, _CSM_ 19 June

1979). Eckert described the degree of thirst for Western

classical music among the Chinese, some of whom "camped

out for over 48 hours to get a ticket to this highly

publicized event" (ibid.).

The climax of the rapid opening of the Chinese

cultural front came when the newspapers reported on the

Chinese government's invitation to the British rock group

Wham to perform in China. News articles pointed out that

only a few years before Chinese authorities condemned jazz

and rock music as decadent, but now they called the music

of Wham "very healthy for youth." Julian Baum noted that

"Wham's visit, along with an American film festival and

other events...seem like springtime for Western culture in

China" (Baum, _CSM_ 9 April 1985). Daniel Southerland wrote:

Wham's appearance here...seemed to represent

another step in China's opening up to outside ideas and influences. Other steps have included official tolerance for Western style dancing, the widespread dissemination of cassettes of songs by Taiwanese and Western pop singers and the introduction of more colorful fashions (Southerland, _WP_ 8 April 1985).
Large numbers of Western movies were also imported in the first half of the 1980s. They included, at first, Charlie Chaplin's films, "Hunchback of Notre Dame," "Jane Eyre," "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner," and "Death on the Nile" (Mathews, WP 8 June 1980). By the end of 1985, Julian Baum reported, such films of extreme violence as "Rambo" and "First Blood" became hit movies in China (Baum, CSM 15 Oct. 1985).

The same liberalizing tendency was also reflected in other cultural areas covered by the three newspapers. In education, for instance, the emphasis began to tip toward being academically and professionally expert rather than being politically loyal as in the past. News stories indicated that college examinations were restored and had become so tough and competitive that a Chinese scientist told Takashi Oka that "Einstein would have failed our Chinese university entrance examinations" (Oka, CSM 6 Aug. 1981). Other reports mentioned the improvement of Chinese intellectuals' social status, such as Jay Mathews' article "In Chinese Schools, Teacher, Not Mao, Is Final Authority" (Mathews, WP 27 July 1980).

THE NEGATIVE IMAGE

Unlike the source materials offering a positive image, the news reports with negative views did not concentrate on just a few subjects. Instead, they spread
quite evenly over a number of themes. Among 141 reports with negative views, only 38 dealt with the economic and material aspects of Chinese life. And among the 38, only 11 discussed the reform program directly. The rest covered a number of subjects in the cultural and social areas.

The majority of the news stories with unfavorable views on economic conditions focused their attention on the basic realities of Chinese life -- poverty, primitiveness, and deprivation. Although this image was built on the themes of the initial and transitional periods, it stood in much sharper contrast to the positive images of the reform period. While reports with positive views appraised the fast growing wealth of the private businessmen, Fox Butterfield presented another picture when he quoted some Western studies as saying that the Chinese diet "averages only about 2,100 calories a day," of which perhaps about "80% derived from grains like rice and wheat rather than meat or fish, the highest percentage of any country in Asia..." (Butterfield, NYT 1 Jan. 1981).

Takashi Oka wrote that "for the most part, daily existence still goes on pretty close to the bone," and "the word frugality takes on a new dimension when applied to China" (Oka, CSM 19 June 1984).

Portraying the crowded public transportation system in Shanghai, Michael Weisskopf wrote that "...transit planners allot bus space according to the number of shoes
that can fit safely into 10 square feet of bus—a maximum of 18. At peak times, however, the shoe count reaches 22” (Weisskopf, WP 6 Jan. 1985). On housing conditions, a frequent subject all through the three periods, Weisskopf noted in the same article:

The housing crisis packs the community so tightly that people have difficulty separating their lives. It slashes through all levels of society, pitting neighbor against neighbor in quarrels over communal space and forcing students into the streets to do their homework under dim streetlight for lack of space or quiet at home (ibid.).

Apart from the progress of the reform program publicized by the Chinese government, Wren wrote that "there remains another, bleaker side of rural China rarely shown to foreigners" (Wren, NYT 18 Dec. 1984). Reports indicated that not all Chinese farmers benefitted from the new "responsibility system." To meet the government quotas under the new system, Jonathan Unger said, "families that had few hands but many mouths to feed are worse off than under the collectives" (Unger, CSM 2 May 1984). Dinah Lee, quoting a Chinese official’s words, reported that "70 million people, or about 14 million households, would receive government aid this year" (Lee, CSM 3 Feb. 1985). John Burns said that poor people in the Shenzhen New Economic Zone were selling their babies to foreigners and there were organized bands of begging children, some of
whom were only three or four years old (Burns, NYT 28 Aug. 1985).

Political control had been a continuous theme in all three periods. However, under the special circumstances of the reform period, it was described as taking a "zig zag" course. With the liberal and conservative factions in the Chinese Communist leadership fighting to influence China's developmental directions, Party policies oscillated between two extremes. In this respect, no subject was more illustrative than the portrayal of the creative life of Chinese writers and artists.

Writers and artists had always been under the supervision of the Chinese Communist Party. The fight for more creative freedom by Chinese writers and artists and against the insistence on censorship by the Party had been a tug of war all through the years of Communist rule. At the end of 1979, reports pointed out that delegates at a writers' congress responded with the "loudest applause" when Deng Xiaoping said that "no outside interference [in writers' creative work] should be permitted" (Butterfield, NYT 22 Nov. 1979). News articles also told stories that the Party even tolerated art works with anti-authority implications. Fox Butterfield described a sculpture at an art exhibition:

In a dark brown rectangular wooden sculpture titled "Self-Portrait," Wang Ke-ping [the artist]
depicts himself as a creature with the body of a man and the head and tail of an ape. Above this beast, squashing him down, is the spine of a book. The tome is not labeled. But many of the thousands of visitors...recognized it as the famous Little Red Book of quotations of Mao Zedong. 'It was such a weight on us we regressed into apes,' explained Wang...(Butterfield, NYT 25 Dec. 1979).

More than half a year later, however, news stories reported that, angered by a film (Bitter Love) which criticized the Party for persecuting patriotic artists, high ranking Party officials called for public criticism of the playwright as well as other authors and editors who believed that they should have more freedom to write and publish what they liked. James Sterba quoted Chinese Party Chairman Hu Yaobang as saying that those writers and artists who had "an engrained hatred for new China, socialism and our Party" should be "punished by law for their counterrevolutionary activities" (Sterba, NYT 30 Sep. 1981). "Writers in China," Takashi Oka noted, "have already battened down their hatches for a long, cold winter" (Oka, CSM 15 Oct. 1981).

However, no sooner had calm been restored after the controversy concerning Bitter Love, when another storm arose in a campaign against "spiritual pollution." Mary-Louise O'Callaghan reported:

For nearly two months, the official Chinese news media have been filled daily with stories of the
horrors and dangers of Western philosophies, art, and literature as a part of a campaign against 'mental' or 'spiritual' pollution (O'Callaghan, CSM 12 Dec. 1983).

Barely a year passed before the political wind changed its direction again. By the end of 1984, reporting on the Conference of China's Writers Association which 800 poets, novelists, and playwrights had attended, John Burns noted that Hu Qili, who oversaw cultural matters in the Party Secretariat, "assured them of the Party's determination that 'literary creation must be free' and vowed that writers must never again be punished or subjected to political discrimination" (Burns, NYT 1 Jan. 1985). Some writers, Burns wrote, "hailed the speech as heralding a new golden age for Chinese literature" (Burns, NYT 6 Jan. 1985). It was in this kind of policy swings that writers and artists were being pushed around and controlled.

One of the topics within the negative image was unemployment, which involved mostly young people who drifted back from the countryside and were without jobs. Discussing the problem, Bryan Johnson wrote:

Meanwhile, millions of Chinese are reported to be unemployed - or under the local euphemism, 'waiting for assignment.'

Millions more are seriously underemployed, educated young people forced to work on rural communes or factory assembly lines. And there are still an estimated 10 million 'sent-down youth,' young people from the cities sent to the country during the Cultural Revolution, who have been
drifting back - usually jobless - to the cities (Johnson, CSM 27 Aug. 1980).

News articles also reported that along with the ongoing reform, social evils that had disappeared after the Communists assumed power began to resurface and the crime rate was rising. There were stories about stealing, prostitution, corruption, and superstitious practices such as witchcraft, fortune-telling, and geomancy.

Among the news reports with negative views, a pervasive theme was rising public disillusionment with the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese government along with the increasing manifestation of anti-authoritarian behavior. Jay Mathews wrote that "doubts about the Communist system are heard in nearly every private conversation with young Chinese" (Mathews, WP, 28 May 1980). A worker wrote in his diary that the Communist Party is even more crafty at exploiting people than capitalists in the old society (ibid.). Writing about audience reaction to a film "The Flying Thief of Emei," Daniel Southerland reported that the audience "kept cheering the thief as he fought with the Chinese police" (Southerland, WP 25 Dec. 1985). There were also articles about young people who organized demonstrations and protest rallies in Beijing and Shanghai. Some even "assaulted officials, blocked traffic and cut power lines" (Butterfield, NYT 13 Feb. 1979). Ross Terrill noted that
"the total subordination of individual will to national will is called into question" (Terrill, NYT 19 June 1979).

A CHINESE PERSPECTIVE

The three American newspapers included in this study reflected the major directions of Chinese society in the first part of the 1980s. One prominent feature of their coverage was the substantive increase in the quantity of news stories in this period and the great diversity in the content of these stories. This was due, perhaps, to the closer relationship between the United States and China that followed the normalization of diplomatic relations in 1979. Obviously, the more liberal and open atmosphere during the reform era in China also stimulated journalistic initiative and contributed to the burgeoning press coverage and its vivacity. Reports from the three newspapers also demonstrated that American journalists had reached a much deeper understanding of Chinese society than in the past.

Closer scrutiny and analysis of the source materials in their entirety, however, reveals that the features of the "portrait" were unbalanced and emphasis misplaced in certain instances. A major case in point was the overly concentrated and overly optimistic reporting of the achievements of the reform program. Some figures may help illustrate this argument: of 83 news reports devoted to
the subject of reform, those with positive assessments amounted to 66 while those with negative ones totaled only 17. Among the 66 stories with favorable views, 23 dealt with the achievements of the reform program in general. The other 43 focused on individual private entrepreneurs — Chinese Horatio Algers — and the resultant rise in the living standards of Chinese. Among the 17 news reports that focused on problems of the reform program, 11 described the plight that some of the newly rich confronted, such as jealous neighbors, difficulties in getting supplies, and unfair competition with state-owned stores. Only 6 reports told stories about those who failed to benefit from the reform program.

The dominant impression that these sources create is that the reform program was a sweeping success and the newly revived private sector a major contributing factor. This impression left out two basic features of Chinese life. First, in spite of improvements in people's living standards, poor living conditions and a lack of basic necessities remained the prevailing reality of Chinese life. Secondly, of all the policy changes that had the effect of elevating the general public's income, the role of the private sector, only developed at the turn of the decade, was actually quite minimal.

Undeniably, economic and material conditions in the lives of the Chinese, both rural and urban, improved under
the reform program due to the fundamental changes in various government policies. The permission to establish private enterprises was only one among these. This did lead to new-found wealth for some bold and enterprising people. Despite gradual expansion of the private sector over the years, it was still a minor part of the economy and affected only a small number of people. Dietrich pointed out that "although these small scale undertakings received attention in the Western press, they still constituted only a tiny proportion of the urban work force" (Dietrich 1986, 275). During the three decades of Communist rule in China private ownership did not exist and was condemned as the epitome of capitalistic evils. It is inconceivable that the Chinese government could have changed the country's economic structure within such a short period, even if it was willing to give up entirely the centrally planned economic system which has remained the hallmark of the Communist system.

There were also some practical reasons for people not to join the private sector. After the Chinese Communist Party nationalized all the private enterprises left over from the Guomindang era in the mid-1950s, practically every Chinese became a government employee and was given an "iron rice bowl." A safety net of sorts, the "iron rice bowl" provided the Chinese people with medical care, housing, social security, child care, a retirement
pension, and other benefits for as long as they lived. With the "wait and see" attitude that prevailed among the Chinese regarding the durability and reliability of the policies of the new regimes, it was understandable that many opted for the safety net, despite the lure of a possible fast track to wealth.

Furthermore, among those who engaged in private businesses, a large number were rusticated Chinese youths who were fortunate enough to be able to return to the cities but unfortunate enough to find themselves out of work. Partly to solve the growing problem of unemployment the Chinese government decided to permit the establishment of private enterprises. Dietrich called these young people "reluctant entrepreneurs." He pointed out that the practice of private or collective businesses emerged only "when it became clear that millions of young people would no longer go down to the countryside and yet could not be provided with state jobs" (Dietrich 1986, 275). The concentrated reporting on the successes of the private enterprises exaggerated their role in transforming the Chinese economy during the reform.

The Chinese economy underwent gigantic restructuring from the time that reform started in 1979. The key to change was the injection of material incentives into the economic system with the aim of reviving human enthusiasm for high productivity and a better life. The
"responsibility system" played a crucial role in this effort. It changed significantly people's attitudes toward their work and enlivened economic activities for all concerned. The bonus system and moonlighting activities that provided people with extra money were much more instrumental in raising incomes than were private enterprises. However, few news stories in the sources devoted attention to these topics.

As mentioned earlier, China has been a poor and backward country for a long time. Though changes were brought about by the new policies, the basic conditions of people's lives remained the same. It may be difficult for Westerners to keep this fundamental factor in perspective against the unceasing efforts of the Chinese government to publicize the bright side of the reform. A NYT article quoted Dr. Nicholas N. Eberstadt of Harvard University's Center for Population Studies as saying that "malnutrition, overpopulation and poverty may be more serious problems for China than Western visitors have been led to believe in recent years" (Browne, NYT 27 March 1979).

While the new policies had led to economic betterment for some people, life for many others, who could not benefit from the reform, become even harder. Fairbank pointed out in China Watch that Deng's reforms enabled some peasants to get rich but caused others to grow poor.
(Fairbank 1987, 200). Generally speaking, peasants in coastal provinces with fair weather, fertile soil, and the convenience of being close to towns gained enormously from the economic reform, but those in remote mountainous areas with foul weather, poor soil, and insufficient water resources still lived in dire poverty and had to rely on government subsidies. "Farmers in a poor, rocky, mountainous region with little irrigation were condemned to poverty unless given a handout from outside," Fairbank noted (Fairbank 1986, 346). Christopher Wren revealed the polarization between the haves and have nots:

...the agricultural changes Peking set in motion nearly six years ago have yet to bring prosperity to tens of millions of peasants in China's mountain and desert expanses, despite the Government's efforts to control a widening disparity between wealth and poverty in rural areas (Wren, NYT 18 Dec. 1984).

On the situation in the cities, Orville Schell wrote:

Although the situation today is far from what it was in prerevolutionary China, one is nonetheless beginning to see an increase in beggars, vagrants, and dispossessed children who roam the streets soliciting handouts. This suggests that, at least for some people, the welfare system has failed (Schell 1984, 74).

A side effect that seriously influenced people's lives and cast a shadow over further economic development was spiralling inflation. The Deputy Director of the
Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Liu Guoguang, was quoted as saying that food prices that had the most impact on people's lives increased 60 percent from 1979 to 1985 (Yu, The Nineties Feb. 1988, p.52). In 1985, in a move to relax price controls, the government again raised prices on some 1,800 commodities with an average increase of 50 percent. But prices for beef were up 120 to 130 percent, and the price for a popular variety of fish rose more than 300 percent (Baum, CSM 10 May 1985). Inflation had become such a major concern in people's lives that it was now a daily topic in conversation. It was also partly the cause of student demonstrations in early 1987. Nevertheless, reports on price reform and inflation were minimal in the sources reviewed. Considering the serious impact inflation had on Chinese life, the scarcity of news on this subject constitutes a serious omission.

It is apparent that the weight of the three newspapers' coverage from 1979 to 1985 tilted heavily toward the positive aspects of the reform, while the negative elements of Chinese life did not receive due attention. This imbalanced portrayal and misplaced emphasis misled American readers. Believing that China was on the right track leading toward economic prosperity and a more Western way of life, they found themselves entirely confused when the bloody massacre occurred in June 1989. However, the excessive attention to the bright side of the
reform program was probably unavoidable because Americans found it so appealing. Thus it serves as a good example of the theoretical concept that an image not only says something about the perceived but also reveals the values and beliefs of the perceivers.

Americans firmly believe that democracy, freedom, and a free market economy are the basis of a prosperous country. The free market system, private enterprise, and the pursuit of personal gains emerging among the Chinese in this period generated considerable American interest because these developments confirmed their beliefs. "Americans believe," David Lampton said, "in the inevitable triumph of capitalism, so they look for things to confirm it" (pers. interview, 1985). Fairbank stated that "Americans are always inclined to feel that others are imitating us" (pers. interview, 1985). For a time during the reform period, Americans became convinced, probably under the influence of the media, that China was discarding the Communist doctrines and embracing the Western system. Thus the ideals and values of Americans prompted them to focus upon the positive side of the reform and neglect its problematic aspects. This case also proves that in the process of absorbing information to form an image, people do not always see what is there but often choose to see what they wants to see.
Structurally, the images of this reform period as a whole also lacked the necessary links to knit them into an organic whole. Source materials showed that American journalists had become quite familiar with the social currents of Chinese society. The majority of the news stories, taking each as an individual mirror, truly reflected what was going on and what was in the minds of the people regarding the specific topics in question. On a broader scale, each subject that American reporters covered was quite accurately described, be it getting rich under the reform program or the persistent poverty, the more relaxed atmosphere, or political control in the context of Party policy swings. Yet in most cases each story stood on its own, dealing with a specific image, positive or negative, without linking it to the surrounding milieu that would help readers gain a proper perspective as to how the specific subject related to the larger picture. It resembled the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle before they are put together. Only those people who were really knowledgeable about China were able to piece the seemingly conflicting elements of information together and see the whole picture in a proper light. To those who were not familiar with the Chinese situation, the lack of structural links between opposing images could be confusing and the apparent conflicts in the information presented hard to explain.
As in the initial and transitional periods, misinterpretations of Chinese social phenomena and Chinese culture were also found during the reform period. Housing problems serve as a good example. The portrayal of housing conditions in general was basically accurate -- the tight space, inferior quality, lack of plumbing and necessary amenities, efforts at getting better housing and the like. However, misconceptions arose in the interpretation of the Chinese reaction to the housing situation. Jay Mathews wrote:

Preference for close family and neighborhood ties probably draws these tradition-conscious people closer together than in other societies. They are used to being jammed together in stores, buses, dining halls and lecture rooms (Mathews, WP 30 May 1980).

In another article, Mathews wrote that "yet perhaps the most disturbing thing, as crowded and poor as the Chinese are, is that they have adjusted to it, and even became a bit proud of their lives (Mathews, WP 14 Aug. 1980).

It is well known that close family ties are highly valued in China as Francis Hsu's "inter-dependency" concept about human relationships among them underscores. Chinese people feel obligated to provide mutual help and support in emotional as well as in practical matters. While this has been a part of Chinese culture for thousands of years, it has little to do with living space.
Like people elsewhere, those with fortunes always live in spacious houses or even mansions. This applies to both ancient Chinese royalty and to Communist officials. As the population in China expanded without sufficient new housing to meet people's needs, housing problems became very severe. As a matter of fact, this has been one of the most critical problems in China and has led to widespread complaints, bribery and corruption. Some managerial officials have used housing as a bait to attract more competent workers. Some employees have used it as a threat to switch jobs. In no way could it be said that people got "used to jamming together" or felt "proud" of such disgraceful conditions. Actually, Mathews' descriptions of people trying desperately to get better housing refuted his own interpretation. In one article, he told a story about a young girl who killed herself when she failed to get housing after spending all her savings to pay bribes to a housing official. He also wrote about an official who "forced people asking him for housing to let their children work as unpaid servants in his house -- doing the marketing, washing clothes, cooking meals and waiting on tables" (Mathews, WP 30 May 1980). In the same article, Mathews reported that a housing official raped and molested a total of more than 19 women by using housing as a threat (ibid.). All these facts show that the Chinese did not adjust to the deplorable living conditions.
Exaggerations also appeared in a few news articles. Harrison Salisbury wrote about what he saw during his 70-day travel in 1984 along the route of the Red Army's Long March that took place in the 30s. It took him to distant regions in China not open to outsiders at the time of his visit. In his lengthy and rather romanticized article in the NYT Magazine, he noted that in both the Sizang (Tibet) Autonomous Region and Gansu Province "rural medical services are first rate, and when peasants are ill, they call for the doctor" (Salisbury, NYT Magazine 18 Nov. 1984). Sizang and Gansu are among the more remote and poor areas of China. Regions that were not open to foreigners were usually more backward and inferior in their material and living conditions. Private phones were considered a luxury in major cities of China, a rarity in the countryside. Rural transportation remained primitive, and medical facilities were basically staffed with so-called "barefoot doctors," who did not receive sufficient professional training. All these facts indicate that Sizang and Gansu, of all the regions in China, could hardly have had "first rate" medical care.

American journalists certainly painted a colorful and informative picture of China during the reform period. They told their readers about the unprecedented changes that were transforming China from a country with a rigid
Communist control system to one that had absorbed many aspects of the Western way of life. At the same time, they also reported on the grim and harsh realities of Chinese life which were similar to the portrayals in the initial and the transitional periods.

American newspapermen proved through their descriptions of events that they had arrived at a more mature stage in their understanding of China and the Chinese. Unlike the news reports written in the earlier stages that conveyed a sense of remoteness, vagueness, or even timidity, during the reform period they wrote not only with confidence but also a certain familiarity about Chinese social currents and the inner world of Chinese people. Most of their portrayals of specific events or subjects were informative, realistic, and written with much detail.

The major problem with the reporting during the reform period was its lack of balance and proportion. The very quantity of the newspapers' near euphoric portrayals of the positive side of the reform program diluted the negative descriptions, which more accurately reflected the daily lives of the Chinese people. In sum, the majority of the news reports that appeared in the three newspapers under study were fine pieces of journalistic work. But the larger picture that emerged from the aggregate whole does not truly capture what China was really like. The
spotlight was on action-oriented, dramatic events and it neglected important underlying Chinese realities. This is also why many Americans found themselves ill-prepared when the June 4 tragedy happened in Tienanmen Square in 1989.
CHAPTER VI
CONCLUSION

The coverage of China and Chinese life by the NYT, the WP and the CSM over the fourteen years from 1972 to 1985 constitutes an important part of Americans' knowledge about China. Because news reports play an important role in structuring and defining popular images, information about China during this period has added significance. After a twenty-year severance of relationships between the two countries, the American public thirsted for information about China. The three newspapers identified the major events in social, cultural, and economic developments in China over time, described positive as well negative aspects of Chinese life, and provided interpretations for contemporary events in China. While the three preceding chapters examined specific features of the images as portrayed by the three newspapers, this chapter will focus on the broad characteristics of the coverage as a whole.

The materials collected from the three newspapers under study displayed a remarkable degree of similarity in identifying major trends in China's development, in their thematic emphases, and in their definitions and assessments of the nature of social events. The extent of
each newspaper's focus on particular facets or phenomena during the fourteen years might vary, but they did not affect the overall convergence of the news stories on a number of identical themes. This special feature of the source materials provides the basis for a discussion of the broad characteristics of the three newspapers' coverage of China in general.

During the entire time frame of the present investigation, there appeared a continuous and steady negative image which evolved and expanded under different political and social circumstances. While poor and inadequate living conditions and political control remained the central themes of this negative image during the entire period, portrayals became more concrete and realistic with time. Meanwhile, social problems and social evils that made only a fragmentary appearance initially gradually gained prominence in the coverage, particularly during the reform era. Along with these sustained negative images was a markedly altered image of the Chinese. At first the Chinese were described as noble beings dedicated to serving their country and the people. Their moral standards and commitment were worthy of admiration. After the Gang of Four was ousted, the Chinese suddenly began to be depicted as victims of the Gang of Four and the Chinese political system that caused them to lead lives of fear and uncertainty. With the reform program starting at the
end of the 1970s, newspaper coverage suggested that the Chinese resembled Westerners in their pursuit of economic prosperity and material comfort.

Examination of the source materials indicated that over time the three newspapers' coverage of China provided their readers with a basically realistic picture of the country in so far as descriptions of individual topics were concerned. Taken together, however, news stories demonstrated a tendency to emphasize superficial social phenomena while ignoring many groups of Chinese. Routine news stories also manifested a lack of sufficient historical and social context and proved to be, in certain cases, inaccurate in their interpretations of Chinese culture and social currents. One significant finding of this study is the disparity between the newspaper images and images identified by American China experts interviewed by the writer. This provided practical examples with which to illustrate assumptions on the nature and formation of images.

The changing images of China and Chinese life as seen in the coverage of the three newspapers in the fourteen years demonstrated that American correspondents made remarkable progress in their understanding of China and the Chinese people. The images of the country in the news stories moved from vagueness, remoteness, and mysteriousness during the initial period to a more
realistic and down-to-earth quality in the transitional period and then to an overly optimistic and less balanced assessment. Apart from the euphoric image and the images of the reform program, the subject matters portrayed in most articles of the three newspapers were basically realistic. This conclusion rests on the fact that the continuous negative images were quite truthful to Chinese realities. Even the euphoric image was not entirely a fantasy. The achievements of the Chinese Communist Party described by the news stories were partly true. The discrepancies stemmed fundamentally from those of timing and exaggeration. For one thing, the euphoric image proved to be only a transient one, and it lost its glow even before the Gang of Four was overthrown. In addition, the unrealistic part of the euphoric view was balanced by the large number of negative portrayals that appeared at the same time. This study, therefore, does not support the generalization of the China experts and journalists interviewed that the prevailing image of China during the earlier years after the United States and China resumed contact was mainly euphoric. Equally, it does not support the sweeping criticism that reporting on China at this time was a "total defeat" (Fairbank 1987, 67). Understandably, the newspaper correspondents were not able to obtain information about the persecution and victimization of large numbers of Chinese still going on.
during the early 1970s. However, they did report extensively on the damage the Cultural Revolution had wrought to the lives of the Chinese and on the beginnings of life returning to normality.

Within the broad framework of descriptions of China and Chinese life, however, there appeared a common approach by the three newspapers stressing dramatic, visible, and easily accessible social groups or personalities while ignoring the less vocal and less visible segments of society. This propensity toward superficiality was not limited to the initial period when the Gang of Four was still in power and foreigners' freedom of movement was very restricted. It was a common characteristic of all three stages to ignore some "silent majorities" in China. After the fall of the Gang of Four, the three newspapers prominently featured stories about those who were freed from persecution, about their past sufferings under them, and about their enthusiasm in starting new lives. However, those who were unable to be rehabilitated and those who had been sent to the countryside for life received minimal attention. Those young people who were lucky enough to have returned from their rural assignments and who become successful in private businesses received constant attention. By contrast, large numbers of city youth who failed to return and who were forced to become peasants were never treated
in the reports. Also those young people who managed to return to the cities and accepted government-assigned menial jobs or who were still unemployed received marginal attention.

The three newspapers also tended to neglect historical and social contexts in their coverage of China. Individual news stories often dealt with one specific subject without supplying needed information on its historical context and its surrounding social milieu. This lack of historical and social context led to the isolation of themes that were in fact interrelated, thus creating a picture of trees without their forest. The lack of historical linkage dates from the three newspapers' early coverage of China. The euphoric image was mainly the result of the "Rip Van Winkle syndrome," which led writers to compare what they saw in the early 1970s with what they remembered from twenty years previously. The manipulation of the Chinese government in restricting what foreigners were allowed to see and whom they could contact also contributed to the formation of the euphoric image. Both the "Rip Van Winkle syndrome" and the Chinese government's efforts at image making had the same effect: ignoring what happened during the two decades of Chinese history from the Communist takeover in 1949 to the time of renewed contact. Thus, China's progress was seen not against the background of its immediate past, but against the
conditions during the declining years of the Guomindang rule twenty years earlier. Chinese people's efforts and sacrifices during the intervening years were not accounted for and the images became distorted.

A lack of historical context was also manifest in the way the three newspapers interpreted the three major historic phases under Chinese Communist Party rule -- the Mao era from 1949 to 1966 before the Cultural Revolution started, the ten years of the Cultural Revolution, and the post Mao era under Deng Xiaoping. As a culmination of the political campaigns waged one after another during the seventeen years under Mao's leadership, the Cultural Revolution was no doubt the continuation of Mao's rule. However, in portraying Chinese society immediately after the fall of the Gang of Four, the news stories of the three newspapers blamed the Gang of Four for China's upheavals and the Chinese people's sufferings, creating the impression that the years before the Cultural Revolution were good years. This impression severed the continuity of the Cultural Revolution from Mao's leadership.

To understand the post Mao era, especially Deng Xiaoping's reform program, a historical perspective is most important. Despite the factional fighting that led to the fall of the Gang of Four and the sweeping political transformation that followed, particularly the drastic
policy changes during the reform period, the fundamental nature of Communist rule was in fact not changed. Deng's past history as a veteran Communist, a staunch supporter of Mao's political campaigns, a core figure in the circle of decision makers of the Chinese Communist Party meant that he would not give up easily the absolute power the Party held. However, in their enthusiastic reporting of the reform program and the liberalizing trends of the early 1980s, the three newspapers described China as having forsaken the rigid central planning system of the Communists and embraced the free market economic system of the West. By neglecting the historical links among different phases of China's development, news stories failed to pinpoint the crucial function of the reform program -- to overhaul the failing Chinese economy in order to strengthen the power of the Chinese Communist Party. Deng and his cohorts did not make any attempt at political reform during the entire reform period. Their later crackdown on the dissident movement was quite consistent.

In their routine depictions of certain individual topics the news stories tended not to provide the proper social contexts which would link particular subjects with the immediate social currents surrounding them. Thus, the subject portrayed, devoid of a proper social setting, was not organically connected with its social milieu. In most
cases news stories describing wealthy private entrepreneurs in the reform period did not supply enough information on poor living conditions which were still prevalent and stories about deplorable material conditions often failed to mention the ongoing reform program. While both were facts of life for the Chinese, these missing links in the news coverage caused confusion and, for those unfamiliar with the Chinese situation, created conflicting images.

The ability to interpret the social, economic, and cultural aspects of a foreign country depends on a sufficient knowledge of that country. Undeniably, American correspondents of the three newspapers, through their increasing direct contacts with ordinary people in China, achieved a great deal of understanding of the Chinese people and their culture. However, the materials reviewed suggest that sojourners in a foreign country were prone to exhibit signs of misperceptions and misinterpretation in their writings. These shortcomings in comprehending and interpreting Chinese phenomena were wide-ranging. Not only did they involve misunderstandings of Chinese culture -- such as whether bread was, indeed, a new and strange kind of food for the Chinese or whether or not they had really adjusted to their congested living space -- but they also influenced the overall picture that the correspondents tried to portray for their readers. To explain the
lackadaisical attitude of Chinese workers towards their work as the result of the shortage of consumer goods rather than the unreasonable wage system is an indication that the reporter lacked sufficient insight into basic social currents in China. News stories' interpretations of the role of private enterprises during the reform period are also a case in point. Defining the emerging private sector in the economic system of China as the major source of the rising living standards and minimizing the impact of the responsibility system on the government-owned enterprises and institutions revealed a misunderstanding on the part of reporters about the relationship between different economic and social forces at work under the reform program.

One significant and interesting finding of this study is the disparity between newspaper images of China and the images identified by American China experts and noted journalists interviewed. The disparity is especially apparent for the initial period. Discussing American perceptions of China during the earlier stage of renewed contact between the two countries, all the interviewees maintained that the initial image was simply euphoric. Harrison Salisbury states:

...the darker side of the Chinese reality tended to be overlooked or touched up lightly in the wave of early reports that emanated from the

The disparity is also reflected in the views of the reform period. In 1985 when China was in the midst of its economic reform, the sources consulted also concentrated on the successes of the reform program despite their negative reporting on other aspects of Chinese society. Regarding this period, however, the China experts and journalists interviewed agreed that Americans' perceptions of China in general had become much more negative than before, though more realistic. This view was reinforced by the publications of Fox Butterfield's book Alive In the Bitter Sea and Richard Bernstein's One Billion, both considered landmarks in Americans' changing perceptions of China toward more negative approaches.

Explanations for these disparities can perhaps be found in the personal or shared experiences of the interviewees. It so happened that the interviewees belonged to the same group of people who either went to China with Nixon or were among the first group of Americans who were invited by the Chinese government to visit China after the resumed contact. Many had former experience in China. A few were even born in China. As guests of the Chinese government, they were treated royally and were shown the best of everything. Most of them were representatives of the euphoric perception at
the early stage of resumed U.S.-China relations. These personal experiences might serve to explain why they tended to "overlook the darker side of the Chinese reality."

During the latter part of the 1970s when China's door was opening wider and wider, especially with the normalization of diplomatic relations between the two countries, more cultural exchanges were arranged between scholars and journalists from both sides. With increasing visits and direct contact with the Chinese public, American scholars and journalists began to learn more about China and the Chinese. At the same time, they were frustrated and angry with the Chinese bureaucracy that prevented them from obtaining information they needed and with the Chinese authorities who isolated them from potential Chinese friends. Moreover, they deplored the lack of freedom for the Chinese people. These might explain their negative views.

The paradox of negative experiences and favorable views of economic reform rested on Americans' value concepts. As Harvard Professor Patrick Maddox noted, "Americans think if you are not like us, you couldn't be that good." (Pers. Interview, 1985). Reporting on the reform program, in many ways, reflected the tendency to see China as moving closer to the American ways. John Service noted:
Americans felt guilty at first for cutting off relations, so they wanted to believe in good things. Then they found out shadows, so they went from one extreme to the other... Now they are fascinated by the reform, thinking this is the end of socialism, China is getting like us (pers. interview, 1985).

Jean-Pierre Lehmann suggests that "image relates to an aspect of reality, but excludes other aspects of reality." He also argues that one sees and believes largely what one wants to, believing in those information that seem to confirm one's prejudices. The discrepancies between newspaper images and those of the interviewees and the conflicting attitude of the interviewees toward China in the later years supply concrete examples in support of Lehmann's definition of image. While newspaper information provides many the basic materials to understand other countries, the final product involves personal or group experience.

The images of China seen in the coverage by the NYT, WP, and CSM during the three stages of development in China changed drastically along with major events there. Compared to the time when American journalists were barred from China, news reports during the fourteen years under study revealed a much deeper understanding gained through direct contact with Chinese society. Direct contact, no doubt, can enrich Americans' knowledge about China and the
Chinese and reduce misperceptions and misinterpretations. But the nature of image means that discrepancies of views between Chinese and Americans will continue to exist and at no time will Americans understand China fully and be prepared for what may happen next. That the Tiananmen massacre occurred in the midst of Americans' praise of Deng Xiaoping's economic reform is a case in point.
EPILOGUE

A decade after Deng Xiaoping began the dramatic economic reform program that won acclaim from Western countries, the Tienanmen Square massacre of June 4 1989 in Beijing stunned the world. Beginning in April that year, the pro-democracy movement initiated by Beijing college students drew more than a million Chinese who demonstrated in Tiananmen Square. The demonstrators demanded democratic rights including freedom of the press, an increase in educational funding, the curbing of rampant corruption among Party officials, and the resignation of Premier Li Peng and China's paramount leader Deng Xiaoping. With widespread support from different segments of the public, the pro-democracy movement later spread to all the provincial capitals and to more than eighty cities and a number of towns (Southerland, WP 20 Aug. 1989). Chinese authorities under Deng Xiaoping, however, responded to the students' demands by dispatching troops from other parts of the country and ordering the ruthless massacre in early June. Hundreds, or even thousands, of people were killed by machine guns and tanks around Tiananmen Square, and large numbers of people who took part in the pro-democracy movement were arrested.
The sudden bloodbath in Beijing caught American officials, journalists, and China experts by surprise since few had predicted that the Chinese authorities would resort to force to deal with the pro-democracy movement. The cruelty demonstrated by the Chinese leadership under Deng Xiaoping did not conform to their perception of a liberalizing China. Americans discovered overnight that the China they thought they knew was actually not on a steady course toward Westernization as they had hoped. This reaction calls for the reassessment of the validity of their images of China during the reform period. "If the 'real China' is fundamentally repressive, and openness is the aberration," Nicholas Kristof stated, "this raises questions about whether it will be as easy for the country to restructure itself politically and economically, as was widely believed" (Kristof, NYT 19 June 1989). Some American journalists admitted that their previous views of China needed some alteration.

An examination of the coverage of the Tienanmen incident by the three newspapers under study showed that American images of China changed abruptly and drastically along with the changing situation. Before the bloodshed in June, American journalists and China experts saw in China an economic miracle created by Deng's reform program that raised the living standards of the people and propelled
the country from the egalitarian poverty of Maoism to the new-found consumerism. They also believed that China, with its more relaxed and open atmosphere, was embracing a free market economy and Western values. Thus its continued progress was deemed almost inevitable. But the Tienanmen massacre betrayed this vision and awakened many Americans. William Hinton, the author of *Famshen*, said that "the massacre was like a flash of lightening in the darkness. It lit up the whole scene and made clear what sort of a government we are dealing with" (Tyson, *CSM* 3 July 1989). Others acknowledged that they had misjudged the Chinese people's dissatisfaction with the Deng regime, minimized the seriousness of the 1986-87 student demonstrations that led to the forced resignation of Party Chairman Hu Yaobang, and overlooked Deng's close links to the hardliners.

Research shows that reporting by the three newspapers under study after the Tienanmen bloodbath centered on three major themes -- the views on Deng Xiaoping and the Chinese regime under his leadership, the effects of the economic reform, and the Chinese people.

As the initiator of China's unprecedented economic reform program, Deng had won admiration from many Americans, journalists included. In their minds, he was a hero not only because he enforced liberal economic policies that changed people's lives substantially for the
better but because he was also the first among all the leaders in the Communist camp to dismantle the central planning system and adopt, at least in part, a free market economy. *Time* magazine even made him the Man of the Year in 1984. Seen as a representative of new forces that were propelling China to the ways of the West, he was believed to be different from the old Communist zealots. After the June bloodbath, however, his image in newspaper reports was completely altered. News stories portrayed him as ruthless and as dictatorial as any of the old Communist demagogues. William P. Alford writing in the *CSM* said:

Deng Xiaoping has consistently tried to foster economic modernization while stifling political change -- as demonstrated by his prominent role in attacking intellectuals in the late 50s to early 60s, in deciding to put dissident Wei Jingsheng on trial in the 70s, and in overseeing the slaying of Tibetan nationals in the 1980s (Alford, *CSM* 19 June 1989).

Admitting that the West had had a benign view of Deng, Daniel Southerland pointed out that "China's paramount leader has always acted ruthlessly when he felt it necessary to preserve the Communist Party's dictatorship" (Southerland, *WP* 20 Aug. 1989). Southerland also reported that, based on a leaked transcript of a high level Party meeting held shortly after Chinese authorities declared martial law, Deng argued against any compromise with the students, saying that "one retreat will lead to
another." He was ready from the beginning, Southerland noted, to crack down on the students with violence (ibid.). He also described Deng as a master manipulator and opportunist who, being economically liberal but politically conservative, "walked a tight rope balancing between the conservative elements and the liberals in the regime," and had shifted his stand toward the former in the wake of the pro-democracy movement (ibid.). Fox Butterfield held that "Deng now seems much like Mao, an old man devouring his own successors with little regard for stability or legality" (Butterfield, NYT 28 May 1989).

The Chinese government, according to American reporters, had impressed people as a liberal government under the control of the reformists headed by Deng. However, after the bloody onslaught in early June, this image suddenly and completely altered. William Hinton called the government "fascist." News reports indicated that the Chinese government had not fundamentally changed as was previously thought. Under Deng's rule, it was noted, dissent was still suppressed, the power of Party officials and their families persisted, the press continued to be censored, and there was a lack of social mobility and job advancement. Bernstein stated that "propaganda and sloganeering, Government secrecy and political intimidation, have never entirely ceased in China (Bernstein, NYT 20 June 1989). The regime, news
articles pointed out, was an aging leadership loosing its hold on the nation. Nicholas Kristof wrote that "the Communist Party has been loosing its grip on the country. This began long before the demonstrations, and it did not happen overnight; the party has suffered a prolonged erosion of its moral authority" (Kristof, NYT Magazine 4 June 1989). He pointed out that "the love, fear or awe that the communist party once aroused have collapsed into something closer to disdain or even contempt" (ibid.).

The earlier assessment of economic reform also changed markedly. While the picture of the nouveau riches, who had been the center of attention in the reform period vanished, negative elements of the reform program that had received little attention before were featured prominently. News reports repeatedly named inflation and corruption the major factors behind people's anger and bitterness. Nicholas Kristof noted that "the immediate causes of public dissatisfaction relate not only to vague yearnings for democracy but, more importantly, to profound economic frustrations and disgust over social inequities and corruption" (ibid.).

Agreeing that inflation and corruption under Deng's regime provided fertile ground for rebellion, Michael Weisskopf cited examples to explain the nuances of the situation. "Typically," he wrote, "the son of a top leader will earn a fat fee for brokering a deal between foreign
and state-run firms...or he will help procure an import license for a fee" (Weisskopf, WP 30 July 1989). As for ordinary people, Weisskopf told a story about a Shanghai professor who was sent abroad to do research for two years. His salary was doubled under Deng's reform policies. However, inflation gradually consumed his increased income and he was reduced to a situation where he could only make ends meet. As economic polarization widened, he became angry and frustrated (ibid.).

Also changed, in regard to economic reform, was the image of the private enterprises that had received widespread publicity in the three newspapers' coverage before the June crackdown. While pointing out that "private enterprises in the cities and rural areas are a miniscule portion of the overall economy," Sheryle WuDunn stated that among the private entrepreneurs who seem to be heroes in foreigners' eyes, many were actually social outcasts. "Most Chinese," she said, "are reluctant to forsake their jobs and plunge into business with its social and political risks" (WuDunn, NYT 16 Nov. 1989).

The Tienanmen uprising also smashed the stereotypes supporting much Western thinking about the Chinese. There has been a misperception among many Americans that in order to survive Chinese are basically submissive in the face of suppression. A careful study of Chinese history shows that violent uprisings against oppression have
marked China's development in ancient as well in modern times. The students' pro-democracy movement in 1989 belonged to their long tradition of reaction to oppression. The demonstrators' calls for democracy and their demands for the resignation of Deng shattered the longstanding impression held by some that the Chinese always submit to a strong, emperor-like leader. Many news reports mentioned with awe and respect the lone young man who stopped a column of tanks single-handedly. Daniel Southerland reported that "everyday, many Chinese repudiate this image, in small ways, by declining to inform on their fellow citizens, or by refusing to cooperate with the authorities" (Southerland, WP 20 Aug. 1989). They used their sick leaves excessively, practiced work slowdowns, hailed the Guomindang in the movie theatres, or called the hotlines set up by the government for people to inform on dissidents to condemn the authorities. The government's attempt to project a new image of unity and normality to the world and its own people has, to a large extent, failed. Southerland admitted that "much of the world, including specialists most familiar with China's traditions and history underestimated the Chinese desire for a freer political system" (ibid.).

The pro-democracy movement and the Chinese authorities' repression opened the eyes of American
journalists and China experts. Their views of China and Chinese life reflected in news stories after the June 4 incident strongly support this researcher's analyses and comments on the newspapers' coverage during the previous three periods under investigation. They show that the American media, despite the improvements made along the years since the early 1970s, have not been successful in presenting a balanced view of China's development to their readers. As a matter of fact, the American media were attacked once again after the Tienanmen massacre as people discovered the disparity between their images and reality. "The American media," William Hinton said, "jumped on Deng's bandwagon almost to a man -- they were so elated to find that China is going for privatization that they bought the whole thing" (Hinton, CSM 3 July 1989). Criticizing the news media's coverage of China as deplorable, William Alford pointed out the "superficiality of years of stories heralding China's conversion to capitalism and democracy and portraying Deng sympathetically" (Alford, CSM 9 June 1989).

Setting aside the highly debatable question of whether the media should bear the responsibility solely for American misperceptions of China during the last decade, it is important to note that from the standpoint of image study a disparity between the views of perceivers from foreign countries and the views of the local people
within the perceived country is, to a certain degree, unavoidable. In fact, the gap between the two always exists and will continue to exist. In the case of China, the differences between the two views can be quite considerable. Marvelling at the diversity in the views of foreigners and Chinese, Nicholas Kristof pointed out that "perhaps it is the pessimism of smart young Chinese, their obvious lack of appreciation for the regime that in the last decade has so palpably increased the opportunities and material comfort that most strikes foreigners (Kristof, NYT Magazine 4 June 1989). He also expressed surprise at the Chinese perception that "China is in the middle of an economic crisis." As to the views on China's future, he stated:

Some young Chinese expect the country to fragment, sometime during the next century, into competing provinces, or military regions. Most foreign China watchers are not so pessimistic; they think it far more likely that China will thrive and become a strong and essential member of the international community" (ibid.).

Differences in knowledge and experience, no doubt, have contributed to such conflicting views. In this case, the crux of the matter seems to be the assessment of how much after all the general public in China had benefitted from economic reform and how genuine was the trend toward liberalization and openness during the reform period.
American journalists may have a conceptual knowledge of the plight of the ordinary Chinese, but they lacked personal experience in such plight. Moreover, their own specific cultural background further separates their perceptions from those of the Chinese. Discussing causes for Americans' misperceptions of China before the Tienanmen massacre, James Tyson suggested that some Americans may have projected American values onto China's politics. He quoted Kenneth Shewmaker as saying:

Coming from an optimistic society accustomed to the ideals of aggregate betterment, social movement, and democratic progress, [Americans in China] speculate about [China's] future with expectations of...improvement in the well being and intelligence of the masses" (Tyson, CSM 3 July 1989).

The Tienanmen incident did clear up some American misconceptions of China and narrowed the gap between the views held by Americans and Chinese. However, this does not mean that conflicting views have been totally eliminated once and for all. While old differences in opinions may disappear, new ones often emerge. It is the tension between image and reality that creates more accurate views of a society. Richard Harwood concludes that "journalists in the West in most cases observe and interpret events as accurately and honestly as the human condition allows. But even the freest press is not
omniscient; it stumbles its way toward truth" (Harwood, WP 2 July 1989). However, in order to reduce the tension and arrive at more accurate perceptions, it is important to conduct more cross-cultural studies and communicate with one another more cross culturally. more cross-cultural studies and communicating more cross culturally.
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