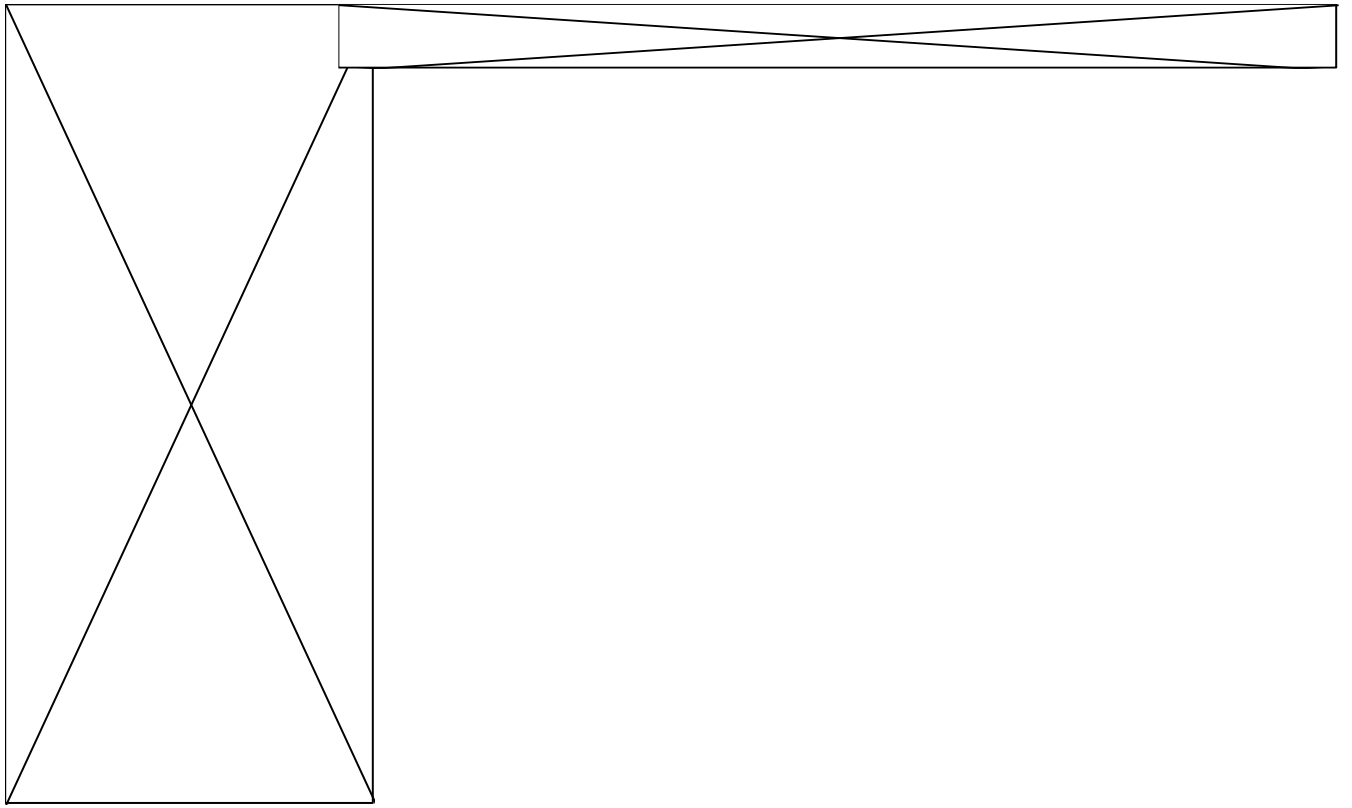


HTAV ANNUAL CONFERENCE –2011



-CHINA-

**MAKING THE MOST OF VISUAL
RESOURCES**



BADGES OF CHAIRMAN MAO



Badges carrying the image of Mao Zedong first appeared in China before liberation. They were produced sporadically until the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, when in late summer 1966 they began to be manufactured in massive quantities. From the summer of 1966 to the summer of 1969, factories, work units and army units across the country stamped out over several billion badges in tens of thousands of varieties. Mao badges were an integral part of the cult of Mao. In his history of the Cultural Revolution, Yan Jiaqi includes a section entitled "Displaying Loyalty and Thought Control". According to Yan, "not long after the start of the Cultural Revolution...it suddenly became the rage to have a 'little red book' in hand and a Chairman Mao badge pinned to the chest." According to one very rough estimate, in 1969 over ninety percent of people wore Mao badges

Each badge was embossed with Mao Zedong's countenance. The vast majority carried the left profile of Mao's head, although some showed full frontal views of his head, his body from the waist up, or, rarely, his whole body. In deference to the prevailing political mood, badges featuring Mao's right profile quickly became taboo. Badges came in many colors, although most were red. Badges usually carried slogans and frequently also depicted a revolutionary site or event. Most badges were round, although as their manufacture proliferated a multitude of shapes appeared, from heart-shaped to flag-shaped, from elliptical to rectangular. Badges ranged in diameter from less than one centimeter to almost two hundred centimeters. Some badges glowed in the dark; others had moving parts. Each badge generally had attached to it a safety pin with which it could be affixed to clothing, or, for the more zealous, directly through the skin. Among the materials used were bamboo, aluminum, gold, silver, porcelain, mother-of-pearl, paper, wood, and even pieces of U.S. fighter planes downed over Vietnam.

Although most of the badges were destroyed following the conclusion of the Cultural Revolution, Mao badges remain the most numerous icons from the tragic decade that many Chinese call "the ten lost years." Some depict famous scenes and events from the revolution and the early years of the PRC

and thus offer an iconographic account of the official history of the Chinese Communist Party. Others show events or carry slogans from the Cultural Revolution, in effect chronicling the major decisions and episodes of the initial stages of the Cultural Revolution. To many Chinese, they are reminders of the insanity that gripped China in that period. But to a growing number of people, they have become valuable collector's items. Cultural Revolution-era Mao badges, once a symbol of loyalty and revolutionary fervor, are now commodities.

BADGES BEFORE 1966

The cult of Mao peaked during the middle years of the Cultural Revolution, but it had its beginnings during the Yanan period and was officially reinforced in the 1942-45 Rectification campaign[Maurice Meisner, Marxism, Maoism, and Utopianism (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982), 157-59.], when Mao and his associates oversaw the rewriting of CCP history and Mao "transformed himself from essentially a military figure to a cosmocratic one...to a Chinese Socrates in full possession of logic and word." [David E. Apter, "Yan'an and the Narrative Reconstruction of Reality," in China in Transformation, ed. Tu Wei-ming (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 211.] It is probably no coincidence then that the first Mao badge most likely appeared during this period. And it is probably also no coincidence that Kang Sheng, who helped Mao carry out the Rectification Campaign, was one of the leading manipulators of the cult of Mao during the Cultural Revolution.

There is some uncertainty as to the origin of the first Mao badge, but it most likely appeared sometime during the Yanan period. There are several badges extant from that era, and experts, unable to reach a consensus as to which is the first, have engaged in considerable debate. For example, Huang Miaoxin, a well-known Shanghainese collector, claims that the earliest badge (and one which is in his collection) was issued by the Manchurian Democratic United Army (*Dongbei Minzhu Lianjun*) in 1937. [Mao Zedong Xiangzhang Shoucang Tujian (Beijing: Beijing Chubanshe, 1993), 2.] But Sakurayi Chodoido, a prolific Japanese collector of pre-Cultural Revolution Mao badges, argues that Mr. Huang is mistaken because the Manchurian Democratic United Army was not actually established until January 1946. [Sakurayi Chodoido, "Tantan Menbu Youguan Mao Zedong Xiangzhang de Shuji," *Shoucang* No. 7 (1994): 48.] In terms of party history, Mr. Sakurayi is incorrect; according to an official dictionary of CCP history, the Manchurian Democratic United Army was established in the early 1930s. [Zhonggong Dangshi Jianming Cidian (Beijing: Jiefang Jun Chubanshe, 1986), 62.] It is possible that Mr. Huang is correct, but most Chinese experts believe that the first badge appeared in 1942 or 1943, during the Yanan Rectification period. That would make sense, if one agrees that the Cult of Mao originated during this period when Mao eliminated many of his remaining rivals and rewrote his role in CCP history. [For other examples of this debate, see "Diyi Mei Mao Zedong Xiangzhang Zai Nali?", *Shoucang* No. 4, 1993, or "Diyi Mei Mao Zedong Xiangzhang Ying Zai Yanan", *Shoucang* No. 9, 1993.]

Badges in the pre-Cultural Revolution differed from the Cultural Revolution badges in several important ways. First, pre- 1966 badges were primarily medals issued in connection with military or political schools, to soldiers and model workers, or in commemoration of the completion of public works projects or participation in military campaigns, and therefore were worn by only a tiny minority of the population. Examples include medals given to all who served in the "resist America, aid Korea" campaign, students at the "Resist Japan University" in Yanan, and workers who built the Kang-Zang Highway. Second, these medals frequently portrayed not just Mao Zedong. Many included Mao and Zhu De, Mao and Stalin, Mao and Lu Xun, Mao and Gao Gang, Mao and Kim Il Sung, and Mao and Stalin and Kim Il Song. Third, at most only about one thousand different Mao badges were produced before 1966, as opposed to perhaps 50,000 variations from 1966-1969, and they were never manufactured in quantities approaching those of the Cultural Revolution period. [Sakurayi Chodoido, "Zaoqi Mao Zhuxi Xiangzhang Chuyi," *Shoucang*, No. 9 (1993): 52- 53.]

BADGE PRODUCTION DURING THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

There are conflicting accounts as to when and where the first Cultural Revolution Mao badge was manufactured. But it appears certain that the first badge was made by one of the large, state-owned badge and insignia factories in either Shanghai or Beijing. One scholar, Lu Na, has written that the Shanghai Badge and Insignia Factory (*Shanghai Huizhang Chang*) actually began producing small quantities of a round, 1.5 cm in diameter Mao badge in late 1965, and continued through August 1966. Only in August did the factory begin making large quantities of the badges.[Lu Na, Mao Zedong Xiangzhang Shoucang Yu Jianshang (Beijing: Guoji Wenhua Chubanshe, 1993), 4.] But two other collectors, Geng Shouzhong and Yang Zhimei, claim that in mid-July 1966 the Shanghai United Badge and Insignia Factory (*Shanghai Lianhe Huizhang Chang*) and the Beijing Red Flag Badge Factory (*Beijing Hongqi Zhengzhang Chang*) began almost simultaneous production of a round, aluminum, red Mao badge 1.2 cm. in diameter.[Geng and Yang, 4.]

Zhou Jihou, a collector in Guizhou who has written the longest (290 pages) and most detailed study of the Mao badge phenomenon, offers a slightly different possibility. He writes that the Shanghai United Badge Factory did produce the first Cultural Revolution Mao badge in mid-July 1966, but it was only 1.2 centimeters in diameter and it predated by several weeks badges made in Beijing. Shanghai college students on summer break carried the badges to Beijing, and only then did the Beijing factory begin to produce the badges.[Zhou Jihou, Mao Zedong Xiangzhang Zhi Mi: Shijie Dijiu Da Qiguan (Taiyuan: Beiyue Wenyi Chubanshe, 1993), 36.]

According to Zhou, the first, small batch of badges was well-received by people, who pinned them to their chests as a "revolutionary symbol". The party committee at the factory also appreciated the badges and, after enlisting several fraternal factories to provide material assistance, began to produce the badges in ever more staggering quantities. According to Zhou, by the end of July the Shanghai United Badge Factory had manufactured 32,000 badges. The factory switched production methods in August and produced 175,000 badges. In September the factory set up a Mao badge assembly line and in that month produced 1.3 million badges! [ibid, 36.]

Shanghai was the power center of the leftist radicals at the start of the Cultural Revolution. If one assumes that in Chinese politics there are no coincidences, and if one accepts that Cultural Revolution Mao badges first appeared in Shanghai, one must wonder whether or not any leftist officials were behind the production of Mao badges. In May 1964, Lin Biao orchestrated the mass printing and distribution to the army of "little red book" and used it to indoctrinate soldiers in Mao Zedong Thought, build up the Cult of Mao and further ingratiate himself with Chairman Mao.[Helmut Martin, Cult and Canon: The Origins and Development of State Maoism (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1983), 28.] And the appearance of Mao badges coincided with the mid-August propaganda barrage to get a copy of the Selected Works of Chairman Mao into the hands of every citizen. At about the same time, Quotations of Chairman Mao went on sale to the general public and quickly became, as the "touchstone of loyalty to Chairman Mao", required reading for all. As Yan Jiaqi writes: "simultaneously, the wearing, manufacture and collection of different types of Mao badges also gradually developed into a kind of fanaticism." [Yan, 47.] Is it possible that Jiang Qing, Yao Wenyan, Kang Sheng or others encouraged the factory to produce badges as part of the opening salvos of the Cultural Revolution? I have found no sources that explicitly link the decision to produce Mao badges with the other calculated propaganda efforts to inflate the cult of Mao, but circumstantial evidence certainly suggests that the leaders of the Shanghai factory may not have acted independently.

Xu Ren designed badges during the Cultural Revolution. He also became a collector, and to date he has accumulated over 20,000 badges. He divides production of Mao badges during the Cultural Revolution into three stages. In the first stage, lasting from July 1966-May 1967, most of the badges were small, round and aluminum. There also appeared small numbers of simple plastic ones.[Xu Ren, Xu Miao, and Xu Ying, Mao Zedong Xiangzhang Wushi Nian (Xian: Shaanxi Luyou Chubanshe, 1993), 3.] Badge manufacture during this stage remained largely the province of tens of specialized badge factories throughout China.

When the "exchange revolutionary experiences" (*chuanlian*) movement began and Mao met with Red Guards eight times between August and November 1966, young Chinese carried badges from city to city. When Mao inspected the Red Guards for the first time on August 18, 1966, Red Guard representatives presented him with several different styles of Mao badges.[Yan, 49.] Badges became more and more common in the major Chinese cities. One foreign observer wrote that "by October 1 most young people were Red Guards and everyone seemed to possess a badge and a copy of Mao's "Quotations." [Foreign Expert, "Eyewitness of the Cultural Revolution," *The China Quarterly* No. 28 (October-December 1966), 6.] These young revolutionaries, many on the road for the first time in their lives, seem to have had difficulty suppressing the somewhat bourgeois desire to collect souvenirs. However, those more revolutionary (or less well off) might view their motives as impure if they were to splurge on local delicacies or fashions. But how could anyone look askance at the purchase of a Mao badge from each place visited? Badges made for great souvenirs or gifts, and they were above reproach. In order to meet the Red Guards' demand, specialized badge factories ratcheted up production and came out with new varieties.[Zhou, 40.]

In late 1966 and 1967 badges first became quite fashionable among rebel factions in Beijing, and then, through the *chuanlian* movement, among similar organizations throughout the country as well. These types of badges first appeared on Beijing college campuses in late 1966. Some rebel organizations designed the badges themselves and then asked a specialized badge factory or a machining factory to make them. The badges were then passed out to members of the organization. The badges were inscribed with the name of the organization, the date of its founding, and an appropriate rebellious slogan; these badges served to publicize the stance or beliefs of a particular organization. After Shanghai's 1967 "January 1 Revolution", Shanghainese rebel groups also began to manufacture their own badges.[Zhou, 43.] But many other rebel factions lacked the technical or financial capabilities and so borrowed molds or made them together with other work units. Therefore, many of the badges made by rebel factions lack any identifying inscriptions[Song Yifan, Mao Zedong Xiangzhang Zhenpin Ji (Chengdu: Sichuan Renmin Chubanshe, 1993), 72.] These badges were sometimes among the spoils of victory in battles between rebel factions. One foreign observer present in Shanghai in 1966 reported the following account published in a Red Guard newspaper by one group of student rebels: "In these battles countless arm bands, Mao badges, pictures of Mao, college badges, and student cards were stolen." [Neale Hunter, Shanghai Journal: An Eyewitness Account of the Cultural Revolution (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1969), 162.]

The rush to establish revolutionary committees throughout the country and then issue celebratory Mao badges for the event mark the start of the second stage of Mao badge production, which stretched from spring 1967 to September 1968. Badges were also issued to commemorate central government meetings. In a conference with cadres from Henan Province, Kang Sheng is recorded as stating: "Some cadres have suggested that maybe we should issue a Chairman Mao badge to every representative. That is an excellent idea." ["Henan wenti xiang zhongyang di baci huibao jiyao (July 30, 1967)", in Zhongyang shouzhang guanyu henan wenti de zhishi ji fu jing huibao jiyao huibian (Henan 27 gongshe, 1967), 69.]

During this time the army also began to manufacture and issue badges. In May 1967, the General Political Department of the PLA made a set of two aluminum badges: a five-star badge bearing Mao's visage accompanied by a rectangular badge inscribed with the phrase "Serve the people". [Xu, 12.] The pentagonal badge was to be pinned directly above the badge with the slogan. The phrase "Be Chairman Mao's good soldier" was inscribed in Lin Biao's calligraphy on the back of the top badge. This set was issued to every active member of the armed forces, from Vice-Chairman and Minister of Defense Lin Biao to enlisted soldiers. The sets were presented in solemn ceremonies, with an officer at the regimental level or above giving a speech before personally handing out each set. According to Zhou, this set, which carried the implied message that "The brilliant radiance of Mao Zedong Thought eternally illuminates the advancing people's army", symbolized that all soldiers stood by the side of "the reddest, reddest of red suns Chairman Mao". Many soldiers saw this set of badges as more precious and holy than any military medal.[Zhou, 51.]

The issuing of this set is perhaps the clearest example of the direct involvement of the Lin Biao and other top military leaders in manufacture of Mao badges. It also coincides with the beginning of the radicals' counterattack against the "February adverse current" and the "black wind" of the preceding months.[Maurice Meisner, Mao's China and After: A History of the People's Republic (New York: The Free Press, 1986), 353.] Military units continued production through 1969, and they made many of the better crafted and exquisite badges. Those badges produced by units under the Third Ministry of Machine Industry (actually the Ministry of Aviation Industry) were both plentiful and renowned for their quality and craftsmanship.[Zhou, 48.] By 1968, in what one collector has termed a "mistake of history"[Song, 32.], there even appeared a relatively small number of badges depicting Mao and his "closest comrade-in-arms" Lin Biao. (Most of these badges were destroyed after the "September 13 Incident", and those extant are now among the most valuable of all Cultural Revolution-era badges. Unfortunately, most that appear in markets today are recent reproductions.)

The call for "the whole country to learn from the PLA" spurred a rapid increase in the numbers and types of badges produced. There was no centralized structure to oversee badge production, but a fragmented bureaucracy did develop. For example, on January 27, 1969, the First Line Headquarters (*yixian zhihui bu*) of the PLA approved a plan for Shaanxi Province to produce 30 million badges during 1968.[Li Ping'an et al., Shaanxi Jingji Dashiji 1949-1985 (Xian: Santai Chuban She, 1987), 295.] And soon army units at the regimental level and above and virtually every province, city and county had established a "Respectfully Manufacture Mao Zedong Badge Office".[Xu, 12.] These offices handled design, production and distribution of raw materials.

Any enterprise that had the capability to manufacture badges just needed a stamp from a badge office and it could pick up aluminum, technical materials and sometimes even finished moulds. Those units or enterprises that lacked the equipment to make badges could contact the local badge office, which would then farm out the job to an appropriate factory. Specialized badge factories remained very busy, because not only did they have to fulfill their own production quotas, but they also had to meet the requests of those units and organizations that lacked the conditions to produce badges. And these factories did not accept payment for their work. By the end of 1967 tens of thousands of factories were producing badges in varying quantities.[Zhou, 47-48.] According to collector Zhang Dekuan, this farming out of badge production makes it very difficult for collectors and researchers today to determine where and for whom some badges were made.[Interview, August 28, 1994 in Beijing.]

Sometimes factories would celebrate the completion of a new batch of Mao badges. As printing factories did upon publishing new batches of Mao's works, a badge-making factory might organize a parade of workers and cadres who, all wearing the new badge, of course, would march in the streets holding aloft red flags, beating drums, and setting off firecrackers. The procession would stop at party and government organs, where factory leaders would present some of the badges.[Zhou, 48.]

In this second stage, the Shaoshan Chairman Mao Badge factory opened in Shaoshan, Xiangtan Prefecture, Hunan Province. It was China's first and only factory designed specifically for the production of Mao badges. (It continues churning out badges to this day, although its name is now the Shaoshan Crafts Factory.) Machine factories in Shenyang and Shanghai donated state-of-the-art equipment and some of the best badge designers and technicians from all over the country went to work there. At one point the factory had over 400 hundred designers and technicians working to manufacture Mao badges. The badges they produced, in aluminum, plexiglass, plastic, porcelain, bamboo and other materials, were among the most famous and sought after badges during the Cultural Revolution. In his description of the establishment of the factory, Zhou Jihou writes that "the founding of this factory was blown way out of proportion by certain 'empty-headed politicians'".[*ibid*, 41-42.] He is likely referring to Hua Guofeng, who in 1967 was First Party Secretary of Xiangtan Prefecture. Hua ingratiated himself with Mao by overseeing the Shaoshan Chairman Mao Badge Factory, which was capable of producing thirty million Mao badges a year.[Jonathan D. Spence, The Search For Modern China (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1990), 643.]

During this period Mao badges played a role in PRC foreign policy. In 1967, radicals rose to the fore in the Foreign Ministry, and their efforts to spread the gospel of Mao Zedong Thought included the dissemination of Mao badges. Perhaps the most famous incident occurred in Burma in June 1967. Burmese officials tried to prevent overseas Chinese students in Rangoon from wearing Mao badges. The Chinese insisted on wearing them, and anti-Chinese riots erupted. More than 100 overseas Chinese died.[John W. Garver, Foreign Relations of the People's Republic of China (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1993), 158.] Diplomats stationed in several African countries allegedly stood on street corners and handed out Mao badges and copies of the "little red book", and a June 1967 delegation to Tirana, Albania, met with repeated requests for Mao badges.[Lu, 5.] Chinese medical teams sent to Africa handed out badges, as did the Chinese embassy in Hanoi.[Xu, 69.] And the Foreign Ministry in June 1968 reportedly issued guidelines for receiving foreign guests that in part stated: "When the masses come into contact with foreign guests they can spontaneously and separately present Mao badges as gifts." [Zhou, 73.]

The final stage of Cultural Revolution badge production lasted from September 1968 to the winter of 1969. In September 1968, when Xinjiang and Tibet established revolutionary committees, all 29 provinces and autonomous regions officially came under the control of revolutionary committees, and "the whole country was awash in red" (*quanguo shanhe yipian hong*). The types of materials used increased greatly, as did the varieties of scenes and slogans depicted. [Xu, 37.] Badge production reached its zenith in April and May of 1969, in concert with the opening on April 1 of the Ninth CCP Congress, at which Lin Biao was written into the party constitution as Mao's successor. The months surrounding the Ninth Party Congress marked the golden age of Mao badge design and production. Badges produced during this period are among the most exquisite and artistic of all.

BADGE CONTENT

Mao badges provide an illustrated narrative to both the events of the Cultural Revolution and the pre-1966 history of the CCP. An examination of this topic requires a monograph in itself. Here I will give a very brief introduction. Among the scenes most frequently depicted on Mao badges were the "holy sites of the revolution". The most common of these sites include: Mao Zedong's former residence in Shaoshan; the Jinggang Mountains, Zunyi, Yanan, and the Tiananmen rostrum in Beijing. Other sites included the Guangzhou Peasants' School and several of the more famous milestones along the Long March.[Song, 19.] Badges commemorating the 1927 Autumn Harvest Uprising provide more examples of the use of a badge to visualize the narrative of party history. Perhaps the most frequently depicted scene was that of Mao going to Anyuan, Jiangxi Province, in 1927. The design of this badge derived directly from Liu Chunhua's famous 1968 oil painting, "Chairman Mao Going to Anyuan", which shows Mao leaving for Anyuan to organize coal miners there. In reality, Liu Shaoqi played a more important role in organizing the strikes in Anyuan; the painting and the subsequent badges are examples of the iconographic reconstruction of history designed to prove the primacy and precocity of Mao Zedong in guiding the revolution. Other badges attempted to affirm Mao's place in the pantheon of Communist thinkers by showing Mao together with Lenin; Lenin and Marx; or Lenin, Mark, Stalin and Engels.

Badges also commemorated events during the Cultural Revolution. Perhaps the most common were those celebrating the establishment of a revolutionary committee. Thousands of revolutionary committees were set up at every level, and almost every one issued a commemorative badge. Many badges were also made in honor of one of "Chairman Mao's Latest Directives." Other frequently depicted events include: the May 7 Directive, the model operas, Mao's tours throughout the country in 1967 and 1968; the January 1 Revolution in Shanghai; and Mao's gift of mangoes to the worker-peasant Mao Zedong thought team at Qinghua University on August 6, 1968.[For a fascinating discussion of Mao's gift of mangoes and its aftermath, see Edward Rice, Mao's Way (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972) 455-58.]

Sunflowers and the character for loyalty (*zhong*) were frequent decorations on Mao badges. Both carried deep symbolic meaning. Mao Zedong was frequently referred to as the "red sun". Sunflowers always face the sun, so sunflowers were used to symbolize the masses' boundless respect and admiration towards Mao Zedong. Sunflowers often appeared in sets of three or seven, with a *zhong* affixed to the middle flower. *Zhong* characters often came in sets of three and seven as well. The numbers three and seven had symbolic meaning. Three symbolized the "three loyal to" (loyal to the great leader Chairman Mao, loyal to Mao Zedong Thought, and loyal to proletarian revolutionary line of Chairman Mao) and seven signified the boundless loyalty of the seven hundred million people to Chairman Mao. [Li Xuemei, "Mao Zedong Xiangzhang De Tezheng," *Shoucang* No. 12 (1993), 9.]

EUNUCHS IN CHINA



Qing era eunuchs ■The tradition of using eunuchs in the imperial court goes back at least 2,000 years. Beginning in the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.- A.D. 220), palace eunuchs often ran the day to day affairs of the court. They vied for power with military leaders and scholar-bureaucrats.

■The word eunuch comes from the Greek word for bed watcher. Eunuchs were used in China, the Byzantine Empire, Ottoman Turkey and other imperial states by monarchs as "keepers of the couch," or guardians of the royal harem.

■Chinese imperial eunuchs were nicknamed "bob-tailed dogs". During the Ming dynasty it was said that 20,000 of them were employed in the Forbidden City. Imperial eunuchs survived until 1924 when the last 1,500 of them were banished from the Forbidden City, according to one observer, "carrying their belongings in sacks and crying piteously in high pitched voices."

■Eunuchs were widely seen as greedy, corrupt and scheming. In dramas about Imperial life they are often cast as villains. Even so they made their contributions to Chinese culture and civilization. The eunuch Cai Lun is credited with inventing paper in A.D. 105. Court eunuchs in the Ming Dynasty were the first Chinese to play Western classical music. The eunuch Zheng Ho was China's greatest explorer. In the the Qing Dynasty, Emperor Qianlong assembled a chamber orchestra of eunuchs dressed in European suits and wigs.

■Many eunuchs chose their way of life. One eunuch told British Sinologist John Blofeld in *City of lingering Splendour*: "It seemed a little thing to give up one pleasure for so many. My parents were poor, yet suffering that small change, I could be sure of an easy life in surroundings of great beauty and magnificence, I could aspire to intimate companionship with lovely women unmarred by their fear or distrust of me. I could even hope for power and wealth of my own."

Eunuch Operation in China



Eunuch boy ■Families often encouraged their sons to become eunuchs as a means of pulling the family out of poverty and gaining admittance into the imperial court. Many parents even organized their sons' castration at an early age in hopes that they would become imperial eunuchs.

■The castrations were usually performed with one slash of a small knife in a hut outside the Forbidden City for a fee of six silver pieces. The eunuchs lost their testicles and penis ("the three preciouses"). The only local anesthetic used was hot chili sauce. After the procedure a plug was placed in the wound and the urethra and left there for three days. If urine poured out of the wound after the plug was removed the operation was considered a success. If it didn't the patient usually died a painful death.

■During the Ming dynasty, the Forbidden City contained a special eunuch clinic where candidates had their genitals removed while sitting on a special chair with a hole in it. Candidates that didn't survive were carried away with their penis and testicles in a pouch for reunification in the afterlife.

■Many eunuchs were orphans or sons of prisoners or poor parents. In her book on the famous eunuch Chêng Ho, *Treasure Fleet of the Dragon Throne*, Louise Levathes wrote: "As was the custom, young sons of prisoners were castrated. Thousands of young boys—some no more than 9 or 10 years of age—were stripped naked, subjected to one brutal stroke of a curved knife...Hundreds never recovered, dying of infection and exposure. Those who did were taken to the capital to serve as court eunuchs."

■The operation cut off the supply of male hormones to the body and gave the eunuchs high voices and soft demeanors. It also left them with less control of their bladder. Eunuchs often wet their beds and their clothes, the source of the old Chinese expression "as smelly as a eunuch." The operation also left them too weak to perform hard physical work such as farm labor. Eunuchs traditionally preserved their genitals in a jar and carried them in a bag hung on their belt. This way, if a eunuch died he had his genitals on him and could be buried with them and be reincarnated as a "full man"

Eunuchs and the Chinese Emperor

Eunuch tombs ■Eunuchs were generally the only men other than the emperor who were allowed to enter the inner courtyards of the Forbidden City, where the imperial family and concubines lived. Other men, including officials, military guards and even male relatives of

the emperor, were not only not allowed to enter the inner sanctums but were often required to leave the palace grounds at night.

■Emasculation was thought to turn eunuchs into sort of non-humans that could enter the Emperors realm without violating it, presenting a threat or undermining the emperor's privacy.

■"The eunuchs detailed to attend on the women of the harem" wrote historian Daniel Boorstin, were "no menace to the purity of the imperial line or to the chastity of the royal consorts...They became a privileged class. Knowledge of the daily habits and personal tastes of the emperor gave eunuchs a peculiar opportunity to anticipate the monarch's whims. In the arbitrary governments of the East, this meant an opportunity to seize power." China's greatest explorer, Chêng Ho, was an eunuch as were several brilliant military leaders. [Source: "The Discoverers" by Daniel Boorstin]

■Eunuchs had to be careful though. "For a eunuch to make a mistake," wrote Matteo Ricci in the 16th century, "in the presence of the King is equivalent to placing his life in danger. They say the sovereign is rigid with them in this respect that even for a slight fault the poor unfortunates are sometimes beaten to death."

Court Duties of Chinese Eunuchs

■Much of the day to day operation of the imperial court was taken care of by the emperor's favorite eunuch, who headed an imperial staff that oversaw thousands of cooks, gardeners, laundrymen, cleaners, painters and other eunuchs that were ranked in a complex hierarchy with 48 separate grades. Floggings and other punishments were often controlled and carried out by the court eunuchs. Concubines and eunuch often formed close friendships.

■Eunuchs served as cooks, cleaners, record keepers and companions. "Each eunuch was apprenticed to a master," wrote Marina Warner, biographer of the Empress Dowager, "and his eventual success or promotion depended on the favor in which his master was held. On his master's death, a young eunuch might be forgotten until the day he himself died but if he was apprenticed to the chief he might rapidly acquire influence."

■The eunuchs were loathed by many. They were regarded as corrupt and immoral. They often demanded kickbacks in return for contracts. Scholar-bureaucrats, who had risen to their positions through merit, "feared, envied and despised" the eunuchs. Sometimes political battles broke out between the eunuchs and the mandarins.

■Eunuchs were not allowed to be buried with their families. Several buried together outside of Beijing in a small graveyard for eunuchs with stone guardians around the tomb of the Ming dynasty eunuch Tian Yi.

Political Power of the Eunuchs in China

Tomb of powerful eunuch Tian Yi■Beginning with the reign of Han Shun To in A.D. 126, eunuchs held a high position in the Chinese court and had what is known today as access. While ministers and many high officials were not allowed to address the Emperor directly, eunuchs saw him on a daily basis and were allowed to talk to him on familiar terms. Not only

did they work closely with the Emperor and his court, child eunuchs often grew up with future princes and emperors and were their playmates. They also had close ties with the palace women. In some case they were the only men they were allowed to see.

■ "Since the emperor would not come out from the inner recesses of the Forbidden City—an area closed to all save the imperial family and their personal attendants," Yale professor Jonathan Spence wrote in *The Search for Modern China*, "the eunuchs became crucial intermediaries between the outer bureaucratic world and the inner imperial one."

■ "Any senior official with business that demanded the emperor's attention," wrote Spence, "had to persuade a eunuch to carry the message for him; the eunuch, naturally enough, asked for fees in return for such services, and soon the more powerful ones were bribed and flattered by ambitious officials."

■ "In later Chinese history," wrote Boorstin, "the heir, born in a the palace, grew up under the constant tutelage of the eunuchs. When such an emperor, still a child succeeded to the throne, the imperial eunuchs would control the child-emperor's decisions or those of the empress-regent. These eunuchs...were usually drawn from the lowest levels of society. Having no future outside the palace, they had no reason not to merit their reputation for being mercenary and unscrupulous. They collected bribes, distributed honors, and meted out the punishments of the torture chamber." [Source: "The Discoverers" by Daniel Boorstin]

■ When the power of the Emperor diminished for some reason, the vacuum was filled by the eunuchs and the corrupt officials that patronized them. This process became a pattern in Chinese history and foretold a dynasty in decline that was primed for being overthrown.

Eunuch Power in China

■ Court eunuchs reached the height of their political power under the Ming Emperor Wanli. He employed over 10,000 eunuchs in the imperial court and had 70,000 to 100,000 of them in official positions throughout the country. Powerful eunuchs embezzled huge fortunes while the Emperor was preoccupied with his concubines.

■ The eunuchs often knew the weaknesses of the Emperors and exploited them. Taisuke Mitamura, author of *Chinese Eunuchs: The Structure of Intimate Politics* wrote: "The emperor in many ways became the plaything of these pariahs from the normal world. They deftly colored for their own purposes the rulers picture of the outside world and turned him against any ministers who tried to oppose their influence.

■ An eunuch named Wei Zhinguan for all intents and purposes ran China in the 1620s as did eunuchs when the Qing dynasty finally collapsed in 1911.

■ After the Communists came to power many eunuchs became destitute outcasts. A few committed suicide in the moats of the Forbidden City. A eunuch museum has been opened in 1999 outside of Beijing next to the tomb for Tian Yi.

The Last Eunuch

■ The last imperial eunuch, Sun Yaoting, died on December, 17, 1996 at the age of 93 at his home in a Beijing temple. Unfortunately for Sun he was emasculated only a few months

before the end of the Qing dynasty in 1911 and his genitals were destroyed by his family in the 1960s during the Cultural Revolution out of fear that they would be punished by Red Guards for having them. [Source: Barbara Demick , Los Angeles Times, March 2009]

■Sun Yaoting was castrated ta the age of eight. When his father learned tat Qing Emperor had been overthrown he beating his chest, weeping, “Our boy has suffered for nothing. They don’t need eunuchs anymore!”

■Sun chose to be a eunuch himself after being inspired by a eunuch in his village that became rich. He served for a while as a eunuch for the wife of the Last Emperor Puyi when the Imperial Court was briefly resurrected. After the Communists came to power he endured humiliation and ridicule as an Imperial era freak and was nearly killed in the Cultural Revolution when his family was so fearful of persecution they threw away his *bao*—preserved genitals.

■In the Mao era, Sun managed to find work as a caretaker of a temple and adopted a son. He died in 1996. In his last years she was recognized a s a rare source of inside information in the last year of Imperial China. Interviews he conducted in his last years were the basis of a biography on Sun that was released in English in the late 2000s.

■Book *The Last Eunuch f China: The Life of Sun Yaoting* by Jia Yinghua.

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1894-1895	SINO-JAPANESE WAR
1898	100 DAYS OF REFORM
1899	BOXER MOVEMENT BEGINS
1901	BOXER PROTOCOL SIGNED
1905	TONGMENGHUI FORMED
1911	RAILWAYS NATIONALISED

1908	PUYI BECOMES EMPEROR
1911	WUHAN UPRISING
1911	SUN YATSEN DECLARED PRESIDENT OF CHINA
1912	YUAN SHIKAI BECOMES PRESIDENT OF CHINA
1915	21 DEMANDS PRESENTED TO CHINA BY JAPAN
1915	YUAN SHIKAI DECLARES HIMSELF EMPEROR

1916	DEATH OF YUAN SHIKAI
1916	WARLORD PERIOD BEGINS
1919	MAY 4 TH MOVEMENT
1921	FOUNDATION AND FIRST MEETING OF COMMUNIST PARTY IN SHANGHAI
1924	FIRST UNITED FRONT FORMED
1925	DEATH OF SUN YATSEN

1926	NORTHERN EXPEDITION BEGINS
1927	SHANGHAI MASSACRE
1927	FAILURE OF THE AUTUMN HARVEST UPRISING
1932	JAPAN SETS UP PUPPET GOVERNMENT IN MANCHURIA
1933	FIFTH ENCIRCLEMENT CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE COMMUNISTS
1934	CHIANG KAI SHEK LAUNCHES NEW CULTURE MOVEMENT

1934	RED ARMY BEGINS LONG MARCH
1935	MAO ZEDONG ELECTED LEADER OF COMMUNIST PARTY AT ZUNYI
1935	LONG MARCH ENDS AT YANAN
1936	CHIANG KAI SHEK CAPTURED AT XIAN
1937	SECOND UNITED FRONT FORMED
1937	SINO-JAPANESE WAR BEGINS

1937	FALL OF SHANGHAI AND NANJING
1938	CHIANG KAI SHEK AND GOVERNMENT RETREAT TO CHONGQING
1945	JAPAN SURRENDERS AND LEAVES CHINA
1949	CHIANG KAI SHEK AND SUPPORTERS FLEE TO TAIWAN
OCTOBER 1949	MAO PROCLAIMS THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

