

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

Wang Meihsiang
National Sun Yat-sen University

Introduction

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

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

² See Wang Ermin 王爾敏, “Zhongguo jindai zhishi pujihua chuanbo zhi tushuo xingshi—*Dianshi zhai huabao* li” 中國近代知識普及化傳播之圖說形式——點石齋畫報例 (*The Use of Images in the Spread of Modern Knowledge in China: The Case of the Dianshi Studio Pictorial*), *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan jindaishi yanjiushuo jikan* 中央研究院近代史研究所集刊 19 (1990), pp. 135–72; Kang Wuwei 康無為 [Harold Kahn], “‘Hua zhong you hua’: *Dianshi zhai huabao* yu dazhong wenhua xingcheng zhiqian de lishi” 「畫中有話」：點石齋畫報與
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huabao 良友畫報 (*The Young Companion*, first publication in 1926) being the most prevalent.³ By comparison, studies on pictorials in regions other than Shanghai and Beijing are scarce. This is primarily because publishers and readers of pictorials had already emerged in Shanghai and Beijing in the late Qing dynasty.⁴

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

(Note 2—Continued)

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

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

⁴ See Chen Pingyuan, *Zuotu youshi yu xixue dongjian*, p. 241.

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

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

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

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

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

Hong Kong and Southeast Asia as well as the relationship of the entire free world, in the 1950s. A review on USIS-HK indicated that Hong Kong was the centre of global Chinese publications (including books and magazines) in the 1950s. Presently, discussions on the influence that Taiwan and Hong Kong had on Southeast Asian literature and cultures largely focus on text-based publications. However, text-based publications largely affect intellectuals. A U.S. survey report suggested that pictorials were favoured among the general readers in Southeast Asia. *Four Seas Pictorial* was extremely popular among general readers in Indonesia.⁶ Therefore, examining *Four Seas Pictorial* can produce results unlike those of text-based publications, such as the promotional effects of graphic communication.

Finally, the present study aims to examine *Four Seas Pictorial* to re-evaluate the operational logic of the literary institution operated with U.S. aid in the Taiwan and Hong Kong cultural domains and the function of American power in the Taiwan and Hong Kong literary domains.⁷ The findings revealed the key role of private parties (migrant writers, local writers, and publishers), particularly photographers and other image providers. Image providers were less valued in journal publications. However, the picture-based model of pictorials enabled more private image workers to join the literary institution operated with U.S. aid, such as painters Zhang Yingchao 張英超 and Li Weiling 李維陵, as well as photographers Li Jingkai 李景開 and Zeng Qifan 曾豈凡. *Four Seas Pictorial* not only disseminated U.S. cultural propaganda through state-private networks and local interpersonal networks but also achieved impartiality by adopting intermediary powers. That is, intermediary operations were adopted to package the propaganda ideology of American power.

⁶ Confidential Report, Arthur W. Hummel to Mr. Saxton E. Bradford, 3 August 1954, Hong Kong; U.S. Consulate, Hong Kong Classified General Records of the USIS, 1951–1955, Entry 2689, RG84, NARA.

⁷ See Chen Jianzhong 陳建忠, “‘Mei xin chu’ (USIS) yu Taiwan wenxueshi chongxie: Yi Meiyuan wenyi tizhi xia de Tai, Gang zazhi chuban wei kaocha zhongxin” 「美新處」(USIS) 與台灣文學史重寫：以美援文藝體制下的台、港雜誌出版為考察中心 (“USIS” and the re-writing history of Taiwan literature: A study on the publication of Taiwan and Hong Kong’s magazines on U.S. aids under the literary & artistic institutions), *Guowen xuebao* 國文學報 52 (December 2012), pp. 211–42; Wang Meixiang 王梅香 [Wang Meihsiang], “Yinbi quanli: Meiyuan wenyi tizhi xia de Tai Gang wenxue (1950–1962)” 隱蔽權力：美援文藝體制下的台灣文學 (1950–1962) (Unattributed power: Taiwan and Hong Kong literature under the literary institution operated with U.S. aid (1950–1962)) (Ph.D. diss., National Tsing Hua University, 2015), p. 47.

Four Seas Pictorial: Replacing Text with Images

According to a report published by the USIS-HK in 1954, the propaganda activities of the Communist Party of China (CPC) in Thailand dated to World War II, beginning with the establishment of the Popular Cultural Enterprise. On the surface, the enterprise was a cultural institution. It was, in actuality, CPC's headquarters in Thailand, tasked with propagating Chinese books and pictorials, and inciting strikes. The U.S. survey indicated that the United States government was fully aware of the activities of the CPC in Thailand. During this period, the propagation of Chinese books and pictorials was the CPC's principal means of expanding its influence in Thailand.⁸ Subsequently, Thailand is only one of many cases, and the propaganda model adopted by the CPC in Thailand can be observed in numerous other countries. Since the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) on 1 October 1949, the U.S. began paying close attention to the Beijing regime and its associations with the Soviet regime.⁹ The U.S. had noticed the issue of "overseas Chinese" in 1950. To gain recognition from overseas Chinese people during the cultural Cold War, the U.S. and the Soviets entered a fierce competition of propaganda and counterpropaganda. For example, the USIS-HK launched *Children's Paradise* in 1953. Its opposition launched *Xiao pengyou* 小朋友 (*Little Friends*) soon after in 1955. The *Changcheng huabao* 長城畫報 (*Great Wall Pictorial*, 1950–1962), a movie-related pictorial published by leftists in 1950, became immensely popular in Southeast Asia. The USIS-HK further introduced the *Free World* (English version), *Ziyou shijie* 自由世界 (*Free World*, Chinese version), *Xuesheng Yingwen zazhi* 學生英文雜誌 (*Student Review*), *World Today*, and *Four Seas Pictorial* in 1951 to promote U.S. ideologies to the Chinese people.¹⁰

In actuality, the USIS-HK had already launched *Jinri Meiguo* 今日美國 (*American Today*) on 26 October 1949. This promotional material contained editorials, commentaries on current affairs, American lifestyles, American newsletters, and others (e.g., art and science). The style of *American Today* was similar to commentaries on politics and current affairs, which were largely text-based, decorated with a small number of pictures. The promotional effects that these commentaries had on overseas

⁸ Confidential Memorandum, T. Dunn to Mr. John Henderson, 23 March 1954, Hong Kong; U.S. Consulate, Hong Kong Classified General Records of the USIS, 1951–1955, Entry 2689, RG84, NARA.

⁹ Secret Report, Overseas Chinese, Hong Kong; U.S. Consulate, Hong Kong Classified General Records of the USIS, 1951–1955, Entry 2689, RG84, NARA.

¹⁰ Foreign Service Despatch, Hong Kong to Department of State, 26 March 1953, Report-Semi-Annual, Hong Kong; U.S. Consulate, Hong Kong Classified General Records of the USIS, 1951–1955, Entry 2689, RG84, NARA.

Chinese readers who were not fluent in Chinese were limited. Therefore, USIS-HK required a more generalized and universalized publication. The “Editor’s Words” section in the first issue of *Four Seas Pictorial* stated:

The printing and publishing of *Four Seas Pictorial* is to bring to the attention of the free people across the four seas (particularly overseas Chinese) the countries and people that enslave others and create havoc in this world; and also the countries and people that fight for democracy and freedom and strive to improve human life. If this pictorial intentionally or unintentionally promotes democracy and freedom or reveals dictatorship and slavery, and evokes its readers to compare and choose, then that would be our greatest achievement.¹¹

「四海」的刊行，便是想讓四海之內的自由人民，特別是遠離祖國的華僑兒女，多曉得一些，在這世界上，有那些人，那些國家在製造災禍，奴役人類；又有那些人，那些國家，在為爭取民主自由，為改善人類生活而努力。假使這本冊子能於有意無意之間，指出民主與自由，獨裁與奴役兩大途徑，使讀者因有所比較而自行抉擇，那便是我們無比的滿足。

Four Seas Pictorial aimed to impart knowledge concerning “Free China” to Chinese people across the four seas. In addition, the editor also hoped that the pictorial would gain popularity across the four seas (*fengxing sihai* 風行四海).¹² On its fourth anniversary, the purpose of *Four Seas Pictorial* was reaffirmed:

As a publication of the free world, *Four Seas Pictorial* has always maintained a stringent attitude in presenting pictures and text to its readers and serving as a silent and fair referee for the conscience of mankind.¹³

「四海」，作為自由世界的出版物之一，一直是在以公正嚴肅的態度，將這些事情，用圖片和文字記載下來，獻呈於讀者和人類良知之前，作無言而公平的裁判。

These forewords clearly show that the target audience of *Four Seas Pictorial* was overseas Chinese people. It uses pictures to highlight different political systems and lifestyles, enabling readers to formulate judgements and choices freely. Providing readers with freedom of choice is a demonstration of U.S. democracy. *Four Seas Pictorial* was launched to benefit the U.S. in its endeavour to strengthen political and diplomatic ties in Southeast Asia. Hong Kong’s intellectuals hoped that the U.S.

¹¹ *Four Seas Pictorial* 1 (10 September 1951), p. 1.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Fan Jiping 范基平, *Four Seas Pictorial* 48 (10 October 1955), p. 1.

would value the resettlement of overseas Chinese. Hong Kong political commentator, military critic, and Director of the *Tianwentai* 天文台 (*The Observatory*), Chen Xiaowei 陳孝威, once composed a letter to the U.S. Secretary of State, John Dulles, encouraging the U.S. to address issues concerning overseas Chinese. He stated in his letter, “In the advent of a great era, overseas Chinese should be fostered to become a constructive power against communism. This is an urgent issue that cannot be ignored by parties concerned with the world’s wellbeing.”¹⁴ This confirms that the promotion of American power was not a unilateral endeavour. Rather, it was facilitated by people in Hong Kong with anti-Communist views, or in the words of the former Director of the USIS-HK, Richard McCarthy, “a unity of Hong Kong intellectuals that oppose a common enemy” 凝聚這群香港知識份子身上已然存在的同仇敵愾。¹⁵

Charles T. Cross, a former employee of the USIS-HK (1952–1954), critically elaborated on the core qualities of *Four Seas Pictorial* as follows:

USIS produced two magazines for the general public: *World Today*, a monthly collection of features, articles, short stories, and book reviews sent out from Washington in English, recrafted by USIS Americans into more appealing formats, and finally transformed by our adept Chinese translators and editors into popular reading; and *Four Seas*, a *Life* magazine-like pictorial, which proved to be so popular that it eventually went off on its own, taking along its Shanghai staff. Both of these magazines were also designed to appeal to the Overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia and to Chinese on Taiwan.¹⁶

According to Cross, USIS considered *World Today* and *Four Seas Pictorial* to be “sisters of propaganda.” We believe that both publications targeted general readers. *World Today* printed roughly 100,000 copies, and *Four Seas Pictorial* printed roughly 30,000 copies.¹⁷ Although the circulation of *Four Seas Pictorial* was considerably smaller than *World Today*, it was sold almost entirely through commercial distribution, while *World Today* was initially gifted and later sold as a budget publication. Moreover, the so-called “Shanghai clique” (*Hu pai renwu* 滬派人物) and its members played a key part in the operation of USIS-HK, such as Shanghai resident, Song

¹⁴ Ibid.: 於此大時代之前夕，對於華僑，應如何妥加撫視培植，使其成為一種力量，而於未來之反共大業中有所建樹，實為關心世界大局者所不能忽略之事實。

¹⁵ See Wang Meixiang, “Yinbi quanli,” p. 58.

¹⁶ Charles T. Cross, *Born a Foreigner: A Memoir of the American Presence in Asia* (Boulder, CO: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999), p. 102.

¹⁷ Secret Report, Overseas Chinese, Hong Kong; U.S. Consulate, Hong Kong Classified General Records of the USIS, 1951–1955, Entry 2689, RG84, NARA.

Qi 宋淇 (Lin Yiliang 林以亮), who served in the Book Translation Program. Similarly, the editorial group of *Four Seas Pictorial* was largely comprised of people from Shanghai, with Fan Jiping 范基平 serving as Editor-in-Chief.¹⁸ These editors from Shanghai continued to share their experiences while serving in the literary institution operated in Hong Kong with U.S. aid.

Fan Jiping was involved in pictorial publication and editing before serving as Editor-in-Chief of *Four Seas Pictorial*. Fan and Chen Yiyun 陳亦雲 launched the first copy of the *Yingtán* 影壇 (*The Screen Pictorial*), a fortnightly publication, in Shanghai on 15 September 1935, published by Shanghai tuwen chubanshe 上海圖文出版社. The forewords in the first edition of *The Screen Pictorial* stated:

We remain just and unbiased in selecting the nation's most beautiful celebrity images. This publication is packed with interesting, animated material for readers and the public in general. This publication is munificent in content, compiled in an organized manner. It selects content with utmost stringency without compromising integrity. This publication is the ticket to the entire entertainment industry.¹⁹

我們以公正的態度，不偏不倚，選取國內外最精美的明星照片，富有趣味的劇情畫片刊載，俾引起並增進讀者及一般觀眾的興趣，內容務求充實，但不涉蕪雜；取材務求嚴格，但不涉偏漏，一編在手，可窺影界全豹。

The manner in which *The Screen Pictorial* covered the domestic and international film industries was completely reflected in the media and news section of *Four Seas Pictorial*. Frequent segments in *The Screen Pictorial* included “Fortnightly News,” “Official Announcements,” “Hollywood News,” “New Hollywood Movies,” “World Entertainment,” and “International Movie News.” It covered the latest news in China, United States, England, France, and Germany. Table 2 (Contents of *Four Seas Pictorial*) shows that “Current News” was the main feature of *Four Seas Pictorial*, followed by “Entertainment News,” which was a reduced version of *The Screen Pictorial*.

Two differences are evident between *Four Seas Pictorial* and *The Screen Pictorial*. First, the entire copy of *The Screen Pictorial* was dedicated to entertainment news, whereas *Four Seas Pictorial* only dedicated two to six pages to overseas cinema, Hollywood news, and Taiwan/Hong Kong entertainment news. The majority of the entertainment content was focused on Taiwan and Hong Kong. Secondly, the

¹⁸ The editor was renamed “Fan Jiping” and replaced the previous “Editorial Group of the Four Seasons Pictorial.” See Fan Jiping, *Four Seas Pictorial* 48 (10 October 1955), p. 1.

¹⁹ See Chen Yiyun and Fan Jiping, “Editor’s Words,” *The Screen Pictorial* 1 (15 September 1935).

content of *The Screen Pictorial* was image-based with minimal text (one or two rows of descriptions). Therefore, *The Screen Pictorial* was a “visual” publication. Although *Four Seas Pictorial* was also an image-based publication, it contained considerably more text than *The Screen Pictorial*. Based on these similarities, we believe that Fan incorporated his experience in editing *The Screen Pictorial* into the “Entertainment News” segment of *Four Seas Pictorial* and that *Four Seas Pictorial* partially inherited the traditions of Shanghai’s pictorials.

After leaving Shanghai, Fan travelled to Thailand and served as a newspaper editor. The agency in which Fan served, *Xing-Xian ribao* 星暹日報 (*Xing Xian Daily*), was founded by overseas Chinese businessperson and founder of *Hubiao wanjinyou* 虎標萬金油 (Tiger Balm ointment), Hu Wenhui 胡文虎, in Bangkok, Thailand on 1 January 1950. The founders of *Xing Xian Daily* included Zhang Lanchen 張蘭臣, Wu Zhulin 伍竹林, Guo Shiqiu 郭實秋, and Liu Hanhua 劉漢華.²⁰ For the editorial group, Hu Wenhui recruited Fan, Zhu Shuhe 朱淑和, Song Yuwen 宋郁文, Su Jichuan 蘇濟川, and Yang Lisheng 楊麗生 from Hong Kong to preside over the editorial aspect of the publication. Fan continued his editorial career at *Xing Xian Daily* in Bangkok after the war.²¹ *Xing Xian Daily* is one of the oldest Chinese newspapers in Thailand. Combined, *Shijie ribao* 世界日報 (*World Daily*), *Jinghua ribao* 京華日報 (*Jinghua Daily*), *Zhonghua ribao* 中華日報 (*Zhonghua Daily*), and *Xing Xian Daily* were called the “Big Four” in the Thai-Chinese community. More important, *Xing Xian Daily* persisted in upholding the ideologies of the Hu brothers (Hu Wenhui and Hu Wenbao 胡文豹), aiming to “spread heritage, promote culture, provide guidance and education, contribute to civilization, and strive for world peace”

²⁰ In 1929, overseas Chinese businessmen Hu Wenhui and Hu Wenbao published *Xingzhou ribao* 星洲日報 (*Xingzhou Daily*) in Malaya to advertise the Tiger Balm. By means of this, the Hu brothers expected to expand the market for their products. In 1931, they published *Xing-Hua ribao* 星華日報 (*Xing Hua Daily*) in Shantou (Guangdong, China). In 1935, they published *Xingguang ribao* 星光日報 (*Xingguang Daily*) in Xiamen (Foukien, China) and *Xing-Zhong ribao* 星中日報 (*Xing Zhong Daily*) in Singapore. In 1938, they published *Xingdao ribao* 星島日報 (*Xingdao Daily*) in Hong Kong. In 1950, *Xing Xian Daily* was published in Bangkok, Thailand. All of these newspapers were united into the first overseas Chinese newspaper series of “Xing Newspaper.” See Ou Yinchuan 歐銀釧, *Xingzhou ribao: Lishi xie zai Dama de tudi shang* 星洲日報：歷史寫在大馬的土地上 (*Xingzhou ribao: History Was Written on the Land of Malaysia*) (Malaysia: Xingzhou ribao, 2008), p. 22; Peng Weibu 彭偉步, *Xingzhou ribao yanjiu* 星洲日報研究 (A Study of the *Xingzhou Daily*) (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 2008), pp. 7–8.

²¹ See Wu Qianqian 吳倩倩, “Taiguo *Xing Xian ribao* 2012 nian gaiban yuanyin ji qi yiyan yanjiu” 泰國《星暹日報》2012年改版原因及其意義研究 (Reasons and significance of the reform of the Thailand *Xing Xian Daily* in 2012) (master’s thesis, Guangxi University, 2013), pp. 14–21.

以宣揚文物、溝通文化、輔導教育、增進文明、促進世界大同為宗旨, as well as to “enhance Chinese-Thai relations, promote Chinese and Thai cultures, advocate the development of Chinese entrepreneurs and businesses in Thailand, and protect government policies” 加強中泰親善關係, 溝通中泰文化, 鼓吹泰國華商工商事業發展, 擁護政府政策等工作方針。²²

Fan Jiping ostensibly joined a Chinese newspaper agency that was supported by the Thai-Chinese businesses. However, insider information announced by the USIS indicated more complex political and commercial interactions. Political interactions refer to the Kuomintang (KMT) and American power. These interactions are consistent with the argument proposed in the present study, stating that American power operated on a “state-private network” (specifically, that the United States collaborated with local private parties in Thailand). In this context, private parties refer to institutions and organizations affiliated with the KMT. For example, Editor-in-Chief of *Xing Xian Daily*, Yang Jianxing 楊健行 [Yang Chien-shin], was the leader of a KMT anti-Communist organization stationed in Thailand. From this viewpoint, both the KMT and the CPC endeavoured to spread their political ideologies through the cultural industry. Zhang Yiguang 張藝光 (Chang Yikwang), who was editor for the “International News” segment, worked closely with the USIS in Thailand.²³ This close collaboration between *Xing Xian Daily* and the Thailand USIS was the motivation that eventually led Fan to become the USIS-HK editor for *Four Seas Pictorial*.

The debut of *Four Seas Pictorial* was extremely confidential. Discussions concerning this publication were often seen in restricted NARA documents. According to a confidential document issued by the Consulate General of the United States in Hong Kong and Macau to the U.S. Department of State, *Four Seas Pictorial* was to be distributed on a completely commercial basis, which was passed in the Baguio Meeting in Thailand and approved by the U.S. Department of State.²⁴ The complete commercialization strategy adopted for the editing and publication processes of *Four Seas Pictorial* was primarily to demonstrate the impartiality of the USIS and the United States. For this reason, documents concerning the publication were largely confidential and restricted. In addition to the impartiality rationale, *Four Seas Pictorial* was to be published under the direct and continued control of the USIS Chief Public Affairs Officers (CPAO) in the United States and Southeast Asia, which was

²² Ibid., p. 7.

²³ Confidential Memorandum, T. Dunn to Mr. John Henderson, 23 March 1954, Hong Kong; U.S. Consulate, Hong Kong Classified General Records of the USIS, 1951–1955, Entry 2689, RG84, NARA.

²⁴ Restricted Operations Memorandum, American Consulate General (Hong Kong) to Department of State, 31 October 1951, Hong Kong; U.S. Consulate, Hong Kong Classified General Records of the USIS, 1951–1955, Entry 2689, RG84, NARA.

associated with the United States' attitude towards Taiwan and Hong Kong publications. A report published by Arthur W. Hummel, Jr. in August 1954 revealed that the USIS Public Affairs Officers (PAO) stationed in Southeast Asian countries were able to formulate their own projects. However, Chinese propaganda in Taiwan and Hong Kong largely followed a specific order and propagation mechanism, by which all USIS CPAOs in Southeast Asia were required to abide.²⁵ This mechanism was instated because the influence of the then USIA (1954) was still limited. Perhaps the reasons that the United States opted for direct control over the propagation method and quantity of Chinese propaganda in Taiwan and Hong Kong were based on the demand for propaganda in Southeast Asia and economic rationality.

The editing and publishing affairs of *Four Seas Pictorial* were largely recorded in a confidential document issued in July 1951, Contract No. S188 fa-70.²⁶ According to the content of the document, the terms and conditions between Fan and the United States were as follows.

In terms of presentation, each issue of *Four Seas Pictorial* comprised 24 pages including a cover page and a back cover. Among these pages, four were printed in two colours. The terms and conditions of the contract clearly show that the presentation of *Four Seas Pictorial* was discussed in detail and that the United States' execution was rational and scientific (mathematical). Under the instructions, supervision, and assistance of the USIS, Fan was tasked with publishing one issue of *Four Seas Pictorial* each month.²⁷ Although the United States emphasized impartiality between *Four Seas Pictorial* and the USIS/United States, the contract clearly shows that the United States aspired to play the role of custodian and coordinator of the publication. This was also mentioned by Peter Evans.²⁸ In terms of support, the contract stated, "All available resources of the USIS are at your [Fan's] disposal, including images and printing material."²⁹ The contract also stated that Fan could

²⁵ Confidential Report, Arthur W. Hummel to Mr. Saxton E. Bradford, 3 August 1954, Hong Kong; U.S. Consulate, Hong Kong Classified General Records of the USIS, 1951–1955, Entry 2689, RG84, NARA.

²⁶ Operations Memorandum, American Consulate General, Hong Kong to Department of State, 29 February 1952, Hong Kong; U.S. Consulate, Hong Kong Classified General Records of the USIS, 1951–1955, Entry 2689, RG84, NARA.

²⁷ Contract No. S188 fa-70, American Consulate General to Fan Kay Ping, 16 July 1951, Hong Kong; U.S. Consulate, Hong Kong Classified General Records of the USIS, 1951–1955, Entry 2689, RG84, NARA.

²⁸ Peter Evans, *Embedded Autonomy: States and Industrial Transformation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), p. 13.

²⁹ Contract No. S188 fa-70, American Consulate General to Fan Kay Ping, 16 July 1951, Hong Kong; U.S. Consulate, Hong Kong Classified General Records of the USIS, 1951–1955, Entry 2689, RG84, NARA.

independently collect materials, as long as they were approved by the embassy.³⁰ Ostensibly, the terms and conditions seemingly offered Fan a substantial degree of freedom. However, underlying restrictions existed. That is, although Fan could utilize the editorial resources within his interpersonal network, he needed the approval of the United States to incorporate them into the publication. This showed the United States' custodian-like role in the publication of *Four Seas Pictorial*, particularly concerning propaganda content.³¹

In term of remuneration, the contract showed that Fan received a monthly salary of HKD 2,480, which was equivalent to the eight-month salary of an average elementary/middle school teacher. The United States was generous in the remuneration of editors. Fan's wages were paid on a fortnightly basis of HKD 1,240.³² As Editor-in-Chief, Fan also controlled a fund of HKD 550 for the payment of images, short stories, articles, cartoons, illustrations, and reference material.³³ Moreover, the rights and obligations between Fan and his publishers were expressly provided in Contract No. IA-188-4. The contract imposed eight obligations on Fan and his publishers. One obligation stated that Fan was required to use the aforementioned fund to purchase adequate news images and Chinese magazine articles. He was also tasked with completing the layout of the magazine and all business contacts before delivering the publication template to the publisher.³⁴ These contracts show that the United States clearly regulated the rights and obligations of its local agents in writing.

In addition to the symbiotic relationship between the United States and local intellectuals, it also provided U.S. Government funds as a government-specific account for *Four Seas Pictorial*.³⁵ This shows that the American power also served in an executive role by providing government funds to establish and promote the publication. Unlike Peter Evans, who opted to exclude private parties when it comes to

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² In this regard, in the course of fieldwork by this author, a Taiwanese foreman who worked in a U.S. engineering company also said that the U.S. company paid their salary not on a monthly basis but every two weeks.

³³ Amendment No. 1 to Contract No. S188 fa-70, American Consulate General to Mr. Fan Kay Ping, 1 December 1951, Hong Kong; U.S. Consulate, Hong Kong Classified General Records of the USIS, 1951–1955, Entry 2689, RG84, NARA.

³⁴ Contract No. IA-188-4, Contract for the purchase of press photographs and magazine articles, Hong Kong; U.S. Consulate, Hong Kong Classified General Records of the USIS, 1951–1955, Entry 2689, RG84, NARA.

³⁵ Confidential Memorandum, The National City Bank of New York to The American Consulate General Hong Kong, 20 November 1951, Hong Kong; U.S. Consulate, Hong Kong Classified General Records of the USIS, 1951–1955, Entry 2689, RG84, NARA.

the role of demiurge, the American power embraced the private sector and utilized its resources.³⁶ The financial support of the U.S. government eliminated the publication's dependency on advertising to turn a profit. A publication claimed, "The publication of client advertisements shall commence in the third issue. The printing of commercial advertisement is not to compensate for the cost. Rather, it is the utilization of the publication's comprehensive distribution channel to provide propaganda service to the business sector."³⁷

The advertisements printed in *Four Seas Pictorial* were largely the business services of local vendors in Hong Kong. The bank commissioned by the U.S. government in Hong Kong stated, "Our accounts are handled with the utmost confidentiality" 我們將該戶頭的運作盡可能機密處理。³⁸ Based on the aforementioned discussion, the United States opted to remain unattributed to all aspects of the publication, including overall appearance, content, and even funding. We believe that the reason for the United States' heavy emphasis on unattributed activity was to achieve effective propaganda. Moreover, *Four Seas Pictorial* was established as a commercial publication. Therefore, its circulation was largely for entertainment and as a form of contemporary literature rather than political propaganda.

The first issue of *Four Seas Pictorial* was launched on 10 September 1951 and continued until 25 November 1952, after which the United States proposed a relocation of the entire *Four Seas Pictorial* editorial team to Manila, the Philippines, to reduce publication costs. However, USIS-HK opposed these plans for three reasons: cost reduction, quality, and printing speed. The USIS-HK argued that no other country could achieve the same level of quality and printing speed at a lower price than Hong Kong.³⁹ Later, the U.S. Secretary of State, John Dulles, sent an approval to the USIS-HK to continue printing *Four Seas Pictorial* and *World Today* in Hong Kong.⁴⁰ This discourse showed that after a period, the United States began considering alternative

³⁶ See Wang Meixiang, "Yinbi quanli," pp. 305–6.

³⁷ *Four Seas Pictorial* 2 (10 October 1951), p. 20: 本刊刊登客戶廣告，定於第三期開始。查本刊接受商業廣告，目的不在一般之所謂「減輕成本」，而在對本刊已有之龐大銷數加以利用，為商界作宣傳之服務。

³⁸ Confidential Memorandum, The National City Bank of New York to The American Consulate General Hong Kong, 20 November 1951, Hong Kong; U.S. Consulate, Hong Kong Classified General Records of the USIS, 1951–1955, Entry 2689, RG84, NARA.

³⁹ Operations Memorandum, American Consulate General, Hong Kong to Department of State, February 29, 1952, Hong Kong; U.S. Consulate, Hong Kong Classified General Records of the USIS, 1951–1955, Entry 2689, RG84, NARA.

⁴⁰ Confidential Airgram, Department of State to American Consulate General, 28 January 1953, Hong Kong; U.S. Consulate, Hong Kong Classified General Records of the USIS, 1951–1955, Entry 2689, RG84, NARA.

printing plans for the publication and reducing cost. This was consistent with their original approach towards economic rationality.

On 10 October 1955, a message was published in the “Editor’s Words” section of *Four Seas Pictorial*, explaining that the publication would undergo significant revisions starting with Issue 49. Specifically, it would add English descriptions. The passage explained, “A large number of Chinese who have been raised and live overseas are not well versed in the Chinese language. Starting in the next issue, we have decided to include English descriptions with our image content, bridging the comprehension gap with our overseas Chinese readers.”⁴¹ This message illustrated the adjustment made to *Four Seas Pictorial* to meet reader demand. Moreover, the content of the publication was also revised. Images and text concerning calligraphy and fashion tailoring, as well as those specific to younger students were added to attract more student readers. In ideology, the publication also aimed to “establish an identity between overseas Chinese and their ancestral land,”⁴² and garner the acceptance of overseas Chinese with the idea of a Free China. The discussion presented in this section has highlighted how propaganda was adjusted to meet reader demands and maximize promotional effects.

Content Analysis of *Four Seas Pictorial*

A number of pictorials were in circulation during the publication of *Four Seas Pictorial*, such as the *Silver Light* first published by the Hong Kong Film and Arts Improvement Press in 1926. *Silver Light* was a cinema-based pictorial that focused on international and domestic movies and celebrities. In addition, *Feifei Pictorial*, a pictorial edited by Li Ouqi 黎耦齊 that began in 1928, covered Chinese painting, fiction, art, photography, artwork presentation, fitness, and dance.⁴³ We divided the framework of pictorials into text content and image presentation. Observations showed that the image portion of the pictorial published during this period was far less than text content. Moreover, images only supplemented text content during the initial development of pictorials. The *Youth’s Pictorial*, launched in 1937, and the *Dongfang huabao* 東方畫報 (*Eastern Miscellany Pictorial*), launched in 1938, were

⁴¹ Fan Jiping, *Four Seas Pictorial* 48 (10 October 1955), p. 1: 生長於海外的華僑頗多不諳本國文字，下期起決計增加英文說明，對圖文內容，扼要註釋，使不諳中文的華僑也讀充分了解而無所隔閡。

⁴² Fan Jiping, *Four Seas Pictorial* 48 (10 October 1955), p. 1: 將加強華僑與祖國的聯繫。

⁴³ See Jiang Yasha 姜亞沙, Jing Li 經莉, and Chen Zhanqi 陳湛綺, eds., *Minguo huabao hui-bian: Gang-yue juan* 民國畫報匯編：港粵卷 (Compilation of Republic of China pictorial: Hong Kong and Guangdong volumes) (Beijing: Quanguo tushuguan wenxian suowei fuzhi zhongxin, 2007), vol. 1, p. 1.

centred on the war. These pictorials contained a substantial amount of images, gradually transitioning pictorials into an image-based publication with text as supplementary content. The *Eastern Miscellany Pictorial* even offered Chinese and English descriptions. Subsequently, the proportion of images and text was dependent on propaganda and reader demand. The addition of English descriptions was based on the desire to deliver propaganda to more non-Chinese readers. This method of operation can be exhibited in *Four Seas Pictorial* after Issue 31 published in 1954, where English descriptions were provided under certain images. English descriptions were fully implemented by Issue 49. The post-war development of Hong Kong's pictorials included the launch of *Jian yu mei* 健與美 (*Health and Beauty*) in 1947. This publication centred on health and fitness and propagated European and American views on shaping the body.

A cross analysis between the development of *Four Seas Pictorial* and the history of Hong Kong's pictorials show that *Four Seas Pictorial* was a publication funded by the U.S. Department of State and circulated within a state-private network. Moreover, it was jointly edited by a group of local writers (migrant writers in Hong Kong). The publication was funded by the U.S. government. Most of the images and content were provided by the United States and edited by Fan's editorial group. We endeavoured to identify the changes in style and content of pictorials following the intervention of American power in the Taiwanese and Hong Kong culture industry and the involvement in the newspaper publishing industry of the literary institution operated with U.S. aid. We also aimed to determine the influences that American power had on the publication of Hong Kong's pictorials.

We first analysed the images published in *Four Seas Pictorial*, specifically the cover art. An advertisement announced by the editorial group for the solicitation of cover art stated, "We are publicly in search of cover art for our publication. Themes include, but are not limited to, people, scenery, buildings, and art. Images should be lively and refreshing. They should be of journalistic value, contribute to lifestyle and entertainment, and be attractive to readers."⁴⁴ Although a variety of themes was solicited, the cover art for *Four Seas Pictorial* was predominantly of women (Appendix 1). These arrangements were consistent with those of *The Young Companion* published in Shanghai in 1926 (Appendix 1) and Fan's *The Screen Pictorial* published in Shanghai in 1926 (Appendix 1). The distinction between *Four Seas Pictorial* and the other two pictorials was that *The Young Companion* and *The Screen Pictorial* largely used celebrities for their cover art, which contributed to both

⁴⁴ *Four Seas Pictorial* 16 (1 February 1953), p. 19: 本刊公開徵求封面圖片，題材不拘其為人物、風景、建築、藝術，要以畫面生動，格調清新，能於新聞價值或生活情趣方面有所表演而能引人入勝為佳。

entertainment and propaganda. By comparison, *Four Seas Pictorial* not only used the images of female celebrities but also renowned women from different countries and domains. Issue 5 featured Hu Xiuqiong 胡秀琼, a renowned American-Chinese fashion designer, and Issue 20 featured professional ballerinas, advocating modern feminism.

Image-text arrangement can be characterized into four major types, namely (1) images on top of the page and text at the bottom; (2) images on the left side of the page and text on the right; (3) image in the centre of the page and text wrapped around; and (4) random arrangement.⁴⁵ Generally, the first method of arrangement was the most popular. The second method was widely adopted in Chinese literature but rarely adopted in pictorials. The “Editor’s Words” section in Issue 2 stated, “In this publication, a considerable amount of effort has been put into writing every single paragraph. The neat and uniform arrangement of images and text adopted in this publication is unprecedented in Hong Kong. We are confident in its success.”⁴⁶ This statement indicates that the editors of *Four Seas Pictorial* were committed to maintaining the neatness and consistency of the images and their descriptions. If we compare early pictorials in Hong Kong, such as the *Silver Light* or *Feifei Pictorial*, in such publications the descriptions following the images were typically inconsistent in length and written in different styles, sometimes from top to bottom and other times from left to right or from right to left. In Issue 2 of *Four Seas Pictorial*, editors directly expressed their pursuit of a neat and organized pictorial. All texts were formatted from top to bottom and from right to left. This unification not only facilitated formatting and printing but also enabled editors to work faster, thereby reducing the cost.

The goals described in the previous paragraph of *Four Seas Pictorial* were comparatively different to conventional Chinese pictorials. Chen Pingyuan stated, “Chinese people prefer text over images. . . . As a result, Chinese people are less proficient at forming narratives through images.”⁴⁷ The image-based framework of *Four Seas Pictorial* was totally different from such a tradition. Thus the “Editor’s Words” section of *Four Seas Pictorial* stated explicitly that the publication used images to tell stories and that images were sufficient for delivering information. Fan wrote:

⁴⁵ See Wang Bomin 王伯敏, *Zhongguo banhua shi* 中國版畫史 (History of Chinese printmaking) (Taipei: Lanting shudian, 1986), p. 17.

⁴⁶ *Four Seas Pictorial* 2 (10 October 1951), p. 3: 從小地方說起，在「四海」裡，甚至一段說明的撰寫，也曾費過一番功夫。圖片說明的整齊化與劃一化，在我國出版界還是一個嘗試。希望我們的嘗試不是一個失敗。

⁴⁷ Chen Pingyuan, *Zuotu youshi yu xixue dongjian*, p. 3: 中國人重文字而輕圖像，……正是這一點，使得中國人不太擅長以圖像敘事。

The world is separated into heaven and hell. Light is not praised, nor is dark cursed. We believe in calmly expressing the happenings of this world through images and providing our readers with the freedom to judge and decide. Images are more direct, overpowering, eloquent commentaries. They truly are worth more than a thousand words.⁴⁸

In this passage, Fan clarifies the views of *Four Seas Pictorial*. He attempted to maintain objectivity and neutrality and avoided conventional democratic or third-party communist narratives. The goal of *Four Seas Pictorial* was not to impose views. Rather, it advocated choice. However, the publication still held subjective views. The editorial group was open with their views when replying to readers' feedback. In a reply, it stated, "We [*Four Seas Pictorial*] advocate democratic freedom and stand firm in our beliefs. However, we remain unbiased in reporting light and dark, freedom and slavery. We do not comment on our articles, enabling our readers to form unbiased decisions."⁴⁹ This statement explained the publication's material sourcing principles. Images contain narratives and can convey personal viewpoints as well as the messages the United States opted to deliver to free-world readers, such as "World January," "news on overseas Chinese worldwide," and "Chinese culture" (e.g., Cemetery of Confucius⁵⁰). Reports on the free world included the political stability of Western countries, rich lifestyles, achievements of overseas Chinese,⁵¹ and the pleasures of modern living. Reports on Free China included modernism (e.g., article on "Vibrant Taiwan"⁵²), well-trained free Chinese military (e.g., article on "Double Tenth in Taiwan"⁵³), democratic development of politics (e.g., article on "National Conference Elects Second President and Vice President"⁵⁴), and the prosperity of free Chinese residents (e.g., articles on "Modernizing Production in Taiwan's Pineapple Industry"⁵⁵ and "Taiwan's Sugar Industry"⁵⁶). Moreover, news concerning disaster

⁴⁸ *Four Seas Pictorial* 12 (1 October 1952), p. 1: 正如所謂天堂與地獄，整個世界之被分裂為二，光明無需歌頌，黑暗無需詛咒，我們覺得把發生在這個世界上的事情，平心靜氣地用圖片表現出來，以讓讀者自行批判與辨味，較之寫一篇洋洋洒洒的評論更為直接與具體，因此對於任何事物，我們多數不置一辭，而所有圖片，也幾乎足夠說明他們自己。

⁴⁹ *Four Seas Pictorial* 3 (20 November 1951), p. 20: 《四海畫報》推崇民主自由，立場堅定，卻一視同仁地報告了光明與黑暗，奴役與自由，不加註釋的讓讀者自行抉擇。

⁵⁰ *Four Seas Pictorial* 12 (1 October 1952), pp. 14–15.

⁵¹ *Ibid.* 9 (25 June 1952), p. 15.

⁵² *Ibid.* 40 (10 February 1955), pp. 6–7.

⁵³ *Ibid.* 13 (1 November 1952), pp. 8–9.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* 30 (10 April 1954), pp. 3–4.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* 12 (1 October 1952), pp. 8–9.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* 17 (1 March 1953), pp. 14–15.

in Taiwan (e.g., the article on “Major Earthquake in Taiwan”⁵⁷) not only reported causalities but also highlighted the Nationalist Government’s efforts in disaster rescue and compensation. Reports on Hong Kong focused on entertainment news, as well as positive reports on the Queen of England and charity events (e.g., article on “The Salvation Army—Hong Kong”⁵⁸). Reports in the United States were focused on modernism (e.g., prevalence of television⁵⁹), technology, charity (e.g., article on “Mutual Assistance and Relief Industry”⁶⁰), and gender equality (e.g., article on “Successful Women”⁶¹). The publication used images to promote the positive ideologies of the United States and Free China. Within these reports, the United States was presented as an altruistic society.

Reports also reported on the free and communist worlds. Images were used to highlight and simplify the differences between the two worlds. This made readers’ preference abundantly clear. In the article “Perspectives on East and West Germany,” images were presented to stress the free democracy of West Germany and the communistic ideologies of East Germany. They also illustrated how refugees escaped from East Germany to West Germany.⁶² *Four Seas Pictorial* also published two consecutive issues on land reform. In Issue 18, the article “Status Quo of Land Reform” presented images (Appendix 2) to illustrate how China’s land reform was killing residents (landowners) and the struggles of poor farmers.⁶³ Issue 19 reported on Taiwan’s land reform. By contrast to the “stern and pained” expressions portrayed in the images of China’s land reform, the images used for the land reform of Free China showed satisfied farmers and landowners entering into agreements.⁶⁴ The expressions of the farmers and landowners were indicative of the land reform progress and effectiveness in communist and Free China.

A quantitative analysis of the content of *Four Seas Pictorial* showed that the majority of reports were on Free China (Table 1), accounting for one-fifth of all reports published. The increased reports stem from the United States’ concerns about the poor reputation of the KMT in Southeast Asia and its poor propaganda outcomes and the attempt to build up KMT prestige.⁶⁵ With the assistance of the

⁵⁷ Ibid. 3 (20 November 1951), pp. 2–3.

⁵⁸ Ibid. 8 (20 May 1952), pp. 36–37.

⁵⁹ Ibid. 1 (10 September 1951), p. 16.

⁶⁰ Ibid. 14 (1 December 1952), pp. 12–13.

⁶¹ Ibid. 8 (20 May 1952), pp. 26–27.

⁶² Ibid. 20 (1 June 1953), pp. 6–7.

⁶³ Ibid. 18: (1 April 1953), pp. 2–3.

⁶⁴ Ibid. 19: (1 May 1953), pp. 2–3.

⁶⁵ Confidential Report, Arthur W. Hummel to Mr. Saxton E. Bradford, 3 August 1954, Hong Kong; U.S. Consulate, Hong Kong Classified General Records of the USIS, 1951–1955, Entry 2689, RG84, NARA.

United States, Free China became the centre of the free world and the representative for Chinese culture. The editorial group for *Four Seas Pictorial* was predominately anti-Communist and supported the KMT. *Four Seas Pictorial* was approved by the Republic of China Overseas Community Affairs Council and, to some extent, it was a publication that directly promoted free Chinese ideologies. *Four Seas Pictorial* predominantly reported current news (Table 2), which was consistent with the symbiotic relationship between the United States and the USIS-HK. Current news was sequentially followed by entertainment news and news concerning overseas Chinese.

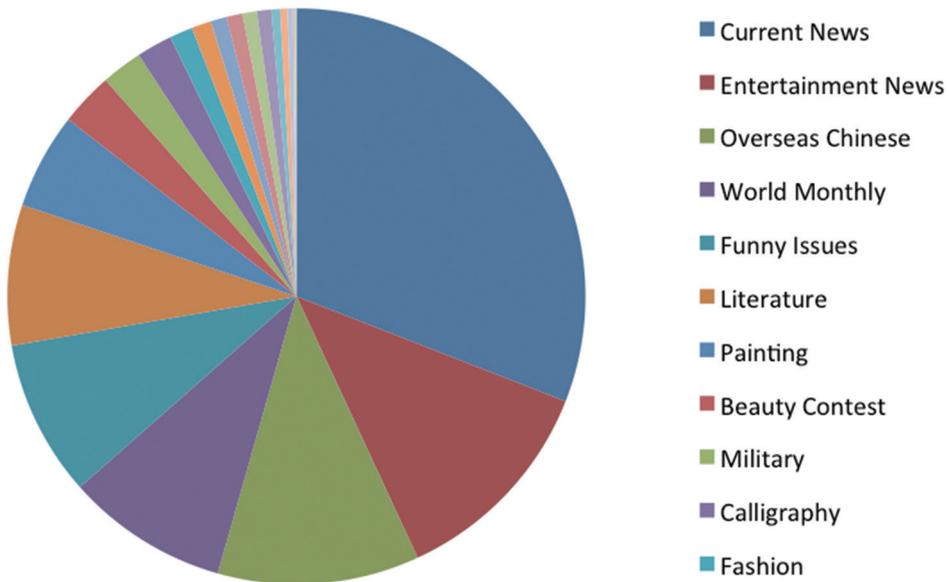
Table 1 Current News of *Four Seas Pictorial*

Nation	Pages	Percentage	Nation	Pages	Percentage
Free China (Taiwan)	113	19.2	Italy	4	0.7
Communist China	57	9.7	Nepal	4	0.7
U.S.	47	8.0	Iran	3	0.5
Free World	44	7.4	Czech Republic	3	0.5
Germany	34	5.7	Cambodia	3	0.5
Hong Kong	30	5.1	Belgium	3	0.5
Vietnam	24	4.0	Turkey	3	0.5
U.K.	22	3.7	Guatemala	3	0.5
Thailand	19	3.2	Cyprus	2	0.3
Japan	15	2.5	Norway	2	0.3
Korea	15	2.5	Vezeuela	2	0.3
Indonesia	14	2.3	Singapore	2	0.3
Russia	12	2.0	Finland	2	0.3
Malaya	12	2.0	Malta	2	0.3
Switzerland	11	1.8	Denmark	2	0.3
Philippines	11	1.8	Poland	2	0.3
Egypt	10	1.7	Macao	2	0.3
France	9	1.5	Netherlands	2	0.3
India	8	1.3	Greenland	2	0.3
Buma	6	1.0	Sarawak	2	0.3
Austria	6	1.0	Vatican	1	0.2
Spain	5	0.8	Greece	1	0.2
Laos	5	0.8	Bulgaria	1	0.2
Africa	5	0.8	/	/	/

Table 2 Content of *Four Seas Pictorial*

content	pages	percentage	content	pages	percentage
Current News	247	31.0	Science and Technology	9	1.1
Entertainment News	97	12.2	Sports	8	1.0
Overseas Chinese	90	11.3	Photography	7	0.9
World Monthly	73	9.1	Sculpture	6	0.8
Funny Issues	70	8.8	Dance	6	0.8
Literature	63	7.9	Stamp Collection	4	0.5
Painting	43	5.4	Drama	3	0.4
Beauty Contest	24	3.0	Human Rights	2	0.3
Military	18	2.3	Ceramics	1	0.1
Calligraphy	16	2.0	Medicine	1	0.1
Fashion	10	1.3			

Figure 1 Content of *Four Seas Pictorial*



In addition to the aforementioned content, *Four Seas Pictorial* also featured a “Short Stories” segment with each issue.⁶⁶ This segment was not unique to the publication. On the contrary, a similar segment, “Serials,” was published in the first issue of *Companion Pictorial* in 1926.⁶⁷ Unlike the images, the pugnaciousness between democracy and communism was less evident in the “Short Stories” segment of *Four Seas Pictorial*. This section largely focused on human affirmation (nature) and love. Stories were generally about love, marriage, extramarital affairs, and incest. These stories are clearly reflective of readers’ preferences. To appeal to overseas Chinese readers, main characters were often set with overseas Chinese backgrounds. For example, in the short story, “Nüwu” 女巫 (Witch), the main female character, Sang Jila 桑吉拉, was the daughter of a Sumatra-born Chinese 蘇門答臘土生華僑.⁶⁸

Short story writers for *Four Seas Pictorial* included Fan (a.k.a. Shangguan dafu 上官大夫) and freelance writers, Wan Gang 萬方 and Xu Xu 徐訏. Short story illustrators included Zhang Yingchao and Li Weiling. Unlike the images, which presented strong opposition between light and darkness through visual contrast, the short stories were less conflicted. Rather, stories centred on life events and love. For example, Xu Xu’s “Fu chou” 父仇 (Father’s enemy), which was published in Issue 1, was later included in a short story compilation published by Yazhou chubanshe 亞洲出版社 (Asia Press) in 1955. In this story, the author adopted a third party and psychoanalytical writing style to reconstruct a series of interviews with criminals, expert criminologists, and abnormal psychologists. Seemingly based on personal experience, Xu Xu, who had a background in philosophy and psychology, structured a story of patricide and incest through the confessions of the victim, Tao Qiang 陶鏘.

Fan largely wrote stories of love and marriage plotted in Shanghai and Hong Kong. In “Yongyuan de dengdai” 永遠的等待 (Forever waiting), he portrayed the affair of Song Shenming 宋深明 and Rong Wei 容薇 and the signing of a “new divorce” contract. This type of story was extremely rare during that period.⁶⁹ In “Zhao xiansheng de lüxing” 趙先生的旅行 (Travels of Mr Zhao), the author described the

⁶⁶ The foreword of *Four Seas Pictorial* stated that *Four Seas Pictorial* welcomes receiving manuscripts from readers. If the manuscript was adopted by the editor, generous royalties would be paid as compensation. Short stories: HK fifteen to thirty yuan per thousand words. Photograph: HK fifteen to thirty yuan per photo. See *Four Seas Pictorial* 4 (25 December 1951), p. 16.

⁶⁷ See Jiang Yasha, Jing Li, and Chen Zhanqi, eds., *Minguo huabao huibian: Shanghai juan* 民國畫報匯編：上海卷 (Compilation of Republic of China pictorial: Shanghai volume) (Beijing: Quanguo tushuguan wenxian suowei fuzhi zhongxin, 2007), vol. 28, p. 1.

⁶⁸ *Four Seas Pictorial* 6 (25 February 1952), p. 20.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.* 38 (10 December 1954), pp. 19–20.

escape of Wang Wantian 汪婉天 from her husband, who was having an affair.⁷⁰ The story of “Muwu li de nüren” 木屋裡的女人 (Woman in the cottage), authored by Hu Zhongwen 胡重文, portrayed the life of a refugee after she escaped from Shanghai to Hong Kong. The story expressed the profound friendship between two people and painted a vivid image of the life of the subaltern in Hong Kong in the 1950s.

Wan Gang, a freelance writer for *Four Seas Pictorial*, preferred the non-fictional writing approach when illustrating Hong Kong before and after 1950. In “Tiantang meng” 天堂夢 (Heavenly dream), the author explained the discourse of Zhong Guoren 鍾果仁, a refugee who escaped from Shenzhen to Hong Kong. To Zhong, Hong Kong was heaven. By collecting a favour, he finally gained the opportunity to travel to Hong Kong. During his escape, he was assaulted while attempting to save a child in his group, finally gaining passage to heaven. “Tiantang meng” illustrated human nature and how Zhong Guoren finally chose to sacrifice himself to save another in a critical situation. We believe that the feature of Wan Gang’s short stories is the acknowledgment of positive human nature. Positive human nature can be observed in other stories compiled in Wan Gang’s *sanhaozi xiaoshuo* 三毫子小說 (thirty-cent novels), even when the enemy was the Communists. To the author, human nature outweighed the opposition between democracy and communism.

If the Hong Kong portrayed in “Tiantang meng” is the heaven coined by the refugees, Wan Gang was steadfast in describing how refugees perceived Hong Kong once they arrived in “heaven.” In “Daziji de beiju” 打字機的悲劇 (Tragedy of the typewriter), the author depicted how Hong Kong residents had to engage in smuggling to survive. The climax of this story was when the female lead character, Chou Minjuan 周敏娟, said in despair, “What else is love good for?”⁷¹ and “There is no room for love in such times of struggle.”⁷² This short story clearly portrays the extreme hardship Hong Kong residents experienced in the 1950s, explaining that love gradually lost value amidst the growing despair of survival. “Jiulongcheng zhi ye” 九龍城之夜 (Kowloon City after dark), a story written by Wan Gang of the life of refugees in Hong Kong’s Diamond Hill, was a realistic account of the marriage between Gu Zhusun 顧竹蓀 and Lady Wang Hanmei 王寒梅, daughter of a tycoon in Hong Kong. As the story unravels, readers experience the hardship they endured for survival, how their feelings for each other changed from love to hate, consumed by desperation for survival. The author perfectly depicted a dark and hopeless Hong Kong. A similar plot can be observed in the story, “Deng” 等 (Wait), which illustrates the hardship of unemployed subalterns in Hong Kong.⁷³ “Zuifan” 罪犯 (Criminal)

⁷⁰ Ibid. 41 (10 March 1955), p. 20

⁷¹ Ibid. 22 (1 August 1953), p. 20: 愛情還有甚麼用處呢？

⁷² Ibid.: 生活是這麼硬繃繃，絲毫也不容情。

⁷³ *Four Seas Pictorial* 49 (15 November 1955), pp. 24–25.

depicts the life of refugees after arriving in Hong Kong. It portrays Hong Kong as a place of hope and deprivation, recollecting Hu Yihua's 胡逸華 penniless life in Wuyi Lane 烏衣巷 to becoming wealthy and finally losing his way to opium.⁷⁴ The aforementioned stories highlighted the narratives of people in Hong Kong, creating a contrasting experience to the positive, bright, and hopeful images published in *Four Seas Pictorial*.⁷⁵ In summary, *Four Seas Pictorial* claimed that it realistically portrayed the free world and the communist world. However, its presentation of images showed otherwise. We observed a world torn in two. Its claims were realized in its literary works. In the textual world created by Hong Kong authors, the world is a single unified body without a clear boundary between darkness and light, human nature, and emotions. The gray area between these depictions was presented in writing.

Conclusion

Four Seas Pictorial is a key pictorial that reflects American power in Southeast Asia in the 1950s. It was the first free world pictorial in Southeast Asia. It was also the first pictorial published by the USIS-HK that focused on overseas Chinese. In respect of U.S. propaganda in Southeast Asia, *American Today* was already in circulation before the launch of *Four Seas Pictorial*. However, the content of *American Today* was overly abstruse for general readers. It was also published under the USIS, often receiving criticism for being culturally imperialist or colonialist. *American Today* was later named *World Today* on 15 March 1952 to break the people's common association between *American Today* and USIS/American power. In addition to the name, the presentation of the publication was also revised to contain more lifestyle-related content and images. A comparative analysis between U.S. promotional materials shows that *Four Seas Pictorial* contained more popularized content and images than *American Today*. In addition, *American Today* focused on American readers as the target for propaganda, while *Four Seas Pictorial* targeted overseas Chinese readers and focused on their demands. Thus, *Four Seas Pictorial* not only presented (or shaped) the free world image of the United States but also reflected the political and cultural situations in Southeast Asia in the 1950s. Later (from Issue 49 onward), segments concerning the U.S. were revised with the addition of calligraphy and fashion segments to conform to readers' interests, adopting the mentality of the advocate (e.g., orthodox Free China) by propagating interesting information. This method benefited the dissemination of culture and information rather than the advocator.

⁷⁴ Ibid. 33 (10 July 1954), p. 20.

⁷⁵ Ibid. 23 (10 September 1953), p. 19.

In summary, the publication of *Four Seas Pictorial* reflected the operating logic of the literary institution operated with U.S. aid and the mechanics of state-private networks and local interpersonal networks (Fan and other editors from Shanghai). The USIS-HK collaborated with local editors to achieve cultural propaganda. Notably, the United States served as the custodian of ideology when collaborating with the private sector to ensure that news reports conformed to the propaganda demands of the United States. A number of editors, such as Fan and Xu Xu, supported the KMT. The close relationship between the *Four Seas Pictorial* and the KMT become more apparent once the publication was approved by the Republic of China Overseas Community Affairs Council. Moreover, American power also served as the custodian and coordinator of the publication. In comparison with publications by the Book Translation Program, the American power offered a greater degree of freedom in *Four Seas Pictorial*. Besides establishing the target audience (overseas Chinese) and providing funding and articles, *Four Seas Pictorial* was predominately presented as a Shanghai pictorial. Using the funding and resources provided by the United States, these Shanghai-style pictorials promoted the collective identity of Chinese people in Southeast Asia towards the free world. This collaborative relationship with local intellectuals (private parties) enabled the United States to maintain unattributed operation.

A dissimilarity can be observed between the framework adopted by *Four Seas Pictorial* and that of previous publications. Although ideology was regulated by the United States, editors of the *Four Seas Pictorial* had greater editing freedom than translated publications. This dissimilarity highlighted the operating logic adopted by the United States. In translated publications, the United States controlled ideologies through requisitions. The publications and pictorials produced by the USIS-HK did not require the approval of the USIA. Rather, they could be reviewed in house. In terms of operation, local intellectuals were offered greater autonomy to draw on their experiences. Therefore, *Four Seas Pictorial* not only reflected the qualities of Shanghai's pictorials but also paved the way for the future launch of other pictorials by the USIS, such as *Asia Pictorial*, as well as *Free World*, a publication launched by McCarthy in Taiwan. *Free World* significantly influenced the art propaganda system in Taiwan, leading to KMT's own pictorial, *Taiwan*.

Notably, the editing style of Fan can be observed in the 1970 magazine *Daren* 大人 (*Panorama Magazine*). The publication criticized and ridiculed life events using humorous maxims or sayings similar to the “Weiwu ji” 微悟集 (Realization) segment of the *Four Seas Pictorial*. For example, “Men argue, women converse, and petty people whisper”; “Business is like oil and friendship is like water; they do not mix”; “Inventing a new dish is comparable to discovering a new planet”;⁷⁶ “Ideas that are

⁷⁶ Ibid. 1 (10 September 1951), p. 19: 雄辯是丈夫，談話是女人，竊竊私語是小人……生意像油，友誼的水摻不進去……發明一味新的菜式對於人類的貢獻，不在發現一顆新的星球之下。

understood by few are philosophy, by many, they are knowledge”; “The first gift God gave to women is beauty. It is also the first thing He takes away.”⁷⁷ Fan’s alias, Shangguan dafu, often appeared in the *Panorama Magazine* for authoring epigrams. His real name also appeared in the magazine for his observations and commentaries concerning events in Southeast Asia. This content can be perceived as the experience and continuity of *Four Seas Pictorial*.

Four Seas Pictorial not only promoted the free world but also reflected the conditions of Hong Kong in the 1950s through the writings of a group of local intellectuals. For example, the works published in the “Short Stories” segment, as well as the images by Li Weiling published in the “Xianggang suxie” 香港速寫 (Hong Kong sketches) and “Xianggang saomiao” 香港掃描 (Hong Kong illustrations) segments, illustrated Hong Kong’s society in the 1950s. In response to the “Hong Kong illustrations” segment by Li Weiling (Appendix 3), Yang Jiguang 楊際光 stated:

Hong Kong has long lost its culture. It is now another’s cliché. Despite this fact, people often praise Hong Kong, describing it as a beautiful paradise. If we willingly lament, “Hong Kong’s culture lies in ruin,” just because a few self-identifying cultural promoters are disseminating their destructive cultural germs, then for those that do not perceive themselves to be fighting for a cause, but silently support and encourage the promotion of culture out of their obligation to and interest in life, it should undoubtedly be a pleasant surprise. Even if such people are rare, I firmly believe they exist. They neither over-exaggerate nor clamour about creating history. They are neither tainted by an innate sense of superiority nor desire to lead or reproach others. Instead, they do what they can, regardless of the consequences. It is the sincerity they demonstrate in their work that pushes their culture forward.⁷⁸

The long comment provided by Yang concerning the work of Li Weiling was to praise Li for the contribution he had made to Hong Kong. Li was one of the rare influencers

⁷⁷ Ibid. 7 (25 March 1952), p. 19: 少數人懂得是哲理，多數人懂得便是常識……上帝最早給予女人的第一件禮物是美麗，第一件要回去的，也是美麗。

⁷⁸ Ibid. 18 (1 April 1953), p. 10: 說香港沒有文化，早已成為若干人的濫調；然而，我們也常常聽到一些人讚美這個島嶼，把香港描繪成一個美妙的樂園。……如果說，單憑幾個自以為背負著推動文化使命的人，散播嚴重破壞性的文化細菌，就值得我們沉重地慨嘆「香港的文化已被墮落毀滅」，那麼，另外幾個並沒有認為自己負有任何使命，祇是尋著生命所賦予的責任與興趣，默默地從側面支持和鼓勵文化的推展的人，無疑也足以構成我們意外的驚喜。這一類人縱使稀少，卻決不是沒有。他們並未誇張自己，也沒有大聲叫囂自以為是在創造歷史，更沒有為與生俱來的優越感所迷惑，想去領導或甚至教訓別人。他們祇是從事著自己能力所及的工作，不顧它結果的優劣成敗。但就因為他們真誠做出這點工作，文化的延續並沒有如許多人想像的那樣中斷或靜止。

described by Yang. Although Yang's comment was after Li and the other relevant editors began working under the framework stipulated by the literary institution operated with U.S. aid, Yang's comment possibly meant the self-perception of the actors towards their cultural work. In other words, Hong Kong's intellectuals working in the literary institution operated with U.S. aid were aware that they opposed Communist China. However, they did not wish to clamour like their opposition. Instead, they firmly believed that "he uses the tools and skills available to him to record and represent his experiences and current conditions realistically. Then, he expresses his personal opinions concerning the environment and *zeitgeist*."⁷⁹ This was the environment, conditions, and *zeitgeist* of Hong Kong.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 11: 他是在運用他所能運用的工具與能力，把他目光所接觸的環境與這個時代的具體風物，加以記錄和表現，再注入他感覺中屬於這環境與時代的精神。

Appendix 1: Covers of *Four Seas Pictorial*, *The Screen Pictorial*, and *The Young Companion*



Appendix 2: Status Quo of Land Reform



The upper picture is land reform of Communist China while the lower one is land reform of Free China (Taiwan).



The left picture is land reform of Communist China while the right one is land reform of Free China (Taiwan).

Appendix 3: Sketches of Hong Kong by Li Weiling



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

(Abstract)

Wang Meihsiang

This study is centred on the *Four Seas Pictorial* (1951–1956) published by the U.S. Information Service in Hong Kong, and investigates how the USIS used the *Four Seas Pictorial* as propaganda to seek resonance from readers in Southeast Asia and shape their imagination of the free world. The study collects documents on the *Four Seas Pictorial* from the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration to research a publication that was considered a sister product of *World Today*, as well as a pictorial news magazine issued by the Hong Kong USIS for Southeast Asian readers, and the first pictorial in Western-aligned Southeast Asia.

Through research on the *Four Seas Pictorial*, aside from the pictorial record and ideological formation functions of the pictures, we also find that “politics” within the “entertainment” was characterized by mass appeal and commercialization. The objective was to realize the cultural propaganda objectives of American power in a more economically rational way in order to win the support from more readers in the free world of the United States and Free China. In addition, through the editing of the *Four Seas Pictorial*, we can see the possible changes in American power through its local intermediaries. The overall direction of the United States was to maintain the correct ideology, but details, including the form it should take, were decided by local intermediaries. Finally, the study reflects on the possibility of a history of Hong Kong pictorials. In existing research on late Qing pictorials, we can find pictorials produced in Hong Kong. In addition to the influence of the Chinese pictorial tradition, we also have publications such as the *Four Seas Pictorial*, which has been regarded as the Hong Kong version of *Life*, showing both Shanghai and American influences in the development of Hong Kong pictorials.

Keywords: cultural Cold War U.S. aid culture Hong Kong USIS propaganda anti-Communism

香港製造的自由世界圖像： 以《四海》畫報（1951–1956）為例

（提要）

王梅香

本文以香港美新處出版的《四海》畫報（1951–1956）為中心，探究香港美新處如何透過「畫報」的宣傳形式，尋求東南亞讀者的共鳴，塑造其自由世界的想像。本文透過美國國家檔案局《四海》畫報的文獻，討論這份被視為《今日世界》姊妹品的畫報，是香港美新處針對東南亞讀者所發行的新聞圖片雜誌，也是當時東南亞自由陣營最早的一份畫報。透過《四海》畫報的研究，除了看到以照片為主體的畫報，扮演圖片記實和意識型態塑造的功能，在「娛樂」中帶有「政治」，並具有大眾化和商業化的特質，目的在以更符合經濟理性的方式，實現美國權力文化宣傳的目標，以爭取自由世界更多讀者對於美方和自由中國的認同。其次，透過《四海》畫報的編輯運作，可以看到美國權力透過在地中介者可能產生的變化，美方掌握大方向，確保意識型態上的正確，至於形式等細節，則交由在地中介者決定。最後，本文嘗試思考香港畫報史的可能性。在既有對於晚清畫報的研究中，可以看到香港製造的畫報，除了受到中國畫報傳統的影響，還有如《四海》畫報被視為是香港的《生活雜誌》，彰顯在香港畫報的發展過程中的上海與美國因素。

關鍵詞： 文化冷戰 美元文化 香港美新處 宣傳 反共