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“To Cleanse the Countryside We Must First Cleanse Hearts’: The Culture of Rural Pacification in Japanese-occupied China

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ABSTRACT

Contributing to a growing literature on the transnational history of ‘collaborationism’ under wartime occupation, this paper examines ‘Rural Pacification’ – the counterinsurgency campaigns that were prosecuted from 1941 to 1943 in Japanese-occupied China – from the perspective of culture. In this paper, I argue that, despite being initiated as a military project, the ‘political work’ of Rural Pacification, and particularly the use of cultural production to spread government ideas to rural communities in the Lower Yangtze Delta, marked a crucial part of these campaigns. Rural Pacification was not purely about the eradication of communist resistance in China, but also about ‘cleansing hearts’.

KEYWORDS

China; foreign occupation;
war; rural; cultural history

Introduction

The cultural and social history of ‘collaborationism’ in wartime Europe has emerged over the last two decades as an important field of academic enquiry. In the last few years in particular, a number of transnational projects have examined the ways in which ‘collaborators’ re-imagined themselves and their societies under German occupation,¹ how musicians worked in the name of (or in spite of) such occupation,² and how filmmakers across the continent negotiated their place in a new Nazi ‘world order’.³ Building on an existing literature on World War II ‘collaborationism’ in specific countries such as France,⁴ this new research has emphasised the geographic and temporal continuities across occupied and non-occupied regions of Europe, and across the watershed of 1945.

The field of modern Chinese history, however, is somewhat different. Following the publication of Chang-tai Hung’s seminal book *War and Popular Culture* over a quarter of a century ago, the cultural history of the Japanese occupation of China was written overwhelmingly from the perspective of resistance.⁵ Indeed, up until recently – and with a few notable exceptions⁶ – the focus of research on the impact of the war on ‘popular’, ‘mass’ and ‘new’ culture remained those regions of China beyond the reach of Japanese control. Such work provided historians with a clear understanding of the ways in which resistance shaped everything from visual arts to literature in the communist-controlled base areas, China’s southwest and the ‘orphan island’ (*gudao*) of unoccupied Shanghai

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prior to 1941.⁷ Only in recent years has this focus been challenged by the emerging ‘new cultural history’ of Japanese-occupied China,⁸ a subfield that has encouraged scholars to analyse literature, filmmaking and visual cultures in the occupied cities of Beijing, Shanghai and Nanjing, revealing the often unexpected ways in which Chinese cultural workers carved out new modes of agency and creativity under Japanese rule.⁹

In the wider realm of wartime cultural history, however, occupied *rural* China remains largely absent. We still know relatively little about the ways in which the Japanese invasion shaped cultural production in the countryside. And our knowledge of the ways in which non-communist groups used various forms of cultural expression as tools of wartime mobilisation amongst rural populations is scant.

This paper represents an attempt to address this gap, while also challenging the tendency in some of the social history literature on occupied China beyond the cities to focus purely on narratives of ‘rural instability’ and suffering.¹⁰ By examining cultural programmes that were introduced through a series of campaigns collectively referred to as ‘Rural Pacification’ (*qingxiang*),¹¹ I will argue that cultural and political engagement with the countryside represented a crucial aim of the ‘collaborationist’ Re-organised National Government (RNG) of Wang Jingwei during the Japanese occupation.¹² At one level, a serious examination of the extent to which Rural Pacification encompassed not just military operations, but also attempts either to engage with rural populations via cultural production, or to document and study the culture of rural populations themselves, will help us to appreciate just how similar many wartime Chinese administrations were when it came to their respective attempts to affect change in the countryside. In this regard, this paper takes Rana Mitter and Aaron William Moore’s suggestion that, during the Second Sino-Japanese War, ‘all modernizing regimes in China (Nationalist, Communist, and the collaborationist regime ...) wanted social change ...’ and applies it specifically to rural China.¹³

Research on cultural production and wartime mobilisation in rural communist base areas has, of course, already generated a vast body of scholarship, much of it emphasising the influence of rural cultural forms on the arts of the (communist-led) resistance.¹⁴ Scholars of Nationalist China have also highlighted the importance of culture to mobilisation in rural areas controlled by Chiang Kai-shek’s regime during the war.¹⁵ By turning our attention to the occupied Lower Yangtze Delta in this paper, we can start to expand these discussions about the ‘rustification’¹⁶ of Chinese political culture during wartime that such research has inspired. To be sure, as one of the wealthiest and most densely populated regions of the country, the Lower Yangtze Delta (where Rural Pacification was undertaken) is not necessarily indicative of occupied rural China as a whole. Nonetheless, by considering Rural Pacification, we can start to understand how the RNG represented not so much an aberration but rather a continuation of attempts by modern Chinese political movements to come to terms with ‘the rural’ across the middle decades of the twentieth century.¹⁷

At another level, however, I will argue for the need to apply a cultural history perspective to the study of Rural Pacification itself.¹⁸ Rural Pacification was officially introduced in mid 1941 as a means of eradicating armed resistance in east China. Modelled partially on pre-war programmes devised by Chiang Kai-shek’s Nationalists to annihilate rural communist bases,¹⁹ these campaigns involved the murder of dissenters, the forced enclosure of ‘pacified’ villages and the revival of older forms of

community policing and surveillance, generating widespread violence and corruption.²⁰ Rural Pacification also involved a re-ordering of rural production so as to satisfy a Japanese (and later collaborationist) desire to extract grain and other resources for the war effort.²¹ While these campaigns were effective in reducing anti-Japanese resistance,²² life under them was described by those who experienced it as akin to ‘... living amidst panic’ (*zai jinghuang zhong guo shenghuo*).²³

In this paper, however, I will show that Rural Pacification was, equally, a cultural enterprise, and one through which the RNG sought to control the very soul of rural China. Indeed, one of the most commonly repeated slogans of the campaigns was that ‘to cleanse the countryside we must first cleanse hearts’ (*qingxiang xian yao qing xin*).²⁴ Rural Pacification involved the imposition of government ideas via various state-sanctioned forms of cultural production, propaganda and mobilisation in those areas that were deemed susceptible to resistance influence, often via intellectuals from Shanghai (and other cities) who were commissioned by sections of the RNG state and ‘sent down’ to the villages to foster a new generation of cultural workers. As phrases such as ‘to cleanse the countryside we must first cleanse hearts’ suggest, Rural Pacification was thus defined not purely by an iconoclastic impulse to destroy expressions of resistance, but also by a desire to change, via cultural programmes, the very way in which people in the countryside thought and behaved. This is something that even the most virulent opponents of Rural Pacification acknowledged: according to David Serfass, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) recognised ‘... that political work under the RNG in the Lower Yangzi contrasted with the bloody “mopping up” carried out in North China by Japanese troops’ earlier in the war, for instance.²⁵

Drawing on archival records and primary sources now held at institutions in China, Japan and the United States, this paper represents a first attempt at understanding the use of cultural production for the purposes of rural mobilisation under the RNG. I will start by outlining the political and cultural infrastructure that was put in place under Rural Pacification. I will then explore what was meant by the so-called ‘political work’ of Rural Pacification – a category of activity covering non-military aspects of the campaigns – before highlighting two cultural forms that were deployed by the RNG. The first of these, *kamishibai*, was a distinctly Japanese form of performative and visual media that was adopted by the RNG under Japanese pressure, but was then ‘Sinified’ by Chinese cadres so that it could serve RNG (rather than purely Japanese) aims to speak directly to rural audiences. The second cultural form to be explored is one that had been closely associated with leftist and/or anti-Japanese sentiment in the 1930s in Chinese cultural history – *muke*, or woodcuts. The use of woodcuts to promote Rural Pacification marked a decidedly nativist turn by the RNG, and reflected greater levels of autonomy for this regime from the Japanese from late 1942 onwards.²⁶ By analysing the ways in which these two cultural forms were introduced, I will make two wider claims. The first is that Rural Pacification was far more than counter-insurgency. At the heart of these campaigns lay ideas about the need to deploy decidedly modern cultural forms to engage with the countryside (both before and after the Japanese invasion). The second is that in seeking to use culture to mobilise peasants during Rural Pacification, the RNG shared far more in common with its rival Chinese administrations than the extant scholarship has tended to acknowledge.

Rural Pacification and the RNG

The RNG was inaugurated in March 1940. Led by the veteran statesman and former Chinese premier and foreign minister, Wang Jingwei, the RNG claimed to represent a return to Republican Chinese ‘orthodoxy’. It resurrected many of the institutions of the pre-war Chinese state that had fled westward in 1938–39. Under a banner of ‘peace, anti-communism and nation-building’ (*heping, fangong, jianguo*), it also claimed a return of Chinese autonomy and national pride under foreign rule. The regime continued to aspire to total control of China, despite only ever managing a patchwork of ever-shifting territories – and a handful of key cities – in China’s east and south.²⁷ Given the fact that this regime struggled to exert control *beyond* such cities,²⁸ a recurring theme in recent scholarship on the RNG has been its connection to particular cities.²⁹ Counter-intuitively, however, developments in rural occupied China were a major pre-occupation for the RNG. Indeed, as Brian Martin has argued, Rural Pacification was ‘the most important politico-military policy’ pursued by this regime.³⁰

Managed by a Rural Pacification Committee (Qingxiang weiyuanhui) (RPC) that was founded in May 1941, Rural Pacification came to represent an almost parallel administration.³¹ While Wang Jingwei remained the head of the RNG in Nanjing, for example, it was Wang’s director of intelligence, Li Shiqun, who would emerge as the main powerbroker of Rural Pacification. Li would direct these campaigns from the regional centre of Suzhou, almost entirely independently of Nanjing. From the end of 1941 onwards, Li would serve as governor of the province in which Suzhou was located – Jiangsu. With support from Japan’s 13th Army and the Japanese advisor Kagesa Sadaaki – and later cooperating with the very communist New Fourth Army that the RNG was supposedly suppressing³² – Li acted autonomously of Nanjing and the Japanese in his efforts to supposedly ‘establish security’ (*queli zhian*) and ‘improve the people’s livelihoods’ (*gaishan minsheng*)³³ – the two professed aims of the campaigns in their early phases. Rural Pacification was initially designed according to a division of labour between Li Shiqun’s cadres and Japan’s 13th Army: in theory, RNG personnel would be responsible for the political (i.e., non-military) side of the campaigns, while the Japanese would be in charge of security.³⁴

Li managed an entire Rural Pacification administration in Suzhou with some 200,000 security personnel under his command by 1942,³⁵ and a significant (though never quite sufficient) number of civilian cadres – high school and university graduates who were trained in the art of mobilisation, propaganda and rural governance for three to six months prior to being sent into the field.³⁶ As we shall see below, such cadres played host to urban intellectuals who were sent to the ‘Rural Pacification areas’ with the arrangement of Nanjing and the Japanese military authorities

In desiring to extend its influence into the countryside, the RNG was no different from the Chinese governments that had come before it (or existed alongside it). Many aspects of Rural Pacification looked like the ‘hundreds of surveys and development projects . . . implemented in China’s villages’ in the 1930s under the banner of ‘Rural Reconstruction’ (*xiangcun jianshe*).³⁷ Introduced under China’s pre-war Nationalist Government, Rural Reconstruction had represented an attempt to modernise and reform rural governance while creating a ‘compelling alternative’ to agrarian revolution. This included a belief in

reforming but retaining conservative elements of village cultural and social life, as well as the ousting of local rural elites who (until the arrival of the Nationalist state) had exerted influence entirely unchallenged.³⁸

In its language, Rural Pacification also displayed at least a partial provenance in these pre-war attempts to bring modernity to the villages of Jiangsu and Zhejiang.³⁹ Tellingly, few of these precedents were denied by Wang's regime. The RNG wrote Rural Pacification into a longer history of Chinese engagement with the countryside dating back to the Northern Expedition of 1926–27.⁴⁰ Just as Chiang Kai-shek's National Revolutionary Army had brought the Republican Chinese revolution to the countryside in the 1920s through that particular military campaign, so would RNG cadres bring the rule of Wang Jingwei to Japanese-occupied Jiangsu. Nowhere was this displayed more clearly than in what Li Shiquan's cadres referred to as the 'political work' of Rural Pacification.

'Political work' and cultural mobilisation

While Rural Pacification had been initiated in the name of counterinsurgency, the non-military side of these campaigns – i.e., those that had always been nominally managed by the RNG – were deemed central to the wider success or failure of the programme overall. The phrase used to refer to this non-military side of Rural Pacification was the ambiguous notion of 'political work' (*zhengong*) – a category that covered virtually all aspects of Rural Pacification short of armed counterinsurgency. At the heart of 'political work' was the notion that Chinese cadres needed to get 'deep amongst the people' (*shenru minjian*) in order to root out 'unhealthy' (*buliang*) elements and thought, and use 'methods involving no bloodshed' (*bu liuxue de shouduan*) to increase grassroots support for the RNG.⁴¹ In this regard, the 'political work' of Rural Pacification included what we would today understand as cultural policy and propaganda.⁴²

What did 'political work' practically entail on the ground? On the arrival of RPC and/or (collaborationist) Nationalist Party (KMT) cadres in a 'pacified' village (i.e., ones that the Japanese had occupied in response to armed resistance), a communal meeting (*minzhong dahui*) would be convened, slogans would be hastily painted onto village walls, and *manhua* and propaganda pamphlets would be distributed, all with the aim of convincing local populations to 'cleansing their hearts' and pledge loyalty to the RNG (and to Rural Pacification itself).⁴³ In other words, the 'political work' of Rural Pacification included (but was not limited to) the promotion or dissemination of what is often described in the academic literature on *unoccupied China* as 'popular culture' – 'modern urban culture forms ... [such as] ... spoken dramas, cartoons, and newspapers'.⁴⁴ In a countryside still afflicted by high levels of illiteracy, and in a situation of fluid and shifting boundaries between 'pacified' and 'non-pacified' areas, 'mobile' (*liudong*) forms of performative and visual cultural expression that entailed both public displays of loyalty by (and large-scale surveillance of) rural populations, were given a high priority.⁴⁵ One 1942 guide on 'political work' listed activities such as open-air speeches (*jietou yanjiang*), 'calligraphic propaganda' (*wenzi tuhua*), workshops (*zuotanhui*), music and theatrical performances (*yinyue xiju*), public book readings (*shuoshu*), film exhibition, and the rather ominous sounding 'household visits' (*jiating fangwen*).⁴⁶ Other Rural Pacification reports on 'political work' contain similar lists of activities.⁴⁷

There can be little doubt that such forms of performative and visual culture were imposed on rural communities, and that people subject to Rural Pacification had little choice but to accept RNG cadres in their villages – and in some cases even their homes. Yet it is also striking that much of this political work would have looked remarkably familiar to anyone with knowledge of the efforts of the pre-war Nationalist state in these same areas. Open-air speeches, impromptu ‘street theatre’ and the plastering of massive slogans or satirical images on village walls was nothing new. All of this was part of a wider practice of using culture for the purposes of rural mobilisation which could be traced as far back as the Northern Expedition.⁴⁸ Just as importantly, such activities were remarkably similar to those being promoted in areas *not* occupied by the Japanese – even if the message it carried was a different one – as detailed in the voluminous scholarship on the culture of wartime resistance.⁴⁹ The images of Rural Pacification dramas performed in villages and reprinted in official RNG publications suggest a striking similarity with the ‘living newspaper’ plays (*huobaoju*) that resistance cultural workers were performing in other parts of China at the same time.⁵⁰

Such efforts were managed by a dedicated Political Work Team (Zhengzhi gongzuo tuan) (PWT). Headed by Yuan Shu – a well-known Republican-era intellectual (who would, after the end of the war, be revealed to have served throughout this period as a communist double agent)⁵¹ – this team was directly answerable to the RPC. Yuan appears to have been something of a charismatic leader of this group. In memoirs produced by its members, for example, he is remembered for the apparently rousing songs that he taught his cadres to sing as they went about their duties.⁵² As some of the examples listed above suggest, the (pro-RNG) KMT also played an important role in political work, maintaining a Rural Pacification Area Party Affairs Office (Qingxiangqu dangwu banshichu; PAO) in Suzhou under the control of Wang Minzhong, who would later serve as the RNG’s deputy minister of education. The responsibilities of Wang’s office – which included ‘civic training’ (*minxun*), youth affairs, propaganda and ‘party affairs’ (*dangwu*) – often overlapped with those of the RPC, despite being institutionally independent of it.⁵³

The message that PWT cadres and their KMT brethren took to the villages of the Lower Yangtze Delta was one that – perhaps counter-intuitively (given that they only accessed such villages once Japanese violence had been visited upon them) – had little to do with the Japanese presence. In language that reads remarkably like the propaganda emanating from both Chongqing and Yan’an at the same time, Suzhou-based cadres described themselves as ‘young revolutionaries’ (*nianqing de geming doushi*) working in the spirit of Sun Yat-sen’s republic.⁵⁴ They stressed the need to maintain security and absolute loyalty to the ‘motherland’ (*zuguo*). They underlined the need to eliminate ‘bandits’ (*tufei*) and resistance ‘guerrillas’ (*youjidui*), and (in a reference to pre-war rural reconstruction terminology) to overthrow ‘local bullies and evil gentry’ (*tuhao lieshen*). They called for an increase in agricultural production by urging peasants who had fled to urban centres earlier in the war to return to their ‘cleansed’ villages, enclosed within bamboo walls.⁵⁵ The manner in which such ideas would be disseminated to rural audiences, however, often betrayed evidence of Japanese involvement in the political work of Rural Pacification.

Sinifying Japanese cultural forms: *kamishibai*

Some of the early attempts at undertaking political work under Rural Pacification indicate an intrusive Japanese role in the design of the campaigns. It is for this reason that the first form of cultural production I shall examine in the context of Rural Pacification is one which was imposed on the RNG by the Japanese, and which had only the most limited history of use in the Chinese countryside – *kamishibai*. Described by Sharalyn Orbaugh as a form of ‘picture storytelling’,⁵⁶ *kamishibai* was a performance medium that had become popular in Japan in the 1930s, being used for educational, propaganda and entertainment purposes. ‘Part script, part picture, part performance, it [*kamishibai*] falls somewhere between literature, art history, and theater’,⁵⁷ and involved a narrator (or narrators) telling a story in public spaces while moveable, illustrated panels detailing events in that story were simultaneously displayed on a small screen (usually inside a moveable box). When this distinctly Japanese form was introduced into China at the start of 1942 it was re-christened ‘*huapianju*’ (lit., ‘painted slide theatre’), thereby repurposing a term that had been used in the pre-war years for what are also sometimes referred to as ‘magic lantern slides’.⁵⁸

The decision to develop *kamishibai* in occupied China was a Japanese initiative which fitted with wider imperial aims. Japanese officials such as Uebori Sōtarō (an advisor embedded within the RNG’s Ministry of Publicity) were tasked with promoting the form in China,⁵⁹ while the Japanese military promoted it in areas that it occupied. This is less than surprising given the use of the form in wartime Japan itself to depict ‘idealized interactions between children and soldiers’.⁶⁰

Nonetheless, its introduction was clearly linked to attempts to enable the RNG to recalibrate its propaganda for the ‘lower class masses’ (*xiaceng minzhong*) in rural China.⁶¹ In other words, the form was seen as suitable for promotion to rural audiences, and as one medium through which RNG policy could be disseminated amongst rural communities. In early ‘work plans’ (*gongzuo jihua*) for Rural Pacification, for instance, *kamishibai* was specifically listed as one form of ‘mobile’ cultural propaganda – alongside the usual street theatre and large painted slogans – that would be suitable for political work.⁶² Ironically, it may well have been initiated with the knowledge that Chinese resistance activists had experimented with the form – while acknowledging its Japanese provenance – as early as 1938.⁶³

While this medium had proven successful in urban contexts in Japan and was used by the Japanese military in China for propaganda purposes prior to the introduction of Rural Pacification,⁶⁴ there was a clear link between its adoption by the RNG in the winter of 1941–42 and Rural Pacification. Indeed, while the Chinese Kamishibai Committee (Zhonghua huapianju xiehui) (CKC) was inaugurated with much fanfare in Nanjing in February 1942,⁶⁵ local chapters were established almost immediately thereafter in regional centres which were the focus of Rural Pacification, including towns in Zhejiang, Jiangsu and Anhui. The CKC also established its own training institute (*jiangxisuo*) in the Rural Pacification centre of Suzhou.⁶⁶ Local CKC chapters trained dozens, and in some cases, hundreds of Chinese students to be *kamishibai* professionals in rural areas.⁶⁷ In three rural counties in Zhejiang alone, for example, almost 900 Chinese practitioners (almost all of them high school students) were trained in the form in 1942. Indeed, this was

openly acknowledged as one of the strengths of the form for occupied China, for unlike more formal modes of performance that were being promoted under the RNG in Chinese cities (e.g., modern drama), *kamishibai* practitioners could be drawn from amongst local communities, and trained to a level of proficiency in the form in a short time.⁶⁸

Kamishibai was not deployed purely in the countryside; it was also widely used as a propaganda tool in schools in occupied urban China. Nevertheless, even its most urban of RNG champions – such as the Shanghai-based theatre director Chen Dabei – saw its potential utility for ‘cleansing rural hearts’ while at the same time marking the political work of Rural Pacification as a distinctly Chinese endeavour. A long-respected dramatist, and one of the most celebrated promoters of modern theatre in Republican China prior to the Japanese invasion, Chen Dabei had defected to the RNG in the summer of 1940.⁶⁹ He was later listed as a lecturer at the RNG’s Central Propaganda Institute and a member of the Propaganda Unit of the Central Executive Committee of the (pro-Wang Jingwei) KMT.⁷⁰

Chen appears to have been recruited by the RPC to help Sinify *kamishibai* and make it palatable for rural audiences by developing distinctly Chinese stories for the medium. Prior to the official launch of the CKC, for instance, Chen had travelled to Suzhou (accompanied by Japanese minders) to promote the form to a group of some 150 students (i.e., potential future practitioners).⁷¹ He was also commissioned to write new *kamishibai*, including one entitled *Kong Shangren*.⁷² This *kamishibai* was scripted specifically with Rural Pacification in mind.⁷³ I am not aware of any script or artwork from this *kamishibai* that has survived (or any account describing it having been performed). However, it was named after a well-known Qing-dynasty dramatist whose play *Taohuashan* (Peach Blossom Fan) – which explored the moral choices made by various characters in the face of the fall of the Ming dynasty – was re-written under the RNG and enjoyed a short-lived revival as an allegorical tale justifying collaboration with the Japanese in wartime Shanghai.⁷⁴ The manufacture of new and distinctly Chinese *kamishibai* marked a move away from the use of this form by the Japanese military (which, even while Rural Pacification was being implemented, was continuing to produce *kamishibai* for occupied Chinese audiences extolling Japanese military successes).⁷⁵

The use of *kamishibai* under Rural Pacification was indicative of a top-down approach to cultural policy during the first year of the campaigns. This was a Japanese cultural form which, it was believed, would work as a new medium falling somewhere between propaganda and entertainment, and which promised to be easily adaptable for rural China.⁷⁶ Yet in the form’s Sinification under figures such as Chen Dabei, we see evidence of attempts to speak to rural Chinese audiences in ways that were perhaps not foreseen by the Japanese. For PWT cadres and Shanghai-based cultural workers, even the most overtly Japanese forms of cultural expression could be adopted and changed to promote or develop distinctly Chinese cultural forms and stories in the regime’s hinterland.

Visual culture for the rural masses: woodcuts

If *kamishibai* was indicative of an earlier phase of Rural Pacification, during which Japanese cultural forms were imposed upon RNG cadres, then a quite different form of visual culture – woodcuts – was representative of later phases of Rural Pacification, when the RNG started to experiment with forms of cultural production associated with modern Chinese politico-cultural traditions.

In an October 1943 report on Rural Pacification in the town of Zhenjiang, local PWT cadres noted how the nature of the political work they were undertaking in this corner of Jiangsu was entirely different from that which had been pursued just two years earlier. The need to purge ‘harmful and corrupt behaviour’ (*shang feng bai su*) that persisted in the countryside was even more urgent now that armed communist resistance was viewed as less of a threat. Political work now involved bringing national and international events to the attention of local villagers, and finding new ways in which to convince rural communities of the benefits of a more assertive and increasingly autonomous RNG.⁷⁷

What had changed in the intervening years was the transformation of the Second Sino-Japanese War into World War II, and the subsequent development of a more overtly nationalistic RNG, as the Japanese empire increasingly moved its resources to other theatres of war, and hence away from east China. This culminated in the adoption by the Japanese Government in late 1942 of its ‘new China policy’, which included promises of greater autonomy to the RNG. This change in the Sino-Japanese relationship was best displayed with the RNG’s official Declaration of War on the Allies in January 1943 – an act that transformed a formerly ‘neutral’ puppet regime into a nominal Japanese co-belligerent in the war. In a China that was now officially at war with the West – and no longer troubled by the threat of communist insurgency – the enemy was now deemed to be the residue of Western influence, rather than shadowy communist resistance in the villages.⁷⁸

In such a radically changed context, one might assume that Rural Pacification would have been halted. As the PWT cadres in Zhenjiang noted, however, this new context simply required a reframing of the campaigns as a distinctly Chinese (rather than a Sino-Japanese) project, and an underlining of their utility in forcing rural communities to support the RNG (rather than simply turn against the resistance). Within weeks of the Declaration of War, Li Shiqun convened a Rural Pacification propaganda conference in Suzhou with the aim of repurposing Rural Pacification political work for this new context.⁷⁹ Increasingly, the RNG also sought to rhetorically link Rural Pacification in this period with more recent, urban campaigns, most noticeably the New Citizens Movements (*Xin guomin yundong*) which had been launched in January 1942 and involved the mobilisation and militarisation of occupied China’s youth: ‘Rural Pacification is the cleansing of hearts’, wrote an anonymous cadre in a children’s supplement printed in the *Qingxiang xinbao* in April 1942 – reminding readers of the motto that had underpinned the campaigns a year earlier – ‘and the cleansing of hearts is the New Citizens Movement’.⁸⁰

To be sure, earlier modes of cultural production that had been imposed on villages were not abandoned in this period. In the same month that the RNG declared war on the Allies, for instance, a new ‘Plan for the Popularisation of *Kamishibai*’ (*Huapianju puji jihua*) was published, with the stated aim that every village and township in occupied China should eventually have its own team of *kamishibai* practitioners.⁸¹

Importantly, however, new forms of cultural expression with mass appeal began to be (re-)introduced in this period to complement existing programmes. One example of this was *muke*, or woodcuts. In the historiography of modern Chinese visual cultures, woodcuts have long been associated with the political left, and particularly with the anti-Japanese resistance that developed in the 1930s. The form’s promotion through the ‘New Woodcut Movement’ (*Xinxing muke yundong*) by Lu Xun in the pre-war years, and the iconic importance of specific woodcuts such as Li Hua’s *Nuhou ba Zhongguo* (Roar China), have all helped to underline the link between this form and left-leaning (and especially CCP) resistance art.⁸² As Chang-tai Hung argues: ‘Woodcuts . . . were used by the Communists in the War of Resistance and the ensuing civil war period (from 1945 to 1949) not only to comment on political as well as social developments but also, and more important, to portray visions of a new society under Communist rule.’⁸³

However, a perusal of the RNG press in the 1942–43 period suggests that *muke* was no less important for those who worked *against* the resistance as it was for those who produced art *for* it. RNG pictorials regularly reprinted *muke* (including those that had been first published in the pre-war years), and exhibitions of pro-RNG propaganda that toured the towns and cities of east China often featured the form.⁸⁴ Crucially, from 1942 onwards, *muke* was increasingly worked into Rural Pacification efforts, with *muke* exhibitions being held in pacified areas, while the Ministry of Publicity-edited magazine *Zhonghua huabao* regularly published *qingxiang*-themed woodcuts by a variety of RNG-affiliated artists, often depicting the occupied countryside.⁸⁵

The *muke* form in RNG China is most closely associated with an artist called Wang Yingxiao. Wang was a prolific contributor to newspapers throughout occupied China and played a major organisational and promotional role in woodcuts during the occupation (despite being almost entirely absent from the annals of *muke* in both pre- or post-war China today). Wang was the founding director of the RNG-sponsored Association of Chinese Woodcut Artists (*Zhongguo muke zuozhe xiehui*) (ACWA) and was the editor of the magazine *Zhongguo muke* (Chinese woodcuts), which started publication in late 1942. In early 1943, just after Wang Jingwei’s Declaration of War on the Allies, Wang Yingxiao made the journey from Shanghai to Suzhou to establish an ACWA chapter in the town and to train local artists there – just as Chen Dabei had done for *kamishibai* a year earlier. Thanks to Wang’s work, the Suzhou chapter became home to the second largest concentration of *muke* artists (after Shanghai) in RNG China.⁸⁶ Wang would later help to establish ACWA chapters in Wuxi and other parts of the Lower Yangtze Delta.⁸⁷

During his tour of Suzhou and other ‘pacified’ areas in 1943, Wang also published what he claimed was the ‘first collection of propagandistic woodcuts to be produced in the *qingxiang* areas’, doing so through Wang Minzhong’s PAO. While this collection of around twenty woodcuts by Wang (and a handful of ACWA associates) addressed all manner of subjects of relevance to an RNG that was now nominally at war with Britain and the United States, it also represented Wang’s ‘take’ on Rural Pacification.⁸⁸ Woodcuts with titles that encouraged farmers to ‘employ the latest agricultural

technology to increase production’ or to ‘support Rural Pacification’ were clearly designed with two ‘markets’ in mind: on the one hand, they used the simple message of leftist woodcuts – the book openly acknowledged the use of woodcuts in the Soviet Union as an example worth emulating – to convince rural readers of the need for compliance with RNG authorities, referring to the *muke* form as a ‘political tool’ of Rural Pacification; on the other, they addressed an urban readership by presenting a vision of an idealised countryside in which sturdy peasants were already fully invested in the need to ‘cleanse the hearts’ of occupied China. In both cases, the wider changes that were witnessed in 1943 had had a clear impact on the ‘political work’ of Rural Pacification. Woodcuts had rarely been mentioned in the lists of Rural Pacification-compliant cultural forms published earlier in the war – a time when the form had perhaps been too closely associated with resistance art, and when Japanese forms such as *kamishibai* were being promoted instead. By 1943, however, the ‘political work’ of Rural Pacification had become so closely associated with the radically nationalist agenda of an RNG at war that the adoption of *muke* by this collaborationist administration was wholly in keeping with a re-imagined set of campaigns to ‘cleanse hearts’ in the countryside.

Conclusion: Rural Pacification and the ‘cultural turn’

In much of the existing literature on the Japanese occupation, particularly that published in the People’s Republic of China (PRC), the political and cultural aspects of Rural Pacification are dismissed as little more than an example of the ‘enslaving education’ (*nuhua jiaoyu*) that was imposed on China by the Japanese,⁸⁹ or as a cynical attempt on the part of Li Shiqun and his staff to fleece the Japanese of funding while ruling a *de facto* fiefdom.⁹⁰

Nonetheless, a consideration of the central role of political work to Rural Pacification (and the agency of Chinese cultural workers themselves in leading such work) has the potential to tell us a great deal about how the RNG – or, rather, that section of the RNG headed by Li Shiqun – sought to engage with rural China. Doing so does not mean downplaying the very real violence that these campaigns entailed on the ground in east China. It does, however, require us to think more carefully about what we mean when we discuss cultural histories of wartime China. Stephen MacKinnon’s argument that early wartime mobilisation by Chinese resistance cultural workers in Japanese-besieged Wuhan ‘... anticipated broad patterns of change, such as the unprecedented mobilization and politicization of the populace, both urban and rural, during the rest of the war period’ is entirely valid.⁹¹ But it has not, as yet, been applied to RNG Suzhou and its surrounding hinterland.

The ‘cultural turn’ that has been witnessed in the cognate field of PRC History over the last decade provides some important points of comparison here. Scholars of the early PRC have revisited key CCP initiatives from a distinctly cultural angle in recent times, moving beyond the trope of the purge and reconsidering the importance of cultural production to various campaigns and movements in Mao’s China that are also associated with widespread violence and social disruption.⁹² In his examination of Land Reform during the early 1950s, for instance, Brian DeMare shows us that ‘the communists regarded rural cultural work, intimately connected to land reform and other state

building campaigns, as one of the lynchpins in their efforts to establish the new PRC order.⁹³ If we begin to look at the political work of Rural Pacification in the same manner, similar arguments might be made about Li Shiqun's PWT in rural Jiangsu and Zhejiang ten years earlier. Despite the RNG's professed anti-communism, the RNG shared with the CCP a desire to mobilise peasant communities for wartime ends. Indeed, the crucial role played by CCP agents such as Yuan Shu in Rural Pacification, and the well-documented but clandestine links between Li Shiqun and the New Fourth Army in this same period,⁹⁴ might even prompt us to consider Rural Pacification not as some ideological counterweight to rural Chinese resistance, but as merely one (overlooked) part of a wider set of pan-Chinese efforts at wartime mobilisation of rural populations. The fact that rural communities themselves often struggled to distinguish CCP propaganda from RPC initiatives (as eyewitness accounts from the time attest),⁹⁵ or that PWT cadres admired the CCP propaganda they uncovered in rural villages,⁹⁶ only supports such an approach. Even more telling is the fact that, following the end of the war, Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists placed little emphasis on Rural Pacification when prosecuting the surviving members of the RNG administration precisely because Chiang's post-war efforts to eradicate the CCP in the countryside reminded many people of the Rural Pacification campaigns led by Li Shiqun.⁹⁷

Despite a decades-long tendency to associate cultural production in rural China predominantly with the communist-led resistance,⁹⁸ the mobilisation of idealistic cultural workers and political engagement with rural communities was never a uniquely CCP (or KMT) project. What I have demonstrated in this paper is that such efforts were just as important to the RNG, despite (or perhaps precisely because of) this regime's lack of support in the countryside. To be sure, the Chen Dabei-authored *kamishibai* that were performed in the villages of rural Jiangsu and Zhejiang were not identical to the *yangge* performed in wartime Yan'an – if the influence of local traditions coloured CCP wartime (and ultimately post-war) cultural production in the northwest, then the prevalence of Japanese forms of media such as *kamishibai* were indicative of a dominant Japanese presence in the Lower Yangtze Delta. Unlike the wartime cultural production developed in the communist base areas, the political work of Rural Pacification had only limited lasting impact.

However, the very existence of cultural production as an integral part of Rural Pacification – and the parallels between such 'political work' and the use of culture to mobilise rural communities elsewhere in China – means that cultural historians can no longer omit the RNG from their considerations of rural China at war. Just as observers of the Chinese state and economy are starting to put the RNG back into wider narratives of twentieth-century Chinese nation-building,⁹⁹ so might historians start to explore the ways in which cultural workers themselves played a role in engaging with, depicting and speaking to the occupied countryside. It is my hope that this brief attempt to do so will encourage further research into those fields of Rural Pacification cultural production that I have not had the space to consider here: literature, cinema and *xiqu* (Chinese opera), for example. For the time being, however, we might begin by reconsidering Rural Pacification as one of various state-sponsored attempts by Chinese political entities across a broad ideological spectrum to engage culturally with a rural China at war.

Notes

1. For a recent example, see Martina Bitunjac and Julius H. Schoeps (eds), *Complicated Complicity: European Collaboration with Nazi Germany during World War II* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021).
2. Such as the ground-breaking collection edited by David Fanning and Erik Levi, *The Routledge Handbook to Music under German Occupation, 1938–1945: Propaganda, Myth and Reality* (London: Routledge, 2020).
3. See, for instance, Pavel Skopal and Roel Vande Winkel (eds), *Film Professionals in Nazi-occupied Europe: Mediation between National-Socialist Cultural ‘New Order’ and Local Structures* (Cham: Springer, 2021).
4. The literature on the cultural history of Vichy France is vast. Some representative examples are Laurence Bertrand Dorléac, *Art of the Defeat, France 1940–1944*, trans. Jane Marie Todd (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2008) and Agnès Callu, Patrick Eveno and Hervé Joly (eds), *Culture et médias sous l’occupation: des entreprises dans la France de Vichy* (Paris: CTHS, 2009).
5. Chang-tai Hung, *War and Popular Culture: Resistance in Modern China, 1937–1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).
6. Edward Gunn, Jr., *Unwelcome Muse, Chinese Literature in Shanghai and Peking, 1937–1945* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980).
7. Recent book-length contributions to the field include Carolyn FitzGerald, *Fragmenting Modernisms: Chinese Wartime Literature, Art, and Film, 1937–49* (Boston: Brill, 2013) and Pingzhao Zhu, *Wartime Culture in Guilin, 1938–1944: A City at War* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015).
8. I borrow the notion of a ‘new cultural history’ of occupied China from Jeremy E. Taylor and Zhiyi Yang, ‘Towards a New History of Elite Cultural Expression in Japanese-Occupied China’, *European Journal of East Asian Studies* 19, no. 2 (December 2020), p. 192.
9. Representative examples include Poshek Fu, ‘The Ambiguity of Entertainment: Chinese Cinema in Japanese-occupied Shanghai, 1941 to 1945’, *Cinema Journal* 37, no. 1 (1997), pp. 66–84; Nicole Huang, *Women, War, Domesticity: Shanghai Literature and Popular Culture of the 1940s* (Boston: Brill, 2005); and Jeremy E. Taylor, *Iconographies of Occupation: Visual Cultures in Wang Jingwei’s China, 1939–1945* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2021).
10. Examples of the former include R. Keith Schoppa, *In a Sea of Bitterness: Refugees During the Sino-Japanese War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011) and Diana Lary, *The Chinese People at War: Human Suffering and Social Transformation, 1937–1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), esp. p. 126; on the latter, see Timothy Brook, ‘Preface: Lisbon, Xuzhou, Auschwitz: Suffering as History’, in James Flath and Norman Smith (eds), *Beyond Suffering: Recounting War in Modern China* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011), pp. xi–xix.
11. The term ‘qingxiang’ is translated in this paper, in keeping with the extant literature, as ‘Rural Pacification’, although literally the term could be translated as ‘cleansing the countryside’.
12. In this paper, I adopt Brook’s definition of the term ‘collaborator’, i.e., ‘... those [Chinese] who were actively engaged in promoting the creation and maintenance of the occupation state ...’ in Japanese-occupied China. See Timothy Brook, *Collaboration: Japanese Agents and Local Elites in Wartime China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), p. 13.
13. Rana Mitter and Aaron William Moore, ‘China in World War II, 1937–1945: Experience, Memory, and Legacy’, *Modern Asian Studies*, 45, no. 2 (2011), p. 229.
14. In addition to Hung, *War and Popular Culture: Resistance in Modern China, 1937–1945* and David Holm’s *Art and Ideology in Revolutionary China* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), contributions to this literature include Zhou Aimin, ‘Red Classics: Yan’an Woodcuts during

- the War of Resistance’, trans. Matt A. Hale, *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 7, no. 3 (2006): 492–503 and Zhou Liu, ‘Weigongtuan and the Rural Literary Popularization Movement in Yan’an’, *Frontiers of Literary Studies in China* 6, no. 1 (2012), pp. 39–55.
15. See, for instance, Robert A. Kapp, ‘The Kuomintang and Rural China in the War of Resistance, 1937–1945’, in F. Gilbert Chan (ed), *China at the Crossroads: Nationalists and Communists, 1927–1949* (New York: Routledge, 2019).
 16. Hans van de Ven, *China at War: Triumph and Tragedy in the Emergence of New China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018), p. 135.
 17. For a discussion of such attempts, see Myron L. Cohen, ‘Cultural and Political Inventions in Modern China: The Case of the Chinese “Peasant”’, *Daedalus* 122, no. 2 (1993), pp. 151–70.
 18. Such as David Serfass, ‘L’occupation japonaise comme objet pour l’histoire de l’État chinois: l’exemple de la campagne de pacification rurale du gouvernement de Wang Jingwei, 1941–45’ [The Japanese Occupation as a Subject for the History of the Chinese State: The Example of the Rural Pacification Campaign by the Wang Jingwei Government, 1941–45], *Études chinoises* 35, no. 2 (2016), pp. 123–37. See also Brian G. Martin, ‘Shield of Collaboration: The Wang Jingwei Regime’s Security Service, 1939–1945’, *Intelligence and National Security* 16, no. 4 (2001), pp. 89–148.
 19. Serfass, ‘L’occupation japonaise comme objet pour l’histoire de l’État chinois’
 20. On the corruption and smuggling that was endemic under Rural Pacification, see Joseph K. S. Yick, ‘Communist-Puppet Collaboration in Japanese-occupied China: Pan Hannian and Li Shiqun, 1939–43’, *Intelligence and National Security* 16, no. 4 (2001), pp. 61–88.
 21. Second Historical Archives, Nanjing (SHA), 2003-4-511: ‘Wang wei Jiangsu sheng Subei diqu diyiqi qingxiang gongzuo baogao’ [Work Report on the First Stage of Rural Pacification in Northern Jiangsu under the RNG], circa 1941.
 22. On the military and strategic successes of Rural Pacification, see Yung-fa Chen, *Making Revolution: The Communist Movement in Eastern and Central China, 1937–1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).
 23. The description is taken from a 1941 letter by a resident of rural China who lived through Rural Pacification, and who is cited in: Wang Zhenghua, ‘Wanshan wanli qing: Jiashu zhong de zhanshi shenghuo’ [Far Apart but Close at Heart: Wartime Life Through Private Letters], *Guoshiguan xueshu jikan* 17 (September 2008), p. 96.
 24. Ishihama Tomoyuki, *Seikyō chiku* [The Rural Pacification Areas] (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1944), p. 5. I am translating the Chinese word ‘xin’ as ‘heart’ throughout this paper, although the term could also be translated as ‘mind’, ‘conscience’ or ‘moral character’. See Zhang Fangjie (ed), *Far East Chinese-English Dictionary (Yuandong Han Ying da cidian)* (Taipei: Yuandong tushu, 2000), p. 417.
 25. David Serfass, ‘Collaboration and State-Making in China: Defining the Occupation State, 1937–1945’, *Twentieth Century China* 47, no. 1 (2022), pp. 71–80 (esp. 78).
 26. On the RNG’s ‘nativist turn’ late in the war, see Taylor, *Iconographies of Occupation*, pp. 31–37.
 27. One of the most concise summaries of the regime is David P. Barrett, ‘The Wang Jingwei Regime, 1940–1945: Continuities and Disjunctures with Nationalist China’, in David P. Barrett and Larry N. Shyu (eds), *Chinese Collaboration with Japan, 1932–1945: The Limits of Accommodation* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), pp. 102–15.
 28. David Serfass, ‘Mapping China under Japanese Occupation: Spatial Configurations of State Power during Wartime (1937–45)’, in David Baillargeon and Jeremy E. Taylor (eds), *Spatial Histories of Occupation: Colonialism, Conquest and Foreign Control in Asia* (London: Bloomsbury, 2022), pp. 119–43.
 29. See, for example, Joseph K. S. Yick, ‘“Pre-Collaboration”: The Political Activity and Influence of Chen Bijun in Wartime China, January 1938–May 1940’, *Southeast Review of Asian Studies* 36 (2014), pp. 58–74.
 30. Martin, ‘Shield of Collaboration’, p. 130.
 31. Serfass, ‘L’occupation japonaise comme objet pour l’histoire de l’État chinois’.
 32. Yick, ‘Communist-Puppet Collaboration in Japanese-occupied China’.

33. Wei Jianxin 'Qingxiangqu de huigu yu qianzhan' [A Retrospective Account of and the Prospects for Rural Pacification], *Huawen Daban meiri* 9, no. 3 (1 August 1942), p. 15–17.
34. SHA, 2003-1-4000: 'Minguo sanshiyi niandu xiaban niandu qingxiang gongzuo yaoling' [Instructions on Rural Pacification Work in the Second Half of 1942], 1942.
35. Martin, 'Shield of Collaboration', p. 130.
36. 'Xunlian xuanchuan ganbu' [Training Propaganda Cadres], *Qingxiang xinbao*, 18 November 1942, p. 1.
37. Stig Thøgersen, 'Revisiting a Dramatic Triangle: The State, Villagers, and Social Activists in Chinese Rural Reconstruction Projects', *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs* 38, no. 4 (2009), pp. 9–33.
38. Kate Merkel-Hess, *The Rural Modern: Reconstructing the Self and State in Republican China* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2016), p. 3.
39. For an example of Rural Pacification literature that uses such terms, see Jiangsu sheng Zhenjiang diqu zhengzhi gongzuotuan, *Zhenggong baogaoshu* [Report on Political Work] (Shanghai: Jiangsu sheng Zhenjiang diqu zhengzhi gongzuotuan, 1943), pp. 14–15.
40. Zhou Zhidong, 'Qingxiangqu de zhenggong zhengce (san)' [The Policies on Political Work in the Rural Pacification Areas (Part 3)], *Qingxiang xinbao*, 8 November 1942, p. 4.
41. Zhou Zhidong, 'Qingxiang qu de zhenggong zhengce (yi)' [The Policies on Political Work in the Rural Pacification Areas (Part 1)], *Qingxiang xinbao*, 6 November 1942, p. 4.
42. This is despite the fact that, in the instructional literature produced through groups such as the RPC, the word 'culture' (*wenhua*) was sometimes reserved for references to print media and education. In Wei, 'A Retrospective Account . . .', for instance, 'Rural Pacification culture' is reduced to a list of newspapers, periodicals and schools in 'pacified' areas, while 'political work' is described as 'managing issues relating to the masses' (*guanli dazhong de shiqing*).
43. SHA, 2003-5-95: 'Anhui sheng yi qingxiangqu gongzuo zong baogao' [General Report on Work in Rural Pacification Area 1, Anhui Province], March 1941.
44. Hung, *War and Popular Culture*, p. 7.
45. And were featured in Rural Pacification photojournalism. For an example of this see the photo-spread entitled 'Huoyao de qingxiang gongzuo' [The Lively Work of Rural Pacification], *Huawen Daban meiri* 7, no. 3 (1 August 1941), no page numbers.
46. Guomindang qingxiangqu dangwu banshichu, *Qingxiangqu dangwu baogaoshu* [Report on Party Affairs in the Rural Pacification Areas] (Suzhou: Qingxiangqu dangwu banshichu, 1942), p. 12.
47. An undated report on Rural Pacification work produced by the RNG's Shanghai municipal authorities, for example, lists 'propaganda work' as including 'following troops, setting up propaganda units, producing large-scale slogans or *manhua* (*juxing biaoyu huo manhua*), printing various items of propaganda, visiting households, establishing newspaper reading rooms, collecting intelligence, training people and other measures'. SHA, 2003-2-438: 'Shanghai shi qingxiang gongzuo baogao deng xiangguan wenjian' [Report on Rural Pacification Work in Shanghai and Related Documents], no date.
48. The literature on the uses of cultural production in the service of mobilisation during the Northern Expedition is significant. A representative example is John Williams, "'Attacking Queshan": Popular Culture and the Creation of a Revolutionary Folklore in Southern Henan', *Modern China* 36, no. 6 (2010), pp. 644–75.
49. I am thinking here of not just Chang-tai Hung's work but also Stephen R. MacKinnon, *Wuhan, 1938: War, Refugees, and the Making of Modern China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).
50. On *huobaoju*, see Jeremy E. Taylor, 'The Sinification of Soviet Agitational Theatre: "Living Newspapers" in Mao's China', *Journal of the British Association of Chinese Studies* 2 (July 2013), pp. 27–50.
51. On Yuan Shu and his role as a CCP double agent during his time as head of the PWT, see Joseph K. S. Yick, 'Yuan Shu: Chinese Special Service Agent and Spy, 1931–45', *Southeast Review of Asian Studies* 39 (2017), pp. 84–113.

52. 'Chairman Yuan' is remembered in this way in a typical piece of cadre-compiled Rural Pacification literature: Hu Shua, 'Zhengong shouji' [Notes on Political Work], *Qingxiang qianxian* 2, no. 4 (June 1943), pp. 26–28.
53. *Xin Zhongguo shouce* [Handbook on New China] (Nanjing, 1942), pp. 17–19; see also Guomindang qingxiangqu dangwu banshichu, *Report on Party Affairs in the Rural Pacification Areas*, p. 1.
54. Hu Shua 'Zhengong shouji'.
55. Wang Manyun, 'Qianli aihong shuo qingxiang' [The Groans of Anguish around Rural Pacification], in Huang Meizhen (ed), *Wei ting youying lu: Dui Wangwei zhengquan de huiyi* [A Secret Record of the Puppet Government: Memoirs from the Wang Jingwei Regime] (Beijing: Dongfang chubanshe, 1986), p. 248.
56. Sharalyn Orbaugh, 'Kamishibai as Entertainment and Propaganda', *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan* 19 (2005), pp. 21–58.
57. Sharalyn Orbaugh, *Propaganda Performed: Kamishibai in Japan's Fifteen-Year War* (Boston: Brill, 2014), p. 2.
58. Qing Yuan, 'Za tan huapianju' [Jottings on *Kamishibai*], *Huawen Daban meiri* 8, no. 6 (1942), p. 40.
59. Shanghai Municipal Archives (SMA), R48-1-879: 'Ri-wei Shanghai tebie shi zhengfu guanyu Zhonghua huapianju xiehui huiyuan' [Documents on Membership of the CKC from the RNG and Japanese Shanghai Municipal Government], July 1943.
60. Aaron William Moore, 'Reversing the Gaze: The Construction of "Adulthood" in the Wartime Diaries of Japanese Children and Youth', in Sabine Frühstück and Anne Walthall (eds), *Child's Play: Multi-Sensory Histories of Children and Childhood in Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2017), p. 144.
61. SHA, 2003-1-2083: 'Zhonghua jiaoyu huapianju xiehui zhangcheng shencha yijian ji you-guan wenshu' [The Founding of the CKC and Related Documents], March 1942.
62. SHA, 2003-5-95: 'Anhui sheng yi qingxiangqu gongzuo zong baogao' [General Report on Work in Rural Pacification Area 1 in Anhui Province], March 1941, p. 8.
63. Yu Qixing, 'Jieshao yi ge xuanchuan xin wuqi: Huaju' [Introducing a New Propaganda Weapon: *Huaju*], *Zhong Su wenhua zazhi* 4 (February 1938), pp. 13–14.
64. Sakuramoto Tomio and Konno Toshihiko, *Kamishibai to sensō* [*Kamishibai and War*] (Tokyo: Marujusha, 1985), pp. 148–49.
65. SHA, 2003-1-2083: 'The Founding of the CKC and Related Documents'.
66. Tao Kangde and Qiu Shimu, *Shenbao nianjian* [*Shenbao Almanac*] (Shanghai: Shenbaoshe, 1944), pp. 1019–20.
67. Accounts of such training survive in the form of newspaper articles such as Xiao Die, 'Cangan Kunshan huapianju jiangxi hui ji' [An Account of my Participation in a *Kamishibai* Training Course in Kunshan], *Qingxiang xinbao*, 25 November 1942, p. 2.
68. Qing Yuan, 'Jottings on *Kamishibai*'.
69. 'Chen Dabeì bian le' [Chen Dabeì has Changed], *Dianying yule tuhua zhoukan* 11 (September 1940), p. 13.
70. 'Suwei "Zhongyang xuanchuan jiangxisuo" neimu' [Inside the so-called 'Central Propaganda Institute'], *Hanjian choushi* 3–4 (1945), p. 45.
71. 'Xuanbu huapianju xuanchuandui zai Su zhanlan wanle fan jing' [*Kamishibai* Propaganda Team Complete their Promotional Work in Suzhou and Return to the Capital], *Jiangsu ribao*, 7 December 1941.
72. Chen Dabeì, 'Huapianju de bian yu yan' [The Editing and Performance of *Kamishibai*], *Huawen Daban meiri* 7, no. 11 (1 December 1941), pp. 40–41.
73. On the link between the play *Kong Shangren* and Rural Pacification, see SHA, 2003-1-2083: 'The Founding of the CKC and Related Documents'. While the play is listed as being 'Rural Pacification-themed', no explanation is given for this.
74. Kun Qian, 'Gendering National Imagination: Heroines and the Return of the Foundational Family in Shanghai during the War of Resistance to Japan', *Frontiers of Literary Studies in China* 8, no. 1 (2014), pp. 78–100.

75. A handbook on *kamishibai* published in September 1941 by the Japanese military for use in occupied China does not so much as mention Rural Pacification. Japanese Center for Asian Historical Records (JACAR), C14010442300: Anami butai hōdōban, *Heping jianguo huaju shuomingshu* [Handbook on Peace- and Nation-building-themed *Kamishibai*], September 1941. I thank Sophia Lee for alerting me to this document.
76. On wider imperial Japanese attempts to use *kamishibai* in the occupied territories, see Emily Horner, 'Kamishibai as Propaganda in Wartime Japan', *Storytelling, Self, Society* 2, no. 1 (Fall 2005), esp. pp. 27–28.
77. Jiangsu sheng Zhenjiang diqu zhengzhi gongzuotuan, *Zhenggong baogaoshu*.
78. On this shift from late 1942 and into 1943, see Taylor, *Iconographies of Occupation*, pp. 34–37.
79. Li Shiqun, 'Nuli shengchan xuanchuan wancheng gaodu qingxiang' [Strive to Produce Propaganda and Complete Rural Pacification to the Highest Possible Degree], *Qingxiang banyuekan* 1, no. 11 (March 1943), pp. 5–6.
80. Reprinted in Yu Zidao, Liu Qikui and Cao Zhenwei (eds), *Wangwei zhengquan ziliao xuanbian: Wang Jingwei guomin zhengfu 'qingxiang' yundong* [Materials Relating to the Bogus Wang Regime: The 'Rural Pacification' Movement of the Wang Jingwei National Government] (Shanghai: Xinhua shuju, 1985), p. 380.
81. SMA, R18-1-53: 'Shanghai tiebie shi zhengfu chaofa xuanchuanbu guanyu huapianju puji jihua ling' [Shanghai Municipal Government Copy of the Ministry of Publicity Plan for the Popularisation of *Kamishibai*], January 1943.
82. Xiaobing Tang, 'Echoes of Roar, China! On Vision and Voice in Modern Chinese Art', *positions* 14, no. 2 (Fall 2006), pp. 467–94.
83. Chang-tai Hung, 'Two Images of Socialism: Woodcuts in Chinese Communist Politics', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 39, no. 1 (1997), p. 35.
84. Taylor, *Iconographies of Occupation*, p. 51.
85. 'Manhua yu muke' [*Manhua* and Woodcuts], *Zhonghua huabao* 1, no. 5 (December 1943), pp. 26–28.
86. Untitled membership list in *Zhongguo muke* 1 (December 1942), pp. 17–18.
87. 'Hui wu baogao' [Report on ACWA Affairs], *Zhongguo muke* 3 (April 1943), p. 16.
88. Wang Yingxiao, 'Yu er' [Second Foreword], in Wang Yingxiao (ed), *Qingxiang mukeji: canzhan zhi ji* [Rural Pacification Woodcut Collection: Declaration of War Edition] (Suzhou: Qingxiangqu dangwu banshichu, 1943), no page numbers.
89. Wen Shaohua, *Cong lieshi dao hanjian: Wang Jingwei zhuan* [From Martyr to Traitor: A Biography of Wang Jingwei] (Hong Kong: Zhonghua shuju, 2013), p. 294.
90. This explanation is given in Wang Manyun, *The Groans of Anguish*.
91. MacKinnon, *Wuhan, 1938*, p. 115.
92. This is particularly the case in new cultural histories of the Cultural Revolution, including (but not limited to) Paul Clark, *The Chinese Cultural Revolution: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).
93. Brian James DeMare, *Mao's Cultural Army: Drama Troupes in China's Rural Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 175.
94. Yick, 'Communist-Puppet Collaboration in Japanese-occupied China'.
95. Wang, 'Far apart but close at heart'.
96. Hu, 'Zhengong shouji'.
97. This point is made in Margherita Zanasi, 'Globalizing *Hanjian*: The Suzhou Trials and the Post-World War II Discourse on Collaboration', *American Historical Review* 113, no. 3 (2008), p. 747.
98. I am referring, of course, to Chalmers Johnson, *Peasant Nationalism and Communist Power: The Emergence of Revolutionary China, 1937–1945* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1962).
99. Serfass, 'Collaboration and State-Making in China'; see also Parks M. Coble, *Chinese Capitalists in Japan's New Order: The Occupied Lower Yangzi, 1937–1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

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