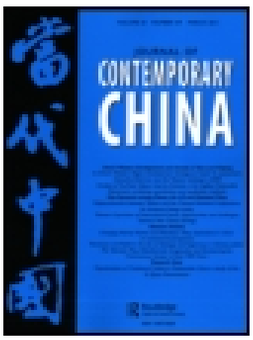


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Ritual, Reading and Resistance in the Prison and Cowshed during the Cultural Revolution

Guo Wu

Allegheny College, USA

ABSTRACT

Putting the cultural experiences of a multitude of prisoners during the Cultural Revolution in the historical context of the modern Chinese prison system and in light of the critical theories of methods of penalty and cultural production under incarceration in modern society, this article argues that the formal prison and informal cowshed during the Cultural Revolution both served as important sites for cultural production and dissemination. They also demonstrated the inmates' perseverance, articulation and resistance. Beneath the surface of highly structured and formulaic daily routine, mechanic ritual performance and forced obeisance, the political prisoners utilized multiple available forms to negotiate with the authorities, influence each other and even their guards, and maximize the freedom of reading, communication and gaining outside information.

This article is not a comprehensive study of the contemporary Chinese formal and informal prison system. Instead, the authors focus on one rarely studied aspect of the Chinese Cultural Revolution: the cultural life in formal and make-shift prisons. Past studies have revealed how numerous reading circles emerged in China from 1967 to 1976 to borrow, lend 'internal' books of Western history and political theory, and share reading experience through organizing society, engaging in salon discussion and personal correspondence.[1] Although the reading group members ran the risk of being arrested or executed, the acquisition and reading of books were less challenging for them because of the relative personal and correspondence freedom, as well as the easier access to reading materials. Many of these had diffused to society from the library and formally exclusive circles of internal circulation. The breakdown of the school surveillance system and more free time for students due to cancellation of school also facilitated intensive reading of non-pedagogical literary, historical and political works.[2] Barbara Mittler's study of the culture during the Cultural Revolution buttresses an earlier assumption that books were widely available, and libraries might have been sneaked into, or their books were dispersed after the ransacking of the Red Guards. Literary works were popular among young readers. Romain Rolland, Leo Tolstoy and Soviet authors were frequently mentioned in reminiscences.[3] Robert Darnton asks, 'What did eighteenth-century Frenchmen read?' when examining the French literary underground of the *ancien régime*.[4]

CONTACT Guo Wu gwu@allegheny.edu

[1]Song Yongyi, 'A Glance at the Underground Reading Movement during the Cultural Revolution', *Journal of Contemporary China* 16(51), (2007), pp. 325–33.

[2]Xu Youyu, 'Hongweibing xingwei dongyin de diaochao he fenxi' ['Survey and Analysis of the Motives of the Red Guards'], in Li Hui, ed., *Canque de chuanglanban* [*The Broken Window*] (Shenzhen: Haitian chubanshe, 1998), pp. 143–4.

[3]Barbara Mittler, *A Continuous Revolution: Making Sense of Cultural Revolution Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), pp. 131–2. Interviews with scholars Xu Youyu and Zhu Xueqin both show that they were deeply influenced by the individualism and revolutionary heroism in *The Gadfly* by Irish writer Ethel Voynich. Carma Hinton dir. *Morning Sun*, [distributed by] Center for Asian American Media, 2005.

[4]Robert Darnton, *The Literary Underground of the Old Regime* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), p. 173.

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When studying the early People's Republic of China (PRC) history, Darton's question may be applied and taken further through investigating what books were truly attractive to the reading public in the 1950s-1960s, when there was a state-sanctioned reading list that includes popular revolutionary stories such as *The Song of Ouyang Hai* and *The Diary of Lei Feng*, and more importantly, what people exactly read when they were incarcerated. Although reading could be dangerous during the Cultural Revolution for urban students, it was conceivably much harder for prisoners to even acquire reading materials, and their correspondence with the outside world was under regular censorship. Examining the political ritual, reading and story-telling under incarceration provides a new, cultural, as well as legal angle to revisit the Cultural Revolution. The prison or any detention sites are uniquely enclosed socio-political spaces where different agents engage in struggles for domination and autonomy, often epitomized by the regulation of rituals and reading, and the concept 'space' is used here in a sociopolitical sense, for 'space' represents mobility and possibility, and 'place' represents fixity, rigidity and control.[5]

This article attempts to piece together the prison experiences of political prisoners during the Cultural Revolution and interpret them in light of sociological and critical theories, focusing on how the prisoners, mainly 'thought criminals' in this study, dealt with political rituals, compulsory reading, critical reading, censorship, and their acquisition of knowledge, information and entertainment. Sociologist David Garland has provided a cultural analysis to the practice of punishment.[6] According to Garland, penal institutions should also be considered as 'sites of ritual performance and cultural production.'[7] Informed by Garland, makeshift cowsheds and formal, institutionalized prisons during the Cultural Revolution serve as an ideal scenario to attest the theory that penal institutions could be used as viable space of cultural and ritualist (re)production. Conceptually, the author adopts both terms, the prison and the cowshed, interchangeably in order to indicate two types of incarceration of political deviants during the Cultural Revolution. The former indicates the formal building for legal confinement, and the prisoner including political deviants and common criminals. The latter was a spontaneous, makeshift space that held political deviants for unfixed terms during the Cultural Revolution, and the practice of mass incarceration for political investigation and indoctrination can be traced back to the CCP's wartime years in Yan'an and its pursuit of 'simplifying' and 'innovation' of legal procedures in the 1950s and early 1960s.[8] Often merely a 'room reserved for the punishment of class enemies,' and 'The term derives from the use of the term 'cow—along with "snake," "monster," and "demon",'[9] the cowshed was usually established by the work unit as a pre-trial detention site, where the inmates worked, as a form of 'mass dictatorship,' while the prison during the Cultural Revolution was taken over by the army after the judiciary organs were smashed, and the inmates in prison usually received formal verdicts and sentences.

Regardless of the difference of the founding and management between the cowshed and the prison, there was a common nexus of power relationship existing between the guards as the agent of the state and the inmates as its victim. The theory of Pierre Bourdieu can be applied here to enunciate the structural relations inside the prison where each person takes a position. The guards monopolized the field (in this case the prison/cowshed) of cultural production, dissemination and definition, and imposed the standard interpretation upon the inmates, who maintained their autonomy although placed at the bottom of the hierarchy.[10] By combining Bourdieu's conceptualization of 'field,' 'space,' and 'structure' in cultural production with Garland's more specific study of the penal institution, this author draws attention to the internal structural relations of Chinese prison

[5]Beth E. Notar, *Displacing Desire: Travel and Popular Culture in China* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006), p. 4.
[6]David Garland, 'Concepts of Culture in the Sociology of Punishment', *Theoretical Criminology*, 10(4), (2006), pp. 419–47.
[7]Ibid., p. 421.
[8]Guo Wu, 'Outsourcing the State Power: Extrajudicial Incarceration during the Cultural Revolution,' *China: An International Journal* 15(3), (2017), pp. 62–63.
[9]Feng Jicai, *Voices from the Whirlwind: An Oral History of the Chinese Cultural Revolution* (New York: Random House, 1991), p. 36.
[10]Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, Randal Johnson ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), pp. 29–42.

with the main goal of demonstrating how they play out in a dual, interactive process of the state's control of the flow of knowledge and information on the one hand, and the inmates' unquenchable zest for intellectual freedom on the other.

In addition, to see the prison/cowshed as a site of struggle is also to affirm the important Foucauldian notion that 'power is not to be taken to be a phenomenon of one individual's consolidated and homogenous domination over others…' and 'Power must be analyzed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain.'[11] In the scenario of a Chinese prison/cowshed, the exercise of state power was also not only a one-directional imposition of political authority, but also a 'net-like' dynamic process in which each involved individual is its vehicle and power is exercised 'simultaneously.'[12] With this premise, we can use the Chinese sites of confinement during the Cultural Revolution as a case to address the Foucauldian concern that 'in what ways punishment and the power of punishment are effectively embodied in a certain number of local, regional, material institutions, which are concerned with torture or imprisonment.'[13] It is also notable that books, with their own social life, were also agents and vehicle of ideas.[14]

This article provides an analytical framework to revisit the cultural activities, possibilities of resistance and struggle of the incarcerated political deviants during the Chinese Cultural Revolution under specific spatial arrangements underpins three premises. First, prison/cowshed can be a field of cultural and ritualistic (re)production; Second, the spatial/relational structure of power inside it may be analyzed based upon empirical evidences; Third, the exercise of power in prison/cowshed is a circulation and it can be individual-based and interactive and reciprocal. This current study is thus essentially an inquiry of the mechanism of power in the Chinese prison during the Cultural Revolution and the networks of communication through the lens of political prisoners who experienced, reflected, and articulated, albeit it by no means attempts to become an exhaustive general study of the Chinese prison system, nor is it an overview of the life of the millions of prisoners as a collective.

Daily Ritual and Reading of Mao's Works

Inside the unofficial 'cowshed' during the Cultural Revolution, daily life was highly structured, centering on Mao cult and confession. Hao Bin, a history professor of Peking University was labeled as a 'black gangster' in the summer of 1966. He was removed from the PKU campus and relocated to the Taiping Village in the northern suburb of Beijing with another 22 professors also labeled as 'black gangsters' in September that same year. Hao Bin was jailed in this cowshed under the name of 'half-work-half-study base' for three years until he was released in the summer of 1969, when the cowshed was abolished. His memoir provides a detailed account of the daily routine of the cowshed managed by the student Red Guards:

> Get up at 6 am. A quarter later assemble for roll call. Wash face and brush teeth. Before breakfast there was one hour for 'daily reading' (of newspapers). Breakfast. Four hours of labor in the morning and another four hours in the afternoon. After dinner, study the *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, and write confessions. Only Sunday afternoon is free from labor and the time was reserved for laundry, haircutting, or mailing letters.[15]

According to Hao Bin, pleading guilty in front of Mao's portrait was an indispensable political ritual occurring three times a day prior to each meal. All the confined professors should line up in front of Mao's portrait, lowering their heads. One designated inmate would read a quotation from Mao

[11]Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977* Colin Gordon ed. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), p. 98.
[12]Ibid.
[13]Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, pp. 96–97.
[14]Robert Darnton, *The Literary Underground of the Old Regime* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), pp. 169–99.
[15]Hao Bin, *Liushui heceng xi shifei: Beida niupeng yijiao*[*How Could Flowing Water Wash Away the Past: A Glimpes of the Peking University Cowshed*] (Taipei: Dakuai wenhua chuban youxian gongsi, 2014), p. 74.

aloud, which was followed by a collective slogan shouting: 'I plead guilty to the great leader Chairman Mao!' Then each inmate should announce his own name, which was prefixed with his 'hat', i.e. charge, such as 'acting counterrevolutionary.'[16] A former English professor at Peking University, Wu Ningkun also emphasizes in his memoir the close relationship between meals and the ritual of Mao cult: 'But no one was to line up for food before he or she bowed to the Chairman's portrait on the wall and recited a quotation from the Little Red Book. When one finished eating, he or she went back to the portrait and shouted, "Long Live Chairman Mao"!'[17] Besides reciting Mao's quotations, Ji Xianlin, an eminent scholar of Indology at Peking University, is particularly stricken by the university cowshed rules that restricted inmates' body movement: 'looking up while walking' and 'sitting with their legs crossed' were prohibited.[18]

At Peking University, the student-guards of the cowshed also organized confession meetings for the professors to exchange their experiences in pleading guilty, and each week the inmate would have to submit a confession in Hao Bin's cowshed. Wu Ningkun, who was teaching English in Anhui Province before jailed, provides the full-text of the confession of him and his colleagues in the cowshed:

> Most beloved and revered Great Leader Chairman Mao, the Red Sun in our hearts: We are a group of counter-revolutionaries who have sinned against you, against the invincible Mao Zedong Thought, and against your glorious revolutionary line. Our sins are grievous and innumerable. A thousand deaths could not redeem us from our mortal sins. But this Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution you have launched and directed in person is touching us to our very souls. We solemnly vow that we will examine our sinful past with the microscope of Mao Zedong Thought and make every effort to turn over a new leaf and return to your glorious revolutionary line as soon as possible. Long live the Great Leader Chairman Mao! Long Live the Great Savior of the Chinese People! Long live the invincible Mao Zedong Thought! Long live the glorious revolutionary line of Chairman Mao![19]

In Hao Bin's case, under the close surveillance of the student Red Guards, it was almost impossible for the inmates to read anything other than newspapers and Mao's essays in the cowshed. For Hao Bin and other professors, memorizing designated passages from the *Selected Works of Mao Zedong* in daytime and waiting for public recitation in the evening was another daily routine, when the inmates would either be picked by the student keeper or be paired to check each other's memorization.[20] An American scholar who joined the Chinese revolution and became a Communist Party member was imprisoned in 1968, Sidney Rittenberg wrote in his memoir that every time when he was interrogated, he was ordered to 'bow to Chairman Mao's portrait on the wall and ask for forgiveness' and then to recite quotations from Mao.[21]

What happened inside the cowshed reflected the political climate and practice outside out it. The ritualistic worship of Mao and the routine of 'asking for instructions in the morning and reporting back in the evening,' and the compulsory 'daily reading' of Mao's works had become ubiquitous in social life since the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution in 1966, and it was officially endorsed and promoted by the CCP Center's document '*Zhongfa* [67] 350' in 1967.[22] For the inmates, writing confessions and pleading guilty in front of Mao's portrait were two more specific activities related to their status as political outcasts.

The cowshed was established on the spot and its space could be randomly chosen. While Peking University set up its cowshed in the Taiping Village, one research scientist was suspected of stealing top secret government documents from the national nuclear research base where he worked. He

[16]Ibid.
[17]Wu Ningkun, *A Single Tear: A Family's Persecution, Love, and Endurance in Communist China* (New York: The Atlantic Monthly Press, 1993), p. 233.
[18]Ji Xianlin, *The Cowshed: Memories of the Chinese Cultural Revolution*, trans., Chenxin Jiang (New York: New York Review Books, 2016), pp. 96–97.
[19]Wu Ningkun, *A Single Tear*, pp. 215–216.
[20]Hao Bin, *Liushui heceng xi shifei*, p.132.
[21]Sidney Rittenberg and Amanda Bennett, *The Man Who Stayed Behind* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2001), accessed May 20, 2016, https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822383161.
[22]Daniel Leese, *Mao Cult: Rhetoric and Ritual in China's Cultural Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 198.

was then locked up in one room which was a former lab and now emptied and guarded by several PLA soldiers, who peered inside to observe the inmates through a peephole on the door. The lab was filled up with prisoners and two men had to share one bed, and the only reading material allowed was the pocket-sized *Quotations from Chairman Mao*. The prisoners were to be interrogated until they confessed past misbehaviors, and they were permitted to go to sleep as late as 2:00 am.[23]

In a formal prison, however, the solitary cell provided a private space for counter-rituals as opposed to the Mao-worshipping rituals sanctioned by the state. For Lin Zhao, a Christian, female 'acting counterrevolutionary', and later martyr who was sentenced to the Shanghai Municipal Prison, popularly known as Tilanqiao Prison in May 1965, solitary incarceration in her cell entails that she was able to perform Christian rituals. She baptized the soul of a Chinese Communist leader Ke Qingshi, who was conceived by Lin to be a victim of Mao Zedong's political murder. Lin Zhao made an altar in her cell, sang hymns, said prayers, and 'conducted her one-person worship in her cell.' She also made an offering with food to her late father in front of the alter.[24]

Miscellaneous Book Reading

In some cowsheds, it was impossible to read non-Maoist materials. The historian Zhang Kaiyuan of Central China Normal College was locked up in a classroom-turn-cell, but he could go to the library of the History Department to get some books: mainly politically safe literature and history books to avoid getting in trouble.[25] This author's late father in his unpublished memoir recalled how he read a novel entitled *We Plant Love* in the cowshed, managed by the army representatives who had suppressed the anti-Revolutionary Committee 'April 11th ' rebellion corps, of which my father was a member. He made a fake cover with a handwritten title made up by himself: *We Plant Corns*. He also read the Chinese translation of John Fairbank's *The United States and China* in the cowshed under the fake cover saying it was Lenin's *Philosophical Notebooks*. A writer and rebellion group member, he admitted to this author that reading Fairbank in cowshed made him seriously rethink China's history and its relationship with the world.

When Wu Ningkun and other fellow 'ox demons' were moved from student dormitory to Nanzhuang village in rural Anhui, where they lived in the new cowshed of the Foreign Language Department of Anhui University and participated in labor. In the village, one fellow 'ox demon' named Chen Yu read *The Dream of the Red Chamber*, a Chinese literary classic of the eighteenth-century and the modern historian Guo Moruo's essay commemorating the three-hundredth anniversary of the peasant revolution led by Li Zicheng, which toppled the Ming Dynasty in 1644. When inquired by the supervisor about why he did not read Chairman Mao's works, Chen always relied that these materials were recommended by Mao. Chen was also reading the Chinese translation of *Spartacus*.[26]

In general, more latitude of reading was allowed in after-trial prison or even pre-trial jail than in the informal cowshed. According to the political dissident and economist Yang Xiguang, a.k.a. Yang Xiaokai, the prison that confined him during the Cultural Revolution had its own reading room, which was reopened after the death of Lin Biao in September 1971, when many suspended magazines resumed publication. Prisoners were now allowed to subscribe to any magazines with their name printed on the post office catalogue of periodical subscription. Yang Xiguang recalled in his memoir *Captive Spirits: Prisoner of the Cultural Revolution* that he chose *Science and Technology Abroad, Chinese Science*, and *Learning and Criticism*.[27] Sending outside reading materials to the prison for the inmates to

[23]Feng Jicai, *Voices from the Whirlwind*, pp. 231–40.
[24]Lian Xi, *Blood Letters: The Untold Story of Lin Zhao, A Martyr in Mao's China* (New York: Basic Books, 2017), pp.156, 172, 217.
[25]Zhang Kaiyuan, 'Wo de wenge suiyue' ['My Years during the Cultural Revolution'], *Minjianlishi* [*Unoffcial History*], Online Database of the University Service Center, Chinese University of Hong Kong, accessed February 12, 2017, http://mjlsh.usc.cuhk.edu.hk/Book.aspx?cid=4&tid=3406.
[26]Wu Ningkun, *A Single Tear*, p. 240.
[27]Yang Xiguang and Susan Mcfadden, *Captive Spirits: Prisoner of the Cultural Revolution* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 183.

read was not easy but possible. Technically, the prison regulation banned the use of foreign languages within the cells, and prisoners were not permitted to subscribe to non-Chinese publications, not even Chinese official publications in English. To learn English, Yang relied on translations of Mao's *Quotation* and the English-language *Beijing Review* sent to him by an engineer who had finished his sentence and worked in the compulsory brigade.[28] Yang Xiguang recalled that his sister Yang Hui failed several times to send a three-volume set of *Das Kapital* to him, because the cadres did not want radical rebel leaders such as Yang to 'use Marxism to refute Mao Zedong thought.'[29] Eventually, another prisoner with the surname Chen supplied Yang a set of *Das Kapital* with unknown sources.

The prison discouraged the reading of Marx and Lenin while exclusively promoting Mao's works. Sidney Rittenberg was permitted to keep *Quotations from Chairman Mao*, also known as the 'Little Red Book,' in his cell for the guard wanted him to 'learn from what it says and apply it to your situation,' and it 'will show you the way.'[30] In 1969, Lu Li'an, a Wuhan-based Red Guard and founder of a study society that engaged in critical reading and intellectual inquiry, was sentenced to the No. 1 Prison of Hubei Province, charged with the crime of acting counterrevolutionary. Upon arrival, the guard gave Lu a set of *Selected Works of Mao Zedong* to read, urging him to memorize the classic 'Old Three Pieces': 'The Old Fool Moves the Mountain,' 'Serve the People,' and 'In Memory of Norman Bethune.'[31] Lu told that prison keeper that he wanted to read some books by Marx and Lenin such as *The State and Revolution* and *Civil War in France*, but the guard replied that studying Mao Zedong's essays 'On Coalition government,' 'On New Democracy,' and 'Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party' would suffice because 'Mao Zedong thought is the pinnacle of contemporary Marxism, according to Lin Biao.' 'Whatever in the works of Marx and Lenin you can find in Chairman Mao's works,' the guard argued, 'even if things that were not brought up by Marx and Lenin, Mao has discussed them creatively.'[32]

The control of the reading list had its modifications. A Hunan worker rebel Chen Yinan, who was thrown into his own company's cowshed, named 'Mao Zedong Thought Study Class,' in 1970, also mentioned that the endorsed reading in the 'confession room' excluded the works by Marx, Engels and Lenin. However, after Chen Boda, the leading CCP theoretician and Mao's political advisor, was purged in the Second Plenum of the Ninth Party Congress of that year and indicted by Mao as a 'phony Marxist and swindler,' the authorities permitted the reading and citing of Marx and Lenin to answer Mao's call for reading Marxist works so that people would not be fooled by Chen Boda. After this, Chen Yinan legitimized his reading of Marx and Lenin, and he became proud of his ability of reading and explaining Marxism and Leninism to his guards, who asked Chen to lecture them because they were unable to understand those foreign works.[33]

At the outset, the only material Lu Li'an could read other than Mao's works in his cell was the 'Regulation for Prisoners' on the wall. It requires the prisoners to study hard, to reform thought, and to obey the cadres. It also asks the prisoners not to damage the property, not to graffiti the wall, and not to communicate with each other in foreign languages. Like Yang Xiguang, Lu Li'an also relied on his sister to deliver books to him from outside. Once his sister sent him some medical books to read. Lu also asked his mother to send him an unofficial collection of Mao's early works and speeches during the Cultural Revolution called *Long Live Mao Zedong Thought*, which was compiled by Red Guards. The book along with *The History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)* were confiscated by the army representative who oversaw the prison with the excuse that it was not an

[28]Ibid., p. 233.
[29]Ibid., p. 102.
[30]Sidney Rittenberg and Amanda Bennett, *The Man Who Stayed Behind*.
[31]Lu Li'an, *Yang tian chang xiao: yige danjian shiyi nian de hong wei bing yuzhong* [*Outcry from a Red Guard Imprisoned during the Cultural Revolution*] (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2012), Kindle edition.
[32]Ibid.
[33]Chen Yinan, *Qingchun wuhen: yige zaofanpai gongren de shinian wenge* [*A Rebel Worker's Life during the Cultural Revolution*] (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2006), Kindle edition.

authorized publication. In the summer of 1970, Lu Li'an began to write a biographical novel about his early life and struggle as a Red Guard while in the prison.

In the prison, the power relations were multi-directional. In Lu's case, his individual power was reinforced by his families who were outside of prison yet could assist him to break the thought control inside the prison by sending in books. Yet, the struggle between Lu and the guards also concerns the multifaceted character of Mao Zedong as a person and his 'thought' as an official discourse, as well as the tension between the original works by Marx and Lenin and the sanctioned Maoist works. In Lu Li'an's case, the prison would not accept the copy of *Long Live Mao Zedong Thought* because it was unofficial, nor would the prison, in Chen Yinan's case, legitimize the reading of the original works of Marx and Lenin until Mao himself endorsed it. For the prison authorities, Marxism and Leninism became irrelevant or superfluous to the Chinese Cultural Revolution, and only the officially interpreted Mao Zedong Thought could be read by prisoners, while the expectation was to force word-by-word memorization rather than to encourage in-depth critical reading. Expanding and diversifying the reading list even within the scope of revolutionary ideology thus became a new site of struggle, in which the political prisoners were empowered by their more sophisticated understanding of Marxism/Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought not as an official ideology but schools of thought. Their knowledge of original Marxist and Leninist works earned respect from the guards, as happened in Chen Yinan's case.

Censorship, Resistance and Reverse Influence

As with Yang Xiaokai, Lu Li'an found the censorship of book in prison was ameliorated after Lin Biao's death and posthumous indictment by the Party as a counterrevolutionary in late 1971. Lu could then receive the magazine *English Learning*, a Chinese masterwork of etymology *Origins of Words*, classical novel *Dreams in the Red Mansion*, and the *Complete Works of Lu Xun*, all mailed in by his sister. Yet he had to defend his right of reading by debating with Guard Wang who questioned his motive of learning English. The guard's logic to dissuade Lu was purely anti-intellectualistic: the only meaningful thing for a prisoner to do was to reform his worldview by studying Marxism, Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought. But Army Representative Wei was more open-minded, and he carried all the English-learning magazines to Lu's cell and put them on his bed.[34]

The censorship of books could be arbitrary. One leader with surname Zhang assured Lu Li'an that all books, if they are not officially banned, could be sent into the prison. With Zhang's permission, Lu not only secured *Origins of Words* published in 1933, which 'largely enriched' his 'knowledge in classical Chinese culture,' but also *Essential English* published in Hong Kong, which impressed him with the 'rich Western culture and history.' Lu also got *Selected Pieces from the Records of the Grand Historian* and Marxist historian Fan Wenlan's influential *Shortened General History of China*. By comparing these two books, Lu acquired some long-awaited knowledge about ancient Chinese prison system. Finally, Lu concluded that his reading experience was facilitated by the fall of Lin Biao and the sympathy or the 'remaining human nature' in Guard Wei. Reading, Lu recalls, opened a window for his mind to break out of physical confinement.

As what Lu Li'an experienced, there could be positive interactions between the guards and the prisoners. For Wu Ningkun, punitive labor under surveillance in the countryside was an opportunity to influence the student guard, an English major named Sun Shaoru, a shy and earnest young man who wanted to learn while the college was suspended. Wu Ningkun used the standard English reader for sophomores to teach Sun while cautioning him against a mechanic approach to the study of English. Wu urged Sun to read classical Chinese literature, especially poetry, which Mao also loved reading and writing. At Sun's request, Wu Ningkun also taught him French. While his own soul was being reformed as an 'ox demon,' Wu believed that as a professional teacher, he was obligated to 'help to enrich his (Sun's) sensibility and add dimensions to his vision of life.' Yet, all these

[34]Lu Li'an, *Yang tian chang xiao.*

instructions had to be done very carefully so that Sun would not be caught.[35] In a prison in 1967, a former female Public Security Bureau officer Liu Liying also won sympathy from the guard, who secretly passed newspapers to her from outside and dissuaded her from committing suicide.[36]

Deciphering Newspapers and Radio to Acquire Information

One important way for the prisoners to smell the change of political climate was to scrutinize newspaper. In Lu Li'an's account, one guard in prison was responsible for reading internally circulated newspaper *Reference News*, which mainly carries foreign media's reports on China, to the prisoners, then he often added his own criticisms to foreign views. Yet the change was felt when this guard stopped reading *Reference News* to the prisoners since mid-September, 1971, and gradually Lu Li'an found some curious wording in Party newspapers such as 'political swindler,' and Mao's directives about being open and candid, not being treacherous, etc. He also noticed that some formerly side-lined old generals reappeared in the newspaper. Several years later, while still in prison, Lu happened to encounter a piece of *Reference News* which carried a foreign report about Lin Biao's plane crash in Mongolia.[37] Yang Xiguang noticed in the newspaper the disappearance of Lin Biao after his defection and death and the reappearance of the sidelined Foreign Minister Chen Yi. He also interpreted the temporary disappearance of ultra-leftists Zhang Chunqiao and Jiang Qing and the presence of Zhou Enlai in *Hunan Daily* as a signal hinting at Mao's passivity and Zhou's assertiveness after the death of Lin Biao.[38] Sidney Rittenberg was also a keen observer of the news report in the *People's Daily*, which he could read in prison. He noticed how the frequent appearance of Lin Biao and Lin's associates such as Huang Yongsheng, Wu Faxian and Qiu Huizuo before 13 September 1971 stopped: 'All mention of Lin Biao and his cohorts, all phrases and slogans associated with them completely vanished from the *People's Daily*. It was too obvious to miss.'[39] Reading and decoding newspaper was an equally effective way of understanding high-level politics for Yan Weibing, wife of Lu Dingyi, a politburo member and one of the earliest victims of the Cultural Revolution purge. When Yan Weibing, who was held in Beijing's Qincheng Prison, had not seen Lin Biao's name and picture in the *People's Daily* for a while, she laughed and said to the prison guards: 'Ha-ha, an important thing happened in the Party!' She then said sarcastically, 'The biggest secrets of the Party are always in the newspaper!'[40]

Radio was another source of information for the inmates of both cowshed and prison. The former vice-premier Bo Yibo, charged with historical treason, was thrown into a prison in early March 1967. Bo could read newspapers and listen to his semiconductor transistor radio. The Special Case Group observation of Bo Yibo's performance describes that 'When he heard the broadcast about the contents of the criticism against Peng Dehuai and Luo Ruiqing, he abruptly turned it off.'[41] After Lin Biao's death, Lu Li'an became aware that the radio broadcasting only wished 'Chairman Mao long life without end,' yet Lin Biao's name was dropped. In Peking University's cowshed, Hao Bin and other professor tried their best to capture the change of political climate through newspaper and radio. Hao Bin and others relied on the cowshed cook to purchase newspaper for them to read, but it was at the discretion of the student Red Guards to decide whether they were to be distributed to the confined professors. One colleague of Hao Bin named Fan Daren had a self-assembled crystal radio, which became the main source of information for the five confined professors. 'Editorials in the

[35]Wu Ningkun, *A Single Tear*, pp. 255–6.
[36]Liu Liying, *Wangshi huishou* [*Reminiscences of the Past*] (Beijing: Xinhua chubanshe, 2009), pp. 101–102.
[37]Lu Li'an, *Yang tian chang xiao.*
[38]Yang Xiguang and Susan Mcfadden, *Captive Spirits*, p.184.
[39]Sidney Rittenberg and Amanda Bennett, *The Man Who Stayed Behind*.
[40]Ye Yonglie, 'Jiemi: Liangbao yikan xielou zhongguo zuida jimi' ['Declassified: The Biggest Secret of the CCP was Revealed by Its Two-Newspapers-and-One-Magazine'], Xinhuanet, Feburary 2013, accessed February 25, 2017, http://news.xinhuanet.com/book/2013-02/06/c_124328394.htm.
[41]Wu Linquan and Peng Fei, excerpt from Caolan Chunqiu [Springs and Autumns in Caolan] (Beijing: remin chubanshe, 1988), in Michael Schoenhals ed., *China's Cultural Revolution, 1966–69: Not a Dinner Party* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1996), p. 131.

People's Daily, Red Flag magazine, and the *PLA Daily* and the long articles were our focuses,' and 'We always wanted to gather some information between the lines of these (broadcasted) articles,' Hao Bin recalls.[42]

Story-telling, Dialogue and Music

In addition to ritual and reading, a main form of cultural exchange in prison was story-telling, through which the inmates related to each other and sometimes transformed the cell into a clubhouse. Yang Xiguang recalled how illiterate prisoners told stories such as *Journey to the West, Three Knights and Five Cavaliers, Burning Red Lotus Temple*, which they became familiar with from exposing to tea house before being imprisoned, while intellectual-prisoner could share Western stories such as *Tale of Two Cities, Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *Camille*.[43]

Between two well-educated inmates, there could be meaningful conversations. The young poet Zhang Langlang was arrested in 1968 as the organizer of a poetry society, and he became the roommate of the famous dissident Yu Luoke, who was to be executed in 1970 in the Beijing Municipal Jail. Zhang recalls that in the prison he told Yu that he had read Jean-Paul Sartre and Existentialism before his arrest, while Yu was a staunch Marxist fundamentalist who loathed those French 'petty intellectuals.' According to Zhang Langlang,

> He (i.e. Yu Luoke) and I made an agreement: every day at rest time, we took turns to lecture the other with a topic one is familiar with. I lectured him about 'Modern Western Art History,' Abstractionism, Impressionism, etc., and he memorized all the content. He told me about the 'Current State of World Film'. He was so professional and so comfortable with using the jargons and statistical numbers. I was puzzled about how he could know so much about film while he was a film major. Only later did I know that he got the knowledge from another inmate by trading his. He kept learning and he cherished the precious knowledge, but when I shared with him the stories in *Catcher in the Rye, Room at the Top*, and *On the Road*, he became irritated, saying, "What the hack are these?"[44]

Zhang Langlang's reminiscence also reveals that one jailed old official kept a set of old version of *Selected Works of Mao Zedong* published in Yan'an before 1949, and Yu Luoke borrowed it from him and carefully compared this version with the prevailing version that they were studying, taking notes of the differences between two versions.[45] Critical reading also occurred in Yang Xiguang's prison in Hunan, where one inmate borrowed his book, Mao Zedong's *Critique of Political Economics*, only to 'understand how Mao's ultraleftist ideas were formed.'[46] In the Peking University cowshed which was later relocated to Building 38 on campus, Hao Bin stayed in the same room with the eminent historian Deng Guangming, and Hao learned a lot about the academic debates and scholars' life in the 1930s from his conversation with Deng. Hao Bin admitted that these meaningful conversations were only possible in the unique environment of cowshed.[47]

Zhang Langlang's retelling of the stories in the novels of the American 'Beat Generation' and the British 'Angry Young Men' authors in jail again points to the aforementioned cultural phenomenon before and during the Cultural Revolution: legitimate and underground reading of foreign books. Xu Youyu's research reveals that many of his interviewees admitted that the most significant intellectual influence they received during the Cultural Revolution was from translated Western novels. It was ironic, Xu suggests, that a large quantity of translations of Western novels in the 1950 and 1960s occurred simultaneously with the criticism of them, but the criticism was feeble, because these classical works possessed irresistible enchantment to Chinese readers.[48] Modern Soviet novels such as *The Forty-First, The White Ship* and *The Cranes Are Flying*

[42]Hao Bin, *Liushui heceng xi shifei: Beida niupeng yijiao*[*How Could Flowing Water Wash Away the Past: A Glimpses of the Peking University Cowshed*] (Taipei: Dakuai wenhua chuban youxian gongsi, 2014), pp. 101–2.
[43]Yang Xiguang and Susan Mcfadden, *Captive Spirits*, p. 211.
[44]Zhang Langlang, 'Zai sixing hao de rizi' ['My Days in the Death Cell'], *NetEase*, accessed April 2, 2017, http://news.163.com/10/0414/16/648BIO2R00014AEE.html.
[45]Ibid.
[46]Yang Xiguang and Susan Mcfadden, *Captive Spirits*, p. 80.
[47]Hao Bin, *Liushui heceng xi shifei*, pp. 205–206.
[48]Xu Youyu, 'Hongweibing xingwei dongyin de diaochao he fenxi' ['Survey and Analysis of the Motives of the Red Guards'], in Li Hui ed., *Caique de chuanglanban* [*The Broken Window*] (Shenzhen: Haitian chubanshe, 1998), p. 143.

were also popular in Maoist China due to their expression of human emotions.[49] The dispute between Yu Luoke and Zhang Langlang in jail manifested two related yet also distinct intellectual strains among the educated Chinese youths during the Cultural Revolution: those who took interest in the Marxist-Leninist political theory, and those who were more immersed into modern Western avant-garde literature and art.[50]

Music was another way to keep the inmates' life vigorous. For Zhang Zhiyang, a philosopher and Cultural Revolution prisoner, music broadcasted in the loudspeaker of the prison became the marker of daily routine: 'The East Is Red blasts over the loudspeaker and it's time to get up … The "International" reverberates through the air and it's time for bed, leave the lights on.' In solitary confinement, Zhang tried to kill time by memorizing German adverbs and he eventually 'developed the habit of putting words in order … because this makes them easier to remember.' The result was that Zhang composed a poem titled 'Bayonet.' Most of the time, Zhang relied on his wild, poetic 'imagination' to overcome the loneliness in his solitary cell.[51] Singing non-revolutionary songs was not particularly prohibited in prison sometimes. Zhang Langlang mentioned how he sang Soviet Russian songs when he was confined in the single room for condemned prisoners:

> In death cells, each person was assigned to a single room. You could not see each other, and the only way of communication was voice. Newcomers like us were so shocked that we used the method of opening party to ward off fear. When the guard came, we pretended to sleep, and when they left, we sang with deep voice. I sang a Soviet song called 'Die Gloriously' … in one moment, hot blood burst in my bosom, and I couldn't help but singing out loud, in Italian: *O sole/O sole mio/sta 'nfronte a te!*[52]

Xu Xiao, a young female writer who was thrown into jail in 1975 for pretrial detaining wrote in her memoir that for the first time she ever heard the lyric pop song 'Serenade of the Green Island,' originally sung by the famous Taiwan singer Deng Lijun (Teresa Teng) was from an inmate who was arrested for 'hooliganism' because she took nude pictures with her boyfriend. Xu recalls that she heard many songs that she had never heard from this girl, who often burst into tears while singing in the jail.[53] A 22-year-old young man, Zhou Qiyue, the son of musicians Zhou Weizhi and Wang Kun, was imprisoned in Beijing Municipal Jail in 1969, where he heard how two recalcitrant inmates played tricks with the guards, and learned later that one of them was Yu Luoke. After discovering three volumes of *Selected Works of Mao Zedong* in his cell, Zhou devoted his time to reading them until he could almost recite. He also tried to recall all the ancient proses and poems and even school textbooks that he had learned and sang foreign songs in his mind because the condemned cell he was thrown into strictly prohibited any noise.[54]

Prisoners during the Cultural Revolution had chance to appreciate the performance of jailed top-notch Chinese actors, singers and violinist, because the prison would organize performances to entertain inmates at the Chinese New Year parties. In the Second Prison of Hebei Province to which Zhang Langlang was transferred from Beijing Municipal Jail, he heard the performance of China's then best violinist Yang Bingsun, who was released in 1977 and later accompanied and translated for the eminent American violinist Isaac Stern who visited China in 1979. As Zhang Langlang remarks, "The prisoners in the Number 1 Prison of Beijing might have never imagined that they could one day hear the singing of (the most famous Chinese tenorist) Liu Bingyi, and the prisoners in the Shenxia County Jail of Hebei Province might have never conceived of a single chance in their lifetime to watch the performance of the famous actor Ying Ruocheng so closely, when he appeared in an excerpt of the play *Tea House*. Zhang then continues wryly, 'Well, it was not that bad being jailed in

[49]Ibid., p. 169.
[50]One such an underground modern art group can be found in 'Wuming' [Nameless]. See Wang Aihe, Wuming, 'An Underground Art Group during the Cultural Revolution,' *Journal of Modern Chinese History* 3(2), (2009), pp. 183–199.
[51]Zhang Zhiyang, 'Walls,' translated by Nancy Liu and Lawrence Sullivan, *Chinese Studies in Philosophy* 25(3), (1994), in Michael Schoenhals ed., *China's Cultural Revolution, 1966–69*, pp. 340–345.
[52]Ibid.
[53]Xu Xiao, *Bansheng weiren* [*Half of My Lifetime as a Human Being*] (Beijing: Tongxin chubanshe, 2005), Online edition, accessed April 5, 2017, http://read.jd.com/12863/616073.html.
[54]Zhou Qiyue, 'Sishi nianqian de sixing huiyi' ['Reminiscences of My Death Penalty Forty Years Ago'], *Minjianlishi*, accessed January 18, 2016, http://mjlsh.usc.cuhk.edu.hk/book.aspx?cid=6&tid=157&pid=2497.

those years. For one thing, you perhaps avoided worse fate, and for the second, you never knew who you would meet next time. You could have never seen some of those celebrities if they had not been thrown into the prison.'[55] Prison during the Cultural Revolution thus became a curious meeting ground of a motley group of people. And it is interesting that Ji Xianlin notices that the struggle sessions against intellectuals like himself became a spectacle and alternative form of entertainment for their worker-guards to substitute the traditional comedic art form known as crosstalk.[56]

The prisoners in institutionalized jails and prisons, who constructed 'the space of positions,' in the words of Pierre Bourdieu, fell into three categories: the first type were elite inmates such as the old cadre who possessed an older version of Mao Zedong's works and the established artists; the second included young radicals such as Yu Luoke, Lin Zhao, Zhang Langlang, Zhou Qiyue, Yang Xiguang, Lu Li'an and Chen Yinan, etc., who read Western classical and modern classics, shared the stories with inmates verbally, and even engaged in intertextual criticism of Mao's works; and the third group were grassroots-level prisoners who were better-versed in traditional Chinese folk literature, most being common criminals. In Zhang Langlang's reminiscence, many grassroots-level prisoners admired Yu Luoke, who even gave them lectures. These three main categories that crossed paths in prison, however, shared the alternative discourse distinct from the dominant official ideology, which was epitomized by dogmatized Maoist works and propaganda materials. When there were no physical books, the empowered inmates resisted the state-imposed discourse by invoking their memories of non-Communist art works, be they ancient Chinese novels, Western stories, or foreign songs. Story-telling, mutual lecturing and singing made the prison cell a new field of cultural diffusion and (re)production, which did not necessarily invent new works, but maintained the transmission of the works that mentally supported the inmates.

Spatial Arrangements of the Cowshed and the Prison

Except a few cases, the prison usually allowed more freedom of reading, discussion and story-telling than the cowshed. This was because the cowshed was usually a single room watched from outside by several guards, who were spatially extremely close to the confined room. In one reminisce, the author and his family were locked up in a warehouse, which was their 'cowshed.'[57] Wu Ningkun was jailed in a 'student dormitory.'[58] In most cases, the cowshed had nothing to read except *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*.[59] Formal prison, however, is a structured building compound with its professionalized planning and compartmentalized functions (Figures 1 and 2). In a typical modern Chinese prison, the work zone of the prison keepers and the cells are demarcated by an iron gate (Figure 3). The guards have their own dormitory and office, and they patrol on fixed schedule, known as 'checking the cells.' The functional segregation allowed leeway for the prisoners to read, to talk, to sing and even to lecture. The prison may also have its own library, which serves as a specialized space for acquiring knowledge and information.

Reading in Prison under GMD and CCP: A Historical Perspective

In a historical perspective, there was visible continuity between the Chinese Communist government and its warlord and Nationalist predecessors in terms of the transformative reading practice in prison. In fact, the reformative role of modern Chinese prison was affirmed in the 1900s, and by

[55]Zhang Langlang, 'Jianyu li de Yang shouxi'['Concert Master Yang in Prison'], *Chinese News Digest*, March 20, 2017, accessed April 9, 2017, http://hx.cnd.org/2017/03/20/(zk1703d).
[56]Ji Xianlin, *The Cowshed*, pp. 62–63.
[57]Wen Wen, 'Yancha xiaodian' ['Cigarette and Tea Store'], in Li Hui ed., *Caique de chuanglanban* [*The Broken Window*] (Shenzhen: Haitian chubanshe, 1998), p. 278.
[58]Wu Ningkun, *A Single Tear*, p. 215.
[59]Hao Bin, *Liushui heceng xi shifei: Beida niupeng yijiao*[*How Could Flowing Water Wash Away the Past: A Glimpes of the Peking University Cowshed*] (Taipei: Dakuai wenhua chuban youxian gongsi, 2014), p. 205.



Figure 1. Satellite Picture of Qincheng Prison, Beijing.

the 1920s, Buddhists, YMCA and the Salvation Army all began to influence the inmates. Prisons in the 1920s let the prisoners read materials of political indoctrination such as *Essential Reading for Citizens* and *A Short History of National Shame*.[60] The Nationalist government, which was proclaimed in 1928, often 'used Buddhist morality books to instill repentance into prisoners' in the

[60]Jan Kiely, *The Compelling Ideal: Thought Reform and the Prison in China, 1901–1956* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014), pp. 48–68.

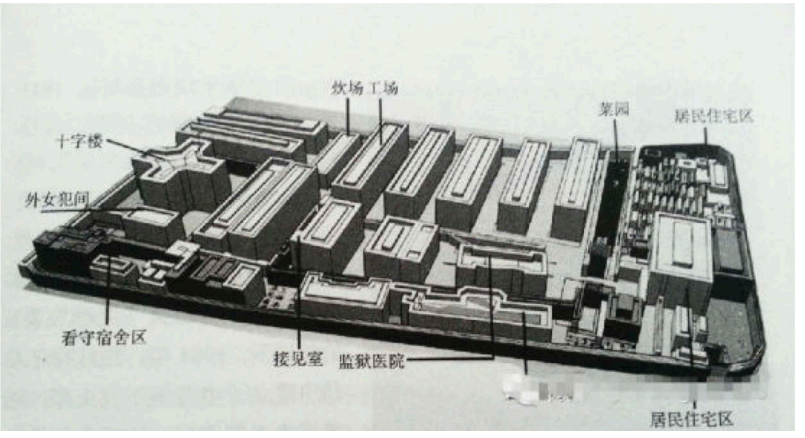


Figure 2. The Plan of Tilanqiao Prison of Shanghai with separate blocks for male inmates and female inmates, residential area of the guards, family reception room, clinic, kitchen and workshop.

1930s.[61] Confucian moral teaching material in the prison in the 1930s also included the late Qing Confucian statesman Zeng Guofan's *The Family Letters of Zeng Guofan*.[62] One Nationalist prison keeper of Zhazidong Prison named Huang Maocai wrote in his unpublished manuscript that: 'On the wall and pillars of the prison there were anti-Marxist and anti-Mao Zedong slogans, and there were transformative words such as "Youth Goes without Return" and "Think Carefully", as well as slogans with strong Buddhist "No Escape in the Maze/Turn Around You Will Find the Shore".'[63] The political prisoners were required to write weekly reflections, but the effect was dubious, as Keeper Huang admitted, 'it actually did not work at all.'[64]

The power dynamics between the keeper and the prisoner had also been at work in Republican China under the rule of the Nationalist Party. Huang Maocai, who was later sentenced to life in prison in 1953 as a 'counterrevolutionary' by the Communist government and released in 1982, confirmed that as a guard under the Nationalist government he delivered letters for Communist prisoners and bought them newspapers from outside, mainly independent and outspoken newspapers such as the *Dagongbao*, and Huang himself was very sympathetic with the Communist prisoners.[65]

Conclusion

Due to the inaccessibility of the archives of prison, the disappearance of the extralegal, makeshift cowsheds, and the passing of the generation that had the experience of being jailed during the Cultural Revolution, piecing together the life and especially reading experience in confinement in the 2010s is a daunting job.[66] Fewer people read, exchanged opinions in prison, survived the incarceration, and were able or willing to write it out retrospectively. Based on the available materials, it is arguable that the site of incarceration during the Cultural Revolution can be analyzed as a space

[61]Frank Dikötter, *Crime, Punishment and the Prison in Modern China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), p. 289.
[62]Jan Kiely, *The Compelling Ideal*, p. 107.
[63]Huang Maocai, 'Zhazidong xiezhen: Shaowei kanshouyuan huiyilu' ['True Life in Zhazidong Prison: Memoir of a Second Lieutenant Prison Keeper'], unpublished manuscript. n.p., n.d.
[64]Ibid.
[65]Ibid.
[66]It is not possible to conduct the research in China by consulting prison and policy archives as Robert Darnton did to the archives of the Bastille and the French police in Paris of the 1740s–1750s, yet even the police archives of the French police were considered by Darnton as inadequate in showing the inmates' 'attitudes and behavior patterns.' See Robert Darnton, *Poetry and Police: Communication Networks in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), p. 55. Chinese local gazetteers may or may not mention the imprisonment during the Cultural Revolution, but there are only statistical numbers, not the real life of any individual persons.

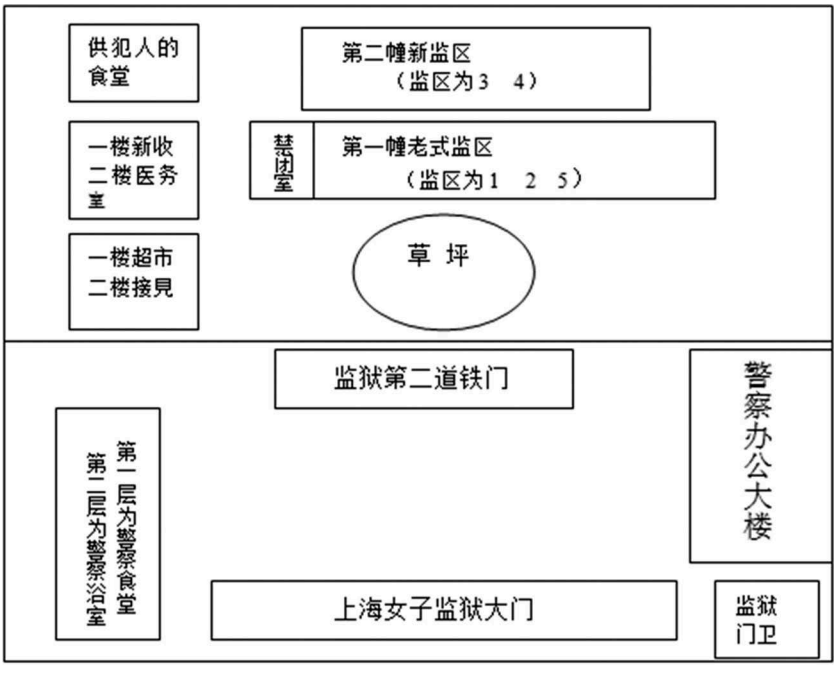


Figure 3. Floor Plan of the Shanghai Women's Prison with the first gate, the second gate, police office building, police cafeteria and shower rooms are in the lower part of the plan. After entering the second iron gate, the demarcation line, there are lawn, cells, prisoners' cafeteria, clinic, supermarket and reception room.

where rituals and readings were forced upon the prisoners to achieve the goal of 'thought reform,' or ideological disciplining. The daily routine in confinement centers on a series of disciplinary, formulaic, and symbolic acts: bowing, recitation, slogan-shouting, and repeated reading of the canonized Maoist writing, and imagined communication with Chairman Mao, aiming at the salvation of a sinful soul. It is this 'disciplinary mechanism' in a specific, enclosed space and institution of 'social quarantine,' in Foucault's words, as well as the quasi-religious character of Mao cult in jail, that deserves attention.[67]

Although Foucault's study takes the eighteenth-century European experience and the exercise of the Bourgeois legal power as the object of analysis, this analytical framework can be applied to the socialist, and sometimes the Nationalist incarceration of political criminals in China. The cowshed on college campus was particularly significant because it was not the traditional dynamics between the prison keeper and the prisoner, but instead a new power relational mode that thoroughly subverted traditional Chinese social hierarchy. At Peking University, students became the new political player, agent of the Cultural Revolution, and authority of revolutionary Maoism, who forced their professors, the old academic authority, to memorize and to recite Mao's works; workers enjoyed the struggle sessions against the scholars; army officers monitored jailed students. In the meantime, while the inherent inequality of power relations between the prisoner and the guard was irrevocable, this study reveals a more complex picture in which the prisoners capitalized on their outside connections, formed internal cohorts, read and decode available texts, and to articulate their rights of acquiring knowledge or even exerted their authority of understanding the canons at a deeper level.

The political prisoners' experiences, as shown in their memoirs, witnesses' reminiscence, and historians' reconstruction, illustrate that during the Cultural Revolution, the sites of confinement and penalty were a significantly interactive space of contention and field to produce meaning. The prisoners were less than passive victims of torture or recipients of indoctrination, but dynamic agents

[67]Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (New York: Vantage Books, 1995), pp. 215–22.

who sought individual autonomy, group solidarity and self-expression. They exploited all available resources, opportunities and possibilities to resist the penal institution's disciplinary quarantine and censorship of information to maximize their freedom. Unable to defy the formal rituals, daily routines and reading materials imposed upon them by the penal institution, the inmates, however, never stopped extending their reading list, thinking, debating, communicating, negotiating and invoking memory of the books they had read in the past. They even maintained their own religious and personal rituals to counteract political ritualism. It was not surprising for some prisoners to win sympathy of the guards and exercised reversed influence on them. The nexus of power relations in the space of confinement was fraught with struggles and compromises, while information, knowledge and memory found a new venue to survive and thrive through the inmates' unrelenting resistance. It was this resistance that paved the way for the post-Mao 'intellectual emancipation.' Michel Foucault was correct when saying that the prison as an institution was but a failure, because 'people know it didn't reform but on the contrary manufactured criminal and criminality.'[68] This is even truer for thought criminals, who could turn the experience of imprisonment into a process of deeper self-transformation and self-fulfillment. As Zhang Zhiyang said sardonically in hindsight: 'However, I must admit the crime forced upon me in order to become a free human being.'[69]

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Notes on contributor

Guo Wu is Associate Professor of History at Allegheny College, Pennsylvania, USA. He is the author of *Zheng Guanying, Merchant Reformer of Late Qing China and his Influence on Economics, Politics, and Society* (2010), *Narrating Southern Chinese Minority Nationalities:Politics, Disciplines, and Public History* (2019), and several articles on the politico-cultural movements in the PRC such as 'speaking bitterness,' 'recalling bitterness,' and the creation of the image of evil landlord in Chinese socialist arts. An earlier draft of this article was presented to the conferences 'A History of Penal Regimes in Global Perspective, 1800–2014' at Harvard University in 2015 and 'Bombard the Headquarters: An Exhibition and Symposium to mark the 50th Anniversary of China's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution' at the University of Melbourne in 2016.

[68]Ibid., *Power/Knowledge*, p. 45.
[69]Zhang Zhiyang, 'Walls,' in Michael Schoenhals ed., *China's Cultural Revolution, 1966–69*, p. 354.