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From Bloodsucker to Disease-carrier: Mosquito and Chinese Hygienic Modernity

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the  
requirements for the degree Master of Arts  
in Asian Studies

by

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by

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## ABSTRACT

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by

Yue Wu

Mosquito has been frequently adopted as a metaphor indicating bureaucratic corruption by Chinese literati throughout the imperial history. The representation of mosquitoes is therefore implicated with Confucian moral discourse that lays the cornerstone of socio-political structure in premodern China. However, the literary portrayal of mosquitoes was confronted by a new scientific rendering as the disease-carrier by the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century with the introduction of Western science in Chinese intelligentsia. While mosquito as a moral vehicle still secured a voice during the Republican era, it disappeared almost entirely after the establishment of People's Republic of China in 1950s. Through an extensive investigation on classical anthologies, newspapers, journal articles, and Communist Party propagandas, this project traces the shifted image of mosquitoes from late Qing to Maoist era in sight of the rise of scientific discourse. It argues that the transformed perception of mosquitoes was entangled with modern state-building in 20<sup>th</sup> century China, centralizing on the goal of "hygienic modernity" that connects personal well-being with public welfare. Moreover, while the discourse of science appropriated that of morality in China's modernization cause, it was exploited in Communist China to justify ideological struggle against class enemies, which eventually extended the violence towards nature's menace to human sphere.

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## Introduction

Mosquito affects the well-being of human body. The discomfort brought by this bloodsucking creature manifests not only in physical itchiness, but also mental disturbances featured with detestation and anxiety. This mosquito-triggered “illness” was metaphorically correlated with socio-political defects by the literati in premodern China, which contributed to a rich literary tradition that engaged mosquitoes with critiques on the moral degeneration of the ruling class. Poetry, among all the literary genres that carried the representations of mosquitoes, occupied a most compelling position because of its didactic function in transmitting Confucian moral principles. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, however, mosquito as a moral vehicle in literature was confronted with a new image as the disease-carrier accompanied with the introduction of Western science, and largely disappeared during the Communist rule in 1950s. This project intends to explore how the portrayal of mosquitoes was shifted from a bloodsucking insect comparable with the morally corrupted bureaucrats to the malaria-bearing pests deserved to be eliminated. By so doing, it argues that the converted perception of mosquitoes is closely associated with the state-building project in 20<sup>th</sup> century China, in which, striving to achieve the goal of “hygienic modernity” comprises a crucial part.

The term “hygienic modernity”, coined by Ruth Rogaski as a parallel to the Chinese phrase *weisheng* 衛生, identifies a modernized awareness in the matter of health. It

requires concerted efforts from both the individual citizens and the state institutions in guarding life as a collective interest.<sup>1</sup> However, until the last decades of the Qing dynasty, the notion of *weisheng* had been largely merged with its Daoist origin as a self-beneficial act that nourishes life through the adjustment of *qi* (vital energy). Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the unprecedented crisis faced by China under Western invasion eventually pushed *weisheng* to depart from the Daoist tradition when learning from the West became an urgent task. Frequently employed in translated treatises from Europe and Japan, which affiliated personal hygiene with public welfare, *weisheng* gradually acquired a modern connotation linking individual well-being with national strength.

The evolved modern awareness of *weisheng*, which often invokes the grand historical backdrop of the late Qing, can also be situated in the trivialities of everyday life. Insects like mosquitoes, which share an intimate bond with human beings, provide a unique lens to probe the transformation of this Chinese term in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The increased portrayal of mosquitoes as a threat to the entire Chinese race, which, when frequently juxtaposed to the rhetoric on *weisheng* advocating the elimination of such pests, notably connoted *weisheng* with a public significance in early 20<sup>th</sup> century China. Through the continued mass anti-pest campaigns from 1920s onwards, *weisheng* as a public duty eventually was branded into China's collective consciousness. This project aims to relate a story down to

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<sup>1</sup> Rogaski, Ruth. *Hygienic Modernity: Meanings of Health and Diseases in Treaty-Port China*. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: California University Press, 2004).



the bottom and next to the skin; it explores the possibility of writing China's encounter of modernity through a subject as minute as the mosquito.

But mosquito may not be an insignificant subject to the Chinese after all. Before descending to the ground, mosquito had been enshrined in poetic anthologies as a valued trope delivering Confucian moral principles. Hence, the declined literary portrayal of mosquitoes also uncovers the reshuffle of the leading political discourse in China's pursuit of modernity. It leads to the second goal of this project to map out how the discourse of science gradually appropriated that of morality in launching and directing China's cause of modernization.

The triumph of science, however, was not obtained with great ease. An extensive research on the publications from late 19<sup>th</sup> century to 1950s reveals that the scientific rendering of mosquitoes, while flourished in the Republican era, only obtained a dominant voice until the coming of the Communist rule. The assorted images of mosquitoes during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century betrays the unconsolidated authority of scientific language, along with which, the modern awareness of *weisheng*, or "hygienic modernity", was also stuck at the sprouting stage, where the link between individual duty of pest prevention and the cause of public health was not sufficiently recognized by ordinary Chinese.

In this sense, the largely unified image of mosquitoes as a biological threat in 1950s

begs our inquiry on the conspicuous victory of the scientific discourse under the Communist regime. The intensive implementation of the health campaigns during the first decade of Communist era might offer an explanation in this regard, which not only entrenched the perception of mosquitoes as a disease-causing pest in the public space, but also led to a consummated modernity in the notion of *weisheng*, channeling each citizen's effort to the state's call for mosquito eradication. But this explanation also prompts us to ask further - why the campaigns succeeded under the Communist rule (as compared with the less fruitful attempts made in the Republican period)?

Histories on medicine and public health in Maoist era have suggested that besides the post-war social stability and an anti-imperialist zeal triggered by the American germ war, the continued practice of health campaigns in 1950s China might be primarily resulted from the promotion of a nation-wide health care. Michel Foucault's theorizing on the rise of modern governmentality provides a useful framework to understand the health policy during Maoist era. As Foucault observed, a new technology of governance emerged in 18<sup>th</sup> century Europe, which aimed at preserving and multiplying human life to optimize productivity. The burgeon of medical and educational institutions, which spread knowledge and care to produce a docile and salubrious population, also established an extended power control over human bodies, which Foucault termed as biopower.<sup>2</sup> In this sense, the

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<sup>2</sup> Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality, vol.1*. Robert Hurley, trans. (New York: Random House, 1978): 140.

distribution of socialist welfare in Maoist China with its underlying goal of China's economic progress finds a similar scenario in Foucault's Europe; and the disciplined bodies and modified consciousness of the Chinese in eliminating mosquitoes for socialist construction manifests one aspect of the biopolitical control under the Communist regime.

However, the divergent socio-historical situation between 1950s China and 18<sup>th</sup> century Europe urges us to heed the nuances in relating the experience of China to that of the West. It thus leads to the last aim of this project to argue an adapted Foucauldian paradigm in understanding the power mechanism contained in Maoist health politics. As I will demonstrate in the final chapter, the anti-bourgeois atmosphere lingered in Maoist era complicated the process of delivering knowledge and care; the effectuation of biopolitical power, as it turned out, exceeded the scope of governing health and prospering economy, permitting China's collective violence against the pests to include the capture of enemies in human society.

Chapter One establishes an argument on the political importance of the representation of mosquitoes in Confucian China. It reveals how the poetic rendering of mosquitoes manifests a type of softened governing under the Confucian rule featured with moral exhortation overarching both human and natural world. Moreover, by showing mosquito-poems with apparent influence from Daoist and Buddhist philosophy, this chapter also

demonstrates the dictatorial attitude over nature contained in Confucian utilitarianism was constantly moderated. By endorsing a harmonious union with as well as an empathetic feeling towards nature, Daoism and Buddhism exerted an auxiliary impact on Confucian moral discourse, through which internalizing the violence towards nature's nuisance contributed to a practice of self-cultivation.

Chapter Two investigates the significance of the shifted perception of mosquitoes in China's pursuit of "hygienic modernity" in early 20<sup>th</sup> century. By teasing out the science literature from late Qing to Republican China, this chapter reveals an intimate connection between the rising image of the infectious mosquitoes and the evolved modern consciousness in the term *weisheng*. Nevertheless, the literary portrayal of mosquitoes exerting ethical values still secured a voice in Republican cultural arena, which implies an unconsolidated authority of scientific knowledge and modern health management. This chapter argues an unconsummated "hygienic modernity" in Republic of China, where the unsaturated link between personal hygiene and public duty led to the failed attempts of the anti-mosquito campaigns.

Chapter Three sets out to explain the largely disappeared image of mosquitoes as a moral trope in 1950s Communist China in light of the intensive implementation of the anti-pest campaigns. Associating the nation-wide distribution of health care with the successful mobilization of health campaigns, it argues the accomplishment of "hygienic modernity"

under the Communist regime as both the state and individual citizens made fervent endeavors in wiping out the disease-causing mosquitoes for national construction. While the Maoist health politics identifies Foucault's biopolitical model in early modern Europe, the ambivalence towards Western science and the scarce medical resources in Communist China led the two to diverge. This chapter will explore how the language of science was exploited by the political leaders to facilitate ideological struggle, which eventually extended the war against infectious mosquitoes to the "class enemies".

## Chapter One

### Moralized Nature and Imagined Governance: Mosquito-poetry and Political Philosophy in Confucian China

#### Introduction

Poetry serves a primary medium for Confucian didactics. As the Master once told his son, “if you do not learn the *Book of Odes*, you will not be fit to converse with.”<sup>3</sup> Being acquainted with the poetic language therefore aims not only at elevating one’s literary attainment, but also at the inculcation of moral, political, and social orders. The portrayal of nature, which squares a fair portion of classical Chinese poetry, in this sense, also embodies a segment of the Confucian universe.

Mosquito is one of the poetic subjects derived from nature that intimates Confucian doctrines. Being a bloodsucking insect, mosquito is frequently compared with the corrupt bureaucrats to reveal moral degeneration of the ruling class. The interpretation of nature

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<sup>3</sup> “不學詩，無以言”，*The Analects*, 13.5. Scholars have noted that literary cultivation (*wen* 文) comprises one crucial element in shaping the Confucian noble man, *junzi* 君子, and the *Book of Odes* (*Shijing* 詩經) is endorsed as the principal text for education. The importance of *Odes* in instructing people to remain on the right (Confucian) course is evidenced by another quote in *The Analects* (2.2): “The Master said: ‘In *The Book of Odes* there are three hundred pieces, but the design of them all may be embraced in one sentence - having no depraved thoughts.’” (子曰：“《詩》三百，一言以蔽之。曰：思無邪。”)。 See Lau, D. C., trans. *Confucius: The Analects*, (London: Penguin Books, 1979); Huang, Yong, ed. *Rorty, Pragmatism, and Confucianism, with Responses by Richard Rorty*, (New York: SUNY Press, 2009): 187.

that is tailored to regulating human behavior apparently exposes a utilitarian end of Confucianism, and the accusation on mosquitoes, in this sense, exemplifies not only a symbolic gesture of redressing the ruler's ill-governance, but also a figurative taming of nature's menace. Nevertheless, the charges against the mosquitoes are sometimes withdrawn, which exhibits an integrated influence from Daoist and Buddhist thoughts arguing against human superiority and dissuading the act of killing. This chapter traces the tradition of mosquito-poetry accompanied with related religious texts in premodern China to explore how the poetic rendering of mosquitoes consolidated Confucian political philosophy by extending an imaginary reign over nature, and how the dictatorial attitude towards nature betrayed by this literary trope was moderated through Daoist and Buddhist remonstrations.

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The classical Chinese literature entails a rich tradition of poetry engaged with mosquitoes. Leafing through the poetic anthologies by scholar-officials in imperial China, one could detect a continued line of chanting on this bloodsucking insect with an embedded a moral intent. In Tang Dynasty, Meng Jiao 孟郊 (751-814) wrote:

On a midsummer night I was resting,

五月夜中息，

While the hungry mosquitoes were bustling.

饑蚊尚營營。

They simply longed for grease and blood,  
And dismissing the weight of life.<sup>4</sup>

但將膏血求，  
豈覺性命輕。

Known as a poet who frequently deplored the hardship of his life, Meng Jiao was also praised as a serious Confucian moralist pondering over social problematics based on his own difficulties.<sup>5</sup> As the “grease and blood” (膏血) implies people’s hard-won possessions, Meng subtly relates the mosquitoes with the bloodsucking bureaucrats to indicate the heavy taxation imposed upon the commoners.<sup>6</sup> The lack of reference to “life” (性命) in the last line also allows a more nuanced interpretation of the poem, which elevates the depiction of the desperate mosquitoes (risking their lives seeking for blood) to a poignant critique on the state functionaries who trampled the lives of the ordinary people.

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<sup>4</sup> See Huang Jun 黃鈞. *Quan Tangshi* 全唐詩, (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 1998), 611.

<sup>5</sup> The poet and politician, Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007-1072), admired Meng’s poetry precisely because it scraped off the decorous glaze of Tang poetry and reflected the harsh reality of life. The austere style of Meng’s poems was later known as “bitter-chanting” 苦吟, in which the foregrounded distress and anxiety of the poet denoted not only the arduous process of artistic creation, but also the socio-political circumstances towards late Tang. See Barnstone, Tony & Chou, Ping. *The Anchor Book of Chinese Poetry: From Ancient to Contemporary, The Full 3000-Year Tradition*, (New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2005), 152-153.

<sup>6</sup> “Grease and blood” as an allusion to people’s property is derived from the article entitled “On What Leads to A King’s Fleeing from the Palace” (《論敘遷幸之由狀》) written by the scholar-official, Lu Zhi 陸贄 (754-805), which revealed the hard situation of people’s livelihood as one major reason of the “Jingyuan Military Coup” 涇原兵變 in late Tang dynasty: “the farm work is deserted because of conscription; the grease and blood are exhausted under the tyrannical rule 農桑廢於征呼，膏血竭於笞捶.” See Huang Yongnian 黃永年. *Xin Tang Shu* 新唐書, (Shanghai: Hanyu dacidian chubanshe, 2004), 3568.



A similar comparison between the “greedy” mosquitoes and the court officials can be found in another Tang poem written by Pi Rixiu 皮日休 (838-883) entitled “Mosquitoes” (蚊子):

Gathering like thunders faraway,	隱隱若聚雷，
Puncturing skins insatiably,	噬膚不知足。
Why seeking delicacies from a man	何事覓膏腴，
With no imperial grains in his belly? <sup>7</sup>	腹無太倉粟。

Compared with Meng’s “austere art”, Pi’s didactic tone was presented as more playful.<sup>8</sup> Instead of posing a plain comment on bureaucratic exploitation, the poet shrewdly couched his critique with a rhetorical question by the end of the poem – how can you insatiable officials find anything of value from the starved? They are plundered to feed up your imperial appetite already.

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<sup>7</sup> Wang Maofu 王茂福. *Pilu Shizhuan* 皮陸詩傳, (Changchun: Jilin renmin chubanshe, 2000), 84.

<sup>8</sup> It has been noted that Pi was a poet who held a keen interest in poetic techniques and aesthetic experiment, as well as a scholar-official with a strong sense of social responsibility. A bulk of his poems were devoted to exposing the plight of the common people due to the ill governance. See Yao, Xinzhong. *The Encyclopedia of Confucianism*, (New York: Routledge, 2003), 477.

While both Pi and Meng's accusation on the ruling party remained implicit, a more straightforward rebuke on the avaricious bureaucrats through the image of mosquitoes can be found in Wei Chulao's 韋楚老 (840-?) "Mosquitoes by the River" (江上蚊子):

May I ask your tiny greedy heart,	請問貪婪一點心，
How much that is stinky and corrupted	臭腐填腹幾多足？
should be enough for your need? <sup>9</sup>	

Apart from the bloodsucking nature of the mosquitoes, other correlative aspects were also used to establish the literary image of the mosquito-bureaucrat. In "The Rime of Crowded Mosquitoes" (聚蚊謠), Liu Yuxi 劉禹錫 (772-842) drew on the grouping behavior of the mosquitoes to alert the rumors circulated in the court:

Boisterous and inflammatory,	喧騰鼓舞喜昏黑，
[The mosquitoes] favor darkness as much as dizziness,	
The confounded cannot differentiate (right from wrong),	昧者不分聽者惑。
And those who listen (to them) are bewitched. <sup>10</sup>	

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<sup>9</sup> See Huang Jun 黃鈞. *Quan Tangshi* 全唐詩, (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 1998), 814.

<sup>10</sup> See Zhang Tianchi & Liu Guanghan 張天池&劉光漢. *Liuyuxi Shiwen Xuanzhu* 劉禹錫詩文選註, (Xi'an: Sanqin chubanshe, 1987), 111.

Despite his early fame as a prodigy and passing the civil service examinations at the age of twenty, Liu's political career, however, was constantly obstructed. His satirical writings frequently offended court officials and had him exiled to remote postings.<sup>11</sup> As the above quotation might have served one of the reasons that contributed to Liu's marginalized position, it also evinces that mosquito as a metaphor insinuating bureaucratic misdemeanors was well-acquainted by the scholar-officials in Liu's time.

The legacy of the political image of the mosquitoes was inherited and developed in the dynasties that ensued. He Zhu 賀鑄 (1052-1125) in Song dynasty, similar to Liu, also depicted the crowded mosquitoes in one of his poems, "Cursing the Mosquitoes" (詛蚊), which brought attention to the phenomenon of court factionalism:

Leaning on the party and its followers,	挾是黨與繁，
Does it contribute to your physical strength?	豈資軀力大。
[You are] greedier than the wolves,	饑心過狼貪，
And more toxic than the wasp-sting. <sup>12</sup>	毒喙甚蜂蟄。

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<sup>11</sup> See Barnstone & Chou eds. *The Anchor Book of Chinese Poetry*, 164.

<sup>12</sup> See Fu Xuancong 傅璇琮. *Quan Song Shi: Di Shijiu Juan* 全宋詩：第 19 卷, (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1998).

In Ming Dynasty, Zuo Maodi's 左懋第 (1601-1645) "An Ode to Mosquitoes" (詠蚊) rendered a vivid image of the mosquitoes that mirrored hypocritical court performance:

Reporting all the pleasant news into your ear,	入耳皆雅奏，
Holding all the schemes behind his mask,	觸面盡深機。
Dashing away after sucking out the blood -	吸飽飛颯去，
Do Your Lordship know any of that? <sup>13</sup>	主人知不知？

By the time of Qing, a full-fledged literary tradition of the mosquito-bureaucrat is rather identifiable. Typical features that affiliate mosquitoes with the depraved officialdom are comprehensively delineated through poetic verses. One of the exemplary poems is offered by Bao Xinpu's 鮑辛浦 (1690-1748) "On Mosquitoes" (蚊賦), in which the poet writes:

Fawning up the rich and the powerful,	乘隙趨炎，
Plotting countless ruses and treacheries,	懷奸抱智。
Smearing blood as if showing allegiance,	敵血如盟，

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<sup>13</sup> Another poet in Song Dynasty, Yang Jian 楊簡 (1141-1226), left a similar portrayal in "The Mosquito at Night" (夜蚊): "Intimating the pleasant news in private, its scheming nature is revealed at the court (偏向耳旁呈雅奏，直來面上發深機。)." See Fu Xuancong 傅璇琮. *Quan Song Shi: Di Sishiba Juan* 全宋詩：第 48 卷, 39.

Pricking (arms) as if inflicting penalties.<sup>14</sup>

婪脂如刺。

The bloodsucking greediness, pestering obsequiousness, and surreptitious movements, all seem to naturally connect mosquitoes with bureaucratic misconducts. However, the sturdy link between mosquitoes and court officials over the past two millennia was not entirely contingent on the former's biological existence, but also supported by an ideological base in Confucian doctrines. As Confucius noted:

When the sage rules a country, no celestial eclipse ever occurs, and no stars fall; the Ocean Bo is tranquilized, and the rivers do not flood [...] Bees do not sting the infants; mosquitoes and gadflies do not prey on the royal ponies.<sup>15</sup>

The menace of nature, as this quote suggests, should be tamed by a sagacious ruler.

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<sup>14</sup> See Ren Jiyu 任繼愈. *Zhonghua Chuanshi Wenxuan: Qingchao Wenzheng* 中華傳世文選: 清朝文征, (Changchun: Jilin renmin chubanshe, 1998), 1352. "Pricking" 刺 apparently refers to the punishment of *qing* 黥 in imperial China, in which the convicted criminals are tattooed with words on their body. According to *The Legal Code of Qing* 大清律例, *qing* is applied to people who have conducted theft: "the first time they are tattooed with the word "stealing" on their right arm, the second time on the left arm, and the third time hanged." (初犯 (首從)並於右小臂膊上刺 "竊盜" 二字, 再犯刺左小臂, 三犯者絞。) See Chen Zhiyong. 陳智勇 *Zhongguo Gudai Shehui Zhi'an Guanli Shi* 中國古代治安史, (Zhengzhou: Zhengzhou daxue chubanshe, 2003), 261.

<sup>15</sup> "聖人有國, 則日月不食, 星辰不隕, 勃海不運, 河不滿溢...蜂蠆不螫嬰兒, 蚊虻不食天駒。" See Meng Qingxiang & Meng Fanhong 孟慶祥 & 孟繁紅. *Kongzi Jiyu Yizhu* 孔子集語譯註, (Ha'erbing: Heilongjiang renmin chubanshe, 2003), 204.

The emergence of natural phenomena that is antagonistic to humans, therefore alarms ill governance and moral degeneration of the ruling party. The interconnectedness between human behavior and nature's reaction as an abiding creed in Confucius's teachings thus yielded the mosquito-bureaucrat as an effective trope intimating political misdeeds on the one hand, and preserved throughout history to entrench the legitimacy of Confucian orthodoxy on the other hand.

This mutual boost between the representation of mosquitoes and the ideal of ruling denotes a porous boundary between human society and natural kingdom in imperial China, where an "ethical accommodation" supplanted physical domination and left a cosmos following the same rules that regulate the human beings.<sup>16</sup> This "ethical accommodation" is further elaborated by Roel Sterckx in regard to the interpretation of animals in premodern China:

The sage's hermeneutic of the natural world did not consist of analyzing the animal world as a distinct and separate reality ruled by internal and independent biological laws; rather, he explained animals through integrating their appearance

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<sup>16</sup> See Heiner Roetz, "On Nature and Culture in Zhou China" in *Concepts of Nature: A Chinese-European Cross-Cultural Perspective*, ed. Hans Ulrich Vogel and Gunter Dux (Leiden: Brill, 2010, 198-220), 199.

and behavior within the encompassing structure of a human-animal congruity.<sup>17</sup>

The literary trope of the mosquito-bureaucrat apparently echoes Sterckx that the Confucian world order was shared between humans and nature/animals. The mosquito-poetry in effect, manifests a softened governance over nature under the Confucian rule, which is featured with moral/ideological conversion and exerts power by inculcating the barbarous.

This softened reign can be traced all the way back to the *Book of Odes*. In a poem titled as “Blue Flies” (*Qingying* 青蠅), the bustling flies were adopted as a metaphor to imply the slanders besetting the king:

They buzz about, the blue flies,	營營青蠅,
Lighting on the fences,	止於樊。
O happy and courteous sovereign,	豈弟君子,
Do not believe slanderous speeches	無信讒言。
They buzz about, the blue flies,	營營青蠅,
Lighting on the jujube trees,	止於棘。
The slanderous observe no limits,	讒人罔極,

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<sup>17</sup> See Sterckx, Roel. *The Animal and the Daemon in Early China*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 5.

And throw the whole kingdom into confusion.<sup>18</sup>

交亂四國。

While the blue flies keep moving about, their itinerary is predicted and their “malicious” intention is alerted; their manner of behavior is, in a way, moralized, so as to chime a bell for the ruler. In this sense, the literary portrayal of the blue flies not only aimed at rumor control, but also the management of nature’s nuisance.

Comparable to the blue flies in the *Odes*, the mosquitoes entitled with a political identity similarly mark an extended territory under human governance. The Confucian moral indoctrination, ultimately, betrays a utilitarian end, which, by inserting orders into the wild, it subjugates the beast for the betterment of human society.<sup>19</sup>

However, this dictatorial attitude over nature was frequently moderated. As the next section of this chapter will show, Confucian ethics as the primal guidance for Chinese rulers

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<sup>18</sup> See Shen, Vincent. *Dao Companion to Classical Confucian Philosophy* (Berlin: Springer Science & Business Media, 2013), 259.

<sup>19</sup> The Confucian utilitarianism is most evidently expressed by Xunzi 荀子 (313 BC – 238 BC), who believes in humans’ superiority because of their capability of ordering things: “when the heaven is combined with the earth, myriad things are produced; yin combined with yang, changes are given rise; human nature combined with artifice, orders are established. While the heaven can give birth, it cannot differentiate the things being brought to life; while the earth carries human beings, it cannot issue orders and have them ruled.” (天地合而萬物生; 陰陽接而變化起, 性偽合而天下治。天能生物,不能辯物也; 地能載人,不能治人也。) See Chen Hongtai 陳紅太. *Ruxue yu Zhongguo Chuantong Zhengzhi Zhaxue* 儒學與中國傳統政治哲學, (Beijing: Xiandai chubanshe, 1997), 98.



was integrated with Daoist and Buddhist philosophy, which tranquilized the palpable violence in Confucian utilitarianism by endorsing the ideal of a harmonious union with and empathetic heart towards the natural world.

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Daoism too, philosophizes the intimate connection between humans and nature. But unlike Confucianism, the rapport between mankind and the cosmos in Daoist notion is identified with the spontaneous movement of the Way (道 *Dao*) rather than the value judgement projected by human subjectivity.<sup>20</sup> In fact, it is precisely the habituated proclivity of humans to formulate value schemes and establish hierarchies that have vitiated our primordial linkage with the Way.<sup>21</sup> Hence, for Daoism, an “antagonistic” nature is good to think with; contemplating on nature’s menace is simultaneously conducting self-introspection, which helps one to revert back to a value-free mentality and reunite with the Way.

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<sup>20</sup> As *Dao De Jing* ch 42 suggests, humans are but one among the myriad things produced by the movement of Way (道生一，一生二，二生三，三生萬物). In this sense, humans are equalized and intertwined with the natural world as both are the embodiments of the Way.

<sup>21</sup> See Yu Jiyuan. “Living with Nature: Stoicism and Daoism”. *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, 25. 1 (2008): 1-19, 6.

Mosquito as a bloodsucking creature, therefore, is frequently employed in Daoist texts to reveal and critique the partiality of human mind. In the *Script of Ascension* 冲虚经, Liezi 列子 (450BC-375BC) argues:

Humans select the edible things to eat. Could it be said that those are born for humans to eat by nature? If so, the mosquitoes and gadflies puncture skin, and the tigers and wolves feed on meat - could it not be said that humans are born for mosquitoes and gadflies to puncture, and meat for tigers and wolves to consume by nature then?<sup>22</sup>

While humans are comfortably consuming animals, being fed on by other animals is by no means acceptable. The activity of eating that is taken for granted by humans is unveiled as inordinately self-interested through the angle of animals.

The dialectic approach adopted by Liezi in arguing against the human-centered value system can be found in another Daoist text by Chen Xianwei 陳顯微 in Song Dynasty, which centers on the minuteness of mosquitoes to deliver the moral of the story:

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<sup>22</sup> “人取可食者而食之，豈天本為人生之？且蚊蚋嚼膚，虎狼食肉，非天本為蚊蚋生人、虎狼生肉者哉？” See Feng Youlan 馮友蘭. *Zhongguo Zhhexueshi* 中國哲學史, (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1994), 621.

Baoyizi once noted: “The people in the past said that the Jiaoming bug can build a world on the eyelashes of a mosquito. This is because, in regard of size, worlds are differentiated as huge and small, but when perceived through the mind, they are not distinguished by its scale. Therefore, a bee can tour around its own universe, and a shrimp its own sea.”<sup>23</sup>

While the mosquito is tiny enough, even tinier bugs can accommodate themselves on a mosquito. Apparently, physicality does not preclude one from enjoying the universe, as the perception of the world is tailored to every living organism as equally meaningful and sophisticated. Thus, by switching the lens from human eyes to that of the animals, the Daoist master questions human’s entitlement of applying their own scale of measurement in judging against others.

The Daoist dialectics in pondering human-animal relationship clearly influenced Confucian thought. In the essay “In Defense of Mosquitoes” (蚊對) written by the scholar-official, Fang Xiaoru 方孝孺 (1357-1402), in Ming Dynasty, the author recorded a conversation with his protégé after a failed attempt in expelling the mosquitoes. As the master complained: “Why has nature imprudently produced this tiny creature to harm

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<sup>23</sup> “抱一子曰：昔人謂焦冥蟲向蚊蟲眉睫上建立世界，蓋以形觀之，則有巨細之分，以心論之，則無小大之辨，故一蜂可游觀天地，一蝦可放肆大海。” See Chen Xianwei 陳顯微. *Baoyizi Chenxianwei Daoshu Erzong* 抱一子陳顯微道書二種, (Hongkong: Xinyitang youxian gongsi, 2013), 89.

people?” (天胡產此微物而毒人乎?), the protégé’s response to his master is presented as follows:

Why are you indulging yourself so much while whining about nature’s stubborn (way of being)? [...] From our own perspective, humans are nobler than other living beings, but from the view of heaven and earth, which should be nobler than the other? [...] The things consumed by humans are of an enormous (variety). Why is it that only humans cannot be fed on by other things?<sup>24</sup>

The protégé’s retort (or more likely, Fang’s self-critiquing) resonates with Liezi in taking the point of view from nature to reposition humans on the same rank as the animals. Similar to Chen Xianwei’s argument, mosquitoes with their physical weakness are employed to trigger the shift of position in Daoist discourse and contend for an egalitarian view of all living beings.

The influence of Daoist egalitarianism is identified not only in the essays by Confucian scholars, but also in their poetry. Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037-1101) in Song Dynasty, who was renowned for his penchant for Daoist philosophy, once versed:

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<sup>24</sup> “子何待己之太厚，而尤天之太固也! ... 自我而觀之，則人貴而物賤，自天地而觀之，果孰貴而孰賤耶? ... 其食乎物者，可謂泰矣，而物獨不可食於人耶?” See Qian Jibo 錢基博. *Mingdai Wenxue* 明代文學, (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1999), 11.

When watching down from the perspective up above,

下觀生物息，

All living beings breathe to each other

相吹等蚊蚋。

the same breath as the mosquitoes and blackflies.<sup>25</sup>

Echoing the “Enjoyment in Untroubled Ease” (逍遙遊) by Zhuangzi 莊子, Su Shi’s poem identifies a divine existence from above that equalizes every living organism;<sup>26</sup> this unfathomable divinity, to whom humans exist in the same way as the mosquitoes, notably disavows human superiority.

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<sup>25</sup> See Su Shi 蘇軾. *Sushi Shiji: Di Qi Juan* 蘇軾詩集: 第7卷, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982), 29. Su Shi’s fervent interest in Daoism has been marked by both his contemporaries and himself. One of his confidants, Huang Tingjian 黃庭堅 (1045-1105), once noted that “Dongpo was attracted to ‘techniques of the Way’ throughout his life”; Su Shi also stated that he had been fascinated with the Dao since childhood, and only because of the pressure from his father and brother that he was trapped in the secular officialdom (軾韶齏好道，本不欲婚宦，為父兄強，一落世網). It is also worth noting that Su’s passion about Daoism was by no means alone during his time. Daoist philosophy and practice enjoyed general popularity among the literati in Song dynasty largely because of the Emperors’ advocacy. See Baldrian Hussein Farzeen. “Taoist Beliefs in Literary Circles of the Sung Dynasty - Su Shi (1037-1101) and His Techniques of Survival”, *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie*, vol. 9, 1996, pp. 15-53.

<sup>26</sup> The wording of “breath” (息) and “breathe to each other” (相吹) clearly invokes the passage by Zhuangzi: “(But similar to this is the movement of the breezes which we call) the horses of the fields, of the dust (which quivers in the sunbeams), and of living things as they are blown against one another by the air.” (野馬也，塵埃也，生物之以息相吹也。) It describes the world viewed by the imagined creature *Peng* 鵬 (which stands for the Daoist ideal of free will, and possibly, the Way itself) when hovering thousands of miles up in the sky. See Li Mian 李勉. *Zhuangzi Zonglun ji Fenpian Pingzhu* 莊子總論及分篇評註, (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1990), 37.

Hence, instead of interfering, humans ought to be humble and learn how to conform to the flow of nature. Just as Laozi exhorts the king to suppress his all-too-human desires through the metaphor of the “uncarved wood”,<sup>27</sup> the “undisturbed mosquitoes” found in numerous poetic verses seems to serve a similar purpose. In a poem titled “After the Rain” (雨後) by another Song poet, Shu Bangzuo 舒邦佐 (1137-1214), the author suggests:

No need to expel the mosquitoes and flies,	蠅蚊不須驅，
They disappear naturally when the time comes.	時至自退藏。
When a leaf of Wutong falls suddenly,	琤然一葉下，
Its demise suggests the coming of autumn. <sup>28</sup>	梧桐隕秋黃。

As the falling leaf harbingers seasonal change, the undisturbed nature will take care of the annoying mosquitoes at the appropriate time. Shu’s poem thus demonstrates a mutually benefited situation between human and nature that corresponds to the primordial unity in Daoist ideal.

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<sup>27</sup> *Dao De Jing* (chap 37) writes: “The Dao (Way) is constantly without name. If marquises and kings can maintain it, then the ten thousand things change by themselves. That which changes and then desires to take action I will subdue with the nameless, uncarved wood. If it is subdued with the nameless, uncarved wood, only then will it be blameless. By being blameless, there will be tranquility (道常無為而無不為。侯王若能守之，萬物將自化。化而欲作，吾將鎮之以無名之樸。鎮之以無名之樸，夫將不欲。不欲以靜，天下將自正。)。 See Moeller, Hans-Georg. *The Philosophy of the Daodejing*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 66.

<sup>28</sup> Fu Xuancong 傅璇琮. *Quan Song Shi: Di Sishi qi Juan* 全宋詩：第 47 卷.

This interconnected and reciprocal relationship with the natural world is also indicated in a poem by Fan Chengda 範成大 (1126-1193), whose assigned postings in southwestern China urged him to deal with the situation of rampant mosquitoes:

The tactics of war should not be aroused by a mosquito,                    心兵休為一蚊動，  
But the techniques of art can be derived from the lonely                句法卻從孤雁來。  
wild goose.<sup>29</sup>

While being plagued by mosquitoes, Fan managed to internalize his violence into the driving force for artistic creation. The nature that is maintained in its original way of being accomplished his poetry as a return.

Nevertheless, Fan's suppressed intent of killing was not only assisted by Daoist teachings. As is shown in his another poem, Fan was also enlightened by the Buddhist wisdom:

By squashing the lice nature's movement is disturbed,                    捫虱天機動，

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<sup>29</sup> Fan Chengda 範成大. *Fan Shiju Ji* 範石湖集, (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2006), 291.

By expelling the mosquitoes my suffering *form* is born.<sup>30</sup>

驅蚊我相生。

The “form” (*xiang* 相) apparently refers to the Buddhist notion to which our pain and happiness are attached. It constitutes the source of all the sufferings paradoxically filled up by ourselves.<sup>31</sup> Hence, expelling the mosquitoes does not count for the end of anguish, but quite contrarily generates the very origin of it. Extinguishing the impulse of killing, in this sense, contributes to one’s detachment of the form, and possibly, the achievement of Buddhahood.<sup>32</sup>

As an anecdote recorded in one of the Buddhist hagiographies reveals, an ordeal

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<sup>30</sup> Fu Xuancong 傅璇琮. *Quan Song Shi: Di Shijiu Juan* 全宋詩：第 19 卷. The influence of Buddhism to Fan Chengda can be traced to his early youth when he pursued studies at the Jianyan Monastery 薦嚴寺 in Kunshan 昆山. As J. D. Schmidt noted, much of Fan’s finest poetry might have been inspired by his lifelong Buddhist faith, which also provided him with consolation during the prolonged illness later in his life. See Schmidt, J. D. *Stone Lake: The Poetry of Fan Chengda 1126-1193*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

<sup>31</sup> According to Mahāyāna Buddhism, *xiang* is a fake-self constructed and clutched on by our physical/mental desires. As the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* 圓覺經 explains at the beginning pages: “(we) mistakenly recognized the four physical *xiang* (bone, hair, nail, and muscle), and six mental *xiang* (color, sound, smell, taste, touch, and reason) as our true selves (妄認四大為自身相，六塵緣影為自心相者也).” See Mingzhuang Fashi 明奘法師. *Yuanjuejing Jiangji* 圓覺經講記, (Taipei: Wushi tushu zongjingxiao, 2010), 32.

<sup>32</sup> The *Diamond Sutra* 金剛經 writes: “Detached from all the *forms*, named all the Buddhas” (離一切諸相，即名諸佛), and “all the *forms* are void and absurd. When you see *form* as non-existent, you can see the Buddha” (凡所有相，皆是虛妄，若見諸相非相，則見如來). See Nanhuaijin 南懷瑾. *Nanhuaijin Xuanji* 南懷瑾選集, (Fudan daxue chubanshe, 2003), 164-9.



through mosquitoes might have led to a monk's Buddha-being:

Senzang, born in Xihe, fed himself to the mosquitoes in the bushes during summer. He had been chanting Amitabha for twenty years, and intended to cultivate himself in peace through daily routines. The light of Buddha shone on his sickbed all of a sudden.<sup>33</sup>

But apart from the somewhat other-worldly Buddhist enlightenment, the key for the Buddhist-mosquitoes to affect the secular Confucianism might be the idea of “kindness” (*shan* 善). As a passage from the Huayan School of Buddhism teaches:

Generally speaking, there are three ranks of kindness as well as evilness. Take the example of killing - killing a man is most evil, animals moderate, mosquitoes and gadflies the least. Refraining from killing is the opposite. Not killing a man shows the least kindness, mosquitoes and gadflies the highest.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> “僧藏。西河人。夏月在草間餵蚊。念阿彌陀佛二十年許。飲食行坐志在安養。忽於病中見化佛光照其身。” See Zhipan 志磐. *Fozu Tongji* 佛祖統紀, (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1995).

<sup>34</sup> “泛說善惡皆有三品。三位明之。一約境。且如殺生。殺人為上。殺畜為中。蚊蚋為下。不殺反此。不殺人為下。不殺蚊蚋為上。” See Zong Mi 宗密. *Yuanren Lun* 華嚴原人論 (*On the Origin of Humanity*), ed. Li Jinquan 李錦全, (Gaoxiong: Foguang chubanshe, 1996).

Kindness, characterized with an empathetic feeling towards other beings, is also related to the Confucian notion of benevolence, which is considered as an important indicator of the sage-ruler. Therefore, the Buddhist-mosquito that can cultivate a kind/benevolent heart became a helpful acolyte along with Daoism in balancing Confucian hostility towards nature.

The coupling of Buddhism with Confucian doctrines to govern human activity is evidently shown in the poem, “Written Thoughts in Mid-Autumn” (仲秋書事), composed by the scholar-official Lu You 陸遊 (1125-1210):

Self-reflection should be thoroughly done	省身要似晨通發，
like combing the hair in the morning,	
Refraining from the act of killing	止殺先從暮拍蚊。
should start with the mosquitoes at nightfall. <sup>35</sup>	

By paralleling Confucius’s teaching on “self-examination” 省身<sup>36</sup> with the Buddhist’s remonstrance against killing, the let-live mosquitoes in Lu’s poem confirms the auxiliary

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<sup>35</sup> See Qian Zhonglian 錢仲聯. *Jiannan Shigao Jiaozhu: Di Ba Juan* 劍南詩稿校註：第 8 卷, (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1985).

<sup>36</sup> See Analects (1.4): “The philosopher Zeng said, ‘I daily examine myself on three points’” (曾子曰：“吾日三省吾身”). Lau, D. C., trans. *Confucius: The Analects*.

effect from the Buddhist creeds in Chinese imperial court.<sup>37</sup> The literary representation of mosquitoes in classical Chinese poetry, while constantly being recruited under the Confucian rule to convey moral lessons, was also secured by the assimilated Daoist and Buddhist philosophy from being crushed by human self-interests. The poetic embodiment of the mosquitoes scattered throughout Chinese anthologies therefore epitomizes a softened governance over nature's nuisance and human behavior in Confucian China, which aims to preserve a harmonious relationship between human beings and nature. In this sense, the crumbling of the mosquito-poetry in 20<sup>th</sup> century China was fundamentally a result of the internal collapsing of the Confucian moral philosophy and world order when confronted with Western modernity. As I will show in the next chapter, the rise of the scientific portrayal of mosquito as a disease-carrier at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century discredited the past literary tradition, and accompanied with which, a transformed view of the appropriate management over nature and human society also came to light.

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<sup>37</sup> While the Song dynasty experienced frequent interactions and integrations of the three religions (namely, Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism), Buddhism as an auxiliary philosophy to Confucian doctrines might reflect a more faithful picture, which is exemplified by Lu You's case. As Lu once noted in the colophon of *The Recorded Response from Master Xiao* (《跋曉師顯應錄》), the function of Buddhist teachings was considered by him with the same end of moral cultivation: "tempting people with the promise of good fortune, and frightening them with the fear of punishment [...] Just as the social rules of this-worldly life can instill moral principles in people, which have led to the peaceful reigns of Tangyao and Yushun 誘之以福根, 懼之以禍罰 ... 譬之世法, 道德風化, 固足坐致唐虞三代之治矣." See Wu Lianqun 伍連群. "On Lu You's Buddhist Thoughts" 論陸遊的佛教思想. *Chuanshan Journal* 船山學刊, 2.64, (2007): 132-134.

## Chapter Two

### Constructing the Public Threat: The Rise of Diseased Mosquito and Sprouting Modernity of *Weisheng* in Early Twentieth Century China

#### Introduction

In 1899, the *New Knowledge Newspaper* (*Xinzhi Bao* 新知報) reported a recent medical discovery in Hong Kong, noting that “the doctors had found mosquitoes were most likely to transfer diseases to human beings.”<sup>38</sup> This piece of news marks the beginning of a new recognition of mosquitoes as disease-vectors for the Chinese, following which, the scientific portrayals of infectious mosquitoes burgeoned in the public sphere.

A close investigation of the scientific literature published from late imperial to Republican period reveals an entangled transformation of the Chinese concept of *weisheng* 衛生 along with the converted perception of mosquitoes, through which *weisheng* acquired a preventive focus and public significance when mosquitoes were viewed as a threat to the entire Chinese race. In this sense, the booming image of the diseased mosquitoes not only demonstrates, but essentially facilitates the modernization of *weisheng* in achieving the goal of “hygienic modernity”, which marries up individual efforts and

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<sup>38</sup> “蚊能傳病” (The Mosquitoes Can Spread Disease). *Xinzhi Bao* 新知報 (*New Knowledge Newspaper*), 92 (1899): 22.

state-sponsored institutions in governing health as a collective interest.

However, as the scientific representation of mosquitoes kept increasing, its literary counterpart carried with traditional moral values still secured a firm position in the cultural arena during the Republican era. By analyzing the contesting voices of the mosquitoes in light of the failed mobilization of anti-mosquito campaigns in 1920s and 1930s, this chapter will explore how the pursuit of “hygienic modernity”, while having taken an initial step, remained incomplete in the first half of 20<sup>th</sup> century China.

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By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, China was at the threshold of change. It is reflected from even the smallest aspect of how one should reconsider the matter of getting along with the mosquitoes. Accompanied with frequent reports on fire disasters due to the unattended burning of mosquito-incense,<sup>39</sup> an increasing number of articles started to introduce newly developed methods from the West in expelling this annoying creature.

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<sup>39</sup> See, for example, a news piece found in 1884 *Zilin Hubao* 字林滬報, titled as “Fire Disaster Resulted from the Burning of Mosquito-incense” (薰蚊失火); and earlier in 1869 *Shanghai Xinbao* 上海新報, “In the summer, the poor family with no mosquito net often lights mosquito-incense to expel the mosquitoes, which easily incurs misfortunes (貧苦之家夏日無帳往往燃點蚊烟以為驅蚊之計此最易悞事也).”

In a passage found in *Zilin Hubao* 字林滬報 published in 1888, the effectiveness of an approach invented by the Westerners to repel the mosquitoes is praised by the author as follows:

The people from the West are especially good at the study of science 格致之學. For each animal and plant with different characteristics, they all observe their physical nature 物性. Take the example of expelling the mosquitoes, which is rather ingenious. They put some camphor in a tin plate with a pale fire underneath. When the smell starts to diffuse, the mosquitoes will naturally hide away.<sup>40</sup>

It should be noted that this “rather ingenious” method essentially differs nowhere from the burning of traditional mosquito-incense.<sup>41</sup> Nevertheless, what impressed the author in

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<sup>40</sup> “驅蚊妙法” (An Ingenious Method of Expelling Mosquitoes). *Zilin Hubao* 字林滬報, 1888. Although *Zilin Hubao* was a British-run newspaper (founded by Frederic Henry Baifovr in 1882), the content of which was mainly selected and organized by two Chinese editors, Cai Erkang 蔡爾康 and Dai Pusheng 戴譜生, to appeal to the Chinese audience and make profits. In this sense, *Zilin Hubao* offers a window to probe the reception of newly introduced Western knowledges in China (even though on a limited scale). See Bai Ruihua 白瑞華. *Zhongguo jindai baokanshi* 中國近代報刊史, (Beijing: Zhongyang bianyiju, 2015).

<sup>41</sup> The ingredients of the traditional mosquito-incense varied throughout time and space, but was mainly involved with mugwort and realgar, which were not accessible commodities for the poor. Most common anti-mosquito recipes for the ordinary Chinese consisted of random inflammable materials, such as sawdust and straw papers, and the burning of which, even if under good control, was harmful to one’s respiratory system. See “The Study of *Weisheng*: On the Mosquito-repellent Plants” (衛生學: 除蚊植物有關於衛生說). *Henan Baihua Kexuebao* 河南白話科學報 (*Henan Vernacular Science Newspaper*), 66 (1909): 4.

particular was the scientific inquiry conducted by the Westerners to generate a valid technique in dealing with nature's nuisance. The seemingly insignificant device of the mosquito-repellent therefore showcases the technological prowess of Western science, which, for the late Qing Chinese, is most likely reminiscent with the military might of the Western gunboats that granted them wealth and power.

Indeed, the quick appreciation of Western science by the Chinese literati since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century was largely resulted from the successive defeats in the two Opium Wars.<sup>42</sup> The early promotion of scientific learnings thus was engaged with a desire of applying the instrumental value of modern science to strengthen China's military force rather than making enquiries about mathematical theorems and logical reasoning. As the above passage reveals, the Chinese elites at this time were more fascinated with the practical result generated by employing the biochemical knowledge than the scientific methodology with which such knowledge was derived.

Nevertheless, the spreading words on the technological potency of science gradually challenged the fundamental structure of traditional knowledge as it implicitly imported facts and certainty from outside. In an 1890 article also published in *Zilin Hubao*, the author,

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<sup>42</sup> See Wright, David. "The Translation of Modern Western Science in Nineteenth-Century China, 1840-1895". *Isis*, 89. 4, (1998): 653–673.

after denoting the untreated breeding places of mosquitoes in the surrounding bushes and puddles, remarked poignantly:

I do not know the logic of preventing the trouble 防患之理, while merely seeking the method of evading from the disturbance 避擾之法. It is as if cutting the edges while leaving the core intact; seeing one aspect while missing out others. The further one tries to evade, the more disturbance one is bringing on 愈避愈擾.<sup>43</sup>

Here, the author's reflection on the mosquito-expelling method demonstrates that the critique on the received knowledge in traditional China targeted no more on the technological aspect, but on its deep-down logic. Apparently, a "preventive" approach was favored over an "evasive" one in dealing with mosquitoes' harassment and maintaining one's well-being. This newly emerged "preventive mentality", which went beyond the framework of conventions, manifests the impact of the West in reformulating China's perception of and strategies against the menace from the outside.

After China's debacle in the Sino-Japanese War in 1895, the lack of confidence in the Chinese past became more evident. Accompanied with the fierce interrogation on Confucian doctrine's capability of safeguarding China, learning from the West was

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<sup>43</sup> “避蚊說” (On Evading the Mosquitoes). *Zilin Hubao* 字林滬報, 1890.



increasingly implicated with a modernizing initiative in breaking away from the Confucian moral orders, upon which the political structure was established.

The transmission of knowledge on natural science was thus wedded with the Western concepts on civilization and social improvement, and, in the case of mosquitoes, the updated mosquito-elimination techniques began to be associated with the benefits of a reformed social reality.

The earliest bridging of science and social welfare in regard to mosquito prevention was attributed to the missionary, Young John Allen (also known as Lin Lezhi 林樂知), whose article published in one issue of *Wanguo Gongbao* 萬國公報 (*A Review of Times*) in 1897 not only assigned the mosquito as a crucial agent in the inauguration of China's modernizing cause, but also directed our attention to the Chinese phrase *weisheng* 衛生, which likewise lay at the crossroads of tradition and modernity:

The Master of Huainan 淮南子 said that mosquitoes and gadflies prick human skin, which leads to a disturbed mind 性不能平 [...] However, dealing with them after their being brought to life is not as good as eliminating them in advance [...] A newspaper from the West noted that [if people] drop kerosene into the water, it would generate a natural folium on the surface, whereby the mosquito eggs would never be hatched [...] Compared with the price of making mosquito nets

for every citizen 合城人盡制蚊癘, how much would that cost? Apart from *weisheng*, it also offers a way of managing finance 理財之道.<sup>44</sup>

The idea of *weisheng*, as is derived from the Daoist canons, has been generally equated with the principles of nourishing life in premodern China.<sup>45</sup> In this sense, the quotation from the Daoist master at the beginning of this passage, while indicating that the notion of *weisheng* was still merged with its Daoist origin, also helps to subtly couch Allen's promotion of new learning through the local language.

As a missionary in late Qing China, Allen's enterprise of preaching, ironically, was more successful in spreading the truths found in nature than those in the Bible. His avid translation of concurrent scientific theories in the West through *Wanguo Gongbao* made him a close associate with the Reformists in designing the future of China during the last days of Qing.<sup>46</sup> The connection between Allen and the reform-minded intellectuals

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<sup>44</sup> Allen, Y. J. "A Fine Method in Expelling the Mosquitoes" (辟蚊妙法). *Wanguo Gongbao* 萬國公報 (*A Review of Times*), 102 (1897).

<sup>45</sup> By the time of the late imperial China, *weisheng* gained a particular focus on the adjustment of *qi* (vital energy) inside one's body in accordance with the cosmological movement. As Rogaski noted, the aim of *weisheng* by then was to avoid both physical weariness (such as excessive labor and inordinate diet) and mental depletion (through the expression of emotion and care), which were believed to cause disturbance of *qi*. See Rogaski, Ruth. *Hygienic Modernity: Meanings of Health and Diseases in Treaty-Port China*. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: California University Press, 2004): 44-7.

<sup>46</sup> Scholars have noted *Wanguo Gongbao* as a major influence for the leading Reformists, Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao, whose later advice for Emperor Guangxu (1871-1908) in establishing

therefore leads us to notice that the “new learning” he is upholding here does not stop at an advanced method in dealing with the mosquitoes - it also denotes the social benefits that ensued, which is reflected partly from the idea of *weisheng*.

Noticeably, in Allen’s writing, *weisheng* as a result of applying the preventive elimination of mosquitoes was paralleled with an economic gain of the government. In this sense, the notion of *weisheng* has acquired new connotations besides the practice of self-beneficial routines that preserves health. A sprouting modernity in this phrase, featured with a preventive focus and public significance, started to emerge.<sup>47</sup>

Nonetheless, *weisheng* at this point was still attached with the past. While starting to

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constitutionalism in China was largely derived from this newspaper. See Zheng Lian’gen 鄭連根. *Naxie huoque zai jindai zhongguo de xiyang chuanjiaoshi* 那些活躍在近代中國的西洋傳教士 (*The Active Missionaries in Early Modern China*), (Beijing: Xinrui wenchuang chubanshe, 2011), 178-180. Interestingly, due to the popularity of *Wanguo Gongbao*, Kang and Liang themselves also founded a newspaper with the same name in 1895, and later changed to *Zhongwai Jiwen* 中外紀聞 (literally, *The Recorded News from China and Without*).

<sup>47</sup> There have been disputes on when and how the modern connotations in *weisheng* began to develop in China. Although the earliest connection between *weisheng* and modern science was through the translations on chemical knowledge by John Fryer in the late 1870s (through a compiled work titled as *Huaxue weisheng lun* 化學衛生論), Elman has shown that after 1890s, China were less reliant upon the missionary informants and translated numerous works in the natural and social sciences from Japanese into Chinese. The Japanese science textbooks even became the models for China after the Sino-Japanese War. Especially, with respect to theories on public health, current scholarship has largely agreed on Japan as the major source. See Benjamin Elman. *A Cultural History of Modern Science in China*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008): 172.

be aligned with social welfare, *weisheng* after all, conformed to the Daoist regimen, which ultimately aimed at reverting back to an undisturbed origin (i.e. the primordial Way). The violence contained in the preventive-extinction of the mosquitoes therefore was liquidated in pursuit of the spiritual peace; and *weisheng*, as a practice and desired result that maintains one's well-being, was essentially dissociated with radical transformations of one's surrounding so as to protect life.

It is in this sense that the portrayal of mosquitoes as disease-carriers a few years later in 1899 became an important trigger in rendering *weisheng* its new meaning, in particular, the modern preventive focus, as more aggressive and urgent. Considering the socio-political situation in the last years of Qing's reign, when rampant epidemics along with incessant Western invasions threw the lives of the Chinese into the all-time unpredictable danger, an article that revealed the deadly nature of mosquitoes spoke to China in a timely manner:

The *London Science Newspaper* noted that the mosquitoes [could transfer] poison to human beings. They have led to sickness and even death when the treatment failed. Hence, for those who were concerned about *weisheng*, none of them were not appalled by the mosquitoes 講衛生者，莫不畏之。<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> “Mosquito Elimination Method” (除蚊蟲法). *Nonggongshangbao* 農工商報 (*Agro-Industrial-Commerce Newspaper*), 31 (1908): 43.

What is implied in *weisheng* here has notably departed from the previous goal of keeping the mind and body at peace, instead, it sends out an unmistakable message for one to “guard life” in face of a fatal threat. The fright caused by the pathogenic mosquitoes is verified by a substantial number of scientific studies introduced to China on mosquito eradication and malaria cure in the next decade; but what is also noteworthy here is the scope of this fright pinpointed by the phrase “none of them were not” 莫不, which implies not only an all-inclusiveness of this perceivable danger, but also a shared mentality among the possible victims.

This jointed concern in regard to the fate of China, prompted by the fatality of mosquitoes and a new meaning of *weisheng*, came hand in hand with the Social Darwinian precepts that preached the “survival of the fittest race”. Under the surge of evolutionism in early 20<sup>th</sup> century China, the necessity of eliminating the infectious mosquitoes was extensively publicized in line with the purposes of racial competition and social progress.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> The period from around 1903 until 1915 was the time when the Chinese identified “racial evolution” in terms of a struggle for survival among nations, and for this very reason, medical input was particularly emphasized. As Bridie Andrews noted: “Beginning around 1908, contributors to the medical periodical press frequently couched their appeals for the promotion of medical studies, as well as the introduction of sanitary measures and legislation, in terms of promoting national and racial survival in the face of Western imperialist expansion.” See Andrews, Bridie. *The Making of Modern Chinese Medicine, 1850-1960*. (Vancouver & Toronto: UBC Press, 2014): 94.

As early as 1906, articles popularizing evolutionary theory began to associate the harm of mosquitoes with China's stagnant social condition.<sup>50</sup> Along this same line, a few years later in 1912, a more explicit note on mosquito eradication and public welfare was carried in an article published in the magazine named *Progress*:

The rat and mosquito appear to be small creatures; nonetheless, they are closely related to public health<sup>51</sup> (*gonggong weisheng* 公共衛生), which is taken notice by all the civilized countries 文明國 [...] Those who assume local responsibilities and represent the people should also consider (the eradication of mosquitoes) as extremely important for the cause of public health.<sup>52</sup>

This short paragraph markedly expanded the range of *weisheng* into the public sphere. Decorated with the phrase “gonggong” (public) ahead, *weisheng* accentuates the conduct

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<sup>50</sup> See Ren Tingxu 任廷旭. “On the Harm of Mosquito and Fly” (論蚊蟲蒼蠅之害). *Tongxue Bao* 通學報 (*General Studies Newspaper*), 14 (1906): 410-409. Although the article itself did not specifically relate the evolutionary theory with mosquitoes, it was contained under the column called “On Why Chinese Society Does Not Evolve” (論中國社會不進化之故) in this newspaper.

<sup>51</sup> I am using the corresponding phrase “public health” in English here for “gonggong weisheng”, which refers to the sciences on preventing disease and promoting health through concerted efforts of social institutions, organizations, communities, and individuals. See Winslow, Charles-Edward Amory. “The Untilled Field of Public Health”, *Modern Medicine*, 2 (1920): 183–191.

<sup>52</sup> Tianyi 天翼. “On Eliminating the Mosquitoes” 除蟲說. *Jinbu* 進步 (*Progress*), 2.3 (1912): 60-68.

of “guarding life” as a collective interest, upon which the civility of a country is evaluated.

The recognizable competitiveness in pursuit of “civilized-ness” links the task of eliminating the mosquitoes directly with the future of China.

The rhetoric on proceeding the anti-mosquito enterprise by drawing upon the Social Darwinian tenets can be found in another article in 1913 titled as “The Competition between Humans and Mosquitoes” (“人與蚊之競爭”), which made a more conspicuous connection between the erasure of mosquitoes and national prosperity in contemporaneous world:

Mosquitoes are the enemies of mankind. Their harm to the society is beyond description. I once read the history of Europe and Africa, and learned that the reason why people living there are better-off now than in the past is due partly to the eradication of mosquitoes [...] If *everyone* could assume the responsibility of wiping out the mosquitoes, then it will not be a difficult task to accomplish [...] This is indeed an urgent business at present, which is earnestly advised by people who study public health 衛生學者 on its contribution to the society.<sup>53</sup>

Apart from an outright racial detestation against the mosquitoes to stimulate people’s

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<sup>53</sup> Dai Zhiqian 戴志騫. “The Competition between Man and Mosquito” (人與蚊之競爭). *Yuehansheng* 約翰聲, 24.4. (1913): 4-10.

fervor in eliminating such pest, what intrigues our attention here is the author's emphasis on each individual's duty in the cause of public health. Unlike the 1912 piece, which expected the administrative work to be carried out by local elites and governmental officials, this 1913 piece underlined that wiping out the mosquitoes should be a responsibility assumed by every citizen.

In fact, it was precisely this same kind of bottom-up effort that was entrusted as the major force in the anti-mosquito campaigns throughout the Republican period. As I will show in this chapter later, the hope for citizens' active participation in the health campaigns was shattered with people's overall reluctance in conforming to the routines and regulations for pest-prevention. The failed anti-mosquito campaigns during the Republican era embodies one aspect of the unsolidified "hygienic modernity": in the mind of the ordinary Chinese, *weisheng* remained as a (trivial) personal concern distanced from the public sphere.

But before digging into the general populace of China in 20<sup>th</sup> century, we may dwell a little longer with the elites. If we agree that the evolved public-ness in the idea of *weisheng* was indebted to the social theories imported from the West, the sprout of modernity in *weisheng* may also have suffered from a local resistance against Western cultural assimilation. The notable principles of "natural selection" and "survival of the fittest" championed by Social Darwinism, as is pointed out by earlier scholars, fundamentally



contrast with Confucian moral philosophy centered on benevolence and propriety.<sup>54</sup> In fact, the law of the jungle presents an ethical paradox, in which brutality towards others was justified as righteous for one's own survival. This cult of power, instigated by the Darwinian precepts and the materialistic view of Western science, encountered continuous denouncement from Chinese intelligentsia, and reaching a peak when the detrimental aftermath of the First World War began to surface.<sup>55</sup>

As the feeling of moral decay in China intensified, a re-emphasis on the ethical values became a pressing need. The literary portrayal of mosquitoes was again employed to assert the traditional moral principles. Against the advertising of mosquito-elimination with an evolutionary accent, critiques on the endorsement of the Darwinian theory with the trope of mosquitoes made an assertive interjection in early Republican China.

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<sup>54</sup> See Xu, Jilin. "Social Darwinism in Modern China." *Journal of Modern Chinese History*, 6. 2 (2012): 182-197.

<sup>55</sup> Notably, after the 1911 revolution, Sun Yat-sen swiftly abandoned his appreciation of Social Darwinian theory, claiming which as a "barbaric form of learning"; Yan Fu, who firstly introduced the Darwinian theory to China, also lost his enthusiasm and wrote in 1913 that the bloodshed of World War I demonstrate nothing of value in the evolutionary progress but all come down to four words: selfishness, slaughter, shamelessness, and corruption; Liang Qichao likewise, in his influential record of travel impressions of Europe related a feeling of disillusionment expressed by the Europeans themselves, who reckoned the War as a proof of the bankruptcy of the West and a spiritual decadence led by the mechanistic assumption underlying modern science. Liang's notes on the post-War Europe contrasted what he fervently endorsed earlier in *Xin Min Shuo* 新民說, in which competition and strength aided by the study of modern science were emphasized. See Spence, Jonathan. *The Search for Modern China*. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1990): 302; Elman. *A Cultural History of Modern Science in China*, 224.

As is demonstrated in an article published in 1916, the author noted:

In a world where the weak is devoured by the strong, only the powerful can feed on the powerless [...] What is more harmful than the mosquitoes are the human beings. Somebody says that “mosquitoes” 蚊 shares the same sound with “civilized” 文. He is saying that the skill of preying on others 吮人之術 is a requirement for every civilized country.<sup>56</sup>

The irony here is not only that the “civilized” is certified by a bloodsucking quality, but also China’s involvement in the “civilized” world owing to its predatory finesse developed in the past millennia.

The similarly satirical tone can be identified in another piece found in 1918, entitled “Reflections on ‘In Defense of Mosquitoes’ by Fang Xiaoru” 讀方孝孺蚊對書後:

Right now, the entire country is engulfed in civil war. [The warlords along with the Western aggressors] will follow the law of the jungle 施其弱肉強食之伎倆

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<sup>56</sup> Li Hongchou 李鴻籌. “On Mosquitoes” 說蚊. *Funv Zazhi* 婦女雜誌 (*Women’s Magazine*), 2.5 (1916): 12-13.

and make inroads on our compatriots. Alas! How I wish those rebels to be punctured by mosquitoes every second so as to be awakened from the illusive dreams led on by greediness and foolishness. The mosquitoes puncturing human skin offers an alarm, not a harm.<sup>57</sup>

This article draws on the argument made by the Ming essayist, Fang Xiaoru, to insinuate the crimes convicted by the ruling party rather than those by the mosquitoes. The author's alliance with these bloodsucking creatures pinpoints the severer social problematics in the early Republic, which by the same token, reveals that the literary portrayal of mosquitoes was still a reserved literary device in addressing the ideal rule of China.

Hence, along with the commentaries on China's socio-political situation, the traditional metaphor of mosquitoes also appeared in poetries among numerous publications. In one of the poems published in 1919, the poet rendered a comprehensive image of the corrupt mosquito-bureaucrats in accordance with the established literary tradition:

Born with an obsequious nature,  
Trumpeting at people's presence.

生就趨炎性，  
逢人便欲鳴。

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<sup>57</sup> Ma Xiao'an 馬孝安. "Reflections on the 'In Defense of Mosquitoes' by Fang Xiaoru" 讀方孝孺蚊對書後. *Fu Dan* 復旦, 1.5 (1918): 51-52.

With your opportunistic beak,	鈎營憑利口，
Blocking the streets at nightfall.	昏暮逞橫行。
Regardless of the rich and the poor,	何暇瘠肥擇，
You compete for blood and grease.	但知膏血爭。
Once the autumn wind arrives,	西風一朝至，
I cannot help but moan at your	嘆爾若為情。
disappearance. <sup>58</sup>	

Underpinning moral deterioration, the poem locates a specific critique on the prevalence of Darwinian logic with the word “compete”. The ruthless competition among nations as is compared with that of the mosquitoes’ seeking of blood is deplored by the poet, who eagerly anticipated the change of time.

Nevertheless, it is worth noting that, while presenting an overall detestation towards the mosquitoes/ruling party, the poem ends with a lament, which, however involuntary, betrays the poet’s sympathetic feeling towards the mosquitoes in face of an impending doom. Once again, this poem displays the softened governance in Confucian political philosophy, whose interference with social deficiencies is settled on a symbolic gesture of moral exhortation.

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<sup>58</sup> Nao Seng 惱僧. “Mosquitoes” 蚊. *Shuanglin Zhoukan 雙林周刊 (Shuanglin Weekly)*, 2.3 (1919): 3.

While similar mosquito-poetries can be identified throughout the Republican era, more diversified literary representations of the mosquitoes also came onto the scene. These literary images of mosquitoes, by calling on the traditional values in Confucian, Daoist, and Buddhist philosophies, seem to serve a purpose not constrained by the exertion of moral values, but defending the entire Chinese cultural heritage.<sup>59</sup>

Among these assorted mosquito portraits, some of them with a specific reference to *weisheng* was intriguing. In an article published in 1924, for example, titled “An Admonishment for My Friend on Not Hurting Mosquitoes, Flies, Louse, and Bedbugs”, the author noted:

For the prospect of the cause of public health<sup>60</sup> 為衛生前途計求, the action of expelling the mosquitoes is justified [...] I personally believe that even though

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<sup>59</sup> The assorted representations of mosquito in the Republican period deserves a more extensive study beyond the scope of current research. One possible direction is to align those varied voices (through mosquito) with the spirit of the 1920s “Rectifying National Studies Movement” 整理國故運動 and the protest against the “Abolishing Chinese Medicine Case” 廢止中醫案 in 1929, both of which were aimed at opposing the westernizing tendencies of Chinese culture. See Unschuld, P. U. *Medicine in China: A History of Ideas*. (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2010).

<sup>60</sup> I will use “public health” in reference to *weisheng* from now on as the remaining discussion centralizes on the evolved public awareness in this Chinese phrase. However, in regard to specific cases of *weisheng* movements 衛生運動, I will use “hygienic/health campaign” as the standard translation used in extant scholarship.

mosquitoes are small insects, they are endowed with a same Buddha nature. They desire life and fear death in the same way as the human beings. I hope [that] you can let go of [the mosquitoes] with a kind heart.<sup>61</sup>

Instead of reading it simply as a Buddhist sermon on dissuading kill, this passage requires an extra note in regard to the time of its publication. As historical records show, starting from 1922, coverage on the proceeding of anti-mosquito campaigns became noticeable in newspapers and magazines.<sup>62</sup> In light of this, the “cause of public health” here might be a reference to the campaigns against mosquitoes, to which the non-killing attitude couched in a Buddhist overtone might reflect a non-cooperative stance.

Among the scarce sources on people’s response to the health campaigns in the 1920s, we can identify an article published in 1923, which noted that the anti-mosquito-and-fly

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<sup>61</sup> Hei’an 嘿庵. “An Admonishment for My Friend on Not Hurting Mosquitoes, Flies, Louse, and Bedbugs” 勸某友勿傷蚊蚤蝨及罽蟲書. *Shijie Fojiao Jushilin Linkan* 世界佛教居士林林刊 (*World Buddhist Lodge*), 4 (1924): 11.

<sup>62</sup> The first mentioning of the anti-mosquito (and fly) campaign is identified in an article published in 1922: “The Eliminating-Mosquito-and-Fly Association conducted a staff meeting at the Education Assembly of Jiangsu Province [...] The anti-mosquito-and-fly campaign will be funded by the Worker’s Fundraising Bureau 工巡局 (which levies taxes from retail stores for road repair), carried out by the Police Department of Shanghai, guided by the Bureau of Insect, and assisted by each school’s publicizing work.” See “The Eliminating-Mosquito-and-Fly Association Conducted Staff Meeting” 滅除蚊蠅會開職員會, *Yiyao Zazhi* 醫藥雜誌 (*Medicine Magazine*), 5.6 (1922): 41-44. Most of the anti-pest campaigns during the Republican era followed a similar pattern, which was limited in its scale and impact because of financial shortage.

movement hailed in the Yangtze area was mainly contributed by the students.<sup>63</sup> This short description, apparently, points out the finite forces enlisted by a small group of activists, which is resonated with another 1923 article titled as “Apathy of Residents in Mosquito Prevention” published in *North-China Daily News*. The author, possibly an official of the Municipal Council of the Shanghai International Settlement, reported how the preventive work against the mosquitoes confronted resistance from the local Chinese:

In the northern and eastern districts, many foreign and Chinese houses are close to Chinese territory, where [mosquito] reduction work is made impossible by the hostility of the native authorities. In the western district, on the outskirts the operations are actively opposed by the villagers [...] In particular, observations show that the majority of householders do not interest themselves sufficiently to make a weekly inspection of their premises to search for, and abolish, breeding places.<sup>64</sup>

Apparently, the Chinese residents were hardly mobilized in conducting the scientific

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<sup>63</sup> See “A Temporary Session of the Eliminating-Mosquito-and-Fly-Association” 滅除蚊蠅會開臨時會. *Yishi Yuekan* 醫事月刊 (*Medical Affairs Monthly*), 1 (1923): 73-74: “In regard to the health campaigns, counties in Shanghai, Suzhou, Jiangning, Jintan, Taixing, etc., all have the eliminating-mosquito-and-fly association, to which the students might have made the best endeavors (關於衛生運動, 如上海蘇州江寧金壇泰興等縣, 均有為滅除蚊蠅會, 大概以學生盡力為最多。).”

<sup>64</sup> “The S. M. C. Annual Report”. *The North-China Daily News*, 1923.

prevention of mosquitoes, for which their lack of interest contributed to one of the major factors. A similar report on Chinese people's refusal to cooperate with the health campaign is found in the same newspaper in 1929, in which one of the representatives from the Health Department in the French Concession implied that the failure of the campaign also resulted from the lack of government support:

I suggest that the Municipal Council give at their first meeting the Health Department, the police against sickness, epidemics etc., full power to enter all private gardens [...] One cannot expect much cooperation from Chinese owners when it concerns cleanliness and health and it is up to the Council to take stronger measures to safeguard the health of their residents than to ask for "co-operation".<sup>65</sup>

The difficult situation faced by these early health campaigners reflects an unconsolidated authority of science in Republican China. The bottom-up defiance in the preventive work indicates how the knowledge on modern health management, and the benefits of which, had not been sufficiently distributed to interest the Chinese civilians. As scholars have observed, this is, firstly, due to the lack of a state-sponsored health care system in the Republic, which left the majority of medical practice as private-run and limited to the urban rich. Moreover, among the scarce biomedicine accessible to the

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<sup>65</sup> "Anti-Mosquito Work in French Concession". *The North-China Daily News*, 1929.



commoners, medications with a preventive focus enjoyed even less popularity compared with curative ones as the former's effects do not show immediately.<sup>66</sup> In the case of mosquito prevention, the unfamiliarity with Western medicine and disease-prevention measures was exacerbated and turned into hostility as intrusions of private residency were often required in order to enforce people's conformity with the sanitary regulations.<sup>67</sup>

This conundrum, owing to the unsolidified voice of science, also serves to explain how health campaigns during the Republic era were integrated with folk culture so as to attract people's attention. In an announcement found in a local gazetteer from Suzhou in 1922, the agenda on conducting a "Hygienic Lantern Movement" in the city proper is documented as follows:

Last month, the Suzhou Public Health Association 蘇州衛生會 along with the Anti-Mosquito-and-Fly Association 撲滅蚊蠅會 made a concerted decision on the inception of a "Hygienic Lantern Movement" 衛生燈會. On the night of May 7<sup>th</sup>, every school should select ten student representatives, who will hold mosquito and fly-shaped lanterns inscribed with hygiene knowledge, and make a public

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<sup>66</sup> See Ralph Croizier. *Traditional Medicine in Modern China: Science, Nationalism, and the Tensions of Cultural Change* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968).

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

procession around the Guanqian District.<sup>68</sup>

Marching with animal-shaped lanterns, as is required for this movement, largely resembles what has been observed in early 20<sup>th</sup> century Canton. The popular responses to epidemics among the Cantonese were engaged with large parades in the streets to expel the disease-leading demons. Participants would be dressed in animal costumes and often bear placards with words such as “drew out evil and expel pestilence.”<sup>69</sup> The parallel between the lantern movement and the evil-driven parade ironically connects the instructions on hygiene with the slogans anticipating blessings from the divine. As it turns out, science lost its articulation in the process of making compromise with the local, and the importance of public health, molded into caricature forms, was swiftly passed through and dismissed by the majority of Chinese population.

The notable popularity of this hybridized hygienic movement is indicated by its continuation after the establishment of Nationalist government in the 1930s. Even during

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<sup>68</sup> “The Hygienic Lantern Movement: A Grand Event” 衛生燈會誌盛. *Suzhou Qingnian* 蘇州青年 (*Suzhou Youth*), 11 (1922): 3-4.

<sup>69</sup> Other analogous hygienic movements that resorted to local cooperation were tried out by the YMCA (Young Man’s Christian Association) in Shanghai, which “organized public health festivals that were remarkably similar to traditional anti-epidemic processions, complete with local musicians with trumpets, cymbals, and drums, along with large banners and floats bearing huge models of fly.” See Andrews, Bridie. *The Making of Modern Chinese Medicine, 1850-1960*. (Vancouver & Toronto: UBC Press, 2014): (66).

the proceeding of the “New Life Movement” 新生活運動, when personal hygiene and discipline were given utmost importance, the anti-pest campaigns still lacked coordination from the state-sponsored institutions and heavily engaged with folk traditions.<sup>70</sup>

Admittedly, health works during the Nationalist period was significantly crippled by the financial deficit and Japanese invasion.<sup>71</sup> As a consequence, the government expected people themselves to acquire knowledge through public exhibitions and local gazetteers, and participate in the health campaigns with a voluntary spirit. It can be observed from governmental announcements on the inception of anti-pest campaigns from 1928 onwards, in which the citizens’ output comprised the primary focus, whereas the local administrative bureaus frequently expressed their inability of conducting the elimination work in public areas.<sup>72</sup> During the high time of the Anti-Japanese War in the late 1930s, mosquito

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<sup>70</sup> See, for example, the report in 1934 noted: “Like a tournament, (people were) competing for the most skillful design; flies and mosquitoes were made into the lanterns 有如賽會, 想出花樣, 蒼蠅蚊蟲, 紮成燈柵.” *Weisheng Yuekan* 衛生月刊, 4.8 (1934), 46; and in 1935: “During the New Life Hygienic Movement Week in the summer of Nanjing, a (paper-made) giant was expelling the mosquitoes and flies in a parade (首都新生活夏令衛生運動週晚有汽車大遊行圖中巨人在驅除蚊蠅).” Zhang Qin 張廬. *Tuhua Chenbao* 圖畫晨報, 165 (1935): 2.

<sup>71</sup> The Nationalist government indeed drafted a blueprint in promoting nationwide health care, but the soon erupted WWII had severely disrupted this public health agenda, especially in terms of medical education and the training of medical personnel. See Ralph Croizier. *Traditional Medicine in Modern China: Science, Nationalism, and the Tensions of Cultural Change* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968): 55.

<sup>72</sup> The government’s perfunctory efforts in the anti-mosquito campaigns can be observed in the following reports. The *Administrative Report on Public Health* 衛生行政匯報 of Nanjing in 1928: “...the local government will cooperate with the students from elementary schools in the work of wiping

prevention was further neglected; the continued announcement on the implementation of anti-mosquito campaigns seems to serve mainly as a rhetoric for people to defend the Chinese territory.<sup>73</sup>

Towards the end of the war in mid-1940s, people's languor in executing the mosquitoes was rather tangible. Compassionate petitions for this insect were expressed in various publications. Apart from drawing on Confucian ethics,<sup>74</sup> we may also observe how

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out (the mosquitoes and flies). In addition, it will offer rewards by purchasing the dead flies in the hope that all of the citizens can make combined efforts (懸賞購買死蠅以期全市民眾一致進行) Another example is offered by the 1929 *Nanchang City Government Monthly Report*: "The Bureau of Insect [...] plans to conduct pilot work in expelling and eliminating the mosquitoes and flies in the city of Nanchang, and will popularize the work to other counties when satisfactory results and people's awareness gradually emerge. The Bureau has limited funds. Its good-will is unmatched by its entrusted power (經費支絀心余力薄)."

<sup>73</sup> The Nationalist Government had been broadcasting the necessity of the Anti-Malaria work since 1933 in line with the motivation of people's participation in the Anti-Japanese War. Standard rhetoric of the time can be found in the following piece published in one issue of the *Guangji Medical Journal*: "The Japanese invade us. We surely have to resist them so that our territory can remain intact. There is one tiny creature in this world, which harasses human beings [...] We also have to resist it [...] This tiny creature is mosquito." Similar rhetoric carried on up until 1935. See Youkan 友刊 "Mosquitoes Must Be Eliminated and Prevented" 必須滅蚊與防蚊. *Guangji Yikan* 廣濟醫刊 (*Guangji Medical Journal*), 10.8 (1933): 68-73; "Anti-Malaria Work: Mosquitoes Must Be Eliminated and Prevented" 抗瘧工作：必須滅蚊與防蚊. *Huangxian Minyou* 黃縣民友, 2. 28 (1934): 5-6; "Common Knowledge on Hygiene: Anti-Malaria Work". *Zhonghua Zhoukan* 中華周刊 (*China Weekly*), 522 (1935): 5.

<sup>74</sup> See Liao Wang 遼望. "In Memorial of the Mosquito" 祭蚊. *Sanliuqiu Huabao* 三六九畫報, 11.10 (1941): 16, "Thousands of wigglers have died from the point of your death! [...] (I) cut off your descendants, which amounts to the crime of violating the principle of filial piety [...] Alas! Woe is me! You die with a broken body, and cannot be buried with a decent ceremony (萬千子子從汝而死矣! ... 使汝短嗣，以無後而不孝...天乎痛哉！使汝未全屍而死，不獲大典葬儀。)."

mosquitoes were again defended with a Buddhist concern.

In an article titled “Should We Kill Mosquitoes and Flies?” published in the magazine, *Feeling of Empathy* (覺有情 *Jueyouqing*), funded by the Buddhist community in China in 1944, the author argued:

People say that for the cause of public health and disease prevention 為衛生計, 為防疫計, we should wipe out the mosquitoes and flies [...] However, in order to avoid mosquitoes and flies’ harassment and causing diseases, we only need to remove the medium, which has invited them in the first place [...] Why bother killing?<sup>75</sup>

While the author is contending from the Buddhist anti-killing perspective, the suggested way of dealing with the mosquitoes essentially identifies a type of preventive-elimination. This mosquito removal method, which was brought to China by Young John Allen half a century ago, apparently, had not gained sufficient recognition. This article thus reveals the fact that even though the preventive and public awareness in terms of mosquito eradication and the notion of *weisheng* has been formulated and spread, the actual practice of which was hardly embodied in Chinese society.

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<sup>75</sup> Yang Zhifang 楊智芳. “Should We Kill the Mosquitoes and Flies?” 蚊蠅可殺乎. *Jueyouqing* 覺有情 (*Feeling of Empathy*), 119-120 (1944): 13.

The pleading for mosquitoes, in this sense, also marks the failed attempt in establishing the authority of modern health management, which, I argue, is resulted from a lack of mass education and distribution of medicine. The difficult situation faced by the health campaigners during the Republican era was a paradox, in which the socio-historical situation of China inhibited the establishment of a centralized government to substantiate widely accessible education and medical care, and the people as the entrusted force in the campaigns could not interest themselves in producing positive outcomes. The “hygienic modernity” in early 20<sup>th</sup> century China was thus stuck at the beginning stage when both the citizens and the state fell short of the hygienic duty on either side of the spectrum. This unconsummated modernity, along with the assorted images of mosquitoes crossing tradition with the modern, will however, experience profound changes with the coming of Communist regime in the next decade.

## Chapter Three

### The Triumph of “Science”: Biopolitical Mosquito and Maoist Health Campaigns

#### Introduction

In 1962, a Japanese medical expert and pre-war resident in China revisited this country and reported his observation: “Considerable stress was laid on eliminating the environmental conditions favorable to the breeding of [mosquitoes]. [With] the periodic clean-up of ditches and other stands of stagnant water where mosquitoes might breed [...] no doubt that the program was successful in drastically reducing the mosquito population and various accompanying epidemic diseases.”<sup>76</sup> Noticeably, this report witnessed not only an impressive prevention work conducted on eliminating mosquitoes, but also a “program” which have contributed to this achievement. The “program”, as the Japanese expert further revealed, refers to what is known as the “Four Pests Campaign” 除四害, in which mosquitoes, along with flies, rats, and sparrows, became the major targets to be eradicated on the Chinese land.

Officially launched in 1958 by the Chinese Communist Party leader, Mao Zedong, this anti-pest campaign was an intensified continuation of the “Patriotic Hygienic Campaign”

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<sup>76</sup> Wilenski, Peter. *The Delivery of Health Services in the People's Republic of China*. (Ottawa: International Development Research Centre, 1979): 18.

爱国卫生运动 triggered by the American Germ Warfare in 1952 and implemented throughout the first decade of the Communist era. As the recurrent practice of health campaigns strove to impress Chinese people with the importance of *weisheng*,<sup>77</sup> the portrayal of mosquitoes in the 1950s prevailed overwhelmingly as a scientific one, which disavowed moral significance and empathetic concern. However, if the triumph of the scientific image of mosquitoes was buttressed by the persistent operation of the health campaigns, what was it that had buttressed the mobilization of which when the first spark of anti-imperialist zeal faded away?

This chapter investigates the largely unified image of mosquitoes as disease-carriers in 1950s Communist China by revisiting the health campaigns in light of the promotion of a nationwide medical care. By comparing the health policies in Maoist China with Michel Foucault's theory on the rise of modern governmentality and biopolitical control, this chapter also explores how the dissipated portrayals of infectious mosquitoes helped to produce a sanitary and disciplined population that safeguarded health for state economy, and how the exploitation of which in Party propagandas facilitated ideological struggle, which extended the violence against nature's menace to human sphere.

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<sup>77</sup> I follow Rogaski's definition of *weisheng* during the Communist China as generally referring to "personal cleanliness, environmental sanitation, compulsory vaccinations, suspicion of insects, and the scrutiny of germs." See Rogaski, Ruth. *Hygienic Modernity: Meanings of Health and Diseases in Treaty-Port China*. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: California University Press, 2004): 285.



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In February 1952, the newly established Communist government issued a front-page editorial in *People's Daily* denouncing the American imperialists' appalling crime of launching the germ warfare in Korea and Northeast China.<sup>78</sup> Allegedly, up to thirty different types of disease-carrying insects were dropped onto the Chinese territory through bombs, among which mosquitoes were identified as one major variety.

In a news report from the affected Liaoning Province, a citizen recalled:

I saw two black objects dropped from the plane, and then, in the nearby neighborhood and field, I found piles of flies, mosquitoes, and spiders. These poisonous insects 毒虫 were identical to those found on the battleground in North Korea. Clearly, the American Devils planned to use these insects to slaughter Chinese people without shedding blood 用这些杀人不见血的东西来屠杀中国.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Rogaski. *Hygienic Modernity: Meanings of Health and Diseases in Treaty-Port China*, 293.

<sup>79</sup> "People from Andong, Fushun, Shengyang, etc. Demand Severe Punishment on American and Japanese Germ-war Criminals" (安东、抚顺、沈阳等地人民一致要求严厉惩罚美日细菌战犯), *People's Daily*, (1952): 1.

The image of mosquitoes, as this oral record demonstrates, was portrayed as a weapon for massacre. With the wording of “poisonous” and “slaughter”, the emergence of the infectious mosquitoes was paralleled with a virtual invasion of the American troops. The malicious existence of mosquitoes thus stands for an inroad made by the U.S. government, through which, the brutality of war was transported to the Chinese people within the radius of one’s neighborhood.

As a “war-agent” employed by the American aggressors, mosquito became a primary target in the mass health campaign hailed by Chairman Mao in March 1952, which mobilized the entire Chinese population to conduct sanitary activities as a combat against the American germ war.

Since then, the scientific image of mosquitoes predominated the public sphere. On the one hand, through the circulation of newspapers, exhibitions, and posters around the country, the magnified monstrosity of the infectious mosquitoes was brought to the eyes of a mass audience.<sup>80</sup> On the other hand, stories of peasants, factory workers, and ordinary citizens who were turned into the health activists after learning mosquitoes as a source of disease also crowded the press headlines.<sup>81</sup> As people from every level of the country

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<sup>80</sup> Rogaski. *Hygienic Modernity: Meanings of Health and Diseases in Treaty-Port China*, 294.

<sup>81</sup> The enthusiasm of the Chinese people in fighting against the diseased mosquitoes can be detected in the news reports of the time. In the city of Fushun in Liaoning Province, for example, “all of the peasants were devoted to killing the poisonous pests [...] From March 5 to 18, the masses had collected

actively responded to the state's call to protect their corporal bodies in the same sense as defending the nation's integrity, the "Patriotic Hygiene Campaign" seems to have finally achieved the goal of "hygienic modernity", for which the widespread image of mosquitoes as disease-vectors played a crucial part.

In this sense, the largely unified image of mosquitoes as compared with the cacophonous voices in the Republican period seems to be backed up by the Chinese Communist Party's political agenda in enlisting people's nationalist indignation against the American imperialist power, which in turn, facilitated the mobilization of the health campaigns and the consummation of "hygienic modernity".

However, the continued implementation of the health campaigns in 1950s China begs a further enquiry on Communist Party's effective mobilization beyond a nationalist drive. Admittedly, the stable social condition in the post-war period allowed people to take care of personal and domestic hygiene,<sup>82</sup> but the remarkable sanitary transformation of China within just one decade should be considered as an achievement inseparable from, if not

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more than 10,000 mosquitoes"; also in Liaoning Province, a community leader in the Fusong county after seeing the public poster which introduced the knowledge about mosquitoes transferring disease, went back to fill up the stagnant puddles in his backyard and actively propelled the masses to take part in the "Patriotic Hygienic Campaign"; in Beijing, one of the factory directors wrote to *People's Daily* reporting the workers' contribution to the health campaign by wiping out 130,000 mosquitoes, and asserted that "this is a hard counterattack against the American imperialists' germ war".

<sup>82</sup> Hesketh, T. & Wei, X. Z. "Health in China: From Mao to Market Reform". *British Medical Journal*, 314. 7093 (1997): 1544.

primarily attributed to, the Communist government's policy in promoting health care that reached the deepest area of the country.

On the First National Health Conference summoned by the Ministry of Health in 1950, two fundamental principles for the health work in Communist China were declared: first, to serve the workers, peasants, and soldiers; and second, to emphasize preventive medicine.<sup>83</sup> Soon after that, a three-tier medical system was established in the rural areas, where institutional health care had been almost non-existent. Moreover, mobile anti-epidemic units and health education on disease prevention were operated throughout the country;<sup>84</sup> school-based trainings on Western pharmaceuticals also entered the countryside and even the border areas.<sup>85</sup>

In response to (and also an essential part of) the state health policy, mass mobilization

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<sup>83</sup> Hiller, S. M. & Jewell, J. A. *Health Care and Traditional Medicine in China*. London, (Boston, Melbourne and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983): 66.

<sup>84</sup> Hiller, S. M. & Jewell, J. A. *Health Care and Traditional Medicine in China, 1800-1982*, 71.

<sup>85</sup> Fang Xiaoping. *Barefoot Doctors and Western Medicine in China*. (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2012): 12. As Wilenski has noted, the disciples in the rural areas who had received basic medical trainings during the late 1950s can be seen as the prototype of the barefoot doctors later flourished in the mid-1960s. The newly trained traditional practitioners (with the number of 52,000 by 1958) may not have been as professional but still could spread some knowledge of hygiene, cure simple diseases, and provide supportive therapy. See Wilenski. *The Delivery of Health Services in the People's Republic of China*, 35.

in the name of “Patriotic Hygiene Campaign” continued. In regard to mosquito control, people were required to conduct fairly simple tasks, such as draining the stagnant pools, filling the tree holes, and pulling out the weeds. Apart from that, the government also dispatched health cadres to help the masses unblock the sewage and fumigate the buildings with professional equipment. As a result, the mosquito-leading diseases were rapidly brought under control;<sup>86</sup> both mortality and morbidity rates had fallen significantly by the end of the 1950s.<sup>87</sup>

The success in the health work in Communist regime as compared with the conundrum faced by the campaigners in the Republican era, apparently, was indebted to the establishment of a state-sponsored medical system. The widely distributed socialist care<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Sidel, Victor. W. & Sidel, Ruth. “The Health Care Delivery System of the People’s Republic of China” in *Health by the People*. Newell, K. W. ed. (Geneva: World Health Organization, 1975): 5.

<sup>87</sup> Hiller & Jewell. *Health Care and Traditional Medicine in China, 1800-1982*, 71.

<sup>88</sup> The political rhetoric of the time had been claiming the medical policy of the Communist China as a direct product under the influence of the Soviet Union, which followed the same socialist doctrine of “medicine in service of the people”. However, the forms and functions of those medical organizations mainly followed the developmental blueprints drawn by the Nationalist government in the 1930s. Evident continuities in medical policies can be seen in the multiple level of education programs for auxiliary medical personnel and the pivotal role of the county health centers in rural medical modernization. In fact, the medical system in Communist China is by and large an inheritance and complement of what the Nationalist government had left undone, instead of an abrupt departure from it. See Gao Xi. “Foreign Models of Medicine in Twentieth-Century China” in *Medical Transitions in Twentieth-Century China*, Bridie Andrews and Mary Brown Bullock, eds. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014): 199.

not only procured physical strength of the people, but also recruited their mental conformity by demonstrating the effectiveness of science and technology. Hence, the implementation of the health campaigns was a process aided by the mutual cooperation from both the state institutions and people's own endeavors, through which the benefits of modern health management was fully recognized, and the representation of mosquitoes as disease-carriers was entrenched in the public space.

Nevertheless, the infectious mosquitoes were not merely framed in the health instructions that delivered knowledge and care, but also in the political agenda on advancing agricultural productivity in Communist China. Noticeably, from 1956 onwards, wiping out mosquitoes became one scheduled task in Party's agricultural plan,<sup>89</sup> and the urgency of which grew ever more intensive after the launching of the "Four Pests Campaign" in February 1958 under the injunction issued by the Party Central Committee and the State Council, requiring the proceeding of the anti-pest campaign in combination

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<sup>89</sup> See for example, "The Outline for National Agricultural Development from 1956 to 1967 (Draft)" (1956 到 1967 年全国农业发展纲要 (草案)) published on the second page of *People's Daily* on 26 January, 1956: "Starting from 1956, the [...] mosquitoes should be wiped out within the next five, seven, or twelve years." Similar reports that relate mosquito-elimination and agricultural/industrial production can be found in *People's Daily* in the next few years, such as "The Great Guiding Principle in Constructing the Socialist Countryside" (建设社会主义农村的伟大纲领) and "How to Make Contributions to the Development of Agriculture?" (怎样为发展农业出一份力量?) in 1957; "Different Producing Activities Should Advance Side by Side" (各项生产活动齐头并进) in 1958; "Pay Close Attention to Eliminating the Pests and Diseases in Line with Production" (结合生产抓紧除害灭病) in 1959.

with socialist construction in both urban and rural areas.<sup>90</sup>

The relation between mosquito elimination and the boost of production therefore betrays a more comprehensive scheme of the delivery of socialist care, which, by guarding health of the people, also demanded people's contributions in return. In this sense, eradicating mosquitoes became a required task not only because of the latter's detriment to human health, but also because of its curtailing China's economy.

It is for this reason that we should not ignore the commencement of the "Four Pests Campaign" coincided with the timeline of the "Great Leap Forward Movement" (1958-1960), which above all underscored China's economic breakthrough with a revolutionary spirit.<sup>91</sup>

As news articles from the Party organs have shown, the proceeding of the "Four Pests Campaign" achieved staggering results under an inflamed fervor to transform China into a socialist utopia. Through frequent reports on a gigantic number of the pest bodies collected by the masses, as well as the successive emergence of the "Four Without's" (四无, namely,

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<sup>90</sup> Wilenski. *The Delivery of Health Services in the People's Republic of China*, 8.

<sup>91</sup> Lucas, AnElissa. *Chinese Medical Modernization: Comparative Policy Continuities, 1930s-1980s*. (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1982): 105.

without the “four pests”) provinces, cities, and counties,<sup>92</sup> a conspicuous theme of “change” was underlined, comparing the social conditions under Communist regime with that of the “old society”.

In an interview conducted on the inception of the “Four Pests Campaign”, one of the people’s representatives from Zhejiang Province noted:

Before the Liberation, the Xiaoying Alley (in Hangzhou) was rife with waste waters and foul smells. Flies and mosquitoes were bustling everywhere and various diseases were sprawling. After the establishment of the People’s Government, the residents there began to struggle against the “four pests”, and from 1956 onwards,<sup>93</sup> the flies and mosquitoes were almost wiped out entirely.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> See reports from *People’s Daily*, e.g. on March 19, 1958, “Thirty-four Counties and Cities in China Have Achieved the Goal of ‘Four Without’s’” 全国 34 个县市基本实现 “四无”. Also, reports such as “Mosquito and Fly Must Not Last over the Summer” 坚决不让蚊蝇过夏天 on June 6, noted that “from April 7 to May 10, the Anhui Province has eliminated over 48,300 *jin* (24,150 kilogram) of mosquitoes; and another one published on July 15, “Guangxi Province Will Eradicate Malaria” 广西将彻底消灭疟疾, claiming that “from February to mid-June, Cenxi County has wiped out dozens of thousands of mosquitoes and their larva”.

<sup>93</sup> Although the official commencement of the “Four Pests Campaign” started in February 1958, the idea of the “four pests” was constructed as early as 1956 (see the front-page article “Eliminating the Four Pests” of *People’s Daily* published on 12 January), and the eradication of which had been a consistent goal in the health campaigns thereafter.

<sup>94</sup> “The People’s Representative is Ambitious; The National Construction is Surging Onward” (人民代表雄心勃勃, 建设高潮滚滚向前), *People’s Daily*, (1958): 1.



The image of mosquitoes, as this paragraph indicates, while continuously being understood as a biological threat, also served as an index of the transformed social reality. On the one hand, the people had developed an awareness of struggling against the pests, and on the other hand, the society assumed a new outlook under the concerted efforts made by this transformed people. In this sense, the violence against the mosquitoes manifested one crucial aspect of a modified consciousness, which eventually contributed to a modified society with the disappearance of such pest.

Notably, during the high time of the “Four Pests Campaign”, a significant weight was put on the demonstration of people’s converted attitude towards the pests, which is reflected in the following news story titled as “New Spirit” (新风气) published in September 1959:

Aunt Wang has changed. In the past, she would offer incense to the Fortune God [and] would not even smash one bedbug [...] But now, she is actively participating in the “Four Pests Campaign”, and ready to make an onslaught towards the flies and mosquitoes every minute [...] She knows the importance of hygiene. Her thought has leaped forward for more than a hundred years!<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> “New Spirit” (新风气), *People’s Daily*, (1959): 12.

Along with her discarded superstitious beliefs, Aunt Wang's self-voluntariness in killing mosquitoes verified her tremendous progress in the knowledge on hygiene and compatibility with the new society. The "Four Pests Campaign" therefore can be regarded as a reform program, through which, the gradually emerged will of eradicating the mosquitoes was implicated with a revolutionary surge featured on shaping the socialist man and building the socialist state.

However, this radical change was not entirely attributed to the revolutionary zeal in late 1950s China, but also the intensive household inspections and records reporting as the health campaigns proceeded. Historical records have shown that routines on sanitation work were specified for every individual to follow, and hygienic performances were closely monitored by the health cadres.<sup>96</sup> As a result, the practice of the health campaigns was implanted as a regular feature in people's daily life, which significantly increased the general level of "health literacy". The Chinese, eventually, was converted into a population that was docile and salubrious - a population that would make willing and adequate efforts to strive for the state's economic prosperity.

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<sup>96</sup> Examples can be found in one oral record from a citizen lived through that period: "Thursday morning is the fixed time for cleaning: the people scour the streets and their homes; cadres who work in the government usually do manual labor one day a week, often on cleanup day. There is inter-district inspection whereby a group of people from one district come in and inspect another area and criticize or exchange experiences." See Sidel, Victor W. and Sidel, Ruth. *Serve the People: Observations on Medicine in the People's Republic of China*. (New York: Josiah Macy, Jr. Foundation, 1973): 102.

The process of the health campaigns in Maoist China, which aimed for economic gain and consciousness reform, seems to invoke what Michel Foucault observed as the rise of modern governmentality in 18<sup>th</sup> century Europe. The emergence of this new technology of governance, according to Foucault, was resulted from a shifted interest from governing for obedience to that for production. The recognition of the productive value in human bodies required the distribution of knowledge and care to the governed so as to optimize their output. Hence, the modern Europe witnessed an accelerated construction of social institutions, including hospitals, mental clinics, and schools, and by the same token, an extended control over life was established, to which Foucault termed as biopower.

Through a “series of subsidiary authorities” represented by the physicians, psychiatrists, and educationalists, biopower was effectuated at every corner of the society, where the quality and quantity of human life was monitored and calculated with the aid of modern science. The manifestation of power therefore became widely disseminated, recognized, and eventually internalized in every individual’s mind as a self-constructed prison regulating one’s behavior.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Foucault termed this self-prison as the “modern soul”, which is raised into a type of consciousness that identifies a system of discipline and punishment, in which itself becomes one of the factors that effects power over the body. In other words, this “knowledgeable soul” both enables and entraps the body - “soul-ed” person is one who recognizes his/her capability, and nonetheless under proper control. See Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Alan Sheridan, trans. (New

The emergence of the biopolitical control, which is attributed to a modernized political rationality in governing human life, can be identified in 1950s China in two major aspects. On the one hand, a population with strengthened physicality and economic value was produced through the delivery of health care, and on the other hand, a transformed consciousness in achieving the goal of a clean socialist state was evolved through constant monitoring by the health workers.

Nevertheless, we have to halt a straightforward application of the Foucauldian model in understanding the power mechanism in Communist era, especially when considering the different socio-political background of 1950s China compared with that of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Europe. The crux here is the role of science played in the distribution of socialist welfare in sight of two historical facts: first, science and scientists had been considered as bourgeois imports from the West throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century China, and second, modern medical supplies had been extremely scarce during the first decade of the Communist rule. Thus, questions may be raised - what type of knowledge and treatment was involved in the socialist health care system, and how the government enabled its distribution on a national scale?

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York: Vintage Books, 1977): 21.

To answer these two questions, we should take notice of a third principle of the health policy announced on the 1950 Conference, which emphasized “uniting ‘old-style doctors’ and those trained in modern methods.”<sup>98</sup> This principle, as I will demonstrate later, served not only as a human resource strategy, but also a major propellant for the ideological struggle in Maoist China. It is this “union” between the tradition and the modern that rendered the Maoist health care with an administrative resemblance to the Foucauldian paradigm, but differed from which in the role of the Western trained doctors played in knowledge distribution and punishment infliction.

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After the Civil War in 1949, the Communist government witnessed an immediate increase in medical personnel due to the returned military doctors from the battlefield.<sup>99</sup> Nevertheless, the medical supplies were still far from enough in attending the need of a huge population haunted by epidemic diseases, especially in the rural areas. In July 1951, the Ministry of Health issued a comprehensive directive on a widespread organization of a

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<sup>98</sup> Hiller & Jewell. *Health Care and Traditional Medicine in China*, 66. The foundation of this policy can be traced back to the 1944 Yan’an Border Area Conference on Culture and Education, when Mao addressed that the modern doctors should “unite with and help reform Chinese doctors and old-style veterinarians.” See Croizier. *Traditional Medicine in Modern China*, 156.

<sup>99</sup> Fang. *Barefoot Doctors and Western Medicine in China*, 22.

type of “union clinic”, which recruited both modern and traditional doctors to provide healings in the village.<sup>100</sup> Soon after, the number of this particular kind of clinics soared throughout the country,<sup>101</sup> which established the basic form of the state medical system in China’s rural world from the early 1950s onward.<sup>102</sup>

This reorganization of the previously scattered medical resources in early Communist China proves to be rather effective in providing care to its people, not only on the physical level, but more importantly, psychological. For the rural residents, the familiar picture of the native physicians minimized their suspicion of and resistance to the new style medical practices, and eased the difficulties in communicating with the care providers.<sup>103</sup> In this sense, the traditional medical workers, as most trusted by the people, played an indispensable role in smoothing a major socio-cultural transition for the rural Chinese.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Croizier. *Traditional Medicine in Modern China: Science, Nationalism, and the Tensions of Cultural Change*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968):164.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Fang. *Barefoot Doctors and Western Medicine in China*, 25.

<sup>103</sup> In the union clinics, both modern and traditional Chinese medicine were provided. The culturally conservative peasant, who tended to avoid foreign-style doctors, can easily go to the Chinese branch of the health clinic for help. Acupuncture, for example, were frequently used for treating nervous disorders and reported as mostly effective. See Croizier. *Traditional Medicine in Modern China: Science, Nationalism, and the Tensions of Cultural Change*, 191-2.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

Precisely because of its psychotherapeutic effect, the traditional medical practice gained an authoritarian voice comparable to that of the Western medicine. The treatment on malaria, for example, was not limited to the intake of quinine, but also the use of Chinese herbs.<sup>105</sup> As the official rhetoric continued praising the effectiveness of the traditional Chinese medicine, the alternative cure on this mosquito-leading disease offers one exemplary case where learnings from other than Western sources were allowed to make an interjection, standing side by side with modern medication in governing health of China.

The credential granted to the indigenous medicine gradually developed into an outright advocacy towards the late 1950s. In line with the revolutionary fervor during the “Great Leap Forward” and the “Four Pests Campaign”, the Party issued a further ordinance requiring the craft of native Chinese therapies with accessible local resources.<sup>106</sup> The trust

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<sup>105</sup> See “The Ministry of Health of the Central People’s Government is Promoting the Use of ‘Changshan’ as a Cure for Malaria” (中央人民政府卫生部 推广应用治疟药 “常山”), *People’s Daily*, (1951): 3. “Changshan” (Antifeverile Dichroa Root) is an herb documented in the renowned medical treatise in Ming Dynasty, *Compendium of Materia Medica (Bencao Gangmu 本草纲目)*, as a cure for malaria: “Changshan and Shuqi (the sprout of Changshan) is conducive to assuaging phlegm and the symptom of malaria 常山、蜀漆有劫痰截疟之功.”

<sup>106</sup> Reportedly, 186 homespun methods and an enormous number of secret herbal remedies were collected by the people with great enthusiasm. The press of this period was replete with folk cures, reported as highly effective and having improved the collective medical service. But the practicality of those folk medicines remains suspicious. In the tadpole experiment in early 1958, for instance, almost half of the women who swallowed tadpoles for contraception ended up being pregnant. See Croizier. *Traditional Medicine in Modern China: Science, Nationalism, and the Tensions of Cultural Change*, 187; Wilenski. *The Delivery of Health Services in the People’s Republic of China*, 37.

and encouragement invested in the grassroots knowledge seem to aim at motivating people's participation in the health campaigns and raising productivity, but a close reading of some news articles reveals an additional message. In a report published in March 1958, the author noted:

In the recent "Four Pests Campaign", the Red Glow Commune in Sichuan province used the wild plant, "Bowl-Breaking Flower",<sup>107</sup> to effectively eliminate flies and mosquitoes. This is a new discovery and innovation in people's war against nature 同自然界作斗争.<sup>108</sup>

Here, "people's war against nature" caught our eye. The obvious military overtone in the wording of "war", not only echoes the recurrent theme of "Man Conquering Nature" 人定胜天 during the high time of the "Great Leap Forward", but also implies that the health campaigns as a continued reality in Communist China might be a strategy to perpetuate the warring status after the first spark offered by the American germ warfare. In this sense, the image of mosquitoes was again, indicative of a united enemy, against which

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<sup>107</sup> The name of this plant is derived from its caustic nature. According to the local peasants, they often educate their children not to pick the flower of this plant, otherwise their hands would not be able to hold up the rice-bowl.

<sup>108</sup> "Let the Poisonous Plant Serve the Humankind" (让毒草为人类服务), *People's Daily*, (1958): 7.



the masses' own resourcefulness constituted an essential weapon.<sup>109</sup>

Accompanied with the militarization of folk intelligence, the “union” between the modern and tradition began to tip towards one side. In an article titled as “On Indigenous and Foreign” 也谈土和洋 published a few months later in July, the author noted:

The folk pesticide experimented by the commune leader, Chen Dadui, proves to be more powerful than the “Triple Six” (六六六) in killing the pests [...] Even the trickiest rice-paddy mosquitoes were killed by it. Report has it that scientists are [planning] to develop the pesticide against the rice-paddy mosquitoes in a couple of years. All these facts prove that the masses are entirely capable of producing practical agricultural agents themselves.<sup>110</sup>

In this article, the representation of mosquitoes is connoted with another layer of

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<sup>109</sup> The military nature of the “Four Pests Campaign” is reflected from the news headlines around the time. See, for example, the article published in *People's Daily* on April 19, 1958, “People in Anhui Province Laid A Siege to the Emerged Mosquito and Fly” 安徽人民围歼孳生蚊蝇; May 26 in Chongqing, “A Quick Battle and Complete Annihilation of the ‘Four Pests’” 速战速决, 全歼四害; June 6, “The Great War Against the ‘Four Pests’ in Summer” 向四害展开夏季大战; July 26, “Citizens in Beijing Made a Clean Sweep of Mosquito and Fly” 首都人民扫荡蚊蝇; August 10, “Millions of People in Beijing Made an Onslaught towards Mosquito and Fly from Two Sides” 首都百万群众两路夹击蚊蝇.

<sup>110</sup> Zhang Ke 张克. “On Indigenous and Foreign” 也谈土和洋, *People's Daily*, (1958): 2.

significance. The recalcitrant existence of the rice-paddy mosquitoes as the author indicated, not only accentuated the success of the folk experiment, but also slighted the validity of Western science in advancing the pest-eradication methods. This passage therefore illuminates the fact that accompanied with the advocacy of local intelligence, there was a subplot of diminishing the proficiency of modern science.

The demoted role of scientific expertise aligned with the surge of inventing native medicine was supported by an article published in *Chinese Medical Journal* in December 1958, in which the author made an explicit note:

Now that the movement to encourage the creativeness of our people is developing, [there is] no need to adopt an abject attitude towards experts and medical literature [...] Scientific researches *must* be linked with reality [and] our policy of [...] integrating scientific research with the mass technical revolution is perfectly correct.<sup>111</sup>

Apparently, by assuming the inherent knowledge possessed by people from their real-life experience, this passage slightes the esoteric image of the medical professionals, and declares their need of folk wisdom to be completed and transformed. In this sense, modern

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<sup>111</sup> Lucas. *Chinese Medical Modernization: Comparative Policy Continuities, 1930s-1980s*, 109.

science being detached from the folk life contains imperfect knowledge, which not only disqualifies veneration, but quite contrarily, anticipates correction.

Indeed, if we relate the political atmosphere in the late 1950s, which had been lingering around the theme of the Anti-Rightist Movement, the estrangement from the masses had been a continuous charge against the modern medical practice. Notably, criticisms on an elitist posture held by the medical workers and health cadres were associated with an expression of bourgeois individualism, which eventually led to the suspect on their political loyalty.<sup>112</sup> Bearing this in mind, this 1958 article demonstrates a strong evidence that the “union” strategy served as a vital tool for the Party to legitimate its attack on modern science and its practitioners with their apparent indebtedness to the bourgeois culture.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> An editorial from *Guangming Ribao* in November 1958, for example, contended that it was a bourgeois prejudice that medicine should be regarded as a specialty for a small number of authorities instead of relying upon the rich experience from the masses. Moreover, in a rectification article published in *Chinese Medical Journal* in 1959, the author noted how criticizing the “bourgeois ideologies” and “dictatorship of experts” became a norm in the hospitals, and how the doctors with their supremacy of technique disregarded the patient’s needs, “divorcing medical education from the masses and reality”. See Croizier. *Traditional Medicine in Modern China: Science, Nationalism, and the Tensions of Cultural Change*, 187; Lynteris, Christos. *The Spirit of Selflessness in Maoist China: Socialist Medicine and the New Man*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013): 71.

<sup>113</sup> Paul Unschuld pointed out that the medical professionals trained overseas were subjected to criticisms not simply because of their bourgeois educational background, but because the curative concept at the core of Western medicine fundamentally opposed the dialectic view from the Marxist-Maoist perspective. It can be seen in Mao’s 1937 article “On Contradiction” where he made an express critique on the objective worldview of the Western science: “The metaphysical [...] world outlook sees things as isolated, static and one-sided. [It] searches in an oversimplified way outside a thing for the cause of its development, and denies the theory of materialist dialectics.” See Unschuld,

The war against nature, in this sense, was extended to capture the opponents in human sphere. The Party's policy on struggling against the pests, as it turned out, insinuated a deeper intention of attacking the political rivals. The image of the infectious mosquitoes, which was frequently adopted to spread the knowledge on disease prevention as well as denoting the triumph of folk wisdom, acquired a double-identity involved with people's wars in 1950s Communist China – while its pathologic body served as a key to bolstering the battle against nature's menace, the treatment to which, however, helped to illuminate ideological infraction and fuel the war against the bourgeois rebels.

This double engagement in both the medical and ideological war of mosquitoes is evidenced by an article published in October 1958, in which the author harshly censured the scientists who had strayed away from the appropriate research in making contributions to the health campaigns and instead dedicated themselves to a self-fulfilling enterprise:

The mosquito experts are not studying how to rapidly and thoroughly eliminate the mosquitoes during the “Four Pests Campaign”, while working tirelessly on classifying different types of mosquitoes and searching for new mosquito species.

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Paul. U. *Medicine in China: A History of Ideas*. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985): 248.

Does that not indicate the bourgeois experts are sticking to a capitalist mentality in serving one's own fame and gain?<sup>114</sup>

Apparently, while the biological existence of mosquitoes deserved to be wiped out, the portrayal of which was enshrined in Party's propaganda to strike an accusation on the "traitors" divorced from the urgent need of Communist China. The representation of mosquitoes therefore, directly manifests the Party's will; its predominant, scientific voice disseminated throughout the country announced not the triumph of modern science, but the latter's enslavement under the political rhetoric to spread, entrench, and secure the legitimized knowledge in governing lives under the Communist rule.

The intimate connection between the delivery of knowledge and consolidation of the leading ideology of the Communist state leads us to take a second look at the medical workers sent to the rural areas in 1950s China. These redistributed human resources, while indeed bringing the urban-based professionals to upgrade the quality of rural health care, were also associated with the Anti-Rightist Rectification Campaign with an intent of teaching the Western trained intellectuals a more proletarian outlook in serving the masses.<sup>115</sup> Those "sent down" medical specialists, in this sense, demonstrated Party's

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<sup>114</sup> "The Key to Medical Science's Great Leap Forward" (医学科学高速度跃进的关键), *People's Daily*, (1958): 6.

<sup>115</sup> The relocation of the medical personnel is mostly related to the "Xiafang Movement" (下放运

authoritarian stance in taking over the scientific proficiency, by which an underlying message was disclosed: in the principal requirement of being “red and expert” for the socialist intellectuals, the former should always be prioritized over the latter.<sup>116</sup>

Now, we may return to Foucault’s theory on modern governmentality and biopolitics, and notice the major divergence from which with regard to Maoist health policies. Unlike the medical professionals in Foucault’s Europe, who were largely running private enterprises independent from a centralized government, the medical workers dispatched to the masses in Maoist China were assigned a mission not so much in spreading knowledge as in articulating guidelines from the head of the state. Their visibility among the rural residents, contrary to a reification of expertise and power, proves exactly their lack of which. The language of science was commandeered by Party’s rhetoric, through which the biopolitical control over everyday life, instead of being dissipated and internalized as a self-prison, was ever more centralized and externalized as an omnipresent surveillance by the state. The scientific rendering of the mosquitoes in 1950s China, which navigated

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动) launched in May 1957 as one crucial aspect of the Party’s rectification campaign, which dispatched a massive number of intellectuals and cadres down to the countryside. See Lucas. *Chinese Medical Modernization: Comparative Policy Continuities, 1930s-1980s*, 105.

<sup>116</sup> As Miriam Gross has noted, the Party seemed to be less interested in converting the sent-down experts into revolutionaries than demonstrating its control over Chinese intelligentsia. Disgracing scientists and doctors neither miraculously made them proponents of revolutionary medicine nor changed the focus of professional scientific institutes, but it did make things difficult for the usual proceedings of those institutes. See Gross. *Farewell to the God of Plague: Chairman Mao's Campaign to Deworm China*, 184.

people's struggle against nature's threat as well as bourgeois enemies, therefore served as the real agent in the effectuation of biopower straight from the Party, enabling which to watch over both the physical well-being and political fidelity of the socialist man.

The entangled fate between the pernicious mosquitoes and the “poisonous” bourgeoisies can be observed from the rhetoric during the proceeding of the “Four Pests Campaign”. A recorded speech on the launching ceremony of the campaign in Anhui Province, for example, declared that “we have to recognize the harm of the ‘four pests’, and wiping them out like eliminating the *class-enemies* 阶级敌人”; in another article published in Chongqing, the author noted: “after criticizing the conservatism of the Rightists, (many areas) accelerated the original plan of eradicating the ‘four pests’ and strived to transform the fly-and-mosquito-laden Chongqing into a “Four Without’s” district in the shortest time”; furthermore, a limerick widely circulated in Fujian Province, which also served as a campaign slogan, related that “The flies and mosquitoes are like the Rightists! They suck blood; they invite disease; they steal people’s happiness and cause damage! 苍蝇蚊子像右派! 吸人血, 招病害, 偷人幸福搞破坏!”<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> See “Anhui Province Conducted the Launching Ceremony of the ‘Four Pests Campaign’” (安徽举行除四害誓师大会), *People's Daily*, (1958): 1; “People in Chongqing Started the General Offensive” (重庆人民发起总攻击), *People's Daily*, (1958): 7; “Beating the Drums and Sounding the Gongs to Wipe out the ‘four pests’” (擂鼓鸣金除四害), *People's Daily*, (1958): 5.

As the biological threat posed by the pests was subtly connected with the counter-revolutionary Rightists that similarly hindered socialist constructions, the violence involved in the massacre of the diseased pests during the late 1950s also prompted people to raise the sword against the “diseased” social members. This scenario, which intertwined the political enemies with a dehumanized, biological threat, clearly invokes what Foucault noted as a device of “state racism” in modern warfare to justify the kill of a population as righteous.<sup>118</sup>

The intimate relation between the act of wiping out the pests and the attack on the political rivals thus leads us to notice the striking resemblance of the exemplary public posters featured on the “Four Pests Campaign” and that of the Communist Purge in the 1960s. As Figure 1<sup>119</sup> demonstrates, the four pests were targeted with broom and pesticide held by two proletarian fighters; an overarching slogan along with a giant Chinese character of “*fu*” 福 (happiness) is surrounded with agricultural harvest and industrial construction in the

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<sup>118</sup> In Foucault’s writing, “state racism” serves to explain the paradox of war in modern era when the value of human lives has been fully recognized: “wars are no longer waged in the name of a sovereign who much be defended; they are waged on behalf of the existence of everyone; entire populations are mobilized for the purpose of wholesale slaughter in the name of life necessity.” In other words, the elimination of one population is to make live for another; people became decisively killable when they pose a threat to the well-being of other social members, which, in the case of the Communist China, was no other than the erroneous ideology of bourgeois thinking. See Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality, vol. 1*. Robert Hurley, trans. (New York: Random House, 1978): 137.

<sup>119</sup> See “Liu Shaoqi”. *Chinese Posters Net*. Landsberger Collection, 20 August, 2017. Accessed on 1 June, 2017. Available at <https://chinese posters.net/themes/liushaoqi.php>.



background. A feeling of bright optimism is oozing out from the poster's upper register, which dominates the lower half where the pests are lying on the ground, lifeless and readily disposable. The deliberate juxtaposition between the stagnant status of the pests and a blissful future for the nation apparently underscores a deprived membership of the pests in a thriving socialist nation.

The determined exclusion of the nuisance from a healthy community is echoed with Figure 2,<sup>120</sup> in which the then chairman Liu Shaoqi is labelled as the traitor, scab, and



Figure 1. 除害灭病，造福万代  
“Eradicate the pests and diseases and benefit ten thousand generations.”  
*Red Cross and the Health Propaganda Office of the Health Department of Fujian Province, 1960.*



Figure 2. 把叛徒、内奸、工贼刘少奇永远开除出党!  
“The traitor, scab, and renegade Liu Shaoqi must forever be expelled from the Party!”  
*Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1968.*

<sup>120</sup> See “Health for the People: Continuity and Change in Asian Medicine”. *U.S. National Library of Medicine*, 21 April, 2010. Accessed on 1 June, 2017. Available at <https://www.nlm.nih.gov/exhibition/healthforthepeople/fourpests2.html>.

renegade, cornered by a group of proletariats with shovels and rifle. The analogies between the two posters in structural design, tone of the color, as well as the gist of the slogans are so compelling that the pests are almost interchangeable with the figure of Liu Shaoqi.<sup>121</sup> The overt parallelism here seems to imply that the conduct of dusting the disease out of China is also connoted with a deep-seated message of purging the social members carried with “ideological poison”. The “Four Pests Campaign” unfolded in the late 1950s, in this sense, might also have set up the stage for the political movement in the next decade with an identical aim of “clearing up” the socialist state.

As an indicator of biological threat and political rivals, the mosquito framed into the Maoist public health posters not only emphasized the necessity of disease prevention, but also waged war against the recalcitrant elements found in nature as well as human society. Its infectious body became a site of permitted violence implicating the social members who were labeled as harmful to the cause of public health and state building. The triumph of the “scientific” mosquitoes in Maoist health campaigns therefore was none other than the

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<sup>121</sup> The comparability between the purge of Liu Shaoqi and the elimination of the pests is not surprising. Liu had been famously championing Western curative medicines and was later held as a culprit for the setbacks in health campaigns carried out in some areas. An article in 1969 *People's Daily* revealed the connection between the proceeding of health campaigns and the denouncement of Liu in the following terms: “Big renegade Liu Shaoqi and his accomplices pushed through a counterrevolutionary revisionist line in health work to gratify the aggressive designs of the wolves for capitalist restoration. They devoted a lot of manpower and material resources to the study of rare and difficult diseases, but seldom discussed ways to prevent and treat some common and recurrent diseases.” See Wilenski. *The Delivery of Health Services in the People's Republic of China*, 40.

triumph of Party's leading ideology, which coopted science to its political agenda of supervising over the domain of nature and that of human beings. Undeniably, Maoist China had achieved the basic level of hygienic modernity where individual citizens started to pay adequate attention to the matter of hygiene in line with the state's requirement, but what had been left as a distorted relationship between humans and their surroundings after the intensive practice of the health campaigns will also have to pay a heavy price in the years to come.

## Concluding Remarks

From the didactic bloodsucker to the deadly disease-carrier, mosquito's journey to the pest went along with the shift of dominant discourse in the 20<sup>th</sup> century China. The transformed cultural representation of mosquitoes from late Qing to Maoist era vividly demonstrates how the discourse of Western science replaced that of Confucian morality in launching China's cause of modern state-building.

Along with the converted image of mosquitoes, the Chinese notion of *weisheng* also contributed to a crucial aspect in the process of modernization. Through early efforts made by the reform-minded intellectuals, social groups, and local governments, *weisheng* in Republic of China started to depart from the self-beneficial act in Daoist regimen to seek "hygienic modernity". The eventual consummation of the modernized awareness in *weisheng*, however, also incurred exploitation of the language of science by socialist discourse in 1950s. Ultimately, the struggle against the diseased pests was extended to inflict violence upon the "diseased" social members.

This brief investigation on the cultural history of mosquitoes in China therefore reveals how science with its utilitarian gesture can be expropriated by political rhetoric on social development, and how the line between humans and animals is fundamentally arbitrary that the justification of violence on animals eventually brings on a same fate to the devalued

human groups.

The years that followed the “Four Pests Campaign” witnessed a dampened enthusiasm in the health campaigns. The regression in both ecology and economy took China more than a decade to recover from and redirect its path of the modernization project. But as much as China would like to wave farewell to the traumatic experience brought on by the political upheavals during 1950s, the biological, if not pathological existence of the mosquitoes has been branded into the psyche of modern Chinese, which fundamentally disavowed its literary dimension. It was for this very reason that my encounter with the short prose written by the Qing essayist Shen Fu 沈复 (1763-1832) struck me enormously:

During the summer, whenever I heard the sound of mosquitoes swarming, I would pretend they were a flock of cranes dancing across the open sky [...] At night I would let mosquitoes inside my mosquito netting, blow smoke at them, and imagine that what I saw were white cranes soaring through blue clouds. It really did look like cranes flying among the clouds, and it was a sight that delighted me.<sup>122</sup>

Shen’s marvelous portrayal of mosquitoes from his childhood memory reminded me

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<sup>122</sup> Shen Fu & Jiang, Pratt. *Six Records of a Floating Life*. (London & New York: Penguin Books, 1983).

of how we have alienated ourselves from an egalitarian view of every living organism because of the scientific quarantines we have constructed to flaunt modern civilization. It provided the first spark of this thesis to center on an insect, that is possibly least humanitarian and most deadly, to provoke serious reflections on the ethics of science, the lost poetics in nature, and most importantly, our relationship to animals and other human beings.

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