

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

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Abstract

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

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

Key Words: Cultural Cold War, U.S. Aid Culture, Hong Kong USIS, Propaganda, Anti-Communism

1. Introduction

Previous studies on newspapers and magazines have largely focused on text publications. Few have examined and analyzed pictorials. The images contained in pictorials provide an alternative perspective on time and history. One of the most renowned scholars in pictorial research is Chen Pingyuan (hereafter referred to as “Chen”), a professor at Peking University. Chen is known for his research on late Qing Dynasty pictorials, particularly the *Dianshizhai Pictorial* (first publication in 1884). He has published a number of studies since the 1990s. His findings are consolidated into *Picturing the Late Qing Dynasty* (incorporated with Jia Xiaohong, 2001) and *Literature Review on the Progression of Western Literature to the East: A Study on Late Qing Dynasty Pictorials* (2008). Besides Chen, other scholars have also adopted the late Qing Dynasty as the research period for analyzing Chinese pictorials (Wang Ermin, 1990; Kang Wuwei, 1993; Ye Xiaojing, 1998), with studies concerning the *Dianshizhai Pictorial* and *Companion Pictorial* (first publication in 1926) being the most prevalent. (Gao Yuya, 1999; Li Oufan, 2000; Yu Fangzhen, 2005) By comparison, studies on pictorials in regions other than Shanghai and Beijing are scarce. This is primarily because publishers and readers of pictorials had already emerged in Shanghai and Beijing in the late Qing Dynasty. (Chen Pingyuan, 2008:241)

Hong Kong’s pictorials were merged into the *Volume of Hong Kong and Guangdong* by the *Compilation of Republic of China Pictorial*. In comparison to pictorials published in Shanghai and Beijing, those from Hong Kong and Guangdong manifested greater potential and experienced less publishing restrictions. Chen asserted that among the various pictorials of the late Qing Dynasty, the *Current Affairs Pictorial* – a pictorial published in the more liberal Guangzhou (and Hong Kong) – expressed the most radical political views. (Chen Pingyuan, 2014:42) A comparison between Hong Kong’s pictorials and those from other parts of Guangdong showed a distinct history in the development of Hong Kong’s pictorials. A number of pictorials were already published in Hong Kong before 1945, including the *Silver Pictorial* (1926), *Fei Fei Pictorial* (1928), and *Youth’s Pictorial* (1937). The pictorials focused on providing knowledge and entertainment. Several notable particularities were observed when examining the development of *Four Seas Pictorial* in the historical development of Hong Kong’s pictorials.

Not only did *Four Seas Pictorial* inherit the characteristics of China’s pictorials (Shanghai’s pictorials) in Hong Kong, it was also influenced by the propaganda ideology of “American Power” during the cold war period. The United States aimed to transform *Four Seas Pictorial* into the *Life Magazine* of Southeast Asia and increased the influence of “American Power” in the historical development of Hong

Kong's pictorials. Propaganda research by the United States of Information Service (USIS) is published in books, journals, and pictorials. Books and journals are "printed text" propaganda, whereas pictorials are "image-based" propaganda. "Pictures" were considered the "light cavalry" in wartime propaganda. In the arsenal of propaganda, pictures were lively, direct, and to-the-point.

In a broader perspective, *Four Seas Pictorial* is evidence of American Power after WWII. Unlike publications produced by the Book Translation Program that undergo review and approval by the United States Information Agency (USIA), magazines produced by the USIS Press and Publication Service only require approval from the USIS for publishing. The most popular publication of the Hong Kong USIS (USIS-HK) is *World Today* (1952-1980). Other pictorials jointly published by USIS-HK and local publishers include *Youths' Pictorial* (first publication in July 1952), *China Weekly* (first publication in January 1953), *Paradise Pictorial* (first publication in January 1953), *Asia Pictorial* (first publication in May 1953), and *College Life* (first publication in May 1955). The purpose of the present study was to compare U.S. graphics-based pictorials with the popular *Asia Pictorial* and *Four Seas Pictorial* (the first Chinese pictorial of the Liberals in Southeast Asia published by the USIS-HK in 1951). The present study aimed to examine influences that U.S. factors had on the development of Hong Kong's pictorials by evidencing the development of *Four Seas Pictorial*.

In addition to the significance of *Four Seas Pictorial* on the development of Hong Kong's pictorials, the present study aimed to determine the influences that *Four Seas Pictorial* had on Taiwan-Hong Kong relations and Southeast Asia's cultural domains. *Four Seas Pictorial*, particularly its "Short Stories" segment, expands our understanding of Hong Kong's history and culture in the 1950s. To a certain extent, the factual descriptions presented in the "Short Stories" segment embody the lifestyles of the Hong Kong people before and after 1950. Moreover, *Four Seas Pictorial's* ideologies encompass all of Southeast Asia. Therefore, it can reflect the cultures of Hong Kong and Southeast Asia in the 1950s and the relationship of the entire free world. A review on USIS-HK indicated that Hong Kong was the center of global Chinese publications (including books and magazines) in the 1950s. Presently, discussions on the influence that Taiwan and Hong Kong had on Southeast Asian literature and cultures largely focus on text-based publications. However, text-based publications largely affect intellectuals. A U.S. survey report suggested that pictorials were favored among the general readers in Southeast Asia. *Four Seas Pictorial* was extremely popular among general readers in Indonesia.¹ Therefore, examining *Four*

¹ Confidential Report, Arthur W. Hummel to Mr. Saxton E. Bradford, August 3, 1954, Hong Kong; U.S. Consulate, Hong Kong Classified General Records of the USIS, 1951-1955, Entry 2689, RG84, NARA.

Seas Pictorial can produce results unlike those of text-based publications, such as the promotional effects graphic communication

Finally, the present study aims to examine *Four Seas Pictorial* to re-evaluate the operational logic of the U.S. Aid Literary Institution in the Taiwan and Hong Kong cultural domains and the function of American Power in the Taiwan and Hong Kong literary domains.(Chen Jianzhong, 2012; Wang Meihsiang, 2015) The findings revealed the key role of private parties (migrant writers, local writers, and publishers), particularly photographers and other image providers. Image providers were less valued in journal publications. However, the picture-based model of pictorials enabled more private image workers to join the U.S. Aid Literary Institution, such as painters Zhang Yingchao and Li Weiling, as well as photographers Li Jingkai and Zeng Qifan. *Four Seas Pictorial* not only disseminated U.S. cultural propaganda through state-private networks and local interpersonal networks but also achieved impartiality by adopting agency powers. That is, agency operations were adopted to package the propaganda ideology of American Power.

2. *Four Seas Pictorial*: Replacing Text with Images

According to a report published by the USIS-HK in 1954, the propaganda activities of the Communist Party of China (CPC) in Thailand dated to WWII, beginning with the establishment of the Popular Cultural Enterprise. On the surface, the enterprise was a cultural institution. It was, in actuality, CPC's headquarters in Thailand, tasked with propagating Chinese books and pictorials and inciting strikes. The U.S. survey indicated that the United States government was fully aware of the activities of the CPC in Thailand. During this period, the propagation of Chinese books and pictorials was the CPC's principal means of expanding its influence in Thailand.² Subsequently, Thailand is only one of many cases, and the propaganda model adopted by the CPC in Thailand can be observed in numerous other countries. Since the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) on 1 October 1949, the U.S. began paying close attention to the Beijing regime and its associations with the Soviet regime.³ The U.S. had noticed the issue of "overseas Chinese" in 1950. To gain recognition from overseas Chinese people during the Cultural Cold War, the U.S. and the Soviets entered a fierce competition of propaganda and counterpropaganda. For example, the USIS-HK launched *Paradise Pictorial* in 1953. Its opposition

² Confidential Memorandum, T. Dunn to Mr. John Henderson, March 23, 1954, Hong Kong; U.S. Consulate, Hong Kong Classified General Records of the USIS, 1951-1955, Entry 2689, RG84, NARA.

³ Secret Report, Overseas Chinese, Hong Kong; U.S. Consulate, Hong Kong Classified General Records of the USIS, 1951-1955, Entry 2689, RG84, NARA.

launched *Children's Pictorial* soon after in 1955. The *Great Wall Pictorial* (1950-1962), a movie-related pictorial published by leftists in 1950, became immensely popular in Southeast Asia. The USIS-HK further introduced the *Free World* (English version), *Free World* (Chinese version), *Student Review*, *World Today*, and *Four Seas Pictorial* in 1951 to promote U.S. ideologies to the Chinese people.⁴

In actuality, the USIS-HK had already launched *American Today* on 26 October 1949. This promotional material contained editorials, commentaries on current affairs, American lifestyles, American newsletters, and others (e.g., art and science). The style of *American Today* was similar to commentaries on politics and current affairs, which were largely text-based, decorated with a small number of pictures. The promotional effects that these commentaries had on overseas Chinese readers that were not fluent in Chinese were limited. Therefore, USIS-HK required a more generalized and universalized publication. The "Editor's Words" section in the first issue of *Four Seas Pictorial* stated:

*"The printing and publishing of Four Seas Pictorial is to bring to the attention of the free people across the four seas (particularly overseas Chinese) the countries and people that enslave others and create havoc in this world; and also the countries and people that fight for democracy and freedom and strive to improve human life. If this pictorial intentionally or unintentionally promotes democracy and freedom or reveals dictatorship and slavery, and evokes its readers to compare and choose, then that would be our greatest achievement."*⁵

Four Seas Pictorial aimed to impart knowledge concerning "free China" to Chinese people across the four seas. In addition, the editor also hoped that the pictorial would gain popularity across the four seas.⁶ On its fourth anniversary, the purpose of *Four Seas Pictorial* was reaffirmed:

*"As a publication of the free world, Four Seas Pictorial has always maintained a stringent attitude in presenting pictures and text to its readers and serving as a silent and fair referee for the conscience of mankind."*⁷

These forewords clearly show that the target audience of *Four Seas Pictorial* was overseas Chinese people. It uses pictures to highlight different political systems

⁴ Foreign Service Despatch, Hong Kong to The Department of State, March 26, 1953, Report-Semi-Annual, Hong Kong; U.S. Consulate, Hong Kong Classified General Records of the USIS, 1951-1955, Entry 2689, RG84, NARA.

⁵ Editorial Group of the Four Seasons Pictorial, *Four Seas Pictorial*, 1:1.(1951/9/10)

⁶ Editorial Group of the Four Seasons Pictorial, *Four Seas Pictorial*, 1:1.(1951/9/10)

⁷ Fan Jiping, *Four Seas Pictorial*, 48:1.(1955/10/10)

and lifestyles, enabling readers to formulate judgements and choices freely. Providing readers with freedom of choice is a demonstration of U.S. democracy. *Four Seas Pictorial* was launched to benefit the U.S. in its endeavor to strengthen political and diplomatic ties in Southeast Asia. Hong Kong's intellectuals hoped that the U.S. would value the resettlement of overseas Chinese. Hong Kong political commentator, military critic, and Director of the Observatory Review, Chen XiaoWei, once composed a letter to the U.S. Secretary of State, John Dulles, encouraging the U.S. to address issues concerning overseas Chinese. He stated in his letter, "*In the advent of a great era, overseas Chinese should be fostered into a constructive power against communism. This is an urgent issue that cannot be ignored by parties concerned with the world's wellbeing.*"⁸ This confirms that the promotion of American Power was not a unilateral endeavor. Rather, it was facilitated by people in Hong Kong with anticommunist views, or in the words of the former Director of the USIS-HK, Richard McCarthy, "*a unity of Hong Kong intellectuals that oppose a common enemy.*"

Wang MeiHsiang (2015:47) previously cited the observations of Charles Cross, a former employee of the USIS-HK (1952-1954), who critically elaborated on the core qualities of *Four Seas Pictorial*:

"The USIS-HK published two general magazines, World Today (1952-1980) and Four Seas Pictorial (1951-1954). World Today contained articles, short stories, and English commentaries from Washington, D. C., which were translated and edited into Chinese to fit local readers. Four Seas Pictorial was similar to Life Magazine in the U.S. The editorial team was primarily based in Shanghai. However, the pictorial was short-lived and gained little attention from later scholars. Both magazines were designed to attract readers in Taiwan and Southeast Asia." (Charles Cross, 1999:102)

According to Cross, the USIS-HK considered *World Today* and *Four Seas Pictorial* to be "sister propaganda." We believe that both publications targeted general readers. *World Today* printed roughly 100,000 copies, and *Four Seas Pictorial* printed roughly 30,000 copies.⁹ Although the circulation of *Four Seas Pictorial* was considerably smaller than *World Today*, it was sold almost entirely through commercial distribution, while *World Today* was initially gifted and later sold as a budget publication. Moreover, the "Shanghai clique" and its members played a key part in the operation of USIS-HK, such as Shanghai resident, Song Qi (Lin Yiliang),

⁸ Fan Jiping, *Four Seas Pictorial*, 48:1.(1955/10/10)

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

which served in the Book Translation Program. Similarly, the editorial group of *Four Seas Pictorial* largely comprised “Shanghai people,” with Fan Jiping serving as Editor in Chief (hereafter referred to as “Fan”).¹⁰ These editors from Shanghai continued to share their experiences while serving in the U.S. Aid Literary Institution in Hong Kong.

Fan was involved in pictorial publication and editing before serving as Editor in Chief of *Four Seas Pictorial*. Fan and Chen Yiyun launched the first copy of *The Screen Pictorial*, a fortnightly publication, in Shanghai on 15 September 1935, published by Shanghai Graphic Press. The forewords in the first edition of *The Screen Pictorial* stated, “We remain just and unbiased in selecting the nation’s most beautiful celebrity images. This publication is packed with interesting animation for the readers and the public in general. This publication is munificent in content, compiled in an organized manner. It selects content with utmost stringency without compromising integrity. This publication is the ticket to the entire entertainment industry.”¹¹ The manner in which *Screen Pictorial* covered the domestic and international film industries was completely reflected in the media and news section of *Four Seas Pictorial*. Frequent segments in the *Screen Pictorial* included “Fortnightly News,” “Official Announcements,” “Hollywood News,” “New Hollywood Movie,” “World Entertainment,” and “International Movie News.” It covered the latest news in China, United States, England, France, and Germany. Table 2 (content in *Four Seas Pictorial*) shows that “Current News” was the main feature of *Four Seas Pictorial*, followed by “Entertainment News,” which was a reduced version of the *Screen Pictorial*.

Two differences are evident between *Four Seas Pictorial* and *Screen Pictorial*. First, the entire copy of *Screen Pictorial* was dedicated to entertainment news, whereas *Four Seas Pictorial* only dedicated two to six pages to overseas cinema, Hollywood news, and Taiwan/Hong Kong entertainment news. The majority of the entertainment content was focused on Taiwan and Hong Kong. Second, the content of *Screen Pictorial* was image-based with minimal text (one of two rows of descriptions). Therefore, *Screen Pictorial* was a “visual” publication. Although *Four Seas Pictorial* was also an image-based publication, it contained considerably more text than *Screen Pictorial*. Based on these similarities, we believe that Fan incorporated his experience in editing *Screen Pictorial* into the “Entertainment News” segment of *Four Seas Pictorial* and that *Four Seas Pictorial* partially inherited the traditions of Shanghai’s pictorials.

After leaving Shanghai, Fan traveled to Thailand and served as a newspaper editor. The agency in which Fan served, *Xing Xian Daily News*, was founded by

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

¹¹ Chen Yiyun, Fan Jiping, “Editor’s Words” · *The Screen Pictorial*, 1(1935/9/15).

overseas Chinese businessperson and founder of Tiger Balm, Hu Wenhu Hu, in Bangkok, Thailand on 1 January 1950. The founders of *Xing Xian Daily News* included Zhang Lanchen, Wu Zhulin, Guo Shiqiu, and Liu Hanhua.¹² For the editorial group, Hu Wenhu recruited Fan, Zhu Shuhe, Song Yuwen, Su Jichuan, and Yang Lisheng from Hong Kong to preside over the editorial aspect of the publication. Fan continued his editorial career at *Xing Xian Daily News* in Bangkok, Thailand, after the war.(Wu Qianqian, 2013) *Xing Xian Daily News* is one of the oldest Chinese newspapers in Thailand. Combined, *World Daily*, *Jing Hua Daily*, *Zhong Hua Daily*, and *Xing Xian Daily News* were coined the “Big Four” in the Thai-Chinese community. More importantly, *Xing Xian Daily News* persisted in upholding the ideologies of the Hu Brothers (Hu Wenhu and Hu Wenbao), including “*spread heritage, promote culture, provide guidance and education, contribute to civilization, and strive for world peace,*” and “*enhance Chinese-Thai relations, promote Chinese and Thai cultures, advocate the development of Chinese entrepreneurs and businesses in Thailand, and protect government policies.*” (Wu Qianqian, 2013:7)

Fan ostensibly joined a Chinese newspaper agency that was supported by the Thai-Chinese businesses. However, insider information announced by the USIS indicated more complex political and commercial interactions. Political interactions refer to the Kuomintang (KMT) and American Power. These interactions are consistent with the argument proposed in the present study, stating that American Power operated on a “state-private network” (specifically, that the United States collaborated with local private parties in Thailand). In this context, private parties refer to institutions and organizations affiliated with the KMT. For example, Editor in Chief of *Xing Xian Daily News*, Yang Chien-shin, was the leader of a KMT anticommunist organization stationed in Thailand. From this viewpoint, both the KMT and the CPC endeavored to spread their political ideologies through the cultural industry. Chang Yikwang and Ho Yuanmin, who were editors for the “International News” segment, work closely with the USIS in Thailand.¹³ This close collaboration between *Xing Xian Daily News* and the Thailand USIS was the motivation that eventually led Fan to become the USIS-HK editor for *Four Seas Pictorial*.

The debut of *Four Seas Pictorial* was extremely confidential. Discussions concerning this publication were often seen in restricted NARA documents.

¹² In 1929, overseas Chinese businessperson, Hu Wenhu and Hu Wenbao published *Xing Zhou Daily* in Malaya to advertise the Tiger Balm. By means of this way, Hu Brothers expected to expand the market for their products. In 1931, they published *Xing Hua Daily* in Shantou(Guangdong, China). In 1935, they published *Xing Guang Daily* in Xiamen(Foukien, China) and *Xing Zhong Daily* in Singapore. In 1938, they published *Xing Dao Daily* in Hong Kong. In 1950, *Xing Xian Daily News* was published in Bangkok, Thailand. All of these newspaper were united into the first overseas Chinese Newspaper series of Xing Newspaper.(Xiao Yizhao, 2008:22; Peng Weibu, 2008:7-8)

¹³ Confidential Memorandum, T. Dunn to Mr. John Henderson, March 23, 1954, Hong Kong; U.S. Consulate, Hong Kong Classified General Records of the USIS, 1951-1955, Entry 2689, RG84, NARA

According to a confidential document issued by the Consulate General of the United States in Hong Kong and Macau to the U.S. Department of State, *Four Seas Pictorial* was to be distributed on a completely commercial basis, which was passed in the Baguio Meeting in Thailand and approved by the U.S. Department of State¹⁴ The complete commercialization strategy adopted for the editing and publication processes of *Four Seas Pictorial* was primarily to demonstrate the impartiality of the USIS and the United States. For this reason, documents concerning the publication were largely confidential and restricted. In addition to the impartiality rationale, *Four Seas Pictorial* was to be published under the direct and continued control of the USIS Chief Public Affairs Officers (CPAO) in the United States and Southeast Asia, which was associated with the United States' attitude towards Taiwan and Hong Kong publications. A report published by Arthur Hummel in August 1954 revealed that the USIS Public Affairs Officers (PAO) stationed in Southeast Asian countries were able to formulate their own projects. However, Chinese propaganda in Taiwan and Hong Kong largely followed a specific order and propagation mechanism, which all USIS CPAOs in Southeast Asia were required to abide.¹⁵ This mechanism was instated because the influence of the then USIA (1954) was still limited. Perhaps the reasons why the United States opted for direct control over the propagation method and quantity of Chinese propaganda in Taiwan and Hong Kong were based on the demand for propaganda in Southeast Asia and economic rationality.

The editing and publishing affairs of *Four Seas Pictorial* were largely recorded in a confidential document issued in July 1951, Contract No. S188 fa-70.¹⁶ According to the content of the document, the terms and conditions between Fan and the United States were as follows.

In terms of presentation, each issue of *Four Seas Pictorial* comprised 24 pages including a cover page and a back cover. Among these pages, four were printed in two colors. The terms and conditions of the contract clearly show that the presentation of *Four Seas Pictorial* was discussed in detail and that the United States' execution was rational and scientific (mathematical). Under the instructions, supervision, and assistance of the USIS, Fan was tasked with publishing one issue of *Four Seas Pictorial* each month.¹⁷ Although the United States emphasized impartiality between

¹⁴ Restricted Operations Memorandum, American Consulate General(Hong Kong) to Department of State, October 31, 1951, Hong Kong; U.S. Consulate, Hong Kong Classified General Records of the USIS, 1951-1955, Entry 2689, RG84, NARA.

¹⁵ Confidential Report, Arthur W. Hummel to Mr. Saxton E. Bradford, August 3, 1954, Hong Kong; U.S. Consulate, Hong Kong Classified General Records of the USIS, 1951-1955, Entry 2689, RG84, NARA.

¹⁶ Operations Memorandum, American Consulate General, Hong Kong to Department of State, February 29, 1952, Hong Kong; U.S. Consulate, Hong Kong Classified General Records of the USIS, 1951-1955, Entry 2689, RG84, NARA.

¹⁷ Contract No. S188 fa-70, American Consulate General to Fan Kay Ping, July 16, 1951, Hong Kong;

Four Seas Pictorial and the USIS/United States, the contract clearly shows that the United States aspired to play the role of custodian and coordinator of the publication. This was also mentioned by Peter Evens.(Wang Meihsiang, 2015) In terms of support, the contract stated, “All available resources of the USIS are at your (Fan’s) disposal, including images and printing material.”¹⁸ The contract also stated that Fan could independently collect materials, as long as they are approved by the embassy.¹⁹ Ostensibly, the terms and conditions seemingly offered Fan a substantial degree of freedom. However, underlying restrictions existed. That is, although Fan could utilize the editorial resources within his interpersonal network, Fan needed the approval of the United States to incorporate into the publication. This showed the United States’ custodian-like role in the publication of *Four Seas Pictorial*, particularly concerning propaganda content.²⁰

In term of remuneration, the contract showed that Fan received a monthly salary of HKD \$2,480, which was equivalent to the eight-month salary of an average elementary/middle school teacher. The United States was generous in the remuneration of editors. Fan’s wages were paid on a fortnightly basis of HKD \$1,240.²¹ As Editor in Chief, Fan also controlled a fund of HKD \$550 for the payment of images, short stories, articles, cartoons, illustrations, and reference material.²² Moreover, the rights and obligations between Fan and his publishers were expressly provided in Contract No. IA-188-4. The contract imposed eight obligations on Fan and his publishers. One obligation stated that Fan was required to use the aforementioned fund to purchase adequate news images and Chinese magazine articles. He was also tasked with completing the layout of the magazine and all business contacts before delivering the publication template to the publisher.²³ These contracts show that the United States clearly regulated the rights and obligations of its

U.S. Consulate, Hong Kong Classified General Records of the USIS, 1951-1955, Entry 2689, RG84, NARA.

¹⁸ Contract No. S188 fa-70, American Consulate General to Fan Kay Ping, July 16, 1951, Hong Kong; U.S. Consulate, Hong Kong Classified General Records of the USIS, 1951-1955, Entry 2689, RG84, NARA.

¹⁹ Contract No. S188 fa-70, American Consulate General to Fan Kay Ping, July 16, 1951, Hong Kong; U.S. Consulate, Hong Kong Classified General Records of the USIS, 1951-1955, Entry 2689, RG84, NARA.

²⁰ Contract No. S188 fa-70, American Consulate General to Fan Kay Ping, July 16, 1951, Hong Kong; U.S. Consulate, Hong Kong Classified General Records of the USIS, 1951-1955, Entry 2689, RG84, NARA.

²¹ In this regard, in the field work of the author, the worker leader in US engineering company who also said that the US company paid their salary not by month but by two weeks.

²² Amendment No. 1 to Contract No. S188 fa-70, American Consulate General to Mr. Fan Kay Ping, December 1, 1951, Hong Kong; U.S. Consulate, Hong Kong Classified General Records of the USIS, 1951-1955, Entry 2689, RG84, NARA.

²³ Contract No. IA-188-4, Contract for the purchase of Press Photographs and Magazine Articles, Hong Kong; U.S. Consulate, Hong Kong Classified General Records of the USIS, 1951-1955, Entry 2689, RG84, NARA.

local agents in writing.

In addition to the symbiotic relationship between the United States and local intellectuals, it also provided U.S. Government funds as a government-specific account for *Four Seas Pictorial*.²⁴ This shows that the American Power also served in an executive role by providing government funds to establish and promote the publication. Unlike Peter Evens, who opted to exclude private parties, the American Power embraced the private sector and utilized its resources.(Wang Meihsiang, 2015:305-306) The financial support of the U.S. government eliminated the publication's dependency on advertising to turn a profit. A publication claimed, "*The publication of client advertisements shall commence in the third issue. The printing of commercial advertisement is not to compensate for the cost. Rather, it is the utilization of the publication's comprehensive distribution channel to provide propaganda service to the business sector.*"²⁵

The advertisements printed in *Four Seas Pictorial* were largely the business services of local vendors. The bank commissioned by the U.S. government in Hong Kong stated, "*Our accounts are handled with the utmost confidentiality.*"²⁶ Based on the aforementioned discussion, the United States opted to remain impartial to all aspects of the publication, including overall appearance, content, and even funding. We believe that the reason for the United States' heavy emphasis on impartiality was to achieve effective propaganda. Moreover, *Four Seas Pictorial* was established as a "commercial" publication. Therefore, its circulation was largely for entertainment and as a form of contemporary literature rather than political propaganda.

The first issue of *Four Seas Pictorial* was launched on 10 September 1951 and continued until 25 November 1952, after which the United States proposed a relocation of the entire *Four Seas Pictorial* editorial team to Manila, Philippines, to reduce publication costs. However, USIS-HK opposed these plans for three reasons: cost reduction, quality, and printing speed. The USIS-HK argued that no other country could achieve the same level of quality and printing speed at a lower price than Hong Kong.²⁷ Later, the U.S. Secretary of State, John Dulles, sent an approval to the USIS-HK to continue printing *Four Seas Pictorial* and *World Today* and Hong

²⁴ Confidential Memorandum, The National City Bank of New York to The American Consulate General Hong Kong, November 20, 1951, Hong Kong; U.S. Consulate, Hong Kong Classified General Records of the USIS, 1951-1955, Entry 2689, RG84, NARA.

²⁵ Editorial Group of the Four Seasons Pictorial, *Four Seas Pictorial*, 2:20.(1951/10/10)

²⁶ Confidential Memorandum, The National City Bank of New York to The American Consulate General Hong Kong, November 20, 1951, Hong Kong; U.S. Consulate, Hong Kong Classified General Records of the USIS, 1951-1955, Entry 2689, RG84, NARA.

²⁷ Operations Memorandum, American Consulate General, Hong Kong to Department of State, February 29, 1952, Hong Kong; U.S. Consulate, Hong Kong Classified General Records of the USIS, 1951-1955, Entry 2689, RG84, NARA.

Kong.²⁸ This discourse showed that after a period, the United States began considering alternative printing plans for the publication and reducing cost. This was consistent with their original economic rationality approach.

On 10 October 1955, a message was published in the “Editor’s Words” section of *Four Seas Pictorial*, explaining that the publication would undergo significant revisions starting with Issue 49. Specifically, it would add English descriptions. The passage explained, “A large number of overseas Chinese are not well versed in the Chinese dialect. Starting in the next issue, we have decided to include English descriptions with our image content, bridging the comprehension gap with our overseas Chinese readers.”²⁹ This message illustrated the adjustment made to *Four Seas Pictorial* to meet reader demand. Moreover, the content of the publication was also revised. Images and text concerning calligraphy and fashion tailoring, as well as those specific to younger students were added to attract more student readers. In ideology, the publication also aimed to “establish an identity between overseas Chinese and their ancestral land,”³⁰ and garner the acceptance of overseas Chinese with the idea of a free China. The discussion presented in this section has highlighted how propaganda was adjusted to meet reader demands and maximize promotional effects.

3. Content Analysis of *Four Seas Pictorial*

A number of pictorials were in circulation during the publication of *Four Seas Pictorial*, such as the *Silver Pictorial* first published by the Hong Kong Film and Arts Improvement Press in 1926. *Silver Pictorial* was a cinema-based pictorial that focuses on international and domestic movies and celebrities. In addition, *Fei Fei Pictorial*, a pictorial edited by Li Ouji that began in 1928, covered Chinese painting, fiction, art, photography, artwork presentation, fitness, and dance.(Jiang Yasha, Jing Li, Chen Danqi, 2007a:1) We divided the framework of pictorials into text content and image presentation. Observations showed that the image portion of the pictorial published during this period was far less than text content. Moreover, images only supplemented text content during the initial development of pictorials. The *Youth’s Pictorial*, launched in 1937, and the *Eastern Miscellany Pictorial*, launched in 1938, was centered on the war. These pictorials contained a substantial amount of images, gradually transitioning pictorials into an image-based publication with text as

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

²⁹ Fan Jiping, *Four Seas Pictorial*, 48:1.(1955/10/10)

³⁰ Fan Jiping, *Four Seas Pictorial*, 48:1.(1955/10/10)

supplementary content. The *Eastern Miscellany Pictorial* even offered Chinese and English descriptions. Subsequently, the proportion of images and text was dependent on propaganda and reader demand. The addition of English descriptions was based on the desire to deliver propaganda to more non-Chinese readers. This method of operation can be exhibited in *Four Seas Pictorial* after Issue 31 published in 1954, where English descriptions were provided under certain images. English descriptions were fully implemented by Issue 49. The post-war development of Hong Kong's pictorials included the launch of *Health and Beauty* in 1947. This publication centered on health and fitness and propagated European and American views on shaping the body.

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

We first analyzed the images published in *Four Seas Pictorial*, specifically the cover art. An advertisement announced by the editorial group for the solicitation of cover art stated, "*We are publicly in search of cover art for our publication. Themes include, but are not limited to, people, scenery, buildings, and art. Images should be lively and refreshing. They should be of journalistic value, contribute to lifestyle and entertainment, and be attractive to readers.*"³¹ Although a variety of themes was solicited, the cover art for *Four Seas Pictorial* was predominantly of women (Appendix 1). These arrangements were consistent with those of the *Companion Pictorial* published in Shanghai in 1926 (Appendix 1) and Fan's *Screen Pictorial* published in Shanghai in 1926 (Appendix 1). The distinction between *Four Seas Pictorial* and the other two pictorials was that *Companion Pictorial* and *Screen Pictorial* largely used celebrities for their cover art, which contributed to both entertainment and propaganda. By comparison, *Four Seas Pictorial* not only used the images of female celebrities but also renowned women from different countries and domains. Issue 5 featured Hu Xiuqiong, a renowned American-Chinese fashion designer, and Issue 20 featured professional ballerinas, advocating modern feminism.

³¹ Editorial Group of the Four Seasons Pictorial, *Four Seas Pictorial*, 16:19.(1953/2/1)

Image-text arrangement can be characterized into four major types, namely (1) images on top of the page and text at the bottom, (2) images on the left side of the page and text on the right, (3) image in the center of the page and text wrapped around, and (4) random arrangement.(Wang Bomin,1986:17) Generally, the first arrangement method was the most popular. The second method was widely adopted in Chinese literature but rarely adopted in pictorials. The “Editor’s Words” section in Issue 2 stated, “*In this publication, a considerable amount of effort has been put into writing every single paragraph. The neat and uniform arrangement of images and text adopted in this publication is unprecedented in Hong Kong. We are confident in its success*” (Editorial Group of the *Four Seasons Pictorial*, 1951:3). This statement indicates that the editors of *Four Seas Pictorial* were committed to maintaining the neatness and consistency of the images and their descriptions. Compared to early pictorials in Hong Kong, such as the *Silver Pictorial* or *Fei Fei Pictorial*, the descriptions following the images were typically inconsistent in length and written in different styles, sometimes from top to bottom and other times from left to right or from right to left. In Issue 2 of *Four Seas Pictorial*, editors directly expressed their pursuit of a neat and organized pictorials. All texts were formatted from top to bottom and from right to left. This unification not only facilitated formatting and printing but also enabled editors to work faster, thereby reducing the cost.

The goals described in the previous paragraph of *Four Seas Pictorial* were comparatively different to conventional Chinese pictorials. Chen Pingyuan stated, “*Chinese people prefer text over images. As a result, Chinese people are less proficient at forming narratives through images.*”(Chen Pingyuan, 2008:3) The image-based framework of *Four Seas Pictorial* reflected Chen’s statement. The “Editor’s Words” section of *Four Seas Pictorial* stated explicitly that the publication used images to tell stories and that images were sufficient for delivering information. Fan stated:

*“The world is separated into heaven and hell. Light is not praised, nor is dark cursed. We believe in calmly expressing the happenings of this world through images and providing our readers with the freedom to judge and decide. Images are more direct, overpowering, eloquent commentaries. They truly are worth more than a thousand words.”*³²

In this passage, Fan clarifies the views of *Four Seas Pictorial*. He attempted to maintain objectivity and neutrality and avoided conventional democratic or third-party communist narratives. The goal of *Four Seas Pictorial* was not to impose

³² Editorial Group of the Four Seasons Pictorial, *Four Seas Pictorial*, 12:1.(1952/10/1)

views. Rather, it advocated choice. However, the publication still held subjective views. The editorial group was open to their views when replying to readers' feedback. In a reply, it stated, "*We (Four Seas Pictorial) advocate democratic freedom and stand firm in our beliefs. However, we remain unbiased in reporting light and dark, freedom and slavery. We do not comment on our articles, enabling our readers to form unbiased decisions.*"³³ This statement explained the publication's material sourcing principles. Images contain narratives and can convey personal viewpoints as well as the messages the United States opted to deliver to free-world readers, such as "World January," "news on overseas Chinese worldwide," and "Chinese culture" (e.g., Cemetery of Confucius)³⁴. Reports on the free world included the political stability of Western countries, rich lifestyles, achievements of overseas Chinese,³⁵ and the pleasures of modern living. Reports on free China included modernism (e.g., article on "Vibrant Taiwan"³⁶), well-trained free Chinese military (e.g., article on "Double Tenth in Taiwan"³⁷), democratic development of politics (e.g., article on "National Conference Elects Second President and Vice President"³⁸), and the prosperity of free Chinese residents (e.g., articles on "Modern Production of Taiwan's Pineapple Industry"³⁹ and "Taiwan's Sugar Industry"⁴⁰). Moreover, news concerning disaster in Taiwan (e.g., the article on "Major Earthquake in Taiwan"⁴¹) not only reported causalities but also highlighted the Nationalist Government's efforts in disaster rescue and compensation. Reports on Hong Kong focused on entertainment news, as well as positive reports on the Queen of England and charity events (e.g., article on "The Salvation Army – Hong Kong"⁴²). Reports in the United States were focused on modernism (e.g., prevalence of television⁴³), technology, charity (e.g., article on "Mutual Assistance and Relief Industry"⁴⁴), and gender equality (e.g., article on "Successful Women"⁴⁵). The publication used images to promote the positive ideologies of the United States and free China. Within these reports, the United States was presented as an altruistic society.

Reports also reported on the free and communist worlds. Images were used to highlight and simplify the differences between the two worlds. This made readers'

³³ Editorial Group of the Four Seasons Pictorial, *Four Seas Pictorial*, 3:20.(1951/11/20)

³⁴ Editorial Group of the Four Seasons Pictorial, *Four Seas Pictorial*, 12:14-15.(1952/10/1)

³⁵ Editorial Group of the Four Seasons Pictorial, *Four Seas Pictorial*, 9:15.(1952/6/25)

³⁶ Editorial Group of the Four Seasons Pictorial, *Four Seas Pictorial*, 40:6-7.(1955/2/10)

³⁷ Editorial Group of the Four Seasons Pictorial, *Four Seas Pictorial*, 13:8-9.(1952/11/1)

³⁸ Editorial Group of the Four Seasons Pictorial, *Four Seas Pictorial*, 30:3-4.(1954/4/10)

³⁹ Editorial Group of the Four Seasons Pictorial, *Four Seas Pictorial*, 12:8-9.(1952/10/1)

⁴⁰ Editorial Group of the Four Seasons Pictorial, *Four Seas Pictorial*, 17:14-15.(1953/3/1)

⁴¹ Editorial Group of the Four Seasons Pictorial, *Four Seas Pictorial*, 3:2-3.(1951/11/20)

⁴² Editorial Group of the Four Seasons Pictorial, *Four Seas Pictorial*, 8:36-37.(1952/5/20)

⁴³ Editorial Group of the Four Seasons Pictorial, *Four Seas Pictorial*, 1:16.(1951/9/10)

⁴⁴ Editorial Group of the Four Seasons Pictorial, *Four Seas Pictorial*, 14:12-13.(1952/12/1)

⁴⁵ Editorial Group of the Four Seasons Pictorial, *Four Seas Pictorial*, 8:26-27.(1952/5/20)

preference abundantly clear. In the article “Perspectives on East and West Germany,” images were presented to stress the free democracy of West Germany and the communistic ideologies of East Germany. They also illustrated how refugees escaped from East Germany to West Germany.⁴⁶ *Four Seas Pictorial* also published two consecutive issues on land reform. In Issue 18, the article “Status Quo of Land Reform” presented images (Appendix 2) to illustrate how China’s land reform was killing residents (landowners) and the struggles of poor farmers.⁴⁷ Issue 19 reported on Taiwan’s land reform. By contrast to the “stern and pained” expressions portrayed in the images of China’s land reform, the images used for the land reform of free China showed satisfied farmers and landowners entering into agreements.⁴⁸ The expressions of the farmers and landowners were indicative of the land reform progress and effectiveness in communist and free China.

A quantitative analysis of the content of *Four Seas Pictorial* showed that the majority of reports were on free China (Table 1), accounting for one-fifth of all reports published. The increased reports stem from the United States’ concerns about the poor reputation of the KMT in Southeast Asia and its poor propaganda outcomes and the attempt to build up KMT prestige.⁴⁹ With the assistance of the United States, free China became the center of the free world and the representative for Chinese culture. The editorial group for *Four Seas Pictorial* was predominately anticommunist and supported the KMT. *Four Seas Pictorial* was approved by the Republic of China Overseas Community Affairs Council and, to some extent, it was a publication that directly promoted free Chinese ideologies. *Four Seas Pictorial* predominantly reported current news (Table 2), which was consistent with the symbiotic relationship between the United States and the USIS-HK. Current news was sequentially followed by entertainment news and news concerning overseas Chinese.

Table 1 Current News of Four Seas Pictorial

| nation | pages | percentage | nation | pages | percentage |
|------------------------|-------|------------|--------|-------|------------|
| Free China (Taiwan) | 113 | 19.2 | Italy | 4 | 0.7 |
| Communist China | 57 | 9.7 | Nepal | 4 | 0.7 |
| U.S. | 47 | 8.0 | Iran | 3 | 0.5 |

⁴⁶ Editorial Group of the Four Seasons Pictorial, *Four Seas Pictorial*, 20:6-7.(1953/6/1)

⁴⁷ Editorial Group of the Four Seasons Pictorial, *Four Seas Pictorial*, 18:2-3.(1953/4/1)

⁴⁸ Editorial Group of the Four Seasons Pictorial, *Four Seas Pictorial*, 19:2-3.(1953/5/1)

⁴⁹ Confidential Report, Arthur W. Hummel to Mr. Saxton E. Bradford, August 3, 1954, Hong Kong; U.S. Consulate, Hong Kong Classified General Records of the USIS, 1951-1955, Entry 2689, RG84, NARA.

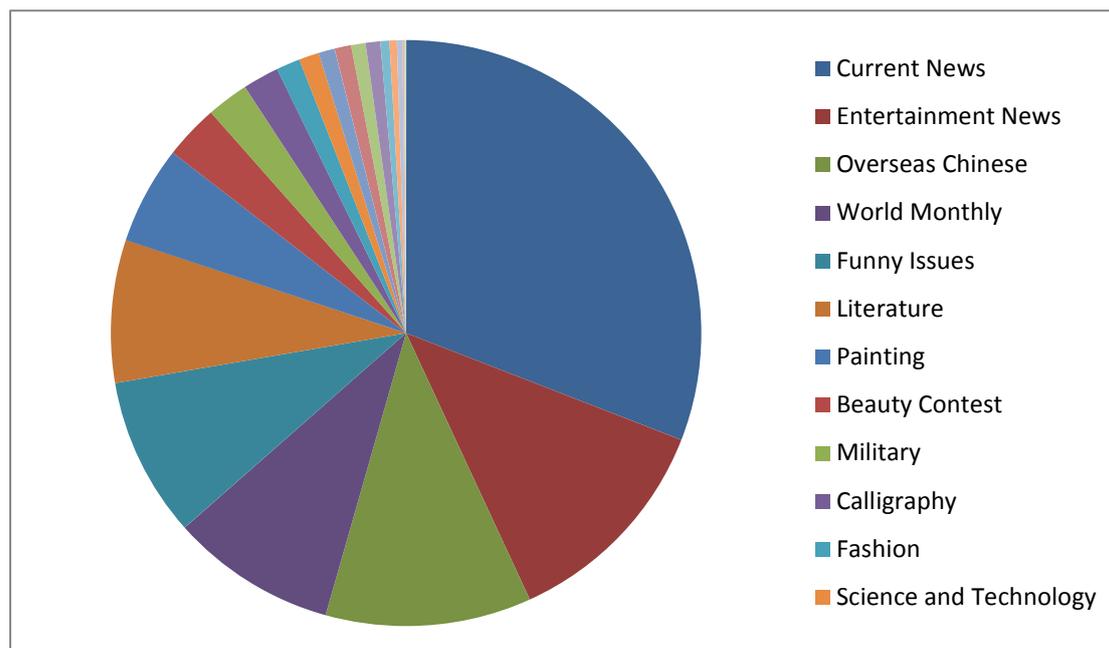
| | | | | | |
|-------------|----|-----|----------------|---|-----|
| Free World | 44 | 7.4 | Czech Republic | 3 | 0.5 |
| Germany | 34 | 5.7 | Cambodia | 3 | 0.5 |
| Hong Kong | 30 | 5.1 | Belgium | 3 | 0.5 |
| Vietnam | 24 | 4.0 | Turkey | 3 | 0.5 |
| U.K. | 22 | 3.7 | Guatemala | 3 | 0.5 |
| Thailand | 19 | 3.2 | Cyprus | 2 | 0.3 |
| Japan | 15 | 2.5 | Norway | 2 | 0.3 |
| Korea | 15 | 2.5 | Vezeuela | 2 | 0.3 |
| Indonesia | 14 | 2.3 | Singapore | 2 | 0.3 |
| Russia | 12 | 2.0 | Finland | 2 | 0.3 |
| Malaya | 12 | 2.0 | Malta | 2 | 0.3 |
| Switzerland | 11 | 1.8 | Denmark | 2 | 0.3 |
| Philippines | 11 | 1.8 | Poland | 2 | 0.3 |
| Egypt | 10 | 1.7 | Macao | 2 | 0.3 |
| France | 9 | 1.5 | Netherlands | 2 | 0.3 |
| India | 8 | 1.3 | Greenland | 2 | 0.3 |
| Buma | 6 | 1.0 | Sarawak | 2 | 0.3 |
| Austria | 6 | 1.0 | Vatican | 1 | 0.2 |
| Spain | 5 | 0.8 | Greece | 1 | 0.2 |
| Laos | 5 | 0.8 | Bulgaria | 1 | 0.2 |
| Africa | 5 | 0.8 | / | / | / |

Table 2 Content of *Four Seas Pictorial*

| content | pages | percentage | content | pages | percentage |
|--------------------|-------|------------|------------------------|-------|------------|
| Current News | 247 | 31.0 | Science and Technology | 9 | 1.1 |
| Entertainment News | 97 | 12.2 | Sports | 8 | 1.0 |
| Overseas Chinese | 90 | 11.3 | Photography | 7 | 0.9 |
| World Monthly | 73 | 9.1 | Sculpture | 6 | 0.8 |
| Funny Issues | 70 | 8.8 | Dance | 6 | 0.8 |
| Literature | 63 | 7.9 | Stamp Collection | 4 | 0.5 |

| | | | | | |
|----------------|----|-----|--------------|---|-----|
| Painting | 43 | 5.4 | Drama | 3 | 0.4 |
| Beauty Contest | 24 | 3.0 | Human Rights | 2 | 0.3 |
| Military | 18 | 2.3 | Ceramics | 1 | 0.1 |
| Calligraphy | 16 | 2.0 | Medicine | 1 | 0.1 |
| Fashion | 10 | 1.3 | | | |

Table 3 Pie Chart: Content of Four Seas Pictorial



In addition to the aforementioned content, *Four Seas Pictorial* also featured a “Short Stories” segment with each issue.⁵⁰ This segment was not unique to the publication. On the contrary, a similar segment, “Serials,” was published in the first issue of *Companion Pictorial* in 1926. (Jiang Yasha, Jing Li, Chen Danqi, 2007b:1) Unlike the images, the pugnaciousness between democracy and communism was less evident in the “Short Stories” segment of *Four Seas Pictorial*. This section largely focused on human affirmation (nature) and love. Stories were generally about love, marriage, extramarital affairs, and incest. These stories are clearly reflective of readers’ preferences. To account for overseas Chinese readers, main characters were often set with “overseas Chinese” backgrounds. For example, in the short story, “Witch,” the main female character, Sang Jila, was the daughter of a Sumatra-born

⁵⁰ Foreword of *Four Seas Pictorial* stated that *Four Seas Pictorial* is welcome to receive manuscript from readers. If the manuscript was adopted, by the editor, the generous royalties would be paid as reward. Short stories: HK fifteen to thirty yuan per thousand words. Photograph: HK fifteen to thirty yuan per photo. The Editorial Group of the Four Seasons Pictorial, *Four Seas Pictorial*, 4:16.(1951/12/25)

Chinese.⁵¹

Short story writers for *Four Seas Pictorial* included Fan (a.k.a., Shuangguan Dafu) and freelance writers, Wan Gang and Xu Xu. Short story illustrators included Zhang Yingchao and Li Weiling. Unlike the images, which presented strong opposition between light and darkness through visual contrast, the short stories were less conflicting. Rather, stories centered on life events and love. For example, Xu Xu's "Fu Chou," which was published in Issue 1, was later included in a short story compilation published by Asia Publishing in 1955. In this story, the author adopted a third party and psychoanalysis writing style to reconstruct a series of interviews with criminals, expert criminologists, and abnormal psychologists. Seemingly based on personal experience, Xu Xu, who had a background in philosophy and psychology, structured a story of patricide and incest through the confessions of the victim, Tao Qiang.

Fan largely wrote stories of love and marriage plotted in Shanghai and Hong Kong. In "Forever Waiting," he portrayed the affair of Song Shenming and Rong Wei and the signing of a "new divorce" contract. This type of story was extremely rare during that period.⁵² In "Travels of Mr. Zhao," the author described the escape of Wang Wantian from her husband, who was having an affair.⁵³ The story of "Woman in the Cottage," authored by Hu Zhongwin, portrayed the life of a refugee after she escaped from Shanghai to Hong Kong. The story expressed the profound friendship between two people and painted a vivid image of the life of the subaltern in Hong Kong in the 1950s.

Wan Gang, a freelance writer for *Four Seas Pictorial*, preferred the non-fictional writing approach when illustrating Hong Kong before and after 1950. In "Heavenly Dream," the author explained the discourse of Zhong Guoren, a refugee who escaped from Shenzhen to Hong Kong. To Zhong, Hong Kong was heaven. By collecting a favor, he finally gained the opportunity to travel to Hong Kong. During his escape, he was assaulted while attempting to save a child in his group, finally gaining passage to heaven. "Heavenly Dream" illustrated human nature and how Zhong Guoren finally chose to sacrifice himself to save another in a critical situation. We believe that the feature of Wan Gang's short stories is the acknowledgment of positive human nature. Positive human nature can be observed in other stories compiled in Wan Gang's *Three-Cents Novels*, even when the enemy was the Communists. (Wang Meihsiang, 2016) To the author, human nature outweighed the opposition between democracy and communism.

If the Hong Kong portrayed in "Heavenly Dream" is the heaven coined by the

⁵¹ Editorial Group of the Four Seasons Pictorial, *Four Seas Pictorial*, 6:20.(1952/2/25)

⁵² Editorial Group of the Four Seasons Pictorial, *Four Seas Pictorial*, 38:19-20.(1954/12/10)

⁵³ Editorial Group of the Four Seasons Pictorial, *Four Seas Pictorial*, 41:20.(1955/3/10)

refugees, Wan Gang was steadfast in describing how refugees perceived Hong Kong once they arrived in “heaven.” In “Tragedy of the Typewriter,” the author depicted how Hong Kong residents had to engage in smuggling to survive. The climax of this story was when the female lead character, Chou Minjuan, said in despair, “*What else is love good for?*”⁵⁴ and “*There is no room for love in such times of struggle.*”⁵⁵ This short story clearly portrays the extreme hardship Hong Kong residents experienced in the 1950s, explaining that love gradually lost value amidst the growing despair of survival. “Kowloon City After Dark,” a story of the life of refugees in Hong Kong’s Diamond Hill written by Wan Gang, was a realistic account of the marriage between Gu Zhusun and Lady Wang Hanmei, daughter of a tycoon in Hong Kong. As the story unravels, readers experience the hardship they endured for survival, how their feelings for each other changed from love to hate, and from desperation for survival. The author perfectly depicted a dark and hopeless Hong Kong. A similar plot can be observed in the story, “Wait,” which illustrates the hardship of unemployed subalterns in Hong Kong.⁵⁶ “Criminal” depicts the life of refugees after arriving in Hong Kong. It portrays Hong Kong as a place of hope and deprivation, recollecting Yi-Hua penniless life in Wuyi Lane to becoming wealthy and finally losing his way to opium.⁵⁷ The aforementioned stories highlighted the stories of people in Hong Kong, creating a contrasting experience to the positive, bright, and hopeful images published in *Four Seas Pictorial*.⁵⁸ In summary, *Four Seas Pictorial* claimed that it realistically portrayed the free world and the communist world. However, its presentation of images showed otherwise. We observed a world torn in two. Its claims were realized in its literary works. In the textual world created by Hong Kong authors, the world is a single unified body without a clear boundary between darkness and light, human nature, and emotions. The gray area between these depictions was presented in writing.

4. Conclusion

Four Seas Pictorial is a key pictorial that reflects American Power in Southeast Asia in the 1950s. It was the first free world pictorial in Southeast Asia. It was also the first pictorial published by the USIS-HK that focused on overseas Chinese. In respect of U.S. propaganda in Southeast Asia, *American Today* was already in circulation before the launch of *Four Seas Pictorial*. However, the content of

⁵⁴ Editorial Group of the Four Seasons Pictorial, *Four Seas Pictorial*, 22:20.(1953/8/1)

⁵⁵ Editorial Group of the Four Seasons Pictorial, *Four Seas Pictorial*, 22:20.(1953/8/1)

⁵⁶ Fan Jiping, *Four Seas Pictorial*, 49:24-25.(1955/11/15)

⁵⁷ Editorial Group of the Four Seasons Pictorial, *Four Seas Pictorial*, 33:20.(1954/7/10)

⁵⁸ Editorial Group of the Four Seasons Pictorial, *Four Seas Pictorial*, 23:19.(1953/9/10)

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

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

A dissimilarity can be observed between the framework adopted by *Four Seas Pictorial* and that of previous publications. Although ideology was regulated by the United States, editors of the *Four Seas Pictorial* had greater editing freedom than

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

Notably, the editing style of Fan can be observed in the 1970 pictorial, *Adult*. The publication criticized and ridiculed life events using humorous maxims or says similar to the "Realization" segment of the *Four Seas Pictorial*. For example, "Men argue, women converse, and petty people whisper"; "Business is like oil and friendship is like water; they do not mix;" "Inventing a new dish is comparable to discovering a new planet";⁵⁹ "Ideas that are understood by few are philosophy, by many, they are knowledge;" "The first gift God gave to women is beauty. It is also the first thing He takes away."⁶⁰ Fan's alias, Shuangguan Dafu, often appeared in *Adult* for authoring epigrams. His real name also appeared in the magazine for his observations and commentaries concerning events in Southeast Asia. This content can be perceived as the experience and continuity of *Four Seas Pictorial*.

Four Seas Pictorial not only promoted the free world but also reflected the conditions of Hong Kong in the 1950s through the writings of a group of local intellectuals. For example, the works published in the "Short Stories" segment, as well as the images by Wei-Ling Li published in the "Hong Kong Sketches" and "Hong Kong Illustrations" segments, illustrated Hong Kong's society in the 1950s. In response to the "Hong Kong Illustrations" segment by Li Weiling (Appendix 3), Yang Jiguang stated:

"Hong Kong has long lost its culture. It is now another's cliché. Despite this fact, people often praise Hong Kong, describing it as a beautiful paradise. If we willingly lament, 'Hong Kong's culture lies in ruin,' just because a few self-identifying cultural promoters are disseminating their destructive cultural germs, then those that do not perceive themselves to be fighting for a cause, but silently support and encourage the promotion of culture out of their obligation and interest to life, should undoubtedly be a pleasant surprise. Even if such

⁵⁹ Editorial Group of the Four Seasons Pictorial, *Four Seas Pictorial*, 1:19.(1951/9/10)

⁶⁰ Editorial Group of the Four Seasons Pictorial, *Four Seas Pictorial*, 7:19.(1952/3/25)

*people are rare, I firmly believe they exist. They neither over-exaggerate nor clamor about creating history. They are neither tainted by an innate sense of superiority nor desire to lead or reproach others. Instead, they do what they can, regardless of the consequences. It is the sincerity they demonstrate in their work that pushes their culture forward.”*⁶¹

The long comment provided by Yang Jiguang concerning the work of Li Weiling was to praise Li for the contribution he had made to Hong Kong. Li Weiling was one of the rare influencers described by Yang. Although Yang’s comment was after the Li and other relevant editors began working under the framework stipulated by the U.S. Aid Literary Institution, Yang’s comment possibly meant the self-perception of the actors towards their cultural work. In other words, Hong Kong’s intellectuals working in the U.S. Aid Literary Institution were aware that they opposed communist China. However, they did not wish to clamor like their opposition. Instead, they firmly believed that “[h]e uses the tools and skills available to him to record and represent his experiences and current conditions realistically. Then, he expresses his personal opinions concerning the environment and zeitgeist.”⁶² This was the environment, conditions, and zeitgeist of Hong Kong.

⁶¹ Editorial Group of the Four Seasons Pictorial, *Four Seas Pictorial*, 18:10.(1953/4/1)

⁶² Editorial Group of the Four Seasons Pictorial, *Four Seas Pictorial*, 18:11.(1953/4/1)

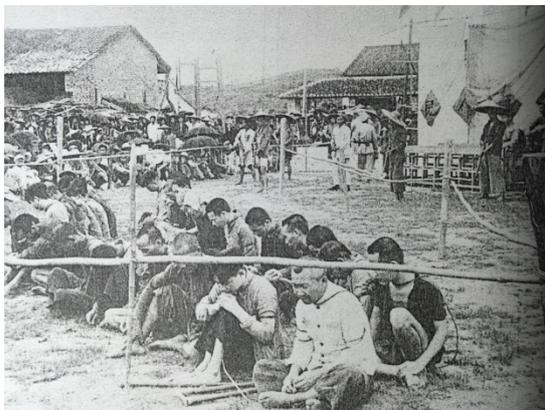
Appendix 1: The Cover Comparison of *Four Seas Pictorial*,
Screen Pictorial and *Companion Pictorial*



Appendix 2: Status Quo of Land Reform



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



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

Appendix 3: Sketch of Hong Kong by Li Weiling



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香港製造的自由世界圖像： 以《四海》畫報（1951-1956）為例

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摘要

本文以香港美新處出版的《四海》畫報（1951-1956）為中心，探究香港美新處如何透過「畫報」的宣傳形式，尋求東南亞讀者的共鳴，塑造其自由世界的想像。本文透過美國國家檔案局（NARA）中收錄《四海》畫報的文獻，討論這份被視為《今日世界》姊妹品的畫報，是香港美新處針對東南亞讀者所發行的新聞圖片雜誌，也是當時東南亞自由陣營最早的一份畫報。

透過《四海》畫報的研究，除了看到以照片為主體的「畫報」，扮演圖片記實和意識型態塑造的功能，在「娛樂」中帶有「政治」，並具有大眾化和商業化的特質，目的在以更符合經濟理性的方式，實現美國權力文化宣傳的目標，以爭取自由世界更多讀者對於美方和自由中國的認同。其次，透過《四海》畫報的編輯運作，可以看到美國權力透過「在地中介者」可能產生的變化，美方掌握大方向，確保意識型態上的正確，至於形式等細節，則交由在地中介者決定。最後，本文嘗試思考「香港畫報史」的可能性。在既有對於「晚清畫報」的研究中，可以看到香港製造的畫報，除了受到中國畫報傳統的影響，還有如《四海》畫報被視為是「香港的《生活雜誌》」，彰顯在香港畫報的發展過程中的上海與美國因素。

關鍵字：文化冷戰、美元文化、香港美新處、宣傳、反共