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Chinese Illustrated Propaganda Books 1950-2000

Maggs Brothers are very pleased to offer for sale a comprehensive collection of books on a subject that has recently received a lot of attention: The publication of Martin Parr’s and Wassink Lundgren’s groundbreaking ‘The Chinese Photobook’ (Aperture, 2015) has thrown a great deal of light on the development of photography in China during the 20th century and much of the text below is based on their findings.

The present collection covers one aspect of Chinese photography, namely propaganda publications from the second half of the 20th century. The subject of propaganda in Communist China has been thoroughly explored in the fields of poster-design as well as artifacts relating to the personality cult of Mao Zedong, but surprisingly little attention has focused on the development of Chinese photography during that time.

When looking through the group of books listed below it becomes obvious that both in the design as well as in the photographic technique there are discernable shifts in observation that correspond to the change of politics and power-structures in China. As such this collection provides a valuable resource for the history of China in general as well as photography and publishing in particular.

Price of collection: £85,000
2  China.
Publisher unknown. 1954.
Large 8vo. 48 loose black-and-white and color plates with printed captions on verso. In original cloth folding case.
Parr/WassinkLundgren: The Chinese Photobook, p.162

This publication was printed to mark the fifth anniversary of the founding of the PRC. Soong Ching-ling, the widow of Sun Yat-sen, contributed the preface. She states that the book shows “a picture of over 500 million people overcoming obstacles and progressing enthusiastically and victoriously toward Socialism.” The photographs cover agricultural and industrial developments, cultural projects, and social life. The text is in Chinese, English, French, and Russian. The images, mostly in color, are loose in a box, the cover of which features the title in Mao's calligraphy.

3  Women in China.
Publisher unknown. 1954.
Parr/WassinkLundgren: The Chinese Photobook, p.156

Published in 1954, the fifth anniversary of the PRC's founding, Women in China depicts the "women of New China" - at work, at play, and even shaking hands with Mao - in a series of black-and-white and color images. Presented as a set of loose plates in a brocade box, individual photographs could be hung as inspirational decor in homes and community centers.
Each of the above volumes illustrates the important roles promised to women in the People's Republic of China: “For the first time in history, Chinese women workers obtained equal rights in society, they now hold their destiny in their own hands, working for their own interests, as well as the prosperity of the motherland.”

The book’s preface furthermore states, “According to statistics of 1955, the number of women workers in China has increased approximately four-fold since the early period of Liberation in 1949.” They constituted an important human resource and now worked in jobs that were hitherto the preserve of men.

Due to the similarities in layout and design this magazine was almost certainly published by the China Workers Publishing House in Beijing. “Our people all over the country are enthusiastically working to build our country into a great socialist state.” (Preface).
China's autonomous regions are often centers of ethnic minority populations and each has their own local government with certain legislative privileges. Inner Mongolia formally became an autonomous region in 1947, two years before the founding of the People's Republic, when northeastern China was already under the control of the Chinese Communist Party. *Pictures of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region* introduces some of the economic and cultural developments in the region.

This promotional book was intended to showcase the enthusiasm with which China's youth engaged in every aspect of life in New China. Its optimistic images illustrate the notion, stated in the preface, that "we, Chinese youths, have already become masters of our country." The roles of children and young adults were radically reshaped in post-Confucian China. In traditional Confucian society people knew their places: sons obeyed fathers, wives obeyed husbands, younger brother obeyed elder brother - and everyone obeyed the emperor. With the overthrow of the imperial system in 1911, things changed irrevocably. Their newly developed sense of patriotism encouraged people of all ages to identify with the state. This feeling reached its apogee during the Cultural Revolution (1966–76), when China's youth assumed the right to destroy all that it identified with the old society.
Ministry of Water Resources of the People’s Republic of China, ed.
Shanghai People’s Fine Art Publishing House, 1956.
Parr/WassinkLundgren: The Chinese Photobook, p.172

Published in 1956 as publicity material for the new engineering projects depicted, this book was also sold abroad through the China International Bookstore. The design of the book’s cover, printed in green with repeating stylized waves, stands in stark contrast to the rather austere, predominantly black-and-white photographs inside, featuring dams and navigation locks, sluice gates, and river dredging operations. The term “water conservancy” is popularly understood to mean not wasting water, but the focus of this book is more in line with China’s perennial water issue: how to control water. A country both rich in water resources and subject to frequent floods and droughts, China has always prioritized development of large-scale water management infrastructure.

Beijing, Minzu Chubanshe, 1956. Large 8vo. Original cloth in dust-wrapper.
Not in Parr/WassinkLundgren: The Chinese Photobook

A fascinating propaganda book about Muslims in China produced at a time when China felt confident that they had established full control over its minorities. “We hope that the free religious life reflected in these pictures will further inspire the patriotic enthusiasm of Chinese Moslems, increase non-Moslems’ understanding of Moslems in our country, and promote mutual understanding between us and our Moslem brothers and Non-Moslem friends throughout the world.” (Foreword).
As the PRC approached its tenth anniversary, books recording the achievements of individual provinces became popular. They were inspired by gazetteers (difangzhi), a historical book genre with maps and illustrations that goes back to the Han dynasty. Their modern equivalent showcases local characteristics and cultural traditions and highlight its special contributions to the New China.

In the early twentieth century, Harbin had a certain international flair that led to attributes like "Oriental Moscow" and "Little Paris of the East" for its architecture and sophisticated lifestyle. The photographs in this book present Harbin's unique history and culture and some of the important transformations experienced by the city since 1949.
北京风光集 Glimpses of Peking.


This book has the feeling of an illustrated tourist guide to the Capital, featuring many of the attractions that date back to the imperial past, as well as some of the recently constructed University campuses, factories and amenities such as the Worker’s Club. The book was clearly intended for a foreign audience within the Communist sphere of influence.

全國勞動改造罪犯工作展覽會畫冊 [Catalogue of the Exhibition on the National Criminal Reform Through Labor].


By 1959, there had been about ten nationwide purges of different natures. The Exhibition on the National Criminal Reform Through Labor was held in Beijing in the same year. Initially it was opened for party-members only, but it was made accessible to the public on June 1, and concluded on July 30, having received over two hundred thousand visitors. According to the preface, the purpose of the exhibition was “to report to the people of the entire nation on the status of reform work and to solicit further support and monitoring from the people, so as to reform criminals more effectively, transform negative elements into positive ones, and more rapidly and effectively contribute to the development of socialism.” This book was not for sale but published for official use only.
To commemorate the tenth anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, the Central Government undertook ten major construction projects in Beijing and in February 1959, stipulated that they be finished for the anniversary on October 1st (China's National Day). These small booklets were published as a gift to some of the units responsible for the projects, which became known as the Ten Great Buildings. It illustrates nine of the ten Great Buildings excluding the yet-unfinished Diaoyutai State Guest-house.

This deluxe clothbound book, housed in a brocade box, was published in 1959. Another edition (not shown), clothbound in a paper box, was also published. In pictures full of color and life, highlighting technology and modernity, Shanghai is shown as a happy and well-ordered city. Hobbies and leisure make an appearance too. In editorial approach and layout, the book is similar to China (pp. 176–79), published in the same year. Here, however, the emphasis is on the changes undergone by Shanghai in the course of China's modern development, and the city's importance as a role model in this process.
When Shanghai became a “Treaty Port” in 1842 the city acquired a new and ostensibly western dimension. After the founding of the PRC, almost all foreigners had to leave the city, but it maintained its status as an important industrial center. The photographs in this book showcase Shanghai’s achievements since the city’s liberation from Nationalist control on May 27, 1949. The image captions and preface are provided in Russian, English, and French, as well as Chinese. The message of this photobook can be summed up in the following quote: “Universal grinding machines - the precision rate reaches international standards. These are now produced on a large scale by the Shanghai Machine Tool Factory which formerly could only produce simple farm implements.”

Heilongjiang, the northern-most province of China, possesses rich mineral deposits and energy resources, notably oil, coal, gold, and graphite. Many industrial enterprises were established here in the 1950s; extensive land reclamation projects were undertaken, and large-scale farms were created to exploit some of the country’s most fertile land. Celebrating Heilongjiang’s achievements during the first decade of the PRC, this book shares the editorial approach and layout of both Shanghai and the monumental China published in the same year.
Edited by the China editorial committee, this “super book” was created in an effort to present a grand survey of Chinese history and culture, bringing together almost 550 images, including 27 photographs of ancient Chinese artifacts. This book comes in three parts, the main one showcasing the achievements of the first decade of the PRC, and the other two dedicated to fine arts and historical artifacts. It is particularly interesting for its combination of politics and art objects that harks back to the old concept of the ‘mandate of heaven’ where ancient cultural relics bestowed legitimacy to those who ruled the country.

Planning for the book started in early 1958 involving the Ministry of Culture as well as Xinhua News Agency. It was meant to showcase the high-points and achievements of the first ten years under the rule of the Chinese Communist Party.

The year 1958 marked the start of China’s Great Leap Forward, a campaign that was intended to rapidly transform the country into a modern Communist state through rapid industrialization and collectivization. Like many of the celebratory projects and events of 1959, the completion of the Great Hall deserved a proper publication. The vast complex was constructed within a year. The large-format folio book The Great Hall of the People shows the brand-new parliament and congress hall through twenty wide-angle photographs, printed on loose plates. The photographs depict the building’s exterior and interior with its array of auditoriums, waiting rooms, banqueting and conference halls. Within the genre of the Chinese propaganda book this is an out-standing publication.
Fred Foley was an American Jesuit priest who came to Beijing in 1946 to learn Chinese. Following the Communist takeover, he moved to Taiwan and spent his spare time photographing the people, culture, and landscape. *The Face of Taiwan* was one of the first English books to focus exclusively on the island. Foley modeled his book on Edward Steichen's *The Family of Man* (1955), and it matches the work almost page for page. But whereas *The Family of Man* advocates a message of universalism, *The Face of Taiwan* takes a strong position against the Communist enemy.

Iron and Steel production became the central focus during the Great Leap Forward when Mao demanded that the country transform itself from an agricultural society to an industrial one in the shortest possible time. 'All the teachers, staff members and students in the Institute are now pooling their efforts, working with courage, perseverance, revolutionary drive, and resolutely advancing on the road of being Red and Expert…'
The People's Sports Publishing House produced a number of publications focusing on the role of sports in Chinese society. This book documents the First National Games of the People's Republic of China, which took place in Beijing between September 13 and October 3, 1959. Forming a comprehensive record of the games themselves (soccer, parachuting, and Chinese chess!), the book also publicizes achievements and developments in sports and exercise in the PRC during its first decade. The volume opens with portraits of and inscriptions by Chairman Mao and President Liu Shaoqi, signaling the importance of sports to both Party and state.

The Table Tennis Association of the People's Republic of China regularly issued publications to commemorate major tournaments. This volume was published in 1961 as a record of the 26th World Table Tennis Championship, held in Beijing, in which China won its first men's team gold medal in addition to gold medals in the men's and women's singles competitions. Of considerable importance within the history of table tennis, the book documents the entire championship in photographs and includes the schedule and lists of participating athletes from the various countries. It also reproduces promotional posters, sketches, cartoons, prize medals, and commemorative medals and stamps.
宮燈 [Palace lanterns].
Architectural Engineering Department at the Institute for Architecture, ed.
12mo. 44 leporello pages (printed on one side). Black-and-white and color plates. Hardcover
(lacking slipcase).
Parr/WassinkLundgren: The Chinese Photobook, p.201

This book was compiled by the Architectural Engineering Department at the Institute for Architecture
and published by the Cultural Relics Press in Beijing in 1960. According to the book's preface,
Chinese palace lanterns are "well-known in the world as a distinctive kind of arts and craft." In
order to provide reference material for architects, the editors of the book selected thirty-nine palace
lanterns from new products, as well as some from Beijing Palace Museum's collection of seventeenth
and eighteenth-century lanterns.

中國攝影作品選 [A selection of Chinese photography].
Parr/WassinkLundgren: The Chinese Photobook, p.195

This book was compiled by the editorial department of Chinese Photography, the official publication
of the China Photographers Association (then known as the China Photographic Academy). The
twenty-four images featured are prizewinning works selected from photographs published in
Chinese Photography between 1957 and 1959. According to the editors, the photographs chosen
offer "compelling proof of the victory of the Party's cultural policies in the art of photography and
the success of their focus on workers, farmers, and soldiers." The book was issued as a deluxe
hardcover edition, with an initial print run of 1,500 copies.
Hubei province is located in Central China north of Dongting Lake. With the Yangtze running through it from West to East its capital Wuhan has always been an important commercial hub. During the 1960s it became a center of the steel and heavy industry. The book follows the example of other provincial photo-books but the present tome is characterized by a particular high-gloss finish to the plates. The first double-page spread of the 8th Communist Party Congress has been cropped on the left, presumably to erase Liu Shaoqi from the image.

Peking Railway Station.

Edited and published in 1965 by the Exhibition Bureau of the Ministry of Railways, this book is a collection of photographs of the Peking Railway Station, (one of the Ten Great Buildings). The 1965 edition revised and improved upon an earlier volume that had been published in 1959. According to the preface of the book, construction of the station began on January 20, 1959, and concluded merely seven months and twenty days later. The present volume records the infrastructure of the station, combined with scenes of happy passengers boarding trains. Most of the photographs are staged, with conscious management of visual details. In many copies pages at the beginning of the book have been glued together in order to hide photographs of Party leaders who had fallen from grace. The cover features Mao Zedong’s calligraphic rendition of the title.
The People of Vietnam Will Triumph! U.S. Aggressors Will Be Defeated!

Foreign Languages Press Beijing, 1966.
Parr/WassinkLundgren: The Chinese Photobook, p.210

As a supporter of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam, DRV), China actively opposed the U.S. presence in Vietnam, and engaged in various propaganda campaigns criticizing American actions in South-East Asia. It was edited by the Foreign Languages Press, which specialized in internationally oriented propaganda and publicity materials. Many of the photographs originated in international journalistic coverage of the Vietnam War. Each volume is filled with statistics of military and civilian casualties, graphic photographs of injuries and ruins, and vitriolic statements against the United States and its military.

The Palestinian and other Arab Peoples will win!

Foreign Languages Press Beijing, 1970.
Not in Parr/WassinkLundgren: The Chinese Photobook

Published in the year after the 9th Party Congress where Lin Biao had been designated Mao’s “closest comrade-in-arms” and his official successor, this book features both on the frontispiece. During the 1960s and 70s the PRC strongly supported Yasser Arafat and the Palestine Liberation Organization.
31 我們必勝! 港英必敗!
The Upheaval in Hong Kong – We Shall Win! British Imperialism in Hong Kong Will be Defeated!
Parr/WassinkLundgren: The Chinese Photobook, p.348

A fascinating piece of propaganda relating to disturbances instigated by the Communists in 1967. Inspired by the Cultural Revolution on the mainland left-wing sympathizers turned a labor dispute into large-scale demonstrations against British Colonial rule. There were instances of strong violence on both sides which left some fifty people dead and eight-hundred wounded.

32 紅太陽照亮了大寨 前進的道路
[The Red Sun Lights the Road Forward for Tachai].
Foreign Languages Press Beijing, 1969.
4to. 148 pages Black-and-white and color plates. Softcover, slightly worn.
Parr/WassinkLundgren: The Chinese Photobook, p.224

"In agriculture, learn from Dazhai" was Chairman Mao's famous exhortation to peasants across the country. Dazhai was a model commune in Shanxi Province that far out-performed other communes in its agricultural yields - despite frequent droughts and severe flooding. Millions of people visited the commune to learn from the miraculous transformation.

Ostensibly, the purpose of the book was to extol the determination of the Chinese people in triumphing over nature. But it also documents the growing deification of Mao. In 1980 the 'Dazhai miracle' was revealed to have been a sham.
On May 7, 1966, Mao Zedong wrote a letter to Lin Biao, supporting the "Report on Further Developing Agricultural Production and Side-Occupations in the Armed Forces," drawn up by and for the PLA. It called for the education of troops in politics and military affairs, and recommended that they engage in additional occupations, including agricultural work, and running small factories to produce goods for the army's own use. Mao's reply - written just days before the launch of the Cultural Revolution - came to be known as the May Seventh Directive. Welcoming the report's recommendations, Mao went further, proposing that all fields of endeavor should become schools of revolution; soldiers, workers, students, officials, and others should all experience working environments other than their own. The text of Mao's reply to Lin is reproduced in the book, and the photographs reveal the close relationship between the two, as well as illustrating the ostensible impact of the directive on the working lives of the people.

Lin Biao was a key military figure who was Mao's designated successor. His alleged coup attempt against Mao in 1971 resulted in his death. In this and other books of the period, Lin's photograph has been defaced. In many copies, Lin's name is also crossed out. The owner may have defaced it to show solidarity with Mao or as a protective measure in case anyone discovered the book in his possession.

Clouds hold important clues to understanding how the atmosphere behaves. The secrets of their formation, their constant motion, radiance, and color has been the subject of intense study going back to Imperial times. The atlas opens with a photograph of auspicious clouds in a blue sky above Tiananmen. The book is divided into text and images of clouds, detailing precisely when and where each photo was taken, and often juxtaposing a line drawing to explain particular features. As with most books published in the 1970s this album begins with a statement by the Chairman.
The Chinese People’s Liberation Army
摄影作品选集  Album with a Selection of Photographic Works.

Not in Parr/WassinkLundgren: The Chinese Photobook

Published on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of Mao Zedong’s celebrated ‘Talks at the Yan’an forum on Literature and Art’ in which he decreed that all art should serve politics and advance socialism. The anniversary was widely celebrated in China with a number of large art exhibitions and the present book features classic images by PLA photographers of happy soldiers and farmers working enthusiastically to build a communist society. All the images are credited to individual photographers.

鐵路橋樑  [Railway bridges].

Small folio. 117pp. Black-and-white and color plates. Cloth-backed boards with plastic dust jacket. Published for internal use only.
Parr/WassinkLundgren: The Chinese Photobook, p.239

The photographs in this book celebrate some of China’s most magnificent bridges. China was justifiably proud of these engineering feats. The Nanjing Yangtze River Bridge featured on the cover of the books was the first double-decked bridge designed and built by Chinese expertise. The brief preface to the book states that the working class should demonstrate their revolutionary spirit by following the maxim of “Self-reliance and arduous struggle.” This hints at the fact that bridge construction was a dangerous endeavor.
The China national football team was founded in 1924; they joined FIFA in 1931, withdrew after the founding of the People’s Republic in 1949, and rejoined in 1979. The sixteen double-sided, accordion-style booklets combine text with black-and-white photographs to demonstrate basic soccer techniques. Diagrams on the facing page explain the text. Each of the booklets focuses on a particular technique, such as catching the ball, passing, and scoring a goal. The photographs illustrate each component move, and because the pages fold out into a filmstrip-like sequence, the complete maneuver can be viewed from start to finish.

Revolutionary model operas were introduced by Jiang Qing, wife of Mao Zedong, during the Cultural Revolution (1966–76). In music and theme, they differed greatly from traditional Beijing, Cantonese, and other operas, and had as their purpose not merely entertainment but the promotion of revolutionary fervor, socialism, and Mao Zedong Thought. Most of the operas also had a military focus, and dancers flying across the stage while pointing rifles at imagined foreign and class enemies figured in many of them. Traditional opera was banned as “feudalistic and bourgeois” and replaced by revolutionary ones. During the Cultural Revolution, they were the sole form of theatrical performance. The best-known operas were Red Detachment of Women, Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy, and The White-haired Girl. Although the purpose of the opera/ballets was to promote Mao’s brand of socialism and to excoriate “feudal” remnants and imperialists alike, they were not without artistic merit; even today some of them are still performed both in China and abroad, albeit with their political content toned down.
萬水千山只等閒 : 鐵道兵戰鬥在成昆線 [Fear not a journey across ten thousand rivers, a thousand mountains: the Railway Engineering Corps’ battles along the Chengdu-Kunming Railway].


Even today the People's Liberation Army is involved in many of the major construction works throughout China. The Chengdu–Kunming Railroad traverses just under seven hundred miles of difficult terrain as it links the capitals of Sichuan and Yunnan Provinces. It took twelve years to build, from 1958, and cost more than two thousand workers’ lives. It is considered one of China's greatest engineering feats, involving the construction of hundreds of bridges and tunnels along its route. This book records the workers who built the railroad and survived.

When the book was first issued Lin Biao contributed pieces of calligraphy and text. After his death (and subsequent official condemnation) on September 13th 1971 all references to him had to be eliminated, and certain pages were removed or pasted over. The two variant copies provide remarkable evidence of these alterations: such as in the example shown opposite, in which a photo of General Wu Faxian, who was also implicated in the plot, has been purged from the censored publication.
Mao Tsetung – A Selection of Photographs


A photographic chronicle of the adult life of the Chairman. Most of the images are posed showing Mao as charismatic leader, teacher, thinker, general, and father figure. The purpose of this album, published two years after Mao's death, is to glorify Mao. The artificiality of these images is of such an order that they almost feel like paintings. Many of them are by Mao's official photographer, Hou Bo.

Chairman Mao Memorial Hall

Folio. 107pp. Black-and-white and color plates. 2 variant copies: Original boards with bellyband in slipcase (left) & Original cloth in dust-jacket and slipcase (below). Parr/WassinkLundgren: The Chinese Photobook, p.252

Mao Zedong died in 1976 at age eighty-two. However, like Lenin and Ho Chi Minh, Mao lives on after death, his corpse preserved in a glass case in the Chairman Mao Memorial Hall, a specially designed mausoleum that has become a major tourist attraction for Chinese and foreigners alike. This book further memorializes Mao, while also proudly documenting the tremendous achievement of the hall's construction by the publisher of this book, China Architecture and Building Press. The building project involved hundreds of thousands of conscripted "volunteers" who completed the massive edifice in only six months. The book's title appears in English on a bellyband wrapped around the cover; an English-language brochure is loosely inserted into its pages. The brochure identifies the photographers by name, accompanied by numbers corresponding to the photos taken by each of them. The location of the memorial hall in Tiananmen Square in Beijing ensures that Mao's presence cannot be ignored. He still influences however remotely everything that happens in the square, whether the annual National Day military parades, or protests such as the huge and fatal June 4th Incident of 1989, when students and their supporters rallied to demand government reform.
China's militia, known as the "People's Militia," was formed in 1930 and still serves as a support force for the People's Liberation Army. Its members, both male and female, receive limited training, and its responsibilities are correspondingly limited. In 1958, Mao Zedong launched the "Everyone a soldier" campaign to recruit large segments of the populace into the militia. Their deployment all across the nation was held to offer a form of national defense that an army concentrated in a few locales could not provide. Before its reorganization in 1987, the militia had counted among its duties patrolling China's coastlines, pursuing bandits, and sending aloft hot-air balloons to drop printed propaganda over Taiwan, some ninety miles off the coast of Fujian Province. At various times militia units were also responsible for internal security, and took part in agricultural and industrial production. In times of war, the militia would, as before, provide logistical support to the regular armed forces (air and naval, as well as ground forces). The activities shown in this book about China's militia are predominantly training exercises, including battle simulation exercises. The photographs convey a sense of the physical endurance required, as well as the variety of skills learned.

The People's Liberation Army (PLA) employed its own photographers to record and celebrate its feats and activities. Parades, battle simulations, combat operations, mass gatherings in Tiananmen, and general duties are all recorded in the images of this book. The PLA began its transformation into a modern army in the 1950s with substantial help from the Soviet Union. Over the years, it has participated in many internal and external campaigns, including the Korean War (1950–53), the Sino-Indian Border Conflict (1962), and the Vietnam War (1959–75). The PLA also played a complex role during the Cultural Revolution (1966–76). Under Deng Xiaoping's leadership, the PLA's modernization would include a return to a mainly nonpolitical role, a focus on quality rather than quantity, and the use of technology to upgrade weapons.
清 明 祭 [Qingming festival].

Publisher unknown, 1978.
Parr/WassinkLundgren: The Chinese Photobook, p.278

“Qingming” in the title of the first book, however, refers not to grave sweeping, but to the mass outpouring of grief during April 1976, following the death of Premier Zhou Enlai. This title only appeared two years after his death - for no such account could have been published before the fall of the Gang of Four.
Published three years after his death this is an extraordinary work documenting the mourning during and after the funeral of Zhou Enlai (1898-1976). Zhou Enlai’s death on January 28, 1976 led to the famous Tiananmen incident on April 5th, 1976: In Chinese culture, people celebrate the 106th day after the winter solstice as the Qingming Festival, also known as Tomb Sweeping Day. On April 4 hundreds of thousands of Beijing residents came to the square to pay homage to the respected leader. Many laid wreaths, paper chrysanthemums or posted handwritten notes, which often referred to ancient Chinese historical events, but were intended to criticize China’s current leaders. The large number of mourners and intensity of the public outpouring of sentiment alarmed Communist Party officials. The Politburo met in emergency sessions in the Great Hall of the People, and decided to remove all the wreaths, flowers, and poems. Many blamed this on the influence of the Gang of Four, and Jiang Qing in particular. The date of 1979 is of course indicative of the true reality of new power in China: Deng Xiaoping had taken control of the Politburo in December 1978 during the Third Plenary Session of the 11th CPC Central Committee. In reality this publication documents the new reality of Reform and Opening Up in China and it is famously the first publication that was not subject to the usual constraints of censorship and political interference in China. Contributions were sought from all manner of professional and amateur photographers. Ironically the publication anticipates the events in Tiananmen Square in 1989.
Various photographers.
Volume I and II: 17 plates each with 33 black-and-white photographs. Envelopes with offset-printed postcards enclosed.
Parr/WassinkLundgren: The Chinese Photobook, p.281

The previous publication marked the start of the renaissance of Chinese photography, and made it possible for the first time after the Communist takeover to print photographs that were taken outside the objective to serve the state. The April Photography Society were the first to manifest this spirit. They determined to move away from politics and embrace a more personal use of photography. The April Photography Society organized the first unofficial photographic exhibition in China. *Nature, Society, and Man* opened in Beijing’s Sun Yat-sen Park on April 1, 1979, and included 280 works by fifty-one artists. The exhibition turned out to be very popular, with large numbers visiting every day to absorb every detail of the works. Following the success of *Nature, Society, and Man*, the Society organized two more exhibitions in 1980 and 1981 that toured nationwide. Each was accompanied by a postcard-like catalogue with seventeen loose sheets. It unambiguously signaled the beginning of a new and less dogmatic Chinese cultural renaissance.

Who would have thought that something as innocuous as a table-cloth or a water-glass could be turned into a vehicle for Communist propaganda: "Especially in the unprecedented great proletarian revolution, owing to the fact that the numerous workers, staff members and art workers are holding still higher the great red banner of Mao Tse-tung’s thought, giving prominence to proletarian politics and resolutely carrying out the policies of ‘letting a hundred flowers bloom’ and ‘weeding through the old to let the new emerge’, the hand-embroidered articles have made constant improvement both in quality and in variety." Although undated there is a library accession stamp on the verso of the back cover which dates this item July 3rd, 1968.
The purpose of *China Health Pictorial* was to publicize the rapid advances in health care achieved by the PRC. It features a rich mix of photography, graphics, and statistics and opens with an image of a painting of Mao Zedong visiting injured soldiers in Yan’an, followed by an inscription in his hand. Most of the content had in fact been taken from the *First National Exhibition on Health and Medicine*, which opened on August 7, 1950, to coincide with the First National Health Congress. The subject matter of these titles is public health care in the PRC. Public health and related issues such as hygiene, exercise, and school sports had already been the focus of the New Life Movement launched by Chiang Kai-shek in 1934 but during the civil war and WWII they had obviously been rather neglected. Community health care was again emphasized in New China. *Health and Hygiene of the People of China* shows how the Communist Party led the people in a patriotic health movement and, in the words of the preface, “completely reformed health care conditions in the entire nation.” The images—primarily journalistic photographs and propaganda photographs—depict many of the new and improved practices.
An illustrated report of the findings of a scientific study on China’s ‘hairy people’. Hairiness is not a common physical attribute of East Asians, and research into its occurrence might yield interesting and useful data on human genetic variation. Six charts summarize the findings and provide statistics on the distribution of hairy people across China. In a twist of fate, the infant depicted on the cover has become a renowned celebrity and rock star in China: Yu Zhenhuan is known today as “the hairiest man in China”.

Three decades of achievement of Beijing No. 1 Construction Co., founded in 1953 are celebrated in this book, which includes the Jianguo Hotel, the first foreign-designed and foreign-invested hotel to be built in China.

From 1949 to 1983, a series of government initiatives radically altered the face of Beijing, not only by erecting modern buildings but also, as prelude, by destroying much of the ancient architecture. The extended captions in this book are in Chinese and English, no doubt to appeal to both local and foreign audiences.
"How do Chinese workers spend their spare time after a good day’s work? This is a question that is much in the thought of many people abroad.” Most of the recorded activities are group pursuits. Whether what is portrayed here is actual documentation or scenes staged for the camera is not known; but what is revealed is a slice of Chinese life that is rarely recorded in the history books.

The Communist state assumed not only the roles of ideological guide of political policies, but also of educator and publisher of information useful to the growing masses. Each page of this atlas of the tongue, released by the People’s Medical Publishing House, features a close-up of an individual tongue, accompanied by a description of its appearance and diagnoses of possible underlying health issues. Analysis of the tongue’s appearance dates back - according to this book - to *The Yellow Emperor’s Classic of Internal Medicine* from the second century BCE. It is still a revered text in China.
Published to celebrate four decades of enforcing the law on the streets, it is interesting to note that this seemingly innocuous title is printed English as well as Chinese using long-form characters. As such it appears that it targeted the Chinese in Hong Kong, where simplified characters were not widely recognized and English is still prevalent. It cannot be a coincidence that it was published in the year before the handover of Hong Kong to Chinese rule in July 1997.

This title with text in Chinese and English is the only one published in Beijing and gives the Chinese government's account of the events of June 4, putting blame on rebellious elements who wanted to challenge the constitution and the Communist Party and overthrow the government. Atrocities reportedly committed by the protestors are graphically described. Ironically this book is also now banned in China.