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CARTOONS FROM CONTEMPORARY CHINA

当代中国漫画集



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All the cartoons in this book, about 300 in total, are selected by cartoonist, Lan Jianan, from the publications in the past few years. They include pieces by renowned artists like Hua Junwu, Zhang Leping, Ding Cong and Fang Cheng.

This book is not only for those who seek fun, but also for those who study contemporary China, since almost all of the cartoons reflect the different aspects of Chinese society including institutions, personnel, family, marriage, children and entertainment.

本书辑录了中国大陆华君武、张乐平、丁聪、方成等一百多位美术家的三百多幅漫画，内容丰富，饶有风趣。作品反映了中国的组织机构、行政管理、婚姻家庭、文化娱乐等千姿百态的社会生活，读者在欣赏艺术的同时，可以窥见中国社会的一斑。

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PREFACE

Cartoon is a visible art often combining satire and humour, an art loved by the people. It can combine recreation and education and be an artistic way to voice one's political and social views. Cartoon can also be a uniquely scathing vehicle for different forms of criticism.

Professional cartoonists were virtually non-existent in traditional China when "if the emperor was not in the mood to laugh, the slaves were forbidden to laugh" (Lu Xun, "Analect Year"). It was only early in the twentieth century when there was no emperors in China and China was exposed to Western influences that cartoons began to appear regularly in newspapers and magazines. Professional cartoonists came into being, although about two hundred years later than when they first appeared in Europe. The steady development of cartoons was only interrupted in the ten years of turmoil that marked the "Cultural Revolution" (1966-1976). After 1976, cartoons and cartoonists emerged in even greater numbers, something unprecedented in Chinese history.

Cartoons in China are usually drawn by non-professionals from all walks of life, and they cover a variety of subjects. Obscene or pornographic cartoons are not welcomed by the popular masses. The cartoons in this book reflect various aspects of life in China's modernization programme.

Just as different countries have different political systems, different nations have different national traits, life styles, as well as ideologies. Yet, humour, the basic element of cartoons, is a universal language and, unlike

a country, has no boundaries. Like music, humour is indispensable in increasing international understanding and friendship. This is the objective of this book.

I hope that through an exchange of art in the form of cartoons, we can learn from our counterparts in the other countries.

Let's establish friendship through laughter.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Fang Cheng".

Senior Editor
of the *People's Daily*
Guest Professor
at Wuhan University

序

漫画是一门笑的艺术，尤以幽默和讽刺见称。中国在“皇帝不肯笑，奴隶是不准笑的”（鲁迅的话）时代，不会产生专门的漫画家。直到二十世纪初，皇帝没有了，中国的漫画才不断出现在印刷品上，也有了专门的漫画家，比欧洲迟两百多年。

漫画究竟是群众喜爱的艺术，娱乐性和战斗性兼而有之，一得时机，便迅速发展。粉碎“四人帮”的第二天，上海街头的大批讽刺“四人帮”的漫画，基本上都出诸于工人群众。近十年来报刊发表的漫画和作者，其数量之多，都是空前的。

我国的漫画家都有职业，工农兵学商，每一行都有漫画家，但专门从事漫画创作的人很少，其中上过美术学校的也很少。这一点，从许多作品中可以看得出来。

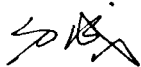
我们是社会主义国家，在建设事业中，实行物质文明和精神文明并重的方针。漫画不仅作为时事评论和供欣赏、供娱乐的艺术形式，也是着重用来进行批评和教育的艺术形式。尽管漫画题材无限，但有悖于社会主义精神文明、贻害社会人民的作品，我们的漫画家不去画，有谁画了，也不会受欢迎拿去发表。这一点，从我们的作品也看得出来。

中国是个历史悠久的古老国家，又是从万难中新兴起的国家。中国的漫画是在激烈的民族斗争和民主斗争中产生，发挥了鼓动宣传的战斗作用的，在人民群众中影响深远。在社会主义建设中，漫画题材则取自社会生活的各个方面。这本画集所选的就是这类作品。

各国制度不同，各民族也有自己的民族风习、生活方式和观念形态等等。但幽默感是不分国界的，幽默于是可以成为国际通用的语言。以此为国际交往的媒介，便于彼此间的互相了解，有利于文化交流和增进友谊，这便是这本画集出版的目的。

任何民族的艺术都有它的特色，有时代特征，也各有所长，各有所短。通过艺术交流，取人之长，补己之短，也是我们的愿望。

我们希望在笑声中获得友谊。



人民日报高级编辑
武汉大学兼职教授

INTRODUCTION

China did not have cartoons until the early twentieth century, though some traditional Chinese paintings with cartoon-like characteristics appeared as early as the Song Dynasty (960-1279). Around the time of the 1911 Revolution, progressive newspapers had developed in Guangzhou, Shanghai, Beijing and a few other major cities in China. Many of the newspapers had columns of pictures. Easily comprehensible cartoons closely related to political events, which were the main subject of the newspapers, soon emerged and were included in these columns.

After the September Eighteenth Incident China was beset by the twin spectres of revolutionary struggle and Japanese aggression. Patriotic youth were angry about a bankrupt and corrupt government that tried relentlessly on the one hand to suppress unfavourable criticism, and on the other hand, was impotent before the increasingly intensified aggression of the Japanese. Many young people, especially in Shanghai, started drawing political cartoons even though they often did not know the fundamentals of drawing. Publications such as the *Modern Sketch* and the *Shanghai Sketch* came out one after another. *Cartoon Life* was especially noted for its progressive ideas. Cartoon drawing was soon in vogue.

The major forms the cartoons took during these decades were irony and satire. Both forms are demanding on the cartoonist. In content, they satirized both the corruption and collaboration with Western and Japanese imperialism of, first, the Qing

government, and then, of the Kuomintang. Simultaneously, the moral rot within the prevailing general social order was a continual target for satire and irony.

Two Faces (1909) depicts one head with two mouths and two noses. It looks angrily at the common people and yet presents a smiling visage toward foreigners — the true image of the Qing government which oppressed the people and bowed to the foreign aggressors.

Power (1929) portrays a huge man with a fist bigger than his head, a despotic ruler grabbing all power into his hand. No mistake, it is Chiang Kai-shek relentlessly suppressing the Communists and all others struggling against his form of tyranny.

The Troubled Brothers was done in the liberated area. It depicts the Japanese and German fascists under the pressure of a huge rock, indicating the coming victory of the world anti-fascist movement.

Professor's Meal is about the miserable life intellectuals led under Kuomintang rule in the 1940s. On the dish is nothing else but a huge book. The professor and his eldest child are eating the pages while the professor's wife is feeding the younger child another page from the book. They all look gloomy. There are also cartoons about the devaluation of the currency at the time and U.S. "aid" to China.

There was one cartoon magazine in the years following the founding of New China in 1949 though newspapers also paid attention to cartoons. Before that political and social cartoons had always been in the mainstream. Cartoonists had been occupied



Two Faces (1909)

Power (1929)





The Troubled Brothers (1944)

with subjects such as imperialist depredations, governmental corruption, and the people's resistance. All these were suddenly gone and replaced by New China. Besides, the entertaining characteristics of the cartoons had not been realized. That accounts for the relatively fewer cartoons immediately after 1949 as compared with the period before 1949. That actually had been anticipated by the cartoonists. One cartoon magazine says: "The crazy dictator and his shameless greedy running dogs have offered us innumerable subjects for cartoon drawing." But now they were all gone.

During the "Cultural Revolution," the "gang of four" and their allies gained complete power in the arts and did their utmost to strangle cartoons, accusing cartoonists of having vilified socialism and the revolution. So for the ten years, practically no cartoons were published. A long cold winter enveloped cartoonists, along with other artists. Following the fall of the gang, Shanghai, a bastion of radicalism for many years, teemed with cartoons denouncing their crimes. A new era for cartoons was ushered in.

In 1979, *Satire and Humour* started its publication. As a bimonthly supplement of the *People's Daily*, the official organ of the Chinese Communist Party, it was followed by repercussions throughout the country. Satirical cartoons on political and social subjects began to flourish.

In the thirty-eight years after 1949, there have emerged groups of cartoonists. It is estimated that out of the four thousand



Professor's Meal (1945)

members of the Chinese Artists Association, cartoonists account for over one hundred, quite a number considering the comparatively short history of cartoons in China. The majority of these cartoonists have grown up in New China and many of them are non-professionals, so that they are intimately familiar with the life of the ordinary people. This enables them to reflect on actual problems.

Today there are about six or seven special cartoon publications, among which *Satire and Humour* is the most influential with a circulation of about 700,000. The Sichuan People's Publishing House is publishing a series on Chinese cartoonists. The series begins with the 1920s. Publishing houses in Tianjin, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenyang, etc., have published collections of cartoons. The Beijing-based New World Press, a sole English publishing house, has published two cartoon books: *Chinese Satire and Humour, Selected Cartoons of Hua Junwu (1955-1982)* and *Wit and Humour from Ancient China, 100 Cartoons by Ding Cong*. The present book contains contemporary cartoons by over one hundred artists including Hua Junwu, Ding Cong and Fang Cheng.

The cartoons in this book are mainly of two types: political and social cartoons and comic cartoons. They reflect the various aspects of life in contemporary China. The political and social cartoons focus on current social problems that have had their antecedents in China's past: bureaucratism, the pursuit of privileges, the illicit obtaining of preferential treatment, low quality

products and social ills attendant to China's modernizations.

Gag cartoons, though discouraged in the past, are now increasing in number as well as in artistic value, though political and social cartoons still account for the majority of the cartoons.

Besides, it must be understood that cartoons here reflect only a tiny facet of a vast seascape. They offer only a glimpse of Chinese society. We hope that through publishing books on cartoons in English, this glimmer will widen into a picture that facilitates the international exchange of ideas and cultures.

Shi Jicai