

Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-tung:



Designer: Shanghai Fine Arts Academy Work Propaganda Team, Revolutionary Committee collective work (上海市美术学校工宣队, 革委会供稿)

1970, October

Long live chairman Mao! Long, long live!

Mao zhuxi wansui! Wanwansui! (毛主席万岁! 万万岁!)

Publisher: Shanghai renmin chubanshe (上海人民出版社)

Size: 53x77 cm.

Call number: BG E13/701 (Landsberger collection)

<https://chinese posters.net/posters/e13-701.php>

Originally published in 1964, *Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-tung*, popularly known as the “Little Red Book” due to its appearance, was widely distributed during the Cultural Revolution. The original publication consisted of 200 quotations covering 23 topics, such as “Women” and “Communists,” compiled by the *PLA Daily*, but was later revised to include an endorsement by Mao’s appointed successor at the time, Lin Biao. The finalized edition would ultimately include 33 topics and 427 quotations. By the time the CCP ceased publication in February 1979, at least one billion copies had been printed. In this propaganda poster, a group of people are at Tiananmen Square in Beijing waving “Little Red Books” during what appears to be a rally led by Chairman Mao. The group at the forefront of the poster consists of young men and a woman in People’s Liberation Army uniforms and a young peasant woman in the front; notice the Chairman Mao badge on the shirt of the young woman to the right of the image.

Chairman Mao Badge:



British Museum

Circular badge (57mm)

Obv: Profile of Mao in silver (head and collar) on red sunray background.

Inscription in gold below.

Rev: Hollowed out form of Mao's head and collar.

Inscription (obv): 敬祝毛主席万寿无疆 (Jingzhu Mao zhuxi wan shou wu jiang) Respectfully Wishing Chairman Mao an eternal life
 Inscription (rev): 毛主席万岁 (Mao zhuxi wansui) Long live Chairman Mao

Note: The inscription on the reverse is in Lin Biao's calligraphy. CM 1990,0204.17

Although the first rudimentary Chairman Mao badges were created in the 1930's, and helped foster the Mao Cult in the 1940's, their popularity soared to epic proportions during the Cultural Revolution. At the height of the Cultural Revolution, badges were feverishly traded, gifted, sold on the black market, and even stolen. An estimated 3 billion badges were produced. At the end of the revolution, badges were officially ordered to be turned in to be melted or destroyed, but many hid their most precious badges, and to this day, there are collectors who boast tens or even hundreds of thousands of badges in their collection. Although the badges usually featured Mao's profile (purposely to the left), rarer ones also depicted landscapes, revolutionary leaders, and other communist leaders. Together with the Little Red Book, badges (worn on the left breast) were the most visible way to display loyalty. The highly-coveted badges were primarily distributed to workers, soldiers, and students, so badges could often be traded for services and other goods, as they were expressly forbidden to be bought or sold.

Chairman Mao swims across the Yangzi:



Designer unknown (佚名)

1969, July

Closely follow the great leader Chairman Mao and forge ahead courageously amid great storms and waves - Celebrate the Shanghai movement to swim the Yangzi river to commemorate the third anniversary of Chairman Mao's good swim in the Yangzi river on July the sixteenth.

Jingen weida lingxiu Mao zhuxi zai dafeng dalang zhong fenyong qianjin - Qingzhu Mao zhuxi 7.16 changyou Changjiang san zhounian Shanghaishi changyou Changjiang huodong (紧跟伟大领袖毛主席在大风大浪中奋勇前进-庆祝毛主席7.16畅游长江三周年上海市畅游长江活动)

Publisher: Shanghai 1969 Swim the Yangzi River headquarters (上海市一九六九年畅游长江指挥部)

Size: 77x53 cm.

Call number: BG E15/289 (Landsberger collection)

<https://chineseposters.net/posters/e15-289.php>

In 1956, Chairman Mao, a lifelong ardent advocate of the benefits of swimming, swam across the Yangzi River for the first time. On July 16, 1966, an event was organized in Wuhan to commemorate the event. Mao joined the throngs of people swimming, exchanging jokes and pleasantries. The swim, widely covered by the media, demonstrated that Mao was still physically fit, contrary to rumors suggesting otherwise, and was still able to lead the revolution. This demonstration was beneficial in Mao's struggle to regain power during the Cultural Revolution. Mao's swim became a major annual event in which thousands of eager swimmers would swim in the sea, and rivers and lakes across the country emulating Chairman Mao's impressive swim.

Bombard the Headquarters:

全国第一张马列主义的大字报和人民日报评论员的评论，写得何等好呵！请同志们重读这一张大字报和这个评论。可是在50多天里，从中央到地方的某些领导同志，却反其道而行之，站在反动的资产阶级立场上，实行资产阶级专政，将无产阶级轰轰烈烈的文化大革命运动打下去，颠倒是非，混淆黑白，围剿革命派，压制不同意见，实行白色恐怖，自以为得意，长资产阶级的威风，灭无产阶级的志气，又何其毒也！联想到1962年的右倾和1964年形“左”实右的错误倾向，岂不是可以发人深醒的吗

Translation: China's first Marxist-Leninist big-character poster and Commentator's article on it in People's Daily are indeed superbly written! Comrades, please read them again. But in the last fifty days or so some leading comrades from the central down to the local levels have acted in a diametrically opposite way. Adopting the reactionary stand of the bourgeoisie, they have enforced a bourgeois dictatorship and struck down the surging movement of the great cultural revolution of the proletariat. They have stood facts on their head and juggled black and white, encircled and suppressed revolutionaries, stifled opinions differing from their own, imposed a white terror, and felt very pleased with themselves. They have puffed up the arrogance of the bourgeoisie and deflated the morale of the proletariat. How poisonous! Viewed in connection with the Right deviation in 1962 and the wrong tendency of 1964 which was 'Left' in form but Right in essence, shouldn't this make one wide awake?

“Bombard the Headquarters – My Big Character poster” was a short document written by Mao Zedong on August 5, 1966 and published in the Communist Party’s official newspaper, *People’s Daily*, a year later on August 5, 1967. The poster is believed to have been directly targeting and criticizing President Liu Shaoqi and senior leader Deng Xiaoping, notably for attempting to contain the chaos of the Cultural Revolution. After the publication of the poster, even greater violence and chaos spread throughout the countryside, resulting in the death of thousands of “class enemies,” including President Liu Shaoqi, who died in 1969 after two years in prison, of mistreatment, abuse, and failing health, which was further complicated by being denied medication.

Mao Pop Art:



LAST BANQUET

Laser prints, pages from the Red Book and acrylic on canvas

60 x 168 inch, 1989

Zhang Hongtu

<http://www.momao.com/>

After decades of artistic suppression, during the “era of Deng Xiaoping” there was a period of relative liberalization and greater political and artistic freedom. In the early 1990’s, which marked the centenary of Mao’s birthday, the personality cult resurfaced, albeit in a much more openly satirical and “tongue-in-cheek” manner. During this period, known as *Maore* or “Mao craze,” Mao’s image had been repurposed by a myriad of artists into sacrilegious pop art. In this image, we see a pastiche of Leonardo da Vinci’s mural, *The Last Supper*. Instead of featuring Jesus and the twelve disciples, however, we just see multiple Maos. One of them is holding a Little Red Book, and instead of bread, they have bowls with chopsticks. The painting is made of pages from the Little Red Book as well, which would have been unheard of and considered traitorous and blasphemous during Mao’s reign. Notice the chamber pot and the bowl of rice spilling over.