

**Editor's note:**  
A Novel and World-Building Literature and Arts

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China's economic growth during the past 30 years has created something of a world wonder, while its development model has received much attention in the academic world. The China model is a product of China's 20<sup>th</sup> century revolution, and so exploring the unique aspects of China's 20<sup>th</sup> century revolution has now become a hot research topic in international academic circles. In any attempt to summarize China's revolutionary experience during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, however, the literature and art from the Yan'an period is ultimately unavoidable. Yan'an served as the starting point for Chinese revolution in its conscious creation of a national form, and as such, is a sacred site of the revolution. During this period, the Chinese Communist Party, along with its supporting army, underwent reform and created many novel and innovative forms of governance. All of these transformations were carried out so as to adapt to the real needs of war, as well as to establish universal truth for China's future path

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**About the author**

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to socialism.

In 1929, the Chinese Communist Party convened the Gutian Congress in Shanghang, Fujian province. It set about to reorganize the military, to stipulate that “the party commands the gun,” to equalize the standing of soldiers and officials, to eradicate the professionalization of the military, to establish important reformatory measures such as not taking away the interests and benefits of the people, among others, to raise the combat effectiveness of the Red Army as well as to ameliorate relations among military troops and the civilians within the places they passed through. Mao Zedong wrote his famous piece, *On Protracted War*, while staying in Yan’an, which demonstrated keen foresight and vision with regards to the Anti-Japanese War, while also establishing his theories of guerilla warfare and the revolutionary base area. After military troops arrived at the Yan’an base area, they were forced to take on the double responsibility of waging war as well as producing economically, due to the urgent needs of production at the time. This passivity would actually turn a bad situation into a good one, as a new type of people’s army was formed which was both capable of fighting wars as well as producing economically. The Great Production Movement improved the material living conditions of the military while dismantling the Kuomintang’s malicious plot of attempting to starve out the Communist Party. Through the Great Production Movement, the military was able to achieve self-sufficiency, reduce financial strain upon the people and improve military-civilian relations. From this, the Anti-Japanese War turned into the People’s War and the first branch of this new type of people’s militia was born. After the new nation was established, it would also help to remedy the relative weakness of the working class. Therefore, it may be said that under the imperative of war, the Chinese revolution was forced to produce its own successful coping mechanisms, while Yan’an’s political practice and methods of governance created a bright and fresh new world.

In terms of cultural development, the same was also true. The lives of intellectuals, in terms of their forms of work as well as their modes and styles of writing, had also been changed. They united with the laborers, farmers and soldiers, and their literature and art was created to serve not only the laborers, farmers and soldiers, but the development of economic production, as well. Moreover, the literature and art of Yan’an featured an expressly vivid and lively manner and style unique to China, and in this sense, it was novel and world-building literature and

arts.

Since the start of the new century, we have witnessed many breakthroughs in terms of perspectives and methodologies used in researching the literature and art of the Yan'an period, and many novel findings have been discovered. In this volume, we have selected and compiled several of the most representative works for the reader's enjoyment. Topics include exploring the significance of the birth of Yan'an literature and art under the larger background of public debate in the 1930's, as well as discussing, from an overall perspective, how the wars during the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century helped to facilitate transformations in forms of artistic medium. Tang Xiaobing, for example, researches image and sound in Yan'an and shows that the transformations seen in artistic medium were closely related with Yan'an's natural environment, as well as the hardship suffered in the Anti-Japanese War of Resistance. More importantly, this background showed that the literature and art of Yan'an was aimed at an alternative and more advanced form of modern literature and art. Luo Gang's paper discussed how, under China's new historical circumstances, families in Yan'an were reformed, as well as the advancements made towards agrarian socialism. These new forms of understanding contrasted with those found in the May Fourth period, as well as with industrial socialism, and embodied Yan'an's materialist spirit of flexible practice. Aside from these, many high-quality individual studies have also been done over the past two decades, for example Li Yang's research on the relations between Zhao Shuli and the dialectics of Talks at the Yan'an Forum of Literature and Art, or He Guimei's focus on the change in Ding Ling's awareness of feminism after the "Resolution of ' 四三," in which she demonstrated that there existed a dispute between feminist thought and women's leftist thought. Gao Ming's paper discussed how the war in Yan'an gave rise to a new form of drama known as "improvised drama," while Sun Xiaozhong's paper discussed the significance of the "Industrious Revolution" during the land reform stage in the liberated areas, as well as the formative process of Yan'an's new styles of home and village. On the basis of this process, he also attempts to explain how the revolutionary practice in the liberated areas together with the literature and art of Yan'an jointly formed a very fine, or exquisite, form of revolution, as well as how they collectively form a new world.