Film Propaganda and the Anti-schistosomiasis Campaign in Communist China

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ABSTRACT

Schistosomiasis (also known as bilharzia or snail fever) is a fatal disease common to the southern provinces of China. Many people have already contracted this illness or are currently at risk. In 1955, Chairman Mao Zedong proposed a national anti-schistosomiasis campaign to fight the disease that was also aimed at increasing agricultural production and mobilizing mass participation in the campaign. The Chinese Communist Party produced a feature film, Kumu fengchun, in 1961, which was used as a propaganda tool to disseminate what the party wanted the masses to know. This film served both to mobilize the masses to participate in the campaign and to give them hope and lead them to believe that the disease could be cured. In 1964, the film was presented in rural areas of the southern provinces of China, playing an important role in the 1960s campaign to eliminate the disease.

Keywords: China, film, Mao Zedong, propaganda, Schistosomiasis

Introduction

Schistosomiasis (also known as bilharzia or snail fever, xuexichong bing 血吸蟲病 in Mandarin) has plagued China for over 2000 years.¹ The schistosome species most common in China is Schistosoma japonicum, a water-borne, snail-transmitted parasite. This species is prevalent in the eleven provinces along and south of the Yangzi River: Anhui, Fujian, Guangdong, Guangxi, Hubei, Hunan, Jiangsu, Jiangxi, Sichuan, Yunnan, Zhejiang, and the suburbs of Shanghai.

Since the 1990s, schistosomiasis has been high on the agenda of the central and local governments. Thanks to the World Bank Loan Project implemented in 1992-2000, the control and treatment of schistosomiasis has been considerably improved (Chen 2005, 43-48). Unfortunately, environmental degradation, frequent floods, and weak public awareness have contributed significantly to the return of the plague in recent years. In 2007, it was estimated that more than 800,000 people in China were infected with schistosomiasis, and 6.5 million more were at risk. The annual cost of treating patients with schistosomiasis had risen to 4 billion RMB. Construction of the Three Gorges Dam and frequent floods in the Yangzi River basin, precipitated by environmental degradation, have provided ideal conditions for the spread of snails, the intermediate host of the disease, in the southern provinces (Zheng 2002, 147-56).

In 1955, Chairman Mao Zedong (1893-1976) proposed a national prevention
program to fight the disease, considering it an important national issue. Widespread mass mobilization, together with effective agricultural and water conservation projects, successfully controlled the disease. By the mid-1960s, the number of infected people had dropped significantly (Dirk 2005, 67-68. A similar observation is also found in Hall 1993, 366; Farley 1993, 997).

In 1961, the central government produced the film *Kumu fengchun* (KMFC, see Figure 1) to promote schistosomiasis prevention (*xuefang* 血防). This film played an important role in the campaign as a propaganda tool, and was the only one to be used in this fashion. This paper discusses the ideologies and content presented in KMFC and examines its role in the anti-schistosomiasis campaign in the 1960s.

**Previous Research**

Most published findings related to schistosomiasis in China are scientific research, especially control programs. As these studies demonstrate, in recent years China has changed its strategy to emphasize health policy and health education in order to control the transmission of *Schistosoma japonicum*. As Wang Longde points out, health education in China has been characterized by centrally led, top-down messages and methods since the 1950s, a policy still operating today. Since the early 1990s, however, government decentralization has drastically increased in China and market principles have become more dominant in society. Wang argues that in order to respond to social changes, there is a need for new approaches to health promotion in the affected areas of China. This new approach should be bottom-up rather than top-down, participatory and empowering rather than predetermined, and fully respectful of local needs (Wang 2010, 121-28).

Two recent studies clearly show the importance of health education and health promotion in controlling the disease today. First, Hu Guanghan examined six endemic villages located in the Poyang Lake area. In these villages, three different interventions were implemented with three separate groups: (1) video-based health education, training in infection prevention, and a “reward/
punishment” program for schoolchildren; (2) promotion of an understanding of schistosomiasis and its control, plus training in preventing infection for women; and (3) encouraging compliance with chemotherapy, plus training in preventing infection for men. The study results show that both awareness and appropriate behaviors were strengthened in all three study groups. The approach emphasizing health education and health promotion, in combination with chemotherapy, was highly successful in reducing re-infection rates among inhabitants of Schistosoma japonicum endemic villages (Hu 2005, 232-41). Similarly, Yuan Hongcheng shows that using cartoons, videos, print materials, and face-to-face educational methods can increase children’s knowledge of schistosomiasis. This study involved collaboration between the Departments of Public Health and Education. These two studies demonstrate that proper health education and health promotion are effective ways of teaching people how to prevent the disease (Hu 2005, 232-41).

Apart from scientific papers evaluating the effectiveness of specific control strategies, F.R. Sandbach, Kenneth Warren, and the current author have published papers discussing the campaign from a historical perspective (Sandbach 1977, 27-33; Kenneth 1988, 123-40; Fan 2008, 176-87). Their studies emphasize three points: (1) Implementing the campaign relied on local and rural communes; (2) The most important way to eliminate and prevent the disease was to eradicate the snail, though the use of chemical molluscicides was not emphasized. Instead, snails were often collected by hand and then burned or scalded to death; (3) The ultimate goal of the campaign was to increase agricultural production.

Actually, the anti-schistosomiasis campaign was not only a public health issue, but was also related to the construction of a communist society. During the 1950s and 60s, the educational system was not yet well established. Therefore, health education in schools was not effective. In order to mobilize the masses to participate in the campaign, how did the CCP and the state disseminate what they wanted the masses, especially uneducated peasants in remote areas and villages, to know and the top-down messages they wanted them to receive? Previous studies have not examined this topic.

**Schistosomiasis Control and Political Goals**

The media in China often use a phrase that originated in Mao Zedong’s early writings on the disease, “the return of the plague spirit,” to describe the recent re-emergence of schistosomiasis. On June 30, 1958, Mao read an article in the Renmin ribao (People’s Daily) that announced the successful elimination of the disease in Yujiang County, Jiangxi Province. Excited and unable to sleep, he wrote two poems that were together entitled Song wenshen 送瘟神 (Farewell to the Plague Spirit, see Figure 2) to commemorate the campaign, which was henceforth also commonly called the “Farewell to the Plague Spirit” campaign (Mao 1972, 106).

Many other contagious diseases—for example, leprosy, smallpox, and the bubonic plague—also wreaked havoc at that time but failed to attract the same attention. Though schistosomiasis was only a local disease prevalent in eleven provinces and a city in the south, people from different parts of the country took an active role in the anti-schistosomiasis campaign. During the 1950s and 1960s,
schistosomiasis ranked first among other serious diseases, and was treated as a national agricultural issue not simply because of the public health problems it posed, but because of the obstacles it created to transforming the country into a fully cooperative socialist nation. As Dirk Engels notes: “In many respects, schistosomiasis control in China could be considered as exemplary. It shows that strong political commitment is a key element in successful control.”

On December 27, 1955, Mao wrote a preface to the book Zhongguo nongcun de shehuizhuyi gaochao (Socialist Upsurges in China’s Countryside), in which he referred to schistosomiasis only as an obstacle to economic development in rural areas (Mao Zedong 1955, 117-19). In the 1956-1967 Quanguo nongye fazhan gangyao caoan jianghua (Outline of National Development of Agriculture, Revised Draft), drafted in 1957, Article 28 described the prevention of schistosomiasis as a national issue and explained: “Since the most susceptible group is the young, who cease working once infected, agricultural production has been directly affected” (China National Radio 1958, 185). There was thus a close relationship between agricultural development and Mao’s anti-schistosomiasis policy.

After 1949, the public health policies of the People’s Republic of China (PRC), proposed by Zhou Enlai (1898-1976) in 1952, were codified in four guiding principles: “(1) The health care system should serve the workers, the peasants, and the soldiers; (2) Prevention should be the first concern; (3) Traditional Chinese medicine should be integrated with Western medicine; (4) Health work should be carried out through mass movements” (Chen 2004, 456-82). These strategies were essential in controlling schistosomiasis.

principles also guided the anti-schistosomiasis campaign. In fact, mobilizing the masses to participate in any kind of movement, including political and public health movements, was the most crucial policy of the CCP. Mao believed that mass participation could help promote political awareness and politicize the public (Townsend 1969). But how to mobilize the masses to participate in the anti-schistosomiasis campaign, and how to get them to follow the directions laid down by the central government and the CCP? The CCP and Mao emphasized that the first step in mobilizing the masses was to produce deeply propagandistic and educational works (Zhongyang aiguo 1960, 19). The role of propaganda tools thus cannot be neglected in an appraisal of the campaign since they were used to spread information, as well as to educate the masses and mobilize them in a common purpose.

**KMFC as Propaganda Film**

The term “propaganda” typically carries a negative meaning. As Richard Taylor states, propaganda aims to make its audience accept certain values, and to sometimes act upon that acceptance (Taylor 1998, 13). Richard Nelson offers a more neutral definition: “Propaganda is neutrally defined as a systematic form of purposeful persuasion that attempts to influence the emotions, attitudes, opinions, and actions of specified target audiences for ideological, political or commercial purposes through the controlled transmission of one-sided messages (which may or may not be factual) via mass and direct media channels” (Nelson 1996, 232-33).

Undoubtedly, film is one of the most important propaganda tools. Both totalitarian and democratic states intentionally shape national culture through the cinema. National identity, national image, and even nation building are hot topics in film studies (Ezra 2000; Hjort 2000). Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union are both examples of how a totalitarian state or a centralized state may control the cinema industry and use film propaganda to disseminate political and ideological themes (Welch 2001; Welch 2002; Taylor 1998; Hoffmann 1996; Tegel, 2009). For example, Ulf Schmidt shows that Nazi Germany used medical films from 1933 to 1945 to communicate its ideas about “racial science” (Schmid 2002). These totalitarian states used propaganda films to convince the masses to follow policies decreed by the state and to accept state ideologies. Their purpose was to control mass opinion or influence thoughts and beliefs. Peter Kenez’s study shows that Lenin and the leaders of the Soviet Union applied a combination of censorship and control of mass organizations, such as the press and the film industry, to mobilize the masses’ support (Kenez 1985).

Soviet, Nazi, and other totalitarian states’ propaganda methods were important models for the CCP, which learned much from them (Shambaugh 2007, 25-58). Previous studies have emphasized that the CCP propaganda system was a control system and that propaganda and indoctrination were inseparable in the PRC (Schurmann 1966). In the 1950s, the PRC aimed at teaching Chinese people to become new socialist men. The most general way the Communists popularized this ideal was to select model citizens from various occupations, including laborers, peasants, women, and youth. A new socialist man, they argued, should exhibit absolute selflessness, obedience to the Communist Party, class consciousness,
study of ideology, participation in labor and production, versatility, and should, above all, be a “Red expert” (Chen 1969). Therefore, the film stories mainly focused on laborers, farmers, and soldiers, who were considered good models for Chinese people. The CCP also used Soviet films, such as Alexander Matrosov, Tractor Drivers, and How the Steel Was Tempered, as models for emulation in the socialist construction of China (Chen 2004, 107). According to Franklin Houn, several films were produced to follow the CCP’s ideology and policies. “The Red Flag,” “Be United for a Better Tomorrow,” and “Going Forward and Singing Loud” were produced for the purpose of constructing a new socialist society, and “The White-Haired Girl,” “The Northern Shensi Shepherd,” and “The Cheerful Peasant Family” for the purpose of the land-reform movement. In addition, the evil image of the Kuomintang was always displayed in films (Houn 1961, 199).

After the establishment of the PRC, films had to meet the CCP’s expectations in terms of their propaganda function in order for them to be shown. The CCP saw many advantages in using film as a means of communicating with the masses. Kevin Latham points out that the CCP appropriated film as a fundamental propaganda tool for two reasons: (1) The cinema industry was nationalized and incorporated into the political and administrative structure of the Party and the state, and could be easily controlled from the center in terms of funding, censorship, and distribution. The Propaganda Department of the Central Committee of the CCP played a critical role in this. (2) By setting up mobile film projection units deep in the countryside to show films to mainly illiterate peasants in even the remotest areas, that medium offered an effective way of reaching a very wide audience in the days before television (Latham 2007, 165). Indeed, during a succession of national political campaigns in the 1950s and 1960s, as well as during larger movements like the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, film served as a useful tool for mobilizing mass participation (Pickowicz 1974, 328-59). The anti-schistosomiasis campaign worked in the same way, although it originally was part of a public health campaign aimed at eliminating disease. Hence, the CCP considered film as the best tool for combating schistosomiasis.

Film, as a propaganda tool, was under the control of the Propaganda Department of the CCP. The production of KMFC was no exception, as it coincided with the aim of the anti-schistosomiasis campaign. Originally, KMFC was a stage play (Figure 3), written in 1958 by Wei Wenbo (1905-1987), associate director of the central leading group of the anti-schistosomiasis campaign. The central leading group was made up of health officials and professionals and endowed with broad powers to enact policies nationwide. The year 1958 was an important one for the campaign, because Yujiang County of Jiangxi Province was the first to announce the elimination of the disease. The film screenwriters Wang Lian and Zheng Junli visited Yujiang County and lived in the infected area while writing the screenplay. In addition, the film’s scenario was also based on a news report entitled “The First Red Flag: Recording the Process of Eliminating Schistosomiasis in Yujiang County, Jiangxi Province (Diyimian hongqi: ji jiangxi yujiangxian genben xueichong bing de jingguo 第一面红旗：記江西余江懸根本消滅血吸蟲病的經過).” This news report was written by Chen Bingxian and Liu Guanghui of China’s central
news agency, Xinhua, on June 29, 1958. One of the main themes of the news report is that nothing is impossible under the leadership of Mao Zedong and the Party. The Kuomintang had failed to eliminate the disease—only the PRC had succeeded. In Jiantou Village of Yujiang County, for example, thanks to agricultural cooperatives, the villagers could be organized to dredge new irrigation channels and block old ones in order to kill the snails that carried the disease. In only a few months, villagers had completed this seemingly impossible task.

The stage play was presented in Beijing in 1960 and the film, with the same title, was produced and presented in 1961. The film served as a propaganda tool, and as such, was targeted at people at risk of infection, both at the regional and national level. The film is actually a love story, set in the 1960s. The main character, Kumeizi (Bitter Sister), is a child bride (tongyangxi) of the Fang family, destined to marry their son Fang Dongge (Winter Brother). To avoid schistosomiasis, Fang Dongge, Kumeizi, and Fang Dongge’s parents left their home county. Fang’s father dies on the way from the disease. Meanwhile, Kuomintang (KMT) troops arrest the men and force Fang Dongge and Kumeizi to join them. Kumeizi disappears during the chaos and Fang Dongge cannot find her anywhere. After 1949, Kumeizi moves to Shuangta County of Zhijiang Province. She marries a man who also dies of schistosomiasis. Meanwhile, Fang Dongge becomes a tractor driver. The central government sends Fang and his mother to Shuangta County to work on farms. Finally, Fang

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4 *Renmin ribao* (People’s Daily), 1962.04.11: 5.

5 Tongyangxi is a practice in Chinese traditional society in which a female child sold to a rich family would be married into the adopted family when she came of age.
met Kumeizi again at the anti-schistosomiasis station (xuefang zhan 血防站, see Figure 4). Unfortunately, Kumeizi also contracts the disease, but Fang does not abandon her. After being treated by both Chinese and Western doctors, she eventually recovers. Fang and Kumeizi then marry, have children, and live happily together as a family.

In the film, Mao Zedong and the PRC are praised for looking after the patients. But the movie also describes how Chinese people, under the governance of the KMT, could not live in peace as it neglected a large number of people infected with this disease, many of whom died from it. However, under the governance of the CCP, the central and local governments pay close attention to the disease. In reality, news reports from the Renmin ribao (People’s Daily) show how the CCP tried to portray the KMT as neglectful: they claimed the KMT never established any research institutes for schistosomiasis and neither trained any experts or implemented any policy to eliminate the disease nor educated the people in how to avoid it. On the other hand, the CCP portrayed itself as devoted to eliminating the disease and being much more concerned about the health of the people.

The main goals of the film were to promote methods for eliminating the snails, as well as to integrate Chinese and Western medicine. The film also touched on issues of medical ethics. The story of KMFC basically followed the themes set by the CCP’s propaganda policy. Fang’s family suffers because of KMT misrule. Fang Dongge is a laborer and a selfless man, and Kumeizi is a farmer. Fang’s role is that of a model for the masses in the anti-schistosomiasis campaign, for though he is not a medical expert, he is still able to contribute to the campaign.

**Agricultural Development, Mass Mobilization, and the Anti-schistosomiasis Campaign**

During the 1950s, the main purpose for eliminating schistosomiasis was to increase crop yields. In February 1956, following his visit to the affected provinces of Jiangxi and Zhejiang, Mao initiated a mass campaign to fight the parasite. Such a change raised the disease, previously considered a local issue, to the national level, on par with other serious diseases. Mao’s change in attitude was largely due to the failure of the country to produce the quantity of crops required by the first five-year plan (1953–1957). Fueled by successful land reforms and peasants’ self-initiative, agricultural development should have gained momentum as planned. However, it turned out to be the opposite of what Mao had hoped, as total agricultural output did not increase significantly as expected. The anti-schistosomiasis campaign therefore had become an important issue. Because the central government pushed for an increase in agricultural production, people in the villages needed to choose whether to devote themselves to increasing agricultural production or to treating patients.

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6 In reality, the anti-schistosomiasis stations were established in the infected areas to treat patients, make arrangements for work related to the anti-schistosomiasis campaign, and educate people. However, in the film, the anti-schistosomiasis stations were presented as providing beds for the patients and functioning as research institutes.

the disease. Which one should come first? The film answered this question by bringing both issues together.

In the film, Fang Dongge discovers a new method of wiping out the snails. Poorly drained, marshy, sunlit ponds and canals are the best environments for the *Oncomelana* snail to live in. In the 1950s and 1960s, one of the methods used to eliminate the snails, which typically lived within 10cm of the surface of the mud, was to dredge new irrigation channels and block old ones. Yujiang County used this method and it proved effective. Therefore, the CCP regarded it as the most effective way to eliminate snails and integrated it with agricultural production. The snail, as a political enemy, could be killed by this method, which increased agricultural production because it also improved irrigation channels. The CCP also promoted this method because it only required manpower, and not much money, unlike the use of chemicals.

Mao proposed mass participation in the fight against the disease and raised the anti-schistosomiasis campaign to a national-level issue (Figure 5). However, political upheaval and economic poverty made it impossible to adopt costly preventive measures. Mass participation was the only feasible way to combat the disease. In 1956, after consultation with leading medical experts and officials, Mao initiated the anti-schistosomiasis campaign with the slogans “Schistosomiasis has to be eliminated (Yiding yao xiaomie xuexichong bing 一定要消滅血吸蟲病)” and “Mobilize all CCP members, involve all people, eliminate schistosomiasis (Quandang dongyuan, quanmin dongyuan, xiaomei xuexichongbing 全黨動員, 全民動員, 消滅血吸蟲病).” In the fight against schistosomiasis, these became the nation’s political mission statements.
Mobilizing the masses for the campaign offered two advantages for the central government and local communities. First, the masses’ participation in the campaign would allow them to learn more about this fatal disease and how to prevent it. Human contact with infected water was a major cause of infection. Animal or human waste laden with *Schistosoma japonicum* eggs was discharged into rivers or lakes, which then entered the body of *Oncomelama* snails. When the eggs hatched, the larvae left their hosts’ bodies and lived in the water. People became infected when they came into contact with the infected water. The schistosome worms propagated themselves in the veins and liver of the parasitized human body, causing a distended abdomen and eventually death. Eradicating the snails was the most important part of the prevention program because the eggs could not develop to the larval stage without first attaching themselves to snails.

Second, having volunteers for the campaign meant that financial support from governments was not required, or at least was affordable. In 1957, the State Council issued instructions for the eradication of schistosomiasis. The instructions stated that the masses in the infested regions could be mobilized for voluntary work on schistosomiasis prevention under the auspices of the state (Zhonggong zhongyang 1986, 1941). Mass participation on a voluntary basis provided a large pool of manpower. One of the slogans of the campaign was, “Extensiveness, Speediness, Excellence, and Thrift (Duo 多, Kuai 快, Hao 好, Sheng 省),” which meant that the campaign should have extensive coverage, achieve its purpose quickly, have high standards, and not cost too much. The anti-schistosomiasis campaign achieved a breakthrough in the 1950s and 1960s by successfully mobilizing the masses to exterminate the snails, regarded as an enemy of the CCP.

Mass mobilization was not simply a matter of promotion and education, but also of commitment, which required actual participation. Schistosomiasis worms cannot be seen with the naked eye, yet the snails are a visible living creature that can be dealt with. Hence, the number of snails killed or captured became one of the indices for measuring the success of the prevention program. In fact, the CCP viewed killing the snails as the most important precautionary measure. Some of the techniques used to control the spread of the snails likely to carry schistosomiasis were primitive. They included digging snails out of the mud by hand and burning them to death, undertaking irrigation projects to dredge new irrigation channels and blocking old ones to bury the snails, and employing chemical controls.

Massive amounts of manpower was required for all these tasks.

As part of providing health education, the PRC published many posters, handbooks, and pamphlets, and produced a slide show called “The life cycle of schistosoma japonicum” for promoting schistosomiasis prevention. These materials taught the masses to avoid contact with infected water and encouraged them to change their customs. However, the central government had another agenda, which was to integrate water construction projects, agriculture, and the anti-schistosomiasis

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8 Information about the techniques for snail eradication and treatments of schistosomiasis can be obtained from American Schistosomiasis Delegation 1977, 427-57; Cheng 1971, 26-53; Mao 1982, 92-99; Maegraith 1958, 208-14.
campaign. To do this, the campaign needed a large amount of voluntary manpower to eliminate the snails and to construct local projects. David Lampton outlined three problems that kept the Ministry of Health from effectively confronting the schistosomiasis problem in the early 1950s, one of which was that it lacked the extensive influence over the masses needed for widespread mobilization (Lampton 1977, 458-62). How to mobilize mass participation was a serious problem.

The film presents a scenario in which Fang and the anti-schistosomiasis station leader encourage the masses to volunteer for the campaign. With the effort of the masses, the disease can be wiped out, it is said, and Chairman Mao's appreciation was the greatest reward. The ending offers a very beautiful picture of Fang and Kumeizi and their happy family. Overall, the film attempted to deliver two important messages: firstly, that the anti-schistosomiasis campaign and increased agricultural production were two sides of the same coin and were not in conflict with each other, and secondly, that the masses should not be afraid of the disease, which could be cured by the joint efforts of Chinese and Western doctors. Once Mao Zedong had taken power, he implemented a policy integrating Chinese and Western medicine. In 1959, an editorial “Seriously implementing the party's Chinese medicine policy” in the Renmin ribao (People's Daily) promoted this policy. In the film, Kumeizi is infected with the disease but is cured by Chinese and Western doctors and recovers.

In the “The First Red Flag,” the journalist went to Lantianban Village, Yujiang County, to report on the situation. Over the course of 50 years, the disease had killed over 3,000 people, twenty villages were in ruins, and 14,000 mu (over 2,000 acres) of agrarian land had been laid waste. People who did not die from the disease were emaciated with distended abdomens and unable to hold heavy farm implements. Poor harvests led to famine, and 10% of the peasants depended on aid from the local government. This all changed after collectivization gave the people the power to eliminate the disease. The fight against schistosomiasis in Lantianban Village began in 1956. As a first step, the party and the local government sent doctors to treat infected people. Over 4,000 patients recovered and returned to work. Within two years, a new irrigation system helped eliminate the snails that transmitted the disease to humans. Finally, the amount of arable land increased by 1,500 mu. These measures resulted in increased productivity. In 1957, Lantianban Village, originally devoid of crops, produced a surplus of about 150,000 kilograms, which was sold to the state. Per capita annual income increased from the equivalent of 38 RMB in 1953 to 74 RMB in 1958. This news report seemed hard to believe (Cheng 1971, 26).

In addition, reporters interviewed Deng Rumei in Yujiang County, providing a close-up of one woman's experience of the disease. Deng married a man in the village and contracted the disease, leaving her with a distended abdomen and the inability to conceive. Word had it that such experiences were common, and that

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9 For more details, see Scheid 2002; Taylor, 2005.
children born to such couples that were able to conceive would be dwarfs. In 1956, the CCP sent doctors to her house. After treatment, she recovered her health and was soon pregnant (Chen 2001, 108-12). The story of Kumeizi was based on the life of Deng Rumei. In traditional Chinese society, giving birth is an unshakable duty. Infertility is therefore the most miserable thing for a woman to suffer. The film, by portraying Kumeizi as being capable of bearing children after suffering from the disease, presented a very bright future for female schistosomiasis patients.

The film also touched on issues of medical ethics. One case is that of a Western-trained doctor who is only concerned with his research but not about his patients at the anti-schistosomiasis station. He is condemned for his actions and finally reforms his attitude. Another case is that of Fang’s mother, who is very worried about her son becoming infected while working in Shuangta County. She wants to leave the county with her son, but Fang has to look after Kumeizi and refuses to leave. Finally, the anti-schistosomiasis station leader convinces her to stay because they have found a cure for the disease.

Conclusion

KMFC matched the CCP’s aim for the anti-schistosomiasis campaign, and as such was very influential, being shown in cinemas in 1961. However, potentially infected people were not found in the cities, but in the villages of the southern provinces where there were no cinemas, and where people had no incentive to buy a ticket to see a movie in the first place. In 1963, the PRC recognized this problem and adjusted its film propaganda policy. Since March 1963, the local authorities of the southern provinces had been using a mobile film projector to screen the film free of charge in rural areas. The PRC understood that this was an effective way to disseminate its policies in rural areas. In the 1950s, the PRC continuously increased the number of film projection teams. In 1950, there were 750 mobile film projection teams, but by 1957, they had increased to 6,844 (Houn 1961, 201-3). The central government used the film as a propaganda tool to increase the anti-schistosomiasis awareness of the masses and mobilize them into taking part in the campaign to eradicate the disease. In 1964, the film was presented 850 times in Suzhou and nearly a million people saw it (Suzhou xuefang 1997, 141). The Nanjing local authority sent people to take the mobile film projectors into the infected rural areas, where the film was screened 57 times and 58,000 people saw it (Wang 1995, 152-53). In Anhui Province, from 1964 to 1985, the local government presented movies related to schistosomiasis prevention, including KMFC, a total of 5,400 times (Anhuisheng weishengzhi 1990, 206).

The film obviously reflected the most important characteristics of the anti-schistosomiasis campaign in the 1950s and 1960s. The PRC lacked the money to beat the disease and so mobilized the masses to take part in eliminating the snails. After 1963, KMFC became an important film to help educate and mobilize the masses. However, today schistosomiasis has re-emerged. According to a survey in Chongqing City in 2009, 58.5% of interviewees were happy to receive anti-schistosomiasis information through movies (Huang 2009). The PRC Ministry of Health also promulgated the “Outline of the Mid-Long Term National Plan
for Schistosomiasis Prevention and Control, 2004-2015 (Quanguo yufang kongzhi xueexichong zhongchangqi guihua, 2004-2015, 全國預防控制血吸蟲病中長期規劃 2004-2015) in 2004. The Outline suggests that primary and secondary school students living in schistosomiasis-infected areas see the anti-schistosomiasis film once a year.\(^{11}\) The Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention has likewise implemented a plan for sending movies to rural areas to educate the masses in the prevention of the disease. Using the film, which conveys knowledge of healthcare, as a promotional tool may be an acceptable and effective way of promoting the anti-schistosomiasis campaign. Ningbo City of Zhejiang Province has even proposed screening KMFC to educate people and promote knowledge of schistosomiasis (Ye 2008, 1600).

Even though the ideology and methods mentioned in the film are out-of-date today, KMFC has played a significant role in the history of anti-schistosomiasis campaigns in Communist China. More importantly, while the broader film industry in China has shifted from propaganda to profit, film still functions as an important propaganda tool to publicize ideology in the PRC. Accordingly, films like KMFC should not be ignored, but rather studied—along with other artifacts such as posters, to better understand the history of public health in contemporary China.\(^{12}\)

### GLOSSARY

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<th>安徽</th>
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<td>方冬哥</td>
<td>Kumu fengchun</td>
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\(^{11}\) On July 8, 2004, the Ministry of Health, National Development and Reform Commission, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Water Resources, and State Forestry Administration jointly produced the Outline of the Mid-Long Term National Plan for Schistosomiasis Prevention and Control (2004–2015). The National Outline provides important guidance on all prevention programs to be launched from 2004 to 2015 in Shanghai, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Anhui, Fujian, Jiangxi, Hunan, Guangdong, Guangxi, Sichuan, and Yunnan provinces. At the same time, it requires provincial governments to use it as the blueprint for developing their own versions of prevention outlines suitable for their own situations. Both the central and local governments of the PRC made great efforts to eliminate the disease, but it is still common in some areas. This is partly because local governments do not have enough money to implement the control program.

\(^{12}\) The US National Library of Medicine and University of Kansas Medical Center have both set up websites titled “Chinese Public Health Posters.” See World Health Organization 2009; Marta Hanson 2008, 1457-458.
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