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### Tradition and Ideology: Creating and Performing New Gushi in China from 1962 to 1966

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## Tradition and Ideology

### Creating and Performing New *Gushi* in China, 1962–1966

It is well known that “invented tradition” played an important role in many nationalist political movements. In the Maoist era, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) appropriated and innovated tradition for political and ideological purposes in a variety of ways. In this article, I focus on the New *Gushi* Movement, launched by the CCP in 1962 and ended in 1966, to illustrate how *gushi* 故事 (“stories”), a vernacular narrative genre, was shaped to meet political and ideological needs in socialist education campaigns; how its form, meaning, and function were affected by incorporation into a wider system of ideological change; how storytellers responded to such changes; and how they expressed their creativity and agency in the process. In particular, I will draw on the case study of the storyteller Zhang Daoyu to explore the integration of tradition and ideology in individual storytelling composition and performance as well as the role of individual agency in the process. My goal is to explore the nature of new *gushi*, tracking what is the new and what is the old in each, and showing how they convey both a continuity and a rupture between the past and the present in revolutionary China.

KEYWORDS: New *Gushi* Movement—tradition—ideology—performance—agency

IN 1962, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) launched the New *Gushi* Movement (*xin gushi yundong* 新故事运动) as part of a program to educate the Chinese people in socialist politics and ideology. In this movement, *gushi*, a traditional vernacular narrative genre,<sup>1</sup> was appropriated by the CCP to serve as a vehicle for socialist values and thought. The CCP selected and manipulated ideas and forms from the *gushi* tradition, reconstructing it with a new ideological meaning to legitimize its power. This article explores how the appropriation took place and how *gushi*'s form, meaning, and function were affected by its incorporation into a wider system of ideological change. In order to explore this larger social dynamic, I will use the case study of the storyteller Zhang Daoyu to explore a concrete case of the integration of tradition and ideology in individual storytelling composition and performance. Drawing from this case study, this article analyzes both how storytellers responded to the political control of this genre and how they expressed their creativity and agency in the process of creating and performing *gushi* during this time. My goal is to explore the nature of new *gushi* produced in this period, showing continuities and discontinuities between past and present in revolutionary China by tracking both the traditional and the new aspects of the genre as a whole.

In China studies, the relationship between ideology and folk literature or performing arts has been tracked widely in different periods from the Republic of China up to the People's Republic of China (PRC) (TIANYING 1959; EMINOV 1975; McDUGALL 1984; HUNG 1985; HOLM 1991; TUOHY 1991; WEBSTER-CHENG 2008). Of particular relevance is David HOLM's work (1991), in which he drew on the New *Yangge* Movement (*xin yangge yundong* 新秧歌运动) to explore the interplay of ideology and artistic creation in the Shan-gan-ning Border Region from 1937 to 1947. He demonstrated how the north Chinese peasant dance-drama *yangge* underwent dramatic political transformations in the hands of the communist propagandists in their attempt to realize the Maoist goal of "facing the masses." His careful study throws considerable light on larger issues concerning both the Maoist line on art and literature and the whole subject of the "Sinification of Marxism." He sets this firmly in the political exigencies of wartime China and in the tensions within the party between the post-May Fourth New Culture Movement<sup>2</sup> intellectuals' cultural iconoclasm and the conservatism of their rural con-

stituents in the “liberated areas.” WEBSTER-CHENG (2008) explores the dynamics of political control of the arts and individual agency in the musical storytelling art of Suzhou *tanci* between 1949 and 1964. In addition to examining the role of the state, she examines artists’ agency in their responses to dominated political forces as expressed in their newly composed and revised *tanci* works. Furthermore, she reviews the artists’ musical innovations both as responses to the coercive political hegemony in a harsh environment and as significant expressions of artistic freedom within politicized hegemony.

Picking up on a similar thread, in this article I explore the integration of tradition, ideology, and individual agency in the New *Gushi* Movement in Maoist China from 1962 to 1966, showing how *gushi*, a traditional narrative genre, was appropriated and constructed for socialist education campaigns, and how individual storytellers responded to such ideological ends. Without going into a detailed account of discourses and practices of tradition in the PRC from 1962 to 1966, this article first depicts tradition in general as a dynamic process and a wholly symbolic construction (HOBBSAWM and RANGER 1983; HANDLER and LINNEKIN 1984). In *The Invention of Tradition*, six historians and anthropologists argue that traditions which appear or claim to be ancient can be quite recent in origin and are sometimes literally invented in a single event or over a short time period (HOBBSAWM and RANGER 1983). Eric Hobsbawm defines “invented traditions” as the following:

“Invented tradition” is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past... However, insofar as there is such reference to a historic past, the peculiarity of “invented” traditions is that the continuity with it is largely fictitious. In short, they are responses to novel situations which take the form of reference to old situations, or which establish their own past by quasi-obligatory repetition. (HOBBSAWM 1983, 1)

Hobsbawm argues that “invented traditions” arise more frequently at times of rapid social transformation when “old” traditions begin to disappear. He attaches much importance to the rupture between the past and the present, showing that the continuity from the past to the present in invented traditions was constructed and used to hide the change and the rupture. More specifically, Hobsbawm distinguishes between three types of invented traditions that each have a distinctive function: 1. those establishing or symbolizing social cohesion and collective identities; 2. those establishing or legitimatizing institutions and social hierarchies; and 3. those socializing people into particular social contexts (HOBBSAWM 1983, 9).

My questions in this article involve the inverse of the scenarios Hobsbawm analyzes: how should we frame the situation when there is significant continuity from the past to the present, but the system frames itself as new? If a tradition claims to be new but conveys some traditional values and elements, could or should it still be viewed as an invented tradition? This article will thus examine both the conti-

nunity and the rupture in the process of the invention of tradition through the lens of the New *Gushi* Movement in Maoist China.<sup>3</sup>

#### THE NEW *GUSHI* MOVEMENT FROM 1962 TO 1966

The New *Gushi* Movement was initiated in 1962 when Mao Zedong launched the Socialist Education Movement, also known as the *Si Qing* 四清, or “Four Cleanups,” in the PRC (BAUM and TEIWES 1968). The main focus of the Socialist Education Movement was on educating the masses with socialist ideology, rebuilding revolutionary spirits into the CCP cadres and the masses, and strengthening the significance of class struggle (BAUM 1969; ZHU and ZHANG 1999). At the end of 1966, the Socialist Education Movement was terminated and universally supplanted by the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976).

Originally launched in response to CCP Chairman Mao Zedong’s impassioned plea to the CCP Central Committee’s Tenth Plenum in September 1962 (“Never forget class struggle!”), the Socialist Education Movement was aimed specifically at correcting a number of unorthodox political, ideological, and economic tendencies that had arisen in the rural communes in the aftermath of the disastrous Great Leap Forward (BAUM 1969). At the beginning of the Socialist Education Movement, the primary purpose of the movement was to reeducate cadres of the CCP and its organizations. However, the movement later turned into a socialist and communist ideological education campaign with a focus on class struggle. When this movement was carried out in both cities and the countryside, common people were mobilized to study Mao Zedong’s works, to inherit the revolutionary spirit of hard work embodied in the model cities Daqing 大庆 and Dazhai 大寨, and to follow the outstanding examples of Lei Feng 雷锋, Wang Jie 王杰, Jiao Yulu 焦裕禄, and others. In order to educate young people specifically, many lively methods were adopted, such as telling the histories of their villages, families, communes, factories, and so forth (ZHU and ZHANG 1999). During this process, new *gushi* were created and performed widely all over the country (QI 1980).

*Gushi*, as a Chinese vernacular literature genre, gives an account of an event and can be translated as a tale, a story, or a narrative. I will not track the long history of this genre here, but will explain the concept of New *Gushi*. *Gu* 故 has multiple meanings in the Chinese language, but as an adjective it refers to the old, the ancient, or the former. *Shi* 事 as a noun usually means an event, a thing, an affair, business, or work. Literally, *Gushi* means an old thing, or an event that happened in the past. This term may thus be understood as a story in old times or in the past. *Xin gushi*, or new *gushi*, literally means “a new old thing,” or “a new old event.” The paradox is evident. What is the new? What is the old? These are two sizeable questions, and I will address them in detail later in this article.

The first folklorist to pay attention to the New *Gushi* Movement was Qi Lianxiu 祁连休, a retired researcher at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences’ Institute of Ethnic Literature. He collected many stories composed between 1949 and 1979, after the establishment of the PRC, and called them *xin gushi* (QI 1980). In his introduc-

tion, Qi briefly described the process of the New *Gushi* Movement in the 1960s, but he did not track the origin of this term or how it had been used in mass media (QI 1980, 1–3). The term *xin gushi* was not standard in print in the 1960s; *xin gushi* were also known as *geming gushi* 革命故事 (revolutionary *gushi*). Sometimes journalists or writers just used the term *gushi* but infused it with ideological connotations.

A report printed in *Renmin ribao* 人民日报 (People's Daily) on 13 January 1963 introduced the fact that storytelling events had become popular in factories and entertainment places in Shanghai for Socialist propaganda purposes. Another article printed in the same newspaper on 27 August 1963 reported that more than two thousand amateur storytellers were mobilized to tell “revolutionary *gushi*” in the suburb of Shanghai in order to educate the masses with the ideology of “class struggle.” In one report in *Renmin ribao* on 28 December 1963, entitled *Shanghai nongcun guangfan kaizhan jiang geming gushi de huodong* 上海农村广泛开展讲革命故事的活动 (Revolutionary *gushi*-telling events were widely launched in the countryside of Shanghai), it was pointed out that revolutionary *gushi*- or *xin gushi*-telling events were carried out in the countryside of Shanghai starting as early as 1958, but they were only widely promoted in 1962 with the beginning of the Socialist Education Movement. It is stated clearly in all of these reports that the new storytelling events were used to serve the long-term goals of socialist and “class struggle” education, and that the newly-trained amateur storytellers were seen as a strong propaganda team used to serve ideological ends. Obviously, in regard to the question of what is old or new in the new *gushi* narrative tradition, the “new” here primarily refers to the revolutionary spirit and ideological ideas of socialism.

These reports told the basic story of the New *Gushi* Movement from a governmental “top-down” view. How then would the masses tell it from the bottom? According to LU Bingwen 陆炳文 (1999), some new storytelling events occurred in the labor union system of Shanghai in 1952, when librarians tried to use *gushi* to promote new literature books in the library. The new *gushi* they told were mainly adapted from the popular literary works published at that time. In the 1950s, many people told new *gushi* written by themselves for their own personal enjoyment. For example, in Ganxiang Town, within the Jinshan district of Shanghai, Yang Zhiyu 杨志余 composed a series of new *gushi* adapted from the autobiographical fiction *Gao Yubao* 高玉宝 and told these new stories in the fields and in tea houses. These new *gushi* attracted lots of audiences in local areas, and they even spread widely outside the local community (LU 1999, 1). New *gushi* compositions and performances were also practiced widely in Jilin 吉林, Hebei 河北, Liaoning 辽宁, Zhejiang 浙江, Jiangsu 江苏, Anhui 安徽, Henan 河南, Hubei 湖北, Jiangxi 江西, and other provinces (QI 1980, 2–3). After gaining the promotion of the CCP, new storytelling events spread widely all over the country, and the new *gushi* were reshaped for socialist education in the New *Gushi* Movement.

While the masses used to participate in these events for entertainment, these events became a form of socialist education under the new political environment. In short, popular storytelling events were “discovered” by the political powers in 1962 and began to serve political and ideological purposes in socialist education

campaigns. Obviously, the populace tended to view the new *gushi* performances as a continuity with the past or as a new *traditional* mode; they saw the connection between the old and the new and perceived the new as contemporary themes on an old motif. This article is concerned primarily with this popular viewpoint, and I will discuss it in more detail below. However, it should be noted that the official reports emphasized the rupture between the past and the present, and this emphasis on discontinuity was derived from and fueled by revolutionary ideology. From different standpoints then, the new *gushi* could be understood differently.

Although the New *Gushi* Movement is a fascinating topic, there is little scholarship on the matter. In addition to QI Lianxiu's introduction (1980), another important work was written by QIAN Shunjuan 钱舜娟 (1986), a retired editor from the Shanghai Literature and Arts Publishing House (Shanghai Wenyi Chubanshe 上海文艺出版社). Qian did not intend to recount the history of the New *Gushi* Movement when she introduced the history of the publication of *Gushi hui* 故事会 (literally, "stories meeting") at her press beginning in July 1963. Nevertheless, because the publication of *Gushi hui* is actually a part of the New *Gushi* movement, it recorded many events and texts in print and thus became the primary source for my research. In the following section, I will briefly introduce its initiation and analyze some of its important documents.

#### GUSHI HUI FROM JULY 1963 TO MAY 1966

When the New *Gushi* Movement spread widely in the early 1960s in China, editors from the press found the chance to participate in this movement and record some of its products. In December 1962, two of Qian Shunjuan's colleagues from Shanghai Literature and Art Publishing House went to Changshu 常熟 in Jiangsu 江苏 Province and tried to get some manuscripts of Chinese traditional opera for publication. Unexpectedly, they found that many people were interested in the new *gushi* told in local areas. They felt that the form of storytelling was very effective for propaganda since there was no need for ostentation, extravagance, stage, makeup, settings, or props in this activity, and it was totally free and easily accessible to audiences. When they went back to Shanghai, they found out that new *gushi* composition and performance was also very popular there. Therefore, they proposed the publishing of a new journal about *gushi* to meet the needs of local storytellers and cultural officials who desired scripts of new *gushi*. Their proposal was approved by their press and thus *Gushi hui* was founded (QIAN 1986). Twenty-four issues of *Gushi hui* were published from July 1963 to May 1966. The publication ended with the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, but it was resumed in March 1974, and its title was changed into *Revolutionary Gushi hui* (*Geming gushi hui* 革命故事会) until November 1978. In January 1979, it changed back to *Gushi hui*, and has continued its publication up to the present (YOU 2005). It maintained a circulation of three to four million copies for each issue in the 1990s and 2000s. Its current popularity owes much to its successful foundation in the early 1960s.



In July 1963, the first issue of *Gushi hui* was published. On the front page was *Bianzhe de hua* 编者的话 (Editor's notes), which declared the content, objective, principle, rationale, and target audience of this new publication (the underlined characters in the original [and their English equivalent in translation below] are to emphasize the significance of storytelling in socialist propaganda):

《故事会》是不定期的丛刊、将根据需要陆续分辑出版。它专门刊载基本上可以直接供给故事员口头讲述的故事脚本、以促进群众故事活动的发展、扩大社会主义宣传阵地、丰富群众文化生活。这些故事文字浅显、通俗易懂，比较适合群众的欣赏习惯、因而也是可以供群众阅读的通俗读物。现在是第一辑。

我国的劳动人民、历来就喜欢听故事、喜欢讲故事。近年来、农村、工厂涌现了许多群众故事员。他们把富有思想性和战斗性的小说、报道、戏剧、电影改编成故事、或者把当地先进人物的事迹改编成故事、用自己的口头语言讲给群众听、受到了群众的热烈欢迎。他们在田头讲、在车间讲；在小会讲、在大会讲；在青年工人、青年农民中间讲、在老年工人、老年农民中间讲；在妇女中间讲、在少年儿童中间讲。这种活动比较适合群众的欣赏水平和欣赏习惯、不要化妆、道具、不要搭档、伴奏、不受场地和时间的限制、表演上不需要艰难复杂的基本功、又便于在讲述故事的过程中结合当地的群众思想情况、因此、它很轻便、很灵活、很经济、能够迅速配合中心任务、深入群众、是文艺宣传中最为灵便的轻武器之一。

*Gushi hui* is an irregular series of publications, and it will be published serially in different issues based on practical needs. It will only publish *gushi* scripts that can be provided directly to storytellers for their oral storytelling so that it will contribute to the development of storytelling activities among the masses, broaden the battlefield of socialist propaganda, and enrich the cultural life of the masses. These *gushi* are easy to read and understand and therefore they are also make popular reading material for the masses. This is the first issue.

Our Chinese working-class people always enjoy listening to *gushi* and like telling *gushi*. In recent years, a large number of storytellers from the masses have appeared in rural areas and factories. They have adapted revolutionary novels, news, operas, and films into *gushi*, or adapted the achievements of local outstanding heroes or heroines into *gushi*. They draw on their oral language to tell *gushi* to the masses and are popularly received by the masses. They tell stories in the fields of farms, in the rooms of factories, at small meetings and big conferences, among young workers and peasants, among old workers and peasants, among women and children. This activity is adopted to cater to the appreciation levels and habits of the masses, and there is no need for makeup and props, no need for performance accompaniments and music instruments, no limits of time and place, no requirements for difficult and complicated basic skills, and it is easy to consider the ideas of the local masses in the process of storytelling. Therefore, it is very convenient, very flexible, very economical, able to respond quickly to the central tasks, and to go to the people, and it is one of the most effective and convenient light weapons in the propaganda of literatures and arts.

This short statement indicates concepts of both tradition and ideology. As the anonymous editor pointed out, China has a long tradition of storytelling perfor-



mance; however, some changes occurred in the 1960s. One impressive change was the appearance of a large number of *qunzhong gushi yuan* 群众故事员 (storytellers from among the masses), who were working-class people, and did not receive any professional training in traditional storytelling performance. They basically drew on contemporary materials from the mass media to tell stories for a wider working-class audience. They performed their *gushi* everywhere from the fields to the factories and were very well received among the common people. The editor clearly pointed out that the target audiences of the storytelling performances were Chinese peasants and workers, irrespective of age or gender. Moreover, the editor differentiated the new storytelling performances from traditional storytelling performances and stated that traditional performing arts have high requirements: makeup and props, a group of performers and music players present in performance, and performers that have completed a complicated and difficult basic training in performing arts. Furthermore, traditional performing arts can only be performed in certain places at certain times, such as at a theater during a big festival. However, new storytelling performances needed none of these, and the new *gushi yuan* could tell new *gushi* everywhere at any time. Therefore, the new storytelling performance format was regarded as an easy and convenient tool to propagate socialist messages. The only difference between new and traditional *gushi* is in ideology.

As illustrated in the editor's notes, new *gushi* were composed and performed to serve the needs of socialist propaganda, especially for the working masses in rural areas and factories. The storytelling performance was not promoted as a tool for people's entertainment, but as an effective tool for socialist education campaigns. During my trip to Shanghai in April 2005, I interviewed Qian Shunjuan in her living room and asked why the journal *Gushi hui* conveyed such a strong ideological message. Qian Shunjuan said that she and her colleagues used to go to the countryside and the factories, living with people and working with them. She said that they just tried to meet the requirements of the masses who wanted to understand the policies of the CCP. Qian gave me her interpretation from the standpoint of both an editor and a member of the CCP.

In the Socialist Education Movement, editors with CCP backgrounds built a bridge between the masses and the CCP in print. Many editors in the 1960s were well-educated intellectuals who accepted Marxism; Qian Shunjuan was a case in point. She graduated from Jiangnan University and joined the Youth League before the establishment of the PRC. Later on, she joined the CCP and took charge of the CCP's propaganda. She was one of the five founders of Shanghai Literature and Arts Publishing House, and after the foundation of the press, she began to collect and edit a variety of works in folk literature. Soon she got tired of editing "traditional" folk literature because she thought it had nothing to do with contemporary life, so she asked to join the editorial board of *Gushi hui*. She soon became a core editor. Qian did not like to sit in an office but liked to go to the countryside and factories, working with the masses. When she edited *gushi* scripts for publication, she lived with storytellers, recorded their *gushi*, transcribed them, and revised them carefully. Due to her and other editors' hard work, the issues of *Gushi hui* met with great suc-

cess. Sixty thousand copies of the first issue were printed and sold out, and more than 340,000 copies came out in reprint. The following issues were also well received in the 1960s, and at least 100,000 copies of each issue were printed (YOU 2005).

Why had *Gushi hui* become so popular since its initial publication? I suggest that a mixture of the old and the new is one reason. The vernacular genre of *gushi* was innovatively changed to represent contemporary issues, and tradition and ideology were negotiated in the new genre. In this process of inventing or revolutionizing tradition, there was both continuity and discontinuity from the past to the present. As the editor's notes indicated, *gushi yuan*, new storytellers, had played an important role in the process. They did not receive any professional training in storytelling but composed many contemporary *gushi* and performed them widely in the countryside and in factories. They were a part of the proletariat and served their class. Officially, they were named *hongse xuanchuanyuan* 红色宣传员 (red propagandists) in the Socialist Education Movement (YOU 2005). According to some reports in *Gushi hui* from 1963 to 1966, most of them drew inspiration from traditional storytelling performances, while some received a Marxist and Maoist education before they became socialist and communist propagandists. Others maintained their individual performance styles. In the following section, I will focus on one famed storyteller in the movement, Zhang Daoyu, as illustrative of the movement as a whole. I seek to explore how he learned to compose and perform new *gushi* in the 1960s, how he interacted with the cadres and the masses in his storytelling performance, how he responded to the New *Gushi* Movement, and how he interpreted new *gushi*.

#### ZHANG DAOYU AND HIS COMPOSITION AND PERFORMANCE OF NEW GUSHI

Zhang Daoyu is known as *Gushi dawang* 故事大王 (the king of *gushi*) in Shanghai, primarily because of his new storytelling compositions and performances beginning from the early 1960s. He used to be an important writer for *Gushi hui* and later became a coeditor of the journal. I found him with the help of Xia Yiming 夏一鸣, a current editor of *Gushi hui*, and visited him at the Shanyang Culture Center in Jinshan District, Shanghai, on 6 April 2005. We talked for the whole day, and he told me about his personal experiences.

Zhang Daoyu was born in Xinjiang Village, in Shanyang Town, Jinshan District, Shanghai (上海市金山区山阳镇新江村) on 24 December 1940, shortly after the total destruction of his village at the hands of Japanese soldiers in August 1937. The Japanese army could not conquer the city of Shanghai quickly, so they decided to land in the rural areas near Shanghai in order to besiege the Chinese army defending the city. His village was totally destroyed by Japanese soldiers in the process. Zhang's parents survived that disaster, but they could never forget it. Zhang's mother told him many stories about Japanese invasion. He thus inherited hatred toward the Japanese from an early age. His family believed the Chinese Communist Party saved the country and pulled their lives out of misery, although they still

lived a poor life after 1949. Zhang's mother liked to tell stories; she also liked to drink tea and socialize in tea houses near her village. Little Zhang Daoyu always accompanied her there. Unexpectedly, Zhang found that some professional storytellers were telling traditional stories there, and he became obsessed with these storytelling performances. Later, he frequently went to see various performances of traditional storytellers in tea houses and enjoyed himself very much. Although Zhang was very smart, his family was too poor to support his education, so he returned to his village after graduating from elementary school and became an accountant in his village. In 1958, he attended a free middle school in his town sponsored by the local government. After graduation, he went back home and worked as a peasant. One official in his village was a brilliant storyteller as well as a skilled peasant. When people worked together on the farm or relaxed at home, this official liked to tell all kinds of stories, which Zhang greatly enjoyed. When Zhang attended militia training in his village, he lived with his cohort in a large dormitory. They used to get together and tell stories at night, and sometimes they created a serial story, each contributing a part (*gushi jielong* 故事接龙). All of these experiences influenced Zhang's storytelling career.

In the early 1960s, Zhang Rujun 张如君 and Liu Yunruo 刘韵若, two professional performers in the Shanghai Ping Opera Troupe (Shanghaishi Ping Jutuan 上海市评剧团) went to rural areas to perform a new *gushi* adapted from the play about the revolutionary heroine Li Shuangshuang 李双双. When they arrived at Shanyang Town, Zhang Daoyu was asked to accompany them both as an assistant and also as a student. This couple's performances were very successful, and Zhang got chances to hear every version of their stories. After their performance, the two professional storytellers usually asked for comments and suggestions from Zhang, who gave them his response and feedback. He was very familiar with rural life and the vernacular language, so he could provide excellent suggestions that were soon adopted by the two professionals. At that time, Zhang Daoyu had already performed as a *gushiyuan* 故事员 (storyteller) in his village, but he had not started composing and performing new *gushi*. During the two weeks that he stayed with the two professional storytellers, he often told them of events in his village and his own responses to them. The two professionals found these stories very interesting, and they encouraged Zhang to compose and perform new *gushi* based on his daily life. Inspired by their suggestion, ZHANG composed his first new *gushi*, *Shuozui meiren* (1964), based on a real story in his village. Soon afterwards, he created other new *gushi* such as *Zhongzi mi* 种子迷 (The seed enthusiast), and *Fan long jin-wei* 范龙进队 (Fan Long joins the team). Later, his composition and performance of new *gushi* was interrupted during the Cultural Revolution. He was attacked because of his storytelling activities in the early 1960s, which hurt him so deeply that he no longer composed nor performed *gushi* related to politics. When the Cultural Revolution was over, Zhang resumed his career in new story creation and performance and has continued it up to the present. He created many famous *gushi* in the 1980s and 1990s, such as *Xin chake* 新茶客 (A new patron of the tea house), *Qiaoguniang zhaoqin* 巧姑娘招亲 (A clever girl asking for marriage), *Huo baogong*

活包公 (Live Baogong), *Guizhen gaijia* 桂珍改嫁 (Guizhen remarried), *Xinfengcun li de chouwen* 新风村里的丑闻 (Scandals in the new-trend village), and *Miliu zhibi* 弥留之际 (At the moment of dying) (YOU 2005). I draw on the case study of how Zhang composed and performed *Shuozui meiren* to examine the relationship between tradition and ideology in individual composition and performance.

*Shuozui meiren* is the story of a matchmaker who deceives two families into marrying their children to each other. It was based on the personal experience of one of Zhang's friends. His friend was twenty-eight years old then, but still single. One woman in the village acted as matchmaker and introduced an eighteen-year-old girl to his friend. The matchmaker lied to both families to set the marriage up. She told them that the potential bride and groom were of a similar age and told the bride's family that the groom was the only son of a very wealthy family. In reality, Zhang's friend had two brothers, and his family was very poor. When the parents of the bride visited the groom's family before the engagement, the matchmaker led them to the house of a rich family and hid the groom's brothers. With such tricks, the marriage was settled, and the matchmaker received plenty of money and gifts from the groom's family. After the wedding, the bride found out that she and her family had been deceived by the matchmaker. However, in traditional Chinese society, if a couple had married, they were not allowed to divorce. Therefore, the bride and her family had to accept this reality and move on with their life. Although this couple got along very well after marriage, Zhang was very angry at the matchmaker, so he composed a story to criticize her and her deceptions. Several differences distinguish the story version from the actual events. In *Shuozui meiren*, the matchmaker was an old lady in her fifties, although the real model was in her thirties, and in the *gushi*, the matchmaker asked the groom's mother to borrow plenty of furniture from her neighbors instead of leading the bride's family to visit another rich family. The matchmaker in the story also used a number of other tricks to cheat the bride's family. In the *gushi*, all the tricks were eventually revealed before the marriage, but the bride and groom still married because they had been in love with each other for a long time. They had not told the truth to their parents because they intended to devote themselves to work first and preferred to marry later.

*Shuozui meiren* was first told by Zhang in his village and many people enjoyed it. Gradually, he became famous for his storytelling. One day, Zhang was invited to attend an official wedding organized by the local government, and his storytelling was planned to replace the wedding banquet because the local officials intended to transform the traditional wedding customs into new ones. After the bride and groom drank their wine while entwining their glasses, a custom known as *jiaobeijiu* 交杯酒, Zhang began to tell *Shuozui meiren*, standing on a table. The storytelling lasted for forty-five minutes, and the audience was greatly amused by it. The wedding ceremony ended when the storytelling performance was over. Zhang succeeded in his performance, established his comic style, and gained storytelling fame in the local area.

After the wedding performance, Zhang was frequently asked to tell *gushi* at many official conferences. The cadres, however, interpreted such *gushi* in ways different

from Zhang's original intention. As mentioned above, Mao Zedong launched the Socialist Education Movement in 1962 with the goal of "protecting" the peasants from the temptations of feudalism and the "sprouts of capitalism" in the countryside. In the cadres' eyes, the matchmaker was a representative of old feudalism. The critique of the matchmaker was in fact an attack against feudalism and Confucianism. The moral conflicts Zhang intended to emphasize became the conflicts of different ideologies in official contexts, and Zhang's *gushi* was utilized to transform the wedding tradition and to serve ideological purposes. Meanwhile, in the 1960s, the cadres encouraged young people to oppose arranged marriages and make their own decisions about marriage, and they also promoted the policy of late marriage. The free love between the bride and the groom in Zhang's new *gushi* and the characters' positive response to the late marriage policy were what the officials promoted and desired. Thus, officials appreciated Zhang's *gushi* and invited him to tell it everywhere, first in the town, then in the county, and finally in the city of Shanghai. However, Zhang was initially not aware of the political purpose. In my interview, he told me that officials listened to his *gushi* at different conference levels just for entertainment.

When Zhang performed *Shuozui meiren* in Shanghai, Ren Jiahe 任嘉禾, an official in charge of folk literature and arts in the city, asked Zhang to write this *gushi* down. The written text of this new *gushi* was published in *Wenhui bao* 文汇报 (Wenhui Daily), on 13 March 1964. Later, it was recommended to the editors of *Gushi hui* and was published in the fifth volume of the series in May of 1964. After the editors of *Gushi hui* discovered Zhang's talents, they encouraged him to continue his new storytelling composition and performance. Zhang's new *gushi* were published primarily in *Gushi hui*, and he became an assistant editor of the publication in the 1990s. Moreover, because of his success in new *gushi* creation and performance, Zhang became an official at the Culture Center of Shanyang Town (Shanyangzhen Wenhua Zhongxin 山阳镇文化中心), and his life improved because of this.

During my interview with Zhang Daoyu, he also told me a funny real-world story. After *Shuozui meiren* was published in 1964, a professional storyteller read it and started to perform it. One day, he came to Zhang's village to tell this story. When Zhang's friend and his wife heard this story, they knew that it was based on their personal experiences, and the story amused them a lot. The matchmaker also heard this story. She knew that the author intended to criticize her, so she returned the money and gifts to the groom's family. Unexpectedly, the matchmaker became Zhang's elder daughter's mother-in-law, and Zhang got along very well with her and her family.

#### TRADITION AND THE INDIVIDUAL

I will now draw on this case study to examine the role of tradition in individual storytelling composition and performance in the New *Gushi* Movement. The key issues that I focus on include what is old and what is new in Zhang's *gushi* and their performance, and how the storyteller and audiences interpret them. As I mentioned above, *gushi* is a vernacular narrative genre in China. Zhang actually inherited some of the old Chinese storytelling tradition, as illustrated from his

personal experiences. First, he enjoyed performances of professional storytellers in tea houses when he was very young. Second, he learned much and drew much inspiration from two professional storytellers in the Shanghai Ping Opera Troupe when they performed in his village. When he recounted his experiences to me, Zhang clearly showed me the continuity between Chinese traditional storytelling and his own story composition. Meanwhile, he also knew that his *gushi* were different from traditional ones. STAHL's research on personal experience narratives (1977; 1983; 1989) helps to outline both the continuity with and the rupture in tradition within Zhang's composition and performance of *gushi*.

New *gushi* share many qualities with personal experience narratives, which have been established as an important genre of folklore by STAHL (1977; 1983; 1989). Such narratives are based on experiences in everyday life, and the storyteller tells them from his or her own real experiences. Unlike the narratives Stahl mentions, however, the new *gushi* under discussion are often based on the experiences of persons other than the storyteller. The new *gushi* published in *Gushi hui* were mainly adapted from literary works or reports in the 1960s, and it was impossible for the storytellers to have experienced all the events that were narrated in their stories. Even though some new *gushi* were based on real events in the storytellers' communities, they are not necessarily related to the storytellers' own personal experiences. Additionally, changes were always made to separate *gushi* from the truth, just as Zhang Daoyu did when he composed *Shuozui meiren*. New *gushi* are thus a creative composition. Nevertheless, storytellers usually drew on real experiences in daily life to compose their *gushi* and also relied on traditional storytelling to revise and perform them. Thus, the combination of nontraditional content and the traditional aspects of form, style, and function are what new *gushi* and personal experience narratives share the most (STAHL 1983).

Stahl points out that "tradition" has two interrelated aspects: the first is "continuity as opposed to change," and the second is "collectivity as opposed to individuality" (STAHL 1977, 15). She argues that personal experience narratives are more traditional than innovative since they are influenced in a way by collective models, and innovation occurs within the range of "safe creation." Following the same reasoning, I argue that the new *gushi* are more traditional than innovative. In order to illustrate the role of tradition in new *gushi* composition and performance, I have narrowed down my arguments to two points: "traditional attitudes" and "collectivity" of new *gushi*.

Like personal experience narratives, the new *gushi* involve traditional attitudes, values, and beliefs that are not necessarily consciously employed by storytellers but do make the stories significant and meaningful in a covert way. As I mentioned above, Zhang Daoyu created *Shuozui meiren* to criticize the avaricious and unreliable matchmaker who deceived both the bride and groom's families to gain some benefits for herself. This reflected Zhang's traditional belief in honesty (*xin* 信), one of the five virtues (*ren, yi, li, zhi, xin* 仁义礼智信; humanity, justice, propriety, wisdom, and honesty) emphasized by Confucius (551 BCE–479 BCE). As Confucius says in the *Analects*, *Yu peng you jiao, yan er you xin* 与朋友交，言而有信 ("Be honest in speech when dealing with your friends") (*Analects* 1: 7). This means that



one has to be honest and true to his words when he is interacting with his friends. Furthermore, in the Chinese oral tradition, the matchmaker is usually a dishonest person who acts contrary to traditional Confucian virtues and morals. With her “oily mouth” (*youzui* 油嘴) and “deceitful speech” (*shuozui* 说嘴) she is often condemned for exaggerating the advantages of both households in order to effect the union and win gifts from both sides (MCLAREN and CHEN 2000, 226). The matchmaker in *Shuozui meiren* tells all kinds of lies about the status of the groom’s family in order to bring about the marriage. Although in reality the matchmaker did succeed in contracting the marriage, Zhang was very angry about her behavior and thus designed the plot to reveal all of her lies at the end of the story, allowing both sides to criticize the matchmaker.

Zhang’s traditional attitude toward honesty (*xin* 信) was formed through his interaction and communication with other members of a traditional Chinese community. These traditional attitudes were also shared and appreciated by his community’s members. When they are reflected in new *gushi*, the significance attached to these attitudes naturally unfolds, which thus gives the *gushi* its meaning. This is the main point of interest for both the storyteller and his audience. Although different audiences may have different understandings of the theme of *Shuozui meiren*, they all agree that the matchmaker should not be dishonest and untrue to her own words. While traditional attitudes are shared by the storyteller and his audience, aspects of tradition may vary between different performances, and some of these aspects might be freely mixed together. It is in the variation and combination of multiple aspects of tradition that individual innovation and creativity can be found.

Collectivity, the second aspect of STAHL’s analysis of tradition (1977) seems to be absent from new *gushi* since they seem to be composed and performed by individual storytellers. However, this is not necessarily the case. Many aspects of collectivity are revealed in the traditional processes of composing and telling new *gushi*. When I interviewed Ren Jiahe 任嘉禾, an official who coordinated the new storytelling performances in Shanghai in the 1960s, and Qian Shunjuan, the editor of *Gushi hui* since the 1960s, about the new *gushi* composition and performance in April 2005, they told me that the new *gushi* were actually composed, revised, and performed collectively. Ren Jiahe summarized the process of new *gushi* composition and performance as *jiangjiang xiexie*, *xiexie jiangjiang* 讲讲写写、写写讲讲, which means that *gushi* is first composed orally, then is written down, and then is continually revised both orally and in writing until it is well received by audiences. Although this process is deliberately reduced and controlled, it imitates the traditional oral transmission of traditional stories. Qian Shunjuan mentioned to me that when she was the editor of *Gushi hui*, she went to rural areas, factories, and the army barracks in order to collect oral stories for publication. She lived, ate meals, and worked with the storytellers. Many storytellers were illiterate, but they were good at storytelling, and they kept revising their new *gushi* orally. Qian recorded some performances of their storytelling, transcribed them, then revised the written texts frequently based on the responses and feedback from the audience until they were good enough for publication. Some literate individuals could write new *gushi*,



but they did not know how to tell them orally. In such cases, Qian asked competent storytellers to tell the stories in the community. Thus, the storytellers and audiences strengthened the orality of the written *gushi* and made them appropriate for oral transmission. Therefore, the new *gushi* were composed and performed collectively, although individual innovation and creativity were mixed with the collectivity.

Zhang Daoyu's new *gushi* were also created and revised collectively. As mentioned above, when Zhang attended military training in his village, he lived with his cohort in a large dormitory at night. They liked to create a story together, each making one episode. This creative process of storytelling composition had a great influence on Zhang's individual creation and performance. When Zhang had some original ideas about *gushi*, he usually told it to the people in his community, receiving response and feedback from them for further revision. He revised the story until both he and his audience were totally satisfied with it. He named this creative process *wo* 窝 (in the Wu dialect), which reveals the collectivity of new *gushi* creation. This word has multiple meanings such as to nest, house, cluster, curl up, wrap, gather, roll, and harbor. Zhang described the whole process of *wo* when I interviewed him in April 2005:

大家集中起来、住在一个地方，到了冬天，比如说气候冷，大家就在招待所里面、窝在屋子里，当中有空调，天冷得不得了，外面在下大雪，大家就住在一起，讲、你讲一句我讲一句，有时候一个故事要讲到深夜两三点钟，大家插得差不多了，大家觉得满意了，再睡觉。就像讲老的民间故事的时候，你插一句、我说一句、这样的。这种写法，我们叫窝。

We [storytellers and story writers] live together in a place. For example, in winter, it is very cold. We live in a hotel, and stay in the room where the heat is on. It is extremely cold, and it snows heavily outside. We all live together, telling stories. You tell a sentence, I tell a sentence. Sometimes a story might be told until 2 or 3 in the morning. We will not go to bed until we cover everything and feel satisfied. It is just as we tell old folktales: you insert one sentence, I say one sentence. We call this process of writing *wo*.

Overall, the new *gushi* published in *Gushi hui* were revised and performed many times both orally and in written texts before publication. These *gushi* could be defined as “tradition-oriented” stories since they were created by storytellers, audiences, and editors. They bear many traditional aspects of storytelling, but are not direct documentations of oral performances (HONKO 2000). Obviously, the originally stories that were performed are different from the final texts of performances, which have been improved and polished in subtle ways. Even so, the revision process of new *gushi* has a strong oral dimension. Therefore, the published texts reveal the interplay of orality and literacy (BØRDAHL and WAN 2010). When I interviewed Zhang Daoyu in April 2005, he said: “I think that a piece of work can be regarded as a real *gushi* only when it looks beautiful in written text, is easy to tell, and easy to remember when it is told” (*wo juede kan qilai wenzi hen mei, jiang qilai you hen shangkou, ting qilai you neng jidezhu, zheyang de gushi caishi zhenzheng de gushi* 我觉得看起来文字很美，讲起来又很上口，听起来又能记得住，这样的故事才是真正的事)。In his eyes, a good *gushi* is a wonderful combination of oral tradition and written literature. He also said, “I think what *gushi* tells is what really happens to the com-

mon people, not your own personal experience. I only write what is on the mind of the common people” (*wo renwei gushi jiang de shi laobaixing de shiqing, bushi jiang ni ziji de shiqing, laobaixing zenme xiang, wo jiu zenme xie* 我认为故事讲的是老百姓的事情, 不是讲你自己的事情, 老百姓怎么想, 我就怎么写). In short, storytellers are bound by tradition and the horizon of expectations of their audience while literary writers have free choice in their selection of content, form, and style. Zhang Daoyu identifies himself as a story writer and primarily a storyteller, and therefore he represents the voice of the common people.

Like personal experience narratives, new *gushi* are a combination of tradition and innovation, and I view them as more traditional than innovative, especially in Zhang Daoyu’s *gushi* composition and performance. In this sense, tradition is a dynamic process that assimilates innovative elements through the creative process of performance and communication (TOELKEN 1996). Here, “tradition” may cover all aspects of expressive behavior—the performer’s competence, the actual performance and interactive events, and the reactions of the audience, as well as the content and stylization of the “texts,” or items that are easily recognized by folklorists.

#### TRADITION, IDEOLOGY, AND THE INDIVIDUAL

Ray Cashman examines how tradition-as-resource plays a role in the individual-as-process. His understandings of both tradition and the individual are intertwined together: “Like tradition, the individual is best understood not as a bounded, natural, static entity but as an on-going work-in-process—enacted, maintained, and revised through performance, recursive and changeable over time” (CASHMAN 2011, 303). Cashman draws on his ethnography of communication approach to illustrate the interrelationship between tradition and the individual, and he shows us how his “star” uses narratives from traditional resources to interpret and criticize his own society as well as articulate and project “a coherent moral self.” The remaining issue that I seek to address is how to review the role of ideology and agency in this individual-as-process. What motivates an individual who continues to act to reshape tradition? Do individuals act in response to external causes? Is individual action determined by tradition or ideology? Do actors act for their own identifiable reasons?

BOURDIEU proposes connecting agency and social structures in a “dialectical relationship” in many works (1977; 1990). He argues that we should not conceptualize human action as a direct, unmediated response to external forces, whether they are identified as micro-level structures of interactions or macro-level cultural, social, or economic factors. He also argues against conceptualizing action as a simple outgrowth from internal factors such as conscious intentions and calculation, as posited by voluntarist and rational-actor models of human action. Bourdieu’s goal is to transcend the classic subjective/objective dichotomy by conceptualizing action so that micro and macro, voluntarist, and determinist dimensions of human activity are integrated into a single conceptual movement.

He thus proposes a structural theory of practice that connects action to culture, structure, and power.

Inspired by Pierre Bourdieu's theory, I claim that the practice of new *gushi* creation integrates both tradition and ideology into storytelling performances. Individual storytellers such as Zhang Daoyu did not respond passively to the socialist education campaigns and did not let the ideology of the CCP overwhelmingly dominate their storytelling composition and performance. Nor did they compose new *gushi* completely from their own consciousness. It is thus in individual agency that tradition and ideology are intertwined and opposing ideological positions are negotiated.

Ideology is a heavily loaded word in Western scholarship, and Western scholars usually make some revisions of this concept to explore the interplay of ideology and artistic creation in Maoist China (HOLM 1991; WEBSTER-CHENG 2008). Holm deals with this keyword in both its restrictive and its inclusive senses, defining it "both as a tool of government and as an aspect of human consciousness, a pattern of thought and feeling characteristic of a particular class or group" (HOLM 1991, 8–9). He emphasizes the official ideology on practice and on policy implementation. Thus, to investigate Mao Zedong's "face-the-masses" orientation is to track how it was actually embodied in artistic practice and artistic production. Holm points out that a significant feature of the cultural field that emerged after Mao's talk at the crucial 1942 Yan'an Forum on Art and Literature was "the Party's sponsorship of model genres that could be used as the basis for mass movements in culture" (HOLM 1991, 9). There was eventually a range of such model genres from the 1940s to the 1960s. The New *Gushi* Movement, the New *Yangge* Movement in the 1940s, and the Folk Song Movement (*minge yundong* 民歌运动) in 1958 are all examples.

In China, the "discovery" of folklore and the development of folklore scholarship grew out of a chaotic time of foreign aggression, internal disorder, and dissatisfaction with Confucianism, a moment of serious political and military crisis (EMINOV 1975; HUNG 1985). The Chinese Communist Party inherited the cultural iconoclasm of the May Fourth New Culture Movement to attack Chinese cultural heritage, and this tendency was strengthened by the dominant discourses and practices of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. The Communists were hostile to Confucianism and the culture of the upper classes. Like the Chinese intellectuals who participated in the Folk Literature Movement from 1918 to 1937, they "discovered" and promoted the folk tradition. At the same time, they also found that the folk tradition was closely connected with blind superstitious practices, and they wanted to eliminate feudal superstition as soon as possible (HOLM 1991, 15–16). This attitude toward the folk tradition adopted by the CCP did not change significantly in the Maoist era.

As discussed above, one of the main purposes of the Socialist Education Movement was to correct a number of unorthodox political and ideological tendencies that had appeared in the countryside after the Great Leap Forward, and so the common people were mobilized to accept socialist education. In rural areas, most people were illiterate. Therefore, the cadres "discovered" *gushi* and utilized this format to spread political and ideological education. As I have shown, officials and editors intended to transform the old form, function, and meaning of *gushi*, and make it a "light weapon"

for propaganda in literature and arts. In this sense, there was a salient rupture in the creation of new *gushi*. Zhang Daoyu's *gushi* case study illustrates this point.

When Zhang Daoyu composed *Shuozui meiren*, he intended to criticize the dishonest matchmaker's comportment. He made the following introduction in the written script of this story in the fifth issue of *Gushi hui* (May 1964):

五婶在旧社会里，是专门替人家做媒的媒婆，她只晓得两头说鬼话，两头骗铜钱，只要媒礼一到手，包你媳妇领到家门口。假使夫妻感情不好，哪怕你过门第二天就打破头也不关我五婶的事！人家要来讲几句，她就说：“花轿领到场，媒人跨过墙。再讲，夫妻好不好，是前世姻缘，只有包做媒人，没有包养儿子，我哪能管得到这许多！”所以，在旧社会里，不知有多少青年男女，就这样受了媒婆的骗，被葬送了青春。解放后，人民政府颁布了婚姻法，五婶被群众严厉批评，政府也对她进行教育，她看苗头不对，只好夹紧尾巴，不敢出头露面做媒人了。(41)

In the old society, Wushen [literally, the Fifth Aunt] was a professional matchmaker. All that she knew was to lie to both sides and get money from both sides. As long as she got the gifts for matchmaking, she would lead your daughter-in-law to the door of your house. If the couple did not get along well, or even if you broke your head the day after you got married, [she would say] “It is none of my business!” If someone came to say a few words, she would say, “The bridal sedan chair was led to the place of the wedding, and the matchmaker has left over the wall. Also, whether the couple is good [together] or not depends on their connection to each other in a former life. I am only a matchmaker, I have no responsibilities to make you have a son! How can I deal with so many things?” Therefore, in the old society, [we] do not know how many young men and women were cheated by the matchmaker in this way and had their youth ruined. After the liberation, the people's government issued the Marriage Law. Wushen was severely criticized by the masses, and the government also educated her. She saw the currents were not good for her, so she became very cautious and dared not be a matchmaker in public.

Obviously, Zhang Daoyu differentiated the new government from “the old society,” and made his political standpoint clear. He saw a rupture between the past and the present and drew on the matchmaker's case to praise the ideology of the new government. Yet his ideological orientations do not derive solely from political discourse; they also come from his moral stance and his concern for the happiness of young people. He disagreed with the matchmaker's immoral behavior in the past and blamed the matchmaker for cheating young people and ruining the happiness of their youth. Such moral judgments are based on the values that he and his community shared. Even though the matchmaker violated social and cultural values, she did not suffer any punishment in the past. She always had a way to get herself out of trouble, primarily by her “oily mouth.” However, in the new society, she had to terminate her dishonest speech and behavior. Of course, in the story she returned to her old ways and began to cheat people again in her matchmaking, but her tricks were eventually completely exposed. As mentioned earlier, this happy ending is Zhang's creation or invention. In real life, the matchmaker did cheat everyone and contract

the marriage, while in the new *gushi*, Zhang encoded moral conflicts into ideological conflicts and expressed his orientation toward socialism. As shown at the end of the script, the parents said: *Fengjian sixiang hai sha ren!* 封建思想害人! (Feudal thought is poisonous!) (ZHANG 1964, 53). It is this final slogan that without doubt reveals Zhang's political position.

As Mao Zedong explained in his 1927 report on the peasant movement in Hunan, the CCP was committed as a matter of principle to the destruction of “the whole feudal-patriarchal system and ideology” (HOLM 1991, 16). In the New *Gushi* Movement, *Shuozui meiren* was interpreted as an attack on feudal thought, and thus was promoted widely in the city of Shanghai. As I mentioned before, Zhang's live performance of this *gushi* was used to replace the wedding banquet and transform the old customs. Even though this new *gushi* is more traditional than innovative in its form and values, its function and political orientations are more innovative than traditional (in other words, more revolutionary than traditional) and are determined by an ideology outside of the author himself.

I have explored the integration of tradition, ideology, and individual agency in the New *Gushi* Movement in Maoist China from 1962 to 1966, illustrating both continuity and rupture from the past to the present, represented in individual storytelling composition and performance. I examined how Zhang Daoyu created *Shuozui meiren* based on his personal life and how his storytelling composition and performance was interpreted and promoted by communist officials. Although *gushi*, a traditional narrative genre, was appropriated and constructed for socialist education campaigns, individual storytellers could express their creative agency in their responses to political movements. However, individual creativity and agency was totally suspended during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) when China was in unprecedented chaos. The New *Gushi* Movement ended suddenly in 1966, and the publication of *Gushi hui* was terminated in May 1966. The press was dismantled, and the editor Qian Shunjuan was sent to the *niupeng* 牛棚 (“cowshed”) with many of her colleagues and other intellectuals, who were criticized and denounced at many public meetings. Zhang Daoyu was also attacked and punished unjustly because of his storytelling creation and performances in the early 1960s. After this political and cultural catastrophe ended in 1976, Zhang Daoyu resumed his storytelling performance and composition. *Gushi hui* recovered its circulation, and Qian Shunjuan and her colleagues returned to their old positions.

Since the 1980s, the CCP has adopted a capitalist logic and has pursued economic growth. Culture and tradition have been utilized as a means to gain economic achievement and as a resource for national identity and pride. These are seen as necessary for the consolidation of the CCP government. In these new political, economic, and cultural contexts, the core questions remain the same. Who owns tradition? Who can decide? In regard to my own research, the question becomes who owns *gushi*, and who decides? Further case studies of new *gushi* composition and performance in contemporary China could shed light on these questions, and studies of new *gushi* creation and reception in rural and urban China may further reveal the integration of tradition, ideology, and individual agency in a changing society.

## NOTES

1. The Chinese concept of *gushi* differs from the concept of “stories” in English, but sometimes they are interchangeable. The *Cibai* defines *gushi* as “a type of literature that depicts the whole event, concentrates on the vividness and the continuity of the plot, and generally is more suitable for oral storytelling” (CI HAI BIAN JI WEI YUAN HUI 1979, 3359). Here *gushi* refers to both stories and a vernacular narrative genre.

2. The May Fourth Movement was an anti-imperialist, cultural, and political movement growing out of the student demonstrations in Beijing that took place on 4 May 1919 (CHOW 1960). The broader use of the term “May Fourth Movement” often refers to the period of 1915–1921 that is more often called the New Culture Movement, in which scholars such as Chen Duxiu, Cai Yuanpei, Li Dazhao, Lu Xun, Zhou Zuoren, and Hu Shih launched a revolt against Confucianism and called for the creation of a new Chinese culture based on democracy and science (CHOW 2008).

3. For this study, I conducted fieldwork research in Shanghai, China during April of 2005. I interviewed performers, officials, and editors who had participated in the New *Gushi* Movement in the 1960s about their personal experiences of that period. Most of interviews were conducted in their houses in Chinese. I conducted research in the National Library of China and Beijing University Library, and my primary resources are the issues of *Gushi hui* 故事会, published from July 1963 to May 1966.

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