

## The Employment of Geographical Empathy of *Little Friend* in the National Discourse (1945-1949)

### Abstract:

*Little Friend* was founded and published by Zhonghua Books in 1922 for elementary school children. *Little Friend* has the longest publication history among all juvenile periodicals in China. “Little Friend”, as an alternative way to address “children” in Chinese, was personalized as a fictive child to initiate child readers’ affection. This children’s magazine embodying children’s culture as well as the cultivation and expectation of Chinese children as “ideal citizens” has been employed to embrace the national discourse.

The country eagerly summarized its war experiences (the Second Sino-Japanese War) and further intended to initiate populaces, including children, for its nation-building cause during the transition period from 1945 to 1949. This paper intends to explore how Chinese children are integrated into the nation as an “imagined community” (Anderson 1991, 16) in *Little Friend*. First, concrete locations as junctions mapping out the geographical country were displayed in the columns in forms of verbal quizzes and visual photographs. Second, the editor Chen Bo-chui during this spectrum published a serialized novel called “Little Friends in the Great Time” in the magazine narrating a group of Chinese children who took a trip from Nanking to visit significant cities in China. These child characters were named after the abbreviation of certain provinces and were given regional traits. Last, child readers were called upon to conceptualize their imagination of the “state” through personal responses to their hometown getting published in the magazine.